

### BRIEF



An Indian grey hornbill perches on a tree, in New Delhi, Friday.

### Girl mauled

**Jaipur:** A four-year-old girl was allegedly mauled to death by a stray dog on Friday near a dargah in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan, police said. The incident occurred when Reshma was sitting near a place outside a dargah, waiting for her father. The family, natives of Madhya Pradesh, had come to visit the dargah on the occasion of Ramzan, Amba Mata police station Head Constable Ranjeet Singh said. Reshma was attacked by a stray dog and was seriously injured. She was then rushed to a hospital, where she succumbed to her injuries, Singh said.

### Court acquits

**Thane:** A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has acquitted four persons accused of robbery and purchase of stolen jewellery. Additional sessions judge Amit M Shete acquitted Mukhtar Sheru Husain, Mohammad Afsar Sayyad, Aji Hafij Sayyad and Kantilal Anandji Shah who were booked under sections 392 (robbery) and 413 (dealing with stolen property) of the Indian Penal Code. The copy of the order issued on March 18, was made available on Thursday. Three accused were from Kalyan, while Shah, a goldsmith, was from neighbouring Mumbai.

### Cash seized

**Dhanbad:** Over Rs 34 lakh in cash was seized from a car in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district on Friday morning, police said. The car was on the way to Hazaribag from Durgapur in West Bengal when it was stopped at a check-post near the interstate border in the Maithon police station area, they said. A total of Rs 34.74 lakh in cash was seized from it, they added. The Income Tax Department has been informed about it, and the occupants of the car were being interrogated to ascertain the source of the money, police said.

### Fire breaks out

**Bengaluru:** More than 20 people were rescued after a fire broke out at the basement of a four-storey commercial building at RT Nagar here on Friday afternoon, officials said. There was no injury or loss of life reported, they said. A call about a fire was received at 1.50 pm, following which four fire tenders were rushed to the spot, officials said, adding that the fire was doused by 4 pm.

**Weather**  
High 42 Low 25

**MARKET**  
NIFTY 22,513.70  
SENSEX 74,248.22

**BULLION**  
GOLD 70,481  
SILVER 80,789

# Fire breaks out at storage depot of power company

## No casualty reported; transformers worth lakhs gutted in fire

**Raipur, Apr 05:**

A major fire broke out at a storage facility of Chhattisgarh State Power Distribution Company Limited here on Friday, gutting transformers kept in the premises, an official said. While no casualties were reported in the blaze, people living near the facility located in the Gudhiyari area were evacuated, he said.

Electrical equipment, mostly transformers, stored at the facility caught fire in the afternoon, the police official said. More than 10 fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames and additional fire tenders have been called in from the industries, he said. The firefighting operation is underway and the cause of the blaze was not immediately known, the official said. A 132 KV power substation is located next to the storage facility, and efforts are to prevent the blaze from spreading there as it could affect power supply to parts of the city, he added. Senior officials from the district administration and police have reached the spot.



Plume of smoke visible far in the sky

### Plume of smoke visible far in the sky

**Raipur:** Fire that broke out with transformer explosion in the warehouse of the Sub Divisional Office of the Electricity Department near Bharat Mata Chowk in the capital Raipur intensified within no time and a plume of smoke was visible in the sky from a distance. Local people immediately informed the fire brigade and police about the incident to control the terrible fire. A massive loss is being estimated in this massive fire. According to reports, around 1500 transformers kept in the warehouse have been gutted.

### Chhattisgarh liquor scam

## SC may quash ED case against former IAS officer

**New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):**

The Supreme Court said on Friday it may quash a money laundering case against former IAS officer Anil Tuteja and his son Yash in the alleged Rs 2,000 crore liquor scam in Chhattisgarh, saying there were no proceeds of crime.

"We have gone through the ECIR (Enforcement Case Information Report) and the FIR lodged in the case. We find that there is no predicate offence and there are no proceeds of crime. If there is no proceeds of crime, then there is no money laundering. We will quash this complaint," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and



Ujjal Bhuyan told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, who appeared for the Enforcement Directorate. Raju said there is enough material with the probe agency and, if the court is inclined to quash the ECIR, then the ED be given liberty to lodge a fresh complaint and proceed with the case.

### LS POLL MANIFESTO

## Cong promises to raise 50 pc cap on quotas, right to apprenticeship, make MSP legal

**New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):**

Right to apprenticeship, a legal guarantee for MSP, passing a constitutional amendment to raise the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, a nation-wide caste census and scrapping of Agnipath scheme are among the promises made by the Congress in its Lok Sabha polls manifesto released on Friday.

