

DRG cop killed in accidental firing

Press Trust of India

DANTEWADA: A District Reserve Guard (DRG) constable was killed and another policeman injured due to an accidental discharge of a firearm in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, officials said on Thursday.

The incident took place at around 11 pm on Wednesday when a joint team of the DRG and Bastar Fighter, both

units of state police, was out on an anti-Naxal operation in Barsoor police station limits, a statement issued by the police said.

Acting on an input about the presence of armed Naxalites in Handawada and Hitawada villages along the Dantewada-Narayanpur districts border, the security personnel had launched the operation, it said.

41 candidates in fray for 3 seats in Phase-II of LS polls

Kanker seat is Naxalite-affected, where extra vigil is being maintained by security forces Rajnandgaon and Mahasamund are struggling with the menace

Press Trust of India

RAIPUR: Amid enhanced security, three Lok Sabha constituencies - Kanker, Rajnandgaon and Mahasamund - all facing the Naxal menace, in Chhattisgarh will go to polls on Friday, where 41 candidates are in the fray even as the straight fight is between the ruling BJP and opposition Congress. Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and former state home minister Tamradhwaj Sahu are among the candidates who are in the fray from the Congress' side. "All the prep-



Poll officials on their way to Gariabandh for polling duty | Photo: PTI

HIGHLIGHT

● Bhupesh Baghel and Tamradhwaj Sahu are among the candidates from the Congress' side

arations have been done for conducting polling in Mahasamund, Rajnandgaon and Kanker (Scheduled Tribe reserved) seats going to polls in the second phase in the state on April 26," state's Chief Electoral Officer Reena Babasaheb Kangale said in a press conference here on Thursday. Of the three seats, a major part of Kanker seat is Naxalite-affected.

All preparations are complete for smooth polling
Reena Babasaheb Kangale
Chief Electoral Officer

Husband cannot claim wife's 'stridhan': SC

NEW DELHI: A husband has no control over his wife's 'stridhan' (woman's property) and while he may use it during the time of his distress, he has a moral obligation to return it to his wife.

Bhagyansh tops Chh'garh with 99.98 percentile

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A record 56 candidates, including two females, achieved 100 NTA score in engineering entrance exam JEE-

Main, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Wednesday night. The qualifying percentile for JEE (Advanced), the entrance test for admission to the 23 Indian Insti-

tutes of Technology (IITs), touched a five-year high. While 23 candidates in the JEE (Main) January session scored 100 NTA score, 33 candidates in the April session achieved it.

MONEY LAUNDERING |

Kejriwal received kickbacks: ED to SC

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is the "kingpin and key conspirator" of the excise policy scam and the arrest of a person for an offence based on material can never violate the "concept of free and fair elections", the ED has told the Supreme



Court. The Enforcement Directorate claimed that Kejriwal worked in collusion with his ministers and AAP leaders and was

NUMBER

734

● ED in its 734-page reply affidavit alleged kickbacks received by Kejriwal

also involved in "demanding kickbacks" from liquor

businessmen in exchange for favours granted in the policy.

"Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of NCT of Delhi is the kingpin and key conspirator of the Delhi excise scam in collusion with ministers of the Delhi govt, AAP leaders and other persons," the agency said in its 734-page reply affidavit.

SC imposes Rs 5 lakh costs on Centre

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has imposed costs of Rs 5 lakh on the Centre for challenging a Meghalaya High Court order, holding it was "sheer abuse" of the process of law. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Satish Chandra Sharma said there was

no occasion or justification for the Union of India to have challenged the order by way of a Special Leave Petition. "The present petition is sheer abuse of the process of law. The petitioners are cautioned not to file such frivolous petitions in future.

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Congress nominee Tamradhwaj Sahu had given patronage to crime during his tenure as Home Minister of Chhattisgarh.

Chunnilal Sahu
Mahasamund MP

BJP strives to retain Rajnandgaon LS seat

Central Chronicle News

RAJNANDGAON: The Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat in Chhattisgarh, which showed the influence of an erstwhile royal family in electoral politics and the journey of several powerful politicians in the state, is witnessing an interesting fight this time, with the sitting MP locking horns with a former chief minister.

People started looking at alternatives other than the Congress which gradually lost its hold over Rajnandgaon. The grand old party has tried its one of strongest and influential OBC leaders Baghel in this backward caste-dominated constituency this



time, he said.

However, caste factor has never influenced the outcome of the poll in this seat. During the last assembly polls, the BJP aggressively campaigned on the issue of Hindutva in Kawardha district falling in Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat, which virtually benefited the party, he said. This time, too, the



Hindutva card is going to play a crucial role for the ruling party, he added. An alleged incident of removal of religious flags from a thoroughfare in Kawardha town in 2021 that had resulted in a clash between the two communities was extensively raised by BJP during assembly polls.

Congress spokesperson Rupesh Dubey said

the results of previous Lok Sabha elections have not been in favour of his party, but this time it is in a strong position.

Exuding confidence in the party's victory, BJP spokesperson Neelu Sharma said, "We do not consider any election easy. But the equation in Rajnandgaon seat is in favour of BJP." "There is resentment among Congressmen themselves about not giving opportunities to local leaders. We had won only one assembly seat of the eight assembly constituencies in 2018, but won Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat in 2019 by more than one lakh votes," he said.

ED has attached Rs 15 cr earned through hard work: Anil Tuteja

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: The former IAS Officer Anil Tuteja taken into ED's custody has given information about the entire liquor scam through a letter to the CM Vishnu Deo last on 22 Jan 2024. In this seven pages letter, he has given information about the behavior by ED with Director Hotel Giriraj Mr. Nitesh Purohit and the letter about registering of his statement to be present in the Bureau office and many other documents.

Anil Tuteja through this letter has informed CM that he has not being allowed to put forth

FACTFILE

● Had given information to CM Sai through a seven pages letter earlier

his views properly and termed his mastermind of this alleged liquor scam. He also held all the charges laments against him as one concocted and purely based upon imagination.

Through letter he informed as to how the syndicate was formed and who are involved in it and since he was head of the syndicate, he was having full control on the Excise Department. In this syndicate who all

were involved and what all work they were designated was also informed through this letter. Anil Tuteja informed in the name of conducting inquiry, have also taken the beauty parlour being run by his family under investigation and have attached the Rs 15 cr worth of property generated by hard work of the family.

ED has held Anil Tuteja as the most powerful and closest person to the ex-Chief Minister and on which Tuteja clarified that all this is purely imaginative and are false allegations against him.

LS POLLS IN CHH'GARH

Modi to hold public meeting at Korba on April 28

RAIPUR: Ahead of the third phase of polling in Chhattisgarh, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be holding another public meeting at Korba on April 28 in favour of the party candidate.

Apart from him, the Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge too would be holding public meeting on April 28 at Champa-Janjgir whereas the star campaigner of Congress Rahul Gandhi would be holding a public meeting at Bilaspur on April 29.

Through the above public meeting, both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party as well as principal opposition Congress wants to turn the tide in their respective favour in the concluding phase of Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh.

Free Martial Arts and Yoga training

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Shri Gujarati ShikshanSangh, in collaboration with Shri Gujarati H S School, Sector - 4, Devendra Nagar, Raipur, has organized a summer "free training camp" for martial arts (karate, judo, Thai boxing, Muay Thai, kalariyattu, etc.) and yoga from April 25 to May 20, 2024, from 06:30 to 07:45 in the morning. The aim is



to enhance the physical and mental fitness along with increasing immunity level of students after academic year, prepare for upcoming competitions, discover new emerging talents, and make the best use of summer vacations. The aforementioned free training camp is being conducted under the guidance of renowned international player and martial arts coach Sensei Anis Memon (honored with

Martyr Vinod Choubey Award by the Department of Sports, Government of Chhattisgarh). Interested students above 4 years of age and general citizens can register by contacting Physical Education teacher Tikeswari Sahu in the premises of Shri Gujarati School in blue lower, red T-shirt, or karate uniform, informs Anis Memon (Principal) Shri Gujarati H.S. School.

Collector reviews voter slip distribution work

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Collector and District Returning Officer Dr Gaurav Singh today reviewed the voter slip distribution work by holding a meeting of sector officers in the Collectorate meeting room located in the Collectorate premises under Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

Collector Dr Singh said that sector officers

HIGHLIGHT

● Instructions to sector officers to distribute voter slips door to door

● Instructions for marking voter waiting rooms in polling stations

should monitor the voter slip distribution work and work with seriousness. Distribu-

tion of voter slips should be ensured within the stipulated time limit and basic facilities should be ensured in polling booths, he said.

The Collector said that polling stations should have facilities like toilet, fan etc. Also, voter waiting rooms should be marked for voters in large halls in polling stations, he said. The BLOs who distrib-

ute voter slips quickly within the stipulated time frame will also be honoured, said the Collector. He told all sector officers to prepare progress report of voter slip work daily.

Videos related to the election process have also been prepared for sector officers. ARO Manoj Kosaria and other officers and employees were present.



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मुख्य निर्वाचन पदाधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़

10-12th Board results to be released after polls

Central Chronicle News

FACTFILE

RAIPUR: The Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education is expected to announce the Class 10 and Class 12 board examination results for the academic year 2023-24 in the first week of May 2024, after the completion of the Lok Sabha elections. Over 3.45 lakh (345,556) candidates appeared for the Class 10 board examinations in 2024. Around 2.61 lakh (261,022) students took the Class 12 board examinations across streams like Science, Commerce, and Arts.

Similar to the previous year, bonus points will be awarded to students participating in various activities. The bonus point range this year is 22-39.

on its official websites after May 7, 2024, once the state election process concludes. Pushpa Sahu, Secretary of Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education, stated that after evaluation of answer sheets, the results can be prepared within 10 days.

The CGBSE 10th and 12th results for 2024 are expected to be announced either by May 1st or May 7th, 2024.



Similar to the previous year, bonus points will be awarded to students participating in various activities.

The bonus point range this year is 22-39. The direct link to access the Chhattisgarh Board Result 2024 will be made available on the official website cbse.nic.in.

Once the results are declared, students can check their 10th and 12th results by visiting the Board's official website and entering their roll number, school code, and other required credentials once the results are announced.

SMART CITY PROJECT

MD Mishra took review meeting

RAIPUR: Avinash Mishra, the Managing Director of Raipur Smart City, recently conducted a review meeting to assess the progress of works under the Smart City Mission. During the meeting, he asked the officials to ensure continuous supervision over the construction works. Additionally, Mishra emphasized that all projects should be completed by the month of June, highlighting the importance of meeting deadlines and achieving project milestones in a timely manner. The meeting held in Raipur Smart City office meeting room focused on various ongoing projects, including underground cabling and other projects. Instructions were given to ensure that the construction work of these projects is completed.

BJP to take up health cover responsibilities of senior citizens



Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday claimed that the party would take up the responsibility of providing health cover of senior citizens of more than 8 lakh families from Chhattisgarh no sooner than the NDA governments to power at Centre for third time.

Talking to media persons at party office situated at Ekatma Parishar here, the BJP spokesperson Sandeep Sharma said

that free medical facilities would be provided to senior citizens under Ayushman Card health services.

He said that the Ayushman Card would provide relief to the families from the heavy expenditure on medical treatment. He said that senior citizens of more than 70 years would be provided health cover of Rs 5 lakh which would be providing economic relief from the burden.

Sharma also slammed the Congress over the statement of its Advisor Sam Pitroda over his proposal of inheritance tax on people after death of the individuals. He said that BJP would give befitting reply to the Congress ideology on the issue and would expose it before people.

NEWSLINE

ELECTION

Collector inspects polling station and SST point



RAIPUR: During his inspection of the polling centers and SST points in Arang Assembly Constituency for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh was accompanied by SDM Pushpendra Sharma, Tehsildar Rajkumar Sahu, Tehsildar Sita Shukla, and Shruti Sharma. Dr. Gaurav Singh specifically looked into the polling booths in villages as well as the schools in the Arang assembly area.

Ashish Chaturvedi assumes charge as PNB zonal manager



Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Ashish Chaturvedi has assumed the charge of the zonal manager of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand state of Punjab National Bank, a leader among public sector banks. On reaching the zonal office, Raipur premises, he was welcomed by Mr. Arun Kumar Rao, Deputy Zonal Manager and Mr. Manoj Kumar Rai, Divisional Head Raipur and all the officers. Ashish Chaturvedi started

his banking career as a Management Trainee on April 30, 1991. He has held senior positions in major cities across the country, with his previous position being Divisional Head in Nagpur, Maharashtra. In his address to all staff members in Raipur, he emphasized the importance of providing excellent customer service. Chaturvedi highlighted that satisfied customers are crucial for the growth of the banking business.

Bank of Baroda teams up with Kunaal Roy Kapur for Pehchaan Con 3.0 campaign

Central Chronicle News

MUMBAI: Bank of Baroda, one of India's leading public sector banks, announced the release of its #Pehchaan Con 3.0 Banking Fraud Awareness campaign. Building upon the success of the earlier two editions, the latest campaign seeks to raise awareness about new-age financial frauds such as Artificial Intelligence-generated Deepfake scams that can succeed in duping even the most vigilant customers.

as a family member/a close acquaintance or targeting online shoppers by posing as a delivery agent asking for an OTP, which is then used to hack into one's personal data, fraudsters are using a range of methods to try and dupe people.

Lal Singh, Executive Director, Bank of Baroda said, "Online frauds aimed at defrauding people have become more common nowadays and are an ever-present threat. Further, with the advent of new technologies, the modus operandi of financial cons also keeps evolving rapidly. Hence, all of us need to be extremely alert and learn to identify a potential fraud/scam. Bank of Baroda's Pehchaan Con 3.0 campaign emphasises the importance of self-vigilance to customers so that they can ensure the safety of their hard-earned money from the threats presented by cybercriminals."

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"When employees from Plant win it not only brings laurels but motivate others"

Anirban Dasgupta
Director Incharge, SAIL-BSP

BSP employees bag 9 awards at 34th CII National Work-Skills

211 participants from various private and Public Sector Industries participated

Central Chronicle News

BHILAI: A total of 09 employees of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant have won awards at the 34th CII National Work-Skills Competition 2024, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in New Delhi. BSP's employees have clocked victory in six trades namely Carpentry, Electrical, Industrial Hydraulics, PLC, Turner, and Welder, by competing among as many as 211 participants from various private and Public Sector Industries from around the country. Anirban Dasgupta, Director I/c (SAIL-BSP) felicitated the winners at Ispat Bhawan on Thursday, in the presence of other Senior Officials.

Anirban Dasgupta congratulated the winners of the competition for winning laurels to the organization and wished them a bright future. Dasgupta stated that when employees from our Plant take part and win various competitions, it not only brings laurels to the Plant but also motivates other employees to participate. Our employees are very efficient in the traditional trades. However, we need to further enhance our participation in the new-age trades, like IT, Mechatronics, web design, etc. All necessary resources such as labs, equipment, and other materials shall be ensured to facilitate the participants to prepare well for these competitions. The winners must also encourage their colleagues to take part in such competitions, Dasgupta said.



Anirban Dasgupta, Director I/c (SAIL-BSP) felicitated the winners at Ispat Bhawan on Thursday.

