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SC refuses to entertain activist's plea seeking directions to quash FIRs
New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI): The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a plea moved by a transgender activist seeking directions to quash the FIRs registered against her for protesting until death to protest against ethnic clashes in Manipur. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, however, granted liberty to the activist, Malem Thongam, to approach the Manipur High Court for the redressal of her grievances.

"The petitioner would be at liberty to move the High Court of Manipur in the exercise of its jurisdiction under section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973."

'Ram temple wasn't and will never be election issue'

Udhampur (J&K), Apr 12 (PTI): In a scathing attack on the INDIA opposition bloc for claiming that the Ram temple in Ayodhya is a "poll plank" for the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said it is a matter of faith for the people of the country.

He compared the mindset of the Congress and its allies with that of the Mughals, who he said used to derive pleasure from vandalising temples, and accused them of "teasing the majority community by displaying videos of consuming meat during the month of Sawan to issue for the BJP. It was never an election issue and will never be an election issue," the prime minister said in a Jammu and Kashmir.

Amid tight security arrangements, Modi hit the campaign trail in Udhampur for Union minister Jitendra Singh, who is seeking re-election for a third consecutive seat from the Udhampur seat in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Modi pointed out that the ecosystem start screaming if there is even a reference to the temple. They say the Ram temple is an election

BRIEF



Hot summer day
An artist dressed as Lord Shiva drinks water on a hot summer afternoon, in Nadia district, Friday.

Secretary Posts

New Delhi: Senior bureaucrat Vandita Kaul was on Friday appointed as the Secretary, Department of Posts, according to a Personnel Ministry order. Kaul, a 1989-batch Indian Postal Service (IPoS) officer, is currently serving as Member (Banking & Direct Benefit Transfer), Postal Services Board. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved her appointment as Secretary, Department of Posts and she will succeed Vineet Pandey upon his superannuation, it said.

Nigerian held

Palghar: A 44-year-old Nigerian national was arrested with cocaine and mephedrone worth Rs 57.5 lakh in Maharashtra's Palghar district on Friday, police said. Based on a tip-off, the police raided a residential building in the Pragati Nagar area of Nalla Sopara in Vasai and apprehended the accused, Eze Francis Ana, an official from Tulj police station said.

Weather
High 32 Low 22

MARKET
NIFTY 22,519.40
SENSEX 74,244.90

BULLION
GOLD 73,178
SILVER 84,673

Rameshwaram Cafe blast

NIA arrests two key accused from Bengal

New Delhi/Kolkata, Apr 12: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested two key accused, including the mastermind, in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast case from West Bengal, a development that triggered a war of words between the BJP and the state's ruling TMC.

While the BJP alleged that the TMC has turned West Bengal into a "safe haven for terrorists", Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the accused were arrested due to the state police's prompt action. The accused, Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taahaa and Shazib placed the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at the cafe, they said.

They said "this pursuit was supported by co-ordinated action and cooperation among the NIA, central intelligence agencies and the state police agencies of West Bengal, Telangana, Karnataka and Kerala".

An IED explosion rocked the Rameshwaram cafe located on ITPL Road, Brookefield, Bengaluru, on March 1. Several customers and hotel staff members were injured, some of them grievously, in the blast that caused extensive damage to the property.

An accused in the Bengaluru Cafe blast case being produced at court by NIA officials, in Kolkata, Friday.

and Mussavir Hussain Shazib, were traced to their hideout near Kolkata. They were hiding under false identities, the officials said.

Taahaa was the mastermind behind the planning and execution of the blast

NIA confiscates immovable properties of Khalistani terrorist in Punjab

New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday confiscated immovable properties belonging to Khalistani terrorist Ramandeep Singh in Punjab, the NIA said in its statement.

The properties were confiscated during the investigation into a case relating to terrorist activities of several proscribed terrorist organisations, including Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) etc, it said.

noose further in the pro-Khalistan gangster-terrorist nexus case, the NIA on Friday confiscated immovable property belonging to designated individual terrorist Ramandeep Singh alias Ram in Punjab," the NIA said in its statement.

The properties were confiscated during the investigation into a case relating to terrorist activities of several proscribed terrorist organisations, including Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) etc, it said.

Rahul assures filling 30 lakh vacant Central govt jobs

Tirunelveli, Apr 12 (PTI): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday assured a legislation to provide apprenticeship to young people and filling 30 lakh vacant government jobs.

Addressing his first election rally in Tamil Nadu, Rahul Gandhi said if the INDIA bloc is voted to power at the Centre, "drastic action" will be taken to provide employment opportunities to the young people. There are 30 lakh vacant jobs in the government and these jobs will be provided to young people, he said and added that in order to benefit all the graduates and diploma holders a law-Right to Apprenticeship- will be passed in the Parliament.

Slamming the BJP, Gandhi alleged the Safran party MPs openly stated that "they are going to change the Constitution" if they retained power at the Centre. While the rest of the world earlier looked at India as a beacon of democracy, now it is of the view that India's democracy is no longer a democracy, the former Congress president alleged.

Attacking PM Modi, he said: "The only thing Modi cares about is "having a monopoly on finances and the communication system (seen as reference to media) of this country".

He said the nation today faced an ideological battle. On the one side is the ideology of social justice, freedom and equality, championed by icons such as reformist leader Periyar E V Ramasamy and on the other side are the ideas of RSS and PM Narendra Modi and his government.

Gandhi alleged. Modi stood for "one nation, one leader and one language."

Gandhi said he really loved visiting Tamil Nadu and loved the people of the state. He praised Tamil culture, history and language as the "biggest teacher."

'India among 12 nations mismanaged plastic waste'

New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI): India is among the twelve countries responsible for 60 percent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste though the fast-developing South Asian nation's per capita plastic waste production is among the lowest in the world, according to a new report. The Plastic Overshoot Day Report by Swiss non-profit E4 Earth Action also said global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021. The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. The report comes ahead of the fourth meeting of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in Ottawa, Canada, as the world leaders attempt to develop a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.

"Twelve countries are responsible for 60 per cent of the world's mismanaged plastic waste: China, India, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Vietnam, Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, the United States and Turkey," it said.

Still, India's mismanaged plastic waste will be less than one-fifth of the US. The report also claimed India is estimated to release an average of 3,91,879 tons of microplastics into the environment and 31,483 tons of chemical additives into waterways.

People living in Belgium are the top generators of plastic waste, with a yearly waste production of 147.7 kg per person. This is 16 times higher than in India, it said.

Oman tops the list of countries in terms of mismanaged plastic waste, with a projected 111 kg of mismanaged plastic per person in 2024.

'Rahul takes out Bharat Jodo Yatra but talks about breaking country'

Raipur, Apr 12 (PTI): Athawale on Friday took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi, saying that although the Congress leader takes out 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', he talks about breaking the country. He accused the grand old party of provoking Dalits and Muslims to keep them away from the mainstream, and also alleged that it destroyed the Constitution and imposed Emergency in the country.

Talking to reporters at the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's Raipur office 'Ekatma Parisar', he said, "The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has set the target of winning 400-plus seats in this Lok Sabha elections and it would not be difficult for it to win 50 more seats as its current strength in Parliament is 351. Congress and other opposition claim that the Constitution will be changed (if BJP-led NDA is elected) to power again at the Centre. But they were the ones who imposed emergency and destroyed the Constitution. As many as 80 amendments in the Constitution took place during their (Congress) tenure," he said.

"The Constitution will not be changed. I want to ask Rahul Gandhi. He takes out Bharat Jodo Yatra, but talks about breaking Bharat. By provoking Dalits and Muslims, their (Congress) role to keep them away from the mainstream is not good," the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment said.

If the Congress gets the people's mandate, then it can return to power.

"They were in power for 70 years as they had people's support, but since the last 10 years people have been supporting PM Modi, Athawale added.

"Till the NDA and Modi ji are strong, Congress will not be able to return to power. Rahul will not get the opportunity to become prime minister however hard he tries, he added.

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Collector pays obeisance to Goddess before publication of notification



■ Last date for filing nomination is April 19

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary issued notification at 11:00 hrs on Friday for Lok Sabha Elections 2024 in Parliamentary

Constituency 07 Durg. Simultaneously, the notification was published and pasted on the notice boards of the office as well as in all the ARO offices, urban bodies, janpad offices and gram panchayats. Before issuing the notification, Collector and District Election Officer Choudhary offered prayers

to the Goddess in the temple located in the Collectorate premises. On this occasion, ADM Arvind Ekka, Deputy District Election Officer, Additional Collector BK Dubey, Joint Collector Harvansh Singh Miri, SDM Mukesh Raote and Mahesh Singh Rajput and other officers were present. The work of filing nominations will be done from 11:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs on all days except public holidays. Filing of nominations will conclude at 15:00 hrs on April 19, 2024 (Friday). Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place from 11:00 hrs on April 20, 2024 (Saturday). Candidates can withdraw their nomination till 15:00 hrs on April 22, 2024 (Monday).

One candidate files nomination on the first day



Bhilai, Apr 12:

On the first day of nomination filing under the third phase of Lok Sabha elections-2024, one nomination was submitted for parliamentary constituency 07 Durg. Shyam Sundar Sahu submitted nomination from Loktantra Congress Party. Those who purchased nomination papers were Harishchandra (Independent), Sukhdev Tandon (National Journalist Party), Arun Kumar Joshi (Independent), Shyam Sundar Sahu (Loktantra Congress Party), Shankar

Thakur (Gondwana Gantantra Party), Vijay Baghel (BJP), Harishchandra Thakur (Independent), Anup Kumar Pandey (Independent), Baldev Singh Sahu (Independent), Yashwant Kumar Sahu (Bharatiya Shakti Yojana Party), Ali Hussain Siddiqui (Independent), Vikas Sharma (Independent), Rajendra Sahu (Indian National Congress), Savita Banjare (Shakti Sena Bharat Desh), Pushpa Meria (Independent) and Anshika Jain (Independent).

Youth held for abducting minor girl

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Police arrested a 20-year-old youth on charges of abducting and raping a minor girl. The victim has been rescued safe and handed over to the family. Old Bhilai Police had received a complaint from the family of the minor girl after which an FIR was lodged under 363 of Indian Penal Code. Inspector PD Chandra (SHO, Old Bhilai) informed that they examined the CCTV cameras of several places including the bus stand and railway station. The victim was seen moving with one Gokul Thakur. They had gone to Surat via Nagpur. Police collected information about the whereabouts of the victim and the abductor. Later, a police team accompanied by



the victim's family members reached Surat and safely rescued the victim girl. The kidnapper Gokul Thakur confessed to luring her to flee with him. He established physical relations with her on the promise of marriage. Police booked the accused Gokul Thakur (20) son of Late Meghnath Thakur, a resident of village Aklordih, Police Station Old Bhilai, Durg, under

Section 363, 366, 376 of IPC and Section 4 of POCSO Act. He was produced before the court and has been sent to jail on judicial remand. ASI Hiran Ramteke, Mangala Gupta, Head Constable Ravindra Bharatiya, Constable Mahesh Banchhor, Ishwar Lal Bhardwaj, Harish Rao and Shashikant Yadav played a vital role in rescuing the girl.

Retired Professors demand to remove discrepancies in pension and gratuity

Bhilai, Apr 12:

A delegation of the pensioner professors' association of aided government colleges met the State Education Minister Brijmohan Agarwal the other day. The delegation requested to remove the discrepancies in pension and gratuity as soon as possible. They had submitted a memorandum in this regard earlier also.



an SLP in the Supreme Court. The delegation requested the Minister to please ensure that the government does not file SLP in the Supreme Court.

The delegates informed the Minister about the defamation case filed in the High Court by Dr CK Tiwari and others. In this case, the government has presented an order regarding acceptance of payment of pension and gratuity in their seventh pay scale. However, it is also mentioned in the order that this acceptance will be subject to its decision after the government submits

The Minister assured that the government will not file SLP and will take action regarding giving pension and gratuity in the sixth / seventh pay scale to retired professors of aided colleges. Association President Dr Harinarayan Dubey, General Secretary Dr DN Sharma, Dr Vibha Singh, Prof YP Patel and Dr Rakesh Tiwari were present.

HYU organises voter awareness & cleanliness campaign in 04 colleges

Bhilai, Apr 12:

A total of 04 voter awareness and cleanliness campaign have been organised in 04 different colleges so far in the month of April 2024. The campaign is being run under the joint aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India; National Service Scheme Regional Directorate, Bhopal; and Hemchandra Yadav University HYU, Durg. Giving this information, NSS Coordinator of the University, Dr RP Aggarwal said that more than 500 students and professors from these four colleges took part in this activity. Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr Aruna Palta, who was physically present in the voter awareness and cleanliness campaign organized in all four colleges, administered oath to the stu-



dents to take part in voting. She termed voting as a national festival and urged every participant to take part in voting. Dr Aggarwal further informed that these four colleges include Kalyan Mahavidyalaya, Bhilai; Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya, Junwani Bhilai; Government Indira Gandhi PG College, Vaishali Nagar; Bhilai and Government JLN PG College, Bemetra. In all these colleges where the

campaign was conducted, the Vice Chancellor and Dean Student Welfare Prashant Shrivastava were welcomed by the Principal of the institutions. DrPP Chandravanshi, Dr Alka Meshram, Dr RP Aggarwal, Dr Durga Prasad Rao. The programme was organised under the guidance of NSS State Coordinator Dr Neeta Bajpai, which included various activities related

to voter awareness such as essay, rangoli, painting, awareness rally and street plays at various public places. Program Coordinator Dr RP Aggarwal said that the main objective of these events is to encourage every voter to vote and to make new voters understand the importance of voting. The NSS department of the University will continue to organize such events in other colleges also.

HMS demands Rs 50 lakh compensation for bus mishap victims

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Chhattisgarh State Acting President and senior labour leader HS Mishra has demanded a compensation of Rs 50 lakh to the families of the distillery workers killed in a bus mishap at Kumhari. He further demanded compassionate appointment for the dependents of the deceased and Rs 5 lakh compensation to the injured. The factory management must bear the treatment expenses of the injured and pay their full salary till they rejoin the service. He demanded a free and fair probe into the matter and strict action against the people found guilty. He insisted on lodging an FIR against the Kedia Distillery management for being negligent in providing safety to the employees. The management overlooked the fatal incidents that have occurred in the past. Mishra said that the government and administration woke up after the untimely

death of 12 employees of Kedia Distillery. He said that the administration should conduct inspections regularly and assess the situation of employees and their health and safety. Had the management been sensitive towards the safety of the employees, the incident of April 9 could have been prevented, Mishra said.

Mishra said that there is a 30 feet deep quarry on both sides of the road through which the bus used to travel. Earlier, an accident at Khapri Nullah had claimed the lives of three employees. There are about 2000 workers employed in the company, out of which about 650 workers are on record and there is no labour record of about 1200 workers working in the bottling department. Those workers are made to work 12 hours a day and are being given a minimum wage of Rs 230 to 250. Due to the apathy of the government departments, the labour laws and safety rules are being openly violated.

BSP to celebrate National Fire Services Day & Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Several events are observed at SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant on the April 14 every year. The National Fire Services Day will be observed by the Fire Services Department of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant on April 14, 2024, from 08:00 hrs onwards, at the Main Fire Safety Centre, Bhilai. April 14 also marks the Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, India's eminent visionary and the Architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar Jayanti will be celebrated at the BSP-Higher Secondary School, Sector-6 from 10:00 hrs onwards on April 14, 2024, to pay tributes to Dr BR

Ambedkar. The special attraction of the National Fire Services Day at the Main Fire Safety Centre includes a display of a Parade, fire fighting vehicles, Fire Tenders, safety equipment, etc. It is noteworthy that "National Fire Services Day" is observed to commemorate the martyrdom of the 66 firemen who laid down their lives while protecting the life and property in the horrific fire incident in the Mumbai Dockyard on April 14, 1944. The sacrifice of the country's firemen who were martyred in various other fire accidents is also remembered on this occasion. The one-day event is also an attempt to spread awareness about the

fire hazards in the industries. For the prevention of fire accidents and to raise awareness, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has promulgated the theme of this year's National Fire Services Day 2024 as "Ensure Fire Safety, Contribute towards Nation Building". BSP's Fire Services Department continues to not only protect the Plant and its workforce from fire but also installations and other areas near the Plant, as and when called upon. Currently, it is one of the finest Industrial Fire Services in the country. The Fire Services Department is equipped with state-of-the-art fire-fighting equipment. Since the incep-

tion of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant, the Department has been providing its special services during the fire accidents occurring in Bhilai Steel Plant, Township, surrounding areas, and the state of Chhattisgarh. Born on April 14, 1891, at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, Bharat Ratna Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, social reformer, and political leader who headed the committee drafting the Constitution of India, and served as Law and Justice Minister in the first cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru, and inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement. The year 2024 marks his 134th birth anniversary.

