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BRIEF



BRS leader Kavitha leaves the Rouse Avenue Court after being produced by the CBI in the Delhi liquor policy case, in New Delhi, Monday.

IEDs

Latehar: Security forces recovered and defused improvised explosive devices (IEDs) kept in eight cans in a forest in Jharkhand's Latehar district on Monday, police said. The explosives were recovered from the Lohra forest under the jurisdiction of the Barwadih police station during a special operation.

Regret

Kolkata: Amid the controversy surrounding a student's alleged violation of the dress code during the birth anniversary celebration of BR Ambedkar at Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan, the central varsity on Monday issued a statement expressing regret over the incident and assured that such deviations will not occur in future. The incident, which involved a student wearing shirt-trouser attire instead of the prescribed white robes at the function held in Lipika auditorium within the campus, prompted an apology from the officiating vice-chancellor, Sanjoy Kumar Mallik.

Mishap

Phulbani: At least 25 people, including eight women, were injured in separate road accidents in Odisha's Kandhamal district, officials said on Monday. However, there was no report of any death, they said. A bus and a truck collided head-on at Ranipather ghat, about 25 km from here, injuring 20 passengers, the officials said.

Seize

Hyderabad: Law enforcement agencies have seized cash, gold, liquor, and articles meant for distribution as freebies totalling over Rs 126 crore, till April 14 as part of implementing the Model Code of Conduct for the Lok Sabha elections in Telangana, elections officials said on Monday.

Jailed

Thane: A court in Navi Mumbai on Monday convicted eight Bangladeshi women for illegal stay in India and sentenced them to 25 months of rigorous imprisonment (RI). Additional Sessions Judge KR Deshpande at Belapur also imposed a fine of Rs 11,000 each on them. The Bangladeshi women, who worked as labourers, were arrested in December 2022 from Turbhe in Navi Mumbai for staying without valid documents, according to police.

Weather

High 36 Low 25

MARKET

NIFTY 22,272.50

SENSEX 73,399.78

BULLION

GOLD 71,720

SILVER 83,474

PM ON VISION FOR 2047

'No one needs to be scared'

New Delhi, Apr 15:



Prime Minister Narendra Modi dismissed allegations that the Bharatiya Janata Party would try to change the Indian Constitution if it secured more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha, urging Opposition parties to stop fearmongering about the party's agenda.

"When I say that I have big plans, no one should be scared. I don't take decisions to scare or run-over anyone, I take decisions for the wholesome development of the country," PM Modi said during an interview with news agency.

"...The problem lies with them (opposition) - they want to cast the country in the same mold. We worship diversity. We celebrate it," PM added.

He further said that his government has worked in the right direction, but

there is still a lot to be done. "Governments always say that we have done everything. I don't believe we have done everything. I have tried to do everything in the correct direction, but there still a lot to be done. How do I fulfill the dreams of

every family, that is why I say this is a trailer," PM said during the interview.

"I have been working on 2047 for the past two years. And for that, I asked for opinions and suggestions from people across the country. I have taken suggestions from more than

'Everyone will regret'

The scrapping of the electoral bonds - in a landmark decision by the Supreme Court in February - is a decision "everyone will regret when there is honest reflection" and has "completely pushed the country towards black money", Prime Minister Narendra Modi told news agency. Monday. The Prime Minister said the electoral bonds scheme launched by his government was meant to fight the use of 'black money', referring to unaccounted cash or funds from criminal activities, in election campaigns, and that he had "never claimed this was an absolute way" to achieve that goal. Modi also attacked the opposition for spreading "lies" about the bonds and said his government had introduced the scheme to cut down on 'black money' during elections. He countered criticism - that his Bharatiya Janata Party was the largest beneficiary, to the tune of thousands of crores.

officers in every department to work on this. How can it be done for the next term? For 25 years. And then I sat with them and they gave presentations for two to 2.5 hours," the Prime Minister told news agency.

Furthermore, PM Modi also claimed that in the up-coming Lok Sabha elections, voters of the country will have chose between a "failed Congress model" and the BJP model

that had shown its performance in the last 10 years.

"If we look at the 2024 elections, there is an opportunity before the country - there is a model of the Congress govern-

ment and the BJP govern-

ment. In the last 10 years,

the Congress has performed

well and the BJP has per-

formed well," he said.

"I contacted universi-

ties, I contacted different

NGOs and 15-20 lakh peo-

ple gave their inputs. Then

I took the help of AI and

classified it subject-wise. I

made a dedicated team of

EC seizes record Rs 4,650 cr ahead of LS polls

New Delhi, Apr 15:

The Election Commission on Monday said authorities under its supervision have made seizure worth Rs 4,650 crore, including drugs worth Rs 2069 crore, in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections.

Significantly, 45 per cent of the seizures are of drugs (Rs 2,069 crore).

Use of black money, over and above political financing, could disturb the level playing field in favour of more resourceful party or candidate, it noted, adding that the seizures are a critical part of its resolve to hold the Lok Sabha elections free of inducements and electoral malpractices and to ensure a level playing field.

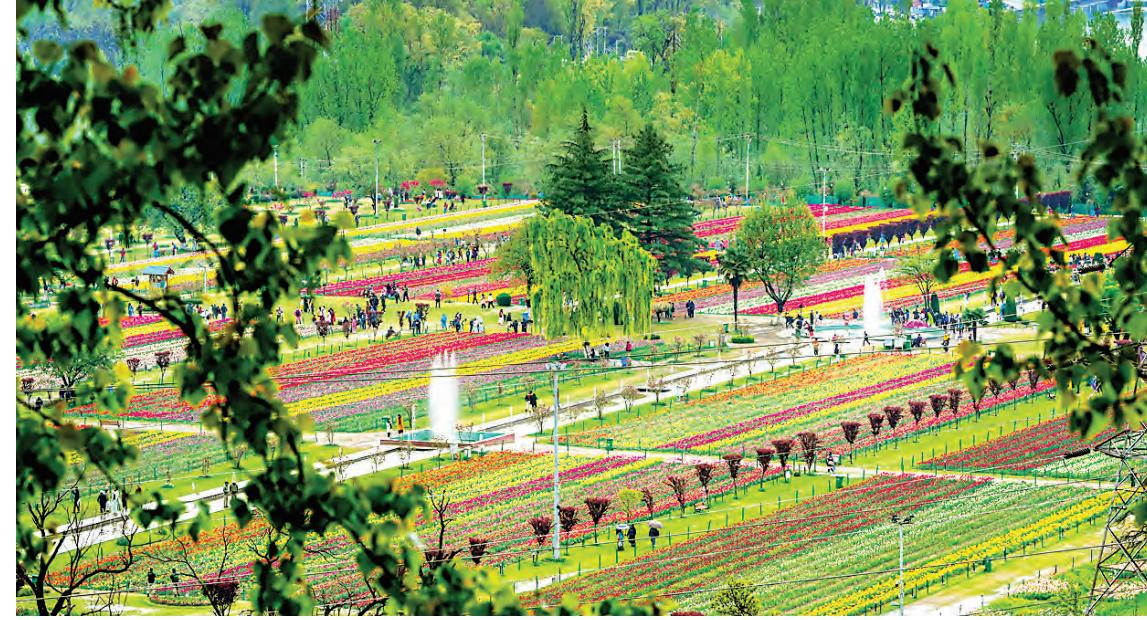
Drug seizures accounted for approximately 75 per cent of the total seizures in January and

March 1. Out of the total recoveries worth Rs 4,658 crore, the cash component stands at over Rs 395 crore, while liquor stands at more than Rs 489 crore. February this year with the poll panel focussing on the menace much before the poll schedule was announced. Over the past few years, significant seizures have been made during elections to state assemblies in Gujarat, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and Mizoram. CEC Rajiv Kumar, while announcing the polls last month, had underlined money power as one of the '4M' challenges, the poll authority recalled. The poll panel pointed out that it has been taking action to ensure level playing field such as checking vehicles of prominent leaders and even removing officials for laxity in carrying out their mandate.

The seven phased Lok Sabha polls were announced on March 16. The first phase is on April 19 and the last one on June 1.

The Commission said authorities have been making seizures worth Rs 100 crore every day since

TOURISTS' PARADISE



Tourists visit Asia's largest Tulip Garden amid rains, in Srinagar, Monday.

RELIEF FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Iran to allow Indian authorities to meet 17 crew members

Of seized cargo vessel

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has said that Tehran will "soon" allow Indian authorities to meet 17 Indian crew members of a cargo vessel that was seized by Iran's military near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday.

Amir-Abdollahian conveyed this to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a telephonic conversation on Sunday, according to an Iranian foreign ministry readout.

In the talks, Jaishankar called for the release of the Indians onboard the Portuguese-flagged cargo vessel MSC Arius.

It said Amir-Abdollahian also ap-

prised details of Iran's "legitimate defence" and punitive measures against the Israeli regime, in a reference to Tehran's missile and drone attacks on the Jewish nation.

The Iranian foreign minister urged the Indian government to maintain its active role through international bodies, including the United Nations Security Council, to halt the war in Gaza as it is at the core of the current crisis in the region, the readout said.

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CLOSE SHAVE

Flight landed with 1-2 mins of holding fuel



File Photo

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

An IndiGo flight from Ayodhya to the national capital was diverted due to bad weather to Chandigarh where it landed with just 1 or 2 minutes of fuel left on Saturday, a Delhi police officer has said even as the airline on Monday asserted that the aircraft had sufficient fuel.

In a post on X, Satish Kumar, who is DCP Crime

with the Delhi Police, said he had a harrowing experience with IndiGo flight 6E 2702 from Ayodhya to Delhi.

He said the flight's scheduled departure time was 3:25 pm and scheduled arrival time was 4:30 pm but at around 4:15 pm, the pilot announced that there was bad weather at the Delhi airport and that the plane had 45 minutes of holding fuel.

"The pilot attempted

landing twice, couldn't due to bad weather and still wasted lot of time deciding the next course of action.

"At 5:30 p.m. (after a lapse of 75 minutes since the Holding fuel announcement) the pilot announced that he'll finally attempt landing at Chandigarh... finally the plane managed to land at 6:10 p.m. at Chandigarh Airport after a lapse of 115 minutes since the 45 minutes holding fuel announcement," Kumar said in the post on Sunday evening.

Kumar also said that he got to know after landing from the crew that there was only 1 or 2 minutes of fuel left.

File Photo

Police nabs notorious woman drug peddler of Nagpur

Four arrested with brown sugar worth Rs 5 lakhs

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: Notorious woman drug peddler of Nagpur, Chanda Thakur and her three accomplices were arrested with Brown sugar worth Rs 5 lakh. She had smuggled brown sugar with two others in a car from Nagpur to Durg. She has been detained several times in Nagpur in narcotics cases.

SP Jitendra Shukla informed that Padmanabhpur Police Station had received a tip off that Chanda Thakur accompanied by her son-in-law Manoj Rahangdale and driver Yasin Shaikh had come to Durg city for delivering brown sugar, a resident



of Green Chowk Durg. Acting on this tip off, a team of Padmanabhpur Police Station swung into action and rounded up the suspects near Central Jail Durg.

On searching the accused, police recovered 235 sachets of brown

sugar and Rs 25000 cash from them. Police also seized four mobile phones and a Fiat Linea car (MH/49/U/0994) from them.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they purchased brown sugar from an anonymous

person near Nagpur (Maharashtra) Railway Station at the rate of Rs 150 per sachet. They brought it to Durg city and were selling it near the Central Jail Durg at the rate of Rs 250 per sachet.

Police arrested Chanda Pradeep Thakur (60) wife of Late Pradeep Thakur, a resident of Shantinagar, Nagpur (Maharashtra); Manoj Rahangdale (36) son of Bisram Rahangdale, a resident of Shantinagar, Nagpur; Yasin Sheikh (36) son of Najeeb Sheikh, a resident of Kalamana, Nagpur; and Prem Thakur (25) son of Vijay Thakur, a resident of Green Chowk, Durg under sections 21(b), 27(a) of NDPS Act.

● **Shri Ram Janmotsava Samiti to celebrate Ram Navami with devotional fervour**

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: Shri Ram Janmotsava Samiti, Bhilai is organizing a grand celebration of Shri Ram Navami for the 39th consecutive year. To ensure public participation in this grand event, the committee conducted a campaign "Ek Mutthi Daan - Shri Ram Ke Naam" and collected more than 100 quintals of food grains as donation from people.

Mahaprasad will be cooked from the collected

100 quintals of grains collected from 'Anna Daan'



grains. State Assembly Speaker Dr Raman Singh will grace the function on April 17 as the chief guest. Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao will preside over.

Committee Patron Prem Prakash Pandey will be the special guest while Bal Yogeshwar Ram Balakdas Mahatyagi of Shri Pateshwar Dham, will deliver the keynote address in the Dharma Sabha.

Youth Wing President Manish Pandey said that Shri Ram Janmotsava Samiti has been organizing this event for the last four decades. Today, it has become the biggest religious and cultural event of Central India.