The manifesto, focusing on five "pillars of justice" and 25 guarantees under them, was released at the AICC headquarters in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. In the 45-page document titled 'Nyay Patra',



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with senior party leader Sonia Gandhi during a press conference, in New Delhi, Friday.

ident Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. In the 45-page document titled 'Nyay Patra',

featuring pictures of Kharge and Rahul and Bharat Jodo Yatra, the opposition party said it would implement 10 per

### 'INDIA bloc fighting ideological election'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the INDIA bloc has decided that its prime ministerial face will be decided by the alliance constituents jointly after it wins the polls and exuded confidence that the NDA's 2024 campaign will meet the same fate as that of 'India Shining' in 2004.

cent quota in jobs, educational institutions for economically weaker sections (EWS) for all castes, communities without discrimination if it comes to power.

### JEE ASPIRANTS



Aspirants leave after appearing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Mains exam, in Patna, Friday.

### Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case

## SC grants bail to activist Shoma Kanti Sen

**New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):**

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to academic activist Shoma Kanti Sen, who was arrested in June 2018 in connection with the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case. A bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and Augustine George Masih directed that she be released on bail on such conditions as the special court may consider fit and proper. It said the conditions shall include that Sen shall not leave the state of Maharashtra without the permission of the special

court. "The appellant (Sen) shall inform the investigation officer of the NIA about the address where she shall reside during the period she remains enlarged on bail," the bench said while pronouncing the order. It said she shall use only one mobile phone number during the bail period and share it with the investigating officer.

"The appellant shall also ensure that the mobile remains active and charged round the clock so that she remains constantly accessible throughout the period she remains enlarged on bail," it said.

## Large-scale climatic phenomena conducive for monsoon: IMD chief

**New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):**

As summer scorches large parts of the country, weather scientists have picked up early signs of a favourable monsoon season this year in fading El Nino conditions and lesser snow cover over Eurasia.

In an interview with PTI, India Meteorological Department Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said large-scale climatic phenomena were conducive for the southwest monsoon, which is crucial for the largely rain-fed Indian

### Delhi excise case Court allows CBI to interrogate K Kavitha

**New Delhi:** A court here on Friday allowed the CBI to interrogate BRS leader K Kavitha, arrested in the Delhi excise policy case, in Tihar jail. Kavitha was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam on March 15.

The order was passed on the plea filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) seeking the court's permission to interrogate Kavitha in judicial custody. Kavitha had urged the court on Thursday for enlarging her on interim bail on account of her 16-year-old son's exams for which he needed his mother's "moral and emotional support".

## SC stays HC order scrapping Madarsa Education Act

### Says Allahabad HC misconstrued provisions of law

**New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):**

In a breather to about 17 lakh madarsa students, the Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order of the Allahabad High Court that scrapped the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 calling it "unconstitutional" and violative of the principle of secularism. Observing that the issues raised in the petitions merit closer reflection, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud issued notices to the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh government and others on the pleas against the high



court order. "The object and purpose of Madarsa board is regulatory in nature and the Allahabad HC is not prima facie correct that establishment of board will breach secularism," the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said. The top court said the high court "prima

facie" misconstrued the provisions of the Madarsa Act, which does not provide for any religious instruction. "The finding of the high court that the very establishment of the board would violate secularism appears to conflate Madarsa education with the regulatory powers of the board. "If the concern was to ensure that the students of Madarsas receive quality education, the remedy would not lie in striking down the Madarsa Act but in issuing suitable directions to ensure that the students are not deprived of quality education," the bench said.

## Infiltration bid foiled

### 1 terrorist killed

**Srinagar, Apr 05 (PTI):**

In a major success ahead of Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir, security forces on Friday foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control in Baramulla district, killing at least one terrorist, officials said. Alert troops of the army noticed some suspicious movement along the LoC at Sabura Nala Rustam in Uri area of the district and challenged intruders, the officials said. They said the intruders opened fire which was retaliated by the soldiers, re-

sulting in killing of at least one terrorist. The body of one slain ultra has been recovered while the security forces believe another terrorist might have also been killed in the action.

A cache of arms and ammunition were recovered from the scene of the encounter including two AK rifles, three magazines, four hand grenades and Rs 10,250 Indian currency. The security officials said the successful elimination of the infiltration bid was a significant achievement ahead of the Lok Sabha polls next month.