Padma Bhushan awardee painter Jatin Das feted

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Artists of the region who are busy paving way for the opening of a regional centre of Lalit Kala Academy in Bhilai, felicitated eminent painter Padma Bhushan Jatin Das the other day. The veteran artist Jatin Das took the opportunity to encourage young artists to work hard and always be ready to face challenges and competition. The programme organised in Sector 1, Padma Bhushan awardee Jatin Das praised the art culture of Bhilai. He called upon the upcoming artists to work hard while being advocates of truth in the rapidly changing world. He also asked the artists to live a natural life in harmony



with nature and boycott toxic materials like plastic. The budding artists displayed their paintings and sculptures in front of him and sought his advice, on which Jatin Das explained to them the intricacies of art and also removed all their apprehensions. In his concise address, Jatin Das stressed upon the artists to

maintain mutual unity and said that only through this, the biggest institutions can be established in Bhilai. Poet and social worker Dr Sonali Chakraborty presented a sapling to Jatin Das. Among the prominent persons present were Dr Sonali Chakraborty, Kanta Devi, Vijay Sharma,

Harjinder Singh Motia, Kamlesh Verma, Mohan Baral, Brajesh Tiwari, Sarika Goswami, Praveen Kalmegh, Virendra Patnaik, Satish Dewangan, PL Jena, Dheeraj Sahu, Yash Dalvi and Ankush Dewangan, the first ever board member of Lalit Kala Academy from Chhattisgarh.

CO&CCD Department clocks record in wagon unloading



Bhilai, Apr 12:

With the onset of the Financial Year 2023-24, the Coke Oven and Coal Chemical Department (CO&CCD) of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant has set yet another best-ever coal wagon unloading record in any shift by unloading 220 wagons in the Second Shift on April 10, 2024. With this, the CO&CCD surpassed the previous record of unloading of 196 wagons achieved on May 29, 2023. This record performance of wagon-unloading was achieved under the guidance of Dayalu Ram, AGM (CO & CCD), and the cooperation of the

Operations and Mechanical & Electrical Maintenance staff under the leadership of Bipin Kumar Dubey, AGM (CO & CCD) and Shift In-charge. Tarun Kanrar, HoD& Chief CGM (CO & CCD), along with the Senior Officials of the department congratulated all the team and felicitated them with Letters of Appreciation for achieving the record despite bad weather and technical difficulties. Tarun Kanrar thanked the T&D department of the Plant for their constant support and cooperation and encouraged them to work with the same team spirit in future.

Collector encourages women officers deployed on election work

Bhilai, Apr 12:

Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary met the presiding officers and officers of polling parties appointed for election work under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024. She urged them to work with dedication to conduct fair and transparent elections. She visited BIT College and inspected the training venue. The Collector has asked the women trainees to receive detailed training to perform their duties in elections in an easy and simple manner. She asked them to get information about every aspect related to voting, get intensive training on handling over of EVM, preparation before starting of voting, conducting peaceful, fair and hassle-free voting in-



cluding mock polls and proper filing of all the forms etc. In the training program of polling parties under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, polling officers one, two and three along with the presiding officers were present. Collector met the women officers and employees of the polling parties and boosted their morale and congratulated them for

completing their election duties. She asked the women officers undergoing training to understand the information given by the master trainer well and get information about how to vote through EVMs and how to fill the necessary forms correctly. If you have any doubt during the training, ask the master trainer again and again.

She added that the administration team will be with them to resolve any problem and doubt. The Collector informed about the safety of women and providing all necessary facilities in the polling stations. Giving information about mock polls and CRC, she said that the electronic voting machine is 100 percent safe and correct. There cannot be any doubt on its credibility. Therefore, she asked them to conduct the voting in a fair and transparent manner without any pressure. Under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, women will be positioned as presiding officers to other polling staff. The Collector asked the trainees that there should be no scope for error in the elections. The work of

election is to be conducted with seriousness and transparency. Some people have already taken responsibility in election work. She asked them not to do election work with over-confidence and avoid mistakes. During the inspection, Additional Collector Arvind Ekka and Yogita Dewangan, Chief Executive Officer District Panchayat Ashwani Dewangan, Charoda Municipal Corporation Commissioner Dashrath Singh Rajput, ARO Mukesh Raote and Sonal David, Assistant Director of Education Department Pushpa Purushottanam were present. The first training of polling team officers has been organized for two days. A total of 2236 trainees participated on Friday.

OBITUARY

Joginder Kaur

Bhilai: Kohka resident Joginder Kaur, wife of Late Swaran Singh, left for heavenly abode at the age of 93 years on the intervening night of Friday. Funeral procession was taken out from her residence situated at Kohka and last rites of the mortal remains were performed at Ramnagar Muktidham. She was the mother of Late Narendra Singh, Late Bira Singh, Shivdayal Singh Shibu and grandmother of Inderjit Singh Chhotu (Director, Heavy Transport Company), Sonu and Monu.



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ACB/EOW raids on the premises of 8 Excise officials

Raids also conducted on the premises of two brothers of Anwar

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 12: The raids by the ACB/EOW against liquor businessmen and officials involved in the liquor scam continued here for the second day in the new premises and this included a dozen establishments and premises.

ACB/EOW officials held talks with the kingpin in this scam, Anwar Debbar, Arvind Singh and AP Tripathi and later raid was conducted at the residence of Anwar's brother and Mayor Ejaz Dhebar, elder brother Akhtar Dhebar and cousin Junaid Dhebar. Apart from this investigations were carried out at Hotel

Wellington Court at Jail Road, belonging to Dhebar group.

In addition to this ACB/EOW is carrying out search and raids against 8 excise officers including Dy. Commissioner, Asst. Commissioner and District Excise officers. The team was found interrogating the Hotel Wellington Court's staff as well.

It is notable here that it was last year during Ramzan-23 that the ED and IT sleuths have gheraoed Dhebar brothers. Sources informed that it was through Hotel that all 'Hawala' transactions related to liquor scam used to happen in 2021-22. In addition to this meetings of the concerned persons in this scam also used to take place in a nearby hotel. One of the owner's of this hotel viz. Nitesh Purohit is already into

ED's custody. Meanwhile there is no information about arrest of Ejaz or any other brother of Anwar Dhebar in this case.

ACB officers have mentioned to release an authorized statement by late in the evening. **Son of liquor businessman taken into arrest**

The ACB has conducted raid at the residence of liquor businessman Trilok Singh Dhillon alias Pappu Dhillon on Thursday and had seized liquor in large quantity. Supela Thana Police has taken into arrest Jasjeet Dhillon, S/o Pappu Dhillon under section 34 (2) of Excise Act. Supela Thana Police informed that on Thursday, ACB conducted raid at the residence of Pappu Dhillon at Nehru Nagar and during investigation they found 28 lts of foreign liquor. This was immediately in-

formed to Supela Thana and police has taken into arrest Jasjeet Dhillon. Supela Thana TI Rajesh Mishra informed that the police has seized the liquor and taken into arrest Jasjeet Dhillon and he has been released after issuing of notice to him.

It is notable here that prior to this on Thursday, ED raided 21 establishments of liquor businessmen and officers involved in the liquor scam having names of about 70 persons and there were reports that cash of Rs 19 lakh was seized.

Apart from this all electronic gadgets like pendrive, laptop, bank statements, moveable and immovable assets, investment worth crores in banks and other important documents were seized and all these will be examined and then final action will be taken.

PLEASANT WEATHER



Since it is raining for last 3-4 days, the weather has turned very pleasant and big relief from scorching heat of last week.

Notification issued for Raipur LS polls

Nominations to be filed till April 19

Raipur, Apr 12:

Returning Officer and Collector Dr Gaurav Singh has issued the notification for Raipur Lok Sabha elections at 11 am on Friday. With this the process of election of Lok Sabha member from Raipur has also started.

The notification has been issued in two languages, Hindi and English, and has also been made public on the notice boards of the offices of the Returning Officer and all Assistant Returning Officers. Nomination of candidates contesting the elections has also begun from Friday itself. Candidates contesting the elections will be able to submit their nominations before the Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer till 19th April. Candidates can submit their papers in Collectorate's Room No. 2, Collectorate Court, from 11 am to 3 pm. Nomination can not be filed on government

holidays. The candidate can submit nomination for election himself or through one of his proposers.

Nomination letter formats can also be obtained from Room No. 2 of the Collector's office. According to the notification issued from the Returning Officer's office, the scrutiny of nomination papers received within the stipulated time till 19th April will be done on 20th April. Candidates will be able to withdraw their names on written notice by themselves or through any of their proposers or through their election agents as declared by written letter. The last date for withdrawal of nominations has been fixed as 22nd April and the time is till 3 pm. The final list of candidates contesting the elections will also be released on the same day. Voting for the election of Lok Sabha member of Raipur Lok Sabha constituency will be held on Tuesday, 7th May from 7 am to 6 pm at the polling centers set up in all the 9 assembly constituencies.

Vote 100%, inspire others too: Pathak



Administers voter awareness oath to officers, employees

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 12: Thousands of officers and employees took the oath of voter awareness on the terrace of the multilevel parking located in the Collectorate complex. Expenditure Observer Aasthanand Pathak administered the voter awareness oath to all the officers and employees of the district. Message was given to the disabled, third gender community and the disabled to vote. A street play was organized and officers and employees also raised slogans in unison with the message of voter aware-

ness. The entire terrace resonated with the message of voter awareness.

Collector and District Returning Officer Dr Gaurav Singh, SSP Santosh Singh, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra, District Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep were present. Expenditure Observer Pathak said that the district administration was appealing for 100 percent voting and efforts were being made to reach 100% people to make them aware about voting. All basic facilities have been ensured in the polling stations, he said. 'We got the right to vote after the struggle and sacrifice of our ancestors and freedom fighters. We did not have voting rights during the British peri-



od', he said, adding that after some struggle a limited number of people were given rights. After independence all classes of people got the right to vote and that people will have to vote considering it as their right, he said. He further said that more and more people should reach the polling stations and exercise their franchise and play a role in building a strong democracy besides inspiring others to vote.

Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh said oath was being taken at more and more places for voter awareness. Apart from officers and employees, voter awareness oath was administered by NREGA laborers, school and college teachers and employ-

ees of voluntary organizations in every village. Dr Singh said that more and more people should reach the polling centers and vote. Attention has also been paid to the facilities of the employees. Many types of programs are being organized for voter awareness and to increase the voting percentage, the message of voter awareness is also being given through bike rally, sweep express.

According to SSP Santosh Singh maximum voting is necessary for a strong democracy. Events are being organized to ensure that the message of voter awareness is spread everywhere, he said. Voting is essential in participating democracy, he added.

Suspect in Urla murder incident arrested

From moving train; Caught by police within 24 hours of the incident

Raipur, Apr 12:

Suspect in connection with Urla murder incident has been arrested by Police-RPF from a moving train. Filing a report Ramashankar Yadav said that the body of his son Vijay Yadav was lying on the roadside near Pragati School Nursery Deceased had serious injury marks on his face after murder by any unidentified person with a sharp weapon. On this an FIR was registered in Urla police station against unidentified person. Section 302 IPC crime was registered and taken up for investigation.

A joint team of the Urla police station and Anti-Crime and Cyber Unit conducted the investigation. Information regarding the incident was collected by detailed questioning of the com-



plainant and nearby people. The friend of deceased Vijay Yadav was questioned over the message. It was revealed that there was an argument between the deceased and one Rupesh Kumar regarding the transaction of money. Rupesh Kumar was absconding by switching off his mobile after the incident.

After finding out about this from his acquaintances, it was found that Rupesh Kumar had left for Bihar by train in the morning. On receiving the information, Urla police and cyber team immediately reached the railway station and checked the CCTV camera, in which the Rupesh Kumar was seen boarding the South Bihar Express.

Today 16 candidates collect nomination forms

14 deposit security amount

Nomination process begins as election notification for Raipur Lok Sabha is issued

Raipur, Apr 12: Process of nomination for Lok Sabha member election has begun with the release of election notification for Raipur Lok Sabha constituency on Friday. On the first day as many as 16 candidates reached the office of the Returning Officer and collected the nomination forms and 14 of them also deposited the prescribed security amount in the office. Those collecting nomination forms today included representatives of national and regional parties, including five independent candidates. Independent candidates-Bodhan Lal Farikar, Praveen

Jain, Rohit Kumar Patil, Dinesh Dhruv, Rajesh Dhruv received nomination forms to contest elections from Raipur Lok Sabha constituency. Similarly, Lakshmu Ram Tandon from Rashtriya Jan Sabha Party, Peela Ram Anant from Sudar Samaj Party, Brijmohan Agrawal from Bharatiya Janata Party, Vishwajit Harrade of Communist Party, Neeraj Saini from Ghoom Sena, Dayashankar Nishad from Bharatiya Shakti Party, Manoj Verma of Chetan Party Independent, Savita Banjare of Shakti Sena Bharat Desh, Ravi Kumar Srivas of Akhil Bharatiya Jan Seva Party, Tilak Sonkar of Indian National Congress and Anil Kumar Mahobia of Right to Recall Party received the nomination forms. Except Tilak Sonkar and Dinesh Dhruv, the remaining 14 candidates have also deposited the prescribed security amount today.

Coffee Table Book presented to Sanjiv Puri



Raipur, Apr 12: Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director, ITC Ltd. is an alumnus of Rajkumar College, Raipur (ISC 1981 Batch). Raja Samrendra Shekhar Deo of Gangpur, Member General Council and Col Avinash Singh, Principal, Rajkumar College met Sanjiv Puri and presented a Coffee Table Book, which highlights the glorious 140 years' journey of the institution. Puri praised the efforts made to establish his Alma Mater, as one of the premier institutions of the country, informs a release issued by Shivendra Nath Shah Deo, Vice Principal, Rajkumar College, Raipur:

Cardiology OPD by MMI Narayana Hospital Raipur in Ambikapur

Raipur, Apr 12:

Cardiac OPD is being organised at Ambikapur on Saturday, April 13th by MMI Narayana Hospital, famous for providing affordable healthcare services with highest quality across the state. Dr. Sumanta Shekhar Padhi (Senior Consultant, Clinical Lead Cardiology Department) of MMI Narayana Hospital Raipur will provide his services in the OPD.

This OPD will be held at Prakash Hospital, Ambikapur from 10 am to 5 pm. Patients who have other complaints like pain in the chest, difficulty in breathing, getting tired quickly, irregular heart rate, nausea,



Dr. Sumanta Shekhar Padhi

heartburn, pain in the stomach and back, pain spreading from the left shoulder or arm to the left body, etc can consult Sumanta Shekhar Padhi or register in advance today and avail the benefits of OPD. For more information contact 9827872666, 9713667433.

English liquor of Punjab was being sold in Raipur

Smuggler arrested, some boxes of liquor found stored in a shop in Amleshwar

Raipur, Apr 12: Punjab state-made English liquor was being sold illegally in Raipur. Police received information on April 11, 2024 that a person riding a four-wheeler was going towards Khamtrai carrying liquor illegally in his vehicle. On this Additional Superintendent of Police City Lakhana Patle, Additional Superintendent of Police Crime Sandeep Mittal, City Superintendent of Police Urla Manishankar Chandra and Deputy Superintendent of Police Crime Sanjay Singh directed police station incharge Khamtrai and incharge Anti Crime and Cyber Unit to catch the said person red handed with liquor.