Preparations for this biggest religious and cultural event of Central India to be held on 17th April are in the final

stages. This year, processions will be taken out from all the 12 blocks through the fixed routes. All these processions will reach Ramlila Maidan Power House.

State General Secretary Budhan Thakur said that attractive tableaux will be the part of the processions and cultural programs will be staged at the venue. The processions from various temples of different directions have been named as Baba Bholenath Shobha Yatra; Bhagwan Chaturbji Shobha Yatra; Maa Bameshwari Shobha Yatra and Maa Danteswari Shobha Yatra. Display of tableaux, Akhara, Panthi Nacha, Raut Nacha, Bhajan Sandhya and Dharma Sabha will be held at Power House.

Pandey said that the Committee was formed with the resolution and dream of Shri Ram Mandir construction at Ayodhya. This dream has been fulfilled on January 22 this year.

Preparations from about 1150 temples would join this mega religious event.

Merchant mill creates new shift records

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Merchant Mill that rolls out TMT bars in different dimensions and grades and light structural steel including angles and channels has made shift records in rolling of TMT 28 mm on two consecutive days.

On Friday, April 12, 2024, Merchant Mill made a shift record by producing 684 Tonnes of TMT 28 mm against the previous best of 648 Tonnes on December 23, 2022. The following day, i.e. on Saturday, April 13, Merchant Mill broke this shift record again with production of 711 Tonnes in TMT 28 mm. Munish Kumar Goyal



CGM (Merchant & Wire Rod Mill) congratulated the Merchant Mill team led by Sushil Kumar Hariraman, GM (MMill),

PKBarua, AGM (MMill) and Deepak Tiwari, AsstManager and their team members for the record production.

BJP candidate Vijay Baghel, Indian National Congress candidate Rajendra Sahu, Independent candidate Harishchandra Sahu and Shakti Sena (Bharat Desh) candidate Savita Banjare filed their nomination papers to the Returning Officer.

Prior to filing nomination, the BJP conducted a public meeting at Manas Bhavan in Durg. Party candidate Vijay Baghel

reached there with a bike rally. Senior leaders addressed the gathering and thereafter, Vijay Baghel accompanied by BJP Durg President Jitendra Verma, BJP Bhilai President Mahesh Verma and others reached the Collectorate to file his nomination.

On the other hand, five people bought nomination papers on Monday. Those who bought the nomination forms are Bhanu Prasad Chaturvedi (Independent), Dr Anju Bain Keme (Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal), Rakesh Kumar Sahu

(Nyaya Dharma Sabha), Bhabali Siwara (Independent) and AH Siddiqui (Ali Hussain Siddiqui) (Independent).

So far 22 people have purchased nomination papers. 5 people have submitted nomination forms till Monday.

BJP, INC and two other candidates file nomination

Central Chronicle News



Maintain strict vigil in the expenditure sensitive assembly constituencies: Pattanashetti

Election Expenditure Observer chairs review meeting

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: Election Expenditure Observer Prasanna V Pattanashetti, appointed by the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for the Lok Sabha elections 2024 for Durg district, chaired a review meeting of officers / employees of Nodal and Excise, Income Tax Department and State Tax Department.

Superintendent of Police Jitendra Shukla (IPS), Additional District Magistrate Arvind Kumar Ekka (IAS), Additional Collector and Deputy District Election Officer Bajrang Dubey, Additional Superintendent of Police Abhishek Jha and Nodal Officer Election Expenditure Monitoring Mahesh Singh Rajput,



Income Tax Officer Ranjani Shrikumar, Assistant Commissioner State Tax GST Jitesh Kumar, District Nodal Officer, Lok Sabha Election Expenditure Monitoring 2024, Joint Director Fund Accounts and Pension (Durg) Diwakar Singh Rathore and other officers were present. Pattanashetti reviewed the work of Expenditure Monitoring Committee, Excise, Income Tax and Police Department officers and gave necessary instructions.

He asked all the Assistant Expenditure Observers of Durg Lok Sabha Constituency to work promptly as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India. He instructed to provide logistics support (vehicle arrangement) to the Auxiliary Expenditure Observers. He directed to keep a special vigil in the expenditure sensitive assembly constituencies including the assembly constituencies 64 - Durg City, 66 - Vaishali Nagar and 67 - Ahiwara. The

Headquarters Assistant Expenditure Observer was instructed to coordinate with the Assistant Expenditure Observers of all the 09 Assembly constituencies of Durg Lok Sabha Constituency and provide integrated information daily in the prescribed format B-14. The Nodal Officer of Lead Bank was asked to provide a daily report regarding daily transactions to the District Election Officer.

He directed the GST team to work in their areas under the GST Act. Similarly, the concerned Assistant Expenditure Observer was directed to deploy an additional VST team in public meetings and rallies in Durg Lok Sabha Constituency and to get videography of the entire program done.

SP Jitendra Shukla informed that considering the IPL season, they have activated the network of informers and are maintaining vigil on the suspects. In this sequel, police received a tip off regarding some youth, who were sitting in a Honda City car at a lonely place near Newai Dam.

They were accepting bets and running the online cricket betting racket through laptop and mobile phones.

Acting on this tip off,

Inspector Anand Shukla and his team reached the spot and rounded up the suspicious car bearing registration number CG 04 ZE 444. Two persons identi-

fied as Lakshdeep and Shivam were found sitting in the car. When questioned, they confessed to using Reddy Anna's app for online betting.

Their four other accomplices identified as Rahul Tamrakar, Hrithik Tamrakar, Niraj Sahu and Purnanand Gaur, were operating the same racket from Rewa (MP). The accused had opened bank accounts with the IDs of in-

nocent people and were using those bank accounts for transactions of cricket betting.

The accused further disclosed that they used to erase the data of betting after settlement. 04 laptops of different companies, 04 mobiles, 14 nos passbook, ATM cards, cheque books, cash Rs 10,000 and hand written betting transactions on blank papers, as well as a Honda

City car used in the incident, have been seized.

The accused Lakshadweep Dahariya (23) son of Shiv Kumar Dahariya a resident of Sector 10, Bhilai and Shivam Singh Tomar (26) son of Balveer Singh Tomar, a resident of Sector 03 Bhilai have been booked under section 419, 420 of the Indian Penal Code and sections 6, 7, and 8 of the Gambling Act.

Employees of SMS-III felicitated with Shiromani Awards

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: Employees of Steel Melting Shop -03 (SMS-III) Department of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant were awarded the 'Pali Shiromani' and 'Karm Shiromani' awards under the 'Shiromani Puraskar Yojana' of Bhilai Steel Plant, for their exemplary work performance. AB Srinivas, GM (SMS-III) was the Chief Guest in the Award ceremony.

Ashok Kumar Choukikar, Dy Mgr (SMS-III), was awarded 'Pali Shiromani' Award, while Dhananjay Kumar Singh, R Pushpaarchana, Punu Das, Om Prakash, Tapas Bauri and Ranjit Shah were awarded the



Chief Guest AB Srinivas appreciated all the employees for their achievements and contributions at the workplace and said that these awards are given not only for outstanding work but also for following Safety

guidelines. Srinivas en-

couraged all the employees of SMS-III to work in the future with the same spirit while adhering to safety.

The Departmental Heads and other Senior Officials including

Hemchand Yadav University declares 04 results of annual examination

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Apr 15: Results of 04 exams related to the annual examination session 2023-24 of Hemchand Yadav University, Durg were declared by the university on Monday.

Giving this information, Deputy Registrar of Examinations of the University, Dr Rajmani Patel said that in the examination results declared, the examination result of MPhil in Clinical Psychology Part 01 and 02 was 100 percent, whereas out of 08 candidates appearing in MPhil in Psychiatric Social Work Part 01, 05 candidates have passed

and the exam result was 63 percent and the exam result of MPhil in Psychiatric Social Work Part 02 was 100 percent.

Dr Patel said that the university is trying to release the results of many examinations by April 25. At present, about 60 percent of the university examinations have been completed. Among these, BCom, BCA exams are important. At present the examinations for BSc, BA and Post Graduate classes are going on.

Most of the postgraduate examinations are ending on April 23. Dr Patel said that more than 15 lakh answer books are to be evaluated in the an-

nual examinations, out of which the evaluation work of about 07 lakh answer books is nearing completion.

Rajmani Patel further informed that the process of filling online application forms for semester examinations has been completed. Online applications with late fees are being accepted till April 22.

The university has issued a notification regarding conducting practical examinations of semester examinations between April 28 to May 11. The time table for the theory examinations of the semester will be released by the university soon.

Brijmohan files nomination paper for LS elections

• Several Congmen join BJP during rally



Central Chronicle News
Raipur, Apr 15: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Raipur Lok Sabha segment Brijmohan Agrawal on Monday filed his nomination papers for the May 7 elections.

A public rally was taken out during the nomination papers from the party office situated at Ekatma Parishar.

Raipur Parliamentarian Sunil Soni, Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) Ajay Chandrakar, Motilal Sahu as well as former MLAs Devji Patel and Shivratan Sharma also participated in the rally on the occasion.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Deputy Chief Ministers Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma as well as State BJP President Kiran Singh Deo also addressed a public meeting

organized during the nomination rally here.

Speaking on the occasion, the State BJP President Kiran Deo said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a guarantee of development as well as security of nation.

Deputy CM Arun Sao said that the Congress has been misleading people over removing poverty and it is appropriate time for people to teach it lesson by defeating the opposition Congress.

Several Congress leaders including Shanker Sahu, Pradeep Kumar Sai from Janata Congress Chhattisgarh

(J), Vijay Gowli from Ramraj Parivar, Virendra Yadav from Bhojpuri community and several others joined BJP in presence of senior leaders during the nomination rally.

Ministers Ramvichar Netam and Tankram Verma were present during the public meeting.

LS is appropriate time to teach lesson to Congress: Sai

Raipur: Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday said that Chhattisgarh had become a den of crime and corruption during the Congress regime and the Lok Sabha elections is appropriate time to teach lesson to them.

Sai made the above statement while addressing a public gathering organized during the filing of the nomination paper by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Raipur Lok Sabha segment Brijmohan Agrawal here.

Speaking further, he said that new record of victory margin should be created in Raipur segment. He also said that the Lok Sabha election is crucial to make Narendra Modi as Prime Minister for the third time. He said that BJP government has taken prompt steps to deliver the promises it had made to the people before the Legislative Assembly polls and added that the remaining works would also be done as promised to the people.

Raipur district administration gets another trainee IAS

• Anupama Anand joins as Assistant Collector

Raipur, Apr 15: Raipur district administration has got another trainee IAS. Ms. Anupama Anand joined Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh today as Assistant Collector. Ms. Anupama Anand, originally from Alappuzha district, Kerala, is a trainee IAS officer of the year 2023 batch. In her educational journey, she completed engineering degree in Electronics and Communication from APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Collector Dr Gaurav Singh followed the ad-

ministrative tradition by giving a flower bunch to Ms. Anupama Anand. He congratulated Ms. Anupama and extended best wishes to her for embarking on a new path of duty.

Additional temporary stoppage of Shalimar-Kurla Express in Dongargarh

Raipur, Apr 15: Chaitra Navratri mela is being organized in Dongargarh from 09 to 17 April, 2024. Keeping in mind the convenience of the visitors going to this Mela, the railway administration will provide additional temporary stoppage facility of 12102 Shalimar-Kurla Express train which will depart from Dongargarh station at 11.16/11.17 am (one minute) on April 16, 2024.

BJP worked for the poor, youth, women and farmers: Sao

Raipur, Apr 15: Attacking Rahul Gandhi, Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao said that Rahul Gandhi did not have any issue to raise for elections. 'I ask, what efforts has Rahul Gandhi made to solve problems of inflation and unemployment? Just asking questions will do nothing. In 70 years Congress only looted the country', Sao said while talking to the journalists here today,

BJP in its 'Sankalp Patra' promised development and self-reliance of country and bringing change in the lives of the people and emphasis has been laid on the upliftment of women, youth, poor and farmers, Sao said adding that BJP has prepared 'Sankalp Patra' keeping in mind the real issues.

On the statement of INDI Alliance on reservation Sao said that this was an alliance of corrupt people. These people are trying to mislead the countrymen, Sao said. In fact no one can

scrap reservation and change the Constitution of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, he said, adding that people of INDI Alliance have been working to divide and break the country. The people of the country are intelligent and will not fall for the words of these family members, he said.

Sao also hit back at Bhupesh Baghel's statement regarding Mahadev Satta. Under whose protection did Mahadev Satta run in Chhattisgarh? he asked. Baghel himself is an accused in the Mahadev betting case and there are allegations of taking Rs 508 crore, he said, adding that people know everything. Action will be taken against the culprits in the BJP government, he added.

On the action on excise scam, Sao said that the agency was investigating the matter. Whoever is involved will not be spared, he said.