Total of 13 employees of BSP displayed their skills in Delhi

A total of 13 employees of BSP displayed their skills at the three-day National Work Skills Competition 2024 in New Delhi, among whom 09 won 1st and 2nd prizes. Pramod Bhonekar, from SMS-II, won the 1st prize in Carpentry trade, while Ramsajan from MRD won the 2nd prize in Carpentry. Kartik Ram Bhagat, from PBS-II, won the

HIGHLIGHT

• Employees have clocked victory in six trades namely Carpentry, Electrical, Industrial Hydraulics, PLC, Turner, and Welder

2nd prize in the Electrical trade, and Akhilesh Kumar Thakur, from

CO & CCD, bagged the 2nd prize in the Industrial Hydraulics trade. Kunche Sai Kiran, from the A&D Department, won the 1st Prize in PLC trade, while Akhil Kumar Rathore, from BFC&SGP, secured the 2nd prize in the same trade. Ishwar Lal Dandena, from Dalli Mechanised Mines, won the 1st Prize in Turner trade.

Polling staff to cast postal ballot at facilitation centre

Central Chronicle News

Centres established at BIT and Police Reserve Centre.

BHILAI: The voters of Durg district (working in District Durg and other districts) who are involved in election work on the polling day like polling team, sector officers, micro observers, security personnel, SST, SFT and vehicle drivers, will be able to cast their postal ballot at facilitation centres. A facilitation center has been set up at BIT College, Durg and assembly wise sections have been set up for postal ballot. To ensure that the prescribed procedure for voting through postal ballot is followed properly in the facilitation centres, officers have been appointed in-charge of collecting the necessary material / documents from the Treasury, taking them to the facilitation center and depositing them back. According to the information, Naib Tehsildar Dhamdha Dharmesh Srivastava and Additional Tehsildar Durg Pawan Thakur have been appointed as officer in-charges for the centres at Science Block first floor room number 22 for Patan (62) assembly con-

stituency, Science Block ground floor number 05 for Durg Rural (63), Science Block ground floor number 06 and 07 for Durg city (64). Naib Tehsildar Durg Jyotsna Kalihari and Dal Singh Bisen have been appointed as officers in charge for the facilitation centres at Science Block Ground Floor No 08 for Bhilai Nagar (65), Science Block First

FASTFACTS

• For voters on election duty like polling team, sector officers, micro observers, security personnel, SST, SFT and vehicle drivers on polling day

• Officers have been appointed in-charge of collecting the material from the Treasury, taking them to the facilitation center and depositing them back

Floor Room No 01 for Vaishali Nagar (66) and Science Block First Floor Room No 05 for Ahiwara (67). Tehsildar Dhamdha Panchram Salame and Additional Tehsildar Gurudutt Panchbhage have been appointed in-charge for facilitation centres established for Saja-68.

CRIME

Two held for vandalising ATM



BHILAI: Police arrested two ruffians on charges of vandalising the ATM kiosk of Equitas Small Finance Bank located in Arya Nagar, Durg. Police had received a complaint from Shubham Kumar Soni (30) that two unknown persons had vandalized the ATM of Equitas Small Finance Bank. Police lodged an FIR under section 457, 427 IPC in Mohan Nagar Police Station. Investigation was conducted under the guidance of SP Jitendra Shukla. The police team examined the CCTV footage of cameras installed in and around the incident site and traced the two persons seen in the footage. The suspects Vikram Singh (22) son of Late Ravinder Singh a resident of Jayanti Nagar, Durg and Rakesh Kumar Singh (38) son of MP Singh, a resident of Mohan Nagar, Durg confessed to committing the crime.

INSPECTION

General Observer inspects polling stations

BHILAI: General Observer Lathkar Shrikesh Balaji Rao (IAS), appointed by the Election Commission of India for Durg Parliamentary Constituency, visited Kumhari, Kukda, Patora, Selud, Thakurain Tola, Akhara and Didabhatha under Patan Assembly Constituency. He inspected polling stations at villages Ranitarai, Jangaon (R) etc. He also visited the Sangwari Polling Station, disabled polling station and critical polling station in these areas. He directed the officials to ensure necessary arrangements at polling stations including the drinking water, sheds etc. At places with more than one polling station, he instructed them to mark the routes leading to the polling booths.

CRIME

Man held for abetment of wife's suicide



BHILAI: Police arrested a man on charges of abetment to suicide after his newly married wife committed suicide by consuming phenyl. It was discovered that the woman was being harassed for dowry. Trainee DSP Akansha Pandey informed that Reena Sahu (22) wife of Chaitram Sahu, a resident of Genda Dabri, Mohan Nagar, had committed suicide by consuming phenyl. During the investigation, police discovered that Reena Sahu was suffering domestic violence and dowry abuse. Demanding dowry, her husband Chaitram Sahu used to beat her almost daily. Police lodged an offence under section 304 (B) of Indian Penal Code at Police Station Mohan Nagar.

Villagers form human chain for voter awareness

Central Chronicle News

Voters motivated through various competitions and cultural programs SVEEP

BHILAI: As per the instructions of Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary, voter awareness campaign is being conducted continuously in the district. In this series, SVEEP Voter Awareness Program was organized in village Marra of Janpad Panchayat Patan to promote voting for Lok Sabha Elections 2024. In the program, villagers were motivated to vote through rangoli, henna, painting and cultural programs. A human chain was also formed by a large group of villagers. They took out an awareness rally also. The officers, employees and villagers pledge to exercise their franchise in the upcoming election and make efforts to ensure 100 per cent voting. The participants who performed excellently in various competitions of the program were rewarded. Chameli Nirmalkar got the first prize in the Rangoli competition. She is also a member of Aradhana Mahila Cluster Organization of Gram Darbar Mokhali. Tanu, Muskaan and Nupur won prizes in Mehndi. Deeksha in painting and Geetanjali and group, Kunti and group and Marra Agriculture College group were felicitated for street play. CEO Janpad Panchayat (Patan) Mukesh Kothari, Additional Chief Executive Officer Shweta Yadav, Senior Taxation Officer CL Bhuarya, officers and employees of Janpad Panchayat Patan, citizens of village Marra and locals from the other Panchayats were present in the programme.

As per the instructions of Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary and under guidance of CMHO Dr JP Meshram and Civil Surgeon cum Chief Hospital Superintendent Dr AK Sahu, a blood donation camp was organized by Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation on April 24 to maintain the availability of blood in the District Hospital, Durg. 202 units of blood were collected at this camp. Nodal Officer Dr Praveen Agrawal, I/c Officer Neha Nalwaya Bafna, Dr Avinash, Dr Yogita Gilhare, Dr Deepesh Chandraul, Counselor Anthony, Ganesh, Abhay, Staff Nurse Taruna Rawat, Senior Lab Technician Roshan Singh, Supervisor Rupesh Sapre, Mahendra Chandrakar, Inderjit Chandrakar, Tirath Yadav, Suraj, Megha, Aditi, Bhupendra, Kaushal Sahu, Himanshu Chandrakar, Mala Deshmukh played a vital role in organising the camp.

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Illegal scrap worth Rs 60 lakh seized from junk yard

Central Chronicle News

The entire scrap is being considered to be stolen material as the yard manager was unable to produce any documents

BHILAI: Police conducted a raid at the junkyard of Lalit Kabadi in Jamul and recovered illegal scrap worth Rs 60 lakhs. A used car without registration plate, bike chassis, submersible pumps, etc as well as scrap loaded in three trucks were seized. The entire scrap is being considered to be stolen material as the yard manager was unable to produce any documents. ASP Sukhmandan Rathore informed that recently they received a tip off regarding a junk yard in Jamul area where the stolen vehicles were being disassembled and the spares were being loaded on trucks for trans-



A used car without registration plate, bike chassis, etc as well as scrap loaded in three trucks were seized.

FASTFACTS

• The entire scrap is being considered to be stolen material as the yard manager was unable to produce any documents

portation as scrap. The yard was being operated by Lalit Kabadi, who was arrested several times earlier also

for disposing of the stolen items. On the instructions of SP Jitendra Shukla, a joint team of ACCU and Jamul Police Station led by Inspector Kapil Dev Pandey and Inspector Keshav Kosle conducted a raid at the junkyard. The team recovered a huge quantity of vehicle parts, machine parts and metal scrap loaded on three trucks. A Tata Nano car without registration plate;

bike chassis, submersible pump, etc were also recovered. The junkyard owner Lalit Kabadi had escaped from the spot but Police caught his Manager Rakesh Mishra (26) a resident of Supela. When questioned about the scrap and the related documents, the manager Rakesh Mishra was unable to give any satisfactory reply or produce any documents.

EXCISE DEPARTMENT

Excise Dept conducts intensive vehicle checking illicit sale of liquor

Central Chronicle News

BHILAI: On the instructions of Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary, the Excise Department Durg is continuously taking action to control and prevent the sale of illegal liquor in the district in view of the Lok Sabha elections 2024. Assistant Commissioner (Excise) Rajesh Jaiswal informed that in order to ensure free and fair polling in the Lok Sabha elections,

the department is continuously carrying out searches and inspections at various suspicious and criminal areas with the aim of preventing the use of drugs / illicit liquor to woo voters in the elections. The department is checking hotels, dhabas and railway passengers coming to and from Durg Railway Station in the district. In this series, the Excise Department, Durg, conducted intensive



checking of passenger buses and four-wheelers coming from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh at Pulgaon Chowk in the wee hours of Thursday. During the vehicle checking, bus drivers and conductors were directed to give immediate information on the official telephone number 0788-2325836 if they spot any suspicious person or find any suspicious material. Assistant District Excise Officer Dheeraj Kan-

"In order to ensure free and fair polling in the Lok Sabha elections, the department is continuously carrying out searches and inspections"

Rajesh Jaiswal
Asst Commissioner (Excise)

naujia, Supriya Tiwari, Pankaj Kujur and Excise Sub Inspector Bhuneshwar Sengar, Harish Patel, Bhupendra Netam, Excise Head Constable Santosh Dubey, Driver J Deepak Raju and Prakash Rao conducted the vehicle checking drive. Police observer said that during checking of the vehicles while carrying out videography, the name of the drier, vehicle no. should be noted down in the register.

Battle-2024



Congress took a step backward on the Sangli LS seat for the sake of the Maha Vikas Aghadi.

Nana Patole
Maharashtra chief

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

LS POLLS

SAD's Amritsar candidate counts on work done as minister

CHANDIGARH: Shiromani Akali Dal candidate from Amritsar Lok Sabha seat Anil Joshi is banking on the work done by him as a minister in the erstwhile SAD-BJP government to clinch the seat in the June 1 election.

Former BJP MLA Joshi, a Hindu face, has been fielded by the Sukhbir Singh Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal from the Sikh-dominated parliamentary constituency -- considered a Congress pocket borough.

Joshi was elected Amritsar North MLA in 2007 and 2012 on a BJP ticket and was the state's local bodies and medical education and research minister in the SAD-BJP regime from 2012 to 2017. In 2021, Joshi was expelled from the BJP after he criticised the party for "mishandling" the farm agitation. Thereafter, he joined the Akali Dal. **PTI**

ELECTION RALLY

Congress made Telangana 'Delhi's ATM', says Amit Shah



HYDERABAD: Senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Thursday alleged that the ruling Congress in Telangana has made the state 'Delhi's ATM', within a short span of coming to power.

The union home minister was addressing an election rally at Siddipet in the state in support of BJP candidate from Medak Lok Sabha constituency M Raghunandan Rao. "In such a short time, Congress party has made Telangana 'Delhi's ATM'. **PTI**

INDIA bloc is fighting against NDA
PM Modi wants to 'create rift' among people: Farooq Abdullah



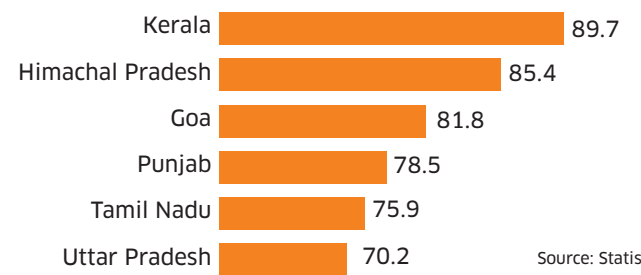
SRINAGAR: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said here on Thursday that the INDIA bloc is fighting against Prime Narendra Modi's attempts to "create a rift among people" and the opposition alliance will "undo the wrongdoings" committed during the BJP rule. "The Election Commission has to be changed and made independent. The judiciary has to be made independent as it is the place where people get justice if they do not get justice anywhere else. "Many things have to be set right. Those have to be made governors who can serve people and not Delhi. Many incapa-

ble people have been put in many institutions, but we have to save those institutions," he said. Abdullah was addressing an NC and Congress joint rally at Congress party headquarters and later NC workers at his party's headquarters Nawa-i-Subah after its candidate from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, submitted nomination papers.

"I pray that the INDIA alliance is successful in Delhi so that Ambedkar's Constitution is saved and it will undo the wrongdoings committed," the former J-K chief minister said. **PTI**

The Day's NUMBERS

STATE VACCINATION COVERAGE (%)



OMAR ABDULLAH ON POLLS 'BJP raking up religious sentiments as ground beneath its feet slipping'

SRINAGAR: The BJP is raking up religious sentiments as the ground beneath its feet is slipping, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said on Thursday. He also said it is no secret that such attacks, especially against the Muslims, were carried out after the first phase of voting. "As far as the use of religion is concerned, this is not the first time. As the BJP sees the ground slipping beneath its feet, it starts talking again in the context of religion," Abdullah told reporters after the party's candidate Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi filed his nomination from the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency. "It seems that the BJP had some expectations from the first phase of the elections and perhaps those expectations were not met," he added. The National Conference vice-president said the party has decided to field a covering candidate in wake of the BJP candidate winning unopposed from Gujarat's Surat after all other nominees withdrew from the fray. **PTI**

AAP ON MCD Saurabh Bharadwaj alleges conspiracy to halt mayoral polls



NEW DELHI: New Delhi: The BJP-led Centre is hatching a conspiracy to halt the mayoral polls and oust AAP from the MCD, Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged on Thursday. The minister also accused Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar of flouting the rules for nominating a presiding officer to hold the mayoral polls by bypassing him. "The proposal to nominate the presiding officer was secretly sent to the Lt Governor, bypassing me. I wrote to the Lt Governor to return the file, stating that it was sent to him directly by flouting the rules," the AAP leader said at a press conference. **PTI**



BJP supporters during PM Narendra Modi's public meeting for Lok Sabha elections.

BJP's Kerala drive, Maha ambition on test amid soaring political temperature

Whether the soaring political temperature prevails over the heatwave-like conditions and pushes more voters to booths is something political watchers will be keeping an eye on.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Will the BJP's drought in Kerala finally end? Will a spike in political temperature following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sharp attack on the Congress boost turnout? These are some of the questions weighing on people's minds as 89 Lok Sabha seats go to the polls on Friday.

Many senior BJP and opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Shashi Tharoor

of the Congress, and Union ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Kailash Choudhary and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, are in the fray as polling enters many saffron strongholds. In 2019, the BJP had won 53 and its existing allies 12 of these seats, including seven of eight in Uttar Pradesh, all 13, eight and seven in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh respectively, and four of the five seats each in Assam and Bihar. The constituents of the now

HIGHLIGHT

● A BJP ally in the last national elections, Uddhav Thackeray is now the face of the INDIA bloc in Maharashtra while the official version of the Shiv Sena he once headed is a BJP ally under the leadership of Eknath Shinde.

INDIA bloc had won 23 seats in the last general election.

Seeking to better its tally, the BJP must not

only retain its bastions but also make fresh inroads as it takes on the opposition INDIA bloc in a battle of narratives, with Modi leading its charge.

Following the first phase polls in 102 seats on April 19, the prime minister has stepped up his attack on the Congress, accusing it of seeking to provide nationwide reservation to Muslims in the quotas meant for Other Backward Classes.

He has also warned voters in his poll rallies

that a Congress government at the Centre will snatch their assets, including women's 'mangalsutra', to benefit those who are "intruders" and have more children as he cited a speech of his predecessor Manmohan Singh to back his claim.