# Sector Officer is the friend, philosopher and guide of polling parties

- Training session held for Sector Officers at Kala Mandir
- Act as a link between Polling Teams and Returning Officer
- Instructed to effectively discharge the responsibilities

Sector Officers in the election work. Dr Sanjay Kumar Das, Assistant Professor, Master Trainer, Government College, Vaishali Nagar, made the sector officers aware of the election related work in the training programme. He spoke about the instructions prescribed by the Election Commission of India. Sector officers were asked to discharge their assigned duties with full responsibility. They were asked to realise the importance of election work. Sector officers were informed about their responsibilities from the implementation of the model code of conduct till the completion of the election process. They were asked to pay more attention in sensitive areas where disputes are likely to occur during voting. Based on past incidents at the local level, they were asked to take the help of



police officers to ensure law and order in the polling stations. Master Trainer HS Bhuwal, Lecturer, Government Higher Secondary School, Nardha, said that the Sector Officer has the maximum responsibilities in the elections. Their work starts as soon as the election program is announced and they can be

freed only after the voting process is over. A sector officer is in charge of ten to twelve polling stations. He is the friend, philosopher and guide of the polling parties under his charge. He is also the representative of the Election Commission in his sector. They are the link between the polling party and RO/ARO. They should visit the centers of

their charge as soon as they are appointed. They should have complete knowledge about EVM, without any confusion and doubt. The Sector Officer should also have complete knowledge of the voting process. They should also have good knowledge of their area and its access routes. He said that the Sector Officer should visit the

polling stations of his charge before voting and collect information. If there is any obstacle in travelling in the sector, such as broken bridge or culvert or cut road, then the Sector Officer should immediately contact the RO/ARO and can also inform the concerned agency. They should be well aware about lighting, shade, drinking water; toi-

lets, ramp arrangements. The offices of political parties and candidates should be more than 200 meters away from the centre. If the polling station is new then it should be given adequate publicity. Sector officers should also keep an eye on whether the model code of conduct is being followed in their sector. They should also keep an eye on the movement of unauthorized campaign vehicles in their area, misuse of government property and defacement of their and private properties. On the day of voting, the Sector Officers will also have the powers of the Zonal Magistrate. Apart from this, Sector Officers will ensure that a day before voting, all the polling parties reach their respective polling stations and they do not face any problem regarding voting material, any member of the party, or EVM, all security including CPF al-

lotted with the party. The personnel should be present at the centre. Sector officer will send a report to RO. Sector officers will ensure mock polls on the day of voting and will focus on those centers where there are no polling agents. Also ensure that voting starts on time, EEM/VVPAT can be changed if necessary. They will keep an eye on the pace of voting and compile a report every two hours and send it to the RO. During the training, Additional Collector Arvind Ekka and Yogita Dewangan, Additional Collector and Deputy District Election Officer Bajrang Dubey, Joint Collector Harvansh Miri, Deputy Collector Lavkesh Dhruv and Uttam Dhruv, Tehsildar Bhilai BB Panchbhai, Assistant Returning Officers and all the nodal officers were present.

## Provide MVY benefits to senior unmarried women; demands Chaurasia

**Bhilai, Apr 05:**

Senior leaders of BJP Mahila Morcha and women of 12 different organisations led by Nita Chaurasia met the Member of Parliament and Lok Sabha candidate Vijay Baghel at his residence. They raised the demand of including senior unmarried women under the Mahtari Vandan Yojna. MP Vijay Baghel assured to discuss the issue with the Lok Sabha manifesto committee and insist for including this demand in the manifesto. Nita Chaurasia, Anjali Patnaik, Surbhi Mishra, Janaki Mishra, Yojana Thahake, and members of Matrishakti Mahila Sangathan, Swalamban Nari Parishad, Udaan Sansthan, Aastha Bahuuddeshiya Sanstha and self-help groups were present.