Bhandara organized on Mahavir Jayanti

Raipur, Apr 15: As part of the ongoing programs on the occasion of Lord Mahavir Jayanti, 'Bhandara' (community feast) was organized today at Mahila Samridhi Bazar premises with the help of Walfort family. Thousands of citizens of the area received Prasad. Mahavir Jayanti Utsav Committee Chairman Jitendra Golchha and program coordinator

Suresh Bafna, while giving the above information, said that every year different programs are organized for 15 days before Mahavir Jayanti.

Women's SVEEP Car Rally on April 21 at 4 pm

Raipur, April 15: As per the instructions of District Returning Officer and Collector Dr Gaurav Singh, a car rally has been organized on April 21 under the SVEEP voter awareness program. The above women's SVEEP car rally has been organized from Raipur Shankar Nagar BTI Ground to Science College.

The rally will begin at 4 pm. Attractive prizes will be given for attractive decoration. For this, the participants will have to decorate their cars with attractions and also paste slogans and messages for voter awareness.

First prize will be given in Rs 21,000/-, second prize in Rs 11,000/- and third prize in Rs 51,00/- respectively. Apart from this, ten people will be honored with Rs 21,00/- as consolation prize. Besides, lucky driver, lucky vehicle, lucky vehicle number will also be rewarded.

Two accused surrenders, five other gets 3 weeks relief from SC

• In Ramwatar Jaggi's murder case

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 15: In the Jaggi murder case, only two accused surrendered in the Court on Monday. Though there were discussions that all the 28 accused would surrender, but only two surrendered viz. Vinod Singh and Chiman Singh.

The remaining 26 accused have not surrendered in the e-court. Two accused in the murder of NCP leader Ramwatar Jaggi surrendered before the court of Special Judge Justice Pankaj Kumar Sinha here on Monday.

It is notable here that the Chhattisgarh High Court had rejected the appeal by the 27 accused in the Jaggi's murder case last on April 4. Though five of the accused in this case have got relief from the Supreme Court (SC) and



the Supreme Court has given additional time of 3 weeks to these five accused to surrender.

This includes in-Charge Crime Branch RC Trivedi, the then Moudharpura Thana TI VK Pandey and CSP Kotwali Thana Amrik Singh Gil and Suryakant Tiwari and Mayor Ejaz Dhebar.

There are reports that the Court could issue the arrest warrant against these accused on Monday. After surrendering shooter Chiman Singh and Vinod Singh said that they received the notice and they have surrendered. Both said that they have been made accused based upon the story and they were not

paid any amount for the contract killing. Shooter said that they have family relations with Jaggi's family and added that he is a businessman and this is my first case and there is no crime record against him in entire India and would approach Supreme Court against this decision. Satish Jaggi, S/o Late Ramawtar Jaggi said that they saw the entire Court's proceeding the whole day and the shooter Chiman Singh and his assistant Vinod Singh have surrendered.

Till 5:00 pm the Court will see and then issue the orders. Satish Jaggi said that the accused have been named based upon the charge-sheet presented by the police. On the issue that five persons have got relief for three weeks from the Supreme Court (SC), Satish Jaggi said that no accused would get any relief and this can be termed as just some extra time.



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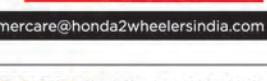
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ED arrests man who 'managed' AAP funds

■ For Goa polls

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested Chanpreet Singh, who allegedly "managed" cash funds for AAP's campaign in 2022 Goa Assembly polls, in connection with the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case, official sources said Monday.

Singh was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on April 12 and was produced before a special court here the next day, the sources said.

He has been sent to the

ED custody till April 18 by the court, they said.

This is the 17th arrest in the case by the ED. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his party colleague and former Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia, BRS leader K Kavitha and a number of liquor businessmen and others have been arrested earlier by the federal agency.

Singh was earlier arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation too in the same case. The money laundering case stems from the CBI FIR.

The ED has informed

the court through its official documents that Chanpreet Singh "managed" cash payments for

the campaign of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) during the 2022 Goa elections and had a "relationship" with the political outfit that rules Delhi currently.

It has been alleged by the agency that the 'South Group' comprising Kavitha, TDP candidate from Ongole Lok Sabha seat Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, his son Raghav Magunta, businessman Sarath Chandra Reddy and others - paid Rs 100 crore bribe to the AAP for obtaining a prime position in the Delhi liquor market as part of the now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.

Out of these alleged kickbacks, the ED has claimed, Rs 45 crore was

used by the AAP to fund its Goa election campaign.

The ED has claimed that cash payments were made to survey workers, area managers, assembly managers and others in Goa who were engaged in election campaign activities of the AAP and these people told the agency that this was "managed" by a person named Chanpreet Singh.

It also said that an employee of an 'Angadia' firm, which allegedly moved cash funds illegally, had "admitted" to disbursing huge amounts of cash in Goa to some people including Singh, who used to work for Chariot Productions Media Pvt Ltd.



Paramilitary jawans during a flag march ahead of the Lok Sabha election, in Bikaner, Monday.

PPA observes opening ceremony of National Fire Service Week - 2024

Paradip, Apr 15:

The Paradip Port Authority (PPA) observed the Opening Ceremony of the National Fire Service Week on 15th of April. The National Fire Service Day is observed every year on 14th of April to pay homage to the brave Firemen and Officers who lost their lives in Bombay Dock Explosion on April 14, 1944 and on subsequent occasions.

A massive Fire Safety Awareness Drive is being conducted w.e.f. 1st April to 20th April this year under the direction of Chairman, Paradip Port Authority so as to educate the Port Workers and stakeholders as well as



local public and school children about Fire Hazard, Fire Prevention and Fire-fighting. The theme for the year 2024 is:

The Opening Ceremony was held at the Main Fire Station of CISF Fire Wing. P.L. Haranadh, IRTS, Chairman PPA was

the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering he stressed on creating fire safety awareness

among stakeholders and congratulated CISF FIRE Wing of PPA for bagging the runners up trophy recently in the Country amongst a total of 114 Fire Wing Units.

At the outset, CISF Commandant Akshat Patel welcomed the invitees and presented the annual report. At the end, Deputy Commandant/Fire Bishnu Swarup presented vote of thanks to all dignitaries and invitees.

The event was conducted by Company Commander Fire Wing Inspector Bhaskar Das and the same was highly appreciated by one and all present on this auspicious occasion.

PPA observes 134th birth anniv of Dr Ambedkar

Paradip, Apr 15:

Every year 14th April is celebrated as the birthday of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar whose contribution towards our nation knows no bounds. His immense

No discussion towards the Indian constitution has earned him the title of 'Father of Indian Constitution'. Besides, his birth anniversary is celebrated as Remembrance Day or Ambedkar Jayanti.

On the eve of 134th birth anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar, Paradip Port Authority (PPA) celebrated the legacy of Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R.



Ambedkar as the PPA fraternity led by P.L. Haranadh, Chairman offered floral tributes at the statue of Dr Ambedkar in the morning. They remembered how his pioneering vision laid the foundation for a progressive and inclusive republic.

Among others, U.R. Mohan Raju, secretary, G.Edison TM, H.S. Rout, Chief Engineer, D.N.Sondhi, FA&CAO of Paradip Port Authority alongwith employees and office bearers of SC & ST Association were present and participated in the programme.

'I've always wanted the love of an elder sister'

Mumbai, Apr 15:

Striking a chord with homemakers across India, COLORS' 'Mangal Lakshmi' has become a household favorite in no time. The show beautifully illustrates the journey of two sisters as they navigate their lives and strive to earn respect for each other in their relationships. According to the storyline, Mangal (portrayed by Deepika Singh) is depicted as supporting her sister Lakshmi (played by Sanika Amit) wholeheartedly.

She takes care of Lakshmi as if she were her child and endeavors to find a groom who will cherish and respect her, something Mangal herself didn't experience in her



marriage. Sanika reveals that the bond between herself and Deepika mirrors that of Mangal and Lakshmi. She shares her learnings gained from Deepika's experience in acting and recounts instances where Deepika has assisted her during certain shoot scenes. She sometimes brings home-cooked food and makes me feel homely on the sets.

Sanika Amit, portraying the role of Lakshmi

in COLORS' 'Mangal Lakshmi,' shares, 'I've always been the elder sister at home, this show gives me a chance to be the younger one! Through COLORS' 'Mangal Lakshmi,' the desire is being fulfilled in ways I never imagined possible.'

Working with Deepika Singh (my Mangal didi) is amazing. Also, it's fun to shoot with Kartik, Adit and Jia. This show is more than just entertainment; it's an emotion for me. Not just a sisterly bond but also the detective side of me that I get to explore in the show is fun! and the same is visible through our on-screen performances. I hope viewers keep showering their love as they have been doing so far for the show.'

She

also

said

she

CEO District Panchayat, SP chair peace committee meeting

In view of upcoming festivals and LS Polls 2024

Dhamtari, Apr 15:

In view of the Lok Sabha elections 2024 and the upcoming festivals, a meeting of the Peace Committee was called in the Collectorate Hall here which was chaired by CEO District Panchayat Ms. Roma Srivastava and Superintendent of Police Anjaneya Varshney. The CEO addressing the meet said that some restrictions have been imposed due to the Model Code of Conduct under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 and the festivals should be celebrated while following the model code of conduct.

Superintendent of Police Anjaneya Varshney, while appealing to organize the Rammavmi festival in a harmonious environment, said that due to the model code of conduct, loudspeakers and display of weapons will also be banned under the Arms



Act in the rally to be organized on Rammavmi. He appealed to the officials of various societies present that the festivals should be

organized in such a way that the religious sentiments of any religion, caste or community are not hurt.

Various community heads present in the Peace Committee meeting suggested that it would be appropriate to change the route to improve the traffic system on the day of Ram Navami, along with commercial vehicles should be prohibited from entering the city at the time of the Yatra. The Superintendent of Police asked the community leaders present to appoint volunteers in the rallies coming out from various villages, localities, squares and intersections, who can coordinate with the police and district administration.

School buses jointly inspected by traffic and Transport Dept.



Dhamtari, Apr 15:

School buses of the region were jointly inspected by Traffic and Transport department, as per the instructions of District Collector Namrata Gandhi and Superintendent of Police Anjaneya Varshney. A total of more than 30 buses of Model School of Dhamtari, Sarvodaya School, Vidya Kunj and KPS School of Kurud, SSI School were inspected by the team. During the checking, according to the guidelines of the Honorable Supreme Court,

the emergency door, first aid box, fire extinguisher, GPS tracker, CCTV camera, speed governor etc. were carefully inspected and health checkup of the drivers and operators was done. During the health check-up, the drivers who were suffering from high blood pressure and poor eyesight were directed to present themselves at the district hospital for treatment. The drivers were told about security arrangements and various other norms to be followed for up keeping the security check.

Assembly level conference of BJP Vyapari Cell concludes



Kurud, Apr 15:

An assembly level conference of BJP Vyapari Cell concluded here in the region, with many traders' business units and eminent citizens taking part. Key speaker Kedarnath Gupta, BJP spokesperson, former state convener Vyapari cell, Ashu

Chandravanshi, BJP assembly in-charge, BJP assembly convenor Bhanu Chandrakar and guidance of Vyapari heads, appealed to make Roopkumari Choudhary victorious in the coming elections. Many traders and businessmen were present who received strong guidance under the

chief hospitality of Kedarnath Gupta, BJP state spokesperson and former state convenor of the BJP's Vyapari cell. It is very important for Narendra Modi to become the Prime Minister again with the support of all of us to transform the country, Gupta said addressing the meet clarifying that a

unique leadership leads to a secure and developed economy. Assembly Convener Bhanu Chandrakar said that businessmen had played an important role in making Modi the Prime Minister in 2014, this time also all the businessmen of the Kurud Assembly should vote for Roopkumari Choudhary from Mahasamund Lok Sabha.

BJP District Vice President Jyoti Chandrakar, Shyam Sahu, Bhimdev Sahu, Malakram Sahu, Anil Chandrakar, Chhatrapal Bais, Mohan Aggarwal, Ramswaroop Sahu, Kuleshwar Chandrakar, Krishnakant Sahu and hundreds of workers of the Economic and Trade Cell participated.

Seeking change, slain Salwa Judum leader's son enters LS poll fray

Raipur, Apr 15 (PTI):

He was just 19 when Naxalites killed his father, a former Salwa Judum leader. Defying the odds, he studied MBBS in Kyrgyzstan. Now, this man from a sleepy village in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Bijapur district has entered the fray for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Meet Prakash Kumar Gota, an independent candidate from Scheduled Tribe reserved Bastar Lok Sabha seat.

Though the polls in Bastar are primarily a contest between the BJP and Congress, Gota claims he holds sway over tribal youths in the region.

Talking to PTI, Gota said tribals constitute 32 per cent of the state's population, yet somehow, they

have

not been able to reap the benefits of development works and schemes.

"The two leading parties have always disappointed the people of Bastar, which is why I decided to enter the poll battle to bring real change in the region," he said.

The 32-year-old member of the Muria tribe hails from Farsegarh village in Bijapur and is currently staying in a rented house in Jagdalpur, the headquarters of Bastar district, due to elections.