The Congress, in turn, has accused him of lying and spreading communal divide, claiming that he has been rattled by the BJP's poor show and complaining to the Election Commission against him.

LOK SABHA POLLS

13 seats in Rajasthan to go to polls in second phase today

Congress, SP harbour negative sentiments for India: Yogi

AGRA: Mounting a blistering attack on the opposition, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Thursday said those who are against welfare and development initiatives, and a secure India are conspiring against the country once again. Speaking at a rally here in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said the Congress and the Samajwadi Party harbour negative sentiments towards India. The members of the "INDI alliance" have a track record of "betraying the nation and dividing the society" on the basis of caste, religion and language", he said. Adityanath alleged that whenever they were in power, they made deliberate efforts to rob rights of the Scheduled Castes, he said.

Press Trust Of India

Polling will be held on Friday at 28,758 booths from 7 am to 6 pm. Around 2.80 crore voters are eligible to vote in the second phase.

JAIPUR: After a high-voltage electioneering in Rajasthan polling on 13 out of 25 Lok Sabha seats will be held on Friday.

Among the 152 candidates in the fray in this phase are two Union ministers, the BJP state president and a former Assembly Speaker. The sons of two former chief ministers are also contesting in this phase of Lok Sabha elections. This is the final phase of elec-



Paramilitary personnel conduct a march on the eve of the 2nd phase of LS elections.

FACTFILE

● Along with Lok Sabha, a by-election will also be held in Bagidora assembly seat in Banswara which became vacant after Congress MLA joined BJP

tions for Rajasthan where polling on 12 seats was held in the first phase on April 19. Along with Lok Sabha general elections, a by-election will also be held in Bagidora assembly seat in Banswara which became vacant after Congress MLA Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya joined BJP.

Malviya is contesting the Lok Sabha election from Banswara as the BJP candidate. More than 1.72 lakh personnel have been deployed on election duty to ensure free and fair polls while 82,487 security personnel including policemen, home guards, forest guards and jawans.

KHARGE WRITES TO PM MODI

Cong chief seeks time to explain party's 'Nyay Patra'

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sought time from him to explain in person the party's 'Nyay Patra'. In his two-page letter, he told the prime minister that he is being misinformed by his advisors about things that are

not even written in the 'Nyay Patra' -- the Congress' manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections.

The letter comes after the prime minister attacked the Congress over its manifesto, alleging that the party aims to "redistribute the wealth" of people and give it away to "infiltrators".

Modi also accused the Congress of snatching

It has become your habit to seize on a few words taken out of context and create a communal divide.

Mallikarjun Kharge
Congress chief



women's "mangalsutra". In his letter, Kharge said the Congress' 'Nyay Patra' aims at providing "nyay (justice)" to the youngsters, women, farmers, labourers and marginalised people across all castes and communities.

"You are lowering the dignity of the chair by speaking in this manner," he said.

If Cong govt is formed at Centre, charges of labourers would be doubled

Jyotsna Mahant
Congress LS candidate



Chhattisgarh



Forest property worth lakhs was destroyed due to recent fire which broke out in the region of Sukhanala Barrage hill adjacent to the headquarters Dongargaon.

Action taken against those selling spurious food items

Action was taken against traders and retailers of the region for selling spurious food items and misleading the general public allegedly

Central Chronicle News

KOREA: Action was taken against traders and retailers of the region for selling spurious food items and misleading the general public allegedly. The action was taken by Additional District Magistrate of Baikunthpur, Arun Kumar Markam with a fine of Rs 5,000 imposed on each in a case verdict for the year 2020.

The traders imposed fine are namely, Shashank Jigyasi (Food Seller) M/s Kumar Medicos, Baikunthpur, Narendra Kumar Kothari (Distributor/Wholesaler) Narendra Pharma, Kothari Bhawan Krishna

Nagar, Raipur and Rajnikant Gupta (Manufacturer) M/s Gupta Honey Main Road, Ward No. 44, Old Daudpur Phatak, Alwar, Rajasthan.

The accused had put misleading stickers on 'Bee Honey' in a pack of 250 grams as '100 percent natural and pure'. The sample of 250 grams of 'Bee Honey' packed, lot number 174.10 MFG October was sent to the State Food Analyst, Raipur for testing, on which the said food item was declared 'normal but misbranded' i.e. standard but misbranded.

On which under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, Section

HIGHLIGHT

● The sample of 250 grams of 'Bee Honey' packed after testing was declared 'normal but misbranded' i.e. standard but misbranded.

● Action was taken under Section 26 (2) (PP), 27 (3) (C) for storing (packed) for sale.

26 (2) (PP), 27 (3) (C), 27 (2) (C). Due to violation of Section 27 (1) by the accused, the charge sheet was presented in this court to punish them with penalty under Section 52 (1) of the Act.

Accused Shashank Jigyasi, food seller, Narendra Kothari distributor and wholesaler and Rajnikant Gupta manufacturer were asked to answer on the basis of prosecution and documents, on which all three accused admitted their mistake and were satisfied with the investigation report of the State Food Analyst, Raipur, due to which there was no need for arguments from either side.

After observing the case and the reply presented by the accused, under Section 27 (1) of the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, the manufacturer or packer of

any food item will be liable for such food item as long as it does not comply with the provisions of this Act and the rules made there under.

Thus, in the absence of factual information on the part of M/s Gupta Honey Processors, the food item 'Bee Honey' (packed) weight 250 grams, lot number 174.10 MFG, written in the month of October as 100 percent natural and pure, was not acceptable, thus M/s Gupta Honey Processor was booked for violation of Section 26 (2) (PP), 27 (1) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and M/s Narendra Pharma.

First preliminary randomization today

KOREA: With hardly 12 days left for the third leg of polling to be held in Korba Parliamentary constituency, the District Election office, Baikunthpur-Korea are imparting training to officers and employees continuously to ensure free & fair polling. Apart from this they are also carrying out public awareness among the voters to ensure cent percent voting. On the other hand, the general observers appointed by EC are getting familiarized with the actual arrangements being made at the polling centres and are obtaining information about security from the concerned officers. The first preliminary randomization of EVM Machines will be held at Govt Model Ramanuj HS School, in Baikunthpur on April 26.

Additional Secretary, Coal Ministry visited SECL

Central Chronicle News

Nagaraju visited the Pelma OC mine in Raigarh area

KORBA: Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal M. Nagaraju (I.P.S.) visited SECL Raigarh area. On reaching Raigarh area, CMD Dr. Prem Sagar Mishra warmly welcomed M. Nagaraju. Nagaraju visited the Pelma OC mine in Raigarh area given to Pelma Collieries for operation on MDO mode last year and reviewed the progress of the project.

It may be noted that last year SECL had signed an agreement with Pelma Collieries for the operation of Pelma open mine located in Raigarh area. According to the agree-



Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal M. Nagaraju (I.P.S.) visited SECL Raigarh area

FACTFILE

● Nagaraju visited the Pelma OC mine in Raigarh area given to Pelma Collieries for operation on MDO mode last year

ment, Pelma Collieries will operate the mine for the next 20 years, under which Pelma Collieries will be responsible for all activities related to designing, financing, procurement, construction, operation and maintenance of this project.

A total of more than 219 million tonnes of coal is proposed to be extracted from the mine during a period of 20 years, with a target of extracting a maximum of 15 million tonnes of coal in a year.

TEACHERS COMPLAINT

CGATSSF on opening of account in Pvt. Bank

Central Chronicle News

KHAIRAGARH: Chhattisgarh Assistant Teacher Samagra Shiksha Federation (CATSSF) has lodged an objection to some coordinators of the Education Department forcing the teachers of the district to open salary accounts in a private bank by citing certain benefits. District President Ramlal

Sahu has alleged, claiming the objection that some teachers are being forced and lured to open accounts in a certain private bank, by quoting the orders of the DEO, BEO and the Collector.

Sahu further alleged that the Jangalpur and Dhodha cluster coordinator of Chhuikhadan block is calling the teachers posted in the schools

No order has been given to change the account. Teachers can choose the bank as per their convenience.

Lalji Dwivedi
DEO



under both the clusters in the scorching heat and getting them to open salary accounts, whereas no such written order has been given by the departmental officers. Ramlal Sahu further alleged that the teachers are forced to open accounts forty-five kilometres away, whereas as per the rules of RBI, accident insurance is given to the govt employees.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

LS POLLS

District hq's Khairagarh all set to vote for LS 2024 under Collector guidance

KHAIRAGARH: The district is all set to vote for Lok Sabha Elections 2024, and preparations have also been almost completed, under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer Chandrakant Verma.

There are a total of 19 polling stations in Khairagarh city, in which 8869 men and 9424 women, thus a total of 18293 voters will exercise their franchise. District Election Office and Municipal Council Khairagarh have made elaborate arrangements for peaceful voting and special attention has been paid to the basic facilities in all the polling stations and by running voter awareness campaigns in every ward and important places, and voters of every section of the community have been motivated to vote and also for the convenience of the voters through BLOs.

FOREST FIRE

Forest fire reported near Sukhanala Barrage in Bamhanibhaantha



DONGARGAON: Reports of forest fire in Bamhanibhaantha forest near Sukhanala Barrage which is spreading very fast has been lodged by villagers across the area.

According to the villagers, the fire in the forest was seen on Tuesday evening, after which the forest department employees were informed, but due to the intense heat, the fire is spreading rapidly in the forest and it has not been controlled yet.

Variety of prog marks Hanuman Janmotsav City celebrates Hanuman Janmotsav with fervour



DONGARGAON: Various events marked the Janmotsav celebrations of Siyaram devotee Shiromani Lord Hanuman, and the entire region plunged into devotion, as traditional rituals and processions were organised in all small and big Hanuman temples. Apart from various preparations, a saffron clad rally was carried out in the city a few days ago, and a day before, a bike rally was organized with the hymns in the oldest south facing Hanuman temple of the city.

On the day of Hanuman Janmotsav, a Prabhat Pheri also took place in the morning, which passed through the main roads of the city and ended at

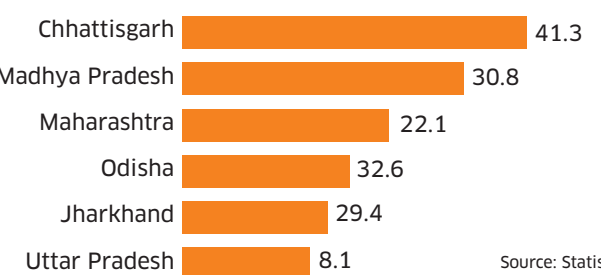
the Hanuman temple. Various social workers and devotees distributed sweets, cold drinks etc. to the large number of children, women and men devotees walking in the Prabhat Pheri along the entire route.

Tribal dance was the centre of attraction in the Prabhat Pheri, along with Ramayana recitation, Sundarkand bhajan etc. organized throughout the day. In the evening, a bhajan program was organized by the city's famous bhajan singer Devendra Goswami, and on the other hand, after worshipping as per rituals, the devotees had darshan of their adored Lord and offered Bhog.

The Day's NUMBERS

Percentage of the forest cover in the country as on 2023

FOREST COVER (%) AS ON DECEMBER 31 2023



Source: Statista

FIRE OUTBREAK

Hotel gutted down in massive fire outbreak in village Badgaon

DONGARGAON: A massive fire, due to fall of electrical fixing led to a hotel being burnt to ashes in village Badgaon Charbhantha area. According to the information received on the spot, in village Badgaon Charbhantha of Revenue Inspector Division Khujji, the electric wire got broken due to falling of trees due to storm late on Tuesday night, thereafter which short circuit engulfed Patel Hotel on the roadside and caught fire. Staff of a nearby hospital, informed the owner Sanjay Patel and father Budhuram Patel, after which the villagers rushed to douse off the fire spread, but reportedly due to fear of electric current and explosion of the gas cylinder kept in the hotel, there was a lot of delay in controlling the fire. The electricity department employee was informed and called to the spot and after cutting the power, fire brigade started the extinguishing the fire, but by then the hotel was completely burnt down to ashes.

CAMPAIGN

Campaign for safe crossing of closed railway crossings



BILASPUR: In order to prevent accidents at level crossings, a special safety campaign is being conducted by the Divisional Safety Department in coordination with various departments to raise awareness of precautions and rules among road users to safely cross level crossings from April 22 to May 01, 2024, for 10 days.

Under this campaign, Divisional Rail Manager Praveen Pandey and Senior Divisional Safety Officer Saket Ranjan are leading the planned efforts to provide guidance and distribute pamphlets related to protection awareness to pedestrians.

Fire broke out in Shri Cement Plant in Khparadih

When news about fire broke in the plant, the employees were panicky

Central Chronicle News

KHARORA: Fire broke out in Shri Cement Plant in Khparadih near Balodabazar on Saturday when the waste from the plant was being disposed off. People from the entire region were surprised and curious about the intensity of fire, as the black smoke assumed proportions in no time and created sensation in the region. People were having all sorts of talks and this remained centre of discussions.

When news about fire broke in the plant, the employees were panicky and in no time the fire-brigade from the plant was called and the fire-fighters started the work of dousing the fire, but it was in vain. This fire broke out in the afternoon hours and the fire-fighting team tried its level best to douse the fire.

When the fire broke out in the plant, the media team tried to know about the reasons behind it. But till late it was not informed how the fire broke out. Since the intensity of fire was high, therefore it could not be brought under control on time. It is learnt that the company is reported to have face loss worth



Fire broke out in Shri Cement plant when the waste was being disposed.

lakhs in this fire

The smoke emitting from the plant left everyone curious about the fire and people in large numbers left out towards the plant. Finally it was after lots of efforts and with repetition of fire-brigade vehicles, that by evening it could be brought under control. Meanwhile it is learnt that the management of Shri Cement has not informed about fire to the police administration and this shows lack of concern on part of the management.

SP Trilok Bansal chairs marathon meeting for Lok Sabha elections

In the view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections 2024, Superintendent of Police, Trilok Bansal here took a marathon meeting of Central Paramilitary Force in-charges including CRPF, ITBP, CAF Force and police station in-charges and instructions were given to remain alert in order to conduct a smooth election process. The SP gave special instructions

HIGHLIGHT

- SP gave special instructions to conduct elections smoothly in Vananchal Naxal affected areas
- Necessary guidelines were given regarding taking immediate legal action as per rules

to conduct elections smoothly in Vananchal Naxal affected areas away from the district headquarters, in police station Bakarkatta, Mohgaon, Salhewara, Gatapara, Gandai, Chhuikhadan, Thelkadih and police station Khairagarh and necessary instructions were given to the central paramilitary forces to conduct peaceful voting.

'Get involved in the execution of departmental work'

Central Chronicle News

He said that most of the time this year will be spent on election work, keeping this in mind, discharge all the responsibilities in the working season in less time

JAGDALPUR: Collector Vijay Dayaram K congratulating all the officers and employees for discharging their responsibilities in a better manner and for successfully conducting the voting under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024. He said that all the officers and employees did the given election related responsibilities with full dedication and team spirit. Voting responsibilities were performed better by women officers and employees. Women officers also performed the responsibilities of Sector Officer and Nodal Officer very well.

Accepting the challenge of conducting fair and uninterrupted voting in the district in a peaceful manner, the work was done with good planning and team spirit, with the coordinated efforts of everyone, the encouraging result of which is in front of us.