With the objectives of improving the economic independence and health nutrition status of women, to remove discrimination and inequality, and to promote economic independence and empowerment, Mahtari Vandan Yojana has been started in Chhattisgarh by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The benefits of this scheme are available only to those women who are married, widowed and separated women. Only the senior unmarried women are deprived of the

## Kritvik wins silver in Ju-Jitsu national championship

**Bhilai, Apr 05:**

A five-day Ju-Jitsu national championship was organized at Chowk Stadium in Uttar Pradesh. A total of 2000 players from 24 states participated in this competition. In the under-eight weight category, Kritvik Chandrakar from Chhattisgarh Durg district participated in two categories. He won a silver medal in the Nivaaja Event. Kritvik Chandrakar made the entire Chhattisgarh and Durg district proud by winning the second Silver medal in the fighting system. Kritvik Chandrakar was taking rigorous training every day for the last two years under coach Deva Sahu in Ju-Jitsu martial arts training at Ward number 21, Shri Ram Indore Stadium. On this achievement, Durg City MLA Gajendra Yadav,

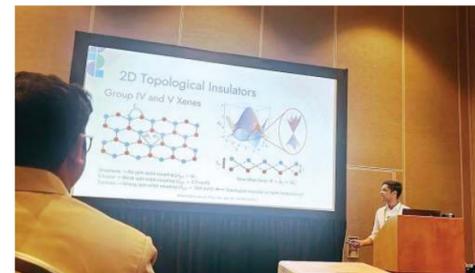


Rural MLA Lalit Chandrakar, Secretary of Ju Jitsu Association of Chhattisgarh, Rana Ajay Singh, Councillor of Ward No 21 Arun Singh, Sanjay Sahu, Ranjan De and others congratulated Kritvik and wished for a bright future.

## Steel City lad Shashwat presents research paper in American Physical Society

**Bhilai, Apr 05:**

Steel City lad Shashwat Chakraborty, a final semester student of B.Tech in Engineering Physics of IIT Bombay, presented a research paper in the American Physical Society. In the APS March meeting, the most important event of the prestigious American Physical Society, Shashwat presented a paper on Topological Spintronics under the guidance of Professor Bhaskaran Muraleedharan. Topic of the research paper was "Proposal for a High Speed 2D Gene Based Antiferromagnetic Memory Cell". The March meeting was held in Minneapolis, America. It is noteworthy that the 125 year old American Physical Society is an organization of all the senior scientists working on



the subject of Physics from all over the world. Its members include the world's great scientist Einstein to the Indian scientist Satyendra Nath Bose. In this Scientific Kumbh organized every year in March, all the senior scientists of the world, including Nobel Prize winners, register their dignified presence. The prestige of education hub Bhilai increased with the selection of Shashwat Chakraborty's

paper and his name being included among the young scientists. Shashwat is the son of Dr Sonali Chakraborty, Director of Swayamsiddha Group and Sandeep Chakraborty, former General Manager of Bhilai Steel Plant. On Shashwat's achievement, the intellectual class of the city including MLA Rikesh Sen, Mayor Neeraj Pal, Pankaj Pal have conveyed their good wishes and blessings.

## Rajendra Prasad to select boxers for ASBC Asian Championship-2024

**Bhilai, Apr 05:**

Former Olympian and Arjuna Awardee Boxer from Bhilai, Rajendra Prasad, has been invited by the Indian Boxing Federation to serve as a member of the selection committee to select U-22 Men and Women boxers for the Indian team to participate in the ASBC Asian Championship 2024 from 6th April to 10th April 2024, at ASI Pune Maharashtra. Currently working as Deputy General Manager (Education-TSD), in SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant, Prasad is the only Olympian and Arjun Award recipient

**Rajendra Prasad**

from Chhattisgarh. Rajendra Prasad is also a member of the selection committee for the Boxing Federation of

India. He has been nominated by the Indian Boxing Federation to select female players for the Elite Women's National Coaching Camp, for the selection of male players for the Men's National Boxing Coaching Camp, in the year 2021, and several other national and international level Boxing Championships. As per the guidelines of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, it is Mandatory to have an Arjun Awardee in the selection committee to select the boxers for coaching camp and International Tournament.

## All India Gold Cup Football Championship concludes

**Kerala Police Team defeats KSEB Kerala in final match****Bhilai, Apr 05:**

BSP Iron Ore Mine Group Dalli Rajhara's Corporate Social Responsibility Department (CSR), in association with the Sports and Recreation Council, organised the All India Gold Cup Football Championship from 27th March to 04th April 2024. Anirban Das Gupta, Director I/c (SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant) was the chief guest of the valedictory ceremony. The final match of the championship was played between Kerala Police Trivandrum and KSEB Kerala at Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Football Stadium, on 04 April, where both the teams ended with a 1-1 goal draw. As a result, the win-



ner and runner-up team was decided through a penalty shoot, where the Kerala Police Trivandrum team emerged as the winner by scoring 4 goals, while the KSEB Kerala team became the runner-up by scoring 3 goals. Anjani Kumar, ED (Works), Samir Swarup, ED (Rowghat), BK Giri, ED (Mines), RB Gaharwar, CGM (Mines) IOC, Rajhara, CISF Chief Bhilai, Shibu Nair, Municipality President, Rajendra

Behera, President (Rajhara Mines Football Club), and Mukul Verma, Vice President (Rajhara Mines Football Club) were present as special guests. Chief Guest Anirban Das Gupta felicitated the winning team Kerala Police Trivandrum with the winner's trophy along with a cash prize of One Lakh Rupees, and the runner-up team KSEB Kerala was given a cash prize of Fifty Thousand Rupees and the Runner-up Trophy.