His father, Chinna Ram Gota, an active leader of Salwa Judum, an anti-Maoist civil militia disbanded in 2011, was shot dead by Naxalites at his farm in Kukrel village, around 2 km away from Farsegarh in 2012.

Maoists also killed his father's older brother in a

similar attack in 2013.

Gota said his father had worked with late Congress leader Mahendra Karma, popularly called 'Bastar tiger' for his tough stand against Naxalites during the Salwa Judum movement.

Karma was killed in the Jhiram valley Naxalite attack during the Congress's Parivartan Yatra in 2013.

"I was a first-year student at a nursing college when my father was murdered. I had to quit my studies midway as my family's financial condition was not good. I have four brothers and two sisters. I am the second eldest. My mother is a housewife," Gota said.

Gota worked as a subcontractor for construction works in the area and tendu leaf collection, and this helped him fund his

medical studies in Kyrgyzstan.

"In 2016, I went to Kyrgyzstan for MBBS. I tried unsuccessfully to avail an education loan. The struggle continued as I had to return home during the COVID-19 pandemic due to my family's financial condition," he said.

Voting machines sent to Sukma district

In the presence of observers and returning officer

- Machines of Narayanpur assembly constituency were brought to the strong room with security

Jagdalpur, Apr 15:

As part of the preparations for the Lok Sabha elections, some polling stations of Chitrakote Assembly and Jagdalpur Assembly constituency of Bastar district are located in Sukma district. Dispatch of voting machines and reserve machines for those polling stations was done from the strong room of Dharampura Model College in the presence of General Observer J Ganesh, Police Observer Ram Kishun and Collector and District Election Officer Vijay Dayaram K. The representatives of political

parties were also present on this occasion. On the instructions of the officials, the numbers of EVM, VVPAT and ballot units were tallied and kept safe in boxes. As per the instructions of the Commission, all the machines were sealed and sent to Sukma under tight

security. Similarly, for the polling stations coming in Bastar district of Narayanpur assembly constituency, when the machines arrived with security from Narayanpur district, they were kept in the strong room in the room marked for Narayanpur assembly constituency. On this occasion, Deputy District Election Officer Praveen Verma, Senior Treasury Officer Sanjay Sonwani, Assistant Returning Officer Bharat Kaushik, Subrata Pradhan, Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar and treasury officers and employees were present.

Unique enthusiasm of faith in Navratri



Khairagarh, Apr 15:

In a rare display of devotion to the Goddess on Chaitra Navratri, a minor girl of Udaipur of the district has lit a Manokamana Jyoti Kalash on her chest, while lying on a bed of nails, for nine auspicious days of the festival. As per information, the twelve year old, Dileshwari Sahu is lying on a throne made of 1480 nails with a flame lit on her chest, which she says, she undertook after the Goddess herself in a dream told her to do so. While her entire family is engaged in devotion to the Mother Goddess, elders and devotees from far and wide including the village are flocking to see the rare sight of devotion. The child is sustaining on two spoons of Dubi juice, taken in the evening hours to her survival and faith alike.

must go to vote on 26th April, which the parents will oblige by replying for their consent to vote.

Approximately 800 children of Rajim city, participating in this campaign, wrote letters to their parents promising to cast their vote, which is an example in itself not only in Gariaband district but for the entire Chhattisgarh state, setting a unique record.

Nodal and Cluster Principal Sanjay Ekka has informed that in the next phase, there is a plan to take out a motorcycle rally of teachers of all the schools of the city and voter awareness slogans will be raised at every intersection.

launched to increase the voting percentage in the city.

In this campaign, including all the government schools of Rajim

Nagar as well as all 5 private schools, children from class 1st to 12th were encouraged to write letters in the name of their parents that they

Preparations for elections accelerate with SDM's meeting



Balrampur, Apr 15:

As the countdown to the Lok Sabha elections continues, Collector and District Election Officer Remijius Ekka's directives for meticulous preparation have spurred action across all administrative levels.

Sub-Divisional Officer Revenue Ramanujganj, in compliance with the Collector's instructions, convened a

crucial meeting at the Government Boys Higher Secondary School Ramanujganj to oversee preparations for the impending voting day on May 7.

Gathering key stakeholders including cluster coordinators and head readers from the education department, the SDM underscored the paramount importance of integrity and efficiency in

discharging election duties. Emphasizing the need for meticulous coordination, the SDM urged all attendees to approach their responsibilities with utmost honesty and sincerity.

During the meeting, detailed discussions ensued regarding various facets of the electoral process, including arrangements for postal ballots and home voting. The SDM also conducted a comprehensive review of all polling stations in the area, ensuring that essential facilities are in place to facilitate smooth voting procedures.

Furthermore, the SDM issued directives to maintain cleanliness at all polling stations, emphasizing collaborative efforts with Gram Panchayat Secretaries to uphold hygiene standards.



Takeshwar Patel

Gota again worked as a subcontractor and managed to resume his medical studies in Kyrgyzstan and returned to India in June 2023 after completing his MBBS.

He has, however, not appeared for the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE) conducted by the National Board of Examination for eligibility to practice medicine in India.

"Another tragedy struck my family in August last year when Naxalites abducted my older brother Mahesh Kumar, who was the chief of the publicity wing of the BJP's Bijapur district unit," he said.

Mahesh was later traced to a forest and admitted to a hospital in a critical condition. He has been in a coma ever since,

he said. Asked why he did not join the BJP like his brother, Gota said he did not want to be in politics and wanted to take up a job.

"There is a provision for a safe settlement and a government job under a rehabilitation scheme for victims of Maoist violence, but we did not get any of this. After all this, I was disappointed with the BJP and Congress," he said.

Over the years, Bastar has become a Maoist stronghold due to large-scale poverty, illiteracy, and lack of health facilities and amenities, Gota said.

"My father contributed to the fight to free the region from the Naxalite menace, and I wanted to address all these issues to bring a change in Bastar,"

he said, citing why he wanted to contest the elections.

However, Gota's decision to enter the fray was sudden.

"When candidates had already started filing nominations for the first phase of the polls, my friends and social workers encouraged me to throw my hat in the ring," he said.

People have been voluntarily contributing to and providing vehicles for Gota's campaign.

"I cannot spend money in electioneering like big parties. I have some savings that have come in handy," he said.

Gota exuded confidence about securing the support of the youth in the region. "BJP nominee Mahesh Kashyap is a communal person and does not take all religions together, while the Congress's candidate Kawasi Lakhma is inactive. Both parties have ignored their dedicated workers and leaders while giving tickets," he said.

Eleven Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh will go to polls in three phases on April 19, April 26 and May 7, and the counting of votes will take place on June 4.

Bastar will be the only seat to go to polls in the first phase.

The ruling BJP has fielded Kashyap, a fresh face who had been an active member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and the Congress has given the ticket to Lakhma, an MLA who has served as a minister in the previous Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government.

EU releases blocked funds of \$6.7 billion to Poland

● As part of its post-pandemic recovery package

Warsaw, Apr 15 (AP):

The European Union disbursed 6.3 billion euros (about \$6.7 billion) to Poland as a part of the 27-nation bloc's post-pandemic recovery fund, the biggest single transfer ever to the country, a government minister said Monday.

Poland's former national conservative government, voted out of power in October, made changes to the judiciary which the EU said violated demo-

cratic checks and balances, and so decided to block the money.

The European Commission had said at the time Poland must meet certain "milestones" to guarantee the independence of the judiciary to get the funds. Brussels emphasized that an independent judiciary is vital to respecting the EU's democratic norms, while some also argue that independent courts boost investors' confidence in the country's ability to adjudicate commercial disputes.

Katarzyna Pelczynska-Nalecz, Poland's minister of funds and regional policy, hailed the move while stressing that the value of

EU membership goes beyond money.

"Being in the EU pays off, but the EU is not only about money, which our predecessors forgot," she tweeted. "We are united by values: democracy, equal opportunities, rule of law, civil liberties!"

Poland's pro-European coalition of three center-left parties led by current Prime Minister Donald Tusk won parliamentary elections and took over in December. It succeeded the nationalist Law and Justice party that had ruled for eight years and introduced changes to the justice system, reproductive rights and the media as part of a post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan.

Poland's former national conservative government, voted out of power in October, made changes to the judiciary which the EU said violated demo-

Iran President Raisi set to visit Pakistan on April 22 amidst Middle East tensions: Report

Islamabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

Amidst spiralling tensions in the Middle East, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is set to visit Pakistan on April 22 and hold meetings with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and the military leadership, according to a media report on Monday.

The 63-year-old leader's

expected visit will take place days after Tehran launched more than 300

drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation to an alleged Israeli airstrike on its Damascus consulate in Syria that killed several

people, including two senior commanders of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Geo News reported.

The visit also assumes significance as it comes amidst ongoing efforts by

Pakistan and Iran to deepen their cooperation which received a tempo-

rary setback earlier this year. In January, Pakistan, in retaliation to Iran's cross-border strikes, carried out precision strikes using killer drones and rockets to target terrorists inside Iranian territory, the report said.

Two bases of the Sunni Baloch militant group 'Jaish al-Adl' in Pakistan's unruly Balochistan province were targeted by missiles and drones, Iranian state media reported. Jaish al-Adl, or the "Army of Justice", is a Baloch Sunni militant group founded in 2012 that largely operates in Pakistan.

Pakistan had even withdrawn its ambassador from Iran and announced that it would not allow the Iranian envoy, who was visiting his home country at that time, to return as a gesture of protest against the breach of its sovereignty by Iran, Geo News reported.

In another development, Iran announced on Monday that they would release Pakistanis stranded on a ship seized by the Iranian forces, after confirmation of their nationalities and completing legal formalities due to brotherly ties between the two countries, the report said.

However, the diplomatic ties were soon restored with the ambassadors of the two countries returning to their respective posts.

The sources, as per the report, said the agenda of President Raisi's visit includes bilateral ties, security cooperation, a gas pipeline and a potential Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The Iranian president's visit also holds significance as the two countries share key economic interests, most notably the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, the report said.

Slater's case was mentioned at the Magistrates Court in Queensland on Monday. The report did not identify the alleged victim.

Former Australia cricketer Michael Slater remanded in police custody

● For assault and stalking

Brisbane, Apr 15 (PTI):

Former Australia cricketer and commentator Michael Slater has been remanded in police custody after being charged with offences including common assault and stalking.

According to the Guardian, the 54-year-old Slater has been charged with more than a dozen offences including unlawful stalking or intimidation, common assault, breaking into a dwelling with intent at night, assault occasioning bodily harm and choking or suffocation.

Slater's case was mentioned at the Magistrates Court in Queensland on Monday. The report did not identify the alleged victim.

He is facing a total of 19 charges on the alleged offences at the Sunshine Coast on various dates between December 5 last year and April 12.

The local police confirmed arresting a 54-year-old man from Noosa Heads at the Sunshine coast last Friday after alleged domestic violence incidents 'over several days'.

Slater was also charged with breaching bail and 10 counts of 'contravening a domestic violence order'.

Police confirmed they arrested a 54-year-old Noosa Heads man at a Sunshine Coast address on Friday following alleged domestic violence incidents over several days. The former right-handed Australian opener played 74 Tests and 42 ODIs between 1993 and 2003.

ACTRESS MARY MINA



Actress Mary Mina, playing a priestess, carries the flame during the final dress rehearsal of the flame lighting ceremony for the Paris Olympics, at the Ancient Olympia site, Greece, Monday, April 15, 2024.

Germany's Scholz calls for fair competition

● Warns against dumping during China visit

Beijing, Apr 15 (AP):

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for fair competition in trade relations with China while warning about dumping and overproduction as he spoke to students in Shanghai on Monday.

Scholz is visiting China against the background of looming EU tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles and other trade-related tensions. The two countries are also split over how to handle Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"The one thing that must always be clear is that competition must be fair," Scholz told students at Tongji University in Shanghai, according to

German news agency dpa.

"Of course we would like our companies to have no restrictions, but conversely we behave exactly how we are demanding here," he said, adding there must be no dumping or overproduction.

The European Union is mulling tariffs to protect its producers against cheaper Chinese electrical vehicle imports, which some fear will flood the European market.

The head of Germany's auto industry association, the VDA, expressed opposition to such tariffs ahead of Scholz's visit. Hildegard Müller told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper in comments published Saturday the tariffs would not help the European and German auto industries and instead "could quickly have a negative effect in a trade conflict."

"Current business with China secures a large

number of jobs here in Germany," Müller said.

Scholz made comparisons to reservations years ago when Japanese and Korean automakers entered the German market.

"There was great agitation in the newspapers:

Now the Japanese cars will come and clean up" — nonsense, he told the Tongji University students. He said there are German cars in China that were made with Chinese manufacturers,

and at some point there would also be Chinese cars in Germany and Europe.

Scholz began his three-day China trip on Sunday in the industrial hub of Chongqing, where he and his delegation of ministers and business executives visited a partially German-funded company and other sites in the vast city, which is a production base for China's auto and other industries.