Under the direction of senior officers, a joint team of Khamtrai police station and Anti-Crime and Cyber Unit

started tracing the four-wheeler and the person of the same description mentioned by the informer. Eventually the team members successfully caught him near the bus stand located near Bhanpuri Chowk Hanuman Mandir under Khamtrai police station area. During interrogation he revealed his name to be Jitender Pal Singh. During search the team members found English liquor in the vehicle. When Jitendra Pal Singh was asked for valid documents regarding the sale of liquor, he was continuously trying to mislead the team members by not presenting any kind of document.

Jitender Pal Singh was arrested and 10 boxes of Punjab state made English liquor kept illegally in the vehicle was seized from his possession. During interrogation he told that he brought the liquor from Punjab and stored some liquor in a shop located at Amleshwar in Durg district.

On this the team members went to Amleshwar with the help of Amleshwar police and conducted a raid at the place mentioned by Jitender and 22 boxes of English liquor were seized from his possession.

Thus, a total of 32 boxes of Punjab made English liquor and Hyundai Ascent car number CG/05/4757 used in liquor transportation, worth approximately Rs 14,50,000/- were seized from his possession.

कालड़ा बर्न एवं प्लास्टिक कॉस्मेटिक सर्जरी सेंटर राइनोप्लास्टी

नाक को सही (रिश्पिंग) करना

आर.के.सी.के.सामन्ते, चौथे कालोनी एवं पंचपेठे नाक, धमतरी रोड कलर्स मॉल के पास, रायपुर कॉल : 9827143060/8871003060

Ajay Advt.

Answer-sheets valuation to be done till April 15

- That of Class 10th, 12th Board exam for CG Board Result 2024
- Results to be released probably by May 10
- Almost 90 percent answer sheets were examined.

Raipur, Apr 12:

The result of Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education (CGBSE) board exam 10th and 12th can probably be released on May 10, students who appeared for class 10th and 12th board exam 2024 will be able to check their result on the official website cgbse.nic.in and results.cg.nic.in. To check Chhattisgarh Board 10th-



12th Result, students have to use their roll number. However, no official statement has been issued by CG Board regarding the results dates of the board exams. Actually Chhattisgarh Board Exam was conducted from March 1 to March 23. Class 10th examination started on March 2 and ended on March 21. Whereas the 12th examina-

tion was held from March 1 to March 23. The board exams ended sooner this time than previous years. With the board exams ending soon, this time evaluation also started in March. It is believed that emphasis is being laid on completing the evaluation process by April 15. The Secretary of the Education Department has also issued

guidelines for this. At present, 36 centers have been created in the state for checking the answer sheets of class 10th and 12th. More than 18 thousand teachers are engaged for this. This time 3.45 lakh students have registered for the examination in class 10th. Similarly, 2.55 lakh students have registered in class 12th. It is said that 85 to 90 percent of the answer sheets have been checked.

Changes are being made regarding the final result. There are two reasons for this. Students will benefit from the early release of the first 12th board exam result. That is, according to the result, they can easily select a college or prepare for other competitive examinations.

The second reason is that now in Chhattisgarh, like

other states, the 10th and 12th board exams will be conducted once in a year. In view of this, this year the examination was also completed early and it is not taking time to release the result.

Chhattisgarh Board Exam Result is also increasing year after year. The result of class 10th examination has increased by almost seven percent in five years. Similarly, the result of class 12th has increased to 1.54 percent. Due to this, the result is expected to be better this year.

Board officials said that helpline numbers will be issued a week before the release of the board exam results, where students can get solutions from experts regarding exam stress and results. Although this facility happens every year.

Huge bike rally organised to create voter awareness in Dharsiwa

- Message to make voters aware through street play, rangoli

Raipur, Apr 12:

Under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh, a huge bike rally was organized for voter awareness under the SVEEP program in District Panchayat Dharsiwa on Thursday. Under the leadership of SVEEP's Nodal Officer and District Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep, the bike rally passed from Dharsiwa via Kura Nagar Panchayat and ended at District Panchayat Dharsiwa. In this rally, officers and employees came out on bikes with placards carrying the message of voter awareness. Besides, colorful balloons were also



released in the open sky to give the message of voter awareness. After the program, voter awareness oath was administered to the officers, employees and residents present. The message of making voters aware was given through street drama. Rangoli was also made for voter awareness. On this occasion,

Sub-Divisional Officer Revenue Raipur Mr. Nand Kumar Chabe, Tehsildar Dharsiwa Mr. Jayendra Singh, District Panchayat CEO Dharsiwa Mrs. Anita Jain and officers and employees of other departments and a large number of Anganwadi workers, assistants and residents were present.

Swadeshi Khadi Mahotsav gets massive response

- Exhibition to continue for limited days at Chhattisgarh Haat Pandari Bazaar

Raipur, Apr 12:

Heavy rush of people are coming daily to Swadeshi Khadi Mahotsav at Chhattisgarh Haat Pandari market in which the handicrafts of weavers from almost all the states of the country have been displayed. A unique collection of handloom and handicraft items is the center of special attraction for Raipurians. In view of the scorching heat, various products like Khadi kurtas of Meerut, Lucknow Chikan, Kashmiri sarees, Banarasi



sarees, Hyderabad cotton sarees were displayed in the exhibition. A huge range of cotton clothes has been brought by the exhibition organizers, which is attracting a lot of city dwellers. 'Swadeshi Khadi is the only place for tremendous purchase of summer cotton clothes. It

is indeed a unique experience for the city dwellers to get products from all the states under one roof at very affordable prices. Credit and debit card facilities are available at all places in the exhibition. 10 percent discount on handloom items and special discount of up to 20 percent

on handicraft items. Director, Anurag Mishra has appealed to the people of city to come in maximum numbers and take advantage of this discount. The timing of the exhibition is from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. This exhibition will continue till April 15th.

Free health checkup camp organised

Raipur, Apr 12:

On the occasion of 'Lord Mahavir Jamma Kalyanak Mahotsav' 2024, on April 11th, the Prabhat Pheri started at 6.30 am from Gudiari temple via Shri Chandra prabhu Digambar Jain Chaityalaya and ended at Maruti Mangalam Sadan Gudhiyari Sri Nagar Road Gudiyari. Prizes were distributed to the children by organizing fancy dress and quiz competition. The program coordinator and in-charge was Shri Sadhumargi Jain Samta Yuva Sangh, Raipur.

Taking forward the principle of 'Jiyo aur Jeene Do', and moving on the path of non-violence on Thursday, April 11



from 10 a.m. to 2 pm a free health camp was organized at Maruti Mangalam Bhawan, Gudhiyari, Raipur. The free health check up camp was organized in the presence of senior doctors under the joint aegis of Mahavir Janam Kalyanak Samiti and Heritage Hospital, Kachna in which about

150 people reached there and got the benefit of consultation and examination in the health medical camp. In this camp, Dr. Nischal Tiwari, General Laparoscopic Surgeon of Heritage Hospital and Dr. Prashant Kulkarni, Medicine Department, Dr. Vikas Kumar Mishra Eye Specialist, Dr. Bharat

Agarwal, Cardiologist, Dr. Mamta Lalwani, Gynecologist were present. Taking steps towards public service, Vikas Sethia, Nilesh Lunia, Prabhat Chopra, Bhavesh Sethia, Inder Saraf of Jain Shri Sangh Gudhiyari were specially present. On April 12, a program of mass social worship has been organized by Mahavir Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav Committee Sakal Jain Samaj from 8.55 am to 9.55 am at Jain Dada Bari located on M.G Road. In which all the members of Sakal Jain Samaj will come together in one place to perform religious rituals, informs a release issued by Pranit Jain, media incharge.

'Kalinga University hosts groundbreaking lecture on 3D-CFD Simulation in Engineering'

Raipur, Apr 12:

Members of the academic community at Kalinga University attended a guest lecture delivered by Prof. Chandan Ghosh, Director of Fluidyn Group, on the transformative applications of 3D-CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) simulation in civil and environmental engineering on April 10, 2024.

In a riveting session attended by over 30 educators from diverse disciplines including Mechanical, Civil, Zoology and Computer Science, Prof. Ghosh delved into the intricacies of 3D simulations and the cutting-edge software developed by Fluidyn. Focusing on the unparalleled capabilities of Fluidyn numerical solvers, Prof. Ghosh underscored their indispensable role in various critical areas, including: Air pollution phenomena &



Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA), Atmospheric toxic gas leakage and particle dispersion (EIA), Fire and heat radiation, such as Urban Heat Island, Contaminant dispersion in confined spaces, Flammable gas/aerosol dispersion & explosions, Oil Tank burst and over-

topping, Radioactive products dispersion in air and water, Surface and ground water pollution, Real-time leak source detection and dispersion and Indoor/outdoor air quality and health impact.

FLUIDYN software, developed from rigorous academic collaboration in computational techniques

and process models in fluid dynamics (CFD), fluid-structure interaction, heat transfer, and electromagnetism, alongside industrial environmental impact (EIA) and Risk Analysis (QRA), epitomize precision and reliability. Featuring 3D structural and fluid dynamics, complemented by empiri-

cal and statistical formulations validated through meticulous testing, FLUIDYN software ensures credible modeling results, facilitating a tangible enhancement in process parameters and the analysis of potential consequences in accidents.

With a legacy spanning back to 1987, FLUIDYN

has been at the forefront, offering consultancy services and scientific software that embody high-precision numerical modeling solutions for complex fluid and multiphysics applications. Addressing the audience, Prof. Ghosh extended an invitation for hands-on experience with the software's educational version, highlighting its potential to address real-life challenges across engineering, mathematics, and Multiphysics domains.

The visit was facilitated by Dr Sandeep Gandhi, Registrar of Kalinga university and senior professors at Kalinga university including the Vice Chancellor Dr R Shridhar and the Director General Dr Byju John also attended the lecture. Professor Uday Kumar, Dean of Faculty of Information Technology and department of Computer Science delivered the Vote of Thanks.

Inter departmental SVEEP cricket competition organized

Raipur, Apr 12:

Under the SVEEP program of Lok Sabha Elections 2024, the second round of inter-departmental sweep cricket competition was played between Sports and Youth Welfare Department and Women and Child Development Department on April 10 at Subhash Stadium in Raipur. In which the team of Sports and Youth Welfare Department won the match. The event was being organized under the guidance of Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh.

The team of Women and Child Development Department won the toss and elected to bat first. Batting first, the entire team was out after scoring 55 runs. While chasing the target, the team of Sports and Youth Welfare Department won at the loss of five wickets in just four overs. In this match,

Parvesh Joshi was chosen man of the match. Chetan was elected the best bowler. Also Laxmikant became the best batsman.

On this occasion, District Panchayat CEO, Vishwadeep and other officers and employees and hundreds of spectators were present. It is noteworthy that inter-departmental teams are participating in the 12-day SVEEP cricket competition. In a 10 overs match, it is mandatory for each team to give a chance to one female player to bowl. Also, each over has been named according to the election process. Names like SVEEP over, Notification over, EVM over, FST over, VVPAT over etc. have been given. The main objective of this game is to increase the voting percentage as much as possible in urban areas and motivate other people to vote as well.

OBITUARY

Chandra Bai Kochar

Raipur: Chandra Bai Kochar, breathed her last here on Thursday. She was 84. The final rites were performed at Marwari crematorium. She was W/o late Lalji Kochar and mother of Director Manas Jeweller and of under of Vinay Mitra Mandal Mahendra Kochar and Tarun Kochar and grand-mother of Manas, Gaurav and Kalp and great-grand-mother of Garvit.

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Youth sentenced to rigorous life imprisonment in murder case

Raipur, Apr 12:

The court of 7th Additional Sessions Judge Mrs Vandana Deepak Dewangan today sentenced a youth to rigorous life imprisonment in case of murder. According to information available deceased Devraj Dhruv used to speak wrong things about his sister Manisha Yadav to the friends of accused Jai Prakash alias Bau, due to which the accused reached near the house of deceased Devraj on the night of February 11, 2022 to take revenge for the said thing.

On being called Devraj came out of his house. When he completed a couple of steps outside his house he was stabbed by accused Jai Prakash with the button knife. Jai Prakash hit Devraj in the neck with the inten-

tion of killing, causing injury. Complainant Lekhrum (father of the deceased) went to save his son and in the meantime accused Jai Prakash ran away and Devraj fell on the ground. Devraj was admitted to Hospital for treatment but he died during treatment on February 15, 2022.

With his conviction Jai Prakash was punished under sections 302 of Indian Penal Code and sentenced to rigorous life imprisonment with fine of Rs 1000. He will have to service additional imprisonment of one month in case of default of payment of fine.

Statements of as many as 16 people were recorded in the case, informed Rajendra Jain Additional Public Prosecutor, District and Sessions Court Raipur Chhattisgarh.

IIIT gears up for prestigious MUN conference on April 13-14

- With over 300 participants and prizes worth over a lakh

Raipur, Apr 12:

Organized by the Student Activity Council (SAC) at IIIT Naya Raipur, the stage is set for a dynamic and intellectually stimulating Model United Nations (MUN) conference at the prestigious International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Naya Raipur, scheduled to take place on the April 13 and 14. With over 300 enthusiastic participants from various educational institutions across the nation, this event promises to be an exhilarating platform for discourse and diplomacy. The conference boasts a substantial prize pool of one lakh rupees, motivating delegates

to bring their A-game to the negotiation table.

The conference will feature several esteemed committees, each focusing on different global issues and fostering debate among the participants. Among these committees are: United Nations Security Council (UNSC), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha, All India Political Parties Meet (AIPPM) and International Press.

Adding to the gravitas of the event, the executive board comprises renowned advocates and experts in international relations, who will evaluate the participants' diplomatic skills and critical thinking abilities. Beyond the thrill of debate, engaging in MUN conferences provides students with a plethora of opportunities for holistic develop-

ment and personal growth. Speaking about the upcoming conference, Kanika Malhotra, Secretary of the MUN Club under SAC, expressed enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled to host this esteemed gathering of young minds at IIIT Naya Raipur. MUN conferences are not just about debate; they are about fostering critical thinking, diplomacy, and global awareness among the youth." In addition, Dr. Pradeep K Sinha, Director of IIIT Naya Raipur, remarked, "The MUN conference is an embodiment of our commitment to fostering intellectual growth and global citizenship among our students. We are proud to host this prestigious event and look forward to the enriching discussions it will bring."

Furthermore, Dr. Manoj Kumar Majumder, President of SAC, highlighted, "The MUN conference stands as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our student body. It is a reflection of our commitment to providing students with platforms for holistic development and experiential learning." He expressed gratitude to the sponsors, with special thanks to Chhattisgarh Environment Conservation Board (CECB) and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for their support in raising awareness about environmental issues. With its diverse committees, esteemed judges, and substantial prize pool, the MUN conference at IIIT Naya Raipur promises to be a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration, shaping the future leaders of tomorrow. Stay tuned for updates and insights from this exciting event!

Eid celebrated with prayers for peace and prosperity

Khairagarh, Apr 12:

Moving according to traditions, Khairagarh Muslim community celebrated the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr with great enthusiasm. Imam Hafiz Fakhruddin of Jama Masjid offered the holy Eid prayers at the Eidgah in local Dauchora at 9 am, after the sighting of the moon on Wednesday night. Prayers were offered as per the Muslim traditions, after which the special Khudba of Eid-ul-Fitr was read and finally by reciting Salato-Salaam, everyone wished for the peace, tranquility and prosperity of the country.

After the prayer, the Muslim brothers hugged each other and congratulated each other on Eid and after reaching the cemetery they read Fatiha



for the last rites of their dead. After this, throughout the day in the city, the Muslim brothers kept visiting other along with a variety of dishes being served. It is noteworthy that according to the belief of Islam, during the very special and sacred month of Ramadan for Muslims, fasting for a month, reciting the Quran, listening to Taraweh and worshipping and paying Zakat is considered as Fard and

Sunnah.