He congratulated everyone for their direct and indirect participation in voting. In view of the success of women employees in discharging their

responsibilities in voting under the Lok Sabha elections, the Collector talked about getting voting done by women officers and employees in the entire assembly constituency during the upcoming elections. He said that most of the time this year will be spent on election work, keeping this in mind, discharge all the responsibilities in the working season in less time. After the election responsibilities, the Collector directed the

FASTFACTS

- He congratulated everyone for their direct and indirect participation in voting
- Collector talked about getting voting done by women officers and employees in the entire assembly

officers to gather for the execution of departmental work. In this direction, the concerned office heads should ensure the presence of all their officers and employees during office hours. Bring updated progress in carrying out departmental work.

He gave instructions for regular monitoring by carrying out the construction works at a faster pace in the working season to complete the already ongoing construction works.

NEWSLINE

POLL CAMPAIGN

MLA initiates 'People Connect Campaign'



BILASPUR: MLA Amar Agrawal has accelerated the People Connect Campaign for the second phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. To defeat the candidates of Congress and other parties in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and to woo voters, Amar Agrawal is consistently engaging with people through 'Tea Talks' programs. Today, MLA Amar Agrawal was present with supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party at various locations in Bilaspur area including Tilak Nagar, Vinoba Nagar, Juna Bilaspur, Torwa in front of Dhanmandi, Chatarjeegalli Sarakanda, Durga Pandal for 'Tea Talks' programs.

VOTER AWARENESS

SVEEP activities for voter awareness continues

KORBA: Under the direction of Collector and District Election Officer Ajit Vasant and guidance of SVEEP Nodal Officer Sambit Mishra, in order to create voter awareness, for Lok Sabha Elections 2024, a rally was organized here in the district. Same way the target to acquire 100 percent voters are being made aware through slogan writing and various programs like essay, speech, mehndi competition, poster making by school students.

In this series, rural women made posters in Gram Panchayat Mungadih of Pali District Panchayat and took out an awareness rally in the village giving the message of 100 percent voting.

FIRE

Forest property worth lakhs destroyed by fire



DONGARGAON: Forest property worth lakhs was destroyed due to recent fire which broke out in the region of Sukhanala Barrage hill adjacent to the headquarters Dongargaon. Though the fire was brought, under control late in the night after rain, but as per information the laxity on part of the Department in controlling the fire is under question. As per resources, the villagers had informed the concerned officials no sooner than the fire had erupted, and by the time the Department reached the spot trying to extinguish the fire with half-baked resources, the fire had already destroyed a long spell of land.

Bastar Comm and IG inspect Strong Room of Kanker LS

Central Chronicle News

Bastar Commissioner Shyam Dhawade and IG Sundarraj P carried out inspection of the Strong Room at Government Polytechnic College of Kanker Lok Sabha constituency here on Wednesday.

JAGDALPUR: Bastar Commissioner Shyam Dhawade and IG Sundarraj P went out to take stock of the preparations for the Lok Sabha elections 2024 and carried out inspection of the Strong Room at Government Polytechnic College of Kanker Lok Sabha constituency here on Wednesday.

Collector and District Election Officer Abhijeet Singh, while giving information about the distribution system of voting material of

Antargarh, Kanker and Bhanupratappur assembly constituencies, also informed about other arrangements of the Strong Room, security, counting place, departure of parties, parking arrangements of vehicles. In view of the heat, Commissioner Dhawade directed to take care of the facilities of the polling personnel in the distribution of voting material.

IG Sundarraj P discussed with Superintendent of Police I. Kalyan Alesela regarding the security of polling parties along with the deployment of Police Sector Officer and wished him best wishes for better implementation.

During the inspection, Joint Collector Mr. Arun Verma, Additional Superintendent of Police Manisha Thakur and other officers associated with election responsibilities were present.

People of the country are suffering from inflation

ANWARI: A street meeting was organized by the Congress Party on April 24 in village Parkhanda, in which State Congress Committee President Deepak Baij was present as the chief guest. In his address, Baij said that the backs of laborers and farmers have been broken during the rule of BJP government and the Modi government has no control over inflation. The number of unemployed is increasing and Prime Minister Modi is filling the country's money in the pockets of big industrialists, asserting that if GST money was invested in development today, inflation would not have increased. Youth unemployment has increased in the last 10 years, on which the BJP government does not pay any attention, he accused stating that with the coming of Cong govt, farmers will be exempted from GST on fertilizers and seeds and under Mahatma Jyoti Jyoti Yojana, women from poor families will be given.

Addl Secy, Ministry of Coal reviews SECL mega projects

Central Chronicle News

Many important topics related to coal mining and dispatch were discussed

KORBA: Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal M. Nagaraju (IAS), on a visit to SECL, held a review meeting of SECL at Gevra House in which Coal India Chairman PM Prasad along with CMD Dr. Prem Sagar Mishra was also present.

Many important topics related to coal mining and dispatch were discussed in the meeting. Additional Secretary M. Nagaraju emphasized on eco-friendly dispatch through FMC, mine expansion, land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement, use of eco-friendly surface miner, continuous miner for mining coal, coal



Addl Secretary, Ministry of Coal M. Nagaraju (IAS) held a review meeting of SECL at Gevra House here on Wednesday.

FASTFACTS

- Nagaraju emphasized on eco-friendly dispatch through FMC, mine expansion, land acquisition
- Coal still remains a reliable source of energy in our country, all of you will have an important role in nation building

crushing etc. During the meeting, the teams of Gevra, Dipka and Kusmunda megaprojects outlined their plans for achieving the targets set for the FY24-25 through presentation.

On arrival, Additional Secretary M Nagaraju was given a guard of honour by the security contingent. In view of the summer season, the

Additional Secretary also distributed welfare kits to the local vegetable vendors and also planted saplings. Earlier, on the arrival, Coal India Chairman PM Prasad was warmly welcomed by CMD Dr. Prem Sagar Mishra. M Nagaraju and Coal India Chairman PM Prasad interacted with the young executives of SECL at Gevra Recreational Club.

LOKSHABHA ELECTION

Participation of women in elections is a matter of pride: Meena

Central Chronicle News

KORBA: Under Lok Sabha Elections 2024, women polling parties are being provided training at Swami Atmanand Vidyalaya Vidyat Griha Higher School No. 1. and General Observer of Korba Lok Sabha Preamsingh Meena and Collector Ajit Vasant on reaching the training venues asked the women undergoing training staff to seriously understand the important information

being given by the Master Trainers in carrying out their responsibilities under the Lok Sabha elections and to resolve their doubts by repeatedly asking questions if they do not understand it.

Observer PS Meena said that hands-on is necessary for better operation of EVMs and praising this initiative of making women take up the responsibility of voting in Korba Assembly under Korba Lok Sabha, he told the women



undergoing training that your participation in the election work is a matter of pride.

The Collector encouraged the women and said that as important as voting is to strengthen democracy, it is equally important to complete the voting tasks without any mistakes. The Collector instructed the presiding officer to officers one, two and three of the polling party to coordinate among them and carry



General observer told the women that their participation in the election work is a matter of pride

Preamsingh Meena
General Observer

out the election work in a phased manner as per the guidelines.

The Collector also told the women undergoing training that this time the number of candidates is more; hence two ballot units will be installed and the entire process of voting will be conducted in the same way as it happens in a ballot unit and there will be no change in the voting process due to installation of two ballot units.



QUOTE FROM THE QUOTABLE

A person should not be too honest.
Straight trees are cut first and Honest
people are screwed first.
[Chanakya]

Comment

A Decade Of Change And Politics of Performance

OUR VIEW |

Urgent action needed against unethical medical practices

The spotlight on misleading advertisements, particularly within the realm of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and healthcare, has brought to the fore critical concerns regarding public health and ethical practices. The Supreme Court's proactive stance in addressing this issue is a welcome step towards safeguarding consumer interests and promoting transparency in advertising. While the controversy surrounding Patanjali Ayurved has garnered significant attention, it is crucial to recognize that the problem extends beyond a single entity. Misleading advertisements have far-reaching implications, especially for vulnerable segments of society such as babies, schoolgoing children, and senior citizens. The court's call for action from both the Centre and state licensing authorities underscores the need for a collective effort to combat this menace. The judiciary's scrutiny of unethical practices within the medical fraternity is equally noteworthy. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has been questioned about the conduct of its members who may be engaging in practices detrimental to public health. This scrutiny highlights the importance of holding all stakeholders accountable for upholding ethical standards in healthcare delivery. The Supreme Court's insistence on examining the Ministry of Ayush's actions further underscores the need for transparency and consistency in regulatory measures. The ministry's decision to refrain from enforcing Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, aimed at curbing inappropriate advertisements, raises concerns about the government's commitment to combating unethical practices. In light of these developments, it is imperative for the Central Government to take proactive measures to address the issue of misleading advertising in the healthcare sector. Strict enforcement of existing laws and regulations, coupled with regular advisories to stakeholders, can serve as deterrents against unethical behavior. Ultimately, the health and well-being of the public should remain paramount, and any attempt to prioritize financial gains over ethical considerations must be met with swift and decisive action.

GUEST VIEW |

India's Resilience: Dispelling Notions of Constitutional Peril

The notion that India and its Constitution are under threat lacks substantial evidence. Genuine peril for a nation arises from compromised borders, external aggression, internal turmoil, or a breakdown of law and order—conditions absent in India presently. India has fortified its defense capabilities, projecting strength and security regionally. Its foreign policy exhibits resilience and pragmatism, steering clear of undue pressure. Even amidst crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, the government ensures food security and social welfare, upholding democratic principles. India's economy thrives, garnering global acclaim for its progress and growth trajectory. The Constitution remains a robust framework, safeguarding citizens' rights through fair elections and orderly power transitions. With unity under one flag and constitution, India stands tall as the world's largest democracy, dispelling notions of imminent danger. Claims of impending peril overlook India's resilient institutions and democratic ethos. The nation's commitment to upholding the rule of law and preserving democratic values remains unwavering, countering narratives of crisis and instability.



Dr. Krishna Kumar vepakomma

In the tumultuous landscape of global politics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been a beacon of stability and progress for India. As he unveiled the Sankalp Patra of his party, he emphasized the crucial need for a stable government capable of fulfilling the aspirations of its people and contributing to global recovery efforts, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India's response to the pandemic under Modi's leadership was nothing short of remarkable. Despite initial skepticism from the West, India emerged as a global leader in vaccine manufacturing, showcasing its self-reliance and humanitarian values. Modi's emphasis on initiatives like 'Vocal for Local' and 'Make in India' revitalized the manufacturing sector, leading to unprecedented growth and resilience, even amid the pandemic-induced economic downturn. India's vaccine diplomacy, exemplified by initiatives like 'Vaccine Maitri,' underscored its com-

mitment to global solidarity and cooperation.

Modi's journey in national politics since 2014 has been transformative, challenging conventional wisdom and ushering in a new era of governance. Amid doubts about the efficacy of multiparty democracy, Modi's decisive leadership and visionary agenda reshaped the political landscape. His government's bold initiatives, from demonetization to the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), stirred debates and controversies but ultimately propelled India towards economic modernization and transparency.

Critics may point to the challenges and controversies that accompanied Modi's tenure, but the undeniable impact of his policies cannot be overlooked. Initiatives like opening nearly 50 crore new bank accounts and constructing 12 crore toilets across the country have transformed the lives of millions, especially women and marginalized communities. Modi's commitment to transparency and

accountability is evident in his government's efforts to slash intermediaries and establish a more inclusive and accessible governance system.

One of Modi's most significant achievements has been his handling of sensitive geopolitical issues, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. His decision to abrogate Article 370 and bifurcate the state for administrative ease, though controversial, has ushered in a new era of peace and development in the region. Along India's borders, Modi's government has demonstrated unwavering resolve in defending the nation's interests, whether against China's belligerence in the Doklam sector or Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Modi's vision extends beyond India's borders, as evidenced by his efforts to promote global peace and unity. His leadership during India's G20 Presidency and diplomatic engagements with world leaders have positioned India as a responsible global actor committed to fostering cooperation and stability. The construction of the Ram temple

at Ayodhya symbolizes India's cultural resurgence under Modi's leadership, transcending politics and uniting the nation under a shared heritage.

As India stands at the threshold of a new era, Modi's leadership remains pivotal in shaping its future trajectory. Despite facing criticism and opposition, his unwavering commitment to India's progress and development continues to inspire confidence and optimism. With the opposition fragmented and unable to match Modi's vision and popularity, the path ahead seems firmly guided by his leadership.

In conclusion, Narendra Modi's decade of leadership has been marked by transformative change, strategic governance, and unwavering commitment to India's welfare. His journey from a controversial figure to a statesman has left an indelible mark on India's socio-economic fabric, shaping its destiny and inspiring future generations to strive for excellence and innovation.



M.R. LALU

Freelance Journalist

India's Impact Investment Change

Impact investment in India blends financial goals with societal needs, fostering sustainable growth by addressing pressing challenges through innovative solutions guided by the SDGs.



Prof. B. D. Mishra

Professor, Department of Management Studies, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur.



India's embrace of impact investment offers hope for tackling pressing societal and environmental challenges. | Photo: AP



M.R. LALU

Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur.

In recent years, the global financial landscape has shifted towards investments that yield profits while fostering positive societal and environmental change. This transformation, epitomized by impact investment, has gained momentum worldwide. At its core lies the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comprising 17 objectives aimed at addressing global challenges like poverty, inequality, and climate change. These goals guide investors towards opportunities that promote a more sustainable and equitable world. India, with its vast population and diverse challenges, resonates strongly with the concept of impact investment. Tackling issues such as poverty, healthcare accessibility, and environmental degradation is critical in India, making impact investment a compelling approach. By directing capital into ventures that deliver measurable social and environmental benefits alongside financial returns, impact investment holds the promise of catalyzing significant change across the nation.

A key driver of impact investment in India is the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the reg-

ulatory authority overseeing the country's capital markets. SEBI has taken proactive steps to promote impact investing, such as introducing guidelines for issuing green bonds in 2019. These bonds finance projects with environmental benefits like renewable energy and clean transportation, ensuring transparency and accountability in fund utilization. Additionally, SEBI has mandated listed companies to disclose their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance as part of their

annual reporting, fostering transparency and encouraging sustainability integration into business strategies.

Beyond regulatory efforts, there is growing momentum among Indian businesses and investors to embrace impact investing as a strategy for sustainable growth and social impact. Entrepreneurs are integrating social and environmental goals into their business models, recognizing the potential to create value for investors and society. Institutional investors, including

banks and asset managers, are exploring impact investment opportunities as part of their commitment to sustainability. Impact investment in India spans various sectors, addressing urgent societal needs like healthcare in rural areas and sustainable agriculture among smallholder farmers. A distinguishing feature of impact investing is its focus on measuring and reporting social and environmental outcomes alongside financial performance. Impact investors use metrics like jobs

created, carbon emissions reduced, and lives improved to assess the effectiveness of their investments. This quantification enables informed decision-making, progress monitoring, and effective communication of impact to stakeholders. Looking ahead, scaling impact investment in India requires collaboration among stakeholders and overcoming barriers like regulatory complexity and limited access to capital. Raising awareness and building capacity among investors and entrepreneurs, especially in underserved regions, is essential for nurturing an inclusive impact investment ecosystem.

Aligning financial investments with impact objectives presents significant potential for driving positive change in India. By embracing impact investing principles and integrating sustainability into investment decisions, investors can achieve attractive financial returns while contributing to the SDGs and societal well-being. With support from SEBI, growing interest from businesses and investors, and a diverse range of impactful opportunities, India is poised to emerge as a leading hub for impact investment.