A key plank in Britain's plan to send migrants to Rwanda is set to become law

London, Apr 15 (AP):

A key plank in the British government's plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda is expected to become law this week, but opponents plan new legal challenges that could keep deportation flights grounded.

A bill aimed at overcoming a UK Supreme Court block on sending migrants to Rwanda is expected to pass Parliament this week after the government overcomes efforts to water it down in the House of Lords. The Rwanda plan is key to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" bringing unauthorised migrants to the

UK, and Sunak has repeatedly said the long-delayed first flights will take off by June. It has been two years since Britain and Rwanda signed a deal that would see migrants who cross the English Channel in small boats sent to the East African country, where they would remain permanently. The plan has been challenged in the courts, and no one has yet been sent to Rwanda under an agreement that has cost the UK at least 370 million pounds (USD 470 million). In November, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the Rwanda plan was illegal because the nation wasn't a safe destination for asylum-seekers. For decades, human rights

groups and governments have documented alleged repression of dissent by Rwanda's government both inside the country and abroad, as well as serious restrictions on internet freedom, assembly and expression. In response to the ruling, Britain and Rwanda signed a treaty pledging to strengthen protections for migrants. Sunak's government argues the treaty allows it to pass a law declaring Rwanda a safe destination. The Safety of Rwanda Bill pronounces the country safe, making it harder for migrants to challenge deportation and allows the British government to ignore injunctions from the European Court of Human Rights

that forbid removals. Human rights groups, refugee charities, senior Church of England clerics and many legal experts have criticised the legislation. In February a parliamentary rights watchdog said the Rwanda plan is "fundamentally incompatible" with the UK's human rights obligations.

The Safety of Rwanda Bill has been approved by the House of Commons, where Sunak's Conservatives have a majority, only for members of Parliament's unelected upper chamber, the House of Lords, to insert a series of amendments designed to water down the legislation and ensure it complies with international law.

Islamic State-linked attackers kill at least 11 people

● Torch vehicles in eastern Congo

Kinshasa (Congo), Apr 15 (AP):

Extremist-linked rebels attacked villages in eastern Congo over the weekend, killing at least 11 people, torching vehicles and taking possessions, a local official said. The attacks occurred Saturday and were reported by the local mayor on Sunday.

Allied Democratic Forces rebels with ties to the Islamic State group have long operated in the border area near Uganda. The United Nations said

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS



Russian soldiers participate in a military exercise somewhere in Russian-controlled Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine.

Man arrested after a stabbing at a church service in Sydney

● Police say no lives are in danger

Sydney, Apr 15 (AP):

Police in Australia say a man has been arrested after a bishop and three churchgoers were stabbed in Sydney. There are no life-threatening injuries.

It occurred during a televised service at the church on Monday evening, police said. The Orthodox Assyrian church streams services online.

A video on social media shows a man dressed in black approaching a cleric at the altar identified as the bishop at Christ the Good

Shepherd in suburban Wakely and appearing to stab him repeatedly in the head and upper body.

Members of the congregation are seen screaming and rushing to the bishop's aid. The church website identified the bishop as Mar Mari Emmanuel. NSW Ambulance service said it had treated a man in his 50s for multiple cuts and taken him to a hospital, and three others were treated for one or more cuts at the scene. A large police response is underway and the public is urged to avoid the area, police said. Australians are still in shock after a lone assailant stabbed six people to death in a busy Sydney shop-

ping mall on Saturday and injured more than a dozen others. Christ the Good Shepherd had been preparing for Palm Sunday later this month. The bishop was featured in national news last year. A video posted in May 2023 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation about a campaign targeting the LGBTQ+ community showed the bishop in a sermon saying that "when a man calls himself a woman, he is neither a man nor a woman, you are not a human, then you are an it. Now, since you are an it, I will not address you as a human anymore because it is not my choosing, it your choosing."

Russian soldiers

earlier this month that almost 200 people have been killed there this year.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Tender No. TRD-BSP-226-24-25 Date 09/04/2024
Work: Replacement including monitoring and control of PSI assets at TSS(TRD) in BSP-JSG section.
Tender Value: Rs. 77,97,541.03/-
EMD: Rs. 1,56,000.00/-, Tender Document Cost: 5,000.00/- Submission of Tender: upto 15.00 hrs. on 30/04/2024.
For further details/purchase of Tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above works, please contact Office of the Sr.DEE/TRD/SEC/R/Bilaspur or refer/download Tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in
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f South East Central Railway @secrel

CENTRAL Chronicle

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Iran-Israel Conflict

Brink of Larger Confrontation

The escalation between Iran and Israel underscores the precarious situation in the Middle East, with potentially far-reaching consequences for global stability. Iran's missile and drone attack on Israel, following earlier hostilities, signals a dangerous escalation of tensions in the region. The aftermath of these events requires careful diplomatic maneuvering to prevent further violence and instability. Iran's actions cannot be viewed in isolation. The April 1 bombing of the Iranian consulate in Damascus by Israel, resulting in casualties including a top Iranian general, inflamed tensions further. Tehran's vow of retaliation was fulfilled with the recent attack on Israel, demonstrating its capacity to strike deep into Israeli territory. In response, Israel claims to have intercepted the majority of incoming missiles and drones, minimizing damage and casualties. However, the risk of further retaliation remains high, with both sides engaged in a dangerous tit-for-tat escalation. The international community, particularly key allies of Israel and Iran, must play a pivotal role in de-escalating tensions. The United States, alongside European nations such as the UK and France, has reaffirmed its commitment to Israel's security. However, this commitment must be balanced with efforts to prevent further conflict. It is imperative that diplomatic channels remain open, with a concerted effort to engage in dialogue and mediation. The United Nations, as a neutral arbiter, has a crucial role to play in facilitating discussions between the parties involved. India, with its longstanding relationships with both Iran and Israel, can also contribute to peace efforts in the region. Urging restraint and prioritizing the safety of its nationals caught in the crossfire should be a paramount concern for Indian authorities. The recent events serve as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace in the Middle East. The disproportionate use of force by both sides has already resulted in civilian casualties and humanitarian crises. Further escalation risks destabilizing the entire region, with potentially catastrophic consequences. Ultimately, the pursuit of peace must outweigh any short-term geopolitical interests. The international community must unite in its commitment to resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, ensuring that the specter of war does not engulf the Middle East and beyond.

Voter-ID versus NRC-CAA

Sujit De

I was a student of class VII when my father was posted to another place. I had mixed feelings about going to a new place. There was the excitement that I would get a chance to explore a new place, a new environment along with the sadness of leaving an area that had become a part of myself. My father took me to a nearby school in our new locality and got me admitted there. But I was bullied on the first day in my new school. It was my first encounter with ragging as well as with the game of othering. Initially, some students behaved as though I were an enemy from outer space. Was it just fun or a ritual to welcome a fresher? If it was so, then where was its origin? The paranoia for anyone outside one's herd might be its origin. Be that as it may, fortunately for me, the school administration and teachers did not treat me in a different way; rather they accepted me as their own. This helped the hostile environment change into a friendly and cordial one within a few days. What would have happened, had my class teacher after calling my roll number asked me to enrol my name again as a student in my school! In that case, instead of the change that the situation underwent from hostile to friendly, it would have become unbearable. Then, I would have faced more ragging with renewed vigour in the hands of some heartless students. Plus, it would cause tremendous harassment for me and my parents. But should any teacher ask such a question to a student when his roll number had already been recorded in the attendance register? It was the school authorities who had recorded the name of the student in the attendance register. Therefore, asking such a question actually means the authorities do not have faith in themselves.

The same question arises regarding the non-acceptance of a voter-ID as a sufficient document for citizenship. Given the Members of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha are directly elected by voters, it is akin to putting a big question mark behind all of them. Should a government ask some voters to prove whether they are citizens of a country or not after being elected by the votes including the votes of those voters? How could a government challenge the way it had been elected while completing its term of five years? Moreover, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) has gone against the secular character of the Constitution by removing one particular religion from the selection process. Two back-to-back incidents that happened last month brought back my memory of the first day in my new school. Sujit Dutta (my namesake) and Esan Singh were found dead at Ichamati in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district on March 27 hours after an organisation took out a protest against the CAA. It appears that the CAA has increased the divide between tribal and non-tribal people of Meghalaya. Debashish Sengupta (37), a resident of Kolkata, was found hanging from the ceiling fan on March 20. His father, Tapas Sengupta said, "Since the notification of the CAA, my son has been suffering from tremendous mental trauma and agony and was also in acute fear psychosis for not having all the required documents as shown in the social media and as prescribed in the said notification." The Centre should pay heed to the apprehension someone has expressed in a newspaper after Debashish Sengupta took his own life. "The moment I formally apply for Indian citizenship, it will be an acknowledgment that I am not an Indian citizen. That is a huge risk." Anything that can increase the divide between different communities and create fear psychosis in the minds of the voters of our country should be avoided. It could spell disaster in our country which has achieved unity by accepting its rich diversity.

CHAITI CHHATH FESTIVAL

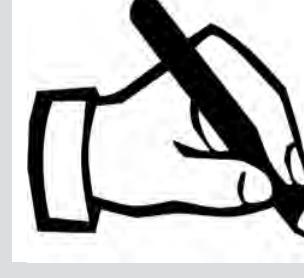


Devotees perform rituals on the last day of 'Chaiti Chhath' festival, on the bank of the Hooghly River in Nadia, Monday morning, April 15.

Mounting Cybercrime in India



SATISH SINGH



An international team of researchers has recently prepared the "World Cyber Crime Index", according to which India ranks 10th in the world in terms of cybercrime. 100 countries have been included in this index. According to this, Russia is at the top in terms of cybercrime, while Ukraine is at second, China, third, America, fourth, Nigeria, fifth, Romania, sixth and North Korea is at seventh. Many types of cybercrimes occur in India. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the incidents of cybercrimes being committed through call forwarding. Telecom companies provide call forwarding facility to the consumers, under which calls, and SMS are forwarded. Consumers use this facility when they are busy in meetings or any important work, so that they do not miss any important call. Consumers get the facility of call forwarding by activating the USSD based call forwarding service on the number. USSD codes are usually used to know the balance or IMEI number of the mobile phone. This is a feature with the help of which services can be started or stopped by dialling a code. Through call forwarding, scammers call consumers and tell them that they are calling from your telecom provider company. We noticed that there is a network problem on your number. To overcome the problem, you have to dial the number "Star 401

Hashtag".

After dialling this number, the consumer is asked to call an unknown number. As soon as the consumer calls, all his calls and messages reach the scammer, including OTPs of bank and credit card transactions. Call and OTP are used by scammers to withdraw money from the consumer's bank account, access social media and get a new SIM issued. To prevent cybercrimes being committed through call forwarding, the government has stopped the service of USSD based call forwarding from 15 April 2024. Therefore, smartphone users are asked to check the settings of their mobile phones and turn off the call forwarding service immediately if they see it running when dialling the "Star 401 Hashtag" number. In the past years, along with digitalization, there has been a sharp increase in cybercrime. Now even Facebook and Instagram have become means of fraud. Such fraud is being perpetrated by creating fake profiles of friends or relatives. For the past few years, people have been searching for answers to all their questions on Google search engine. Keeping such psychology in mind, fraudsters are saving their numbers on the internet in the name of famous payment apps like Google Pay, Phone Pay, Paytm, due to which people automatically fall into the trap of hackers. Now cybercrimes are also being committed through down-

loading of browser extensions.

This work is done through viruses. Mobiles and laptops also get infected through public charger ports. Online transactions done through browsers like Chrome, Mozilla etc. are saved in the server of the browser, which need to be deleted by going to the settings, but due to ignorance people do not do so and cybercriminals get the benefit of this. Therefore, there is a need to be especially careful while using banking digital products like debit and credit cards, ATM, UPI, internet banking, QR codes etc., because carelessness in using them can drain your pockets. Under phishing, by creating a fake website of a big or renowned company or the user's company, whose appearance is like the real website, tempting mails are sent, in which it is said that expensive things will be given for free. With the increase in the popularity of mobile phones, hackers also send offer messages through SMS or WhatsApp, which contain hyperlinks containing malware. It causes damage to the software installed on the computer or mobile or tab, steals the user's financial information like, debit or credit card details, their passwords, OTP, mobile number, address, bank account number, date of birth etc. It can also send fake emails from the user's email account to others without the user's knowledge and through this, along with cheating, sensitive information can also be sold to unwanted people and with its help, someone's social reputation can also be tarnished.