After the last fast, Jashre Eid is celebrated by looking at the moon and it is believed that God has made it obligatory for the Muslims to perform their own Fitra, hence Eid is called Eidul Fitr. Muslim brothers from the city as well as from nearby and remote Vananchal areas participated in Idgah and there was a lot of enthusiasm about the festival from young to old people

and the cooperation of the police administration in maintaining order near the Eidgah complex during the Namaz was also commendable.

On this occasion, Municipality Vice President and former Sadar of Muslim Jamaat Jama Masjid Abdul Razzaq Khan, Janab Zameer Qureshi, Hafiz Mohibbul Haq, Hafiz Ziaul Haq, current Jama Masjid Sadar Arshad Hussain, Naib Sadar Zafar Hussain Khan, Haji Nasir Memon, Haji Rizwan Memon, Haji Imran, Memon, Haji Mohsin Ali, Haji Zahid Ali, Haji Murtaza Khan, Treasurer of Jama Masjid Mohd. Idris Khan, Qasim Khan, Iqra Foundation President Khalil Qureshi and Raja Solanki were present.

Workshop of Kotwar, city soldier and forest guards organized

Khairagarh, Apr 12:

A workshop for Kotwar, Nagar Sainik and Forest Guards was organized here in to train employees as per Election duties for the forth coming Lok Sabha Election 2024. In the workshop convened on the instructions of SP election tips were given to Kotwars, city soldiers and forest guards of District KCG. Specially, Kotwars, city soldiers and forest guards in their area were made aware about how to perform their duties on the Election Day.

In the workshop, ASP Neha Pandey said that a Kotwar is close to the villagers because they have access to every village and Kotwar is the first source of administrative information, while the city soldiers have knowledge of the surrounding areas,



similarly the forest guards are also well-versed with the interior areas of the forest, and keep a close eye on anti-social elements. In this way, all Kotwars, city soldiers and forest guards have been instructed to maintain peace and order in their respective areas and create an environment of peace by continu-

ously coordinating with the police station in-charge and giving information to the police regarding illegal activities and anti-social activities happening in the forest areas, she said.

In the workshop, the guidelines related to controlling the crowd of people present in the polling

booth during elections, distance of publicity or banner posters from the polling booth were explained through the projector and also, detailed information was given on important topics like how to protect the ballot box and electronic voting machines after the elections. Inspector Ambrish Sharma, present in the workshop, gave detailed information regarding model conduct and law during elections. In the said workshop, more than 400 Kotwars, city soldiers, forest guards and officers from Superintendent of Police Office Election Cell including Assistant Sub Inspector Kamlesh Banafar, Constable Atish Chandravanshi, Bharat Bhushan, Rajendra Chandra, Sheetal Yadav, Anil Lahare from the district area were present.

Collector takes stock of nomination and expenditure accounting room

For Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Korba, Apr 12:

Under the direction of Collector and District Election Officer Ajit Vasant, Additional Collector Dinesh Kumar Nag and SDM Shrikant Verma here inspected the room designated for nomination in relation to the necessary preparations under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024. The SDM, Reader and Additional Collector tested the preparations for the elections by applying as candidates to the Returning Officer and questioning the assistant officers and employees engaged in the work. They gave necessary



guidelines regarding setting a convenient distance between the candidates and the Returning Officer while submitting the applications in the nomination room, maintaining the register prescribed by the support staff and regarding the proposers.

The process of nomination for Korba Lok Sabha

elections will start from April 12 and the room on the first floor of the Collector Court has been earmarked for nomination of candidates in the Collectorate. The Collector also took stock of the seating arrangements and work of the Returning Officer, Assistant Returning

Officer and other officers and employees for cooperation in the nomination room. He personally examined the information given to the candidates and proposers coming for nomination and the process of receiving applications from them and gave necessary instructions to the officials.

Similarly, for the expenditure related records of the candidates, the expenditure observation team is active in maintaining the expenditure related information in the register.

Flying squads and static surveillance teams are also deployed at different places in the district and at the headquarters level, the MCMC team in the video observation room and media attestation and monitoring room keeps a close watch on the candidates over news, paid news, advertisements, broadcast and news published in the newspapers, social media, electronic media of the district every day and prepare reports to their in-charge officers

Chaubebandha road handicapped by potholes and swamps

Rajim, Apr 12:

The approximately two and a half kilometer long road from Chaubebandha bridge to Rajim, also called as Chaubebandha road is laid with potholes and swamps alike. As per information, as soon as the weather opens, people are troubled by the clouds of dust, while when it rains, they get stuck in swamps and due to the movement of big and small loading and unloading vehicles, the potholes are continuously increasing. Also as it was not leveled by laying asphalt, the potholes are getting swampy and muddy on a

downpour.

Because this road is connected to the city, the new fair ground is on this route and a fair ground is being built a few steps away, with a proposal of Meena Bazaar of Kumb Mela set up in the vicinity, the road is for sure to take a lot of load in the coming days.

Endowments Minister Brijmohan Aggarwal had announced in the meeting that Meena Bazaar will be organized in the new fair ground, but suddenly it was set up in the old fair ground. There are reports that the Kumbh Mela of 2025 can be organized here in the coming year and due to

unseasonal rain since last three days, the true nature of the road has emerged and the ballast poured to fill the pit has slowly flowed out and the size of the same pit is converting it to slurry.

Pedestrians commuters mainly traders and students are drenched in colours of mud as they commune in the region, but in this regard, Ashok Mishra, President of Navdeep Jankalyan Seva Samiti Rajim Nagar Vikas Manch, informed that the tender for work was released but the Finance Department did not release the budget and the tender was cancelled.

BSP management indifferent towards Rajhara Township

Dalli-Rajhara, Apr 12:

Due to Dalli-Rajhara, the iron ore city, Bhilai Steel Plant registered a record production a few days ago but the same city is being given a step motherly treatment by BSP management, which is an irony in itself. The main complaint is regarding filth dirt and lack of sanitation in the region, which despite several complaints no concrete steps are being taken by the lazy management officials. The Municipal Council is also not getting the filth spread behind the allotted quarters in the township cleaned and also lack of potable water for summers is not being adequately provided.

After inspection by a leading daily of the state it was found that even after requesting several times, the attitude of the

management is adamant towards public grievances. As no roadmap is ready, the concerned officers remain absent most of the time because the management has appointed such officers on responsible posts who do not even reside in the city. Many contractors, who, on the condition of anonymity, said that Mr. RK Jain has been appointed to the post of AGM in Rajhara Civil, who is also looking after the Raoghat project, therefore in such a situation, they spend more time there and the problems of Rajhara remain the same. Residents and alert representatives of different forum have opined over the falling administrative powers of the region and have demanded more able and officers to tackle the situation in the region.

Officer's initiative provides relief in summer heat

Manendragarh, Apr 12:

As temperatures soar with the onset of April, residents are bracing themselves against the scorching heat, highlighting the acute need for access to cold drinking water. However, the absence of provisions for chilled water exacerbates the discomfort faced by the common people during the summer months, with the municipality yet to install cold water tanks in public areas.

In response to the pressing need, Amit Kashyap, the City Kotwali in-charge of the MCB district, took it upon himself to address the issue. At his own expense, Kashyap initiated the setup of a water kiosk outside the police station premises, ensuring that cold water is readily available to the public. While those with means can purchase bottled water, the initiative primarily aims



to alleviate the plight of the less fortunate who cannot afford such luxuries.

The absence of cold water facilities poses a particular challenge for travellers and visitors who arrive in the city from distant locations for various purposes. Understanding this predicament, Kashyap proactively launched the initiative to provide relief to those seeking respite

from the sweltering heat.

Initiating the service on the auspicious occasion of Chaitra Navratri, Kashyap and his police staff procured pots and began dispensing cold water from the water kiosk. Additionally, instructions were issued to ensure the continuous replenishment of the water pots to cater to the needs of all visitors.

The selfless gesture by

Amit Kashyap garnered widespread appreciation from the community, with many commending his commitment to public welfare. Reflecting on the initiative, Kashyap emphasized the importance of ensuring that everyone, regardless of their financial capabilities, has access to cold drinking water, especially during the scorching summer months.

Festive lights illuminate Karrabaghin region

Fingeshwar, Apr 12:

The vibrant spirit of Chaitra Navratri permeates the Karrabaghin region as devotees gather to celebrate the auspicious occasion. In homage to Maa Ghatarani Devi, a revered religious and tourist destination, 205 Manokamna Jyoti Kalash have been ceremoniously established, symbolizing prayers for fulfillment of wishes. Additionally, 170 Jyots have been ignited at the Karrabaghin Devi site, nestled amidst the forest, serving as a beacon of spiritual guidance for visitors from Bodki, Fuljhar, Jogidipa, Charbhathi, and Devgaon.

The fervor extends to Kali Mata Sumer Paharwali Kundel, where 21 Aastha ki Jyots illuminate the Kali Mata Kundel, further enriching the spiritual ambiance. At the Shani Dev Durga Temple Kundel, devotees gather in large numbers to witness the illumination of hundreds of Jyots, seeking blessings and divine intervention to fulfill

their wishes.

Bhagat Khorbaha, the dedicated priest of Kali Mata Kundel, reflects on the profound significance of religion in human life, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence of people from diverse religious backgrounds. He highlights the cultural richness embedded in the celebration of festivals like Chaitra Navratri, which unite communities in reverence, devotion, and joy. Delving into the significance of Navratri, Bhagat Khorbaha elaborates on the nine days of worship dedicated to Adishakti Jagadamba, representing nine distinct forms of the divine feminine. These sacred days hold immense importance, symbolizing auspiciousness, prosperity, and peace. The worship of Goddess Shailputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandmata, Katyayani, Kalratri, Mahagauri, and Siddhidatri during Navratri is believed to bestow divine blessings upon devotees, enriching their lives with abundance and spiritual fulfillment.

Instructions given to ensure availability of basic facilities

At the polling stations Took stock of the work of static surveillance teams including Baranji and Lohandiguda check post

Jagdulpur, Apr 12:

General Observer Dr. J Ganesan, appointed by the Election Commission of India for Parliamentary Constituency 10 Bastar (ST) under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, inspected the polling stations of Chitrakote Assembly constituency of Bastar district on Tuesday. He took stock of the basic facilities and saw the arrangement of shade for voters, drinking water, toilet facilities along with ramps etc. for disabled voters as per the prescribed norms at the polling stations. And in view of the summer season, instructions were given to ensure mandatory



provision of shade and drinking water for voters at polling stations.

During his visit, General Observer Dr. Ganesan took stock of the static surveillance teams deployed here, directed to keep a strict vigil on the illegal transportation of cash, jewelry and liquor. General Observer Dr. J

Ganesan inspected polling station number 33 of Usribeda along with polling station number 44 and 45 established in Secondary School Baranji under Chitrakote assembly constituency under the Lok Sabha elections 2024 and made entry and exit arrangements for easy voting of the voters. Looked at other facilities and gave instructions to the concerned officials to

provide all the basic facilities. He inspected the information related to checking of vehicles, maintenance of registers etc. at Baranji and Lohandiguda check posts and instructed the static monitoring teams deployed here to thoroughly check all the vehicles. During this time SDM Lohandiguda Shankarlal Sinha and other officers were present.

Shri Ram Katha ushers in devotional celebrations

Thousands join Kalash yatra festivities

Pithora, Apr 12:

Amidst the fervour of Chaitra Navratri, the Shri Ram Katha Amrit Mahotsav commenced in Pithora, featuring enlightening discourses by Sadhvi Radhika Kishori from Ayodhya Dham. The inauguration of the sacred narrative was marked by a spectacular Kalash Yatra, drawing participation from thousands of women who embarked on a journey through Pithora and Lahraud villages.

Preparations for Sadhvi Radhika Kishori's Ram Katha discourse at Anjali Vihar in Pithora's employee colony have been extensive since April 10, evoking immense enthusiasm among women for the Kalash Yatra. Adorned in



yellow attire, throngs of women joined the procession, accompanied by kirtan troupes that infused the atmosphere with devotional fervor through melodious chants of "Hare Rama Hare Krishna."

Commencing at the South Mukhi Hanuman Temple and traversing through the bustling streets, the Kalash Yatra culminated at the Katha

Pandal in the Employee Colony, where the arrival of Ram, Lakshman, and Mother Sita on a decorated chariot sparked jubilant celebrations, with women dancing to the resounding chants of "Jai Shri Ram."

The event saw a grand welcome for Sadhvi Radhika Kishori upon her arrival from Ayodhya Dham, marked by fireworks and flower showers.

Commencing on Wednesday evening, the Katha sessions, from 4 pm to 8 pm daily, feature profound discourses by Sadhvi Radhika Kishori on the glory of Lord Ram's name, captivating the audience's hearts. Additionally, Bhog Bhandara is organized daily, providing sustenance and spiritual nourishment to all attendees.

Several writers decline recognition from PEN America

In protest over its Israel-Hamas war stance

New York, Apr 12 (AP):

Several authors have turned down awards and awards nominations from PEN America, citing unhappiness with the literary and free expression organization's stance on the war in Gaza.

This week, PEN announced its long lists in categories ranging from the USD 75,000 Jean Stein Award for best book to the USD 10,000 PEN/Hemingway award for first novel. Authors who have asked for their names to be withdrawn include Jean Stein nominee Camonghne Felix, poetry finalist Eugenia Leigh and short story nominee Ghassan Zeineddine.

"I decided to decline this recognition and asked to be removed from the long list in solidarity with the ongoing protest of PEN's continued normalization and denial of genocide," Felix, author of the memoir "Dyscalculia," wrote on X. The awards are scheduled to be handed out during an April 29 ceremony in Manhattan, hosted by writer-comedian Jena Friedman. A PEN spokesperson said that nine out of 60 nominated authors had asked for their names to be withdrawn. PEN also confirmed that Esther Allen had declined the PEN/Ralph Manheim Award for translation and added that it would soon announce a new winner.

"We respect their decision and we will celebrate these writers in other ways," said Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf, who oversees

PEN's literary programming. PEN's response to Israel's invasion of Gaza, following the deadly October 7 attack by Hamas, has been widely criticized by writers who believe the organization has failed to fully condemn the war that has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead, including hundreds of writers, academics and journalists.

An open letter published in March and signed by Naomi Klein, Lorrie Moore and dozens of others contends that PEN had not "launched any substantial coordinated support" for Palestinians and was not upholding its mission to "dispel all hatreds and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace and equality in one world." The letter's endorsers contrasted PEN's forceful protests against

the Russian invasion of Ukraine and alleged that PEN had done little to "mobilize" members against the Gaza war.

"Palestine's poets, scholars, novelists and journalists and essayists have risked everything, including their lives and the lives of their families, to share their words with the world," the letter reads in part. "Yet PEN America appears unwilling to stand with them firmly against the powers that have oppressed and dispossessed them for the last 75 years."

A PEN spokesperson noted that the organization has issued numerous statements calling for a ceasefire and mourning the destruction of museums, libraries and mosques in Gaza, and has helped set up a USD 1,00,000 emergency fund for Palestinian writers.

RISHI SUNAK. JOHNNY MERCER



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer, left, during a Q&A event at the RAF Museum in Hendon north west London, to launch an employment plan which pledges to help veterans secure high-paid jobs after they leave the armed forces, Friday April 12.

Ford under investigation for Bronco Sport gas leaks

US says its remedy doesn't fix the problem

Detroit (US), Apr 12 (AP):

The US government's auto safety agency has opened an investigation into a Ford recall for gasoline leaks from cracked fuel injectors that can cause engine fires, saying in documents that the remedy doesn't fix the leaks.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in documents posted on Friday that the probe will "evaluate the adequacy and safety consequences of the remedy" that Ford specifies in the recall.

The agency moved with unusual speed, posting documents detailing the "recall query" just two days after the recall was

made public.

The recall covers nearly 43,000 Ford Bronco Sport SUVs from the 2022 and 2023 model years, and Escape SUVs from 2022. All have 1.5-litre engines.

NHTSA said that fuel injectors can crack, causing gasoline or vapours to leak at a high rate onto hot surfaces in the engine compartment.

The Associated Press reported on Wednesday that Ford's remedy for the leaks is to add a drain tube to send the gas away from hot surfaces, and a software update to detect a pressure drop in the fuel injection system.