YOUR LETTERS

Tree cover loss

India faces an annual loss of 200 hectares of tree cover, releasing 50 million tonnes of CO₂. Leading the toll are Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, and Meghalaya. This loss encompasses more than deforestation, including logging, wildfires, disease, and storms. Remote sensing techniques aid in monitoring and safeguarding forests. Addressing this crisis requires the establishment of dedicated forest corridors and the promotion of agroforestry practices to mitigate the impact and ensure sustainable management.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Constitutional stability

Despite recent assertions, India's constitutional integrity stands firm. Bolstered by a robust military and stable governance, the nation remains secure. There's no crisis of hunger or anarchy, with the judiciary operating independently. India's foreign policy exhibits strength, and government aid reaches the needy. Overall, India emerges as stronger, safer, and more developed, with no imminent threats to its constitutional fabric. Concerns propagated about the nation's stability seem unfounded in light of its current state.

Yash Pal Raihan, Jalandhar

Send your articles (600-650 words) and letters (70-80 words) for this page on: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity.

Business



AI offers remarkable opportunity for India
Savi Soin,
 Qualcomm India President



SBI Chairman Dinesh Khara with SBI Card MD & CEO Abhijit Chakravorty during the launch of SBI Card, in Mumbai, Tuesday. | Photo: PTI

BizBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

Q4 RESULT

IHCL PAT rises 29% to Rs 438 crore, total income at Rs 1,951 crore

MUMBAI: The Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) on Wednesday reported a 29.36 per cent growth in consolidated profit after tax to Rs 438.33 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The hospitality company had reported a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs 338.84 crore in the year-ago period. For the financial year 2023-24, IHCL reported a consolidated PAT of Rs 1,330.24 crore as against Rs 1,052.83 crore in the previous fiscal.

Its total income rose to Rs 1,951.46 crore during the quarter under review, from Rs 1,654.54 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing. However, its total expenses also increased to Rs 1,416.77 crore as against Rs 1,254.52 crore a year ago. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & CEO of IHCL, said, "With 53 signings in FY2024, IHCL achieved a portfolio of 310 hotels, enabled by attaining scale in each of our brands and forming strategic alliances in new market segments".

INDICATORS

Share MARKETS

Market	Close	%chg
Sensex:	74,339.44	+0.66
Nifty	22,570.35	+0.75
Nifty, MidCap	50,228.50	+0.47
Nifty SmallCap	16,886.50	+0.84
Nifty Bank	48,494.95	+0.63

Closing rates as on Apr 25, 2024 at 5:30p.m. (IST)

Forex RATES

Foreign currency Vs Rupee

US Dollar	83.31
Euro	89.34
Chinese Yuan	11.49
UAE Dirham	22.68
Pakistan Rupee	0.29
Sri Lanka Rupee	0.28

On Apr 25, 2024

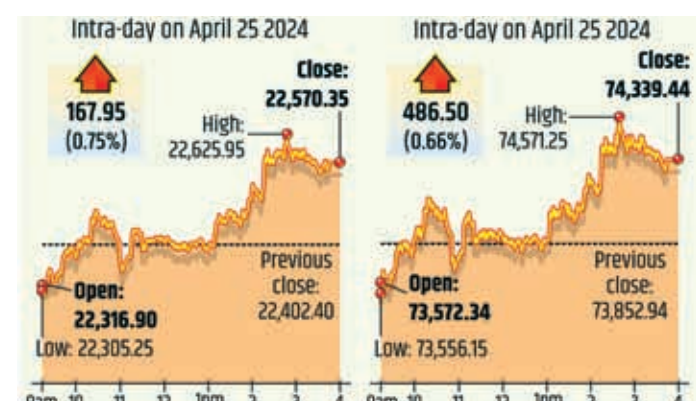
World INDICES

Stock	Value	% chg
Dow Jones (US)	38,460.92	-0.11%
FTSE 100 Index	8,101.75	+0.76%
Nikkei 225 (JPN)	37,628.48	-2.16%
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,530.28	+0.25%

Index at 05:30 p.m. (IST, Apr 25, 2024)

How markets behaved today

Markets extend gains for 5th session; Sensex revisits 74,000 mark



MUMBAI: Rising for the fifth straight session, equity benchmark Sensex rallied nearly 500 points to reclaim the 74,000 mark while the Nifty closed above the 22,550 level on Thursday, driven by heavy buying in banking, financial and metal stocks. Recovering after a sell-off in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 486.50 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 74,339.44. During the day, it surged 718.31 points or 0.97 per cent to 74,571.25. The NSE Nifty advanced 167.95 points or 0.75 per cent to 22,570.35. From the Sensex basket,

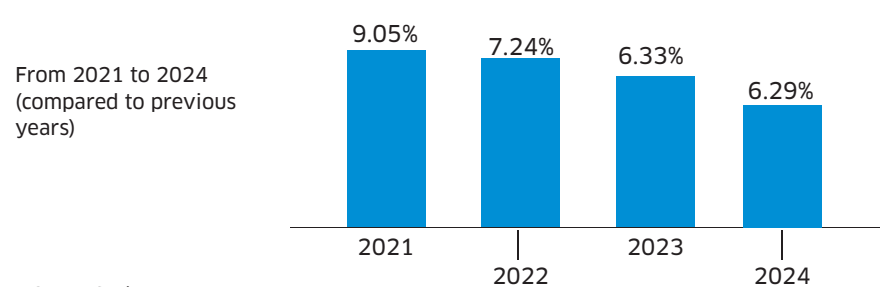
Axis Bank jumped 6 per cent after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,599 crore during the March 2024 quarter. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled lower while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading on a mixed note.

Major Gainers: SBI, NTPC, Nestle, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, ITC, M&M and HCL Tech.

Major Losers: Hindustan Unilever, Titan, Bajaj Finance, Maruti and Asian Paints.

The Day's NUMBERS

REAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH IN INDIA



Source: Statista

ROAMING PACKS

Airtel unveils affordable International Roaming packs for customers

NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel, one of India's leading telecommunications service providers, unveiled affordable international roaming packs for customers travelling abroad. The new packs include access to 184 countries and the tariffs start at as low as Rs. 133/day, making them an affordable option even when compared to local sims. In addition, they offer enhanced data benefits, in-flight connectivity and 24x7 contact centre support. To make things as convenient as possible, Airtel has also ensured that customers travelling to these 184 countries no longer need subscribe to multiple packs for various travel destinations and have the convenience to simply choose the duration of travel and enjoy seamless connectivity anywhere in the world through one single pack; and do this in the most affordable manner. Amit Tripathi - Director - Customer Experience and Marketing, Bharti Airtel, said, "At Airtel, our mission is to solve customer problems and offer greater convenience. PTI

BULLION MARKET

Gold slips Rs 110; silver jumps Rs 350 amid a decline in metal rates



NEW DELHI: Gold price on Thursday slipped Rs 110 to Rs 72,500 per 10 grams in the national capital amid a decline in the precious metal rates globally, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous session, the yellow metal had ended at Rs 72,610 per 10 grams. However, silver prices bounced Rs 350 to Rs 84,100 per kg. It had closed at Rs 83,750 per kg in the previous close. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,500 per 10 grams, down by Rs 110 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. PTI

India granted over 1 lakh patents in FY24, says Unnat Pandit

Pandit emphasised that India needs to strengthen its Intellectual Property position. "Year over year, the IP filing is increasing, in 2023-24 we got 90,300 patent filings.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India granted 1.03 lakh patents in financial year 2023-24, Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks Unnat Pandit said on Thursday, as he assured that there will be "no delay" in the Intellectual Property Office as it prioritises timely clearance of applications. Addressing an ASSOCHAM event here, he shared

that 40 per cent of the applications were disposed of within 30 months of the request for examination. 250 patents were granted. "We are going to have no delay in the IP office, that's the motive with which we have that IP should be granted and under Chapter 8 of the Act it should also be utilised by the applicant, that will generate the economic value of IP," Pandit said. "All the pendency got cleared so

NUMBER

250

- There will be "no delay" in the Intellectual Property Office as it prioritises timely clearance of applications

- In 2023, an all-time high of 90,300 patent applications were received.

now whatever application which is going to come for examination or hearing will be within the period of 30-36 months. So there is no delay which is going to happen now," he said on the sidelines of the event.

Pandit emphasised that India needs to strengthen its Intellectual Property position. "Year over year, the IP filing is increasing, in 2023-24 we got 90,300 patent filings. There is enough traction on not

just development of science and technology but equally protection and this high number of patent filing shows the confidence of research on getting it commercialised in the Indian economy," he said. The commerce and industry ministry had earlier said every 6 minutes one technology is seeking IP protection in India. In 2023, an all-time high of 90,300 patent applications were received.

QUARTERLY RESULT

Axis Bank posts Q4 net profit at Rs 7,599 crore

Press Trust Of India

The bank's net profit grew 17 per cent as compared to Rs 6,071 crore earnings recorded in the preceding quarter of FY24.

MUMBAI: Axis Bank reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,599 crore during March 2024 quarter, but expressed concerns over deposit accretion in the new fiscal. On a standalone basis, it reported a net profit of Rs 7,130 crore in the January-March period.

The bank had posted a loss in the year-ago period as a result of the impact of the acquisition of Citi's retail business. Sequentially, the bank's net profit grew 17 per cent as compared to Rs 6,071 crore earnings



Axis Bank Managing Director & CEO Amitabh Choudhary | Photo: PTI

FACTFILE

- Axis Bank added 475 branches in FY24 and its total network now stands at 5,377 branches.

- It had over 1.04 lakh employees as of March 2024. The overall capital adequacy stood at 16.63 per cent

recorded in the preceding quarter of FY24. In the entire FY24, the bank's net profit zoomed to Rs 24,861.43 crore from Rs 9,579.68 crore.

During the reporting quarter, its core net interest income grew 11 per cent to Rs 13,089 crore. Advances rose 14 per cent while the net interest margin expanded by 0.05 per

cent to 4.06 per cent. Axis Bank's managing director and chief executive Amitabh Choudhary told reporters that he sees deposit growth to remain a constraint and liquidity being tight going ahead as well. Its overall deposit growth came at 16 per cent, but the credit-to-deposit ratio came at a high of over 90 per cent.

PRICE HIKE

Audi to hike vehicle prices by up to 2 pc from June

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: German automaker Audi on Thursday said it will hike prices of its model range in India by up to 2 per cent from June, in order to offset the impact of rising input and transportation costs. The price hike will be effective from June 01, 2024, the automaker said in a statement. "Rising input

costs are compelling us to increase prices by up to 2 per cent effective June 1, 2024," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said. The price correction aims to ensure sustainable growth for the automaker and its dealer partners, he added. "It's our endeavour that the impact of rising costs is as minimal as possible for our customers," Dhillon



said. Audi India retailed 7,027 units in FY24 posting an overall 33 per cent sales growth. The company sells models like A4, Q3, Q5, RS Q8 in India. The company also offers a wide range of premium electric cars including Audi Q8 55 e-tron, Audi Q8 Sportback 50 e-tron, Audi Q8 Sportback 55 e-tron, Audi e-tron GT and Audi RS e-tron GT.



Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

MISHAP

Portion of NH-313 caves in due to landslide triggered by rain in Arunachal

ITANAGAR: A portion of National Highway-313 caved in due to a landslide, triggered by incessant rain in Arunachal Pradesh for the past few days, disrupting traffic movement, an official said on Thursday.

Surface communication to Dibang Valley district in the northeastern state snapped after the vital highway stretch, connecting Roing in Lower Dibang Valley with Anini, around 83 kilometres away from the India-China border, was damaged.

The road between Hunli and Anini, the Dibang Valley district headquarters, was damaged due to the landslide on Wednesday night, leaving the border district isolated from the mainland, he said. "The district administration has deployed workers and adequate machinery to repair the road on a war footing. **PTI**

INVESTIGATION

Maharashtra cyber cell summons actor Tamannaah Bhatia



MUMBAI: Maharashtra cyber cell has summoned actor Tamannaah Bhatia in connection with the alleged promotion of the viewing of IPL matches on a subsidiary app of the Mahadev online gaming and betting application, officials said on Thursday. The actor has been asked to appear before the Maharashtra cyber personnel on April 29, a senior police official said. Bhatia has been summoned for allegedly promoting the viewing of the IPL. **PTI**



Residents of Kerala arrive from Gulf countries at the Kochi Int'l Airport, in Kochi. | PTI PHOTO

Woman Collector urges people to vote on election day

A district information officer said the district administration implemented the programme, whereby the district collector would urge voters to exercise their rights

Press Trust Of India

KOTTAYAM: Kottayam District Collector V Vigneshwari, who is also the District Election Officer for the Kottayam parliamentary constituency, is pursuing a distinctive mission. Her focus is on rallying support for increased voter participation in the polls on April 26 in Kerala.

"Friday is our voting day. Don't forget to come and cast your votes," Vigneshwari appealed to passengers in a bus parked at a private bus stand at Nagampadam here on Thursday.

Curious passengers stood up as the 2015-batch IAS officer boarded the bus, making an appeal for their participation in the poll process.

They respectfully nodded positively, accepting a card pinned with a candy provided by the collector.

"Children, please tell your parents to cast their votes," she told children sitting on seats in the bus filled to capacity with passengers.

"What is in it (the card)?," she asked the children after giving it to them, and told them, "Tell father, mother, and

HIGHLIGHT

• Curious passengers stood up as the 2015-batch IAS officer boarded the bus

• People respectfully nodded positively, accepting a card pinned with a candy provided by the collector

friends to vote for the person they want as their MP."

She then proceeded towards the shops in the bus stand, making similar appeals.

"Have you reached voting age?," she asked

a group of girl students waiting for their bus.

When they answered "yes," she said, "So, please don't forget to vote tomorrow. You all are the backbone of our democracy. You may be first-time voters. Please cast your votes."

Later, talking to reporters, Vigneshwari said, "This is the festival of democracy, and we are inviting all to participate in it. So, all of us should cast our votes, spending an hour of our time."

She added: "All votes are valuable. That is why we are individually impressing upon them

the value of their votes," she said.

A district information officer said the district administration implemented the programme, whereby the district collector would urge voters to exercise their franchise, in collaboration with the Private Bus Owners Association.

A total of 194 contestants in 20 Lok Sabha seats are vying for voters' support as Kerala goes to the polls on Friday, after over a month-long fierce campaign by the CPI(M)-led ruling LDF, Congress-headed UDF, and the BJP-led NDA.

Ice cream vendor stabbed to death near India Gate

NEW DELHI: An ice cream vendor was stabbed to death near India Gate in the high-security area in central Delhi on Wednesday night in what police suspect was a crime related to a love triangle. The police arrested the accused from Noida in the early hours of Thursday, an official said. The victim, identified as Prabhat (25), was standing near his ice cream cart when he was attacked by Ajay alias Akshay at the C-Hexagon of India Gate at around 9 pm. Passersby informed the police after they saw Prabhat lying on the ground in an unconscious state, the police official said. DCP Devesh Mahla said due to the sensitivity of the case, around 12 police teams were formed.

This program anticipates the surge in passenger traffic during the summer months. Indian Railways recognizes the challenges faced by those traveling in unreserved compartments (General Class Coaches), who may not always have access to convenient and budget-friendly meal options.

BHUBANESWAR: Great news for budget-conscious travelers! Indian Railways along with Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is stepping up to

PASSENGER CONVENIENCE |

ECoR to provide economy meals at 9 important stations



A vendor selling economy meal at Khurda Road station.

FACTFILE

• Railways has significantly expanded the program, with counters now operational at over 100 stations

serve passengers, particularly those in unreserved coaches, with a new initiative offering hygienic meals and snacks at affordable prices. This program anticipates the surge in passenger traffic during the summer

months. Indian Railways recognizes the challenges faced by those traveling in unreserved compartments (General Class Coaches), who may not always have access to convenient and budget-friendly meal options.