Nowadays, cyber criminals are extorting money from people by calling them as borrowers without taking any loan through phone calls or SMS. Such blackmailing is being done more for small amounts like Rs 2000 to Rs 5000, so that financially weak people do not complain to the police. Loan recovery agents threaten that you have taken a loan from us and if you do not return the money within two-three days, your objectionable pictures will be made

viral or shared with your relatives or colleagues and will be used as evidence. They send morphed photos and videos. Whether the user is educated or illiterate, today everyone is becoming a victim of cybercrime. Neither the people of urban areas nor the people of rural areas can escape from cybercrimes. Administrative officials, bank officials, judges, MLAs, MPs, ministers, police all are becoming victims of this. Bank's digital products have become a medium for cybercrime. Nevertheless, cybercrimes committed through digital products can be avoided by being alert. If people are wary of suspicious pop-ups during browsing sessions, ensure that the URL contains https://padlock symbol or not, do not share card information on websites or mobile or public laptops or desktops, unknown numbers, or email IDs.

If you immediately delete the attachments and ignore the messages related to online lottery, casino, gaming, shopping, or free download, then you can avoid the trap of phishing mail or suspicious hyper link forwarded through SMS or WhatsApp. Taking loan from mobile app is more dangerous than taking loan from a moneylender. Many times, loan recovery agents not only cheat people of money but also defame them in the society. Moneylenders were largely limited to villages and towns, but today the prevalence of loan recovery agents goes beyond the country and time, because most of the mobiles are made in China and their servers are outside India. For this reason, most of the recovery agents are doing fraud business from China, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, South Africa etc. Therefore, despite filing a complaint with the police, it is not easy to catch the cyber criminals. Caution is the only protection in this matter. Don't be greedy. This is the root of all problems. Do not come under psychological pressure. Do not hesitate to seek police help if you receive threats. Be fearless, only then you can avoid becoming a victim of cybercrime.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wealth Divide: Inequity's Rise

India grapples with stark contrasts: one billion underfed citizens alongside 271 billionaires, the third most worldwide. Over the past decade, elite wealth surged, fostering one of the globe's highest income and wealth inequalities. The top 1% commands 22.6% of national income, with wealth peaking at 40.1%. The World Inequality Lab advocates tax restructuring and robust public investments in health, education, and nutrition. A proposed 2% "super-tax" on the wealthiest could yield substantial revenue. Conversely, hefty loan write-offs for affluent businessmen juxtapose ridiculous subsidies for the poor. Privatization trends overshadow broad public investments in education and health. Addressing this disparity demands a reevaluation of policy priorities towards equitable prosperity.

Sujit De, Kolkata

Saffron Struggle

Unemployment and inflation loom large over Lok Sabha polls. True progress lies in alleviating poverty's grip on the marginalized. The poor suffer most from rising prices. Employment fosters financial freedom, paving the way for a fulfilling life. The ruling party juggles campaign tactics, forming alliances, and promoting welfare schemes. Can they triumph over these hurdles?

MK Nair, Raipur

BJP's electoral destiny

The political landscape in India is in a state of flux, challenging the assumed inevitability of a BJP landslide victory in the upcoming General Election. While the BJP has traditionally relied on identity politics, centered around issues like the Ram Temple, and its array of welfare schemes targeting the impoverished, these strategies may falter in the face of escalating economic turmoil. Mounting unemployment rates and the relentless surge in essential commodity prices have become pressing concerns, potentially eclipsing all other considerations. The BJP's electoral fate in the Lok Sabha elections appears increasingly precarious, as economic distress emerges as a pivotal factor that could decisively shape the outcome of the electoral battle.

Shiv Kumar Mishra, Raipur

Student Safety

The tragic incident claiming six young lives and injuring several others underscores grave negligence from the bus driver, school authorities, district education officials, and traffic police. It's a stark reminder of the imperative to uphold safety protocols. Sadly, governmental action often follows tragedies. Regular safety audits by district officials at schools are essential. Mandatory breathalyzer tests for all bus drivers are necessary steps. Further measures are imperative to safeguard students.

Rakesh Gupta, Korba

Democracy's Cornerstone: Voter is the King



Yash Pal Ralhan

In the bustling heart of democracy, where the fate of nations hangs in the balance, lies the pivotal role of the voter. First phase of voting will be held on April 19 and the canvassing will be up to April 17, 5 pm. These two days are crucial as voters must make important decisions based on the speeches of political leaders regarding whom to vote for. The outcome of this decision will determine the fate of the country, and any erroneous choice could mean waiting for the next five years for a chance to rectify it. The criteria for voting vary from voter to voter.

If no candidate aligns with a voter's preferences, they have the option to choose NOTA (None of the Above), indicating the mood of the electorate. During elections, the issues that drive voters to the polls vary greatly. Some voters may assess candidates based on their track record, others may prioritize daily challenges they face, while others still may be influenced by advice, financial incentives, emotional appeals, caste affiliations, or the economic trajectory of the country.

The unpredictable nature of Indian elections stems from the vast diversity across states, languages, cultures, and identities. This diversity makes it challenging to forecast electoral outcomes precisely. Rare moments of unanimity among voters, such as those witnessed in 1977 and 1984, are noteworthy exceptions rather than the norm. In 1977, amidst the anti-Emergency fervour, the public united to elect a non-Congress government for the first time. Similarly, in 1984, following the tragic assassination of Indira Gandhi, the Congress party capitalized on a wave of sympathy, resulting in a record number of Congress MPs being elected to the Lok Sabha. Recent examples, such as the Punjab Assembly elections, where traditional parties were rejected in favor of AAP, underscore the rarity of such collective unanimity among voters. Achieving such collective consensus requires exceptional leadership, as exem-

plified by figures like Jay Prakash Narayan in 1977. Leadership plays a pivotal role in galvanizing public trust and steering voter sentiment towards a particular direction. However, despite the influence of leadership, electoral outcomes are often multifaceted and influenced by a myriad of factors. The transformation witnessed in the 2014 elections was marked by growing resentment towards the incumbent UPA government, which had faltered on various fronts.

The emergence of Narendra Modi as a charismatic leader, amplified through social media, provided voters with an alternative vision and spurred contemplation about their electoral choices. This highlights the complex interplay between public sentiment, leadership appeal, and prevailing socio-political dynamics in shaping electoral outcomes. Interestingly, electoral patterns often defy regional stereotypes or uniform criteria. Even in landmark elections like 1977, variations in voting patterns between North India and South India were evident. This underscores the nuanced nature of voter decision-making, influenced by a spectrum of factors unique to each region. In Indian politics, the influence of local leaders often transcends party affiliations, with voters backing familiar faces regardless of party changes. For instance, in a Punjab by-election, a Congress leader secured victory on an AAP ticket, only

to contest the next election as a BJP candidate, illustrating voters' pragmatic approach over ideological allegiance.

Despite conventional wisdom linking economic performance to electoral success, the reality is more nuanced. Historical examples, such as P.V. Narasimha Rao's tenure with a GDP growth of 5.2%, ending in electoral defeat, and Rajiv Gandhi's government ousted despite a 5.9% GDP growth due to the Bofors scandal, highlight the lack of a clear correlation between economic indicators and election outcomes. Similarly, governments with low inflation rates have faced defeats, revealing the complexity of voter decision-making. Various regional and national issues further complicate the electoral landscape. From farmer protests in Punjab to demands for Jammu and Kashmir's statehood restoration, agitation in Gujarat over parliamentary statements, and calls for peace in Manipur, each region grapples with distinct concerns. Nationally, debates over the Citizenship Amendment Act, Uniform Civil Code, and the arrest of politicians like Kejriwal in Delhi dominate discourse, indicating diverse voter priorities across states.

Recent surveys suggest unemployment, inflation, and corruption as key concerns, but the impact on election results remains uncertain. Despite the significance of political manifestos, their implementation often falls short.

Amit Shah's admission on a televised interview regarding the 'Rs 15 lakh' promise being an election gimmick underscores this disparity, reflecting a broader disillusionment with political rhetoric. In modern electoral politics, many parties resort to offering freebies as a strategy to attract voters, particularly targeting women. These enticements, such as free electricity, travel, or education, hold significant sway over voter sentiments. However, the exact criteria guiding women's voting decisions remain elusive and difficult to pinpoint accurately. As the Lok Sabha elections unfold, the current government's actions and decisions are under scrutiny by voters. Opposition parties leverage social media platforms to highlight various issues, adding complexity to the electoral discourse. Yet, the true criteria driving voter choices will only become apparent after the election results are announced. In essence, the crux of the matter lies in the uncertainty surrounding the factors influencing women voters and the broader electorate. As the nation stands on the cusp of electoral reckoning, the true essence of democracy shines through: the sovereignty of the voter. In the intricate dance of power and governance, it is the individual citizen who holds the ultimate sway, guiding the ship of state through the turbulent waters of democratic choice.

BRIEF

Warehouse facility



New Delhi: Japanese firm Honda on Monday said it has commenced work for a spare parts warehouse facility in Doddaballapur near Bengaluru, Karnataka. Managed by Honda Cars India, the new facility will support the spare parts operations for all Honda businesses, including Honda Cars India, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, and Honda India Power Products, the company said in a statement. The upcoming facility, which will be operational by the first quarter of FY26, will play an important role in the faster availability of spare parts at Honda dealerships, it added.

Property auction

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi on Monday said it will auction 22 properties of Rose Valley Group of companies on May 20 at a reserve price totalling Rs 8.6 crore in a bid to recover money raised by the firm from the public through illicit schemes. The properties to go under the hammer include flats and office spaces located in West Bengal, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice. The e-auction will be conducted on May 20 between 11 am and 1 pm. The total reserve price of these properties is pegged at Rs 8.6 crore, it added. The markets regulator said it has engaged Quikr Realty to assist it in the sale of the properties.

'Social' outlets



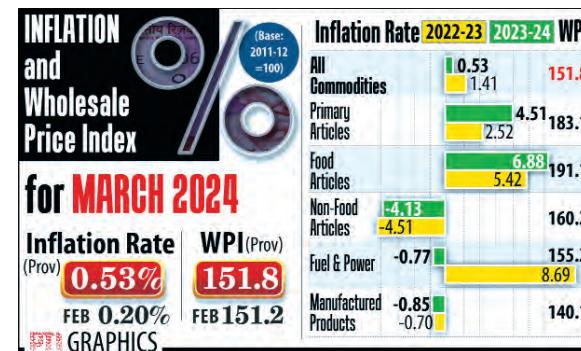
New Delhi: Impresario Entertainment and Hospitality, which operates the restaurant Chain 'Social', is looking to add 10 to 15 new brand outlets annually, especially in tier-2 cities, as part of its expansion plan, said its founder and MD Riyaz Amlani. The company, which also operates restaurant brands like Smoke House Deli and Mocha, remains bullish and optimistic about its growth in India, led by various factors, such as demographic dividend and increasing appetite for premium experiences.

"In the overall food services market, quick service restaurants (QSR) and casual dining restaurants (CDR) are the strongest lever of growth. Our trailblazer brand, Social, sits at the confluence of a cafe and a bar and comes under the CDR category, with immense potential for growth in this segment," Amlani told PTI.

Wholesale inflation hits three-month high of 0.53 pc in March

New Delhi, Apr 15:

Wholesale inflation in the country rose marginally to three-month high of 0.53 per cent in March compared to 0.20 per cent in the preceding month due to increase in prices of vegetables, potato, onion and crude oil. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was in the negative zone from April to October and had turned positive in November at 0.26 per cent. The inflation in March 2023 was 1.41 per cent. "The annual rate of inflation based on all-India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) number is 0.53 per cent (provisional) for the month of March, 2024 (over March, 2023)," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement on Monday. Food inflation moved up marginal-



ly to 6.88 per cent in March from 5.42 per cent in the same month a year ago, data showed. Inflation in vegetables was 19.52 per cent, up from (- 2.39) per cent in the same month a year ago. WPI for potato witnessed a jump of 52.96 per cent against a deflation of 25.59 per cent, while for onion 56.99 per cent as compared to (-) 36.83 per cent in

nessed elevated inflation of 17.2 per cent and 19.5 per cent, respectively in March 2024," India Ratings and Research Senior Director Sunil Kumar Sinha said. However, core inflation continues to be in a deflationary mode with March print at (-) 1.1 per cent.

The data showed that inflation in the crude petroleum segment rose by 10.26 per cent in March this year against a deflation of 23.53 per cent in March 2023 due to hardening of crude prices globally.

Positive rate of inflation in March 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, electricity, machinery & equipment and other manufacturing etc.

The prices of manufactured products also declined 0.85 per cent.

Ola Electric cuts prices of entry-level e-scooter by up to Rs 10,000

New Delhi, Apr 15:

Ola Electric on Monday slashed prices of its entry-level scooter S1 X by Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 across variants, bringing it at par with conventional scooters. The new S1 X was launched in February this year with a price range of Rs 79,999 to Rs 1,09,999 across three variants.

In a virtual address, Ola Electric Chief Marketing Officer Anshul Khandelwal said the prices of the company's entry-level scooter have been reduced with immediate effect and deliveries would start next week. Under the new prices, S1 X with 4kWh battery will now cost Rs 99,999, down from Rs 1,09,999 announced earlier. Similarly, S1 X with 3kWh battery has been priced at Rs 84,999 instead of Rs 89,999 earlier. The S1 X 2kWh battery variant will cost Rs 69,999 (introductory price), reduced

Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 5.18 lakh cr as markets crash



New Delhi, Apr 15:

A sharp plunge in the stock market wiped out Rs 5.18 lakh crore from investors' wealth on Monday as an escalating conflict in the Middle East hit the market sentiment. Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 845.12 points or 1.14 per cent to settle at 73,399.78. During the day, it plunged 929.74 points or 1.25 per cent to 73,315.16.