If that happens, the software will disable the high pressure fuel pump, reduce engine power and cut temperatures in the engine compartment. Owners also will get a "seek service" message.

But the US said on Friday that Ford's fix lets

fuel drain from a cylinder head hole to the ground below the vehicles. "The recall remedy does not include replacement of the cracked fuel injector," the agency said.

Ford said on Friday it is working with NHTSA on the investigation.

The company said in documents that it has reports of five under-hood fires and 14 warranty replacements of fuel injectors, but no reports of crashes or injuries.

In an email on Wednesday, Ford said it is not replacing fuel injectors because it is confident the recall repairs "will prevent the failure from occurring and protect the customer".

The new software triggers a dashboard warning light and allows customers to drive to a safe location, stop the vehicle and arrange for service, the company said.

Uncertainty over impending elections could risk Sri Lanka's economic recovery: ADB

Colombo, Apr 12 (PTI):

The "uncertainty" over the impending elections in Sri Lanka will cause a possible downward trend in the country's economic outlook, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has said.

The island nation is set to face a presidential election in the last quarter of this year, while the parliamentary election is due mid-next year.

However, political uncertainty prevails in the country as opposition parties have pledged to reverse the current IMF-linked reforms, which have proved to be unpopular with the masses.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who has steered the recovery programme by going into a bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a USD 2.9 billion facility, maintains that the island could once again face economic collapse if the IMF pro-

gramme reforms are not adhered to.

Outlining the economic risks Sri Lanka is facing, the ADB in its South Asian chapter's economic trends report released yesterday said, "Among them the most important is uncertainty associated with the upcoming elections, including any possible impact on fiscal policy and reform implementation."

The ADB noted that there are signs of economic recovery in Lanka and emerging growth had revived in the second half of 2023 and is expected to continue in 2024 and 2025.

"Inflation decelerated in single digits last year following a peak in 2022 and will remain below 10 per cent in 2024 and 2025. Challenges remain and the upcoming electoral cycle must not delay the reforms required to address the recent economic crisis. Sri Lanka needs to address vulnerability to poverty to ensure inclusive growth," the report said.

'Significant shortcomings' in Bank of England's economic forecasting

Ex-Fed chair Ben Bernanke's findings

London, Apr 12 (AP):

A review of the Bank of England's economic forecasting that was published on Friday and undertaken by Ben Bernanke, the former chair of the US Federal Reserve, has found "significant shortcomings" that should be addressed to better inform future interest rate decisions.

Following widespread criticism about the Bank of England's forecasts, Bernanke was tasked last year to review the forecasting models.

Though noting that all central banks have had problems over the past few years as a result of a series of economic shocks, notably the coronavirus pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis heightened by Russia's invasion of

Ukraine, Bernanke said the Bank of England's issues were made worse by out-of-date software that had not been properly maintained.

The review said that "insufficient resources have been devoted to ensuring that the software and models underlying the forecast are adequately maintained".

Bernanke, who led the Fed between 2006 and 2014, a period that included the global financial crisis, made a series of recommendations that the Bank of England said it was committed to fulfilling.

Bank of England Gov. Andrew Bailey said the review was a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" for the central bank to update its models and make them fit for purpose to a "more uncertain world".

One recommendation is that the Bank of England start producing its own forecasts of what might

happen to interest rates in future, something that could help inform its inflation forecasts.

Over the past couple of years, the Bank of England has faced criticism for being too slow to respond to surging inflation stoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent energy costs soaring, and supply issues connected to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

As a result, critics have argued that inflation ended up rising higher than it should have done to a multidecade high of more than 11 per cent — two percentage points more than in the US, for example. The consequence of that, they say, is that the Bank of England's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee then had to rise interest rates by more than would otherwise have been required and will have to stay higher for longer.

Nearly 12,000 homes are flooded in a Russian region bordering Kazakhstan

Water levels keep rising

Moscow, Apr 12 (AP): Nearly 12,000 houses have been flooded in a Russian region bordering Kazakhstan as water levels in the Ural River keep rising and threatening more deluge, authorities said Thursday.

The floods sparked evacuations of thousands in the Orenburg region, located some 1,200 kilometres (745 miles), southeast of the capital of Moscow after a dam on the river burst last week under the pressure of surging waters. Local authorities have declared a state of

emergency in the region.

In a televised video conference with President Vladimir Putin, Orenburg governor Denis Pasler reported that a total of 11,972 houses are flooded, as well as 16 state medical facilities. Additionally, 3,600 houses — home to some 20,000 people — are in danger of imminent flooding as water levels continue to rise.

The situation is most dire in the city of Orenburg, the administrative capital of the region, Pasler said, where the water level in the Ural River reached a historical peak of 10.87 metres

(about 36 feet).

A total of 7,800 people have been evacuated from the flooded areas so far, he added. The overall damage from the floods is estimated to exceed 40 billion rubles (USD 428 million).

Further east along the Kazakhstan border, authorities in the regions of Kurgan and Tyumen are also preparing for possible floods as water levels rise in local rivers.

Floods have also hit Kazakhstan, where authorities have declared a state of emergency in 10 out of 17 regions of the country, according to Russia's state news

agency Tass. As of Thursday, the state of emergency was still in place in eight regions, Tass reported. Since March, more than 98,000 people have been evacuated from the affected areas there.

Footage from the flooded regions in Kazakhstan showed water gushing down streets, vast fields covered with water and dozens of houses partially submerged. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has called the floods "a natural disaster ... the likes of which have not been seen for many years."

Two Palestinians killed, 3 injured in confrontations with Israeli forces

In West Bank

Jerusalem, Apr 12 (AP):

Two Palestinians were killed early Friday in confrontations with Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Palestinian medics and the military said. The Palestine Red Crescent Society confirmed the two deaths and said three people were wounded, including one who sustained serious injuries.

The Islamic militant group Hamas said one of those killed was a local commander.

Palestinian health officials say 460 Palestinians, including several dozen children and teens, have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Six months of fighting in Gaza have pushed the tiny Palestinian territory into a humanitarian crisis, leaving more than 1 million people on the brink of starvation. The head of the United States Agency for International Development, Samantha Power, told lawmakers Wednesday

she accepted "credible" reports that famine is now occurring in hard-hit northern Gaza. President Joe Biden said this week that Israel is not doing enough to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Israeli bombardments and ground offensives have killed at least 33,360 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 74,993, the Health Ministry says. The ministry doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its tally, but says women and children make up two-thirds of the dead.

Lifting a near-total ban on abortion

Warsaw, Apr 12 (AP): Polish lawmakers voted Friday to continue work on proposals to lift a near-total ban on abortion, a highly divisive issue in the traditionally Roman Catholic country, which has one of the most restrictive laws in Europe. Members of the lower house of parliament, the Sejm, voted to work on four separate bills. Two of them propose legalising abortion through the 12th week of pregnancy, in line with European norms.

FANCY VIVID PINK DIAMOND RING



A Phillips employee shows the Fancy Vivid Pink diamond ring, weighing 6.21 carats during a press preview of Jewellery Highlights ahead of Phillips' auction house Geneva Jewels Auction on May 13th in London, Friday, April 12, 2024.

Many say Biden and Trump did more harm than good

AP-NORC poll shows

Washington, Apr 12 (AP):

There's a reason why President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are spending so much time attacking each other — people don't think either man has much to brag about when it comes to his own record. Americans generally think that while they were in the White House, both did more harm than good on key issues.

But the two candidates have different weak spots. For Biden, it's widespread unhappiness on two issues: the economy and immigration. Trump, meanwhile,

faces an electorate where substantial shares think he harmed the country on a range of issues.

A new poll from the AP-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research finds that more than half of US adults think Biden's presidency has hurt the country on cost of living and immigration, while nearly half think Trump's presidency hurt the country on voting rights and election security, relations with foreign countries, abortion laws and climate change.

"Considering the price of gas, the price of groceries, the economy — I did very well during those four years," Christina Elliott, 60, a Republican from Texas,

said of the Trump presidency. "I didn't have to worry about filling up my tank or losing half of my paycheck to the grocery store." Elliott wasn't too keen on Trump's handling of abortion and said that when it comes to the former president's rhetoric, "He just needs to learn how to be tactful and shut his mouth." "But other than that, like I said, I did very well during the Trump years," she added. The polling underscores why certain issues — such as abortion for Biden and immigration for Trump — have been persistent focal points for each of the campaigns. The former president regularly decries the

number of asylum-seekers who have arrived in the US under Biden, describing the situation in apocalyptic and dark terms. And Biden has gone on the offensive against Trump on abortion, especially after this week's ruling from the Arizona Supreme Court that essentially criminalised the procedure in the state.

When asked which president did more to help people like them, roughly one-third say Donald Trump and about one-quarter say Joe Biden. Yet 30 per cent of adults said neither Biden nor Trump benefitted them. It's another data point reflecting an electorate that has been largely

disappointed with this year's general election choices, generating little enthusiasm among key parts of the Biden and Trump political coalitions.

Americans rate Biden particularly negatively on a few specific issues. Only about 2 in 10 Americans think Biden's presidency helped "a lot" or "a little" on cost of living, and 16 per cent say that about immigration and border security. Nearly 6 in 10 say his presidency hurt a lot or a little on these issues. Nearly half, 46 per cent, of Americans, by contrast, say that Trump's presidency helped a lot or a little on immigration or border security.



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Exploring Europa

NASA's Quest for Extraterrestrial Life

In the vast expanse of the cosmos, humanity has long pondered the age-old question: are we alone? This existential inquiry has driven scientists to push the boundaries of exploration beyond our own celestial doorstep, leading to endeavors such as NASA's ambitious Europa Clipper mission. Scheduled for launch in October, the Clipper spacecraft represents a pivotal step in our quest to uncover the mysteries of Jupiter's icy moon, Europa. Nestled within the intricate dance of Jupiter's many moons, Europa stands out as a tantalizing prospect for harboring life beyond Earth. At the heart of NASA's mission lies a profound curiosity about the potential for extraterrestrial life. Bob Pappalardo, the mission's project scientist, encapsulates this sentiment, emphasizing that the discovery of life on Europa would revolutionize our understanding of the universe. "Earth and Europa," he muses, "two examples of life within our own solar system—such a revelation would be monumental." However, the journey to unlock Europa's secrets is fraught with challenges. The \$5 billion probe, meticulously crafted at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, undergoes stringent measures to prevent contamination, highlighting the meticulous care required for interplanetary exploration. Upon its launch aboard a Space X Falcon Heavy rocket, the Clipper embarks on a five-year odyssey, navigating the cosmos with precision. En route, it will harness the gravitational embrace of Mars to gain momentum before reaching its ultimate destination: the enigmatic realm of Jupiter and Europa. Equipped with an array of sophisticated instruments, including cameras, spectrometers, and radar, the Clipper aims to unravel Europa's icy veil. The quest, however, extends beyond the search for alien beings; scientists seek to identify the conditions conducive to life's emergence, drawing parallels with extreme environments on Earth. Yet, amidst the excitement of discovery, formidable obstacles loom large. Europa's harsh radiation field poses a threat to the probe's delicate instruments, subjecting them to intense scrutiny akin to 100,000 chest x-rays per circuit. Moreover, the vast distances traversed by the Clipper entail a 45-minute lag in communication—a testament to the unfathomable scales of the cosmos. Power, too, emerges as a critical concern. While the probe's solar array boasts impressive capabilities near Earth, its efficacy diminishes amidst Jupiter's distant embrace. Jordan Evans, project manager for the Europa Clipper mission, elucidates the stark reality: from powering twenty houses to a mere handful of light bulbs, the transition underscores the logistical intricacies of deep space exploration. Amidst these challenges, the Europa Clipper mission symbolizes a testament to human ingenuity and perseverance. Decades in the making, the endeavor embodies the culmination of scientific ambition and technological prowess, offering a glimpse into the limitless possibilities that await beyond our terrestrial confines. As the probe embarks on its odyssey, the echoes of curiosity reverberate throughout the cosmos. With each orbit around Europa, the Clipper inches closer to unraveling the enigma of our cosmic neighbor. And while the journey may culminate in the twilight years of the probe's existence, its legacy endures—a beacon of humanity's insatiable quest for knowledge, illuminating the path toward a future where the boundaries of the known universe continue to expand.

Working Together for India's Water Future

Dr. Krishna Kumar vepakomma



India is facing a significant challenge amidst its economic and industrial growth: a water crisis. Despite a population of over 1.4 billion, the country only has access to 4% of the world's fresh water. The water crisis affects people and the environment because of rapid population growth, cities spreading out, unpredictable monsoons caused by climate change, and not managing water well. Groundwater levels are dropping because of too much farming, encouraged by wrong incentives and subsidized electricity. Scarcity of water is a challenge faced by almost every state in India during the summer months, aggravated by insufficient monsoon rains and rising temperatures. It is anticipated that by 2030, the demand for water will exceed the available supply, doubling the pressure on resources. The situation is dire in some areas, such as the Indo-Gangetic basin, where groundwater depletion has passed the tipping point. Redictions indicate critically low groundwater availability in the northwestern region by 2025. The effects of the crisis are far-reaching, impacting sanitation, health, and finances, especially for vulnerable communities such as slum dwellers and low-income households. Despite the looming crisis, water remains affordable in India, benefiting the average person but leading to overuse and poor management in sectors like agriculture and power generation. Additionally, industries dependent on clean water often face challenges in controlling their runoff, resulting in considerable wastage. Furthermore, the lack of regulation has contributed to water pollution, affecting nearly 70% of households in India with contaminated water. To tackle the water crisis, immediate action is needed from multiple fronts. Firstly, subsidies must support water-efficient practices in agriculture. Promoting less water-intensive crops is crucial for conservation efforts. Additionally, improving water management and wastewater treatment systems is essential for sustainability. Cultivating a culture of water conservation through awareness and community engagement is vital, making water-saving habits a part of daily life for everyone. Examples like Bangalore highlight the importance of sustainable water management and community engagement. Effective measures are crucial for securing a sustainable water future for both Bangalore and India. Addressing issues such as mismanagement, climate change, and technology gaps is essential. Poor management depletes surface water sources, while excessive pumping drains groundwater reserves. Coordinated teamwork, innovation, sustainable practices, and AI integration are vital for ensuring a water-resilient future for India's people and industries.

(Writer is Professor & Principal (Retd.) & Newspaper Columnist.)

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VOTER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Students create a 'rangoli' at the Jallianwala Bagh Martyrs' Memorial to create voter awareness ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Amritsar, Friday, April 12.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Heatwave Concerns

April sees the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing heatwave warnings for isolated regions in Rajasthan as temperatures soar past 45 degrees Celsius. However, India's rising relative humidity poses a significant threat. While recorded temperatures may hover around 30 degrees Celsius, the "feels-like" temperature, determined by relative humidity, often exceeds this. The wet-bulb test, internationally recognized for assessing heat stress, sets a safe limit of 30 degrees Celsius. Surpassing this threshold increases the risk of heatstroke-related fatalities. Despite several regions in India surpassing the wet bulb temperature, the IMD's reliance solely on conventional measures prevents the issuance of heatwave warnings. Urgent reform is necessary for the IMD to incorporate wet bulb temperatures into its testing protocols.

Noopur Baruah, Tezpur

Heat Stroke Alert

Lack of rainfall in April and May raises the risk of heat waves. Heat exhaustion, cramps, and heat stroke are common, with symptoms ranging from excessive sweating to its absence. Heat stroke, the most severe, can push body temperature to dangerous levels, surpassing 103 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit. Without sweating and dehydration, cooling becomes impossible. Immediate measures include drinking ice-cold water, exposure to fans or coolers, and applying ice to the forehead, neck, and armpits. If recovery isn't evident, hospitalization for intravenous fluids and medical intervention is crucial.

Dr. Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Combat Hate

The recent demise of an Indian student in the US underscores the urgency to combat racially motivated crimes. Assurances of safety must be extended to Indian-origin students. Thorough investigations into such incidents are imperative to identify root causes, and strict action should be taken against perpetrators. US Ambassador Eric Garcetti's pledge to ensure safety will lack credibility if such criminal acts persist unchecked. Efforts to curb hate crimes and anti-social behavior are paramount for fostering a secure environment for all.