Other teams were also felicitated on this occasion. A total of 8 teams including the teams of RKM Football Academy, Narayanpur, Kerala Police Trivandrum, Bihar Police Buxar, Barsul Young Men's Association- West Bengal, MEG Bengaluru, Jagga United Orissa, KSEB Kerala, Rajhara Mines-Rajhara, took part in the 9-day-long All India Gold Cup Football Championship. The panel of Judges, Officials, and Referees of

the final match of the Football Championship comprised Deepesh Dey, Raisingh Kangra, Prafull Kumar, Vishal Prajapati, Aman Kumar Prasad, Ravindra Rajwade, Shankar Bahadur Lama and Vijay Anand Dadel along with the Match Commissioner Ruby David. Bhushan Nirmalkar and Sanjay Rawat were commentators for BSP's All India Gold Cup Football Championship held at Rajhara.

# Blast Furnaces employees felicitated under 'SAIL Shabash' Yojna

**Bhilai, Apr 05:**

Bhilai Steel Plant management always recognizes the sincere efforts of its employees and felicitates them for the same. Be it their commendable professional performance at the workplace, or conscious compliance with the safety protocols, the honest endeavors of employees have always been appreciated at BSP. In one such initiative, employees are being felicitated by the Head of the Department with a Letter of Appreciation for their excellent performance. As many as 71 Employees including executives and non-executives of Blast Furnaces Department in Category-1, along with 33 employees under Category-2 were fe-

licitated with Letters of Appreciation in under the newly launched 'SAIL Shabash' Scheme for their innovative endeavors. It is noteworthy that for the first time the Appreciation letters were generated in online mode through the portal. Head of the Blast Furnaces Department Sauyama Tokdar, CGM (BFs) facilitated the awardees in the presence of other Senior Officials, and departmental personnel. Sauyama Tokdar in his address appreciated the proactive efforts of SAIL Corporate Office, New Delhi, in launching the 'SAIL Shabash' Scheme. This scheme will play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of appreciation, recognizing its po-



tential for long-term development within the organization, Tokdar said. Devendra Choudhary, Sr Mgr (BFs) compered the programme on this occasion. The award winners of the 'SAIL Shabash' Scheme under the Category-1 include Nimesh Chandra Mishra, DGM (BF), Satyabrata

Sutar, Gambheer Singh, Subodh D Gaikwad, Assistant General Managers (BF), Ram Ray Ratre, Prashant Dutta, Abhijit Chowdhury, Sr Managers (BF), R Jayaram, Gaurav Singh, Managers (BF), Shaji Babu, Dy Mgr (BF), along with Tarun Kumar Sahu, Gopal Bhimte, Premlal

Sinha, Rajesh Kumar Nayak, Bhagwat Lal Thakur, Anjan Kumar Dutta, Chief Master Technicians (BF), Laxmi Narayan Dewangan, Liladhar Dadwe, Chargemen cum Master Operatives (BF), B Rajesh Tiwari, Safiulla Khan, Tejram Thakur, Bhagwati Prasad Vishwakarma, Jai

Kumar Rawat, Chhabilal Sahu, Takkar Singh Thakur, Yuwaraj Singh Netam, Master Operators (BF), Chandra Shekhar Pandey, Subhash Chandra, Hira Lal Sahu, Pyarelal Thakur, Umendi Ram Churendra, Mukesh Kumar Soni, Shekh Mohammed Sabbir, Ramkumar Lader, Ajay Kumar Verma, Raghuvver Prasad Jaiswal, Ravi Singhal, Shankar Hansdah, Palsingh Thakur, Santosh Kumar Sarathe, Chunnillal Thakur, Dhanesh Ram, Samir Ghosh, Rajkishore, Arun Kumar Meshram, Master Technicians (BF), Anil Kumar Parkhe, M Dileswararao, Janak Ram, Bhuneshwar Singh Dhruw, C Shrinivasu, P Joteswer Rao, Deepak