COMMISSIONED |

112 medical graduates taken into armed forces

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A total of 112 medical graduates of the 58th batch of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune, have been commissioned into the armed forces, officials on Thursday said.

Of these 112 cadets commissioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services, 87 are Gentle-

men Cadets and 25 are Lady Cadets. 81 of them were commissioned into the Army, 10 commissioned into the Navy and 14 commissioned into the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

"In a spectacular ceremony one hundred and twelve medical graduates of the 58th batch of the Armed

The cadets performed exceptionally well in the MUHS winter 2023 examinations
Lt Gen Daljit Singh
DGAFMS

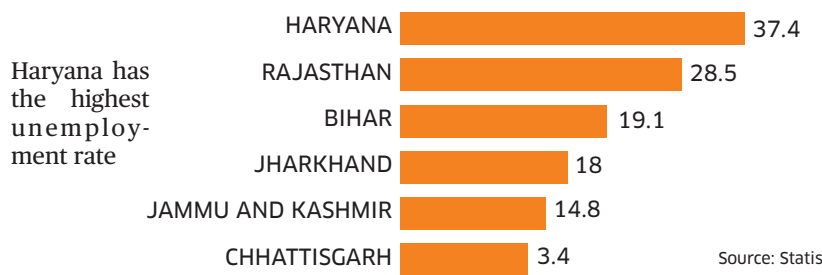


Forces Medical College, Pune, were commissioned into the Indian Armed Forces on April 25 at Capt Devashish Sharma, Kirti Chakra Parade Ground, AFMC," the ministry said.

The chief guest at the ceremony was Director (DGAFMS) and Senior Colonel Commandant, Army Medical Corps, Lt Gen Daljit Singh.

The Day's NUMBERS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN INDIA (IN %)



CRIME

JD(U) leader Saurav shot dead by motorcycle-borne assailants

PATNA: A JD(U) leader was shot dead by motorcycle-borne assailants in Punpun area on the outskirts of Bihar's Patna, police said on Thursday.

The deceased has been identified as Saurav Kumar. Another person accompanying him, Munmun Kumar, was injured in the firing, they said.

"The incident took place around 12.15 am on Thursday when Saurav along with Munmun were returning from a wedding ceremony. The assailants fired at them and fled. A search operation has been launched to nab the culprits," said Kanhaiya Singh, SDPO, Masaurhi (Patna).

Both of them were taken to the nearest hospital, where Saurav Kumar succumbed to his injuries. The condition of the injured person is now stable, Singh said. "We have constituted a special team to investigate the case. We have also got certain preliminary leads..." SSP (Patna) Rajeev Mishra told PTI. **PTI**

TRIBUTE

Yakshagana exponent Subrahmanya Dhareshwar passes away



KUNDAPUR: Yakshagana thespian Subrahmanya Dhareshwar (67), who had earned the fame of 'Bhagavata Shrestha' for his scintillating voice, passed away on Thursday in Bengaluru. Family sources said the end came at his son's house in Bengaluru in the morning following a brief illness.

He is survived by his wife, son and a daughter.

He was revered for filling the vacuum that arose after the departure of Kalinga Navada, who had created a new wave in Yakshagana in Badguthittu version. **PTI**

Cong-SP alliance in UP based on 'appeasement': PM Modi

Prime Minister repeated charges against the Congress on "redistribution" of wealth

Press Trust Of India

AGRA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance in Uttar Pradesh was based on a "policy of appeasement", and its leaders wanted to snatch the rights of the OBC through the back door.



PM Modi during a public meeting for LS elections, in Aonla, U.P.

ing for 'santushtikaran' (satisfying people), he added. He attacked the opposition alliance in Uttar Pradesh, referring indirectly to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav.

"The friendship between the two boys in UP is based on politics of appeasement," he said.

"Both talk of the OBC in their speeches but they want to snatch away their rights from the back door and strengthen their (own) vote bank," he said.

Himachal Pradesh's Rajat Kumar tops CDS examination

DHARAMSHALA: Rajat Kumar (22) from Kangra district has topped the Combined Defence Services (CDS II) 2023 examination. The result of the examination, which is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for admission to Indian Military Academy, Indian Naval Academy and Air Force Academy, was declared

HIGHLIGHT

Kumar's father, Pradeep Kumar, is a postman

He did not take any formal coaching for CDS exam

on Monday.

Kumar hails from Shahpur area of Kan-

gra district. His father, Pradeep Kumar, is a postman, while his mother, Baby Devi, is a homemaker. He did not take any formal coaching for the CDS exam and had also topped his BA examination with 82 per cent at Government College Shahpur last year. Kumar's family members are elated with his success.

Modi's steadfast adherence to lies, alleges Congress

Press Trust Of India

"Every time he opens his mouth to speak, the Prime Minister provides fresh evidence of his meanness, pettiness, and his steadfast adherence to lies," Ramesh said.

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Thursday termed as "lies" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that former PM Rajiv Gandhi had abolished inheritance tax after his mother Indira Gandhi's death to save her wealth from going to the government, as it cited then finance minister's budget speech on abolition of the estate duty. Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Morena city, Modi also said that after benefiting from it, the Congress now wants to impose inheritance tax again on the people of the country. If the Congress comes to power, it will snatch more than half of the earnings of people through inheritance tax, he said.

Hitting back at the prime minister, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X, "Yesterday the PM claimed that @NCRIndia wanted to impose an Inheritance Tax. Once it became clear that it was actually the BJP that has been propagating an Inheritance

tax, he switched lanes." "Once again, his lies stand unraveled. Here is the paragraph from then-Finance Minister VP Singh's budget speech of March 16th, 1985, which proposed the abolition of estate duty. Paragraph 88 of the speech states the reasons clearly," Ramesh said and shared an excerpt from the speech.

"As both wealth-tax and estate duty laws apply to the property of a person, the former

FASTFACTS

Indira Gandhi gave away her ancestral property in 1970

Congress insisted that it favours a socio-economic caste census

applying to his property before death and the latter after his death, the existence of two separate laws with reference to the same property amounts to procedural harassment to the taxpayers and the heirs of the deceased who have to comply with the provisions of two different laws," Singh had said, according to the excerpt of his speech shared by Ramesh.

While the yield from estate duty is only about Rs 20 crore, its cost of administration is relatively high, he had noted.

NEWSLINE

CHANDIGARH

Will work to ensure BJP's victory in all LS seats



NEW DELHI: Haryana BJP leader Kuldeep Bishnoi on Thursday refuted reports that he was upset over being denied a Lok Sabha ticket from Hisar and asserted that he will put in his "best efforts" to ensure the party's victory in all 10 seats in the state. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday met Bishnoi and his family over breakfast in Delhi. In a post in Hindi on X, Bishnoi said during the meeting, "There was a detailed positive discussion on many topics including the Lok Sabha elections".

THANE

Three booked for duping developer of Rs 42 lakh

THANE: The police in Maharashtra's Thane district have registered a case against a couple and their son for allegedly cheating a builder of nearly Rs 42 lakh over the sale of land, an official said on Thursday. In his complaint, the 27-year-old builder, who lives in the Bhiwandi area.

Emotional reunion between Nimisha Priya and mother

Press Trust Of India

After meeting her daughter and spending a few hours with her in prison, the mother, Prema Kumari, in a video message said she was not sure she would be able to see Priya



Nimisha Priya (R) and her mother Kumari (L)

FASTFACTS

Yemen's SC on Nov 13 last year dismissed the appeal of Nimisha Priya

Priya is convicted of murdering Talal Abdo Mahdi, in July 2017

message said she was not sure she would be able to see Priya. "However, my fears were misplaced. I got to meet her. The moment she

saw me, she came running to me, calling me mummy and hugged me. We both cried," Kumari said. She said that Priya told her not to cry and to

be happy and that everything will work out fine. "Then she too started crying. We hugged each other and cried.

I was seeing her after so many years. The last time I saw her was when I married her off," Kumari said. She said the two of them spent a few hours together in the prison and had food together.

"There are women of all ages in the prison, and for them, Nimisha is an essential part of their lives. They all came and hugged and kissed me," she said. Kumari said thanks to God's mercy and the kindness of the Yemeni government, her daughter was fine. Her visit to the Arab

nation was facilitated by the Save Nimisha Priya international council.

Kumari was allowed to go to Yemen by the Delhi High Court in December last year to negotiate about blood money with the victim's family and save her daughter from the gallows.

The permission came on a plea moved by her in the High Court for being allowed to go to the West Asian country. Yemen's Supreme Court had on November 13 last year dismissed the appeal of Nimisha Priya, who was working as a nurse in the west Asian country, against her death sentence. The Supreme Court in Yemen had

reportedly also given her a last option of escaping the gallows by securing a pardon from the victim's family after paying blood money.

TENDER NOTICE South East Central Railway

POLICE COMPLAINT (CO-REGISTRATION CENTER) RAIPUR CITY

TAMILNAD MERCANTILE BANK LTD. POSSESSION NOTICE

TAMILNAD MERCANTILE BANK LTD. POSSESSION NOTICE

TAMILNAD MERCANTILE BANK LTD. POSSESSION NOTICE

I sent the picture and a message to Imtiaz Ali sir telling him, 'Sir, please don't take a part away from me because of the way I look. Because I know I can transform.'

Vidya Malavade
Actress



& Finally

O.T.T Watch



Thandiwe Newton joins 'Wednesday' S2

Thandiwe Newton joins "Wednesday" season 2 cast on Netflix, joining Jenna Ortega, Gwendoline Christie, Riki Lindhome, and Jamie McShane. Created by Alfred Gough and Miles Millar, executive produced by Tim Burton.



Pen studios releases 'Kasoombo' in hindi

Pen Studios to release critically acclaimed Gujarati blockbuster "Kasoombo" in Hindi nationwide on May 3. Directed by Vijaygiri Bava, the historical drama is a tribute to ancestors' valor. Dr. Jayantilal Gada eagerly anticipates its release.



NcutiGatwa

NcutiGatwa, "Sex Education" star, reflects on the backlash he faced after being cast as the first Black actor to play the lead role in "Doctor Who". Gatwa addresses the negative social media reaction and challenges in the industry.



One piece Ch. 1113: zoro missing, vegapunk's message

One Piece Chapter 1113 spoilers tease Zoro's absence and the unfolding of Dr. Vegapunk's ominous message. Last week, Saint Marcus Mars stumbled upon a significant discovery in Punk Records, leaving fans eager for more with the upcoming spoilers.



Amitabh bachchan starts KBC 16 shoot

Amitabh Bachchan starts shooting for Kaun Banega Crorepati 16. No time for leisure lunch, resorts to eating in the car. Fans eagerly await the return of the show, thrilled to see him back as the host.

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja's insights on motherhood and work-life balance

One can never be prepared for motherhood. Whether you're a stay-at-home mother or a working mother, everyone goes through mom guilt.'

Central Chronicle News

In 2022, Sonam Kapoor welcomed her first child, son Vayu Kapoor Ahuja, with husband Anand Ahuja.

Since becoming a mother to her son Vayu in 2022, Sonam Kapoor Ahuja has been outspoken about her journey. In a recent interview with India Today, she tackled the misconception surrounding working mothers. Sonam emphasized that despite common belief, working moms prioritize their children and strive to balance career and family. She debunked the notion that career comes before kids, asserting that "mom guilt" is universal for all mothers, regardless of their work status. Reflecting on her own postpartum experience, Sonam shared that it took over a year to feel like herself again. Despite the challenges, her candid discussions shed light on the realities faced by working mothers, advocating for embracing the complexities of parenting while navigating career demands.



Sonam Kapoor Ahuja challenges misconceptions about working mothers, advocating for balance and embracing the complexities of parenthood.



Navigating Motherhood

Reflecting on her own postpartum experience, Sonam shared that it took her over a year to feel like herself again. She expressed gratitude for her body and the journey of self-care that led her back to a sense of normalcy. Sonam and her husband, Anand, welcomed their son Vayu in August

2022, after announcing the pregnancy in March of the same year. Despite the challenges, Sonam's candid discussions about motherhood shed light on the realities faced by many working mothers. She remains an advocate for embracing the complexities of parenting while navigating the demands of career and personal growth.

| HOLLYWOOD |

Monkey man: Dev Patel's directorial debut faces release uncertainty in India

Central Chronicle News

Despite rumours of Monkey Man not releasing in Indian cinemas, viewers have found a way to watch Dev Patel's directorial debut. The action flick was scheduled for release on April 5 in India but has yet to be cleared. As a result, the film has dropped on video-on-demand platforms in the US, leading to pirated versions surfacing online, which Indian viewers have resorted to amid uncertainty over its official release. Interestingly, Monkey Man was available for viewing not only on Dev Patel's birthday on April 23 but also



coincided with Hanuman Jayanti, as the film is heavily inspired by the Indian mythological figure. The action thriller follows Dev Patel's character, a young man seeking justice for his mother's death caused by corrupt leaders. However, his quest for vengeance transforms him into the titular Monkey Man, championing the oppressed and powerless. The film also stars Sikandar Kher, Sharlto Copley, Sobhita Dhulipala, Makarand Deshpande, and Ashwini Kalsekar, among others.

HIGHLIGHT

● Monkey Man, initially slated for an April 5 release in Indian cinemas, has not announced a new release date. However, it is now available on video-on-demand platforms in the US.

Dev Patel not only directs and stars in the film but also serves as a producer alongside Jordan Peele. As Monkey Man's release in India remains uncertain, Indian audiences eagerly anticipate its official screening, drawn by the intrigue surrounding Dev Patel's directorial debut.

CineBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

BOLLYWOOD

Preityzinta's comeback: shooting for 'Lahore 1947' amidst IPL buzz

PreityZinta, amidst her fervent support for IPL team Punjab Kings, has begun filming for Sunny Deol's Lahore 1947 during her India visit. Fans eagerly await her 'comeback' as she transitions from cricket to the silver screen. Her spirited presence at Punjab Kings matches has rekindled public interest, but now she embarks on a new cinematic journey in Rajkumar Santoshi's period drama. With her versatile talent and infectious energy, Zinta's return to acting promises to captivate audiences once again, igniting anticipation for her role in this historical epic.

WEB SERIES

Aamir Khan joins Kapil Sharma's reunion show extravaganza!

In a highly anticipated event, Aamir Khan finally graces "The Great Indian Kapil Show" alongside Kapil Sharma and Sunil Grover, marking their long-awaited reunion after over half a decade. With Netflix releasing an exhilarating promo, fans are on the edge of their seats, eagerly awaiting a laughter-filled spectacle. The trio's comedic chemistry promises an unforgettable episode, set to leave viewers in stitches and create lasting memories. As anticipation reaches its peak, this epic reunion is poised to deliver entertainment galore, making it a must-watch event for fans and comedy enthusiasts alike. Don't miss out on this laughter-packed extravaganza!

THE BOLLYWOOD HOT PAIR

Yuvika Chaudhary responds to pregnancy speculation after Prince Narula's remarks



Yuvika Chaudhary has responded to rumors surrounding her pregnancy following comments made by Prince Narula during an interview. The couple, renowned as the cutest pair in telly town, first met on Bigg Boss 9, where their friendship evolved into love. After winning Nach Baliye 9 together, they

tied the knot in 2018 and have since been going strong. Despite ongoing speculation about Yuvika's pregnancy, the couple remains focused on their respective careers. Fans eagerly anticipate an official announcement about their first child, adding to the excitement surrounding their journey as a couple.

FASHION

Alaya F dazzles in white co-ord set for Srikanth promotions

Alaya F exudes angelic vibes in a stunning white co-ord set for Srikanth promotions. Styled by Sheefa Gillani, her Asaga outfit, featuring a tulle hand-embroidered bralette and sharara pants, is the epitome of elegance. With promotions for Bade Miyan Chote Miyan wrapped up, she now gears up for her upcoming film alongside Rajkumar Rao.