MK Nair, Raipur

Combat Falsehoods

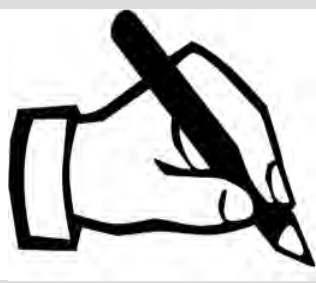
The recent deaths of Indian students in the US have raised alarms over the safety of the Indian diaspora abroad. Despite migrating to countries like the US for educational opportunities, many face racial discrimination and hate crimes. It's crucial to confront the negative narratives targeting the Indian community in the West, which fuel such racially motivated assaults. Regrettably, existing American laws often inadequately safeguard the interests of the victims and their families. Urgent action is needed to dispel falsehoods and ensure the protection of all individuals regardless of their origin.

Nawal Verma, Raipur

Initiative to maintain balance between inflation and development



SATISH SINGH



Due to no significant decline in the level of inflation, on April 5, the Reserve Bank of India kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 percent in the monetary review and did not make any change in other policy rates. With this decision of the central bank, the current pace of development is likely to remain intact and due to this, along with the announcement of the results of the monetary review, a slight increase was also seen in the stock market. The Reserve Bank has not made any change in the key policy rates for the seventh time. The central bank last raised the repo rate to 6.5 percent in February 2023. There has also been a history of not increasing the repo rate for a long time. During the economic recession of 2008, the repo rate remained at 6.5 percent for 10 months. Even during the debt crisis of 2013, the repo rate remained unchanged at 7.85 percent for 8 months. Then, in 2020, even during the Corona period, the repo rate remained at 4 percent for 25 months. The Reserve Bank tries to fight inflation by increasing the repo rate. When the repo rate is high, banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a higher rate, due to which banks also give loans to customers at a higher rate. By doing this, the liquidity of money in the economy decreases and due to lack of money in the pockets of the people, the demand for goods reduces and owing to the

high price of goods and products, their sale declines, on account to which a waning in inflation is recorded. Similarly, when there is a slowdown in the economy, an attempt is made to increase the liquidity of money in the market to accelerate the developmental work and for this also the repo rate is cut, so that banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a cheaper rate and after getting loans at an inexpensive rate, the bank also gives loans to the customers at a lower rate. The main reason for not changing the repo rate and other policy rates is inflation. The Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation released the latest inflation data based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) on March 12, 2024, according to which retail inflation declined marginally to 5.09 percent in February 2024, which is the lowest level in the last 4 months. Retail inflation was at 5.10 percent in January 2024, while it was at 5.69 percent in December 2023. It is within the tolerance limit set by the Reserve Bank of India, which is 2 percent more or 2 percent less than 4 percent. Despite this, this rate cannot be considered encouraging for rapid growth. Inflation plays an important role in determining one's purchasing power. When inflation increases, the prices of both goods and services upsurge, which reduces the purchasing power of the person and the demand for goods and services de-

creases. Then, their sales decline, their production shrinkages, the company suffers losses, workers are laid off, employment generation falls, etc. As a result, economic activities slow down, and the pace of development is hampered. Inflation rate is still very high in most countries of the world, while the level of inflation has decreased in some countries, the main reason for which is the diminution in the price of crude oil in the international market and the reduction in the obstacles in the way of supply chain. Along with the latest data of World of Statistics, inflation in some countries of the world ranges from 100 percent to 250 percent. Argentina is the most expensive country in the world, where the inflation rate is 254 percent. Lebanon is at second place, while Venezuela is at third place. Pakistan is among the top 10 countries of the world with an inflation rate of 28.3 percent, while the inflation rate in Bangladesh is 9.86 percent. However, inflation is decreasing in developed countries. Inflation rate in England is 4.0 percent, while in USA it is 3.1 percent. Inflation rate is also 3.1 percent in France and this rate is 2.6 percent in Japan. At the same time, Thailand has the lowest inflation rate in the world at minus 1.11 percent, while the inflation rate in China is minus 0.8 percent, which ranks second in the world in terms of low inflation rate. India ranks 17th in the world in terms of low inflation. As per credit rating agency ICRA, the loan growth rate of banks on year-on-year basis was 16.5 percent in December 2023, which is estimated to be 12 to 13 percent in the financial year 2024-25. At the same time, according to Care Edge Rating Agency, the loan growth rate can be 16 percent in the financial year 2023-24, while it can be 14.0 percent or 14.5 percent in the financial year 2024-25. There has been an increase

in revenue collection in the financial year 2024-25 and tax and non-tax revenue collection is expected to increase in the coming months as well. Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has also remained above Rs.1.5 lakh crore continuously for the last 6 months. Therefore, it is believed that during the financial year 2024-25, the government will borrow less, which can reduce the tax burden on the common man and businessmen. In line with the HSBC India PMI data released on April 2, the manufacturing figure has reached the level of 59.1 in March 2024, which is the highest level in the last 16 years i.e., since 2008. It was at the level of 56.9 in the month of February. Due to the rapid increase in production and new orders since October 2020, it has been able to reach the level of 59.1. Not only this, but the manufacturing PMI has also remained above the level of 50 for the 33rd consecutive month. It is noteworthy that a level above 50 is an indicator of expansion in manufacturing activities, while a level below 50 is an indicator of contraction. Inflation has a negative impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, but despite the high lending interest rate for the past few months, loan disbursement is fostering, and the pace of growth is also fast. However, such a situation is still an exception. The HSBC India PMI data reaching the level of 59.1 is an indicator of a boom in economic activities. Inflation in India is a little high despite being within the tolerance limit set by the central bank. Therefore, it is a wise decision by the Reserve Bank of India to keep the repo rate and other policy rates unchanged in the monetary review. This will maintain a balance between inflation and growth rate, due to which the common man will not face much trouble and the pace of development will also remain fast.

Let social justice do the final talking

Sujit De

A memorable incident happened at Metro Railway Kolkata five years ago. There was no trace of Covid at that time and I was only one and half years shy of becoming a senior citizen. I was returning home and was standing before a general seat in a Metro coach not before a seat reserved for the senior citizens. A young man in his twenties stood up vacating his seat and asked me to sit there. I declined the offer saying that I was quite okay. Seeing that he was not in a mood to listen to me, I forcibly pushed him to sit again telling him that I had no problem in standing. But again he stood up. Then he said with all the love in the world, "bolchhi tumi bosu (I am telling you to sit)." In Kolkata Metro Railway coaches, some seats are reserved for

women and a few seats for senior citizens and people with disabilities. But there would have been no need to reserve seats for anyone if all the people were like that young man. The reservation signboards over some seats actually indicate that there are many passengers who do not have enough compassion. The reservation of seats in a train therefore acts as a necessary antidote to inhumanity. Similarly, reservation on the basis of caste indicates that caste hatred, untouchability, and caste favouritism are there in our society. We need caste reservation as an antidote to caste based nepotism. There would be no need for caste reservation when all the people will become as progressive, sane and humane as Noble laureate, Kailash Satyarthi. When he was a fifteen-year-old boy, Kailash Satyarthi made a plan

to organise a community dinner where the food would be cooked and served by the Dalits in a hygienic, neat and clean environment. He invited prominent political leaders and people from upper castes. Interestingly, they gladly accepted the invitation. A newly built park in Vidisha with Gandhi's statue at the centre was chosen as the venue. The ladies who were to cook food had put on brand new clothes and had brought absolutely clean utensils for cooking. The dinner was ready. Everybody had been waiting anxiously for the guests for a long time. But not even a single person or political leader turned up. The food was still fresh but the incident dampened the enthusiasm of Kailash, his friends and the Dalits. The double standard of those people was out in the open. Kailash

clearly understood that the so called leaders who used to speak against the practice of untouchability and discrimination in public gatherings were actually haters of backward castes. Then Kailash and others sat together for the dinner. While having his dinner Kailash burst into tears. One of the women who had cooked the food walked up to him and encouraged him. She said, "You are the bravest person that we have seen in our life. You are eating the food that we have prepared." They thanked the boy for his initiative against the hatred for them. Kailash Satyarthi's failure to organise a community dinner party also uncovered the double standard in our society regarding caste. The situation has remained unchanged. Today caste favouritism can be seen everywhere even in the allocation of PhD guides. It has

been reported that upper-caste teachers have been showing a preference for scholars from their own community. On the other hand, upper-caste research scholars are also preferring higher caste teachers. We need caste reservation in every sphere to minimise the incidents of favouring candidates of one's own caste during the selection process for admission, recruitment and promotion under the guise of merit. Caste reservation is a necessary antidote to caste discrimination. Let social justice do the final talking. A highly intelligent serial killer may have more IQ than Kailash Satyarthi but we do not need the former.

(The views expressed above are the author's own. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Central Chronicle.)

BRIEF

Road shows



Male: In an apparent bid to woo Indian tourists back to the Maldives, a major tourism body here has announced that it will hold road shows across key Indian cities. As the number of Indian tourists to the Maldives continues to decline, the Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO) held discussions with India's High Commissioner here, Munu Mahawar, on enhancing travel and tourism cooperation between the two countries.

Retail sector

New Delhi: Cigarette maker Godfrey Phillips India on Friday said it has decided to exit from its loss-making retail business 24Seven. The board of the company in a meeting held on Friday "decided to exit from carrying out the business operations of its Retail Business Division," said a regulatory update from Godfrey Phillips India. Godfrey Phillips India was operating 150 stores/kiosks of 24Seven as of December 2023. A decision in this regard was taken following a detailed review of the company's retail business division and after due consideration of the stakeholders' feedback, long-term performance, prevailing market conditions of the retail sector and long-term business strategy of the company, it added.

Independent director



Mumbai: Private sector lender RBL Bank announced the appointment of banking industry veteran Murali Ramakrishnan as an independent director on its board. Ramakrishnan, who retired as the managing director and chief executive of South Indian Bank till 2023, has been appointed for four years starting from Thursday, a statement said.

IIP grows to 4-month high of 5.7 pc in Feb

■ **On good mining show**

New Delhi, Apr 12:

India's industrial production growth accelerated to a four-month high of 5.7 per cent in February 2024, mainly due to the good performance of the mining sector, according to official data released on Friday. The factory output growth measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was 6 per cent in February 2023. The previous high of IIP was recorded at 11.9 per cent in October 2023, which slowed to 2.5 per cent in November, 4.2 per cent in December and 4.1 per cent in January 2024. During the April-February period of 2023-24, IIP growth touched 5.9 per cent, up from 5.6 per cent in the year-ago period. India's



Index of Industrial Production grew by 5.7 per cent in February 2024, according to a release by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. As per the latest data, the mining output growth accelerated to 8 per cent in February against 4.8 per cent in the year-ago month. The manufacturing sector's output growth decelerated to 5 per cent in February against 5.9 per cent a year ago. The power generation growth also slowed to 7.5 per cent in February from

8.2 per cent growth in the same month of last year. As per use-base classification, the capital goods segment growth fell to 1.2 per cent in February 2024 compared to 11 per cent in the year-ago period. In February this year, consumer durables output expanded 12.3 per cent. It had contracted by 4.1 per cent in February 2023. Consumer non-durable goods output declined by 3.8 per cent during the month compared to a 12.5 per cent expansion in February 2023.

Kamdhenu Limited delivers robust performance

Mumbai, Apr 12:

Kamdhenu Limited, India's largest manufacturer and seller of branded TMT Bars in retail, is proud to announce that it has witnessed an overwhelming demand for its premium branded TMT bar 'Kamdhenu Nxt' in the past year. Aligning its business strategy to cater to this demand, it has successfully expanded the production capacity of its premium brand 'Kamdhenu Nxt' - the next generation high-end interlock steel TMT bar from 3.5 Lakh MT of premium TMT bars to 5 lakh MT in a year. The channel partner network has also widened to 1350 dealers from 1200 dealers in 2023. In order to augment the growing demand of infra and steel, Kamdhenu Limited plans to

further increase the production capacity of Kamdhenu Nxt TMT bar to 6 Lakh MT by the end of next year. To support this revised capacity, the company will also expand its channel partner network by adding 100 more dealers and distributors. Commenting on the company's growth journey and business plans, Mr. Sunil Agarwal, Director of Kamdhenu Limited said, "We are delighted to see the growing demand for our premium TMT bar, 'Kamdhenu Nxt,' in Chhattisgarh. This surge reflects the market's confidence in the quality and reliability of our products. The expansion of our production capacity and channel partner network demonstrates our commitment towards meeting the growing needs of our customers.

Gold gains Rs 1,050 to breach Rs 73k-mark; silver too hits fresh peak

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Gold and silver prices rallied for the fourth straight session and hit fresh peaks on Friday, with the yellow metal gaining sharply by Rs 1,050 to breach Rs 73,000 per 10 grams level amid bullish global trend. According to HDFC Securities, gold price surged Rs 1,050 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 73,350 per 10 grams in Delhi. It had closed at Rs 72,300 per 10 grams in the previous session. Similarly, silver prices zoomed Rs 1,400 to hit a new record of Rs 86,300 per kg. "Spot gold (24 carats) prices in the Delhi markets are trading at a record high of Rs 73,350 per 10 grams, up by Rs 1,050, taking positive cues from overseas markets,"

Rupee falls 13 paise to close at 83.44 against US dollar

Mumbai, Apr 12: The rupee depreciated 13 paise to close at 83.44 against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by a massive sell-off in domestic equities and a strong greenback against major crosses overseas. Forex traders said elevated crude oil prices also dented investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.36 and touched an intraday low of 83.44 against the greenback. The local unit finally settled at 83.44, registering a loss of 13 paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee closed flat at 83.31 against the US dollar.

Forex markets were closed on Thursday on account of Eid-ul-Fitr. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.51 per cent higher at 105.82.

Adani Group targets 20% share in Indian cement market by FY28

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Gautam Adani-led Adani group, which owns Ambuja Cements and ACC Ltd, is targeting to capture around one-fifth of the Indian cement market by FY28. Adani Cement business will implement its accelerated capex program through internal accruals and the business will continue to "remain debt free," said an investor presentation shared by Ambuja Cements. Besides, Adani Cement also amplifies the pace of capacity expansion and is expected to have an accelerated growth rate of 16 per cent to reach 140 MTPA (million tonnes per annum) by FY2028. "Adani Cement market share targeted to be 20 per cent by FY'28 from current 14 per cent," the Adani group firm said. Presently, Adani Cement is the second leading company in the sector after the



Aditya Birla group firm UltraTech Cements. Ambuja, with its subsidiaries ACC Ltd, has the capacity to produce 77.4 million tonnes of cement annually from 18 integrated cement manufacturing plants and 18 cement grinding units across the country. It had recently acquired Sanghi Industries Ltd. The group has certain enablers for capacity enhancement and it already has land in possession and some are in the advanced stages of acquisition. It has a cumulative 8,000 million metric tonnes of lime-

stone reserve, a major raw material for the cement industry, "in possession at nil to nominal premium," Adani Cements said. Moreover, it has 40 per cent of Fly Ash requirements under the long-term arrangement, which will increase to over 50 per cent by 2028.

Ambuja further stated it has "better enterprise risk management" and 65 per cent of the total cost of cement has synergies with a group or where the Group is the market leader. "Accelerated Growth and Cost Leadership supported by Group Synergies is one of the most important differentiating points for Adani Cement," it said. In addition to that Ambuja continues to remain debt-free with a net worth of Rs 43,000 crore (around USD 5.2 billion), and cash and cash equivalents of Rs 8,591 crore (USD 1.04 billion) as of December 2023.

Markets fall make investors poorer by Rs 2.52 lakh crore

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Investors' wealth on Friday plunged by Rs 2.52 lakh crore as the benchmark Sensex tanked 793.25 points due to heavy selling after a recent record-breaking rally. The 30-share BSE benchmark tanked 793.25 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 74,244.90.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies declined by Rs 2,52,301.16 crore to Rs 3,99,67,051.91 crore (USD 4.79 trillion).