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Sensex, Nifty tank over 1 pc on concerns over Middle East conflict, weak global trends

Mumbai, Apr 15:

Stock markets took a beating on Monday with benchmark Sensex and Nifty tumbling over 1 per cent as escalating conflict in the Middle East and weak trends from global markets unnerved investors. Falling for the second session in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 845.12 points or 1.14 per cent to settle at a more than two-week low of 73,399.78. During the day, it plunged 929.74 points or 1.25 per cent to 73,315.16.

The NSE Nifty declined 246.90 points or 1.10 per cent to settle at 22,272.50. Key indices had plunged by over 1 per cent in the previous session on Friday due to profit taking by investors at record high lev-



els. Sensex lost 1,638 points or 2.19 per cent while Nifty plunged 481 points or 2.13 per cent to slip below the 22,300 level in two straight sessions. Foreign fund outflows and hotter-than-expected US inflation data also played spoilsport for the markets. Analysts said the renewed conflict in the Middle East, proposed changes in the India-Mauritius tax treaty and

Rupee falls 6 paise to settle at 83.44 against US dollar

Mumbai, Apr 15:

The rupee declined 6 paise to settle at 83.44 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, in line with deep losses in equity markets and an elevated dollar against major rivals overseas amid geopolitical tensions. However, weakening crude oil prices in the international markets and positive domestic macroeconomic data restricted the rupee's fall, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.46 and traded between 83.42 and 83.47 against the greenback. The local unit finally settled at 83.44 (provisional), registering a loss of 6 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee declined 7 paise to settle at



83.38 against the US dollar. Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the Indian rupee weakened on a strong US dollar and a decline in domestic markets. However, the sharp downside in the rupee was caused amid upbeat domestic macroeconomic data and possible intervention by the central bank.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on heightened global tensions in the

Middle East, which could impact global equities and strengthen the dollar further," Choudhary said, adding that "traders will take cues from India's trade deficit and US retail sales data. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.80".

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.15 per cent lower at 105.68. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.94 per cent to USD 89.60 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 845.12 points, or 1.14 per cent, to settle at 73,399.78. The Nifty fell 246.90 points, or 1.10 per cent, to close at 22,272.50.

FASHION SHOW



Bollywood actors Ranveer Singh and Kriti Sanon during a fashion show on the banks of the River Ganga, in Varanasi.

FADA commences dealer satisfaction study with focus

On finance, insurance firms

New Delhi, Apr 15:

Automotive dealers' body FADA on Monday said it has commenced a dealer satisfaction study with a focus on finance and insurance firms.

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) will undertake the study at dealerships in association with Singapore-based PremonAsia.

The study will look at key factors and attributes impacting the business relationship of dealerships with finance and insurance organisations, FADA said in a statement. It is expected that the results of the study will help finance and insurance companies to design newer products, services and processes to



help dealers and end-consumers, it added. "The study will focus on key aspects of the relationship between dealers and finance and insurance companies and therefore, provide a platform to understand the nuances of this relationship," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said.

Gold rises Rs 300; silver jumps Rs 500

New Delhi, Apr 15:

Gold price rose Rs 300 to Rs 73,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday in line with firm trends in the global markets, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices also jumped Rs 500 to Rs 85,700 per kilogram. In the previous trade, it had ended at Rs 85,200 per kilogram. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,050 per 10 grams, up Rs 300, taking positive cues from overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,355



per ounce, up USD 12 from the previous close. Gold resumed trading on a positive note, mainly lifted by safe haven buying after the escalation in the conflict between Iran and Israel over the weekend. Iran's attack on Israel reduced investor's appetite for risky assets, and increased demand for safe haven assets like bul-

lion, Gandhi said. Additionally, silver prices were trading higher at USD 28.25 per ounce. In the previous session, it had finished at USD 27.84 per ounce. According to market analysts, recent US inflation data diminished the possibility of a interest rate cut in June by the US Federal Reserve.

India's engineering exports edge up to USD 109 bn in FY24 despite geo-political tensions

New Delhi, Apr 15:

India's engineering exports edged up to USD 109 billion in 2023-24 despite a slowdown in some of the key global markets, geo-political tensions, Red Sea crisis and high freight rates," said EEPC India Chairman Arun Kumar Garodia. Engineering exports in FY24 rose to USD 109.31 billion from USD 107.04 billion in the previous financial year, thus registering a growth of 2.13 per cent, the Commerce Ministry data released on Monday showed. According to EEPC, FY24 closed on a strong note, with engineering exports rising 10.66 per cent year-on-year to USD 11.28 billion in March against USD 10.19 billion in the same month last year.

"The monthly, as well as cumulative numbers, clearly show that the Indian engineering sector is quite competitive globally and consistently achieving success in penetrating new markets.

Chaubibandha celebrates Navratri with devotion



● Embracing goddess worship amidst festive joy

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Apr 15: The enchanting fervour of Chait Navratri engulfs Chaubibandha, where devotees gather to pay homage to Goddess Mata amidst a backdrop of festive revelry.



From the break of dawn to the twilight hours, the air resonates with the chants of Aartis, the melodious strains of Jai and Seva songs, and the scent of incense wafting through the temple halls. Notably, the village has adorned itself with Jyot Jawara at three sacred locations, symbolizing the divine blessings showered upon the community.

Yashwant Sonkar,

Ganpat Patel, Parmeshwar Patel, Kuleshwar Yadav, and Santosh Yadav exemplify the spirit of service as they undertake the revered role of Pandas, guiding devotees through rituals and ceremonies.

Each day witnesses a steady stream of pilgrims seeking solace and blessings, their offerings of coconuts and prasad symbolizing their heartfelt devotion. As the auspicious oc-

casion progresses, anticipation builds for the grand Havan puja on Ashtami and the ceremonial immersion in Shitala pond on Wednesday.

At the heart of the celebration lies the soul-stirring melodies of devotion, brought to life by President Ganesh Sahu and a talented ensemble of singers including Lochan Nishad, Sitaram Sonkar, and Panchram Pal. Their

Seva songs, resonating with the glory of the divine, inspire devotees to dance in joyous celebration, their hearts uplifted by the music of the soul.

In a display of youthful exuberance, Khilendra Sonkar and Jitendra Nishad, both Class V students, captivate the audience with their rendition of "Mor Keval Maa."

Their performance, infused with innocence and passion, garners resounding applause, reaffirming the timeless appeal of devotion transcending age barriers.

Meanwhile, amidst the festivities, the musical journey continues as drummer Trilok Sonkar shares his gratitude for the opportunity to learn and grow in musical prowess, a blessing bestowed upon him during this auspicious time of Navratri.

Tribute to paid to Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar



● Honouring the architect of India's Constitution

Central Chronicle News

Chakarbhatha, Apr 15: In a heartfelt commemoration of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's birth anniversary, the Ambedkar ward of Nagar Panchayat Bodri witnessed a solemn gathering, presided over by Bharatiya Janata Party Backward Classes

Morcha District President, Krishna Kumar Kaushik. Amidst the chanting of hymns and the fragrance of incense, workers paid homage to Dr. Ambedkar by performing aarti, worshipping his statue, and adorning it with garlands. Reflecting on the legacy of the revered leader, Krishna Kumar Kaushik emphasized Dr. Ambedkar's pivotal role in shaping India's destiny, underscoring his unwavering commitment to social equality and national unity. The event garnered widespread participation from esteemed council members and dedicated citizens alike, including Deepak Verma, Sunil Kumar Verma, Rakesh Kumar Mishra, Hariram Dogre, and many more. The presence of local residents such as Dilharan Sanehi, Akhlaq Sheikh, Vicky Dogre, and Praveen Sarathi underscored the community's collective reverence for Dr. Ambedkar's vision and principles.

Voters rally revs up civic engagement in Bijapur

Central Chronicle News

Bijapur, Apr 15: In anticipation of the upcoming Lok Sabha General Elections 2024 for Bijapur Assembly Constituency No. 89, within the Bastar Lok Sabha region, preparations are underway to ensure robust voter participation on Friday, April 19.

In alignment with the Election Commission of India's directives, Collector and District Election Officer Anurag Pandey spearheaded a series of initiatives aimed at amplifying voter engagement through the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation Program (SVEEP).

A vibrant spectacle un-



folded today as a convoy of motorcycles and four-wheelers took to the streets, delivering a powerful message of voter awareness.

Led by Collector, SP, and CEO District Panchayat astride motorcycles, the procession embarked from the Collectorate premises.

At the bus stand, amidst the birthday celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Baba Saheb Ambedkar, dignitaries including Collector Anurag Pandey, SP Dr. Jitendra Yadav, and CEO District Panchayat Hemant Ramesh Nandawar, paid homage to the constitutional architect by garlanding his statue.

Pledging to uphold the tenets of democracy and exercise their franchise without fear or bias, they reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding the Constitution. The event witnessed the presence of senior officials, esteemed citizens, and media representatives, underscoring the collective resolve to uphold democratic ideals.

Traffic police spreads awareness on road safety



● Crackdown on tinted vehicles

Central Chronicle News

Dhamtari, Apr 15: In an uplifting initiative led by Superintendent of Police, Dhamtari, Anjaneya Varshney, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Mani Shankar Chandra, along with dedicated traffic police officers, illuminated the community with valuable insights on traffic regulations.

They reached out to diverse groups including drivers, students, employees, and trainees, instilling a culture of road safety.

Under the umbrella of the Baroda Self-Employment Development

during overtaking and to signal clearly before turning or stopping.

In adherence to guidelines from the Superintendent of Police, vigilant traffic officers took action against a vehicle adorned with black film. The driver of the vehicle with registration number CG 07 MB 0170 was promptly stopped, and the black film was removed from the glass as per regulations.

The traffic police extend a heartening appeal to the public and drivers, urging them to prioritize safety by wearing helmets, fastening seat belts, refraining from overspeeding, and avoiding the use of black film on vehicle windows.

Congress's 5 justice, 25 guarantees garner enthusiastic response

Central Chronicle News



Fingeshwar, Apr 15: Amidst the election fervour, Congress workers have embarked on a door-to-door campaign, distributing the party's manifesto outlining "Five Justice Twenty-five Guarantees."

Omkar Thakur, Administrative General Secretary of the District Congress Committee, expressed delight over the overwhelming response received from voters upon perusing the manifesto.

Bhavsingh Sahu, District Congress President, highlighted the party's concerted efforts to reach over 8 crore households across the nation with their manifesto. Additionally, the digital dissemination of the manifesto to over 1 crore individuals underscores Congress's commitment to

transparency and inclusivity. Encouraged by the manifesto's reception, comprising five key justices and 25 guarantees, will serve as a cornerstone in building trust among voters towards the Congress party.

Asserting Congress's proactive stance, Sahu contrasted it with BJP's delay in announcing their manifesto, suggesting a lack of sincerity or originality.

However, he expressed confidence in voters' discernment, believing that the electorate will prioritize

Congress's promises over

People stands together to preserve children's garden

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 15: Concerns have been raised over the deteriorating condition of the children's garden, originally established as a vibrant play space for youngsters. This park, constructed in honour of senior BJP leader Niranjan Prasad Kesharwani, now finds itself neglected and encroached upon, prompting calls for urgent restoration efforts.

Built during the tenure of the BJP administration, the children's garden was envisioned as a central hub for recreational activities, serving as a testament to the municipality's commitment to providing safe and enjoyable spaces for children. However, in recent years, a lack of maintenance and oversight has led to its gradual decline.

Encroachments have



further exacerbated the situation, with carts and other structures encroaching upon the park's boundaries. Swings, plants, and other amenities once cherished by local children have fallen into disrepair; rendering the park unusable for its intended purpose.

Former District Vice

President Kamleshwar Kesharwani expressed concern about the state of Niranjan Prasad Kesharwani Children's Garden, emphasizing that neglect by the Municipality has led to its decline despite being built in honor of local dignitaries. Stressing the need for proper maintenance, Kamleshwar urged the Municipality to take swift action to ensure the smooth functioning of the garden. Additionally, former alderman and councilor Sanjay Verma highlighted the significance of the garden, noting its establishment during the BJP regime to provide a recreational space for children. However, he lamented the lack of maintenance during subsequent administrations, resulting in its deterioration. Sanjay expressed hope for its restoration in the near future.

We've received reports indicating that wear and tear, coupled with a lack of maintenance, has restricted access to Niranjan Prasad Kesharwani Children's Garden for children and the public alike. We are taking steps to address this issue. Plans are underway to restore and refurbish the Children's Garden to its former glory. Our goal is to ensure that both children and members of the community can once again enjoy the park's amenities.