Trending on Insta



@Priyanka Priyanka Chopra's stunning BTS selfie for heads of state

Priyanka Chopra shared a behind-the-scenes photo on Instagram Stories from her shoot for Heads of State, looking stunning in sunglasses against a scenic river backdrop.

@Kiara

Kiara's Instagram post: Shahid and Varun's comments

Kiara shared a photo on Instagram, sipping coffee in a white outfit; Shahid commented humorously, while Varun Dhawan and fans also left positive remarks and heart emojis.





FineDine

SPECIAL OF THE WEEK

Bastian garden city: Mumbai meets Bengaluru

Bastian Garden City, housed in a converted bungalow, draws inspiration from global holiday destinations.



Bastian Garden City: A seafood haven in Bengaluru's dining scene. Co-founded by Shilpa Shetty, it's housed in a lush oasis with boho-chic decor and an alfresco area. Executive Chef Daniel Hernandez Punzo curates a menu featuring pan-fried salmon, tenderloin tiradito, and exquisite desserts like the mangotresleches cake. An unforgettable culinary journey awaits!



with creamy spinach and a parmesan puff, and a delectable crab roll drizzled with house-made ponzu. Meat lovers will also find delights such as tenderloin tiradito and pork belly, showcasing the kitchen's commitment to quality and flavor. Save room for dessert! Indulge in the mangotresleches cake or the visually stunning feuilletine 'pull me up' cake, each a sweet finale to your dining experience. Bastian Garden City promises not just a meal, but a culinary journey through global flavors in a picturesque setting. Whether you're craving fresh seafood or decadent desserts, this is a destination worth exploring in Bengaluru's vibrant dining scene.

HIGHLIGHT

Discover the epitome of culinary elegance at Bastian Garden City in Bengaluru. Co-founded by Shilpa Shetty, this chic eatery offers a seafood-forward menu curated by Executive Chef Daniel Hernandez Punzo, set amidst stunning boho-chic interiors.



Unveiling the story of India's most expensive mango: The Kohitur

Amid the Indian summer heat, the rare Kohitur mango reigns supreme. Crafted for NawabSra-jud-Daulah in the 18th century, it's a cross between Kalopahar and another variant. Grown in Murshidabad, West Bengal, this exclusive fruit can fetch up to Rs 12,000 per piece, reserved for the elite. Its unique taste and limited availability make it a symbol of luxury.

Fruit: Kohitur mango
Details:

This exclusive fruit can fetch up to Rs 12,000 per piece, reserved for the elite.



| VIRAL NEWS |

Viral blue ghee rice: mixed reactions and recipe revealed



A viral video featuring blue-colored ghee rice has sparked mixed reactions. Made with edible butterfly pea flowers, the dish has intrigued some while others are hesitant to try it. The recipe involves boiling the flowers with rice to absorb the blue color, then sautéing it with ghee, onions, cashews, and raisins. The video has garnered over 15 million views and 2.95 lakh 'likes'.

| TRAILBLAZER |

Redefining Global Indian Cuisine: The rise of expatriate chefs

Central Chronicle News

In 'The Taste', VirSanghvi evaluates top-tier Indian chefs who are revolutionizing fine dining across the globe.

In 'The Taste' by VirSanghvi, explore how top Indian chefs are raising the bar for global gastronomy from London to Bangkok. While many travelers seek out Indian restaurants abroad, Sanghvi admits to preferring local cuisine. However, he acknowledges the brilliance of expatriate Indian chefs, like Rydo, GagganAnand's collaborator. Rydo, with his Indonesian background, brings fresh perspectives to Indian cuisine, creating dishes that rival

those of the renowned Gaggan restaurant. According to Sanghvi, Indian cuisine's global influence is expanding, and chefs like Rydo are leading the charge. The list excludes giants like GagganAnand, whose achievements transcend such rankings, and pioneers like Vineet Bhatia and AtulKochhar, the first Indian chefs to earn Michelin stars. Sanghvi also doesn't include Srijit-Gopinathan, whose San Francisco restaurant was the first Indian establishment to win two Michelin stars. Instead, he focuses on lesser-known talents like Rydo, who play a crucial role in shaping Indian cuisine's future.

Gaggan himself acknowledges that many of the best dishes at his restaurant are a result of collaboration with Rydo, with some even



Manish Mehrotra is India's greatest chef by a long way



The Indonesian Chef Redefining Indian Gastronomy. Collaborating with GagganAnand, Rydo brings fresh perspectives to traditional Indian cuisine, shaping its future on the global culinary stage.

originating from Rydo's ideas. This underscores the growing importance of chefs like Rydo, whose understanding of Indian cuisine and culinary skills are comparable to the best in the business.

FoodPick

MUST TRY WHEN TRAVEL

Kettle Korean-inspired flavor

Prepare for a burst of flavor with Kettle Brand Chips' newest offering: a Korean-inspired blend of sweet and spicy. Arriving in stores nationwide this spring,



this release caters to the increasing demand for dynamic taste experiences, particularly among younger chip aficionados. With Gen Z and Millennials in focus, Kettle Brand aims to tantalize taste buds with this complex and irresistible flavor combination.

Score free wings

Applebee's has teamed up with the National Football League, becoming the "Official Grill + Bar of the NFL." In celebration, they're offering a free wings deal during NFL Draft week. Customers can enjoy 20 boneless wings with a \$40 online purchase using code NFLDRAFT24. This offer is valid for pickup or delivery orders made directly on the restaurant's website or mobile app. Limit one free wings deal per order at participating locations.



Fiery refreshment: Starbucks' spicy trio

Starbucks spices up the season with 3 new spicy drinks featuring its Spicy Chili Powder Blend. The limited-time offerings include Spicy Dragonfruit, Spicy Pineapple, and Spicy Strawberry lemonade refreshers. These vibrant drinks blend fruit flavors with a zesty kick, perfect for warmer weather. Available nationwide for a short time this spring, they're a fiery addition to Starbucks' lineup, contrasting the floral notes of its recent lavender offerings.



Spicy mango margarita mocktail

Ingredients:

Ripe mango, lime juice, agave syrup, chili powder, cayenne pepper, salt, ice cubes, sparkling water, lime slices, and chili powder for rimming.

How to make it:

For a Spicy Mango Margarita Mocktail, blend ripe mango, lime juice, agave syrup, and a pinch of chili powder. Rim a glass with chili powder and salt. Pour in the mixture over ice, top with sparkling water, and garnish with lime slices.



Tropical sunrise shake

Ingredients:

Pineapple chunks, ripe mango, coconut milk, freshly squeezed orange juice, grenadine syrup, and ice cubes.

How to make it:

To prepare the Tropical Sunrise Shake, start by blending together pineapple chunks, ripe mango, coconut milk, and freshly squeezed orange juice until smooth. Pour the mixture into a glass and slowly drizzle grenadine syrup down the side for a beautiful sunrise effect. Garnish with a pineapple wedge and enjoy this refreshing and tropical beverage!



Zesty Rum Mojito

Ingredients:

2 oz of white rum, 1 oz of fresh lime juice, 2 teaspoons of sugar, a handful of fresh mint leaves, club soda, ice cubes, and mint sprigs with lime wedges for garnish.

How to Make:

Begin by gently muddling together the mint leaves, lime juice, and sugar in a glass until the mint releases its aroma. Once muddled, add the white rum and ice cubes to the glass. Top it off with club soda and give it a gentle stir to combine all the ingredients. Finally, garnish your Mojito with a mint sprig and a lime wedge for that perfect finishing touch. Enjoy the refreshing taste of this classic cocktail!



Sports



As an all-rounder, I feel that an all-rounder's role is in danger with the Impact Player rule. Every team is looking to play either a pure batter or a pure bowler

Axar Patel
Indian cricketer

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

ITALIAN CUP

Atalanta racks up a huge victory against Fiorentina; Juventus eliminates Lazio

BERGAMO: Atalanta advanced to the Italian Cup final with a 4-1 win over 10-man Fiorentina to set up a meeting with Juventus for the trophy.

The decisive goal by Ademola Lookman in stoppage time was initially ruled offside. Then the goal was awarded following a VAR review.

Atalanta advanced on 4-2 aggregate after Fiorentina won the opening leg 1-0. Juventus eliminated Lazio on Tuesday. The final is scheduled for the Stadio Olimpico in Rome on May 15. Atalanta also faces Marseille in the Europa League semifinals as coach Gian Piero Gasperini – who was suspended Wednesday – chases the first trophy of his career. Atalanta eliminated Liverpool in the quarterfinals. Atalanta's only top-level trophy was the Italian Cup in 1963. The aggregate was level at 2-2 when Lookman was whistled for offside after finishing off a counterattack. **PTI**

PREMIER LEAGUE

Semenyo scores to give Bournemouth emphatic victory over Wolverhampton

WOLVERHAMPTON: Antoine Semenyo scored to help 10-man Bournemouth beat Wolverhampton 1-0 on Wednesday in a Premier League match involving another contentious refereeing decision. Wolves had a would-be equalizer by Hwang Hee-chan disallowed in the second half after referee Stuart Attwell adjudged Matheus Cunha to have fouled Justin Kluivert in an off-the-ball incident in the build-up. Attwell was the Video Assistant Referee in the spotlight after denying Nottingham Forest three penalties in their 2-0 loss at Everton on Sunday. Nottingham questioned his integrity because the club said Attwell is a fan of Luton, which is battling with Forest to avoid relegation. Cunha's foul was not spotted in real time but Attwell opted to give the foul following advice from VAR Darren England to watch it again on the pitchside monitor at Molineux. **PTI**

PREMIER LEAGUE

Crystal Palace remains in contention for winning the trophy after beating Newcastle



LONDON: Crystal Palace made certain of Premier League safety after a 2-0 win against Newcastle on Wednesday.

Jean-Philippe Mateta scored for a fifth straight home match to secure the win and Palace's resurgence under Oliver Glasner following recent victories against West Ham and Liverpool. Mateta broke the deadlock at Selhurst Park with a smart 55th-minute finish before he added a second late on to end Newcastle's four-match unbeaten run. Palace is 14th in the standings and 14 points above the rel-

egation zone. Luton in 18th place has just four games remaining. Mateta put Palace ahead after a slick one-two with Jordan Ayew before he slid a shot home. It was Palace's first goal against Newcastle in seven meetings.

Newcastle pushed for a late leveler, but Palace made sure of the points in the 88th. Will Hughes exchanged passes with substitute Jeffrey Schlupp before he teamed up Mateta, who scuffed a shot through the legs of Martin Dubravka for his eighth goal in nine games since the arrival of Glasner in February. **PTI**

The Day's NUMBERS

TOP FIVE TABLE TENNIS PLAYERS EARNINGS (MNS USD) AS OF DECEMBER 2023

Ma Long	\$80-100
Fan Zhendong	\$70-90
Xu Xin	\$60-80
Lin Gaoyuan	\$40-60
Tomokazu Harimoto	\$30-50

SOCCER

Man United wins 4-2 against Sheffield United in Premier League game

MANCHESTER: Bruno Fernandes scored twice as Manchester United beat Sheffield United 4-2 in the Premier League. Erik Ten Hag's team went behind 1-0 and 2-1 against last-placed Sheffield at Old Trafford before eventually securing a win that moved it up to sixth in the standings. Jayden Bogle capitalized on an Andre Onana error to open the scoring after 35 minutes, but Harry Maguire leveled against his former club seven minutes later. Sheffield went ahead through Ben Brereton Diaz in the 50th and Fernandes equalized from the penalty spot in the 61st. United went ahead for the first time on the night when Fernandes fired home an 81st-minute rocket from 25 yards and then he set up Rasmus Hojlund to add another four minutes later. United is 13 points behind fourth-place Aston Villa with a game in hand. The win was watched by Ineos director of sport Dave Brailsford and newly appointed technical director Jason Wilcox. **PTI**

IPL

Impact Player option gives a great cushion to batters: Gill



NEW DELHI: The Impact Player has a bit of role to play in making the matches high scoring as it provides the extra cushion for batters to keep going hard at the bowlers, feels Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill.

The ongoing IPL season saw its 12th 200 plus score as Delhi Capitals piled on 224 for 4 against Gujarat Titans here on Wednesday. "I think impact player has a bit of a role (in making the matches high scoring), even if you lose extra wickets, extra cushion is there for the batters to keep going and it gives the license for the batters to keep going till the end," Gill said after GT's four-run loss. **PTI**

Gukesh receives rousing welcome in Chennai



Indian chess grandmaster Dommaraju Gukesh on his arrival at the Chennai Airport, in Chennai

Press Trust Of India

CHENNAI: History-making teen Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh was swamped by fans as he returned to an enthusiastic reception here on Thursday after becoming the youngest challenger to the world title following his triumph at the prestigious Candidates Chess Tournament in Toronto.

Hundreds of students from the Velammal Vidyalaya, the school where Gukesh studies, lined up at the airport at least

one hour before his flight landed to greet the 17-year-old chess prodigy.

"I feel very happy for this homecoming, this is a special achievement. I was in a good space since the beginning of the tournament, I had full confidence that I will emerge top in this tournament and luck was on my side as well," Gukesh said while talking to the media at the airport.

His mother Padma, who is a microbiologist, was there to receive him along with some other members

HIGHLIGHT

● **D Gukesh created history by becoming the second Indian after Vishy Anand to win the prestigious tournament.**

● **Gukesh has also bettered the record of former chess player Gary Kasparov after 40 years.**

of the family and the young champion had a huge smile on his face the moment he spotted her in the crowd.

They exchanged a hug after greeting each other.

Gukesh's father Rajnikanth, who is an ENT surgeon, quit his practice to support him, and travelled with the teen to Toronto for the tournament.

On Monday, Gukesh became the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the Candidates Tournament, which is held specifically to decide the challenger for the reigning world champion.

"It feels great. Viswanathan Anand is an inspira-

tion to everyone. He has played a huge role in my career. I am really glad," Gukesh said, referring to the guidance provided by Anand in his formative years and also ahead of the Candidates.

The unassuming player became the youngest ever challenger for the title by bettering the record created by the legendary Gary Kasparov 40 years ago. Kasparov was 20 when he became a challenger to the then world champion Anatoly Karpov in 1984.

| FRENCH LEAGUE |

Mbappe scores two goals to give PSG a win over Lorient in Ligue 1

Press Trust of India

Kylian Mbappe scored two and assisted once to give PSG a 4-1 win over Lorient.

LORIENT: Paris Saint-Germain will have to wait at least a few more days to try to clinch the French league title.

Kylian Mbappé scored twice and provided an assist in a 4-1 win over Lorient on Wednesday, but there were no celebrations because second-place Monaco beat Lille 1-0 later in the evening.

The lead atop the standings is 11 points with four games remaining. Defending champion PSG can clinch its record-extending 12th French league title



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #07 Kylian Mbappe (R) reacts next to his brother Paris Saint-Germain's midfielder #38 Ethan Mbappe (C) Photo. AFP

FACTFILE

● **No celebrations in PSG camp as Monaco beat Lille 1-0 in the second game.**

at home on Saturday against Le Havre. PSG remains on course for a treble of trophies in

league, PSG winger Ousmane Dembélé opened the scoring in the 19th minute in Lorient, a sleepy seaport in Brittany. Mbappé doubled the lead by nonchalantly flicking a cross from Nuno Mendes into the far corner in the 22nd.

| ICC T20 WORLD CUP |

Usain Bolt named ambassador for ICC T20 World Cup

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday named the sprint legend Usain Bolt as the ambassador of the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the West Indies and USA from June 1 to 29. Jamaica-born Bolt had created history at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing

where he won the 100m, 200m and 4x100m races in world record times.