"The market had been building up hope of three rate cuts by the US Fed this fiscal year, but the recent higher inflation reading has mellowed the expectations, which would mean that the wait for rate cut would be longer than

expected. Hence, the sell-off in the Indian markets was a knee-jerk reaction to the rising inflation and fading hopes of a rate cut in the near future," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. A sharp rise in crude oil prices and rupee's downward spiral also dampened the sentiment and contributed to the overall slump. "While the Indian economy is on a firm footing, the spate of negative news, especially from the global front, would at times halt the Indian equities upward march," Tapse said. Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Power Grid, Titan, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India were the major laggards.

Domestic PV sales soar to record high of 42 lakh units in FY24: SIAM

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Passenger vehicle wholesales in India touched a record high of 42,18,746 units in the financial year 2023-24, registering a year-on-year growth of 8.4 per cent on the back of robust demand for utility vehicles, industry body SIAM said on Friday.

As per the latest data issued by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the overall passenger vehicle dispatches stood at 38,90,114 units in fiscal year 2022-23. Two-wheeler sales were up 13.3 per cent last fiscal at 1,79,74,365 units, as compared to 1,58,62,771 units in the financial year 2022-23. Vehicle sales across categories rose by 12.5 per cent to 2,38,53,463 units in the period under review, as against 2,12,04,846 units in



fiscal year 2022-23. Exports, however, saw a drop of 5.5 per cent at 45,00,492 units last fiscal, as compared to 47,61,299 units in FY23. "On the backdrop of a robust economic growth of 7.6 per cent based on conducive policies of the government of India, the Indian automobile industry has posted a satisfactory performance with domestic industry growing by 12.5 per cent during the last financial year," SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal

said. He said the growth was led by the passenger vehicles (PV) segment which almost touched 50 lakh units in overall sales, which included 42 lakh units of domestic sales and 7 lakh units of exports. Within the PV segment, utility vehicles including SUVs grew by 25.8 per cent in FY24 at 25,20,691 units, as against 20,03,718 units in FY23, SIAM said. Aggarwal said the two-wheeler segment continued the recovery path with

a growth of over 13 per cent in domestic sales to almost 1.8 crore units, even though it was still lower than the earlier peak of 2.1 crore units in FY19. However, he said the entry-level categories of both passenger cars and two-wheelers continued to face challenges as the rural economy has not fully recovered. "The domestic commercial vehicle industry had a marginal growth to 97 lakh units and within that, some drop was experienced in light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and small commercial vehicles (SCVs) due to degrowth in the CNG segment," he said. The growth in commercial vehicles was also impacted due to migration to higher tonnage trucks which created higher payload capacity, which is not reflected in the number of units.

Domestic air passenger traffic likely touched 15.4 crore in 2023-24: Report

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Domestic air passenger traffic is likely to have witnessed an annual growth of 13 per cent at around 15.4 crore in 2023-24 and the aviation industry's net loss is expected to have declined to Rs 3,000 to 4,000 crore during the same period, says a report.

Credit rating agency Icra on Friday also said the airlines' ability to raise yields proportionate to their input cost increases will be key to expand their profitability margins while supply chain challenges and engine failure issues pose near term headwinds. For FY24, it said domestic air passenger traffic is estimated at around 154 million, an Year-on-Year (YoY) growth of about 13 per cent. "The domestic air passenger traffic in FY2024, thus, sur-

passed the pre-Covid levels of around 142 million in FY2020. For March 2024, domestic air passenger traffic was estimated at around 135.2 lakh, around 6.9 per cent higher than around 126.4 lakh in February 2024.

Further, it grew by around 4.9 per cent on a YoY basis," Icra said in a report. According to the report, the country's aviation industry is expected to report a significantly lower net loss of Rs 30-40 billion in FY2024 and FY2025 over Rs 170-175 billion in FY2023.

In this context, the industry refers to AIX Connect, Air India, InterGlobe Aviation, Tata SIA Airlines, and SpiceJet. In March, the airlines' capacity deployment was higher by around 2 per cent compared to the year-ago period and about 9 per cent as against February.

For the 11 months ended February 2024, the international passenger traffic for Indian carriers stood at around 270.1 lakh, a YoY growth of around 25 per cent, and higher than the pre-Covid (April-February 2020) levels of around 218.1 lakh by 24 per cent. Nepal has invited businesses from India to invest in the South Asian nation, positioning the country as an attractive investment destination, ahead of the third Nepal Investment Summit scheduled to take place on April 28-29 in Kathmandu.

The rating agency said it has a stable outlook for the aviation industry amid continued recovery in domestic and international air passenger traffic, and relatively stable cost environment and expectations of the trend continuing in FY2025.

Market size of realty sector up 73 pc since 2015 to reach USD 482 bn: CII-Knight Frank

New Delhi, Apr 12:

Indian real estate sector's market size has risen 73 per cent since 2015 to reach USD 482 billion driven by higher economic growth leading to better demand for residential and commercial properties, according to CII-Knight Frank report.

Industry body CII and real estate consultant Knight Frank on Friday released a report 'India Real Estate: A Decade From Now', projecting that the market size is estimated to reach USD 1,487 billion (USD 1.48 trillion) by 2034. Indian real estate market size, which means the value of output generated from residential and commercial segments of construction and services, stood at USD 279 billion in 2015 and has grown to USD 482 billion in 2024. "Supported by a growing

economy, the real estate sector in India has transitioned significantly," the report said. India's real estate sector has forward and backward linkages with about 250 ancillary industries. It is one of the highest employment generators after the agriculture sector, accounting for 18 per cent of the total employment, the consultant noted.

"In terms of output, the market size of India's real estate sector is currently estimated at USD 482 bn contributing 7.3 per cent to the total economic output."

"By 2034, India's real estate sector is expected to expand to USD 1.5 trillion contributing 10.5 per cent to the total economic output," CII-Knight Frank India forecast. The consultant attributed the surge in market size of the real estate sector to growing residential demand, increase in the need

for contemporary office space, expanding hospitality, and retail sector. Gulam Zia, Senior Executive Director, Research, Advisory, Infrastructure, and Valuation, Knight Frank India, said, "In the coming decade, India's economic ascent will be marked by an unprecedented surge, with the real estate sector poised to be a cornerstone of this transformative journey." Fueled by burgeoning wealth, robust consumer spending, infrastructural advancements, entrepreneurial fervor, and strategic initiatives like 'Make in India', Zia said the country stands on the brink of a profound economic evolution. "We anticipate the Indian real estate sector to grow to a USD 1.5 trillion powerhouse by 2034, constituting a remarkable 10.5 per cent of the nation's economic output," Zia said.

Retail inflation declines to 5-month low of 4.85 pc in March



New Delhi, Apr 12:

Retail inflation declined to a five-month low of 4.85 per cent in March mainly due to cooling food prices, according to official data released on Friday. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 5.09 per cent in February and 5.66 per cent in March 2023. Previously CPI-based inflation was the lowest at 4.87 per cent in October 2023. The inflation in the food basket was at 8.52 per cent in March, down from 8.66 per cent in February, according to the

data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The government has tasked the Reserve Bank to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. According to the Reserve Bank, which factors in consumer inflation while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy, food price uncertainties continue to weigh on the inflation trajectory going forward. The central bank has projected retail inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal assuming a normal monsoon. Continuing geopolitical tensions also pose an upside risk to commodity prices and supply chains. The RBI projected inflation at 4.9 per cent in the April-June quarter and at 3.8 per cent for the September quarter.

Sensex, Nifty tank 1 pc after record-breaking rally as US inflation data play spoilsport

Mumbai, Apr 12:

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty plunged by 1 per cent on Friday as investors booked profits after a recent record-breaking rally amid weak trends from Asian markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 793.25 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 74,244.90 with 27 of its components in the red. During the day, it dropped 848.84 points or 1.13 per cent to 74,189.31. The NSE Nifty declined 234.40 points or 1.03 per cent to close at 22,519.40 with 45 of its constituents ending lower. From the Sensex basket, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Power Grid, Titan, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of



India were the major laggards. Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services and Nestle were the gainers. In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in the positive territory while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading in the positive zone. Wall Street ended mostly with gains on Thursday. "US inflation

soared by 0.4% MoM, surpassing expectations and triggering a spike in US Treasury yields. Investors are questioning the feasibility of the US Fed's anticipated three rate cuts this year, leading to underperformance in EMS. Meanwhile, European markets excelled as the ECB maintained policy rates but hinted at a potential rate cut soon.

Patients struggle with doctor shortage in Civil Hospital

- Pregnant women bear brunt of health facility shortage
- Female doctor absence deepens healthcare woes

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 12: The sole government civil hospital in the district is grappling with a severe shortage of medical staff, exacerbating the plight of patients seeking treatment.

As the sweltering summer months loom, the hospital witnesses a surge in patient influx from remote villages. However, the limited number of doctors, dwindling further to only three, poses significant challenges for patient care.

Moreover, exacerbating the situation, a considerable number of doctors, nurses, and dresser staff have either been transferred last year or this

year, or are currently pursuing further studies. These ongoing staff changes have significantly strained the hospital's capacity to provide adequate care, leading to unnecessary suffering among patients.

Lack of female doctors in Civil Hospital

In the absence of a designated female doctor at the civil hospital, women seeking medical assistance face significant challenges. The vacancy in this critical position arose due to Dr. Preeti Vaishnav's relocation to Dhamtari for diploma studies, with no replacement appointed since.

As a result, women with serious illnesses have no choice but to seek treatment in distant towns like Rajnandgaon or Raipur. Although Dr. Rupali Singh is currently stationed at the Civil Hospital, her presence remains largely unknown to city residents and many department employees.



employees.

The reluctance of higher officials to address this issue further compounds the healthcare crisis. Approximately 21 months ago, Dr. Rupali Singh was appointed to the hospital, initially tasked with serving in the OPD to address the shortage of female doctors.

However, her duties were redirected to the Haat Bazaar Clinic Scheme, initiated by the Chhattisgarh Government to provide healthcare in remote areas. Despite this, the Health

Department's neglect of the scheme has resulted in a lack of clarity regarding Dr. Rupali Singh's current duty station.

Healthcare crisis deepens trauma

In the absence of a female doctor at the district's sole civil hospital, victims of sexual violence are forced to seek medical legal certificates (MLCs) elsewhere, adding further distress to their ordeal. With no female doctor available, victims must travel to Bazaar Ataria, Markamatola, or

Jalbandha for MLCs, exacerbating the challenges faced by already traumatized women, girls, and minors.

The failure to address this issue tarnishes the reputation of the district administration and the District Medical Department, highlighting the urgent need for action to address the shortage of female doctors and ensure the acceptance of Dr. Rupali Singh's appointment.

There are no female doctors in Civil Hospital Khairagarh, information about which has been informed to the government. In case of sexual violence, a doctor is called from another place to conduct MLC. As far as Dr. Rupali Singh is concerned, she is working under the Chief Minister Haat Bazaar Clinic Scheme.

— Dr. Ganesh Das Vaishnav, District Medical and Health Officer, KCG

Voter awareness campaign flourishes in remote areas

SVEEP initiative engages diverse community groups

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Apr 12: Led by Collector and District Election Officer Ajit Vasant, Korba gears up for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 with a robust SVEEP voter awareness program.

Through an array of engaging activities such as street plays, rally slogans, essay competitions, speeches, mehndi contests, and poster making, 100% of the electorate is being reached, spanning students, youth, seniors, and residents of both urban and rural areas.

Today marked another milestone as wall writing initiatives unfolded across remote villages, including Simkeda, Amaldaha, Katkona, Gurma Bela, Taraimardih, Kanaki, Ghinara, and Dhondhatari.

Women from self-help groups like Bihan took up the mantle, adorning village walls with messages urging fellow citizens to exercise their right to vote on May 7. They passionately



ly emphasized the pivotal role of voting in shaping democracy and encouraged voters to stay informed and engaged.

Meanwhile, the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) members and Janpad Panchayat employees of Podi Uprora organized a spirited rally, inspiring the community to participate in the electoral process. In Jhabar and Beltikari villages,

women's groups initiated wall writing campaigns, further amplifying voter awareness efforts.

The momentum extended to youth groups, with scout guides disseminating information through concise posters, while villages like Doomarkachhar witnessed the administration administering voting oaths, reinforcing the collective commitment to democratic participation.

Joyous Eid celebrations held in Rajim

- Muslim community extends Eid wishes to all

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Apr 12: The vibrant city of Rajim resonated with the joyous celebrations of Eid as Muslim families came together to mark the end of Ramadan with fervour and unity. Throughout the holy month, children diligently observed fasts, embodying the spirit of sacrifice and devotion.

Under the guidance of Hafiz Qari Maulana Sarwar Alam Sahab, Taraweeh prayers echoed through the mosque, drawing enthusiastic participation from the Rajim Jamaat. The anticipation of Eid ul Fitr



reached its peak as families eagerly awaited the sighting of the Eid moon, exchanging warm wishes and greetings with loved ones.

On the auspicious day, Eid prayers were held at the Rajim Mosque, uniting the community in prayer and reflection. Despite the rain

dampening plans for prayers at Idgah, spirits remained high as Muslim brothers embraced each other with heartfelt hugs and shared blessings.

Leading figures like Muslim Jamaat President Mohammad Shabbir Bhai, along with Syed Navis Ali

and other esteemed members, joined in prayers for the nation's peace and prosperity. In a beautiful display of communal harmony, Eid greetings were extended to Hindu brothers, fostering bonds of friendship and goodwill across the community.

Sacred ritual illuminates Sheetala Temple with devotion

Central Chronicle News

Anwari, Apr 12: In a celebration resonating with devotion and community spirit, the beloved Goddess Maa Bhagwati Sheetala temple in Supela village witnessed the establishment of 57 Manokamna Jyoti Kalash on the auspicious occasion of Chaitra Navratri.

Guided by unwavering faith, devotees and villagers came together to honor the goddess, adorning the temple premises with Jawara of faith and Jyoti Kalash. The symbolic act symbolized their collective prayers and aspirations.

The Village Development



Committee, led by Chairman Mulchand Sahu and supported by Secretary Dwarka Pradhan and Treasurer Digvijay Singh, played a pivotal role in organizing the event.

Alongside, patrons like

Krishna Dayal Sahu, Sonu Ram Dewangan, and Baiga Buddhadev Sahu of the Sheetala Temple, together with village members Doman Lal and Vishnu Ram Sahu, contributed significantly to the spiritual

festivities. Amidst the chanting of hymns and the fragrance of incense, the sacred flame of devotion illuminated the temple, serving as a beacon of hope and unity for the entire village community.

Joyous celebrations mark Chetichand Mahotsav

- Colorful rally spreads festival cheer

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 12: The vibrant Sindh community rejoiced in festivities as they celebrated the birth anniversary of Lord Jhulelal during the Chetichand Mahotsav. Festivities kicked off with a spirited rally through the city streets at noon, with community members joyfully singing and dancing to DJ beats, spreading greetings and the essence of the Chetichand Mahotsav. As evening descended, the fervor escalated as men and women of the Sindh community paraded through the city in a grand procession honoring Lord Jhulelal. Beginning from the Sindh Dharamshala Jhulelal Dham, the



procession, accompanied by traditional folk dances and devotional songs, paid homage to Jhulelal Sajji, seeking blessings for happiness and prosperity. Amidst the Shobha Yatra, the city resonated with the melodious tunes of Dandiya and songs praising Lord Jhulelal, as devotees immersed themselves in fervent devotion. The Sindh community extended the tradition of generosity by distributing Prasad consisting of Tahiri sweet rice, chickpeas, boiled

salted gram, and sherbet to residents, fostering unity and goodwill among people of all communities and religions. The festival ambiance was further enhanced by the warm reception of tableaux at various locations and the enthusiastic participation of rally attendees. The Chetichand festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from men, women, and children of the Sindh community, exemplifying their deep-rooted devotion and festive spirit.