- Anubhav Singh
Chief Municipal Officer, Mungeli

Police conducts Sanskar summer class for children

Shared various types of information on topics related to safety of women and children

Central Chronicle News



Pithora, Apr 15: Rajendra Rajput, the in-charge of Pithora police station, took the initiative to educate children attending the Sanskar summer classes at Pratibha School in the city. During the session, he imparted crucial insights on women and children's safety, addressing various concerns raised by the children themselves.

Additionally, lectures were delivered on important topics such as juvenile delinquency, cyber fraud, child sexual abuse, and responsible social media usage.

The students were also introduced to the concept of the Bal Mitra Police Station.

It's noteworthy that

these Sanskar Summer Classes offer free training to girls from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, encompassing diverse disciplines under one roof. Seema Gaurav Chandrakar, the director of the summer class, extended her gratitude to the station in-charge, who was also felicitated by the institute with a memento.

The event witnessed the presence of summer class choreographer Pintu

Behera, Judo Karate trainer Upendra Pradhan, journalist Raja Babu Upadhyay, officials from the Yuvraj Chauhan Institute, journalists, and parents of the participating children.

Fingeshwar, Apr 15: With the marriage season, particularly coinciding with the auspicious occasions of Ram Navami and Akshaya Tritiya, looming, concerns persist over the prevalence of child marriage in rural areas. In a proactive move against this entrenched social ill, the district administration has mandated stringent measures to curtail such practices.

Under the directive of the district administration, a specialized team has been constituted at both the sub-division and Gram Panchayat levels to combat the scourge of child marriage.

Led by SDM Arpita Pathak, the sub-divisional team comprises key officials including Child Project Officer Kaushalendra Dewangan, Sub-divisional Police



worker, ANM, Mitanin, Women Self Help Group representatives, Kotwar, and two student representatives has been assembled.

Preventive measures ahead of festivals

With Ram Navami scheduled for April 17 and Akshaya Tritiya on May 10, both occasions prone to increased instances of child

marriage, heightened vigilance has been enforced.

SDM Arpita Pathak underscored the gravity of the situation, emphasizing that child marriage is a punishable offense under the law. Stringent monitoring will be upheld at both sub-division and Panchayat levels to deter such regressive practices.

In the event of non-compliance, SDM Arpita Pathak warned of legal repercussions, indicating that strict action will be taken against the families, marriage organizers, officiating priests, as well as individuals involved in providing musical arrangements and decorations.

Residents have been urged to report any instances of child marriage to the authorities, underscoring the collective responsibility in eradicating this detrimental societal phenomenon.

Vidit Gujrathi beats Nakamura again to come back in hunt

Toronto, Apr 15 (PTI):

Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi came back firing on all cylinders after previous match defeat and crashed through the defences of second seed Hikaru Nakamura of United States in the ninth round of the Candidates tournament here.

The all-Indian duel between D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa ended in a draw without much ado as the day saw no other decisive games.

Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia lived by the sword against Frenchman Firouza Alireza before signing peace while Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan showed that he was almost impregnable as white and held his forte against American Fabiano Caruana.



With five rounds and two rest days still to come in the biggest event of the year, Nepomniachtchi and Gukesh continued to be joint leaders on 5.5 points out of a possible nine while Praggnanandhaa is the sole third half a point behind.

Nakamura, Gujrathi and Caruana share the fourth spot on 4.5 points and are all within string distance with Alireza on 3.5 and Abasov on three points.

The Candidates had begun with four draws on the opening day and followed up with a brilliant victory by Gujrathi over Nakamura. The second half was just a reminiscent as Gujrathi was in

his element yet again to score over the American again.

The Indian might have been predictable as far as the openings are concerned with either colour but clearly he knows his stuff.

Despite losing to Gukesh in the previous round, Gujrathi decided to continue with the Italian opening and got rewarded as Nakamura went for a side variation by pushing his king side pawns too early.

With a timely breakthrough in the centre, the dynamics in the position remained but Gujrathi was quick to spot a tactic missed by Nakamura.

What followed was mayhem for black on the board. Nakamura called it a day when checkmate became inevitable.

RR brace for Narine spin treat as KKR eye top spot



Kolkata, Apr 15 (PTI):

Rajasthan Royals' star-studded batting will face the serious challenge of decoding Sunil Narine's mystery at Eden Gardens when they take on two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders in a top-of-the-table IPL clash here on Tuesday.

Narine, who is one month shy of turning 36, had played a pivotal role in KKR's twin triumphs under former skipper Gautam Gambhir in 2012 and 2014.

Ever since joining the side way back in 2012, Narine has sizzled at Eden Gardens with his crafty bowling, proving to be a big threat to opposition batters.

Now after reuniting with Gambhir, who re-

turned to the team as their mentor, Narine dished out an all-round show, reigniting their title hopes again and a win against RR will hand them the pole position in the 10-team standings ahead of the halfway stage of the season.

His 1/19 against the Sunrisers Hyderabad or 1/17 against Lucknow Super Giants may have failed to grab attention but those eight overs where he did not concede a single boundary made all the difference in the end for KKR.

Their IPL record buy Mitchell Starc has also shut all the noise to return to his elements, claiming two wickets in the last over for his 3/28 against LSG.

In such a scenario, the top-of-the-table contest may well boil down to KKR's bowling versus RR's batting.

KKR's only weaklink could be their skipper Shreyas Iyer's poor form with the bat.

RR have a formidable bowling lineup in Trent Boult, Avesh Khan, Yuzvendra Chahal and Keshav Maharaj, while it remains to be seen if Ravichandran Ashwin is fit for the match.

Phil Salt may have walked away with the player-of-the-match award in their solid eight-wicket win over LSG here on Sunday, but it was Narine, who choked LSG in the middle overs to limit them to a below-par 161 for 7.

Absolutely ordinary bowling, ordinary captaincy: Gavaskar



Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Come Tuesday, the likes of Sanju Samson, Riyan Parag and Shimron Hetmyer - who all have struck at the rate of more than 155 this season - will be up against the Narine challenge.

It remains to be seen if Jos Buttler is fit to be included in the playing XI after missing their last fixture against Punjab Kings.

With his ability to express himself at the top, Narine, who has a strike-rate of 183.51 and averages 33-plus this season, has a Rashid Khan-like aura at KKR.

Their IPL record buy

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'Kejriwal being treated like hardcore criminal'

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar jail on Monday and alleged the AAP chief was not being given amenities that are provided even to hardcore criminals.

Mann, who was accompanied by AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak, said they met Kejriwal for half-an-hour but they were separated by a glass wall and interacted over a phone call.

"I became emotional seeing him. He is being treated like a hardcore criminal. What is his fault? Is it his fault that he built mohalla clinics?" said Mann.

The Punjab chief minister said he was asked by Kejriwal to visit different places for campaigning for INDIA bloc candidates.

He also said the Aam



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant talks to the media outside the Tihar jail after meeting the jailed Delhi CM and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, in New Delhi, Monday.

Admi Party will emerge a strong political force on June 4, when Lok Sabha election results are announced.

Pathak said Kejriwal was worried about the people of Delhi and was constantly inquiring whether they were getting subsi-

dies.

"Even while being inside jail, he is worried about the people of Delhi. He said that from next week, he will call two ministers to discuss issues. He has also asked party MLAs to go out among people," Pathak said.

The meeting took place in the 'mulakat jangla,' a room divided with a glass wall, a Tihar jail official said.

Security was already heightened with local police being deployed outside Tihar jail, given that Mann is Z+ protec-

The Delhi chief minister and AAP national convenor was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21. His current judicial custody is expiring on Monday.

The ED has accused Kejriwal of being involved in the "entire conspiracy of Delhi liquor scam, in drafting and implementation of the policy, for favouring and benefiting the quid pro receiving kickbacks and eventually using part of proceeds of crime generated out of the scheduled offence in the election campaign for Goa Assembly elections".

'BJP to crack whip against Eshwarappa'

Hassan, Apr 15 (PTI):

Karnataka BJP President B Y Vijayendra said on Monday that the party would take disciplinary action against rebel leader K S Eshwarappa, who has decided to contest as an independent in Shimoga Lok Sabha seg-



B Y Vijayendra

ment.

This is the first time the party has reacted on the issue. Vijayendra said that his brother and Shimoga MP B Y Raghavendra, who is seeking re-election, will win the seat by over two lakh votes and people will teach a lesson to Eshwarappa.

Eshwarappa, a former Deputy Chief Minister who had also served as the party's state unit President, has entered the fray blaming Vijayendra and his father and veteran party leader B S Yediyurappa for his son K E Kantesh being denied

the ticket to contest from the Haveri Lok Sabha seat.

"We will take disciplinary action against him (Eshwarappa), and voters of the constituency will also take action against him. The more he speaks, double the votes that will come in favour of Raghavendra," Vijayendra said here in response to the 75-year-old's allegation of Yediyurappa favouring his sons and the party's Bangalore North seat candidate Shobha Karandlaje.

"What is the contribution of Eshwarappa to Shivamogga district having been the Minister and Deputy Chief Minister. How Raghavendra has done development works as an MP, and what are Yediyurappa's contribution as CM to the district and the state is discussed in every household. There is no need to learn for him," he said.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka had earlier this month indicated that BJP will decide on taking disciplinary action against Eshwarappa, once he files his nomination against the party's official candidate.

Eshwarappa is steadfast on his decision to contest spurning efforts by party leaders to pacify him.

SC refuses plea for voting facilities to 18,000 internally-displaced

In Manipur polls

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking voting facilities for around 18,000 people displaced internally due to the ethnic strife in Manipur for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The polling for the two Lok Sabha seats of Manipur will be held in two phases on April 19 and 26.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said interference of this court, particularly at this belated stage, would cause substantial impediments in the conduct of the ensuing general elections of

the Lok Sabha for Manipur.

"You have come at the last minute. At this stage, what can be virtually done? We cannot interfere at this stage," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea by Manipur resident Nauluk Khamsuanthang and others seeking a direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to make arrangements to enable internally-displaced persons settled outside Manipur to enable them to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha elections by setting up special polling booths in the states where they are residing.

"There are 18,000 internally-displaced people. They want to vote in the elections in Manipur," the lawyer appearing for the petitioners said.

SC appreciates protective measures by railways

Disposes of petition

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Monday appreciated the steps taken by the Indian Railways to prevent train accidents, including the automatic train protection system 'Kavach', to avoid collisions.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan disposed of a petition that raised several issues related to passenger safety after taking note of multiple steps taken by the public sector behemoth to prevent accidents and promote safe travel. "We appreciate the steps taken by the Railways," the bench said, while taking note of the status report filed by Attorney General R Venkataramani.

While hearing the plea filed by petitioner Vishal

Tiwari on January 2, the apex court had sought to know about the protective measures, steps implemented so far or proposed to be taken by the Centre, including the 'Kavach' system. It had asked the petitioner to hand over a copy of his plea to the office of the Attorney General.

Referring to the train accident in Odisha's Balasore district in June last year that had left 288 people dead, the petitioner had claimed non-implementation of the 'Kavach' scheme was resulting in accidents. He had said a lot of accidents have taken place in the past due to collision between trains.

The plea had sought directions to the Centre to set up an expert commission headed by a retired judge of the apex court and consisting of technical members to analyse and review the risk and

safety parameters in the railway system and to suggest systematic safety modifications for strengthening the safety mechanism. It claimed that non-implementation of 'Kavach' at the earliest had resulted in a massive loss of life and damage to public property which imputed direct liability of gross negligence and breach of duty of care to respondent authorities.

It had also sought issuance of guidelines for implementation of the 'Kavach' system with immediate effect.

The petition was filed days after the crash involving Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express and Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express, which were carrying around 2,500 passengers, and a goods train in June last year near Bahana Bazar station in Balasore.

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Braving inclement weather, the NC leader carried on with his roadshow in support of Lal Singh, who is contesting the polls on a Congress ticket against Union minister Jitendra Singh.

Asked about Azad's onslaught against the NC in his election rallies, Abdullah claimed that he is doing so at the behest of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Omar challenges Ghulam Nabi Azad to contest LS polls against him

Jammu, Apr 15 (PTI):

National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah challenged Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad on Monday to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls against him, instead of "hiding behind a camera" and making statements targeting his party.

Abdullah had earlier held a press conference demanding that SP President Akhilesh Yadav contest the election from Rampur and threatened with a boycott if he did not.

Sagar claimed that for the last few years, the district administration has been threatening the Muslim voters to not cast their votes.

When such arbitrariness reigns, only a stalwart like Akhilesh can stop it, he said.



which is going to polls on April 19.

Azad, also a former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, was named as the DPAP candidate from the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat but he subsequently said he is not sure about his candidature as he was not consulted by the party about it. "I challenge him (Azad) to contest (the polls) against me to test his strength. Hiding behind a camera and giving statements (against the NC) is very easy. If he is a man, let him fight against me. I

will see how many votes he gets," Abdullah told reporters on the sidelines of his roadshow in the Thathri area of Doda district.

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