Bolt currently holds world records in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m with times of 9.58 secs, 19.19 secs and 36.84 secs. Bolt was delighted about his new role as the World Cup comes to his home.

"I am thrilled to be an ambassador for the upcoming ICC Men's T20

"I am thrilled to be an ambassador for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Coming from the Caribbean where cricket is a part of life.

Usain Bolt
Athlet



World Cup. Coming from the Caribbean where cricket is a part of life, the sport has always held a special place in my heart," Bolt said in an ICC media release. Bolt said it will be massive for cricket to find a market in the USA. "While I will be supporting West Indies at the WC, getting the sport into the US is big for cricket. It's the biggest sports market in the world.

Sports News



KKR captain Shreyas Iyer, coach Chandrakant Pandit and mentor Gautam Gambhir.



Punjab Kings captain Shikhar Dhawan during a practice session.

KKR bowling woes under spotlight vs PK

Press Trust of India

KKR's bowling vulnerabilities, especially in the death overs, present an opportunity for Punjab Kings to exploit.

KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) face a crucial challenge against Punjab Kings, aiming to address their bowling deficiencies. With Mitchell Starc's hefty price tag of USD 3 million, the pressure is on him to deliver. However, he's struggled with only six wickets at an alarming economy rate

of 11.48. KKR's bowling unit, apart from Sunil Narine, has been inconsistent, failing to contain runs effectively.

In contrast, KKR's batting, led by Sunil Narine and Phil Salt's explosive starts, has been impressive, consistently posting imposing totals. However, the absence of Venkatesh Iyer's form and Nitish Rana's injury has hindered their balance. The onus is on Starc to regain his form and lead the bowling attack alongside Narine and Varun Chakravarty.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, have relied

Teams

Kolkata Knight Riders

Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Sherfane Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarty, Sunil Narine, Vaibhav Arora, Chetan Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain and Mujeeb Ur Rahman

Punjab Kings

Shikhar Dhawan (c), Matthew Short, Prabhsimran Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Sikandar Raza, Rishi Dhawan, Liam Livingstone, Atharva Talde, Arshdeep Singh, Nathan Ellis, Sam Curran, Kagiso Rabada, Harpreet Brar, Rahul Chahar, Harpreet Bhatia, Vidwath Kaverappa, Shivam Singh, Harshal Patel, Chris Woakes, Ashutosh Sharma, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Shashank Singh, Tanay Thyagarajan, Prince Choudhary, Rilee Rossouw.

on the power-hitting prowess of uncapped players Ashutosh Sharma and Shashank Singh to rescue them from challenging situations. Their top-order,

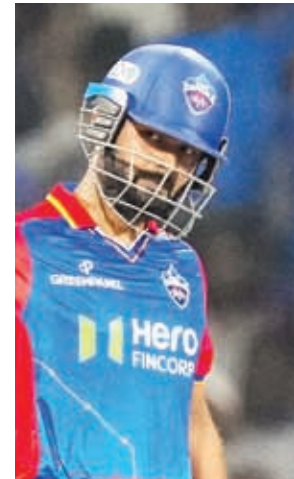
including Prabhsimran Singh and Liam Livingstone, has struggled to make an impact consistently. The potential return of skipper Shikhar Dhawan from injury

could provide a much-needed boost to their morale.

KKR's bowling vulnerabilities, especially in the death overs, present an opportunity for Punjab Kings to exploit. With players like Ashutosh and Shashank in good form, they will look to capitalize on KKR's bowling woes and return to winning ways. The match promises to be a test for both teams, with KKR seeking to strengthen their bowling and Punjab Kings aiming to capitalize on their opponents' weaknesses.

Rishabh Pant's stellar form shines bright: DC coach

NEW DELHI: The swash-buckling Rishabh Pant has showed with his scintillating knock against Gujarat Titans that he is ready to roar in the upcoming T20 World Cup, feels Delhi Capitals' batting coach Pravin Amre. A month after returning to competitive cricket after recovering from the multiple injuries sustained during a horrific car accident in December 2022, Pant virtually sealed his spot as India's first choice wicket-



keeper for the T20 World Cup with an unbeaten 88 off 43 balls in DC's four-run win over GT in an IPL match here on Wednesday. Skipper Pant and Axar Patel (66 off 43) forged a brisk 113-run stand off 68 balls to power DC to 224/4 after they were reeling at 44/3 in their must-win game. "He (pant) started with a two-week camp in Vizag, he came there, he prepared himself very well. I remember when he

| BADMINTON |

Prannoy return after health struggle

Press Trust of India

Prannoy was diagnosed with gastroesophageal reflux disease during the 2018 World Championships.

NEW DELHI: Seasoned Indian shuttler H S Prannoy has revealed that he has been battling a chronic gastrointestinal disorder for the past four months which has not just hampered him physically but also taken a mental toll as he had fought these health issues not so long ago.

Prannoy was diagnosed with gastroesophageal reflux disease during the 2018 World Championships, a chronic disorder that causes symptoms like heartburn, abdominal and chest pain, and inflammation of vocal chords.

Prannoy's training and performance were affected by it in 2019-2020 but he had recovered from it and the after-effects of COVID-



HIGHLIGHT

● A health issue has been bothering me for the last four months. That has kind of taken a toll in the last four months.

19 to slowly and steadily regain his place in the top echelons of men's singles. But he revealed that the he hasn't been all that well for past four months once again.

"A health issue has been bothering me for the last four months. That has kind of taken a toll in the last four months, mentally and physically for me, to

be in the right physical state which I think I was in the last two years," World No.9 Prannoy told PTI during a free-wheeling interview.

"But I think it's all part and parcel of this whole career that there can be a lot of times that we are feeling good. If you're not consistent in what you're doing, then you can take a hit and go back to where you were before.

"It is the same gut issue which had cropped up in 2019. We will get better in the coming months. So yeah, I just need to be a bit more patient," he said.

Indian archers reach final in World Cup Stage 1

SHANGHAI: The Indian trio of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav confirmed a medal, storming into the men's recurve final of the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Thursday.

The team, which qualified behind reigning world and Olympic champions South Korea, sailed past Italy 5-1 (55-54, 55-55, 56-55) without dropping a set to set up a summit clash against the top-seeded Koreans. India will be up against the Korean Tokyo Olympics gold medal winning trio of Kim Woojin, Lee Woo Seok and Kim Je Deok in the gold medal clash slated on Sunday. The top-seeded Korean trio defeated their Chinese Taipei rivals Tan Chi-Chun, Lin Zih-Siang and Tai Yu-Hsuan in straight sets 6-0 (57-50, 58-56, 58-54). Earlier, having got a first round bye in the season-opening tournament, the second seeded Indians overcame a first set deficit to beat 15th seeded Indonesia 5-3 (55-56, 54-54, 55-51, 55-53) in their tricky opening clash.

Bismah Maroof announces surprise retirement from international cricket

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: In a surprise development, Bismah Maroof, one of Pakistan's most high-profile women cricketers and former captain, on Thursday announced retirement from all international cricket with immediate effect.

Bismah, 32, was forced into a long break from cricket, first due to a fitness issue in 2020 and

then after giving birth to a baby girl in August 2021.

Bismah had grabbed headlines when she took her baby to the 2022 World Cup in New Zealand. She was the first Pakistani woman cricketer to avail a 12-month maternity leave with pay policy.

A left-handed batter, Bismah made her ODI debut against India in 2006 and went on to represent Pakistan in 276

international matches, the most by any Pakistan women cricketer. She had made her T20I debut against Ireland in 2009.

She has scored 6,262 international runs, including 33 half-centuries, and has taken 80 international wickets with her right-arm leg-spin.

"I have decided to retire from the game I love the most. It has been an incredible journey,

filled with challenges, victories, and unforgettable memories," Bismah said in a statement.

"I want to express my gratitude to my family, who has supported me throughout my cricketering journey, from the very beginning until now.

"I also want to extend my thanks to the Pakistan Cricket Board for believing in me and providing the platform to showcase my talent.

'Impact rule endangers all-rounders'

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Axar Patel, who is a very capable batter besides being a quality left-arm spinner, feels the "all-rounder's role is in danger" because of the 'Impact Player' rule, making him the latest cricketer to give a thumbs down to the IPL innovation that has polarised opinions. Promoted to No.3, Axar made a counter-attacking 43-ball 66 and along with skip-



per Rishabh Pant, lifted Delhi Capitals from 44/3 to 224/4 in their Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans here on Wednesday. Later, he picked up one wicket as DC successfully defended their total to win by four runs.

Sharing his thoughts on the Impact Player rule, Axar said, "As an all-rounder, I feel that an all-rounder's role is in danger with the Impact Player rule. Every team is looking to play either a pure

batter or a pure bowler as the Impact Player, and the all-rounders are not being used." "With the Impact Player, every team goes into the match thinking they have six batters or bowlers, depending on if they are batting or bowling. This also creates a lot of confusion sometimes," Axar told 'Jio-Cinema'.

The rule has also been criticised by the likes of Indian captain Rohit Sharma and several former players as well.

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World



"India to continue co-op for countering misuse of information & communication technologies by terrorists"

Ajit Doval
NSA

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

REFORMS PRAISED

Modi has done an unbelievable job in India: JPMorgan CEO

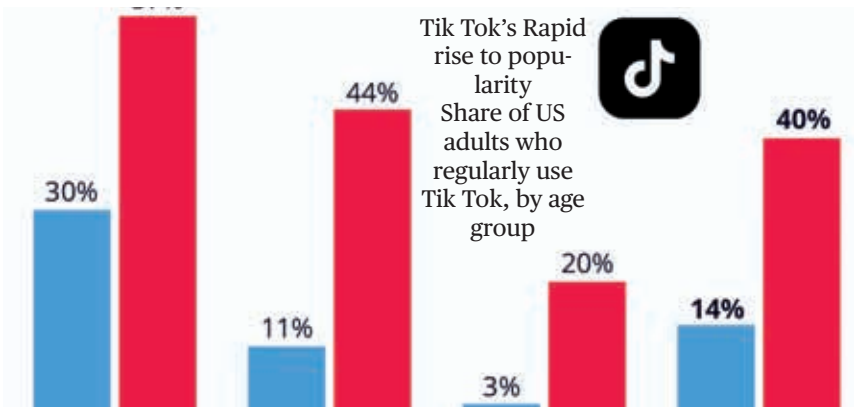
NEW YORK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is doing an "unbelievable job" in India by pursuing reforms and taking 400 million people out of poverty through inclusive financial programmes, JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon has said. Dimon made these remarks while speaking at an event hosted by the Economic Club of New York. He praised Prime Minister Modi for the performance of his government. He also praised reforms undertaken by Modi in the recent past. "They have put in this unbelievable trend that every citizen by hand or eyeball or by finger is recognised. They opened bank accounts for 700 million people. Their transferred payments are going through." He also called Modi "tough" for breaking old bureaucratic systems and said, "We need a little bit more of that here (in the US)". Dimon, 68, also had words of praise for the country's indirect tax regime, which he said removed corruption emanating from the disparity in tax systems followed by different states. **PTI**

DEMONSTRATION

Demonstration against Venice Tax Fee in Venice



VENICE: Citizens and activists confront police during a demonstration against Venice Tax Fee in Venice, Italy, Thursday. The fragile lagoon city of Venice begins a pilot program Thursday to charge daytrippers a 5 euro entry fee that authorities hope will discourage tourists from arriving on peak days. The daytripper tax is being tested on 29 days through July, mostly weekends and holidays starting with Italy's Liberation Day holiday Thursday. Officials expect some 10,000 people will pay the fee to access the city on the first day, downloading a QR code to prove their payment, while another 70,000 will receive exceptions, for example, because they work in Venice or live in the Veneto region. **PTI**



St Petersburg: NSA Ajit Doval in a group photo with other officials at the XII International Meeting of High Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters, in St Petersburg.

Doval, Russian Counterpart Review Bilateral Progress

Meeting with Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, on the sidelines of the XII International Meeting of High Ranking Officials Responsible.

Press Trust Of India

MOSCOW: National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Wednesday met with his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev for a second time this month and they reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues of mutual interest. Doval held a bilateral meeting with Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, on the sidelines of the XII International Meeting of High Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters in St Petersburg, the Indian Embassy in Moscow said in a post on X.

"Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues of mutual interest," it added. During the talks, the two sides focused on bilateral cooperation on various fronts. A special emphasis was placed on cooperation between Russia and India on the track of international and regional security, Russia's state-run TASS news agency reported. The NSA had condemned the barbaric terror attack at Crocus City Hall in Moscow on March 22 and called for shunning double standards in combating the menace. Earlier this month, Doval met

HIGHLIGHT

- Special emphasis was placed on cooperation between Russia and India on the track of international and regional security.
- Both sides discussed important issues of mutual interest

Patrushev on the sidelines of the 19th annual meeting of the secretaries of security councils of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states in Astana and conveyed India's solidarity with the government and the people of Russia to address the threat from

terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In his address at the security conclave of the SCO in Astana, Doval had said that the perpetrators of terrorism should be effectively dealt with including those involved in cross-border terrorist activities. Separately, Doval on Wednesday spoke at the luncheon meeting of BRICS NSAs hosted by the Secretary of the Russian Federation's Security Council and called for closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism and concrete actions to prevent transborder planning, funding and execution of terrorist

acts. Doval also had a bilateral meeting with his Myanmar counterpart Admiral Moe Aung and talked about the current situation in Myanmar and India-funded infrastructure projects in Myanmar. "They also discussed recent developments along the India-Myanmar border, including issues related to security, refugees, development projects, etc," the Indian mission in Moscow said in another post on X.

HAMAS HOSTAGE IN GAZA

Nepal Prez seeks Qatar's help

Press Trust Of India

Nepal President seeks Qatar Emir's help to secure release of student held by Hamas.



Emir of Qatar with Nepal President Ram Chandra Poudel.

statement issued by the President's Office. On the occasion, President Poudel requested the emir to help secure the release of Bipin Joshi, who was taken hostage by Hamas during an attack against Israel in October last year, said Kiran Pokharel, press advisor to the president.

FASTFACTS

- Nepal President seeks Qatar's help to secure release of Nepali student held by Hamas.
- Qatar's Emir assures aid, discussing release of Nepali student captured by Hamas in Gaza.

"Sheikh Tamim assured the president that he would take necessary initiative for the release of the Nepali student," Pokharel told PTI. The emir of Qatar said that he had earlier also taken the initiative for the same. Joshi was among 17 Nepali students pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture at Sudur Paschim University who had gone to Israel under an 11-month learn and earn programme. During the Hamas attack on southern Israel in October, 10 Nepalese students were killed, and six injured while Joshi was abducted and taken to Gaza. The emir left Nepal in the evening after successfully concluding the two-day visit.

UNITED NATIONS

US, China naval officials held meeting

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON: The United States slammed Russia on Wednesday for vetoing a UN Security Council resolution on the Outer Space Treaty that put a legally-binding obligation that countries should not be putting weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear weapons, in orbit. "As we have noted

previously, the United States assesses that Russia is developing a new satellite carrying a nuclear device. We have heard President (Vladimir) Putin say publicly that Russia has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space. If that were the case, Russia would not have vetoed this resolution," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan

said in a statement, after Russia vetoed the resolution at the UN headquarters in New York. "Today, Russia vetoed a UN Security Council resolution, proposed jointly by the United States and Japan, that would have reaffirmed the fundamental obligation of State Parties to the Outer Space Treaty not to place nuclear weapons in orbit around the Earth," Sullivan said.

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