Allegations surface against MNREGA branch's official

Central Chronicle News

Arang, Apr 12: Recent reports have brought to light a series of complaints against Anil Chandrakar, the Public Officer (PO) of the MNREGA branch, sparking public outcry and concern. Chandrasah Sahu, the former President of the Block Congress Committee and General Secretary of the District Congress Committee Raipur Rural, has raised serious allegations against the PO regarding irregularities in various developmental projects.

Sahu's statement highlights an incident from the year 2023, wherein the Sarpanch undertook the deepening work of an old pond under MNREGA. Utilizing heavy machinery such as Hiwa and JCB for

Murom excavation, concerns were raised by villagers regarding the quality and propriety of the work. Despite lodging a complaint with the Public Officer (PO) overseeing MNREGA projects, no action has been taken against the Sarpanch, leaving the community disheartened and seeking accountability.

Sahu further elaborated on another instance concerning the construction of a WBM road by the Sarpanch, stretching from Kosamkhunta to Charoda Bat road, with a budget of Rs 20 lakh. However, villagers raised concerns over the quality and progress of the work. Initial observations revealed that after merely one or two days, mud was applied to the road surface, followed by

the use of a roller without the necessary addition of water. Despite complaints lodged with the CEO, it wasn't until the intervention of the CEO sending Sub-Divisional Officers (SDO) and Rural Engineers (RES) for inspection that the validity of the villagers' grievances was confirmed.

Shockingly, even after 40-50 days since the project's completion, essential details such as the work details board were not displayed at the site. Moreover, neither the engineer nor the PO deemed it necessary to visit the location during or after the project's execution. Notably, the absence of contact information for the Lokpal on any citizen information board of MNREGA

further compounded the challenge of lodging complaints against the engineer and the PO.

Sahu brought attention to another troubling aspect of the situation, concerning Bady construction work approved under MNREGA in 2021-22. Shockingly, despite approval, the project was abruptly halted in the following year, 2023, after just two weeks of labour. But now, PM residence is being allotted on the same land by the Sarpanch by taking money from the villagers.

More than 50 concerned villagers have taken a stand, signing a letter urging the CEO to resume the halted Bady construction work. Additionally, it has been revealed that Sarpanch Ramesh

Sahu is unlawfully occupying village grasslands and is constructing his personal residence on a 2-acre plot.

Despite repeated written complaints to the CEO, District Panchayat Arang, and the Public Officer (PO), no action has been taken, leaving villagers frustrated and incensed. Consequently, they have resolved to escalate the matter by lodging complaints against the CEO and PO with higher authorities, including the District Collector, Commissioner, and SDM office. If appropriate measures are not taken promptly, villagers are contemplating staging a Janpad encirclement to demand accountability and transparency in governance practices.

Sanitation crisis plagues passenger train commuters

- Dirt and disrepair grip train facilities

Central Chronicle News

Dalli-Rajhara, Apr 12: Antagarh to Raipur local passenger train commuters are grappling with a dire sanitation crisis that has persisted unabated for the past four months. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's relentless Swachhta Mission campaign, the cleanliness standards in Dalli-Rajhara railway station and its corresponding train service have plummeted drastically. Passenger coaches are engulfed in layers of dust, mud, and filth, with toi-

lets rendered unusable due to water supply shortages, resulting in clogged and unsanitary conditions. Despite the nationwide emphasis on cleanliness, the apparent neglect of cleaning duties has left passengers disillusioned and frustrated.

Amidst mounting anger, passengers lament the unprecedented levels of filth, highlighting the stark contrast between the government's cleanliness initiatives and the dismal reality experienced onboard the Antagarh to Dalli-Rajhara train route.

Despite assurances from the Raipur Railway Board regarding regular cleaning operations, the ground reality paints a

starkly different picture, with the sanitation system grinding to a halt.

Passenger discontent grows

Passengers express dismay over inadequate cleaning efforts, highlighting that cleaning measures were undertaken for only two days recently, merely as a facade of progress. The deteriorating cleanliness standards have instilled reluctance among passengers to utilize train toilets, given the perva-



sive filth.

Despite paying full fare, passengers lament the lack of essential facilities, emphasizing the urgent need for clean toilets and coaches to alleviate their plight. Continuous water shortages further exacerbate their discomfort.

Railway station employees attribute the issue to the shortage of Cleaning and Maintenance of Way (CMW) staff, resulting in infrequent cleaning schedules,

leaving trains uncleaned for extended periods. When DRM Raipur was called, he said that he is in inspection and will talk later.

Cleaning orders ignored

Despite directives from Senior DCM for daily cleaning, passengers endure the consequences of higher officials' negligence. Superficial cleaning efforts, lasting only two days, fail to address the persistent issues, leaving passengers, including numerous women and children, distressed by chaos and filth. Complaints to the Railway Department yield no action, revealing the arbitrary behaviour of higher-level officials.

MPs neglect public concerns

Despite being appointed as a member of the Railway Advisory Committee, the MP representative of Kanker Lok Sabha constituency, residing in Gunderdehi, displays a blatant disregard for public welfare. Their inaction contradicts the Swachh Bharat Mission advocated by the Prime Minister, especially as elections approach. Such indifference insults common citizens and may reflect in the upcoming election results.

Cleaning system will be started soon in Dalli-Rajhara passenger train. (Senior DCM Railway Raipur)

Rajasthan Royals need better execution of plans against Punjab Kings



Mullanpur, Apr 12 (PTI):

A disappointed Rajasthan Royals will have to focus on better execution of their strategies for a swift turnaround when they face a highly inconsistent yet capable Punjab Kings in their Indian Premier League match here on Saturday.

The Royals had an excellent chance to register their fifth win on the trot and consolidate their totem pole position, but Rashid Khan's daring assault helped Gujarat Titans snatch a last-ball

victory on Wednesday. It might have come as a rude shock for the Royals at Fort Jaipur, and as such, they would want to treat it as an aberration and dish out a more refined outing against the Punjab side.

But it also highlighted some muddled thinking. The Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan outfit lost to the Titans because of the below-par effort from Kuldeep Sen (19th over) and Avesh Khan (20th over) at a vital passage, when they conceded 35 runs across 12 balls.

Here, the Royals made a slight tactical error by not letting Trent Boult complete his quota in that match as the veteran left-arm pacer ended the match at 2-0-8-0.

There is no gainsaying that Boult could have made a change in the script, but Samson leaving that option unused was a tad perplexing.

Of course, Boult has been largely used with the new ball in this iteration of the IPL, but in crunch situations nothing counts more than experience. So, the Royals will be

looking for an improvement in the strategising and execution part against the Kings.

The Shikhar Dhawan-captained side has blown hot and cold so far in the tournament, winning two and losing three out of five matches.

The primary reason for their middling run this year is the patchy form of their fancied batsmen as Punjab relied on cameos by uncapped Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma to boost their batting.

Opener Jonny Bairstow (5 matches, 81 runs) and middle-order batter Jitesh Sharma (5 matches, 77 runs) are the most underwhelming of the lot, and it has robbed them of momentum upfront and in the business end of their innings.

Sam Curran has been above average with the ball, taking six wickets from five matches but the England all-rounder's needle has fallen behind from the halfway mark with the bat, despite scoring a 63.

Tsitsipas advances to Monte Carlo Masters semifinals



Monaco, Apr 12 (AP): Two-time champion Stefanos Tsitsipas eased into the Monte Carlo Masters semifinals on Friday with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Karen Khachanov. The 12th-ranked Greek player dropped only five points on his first serve and hit 20 winners.

He will next face either Jannik Sinner or Holger Rune for a spot in the final at the clay-court event. Tsitsipas won back-to-back titles at the Country Club in 2021 and 2022. Top-ranked Novak Djokovic takes on Alex De Minaur and Ugo Humbert faces Casper Ruud in Friday's other.

Candidates Chess

Gukesh loses to Alireza; Praggnanandhaa holds Caruana

Toronto, Apr 12 (PTI):

Grandmaster D Gukesh slipped from the joint top spot after suffering his first defeat, at the hands of Frenchman Firouza Alireza, but teen prodigy R Praggnanandhaa played out an easy draw with American Fabiano Caruana in the seventh round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

Following the loss, the 17-year-old Gukesh was down to the joint second spot on four points along with Caruana and Praggnanandhaa.

Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi regained his slender half-point lead inching to 4.5 points out of a possible seven at the half-way stage following a draw with American Hikaru Nakamura.

After a draw with Nijat Abasov, Vidit Gujrathi took his tally to 3.5 points to share the fifth spot with Nakamura while Alireza pulled himself up a little on 2.5 points to take the seventh spot.



Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa during Round 7 match against Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana at the FIDE Candidates 2024 chess tournament, in Toronto, Canada, Friday, April 12.

Abasov with two points is still in the last place. In the women's section, R Vaishali seemed to have run out of steam as she suffered her third loss in the event. Tingjie Lei of China proved too good for the Indian on a day when the other three games ended in draws.

Zhongyi Tan of China remained half a point ahead of the pack after drawing with closest rival Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia. Kateryna Lagno, Russia, played out

a draw with Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria and in the other game of the day, Anna Muzychuk signed peace with India's Koneru Humpy.

The Indian challenge in the women's section might already have ended as Zhongyi stood firmly ahead on five points while Goryachkina had 4.5 points in her kitty. Lagno and Lei shared the third spot on four points each and Salimova, on three, was occupying the sole fifth position.

There is no ego in T20 format, it's important to bowl slower balls: Bumrah

Mumbai, Apr 12 (PTI):

While working relentlessly on his variations to stay ahead of batsmen, Jasprit Bumrah is ready to sacrifice his ego of a pacer and is willing to explore options such as slower balls to avoid being a "one-trick pony".

Bumrah claimed five wickets for 21 runs to lead Mumbai Indians' seven-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday, and now occupies joint top spot in bowling chart with Yuzvendra Chahal (10 wickets).

He mixed up his fiery yorkers perfectly with sharp bouncers as he got the wickets of star batters Virat Kohli and Faf du Plessis among others.

"You don't always have to bowl a yorker, sometimes you bowl a yorker, sometimes a short ball. There is no ego in this format. You can bowl 145kmph, but sometimes it is important to bowl slower balls," Bumrah said after the match on



Thursday. In a contest where his fellow pacers erred consistently, Bumrah's accuracy stood out at the Wankhede Stadium.

"In this format it is very harsh for the bowlers. I try to not be a one-trick pony. I have worked on this early in the career," said the 30-year-old in the post-match presentation.

"People start to line you up. I want to have different skills. Bowling is tough, because you will have to take a beating."

He said preparation is important before every match and he did his homework before the match against RCB.

"When things have not worked out for me, the next day, I have seen the videos and analyzed what did not work. Preparation is always the key. Important to keep pushing yourself before a game. I am very happy with the outcome. I will never say I wanted to take a five-for. The wicket was sticky and I am very happy with the contribution."

Rohit Sharma sets eyes on playing in upcoming 50-over WC, WTC final

New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI):

With the hurt of India's defeats to Australia in the WTC and the World Cup finals still burning his mind, skipper Rohit Sharma nourishes the dream of playing in those tournaments' upcoming editions in 2025 and 2027.

The 36-year-old Rohit was part of India's 2007 T20 World Cup victory, but he counts the 50-over showpiece as the real stuff.

"I am playing well at the moment and I am thinking of continuing for a few more years. I really want to win that World Cup. The 50-over World Cup is the actual World Cup. We have grown up watching the 50-over World Cup."

"There is the World Test Championship final happening at Lord's in 2025. Hopefully, we will make it there," Rohit said in a YouTube chat show - Breakfast With Champions - that was also attended by British pop singer Ed Sheeran.

Six months have passed



since India succumbed to Australia in the World Cup final at Ahmedabad, but Rohit found it tough to come to terms with that defeat. "It was happening in India."

"We played well until that final. When we won the semis, I thought, we were just one step away from it (victory). I thought, what's that one thing that can make us lose that final, and honestly, nothing came to my mind," he said.

World's second-fastest 10K woman to make Bengaluru debut

Bengaluru:

Emmaculate Anyango Achol, the world's second-fastest 10K woman runner, will headline the 16th edition of TCS World 10K Bengaluru, scheduled for April 28. The World Athletics Gold Label Road Race is a USD 210,000 prize money event featuring some of the world's most accomplished road and track and field athletes.

And among the star attractions this year is Kenya's Anyango, who clocked an excellent 28:57 in Valencia while finishing behind her teammate Agnes Ngetich, who posted a world record 28:46 there. A silver medalist in the 2019 African junior championships in 3000m, Anyango narrowly missed the Belgarde podium in this year's World cross-country championships. "I am very excited to be in Bengaluru for the first time for this incredible event, which has gained a worldwide reputation for being one of the best 10K races. I have heard so much about the events hosted in India and the running revolution they began nearly two decades ago."

Mary Kom steps down as Paris Olympics Chef-de-Mission

New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI):

Six-time world champion boxer M C Mary Kom on Friday stepped down as India's chef-de-mission for the upcoming Paris Olympics, saying she is "left with no choice" due to some personal reasons.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha announced that Mary Kom had asked to be relieved from her position in a letter addressed to her.

"I consider it an honour to serve my country in every way possible, and I was mentally prepared for it. However, I regret that I will not be able to uphold the prestigious responsibility and would like to resign, owing to personal reasons," the 41-year-old stated in a letter to Usha.

"It is embarrassing to retreat from a commitment, which I seldom do, but I am left with no choice. I am there to cheer on my country and the athletes competing in this Olympic Games, with great expectations," she added.

The IOA had announced her appointment on March 21.



The celebrated boxer, who is also a bronze-medallist from the 2012 London Olympics, was to be the logistical in-charge of the country's contingent at the July 26-August 11 Games.

"We are sad that Olympic medal winning boxer and Chairperson of the IOA Athletes Commission Mary Kom has stepped down citing personal reasons. We respect her decision and her privacy," Usha said in a statement.

"I shall make the appropriate consultations and soon make an announcement about the replacement for Mary Kom." Usha said she had a conversation with Mary Kom after receiving her letter.

Vinesh accuses WFI chief of trying to end her Olympic dream

New Delhi, Apr 12 (PTI):

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday accused the WFI of trying to stop her from competing in the Olympic Qualifiers by creating logistical hurdles for her support staff, a charge vehemently denied by the federation which claimed that she applied after the deadline to send entries had expired.

The 29-year-old Phogat, who won 53kg bronze medals in the 2019 and 2022 World Championships besides a gold in the 2018 Asian



Games (in 50kg), also said she is fearful of being trapped in a doping case.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) said Phogat's request mail (for accreditation of her coach and

physio) came on March 18 but by then it had already sent the entries of the players, coaches and medical staff to the world governing body UWW as the registration deadline was

March 11. A WFI official said the federation sent the entries around March 15 after UWW relaxed the deadline a bit on its request because the trials were completed only on the last day of the deadline.

Phogat is eyeing an Olympic quota in the 50kg category in the Asian qualifying tournament next week in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

At the selection trials in Patiala, she had also competed in the 53kg category after the authorities allowed her but lost in the semifinals.

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It's in my muscle memory: Suryakumar on his audacious shots

Mumbai, Apr 12 (PTI):

The world's number one T20 batter, Suryakumar Yadav attributed the audacious array of shots he played against Royal Challengers Bengaluru to "muscle memory" and constant practice at nets.

Suryakumar dazzled with a 19-ball 52 studded with four sixes and five fours to help Mumbai Indians chase down RCB's 197-run target in just 15.3 overs. "I just try to play the field. I practice these

shots. It is in my muscle memory," Suryakumar said after MI's seven-wicket win in the IPL on Thursday night.

Asked about his favourite shot in the match against RCB, he said, "I think all the shots. The slice over point was my favourite."

Suryakumar was playing in his second match of this IPL after recovering from a sports hernia surgery.

"It is always good to be back in Wankhede. Joining the squad was great. Mentally I

was here, just physically in Bangalore (for recovery at NCA). "Coming at Wankhede, chasing 200, if there is dew it is important to take a chance. We wanted to finish early for the net run rate," said the 33-year-old.

Asked about Jasprit Bumrah's five-wicket haul, Suryakumar said, "It is always good to have Jasprit by your side. It has been 2 to 3 years, have never batted Jasprit in the nets. Either he breaks my bat or my foot."

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