Kumar Agrawal, Ravi Kumar Lahari, Dasa Tudu, Khuman Das, Vijay Kumar Banjare, Anirudha Das, Mohan Rao Kanchipati, Rajnish Kumar Singh, Akhil Kumar Rathore, Vinod Kumar Sharma, Ishwar Singh, Raj Kumar Sharma, Tuku Majhi, and Laxmi Dewangan, Operators cum Technicians (BF). The award winners of the 'SAIL Shabash' Scheme under the Category-1 include Naveen Kumar Tiwari, GM (BF), Srikanta Chandra Pradhan, Manish Kumar Tiwari, Nimesh Chandra Mishra, DGMs (BF), Satyabrata Sutar, Subodh Dadaji Gaikwad, AGMs (BF), Ram Ray Ratre, Abhijit Chowdhury, Somesh Dwivedi, Senior

Managers (BF), R Jayaram, Rishabh C Shinde, Managers (BF), Shaji Babu, Dy Mgr (BF), Vijay Kumar, Asst Mgr (BF), Tarun Kumar Sahu, Chief Master Technicians (BF), Zahoor Alam, Tejram Thakur, Bhagwati Prasad Vishwakarma, Chhabilal Sahu, Master Operators (BF), Bansi Ram Lautre, Umendi Ram Churendra, Ravi Singhal, Shankar Hansdah, Dhanesh Ram, Rajkishore, Master Technicians (BF), Anil Kumar Parkhe, M Dileswararao, Bhuneshwar Singh Dhruw, C Shrinivasu, Muddada Murali Dhar, Swapnil Purushottam Chatap, Rajnish Kumar Singh, Akhil Kumar Rathore, and Tuku Majhi, Operators cum Technicians (BF).



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# Massive fire in Electricity Board's store depot

Fear of loss worth crores

Home Minister Vijay Sharma, MP Sunil Soni, Education Minister Brijmohan Agarwal, MLA Rajesh Munat took stock of the situation

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 05: Tragedy struck the heart of Raipur's Gudhiyari district as a massive fire tore through the electricity distribution company's primary storage depot, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. The inferno, which originated from a 24-kilowatt liter diesel tank, quickly spread to three adjacent oil tankers and thousands of transformers, cables, and conductors, engulfing the area in flames and thick smoke.

As the fire raged on for hours, panic gripped the densely populated surroundings, with residents fleeing for safety as chaos ensued. Witnesses de-



scribed scenes of terror as people scrambled to escape the advancing flames, their eyes stinging from the acrid smoke that filled the air. Despite the valiant efforts of firefighting teams and emergency responders, the sheer intensity of the blaze posed unprecedented challenges, hindering their attempts to contain the inferno.

Authorities swiftly moved to seal off the area,

recognizing the grave threat posed by the raging fire. High-ranking officials, including the IG, Collector, SSP, Disaster Rescue Director, and Corporation Commissioner, descended upon the scene, coordinating rescue and containment efforts in a bid to stem the tide of devastation. Political figures, including Home Minister Vijay Sharma, MP Sunil Soni, Education Minister Brijmohan

Agarwal, and MLA Rajesh Munat, also arrived to assess the situation and provide support to affected residents.

Throughout the ordeal, the resilience of the community was tested as fear and uncertainty gripped the region. Thousands of residents found themselves in the midst of a disaster, forced to confront the very real possibility of irreparable loss. As the flames con-

## Chaos grips Krishna Nagar Gudhiyari

thick smoke had engulfed the vicinity, infiltrating homes and causing widespread distress among the population.

The proximity of densely populated areas such as Krishna Nagar, Ramnagar, and Jyotiba Nagar exacerbated the peril, with the risk of the fire spreading becoming

alarmingly real. Over a hundred families found themselves abruptly displaced from their homes, with Krishna Nagar bearing the brunt of the impact. As billows of heavy smoke billowed from the store depot, the number of affected families soared to over two hundred.



## Massive response effort mobilized

Despite the deployment of thirty fire vehicles, which tirelessly made over a hundred rounds, the fire continued its rampage, prompting a desperate call for assistance from neighboring districts such as Mahasamund, Jalai BSP, and nearby industries. Responders from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) also rushed to the scene to bolster containment efforts. More than twenty additional fire vehicles and around a hundred firefighters and police personnel were directly engaged in the grueling rescue operation. Even the city army was summoned to aid in the battle against the relentless flames. At the forefront of the re-

sponse, Collector Gaurav Singh, SSP Santosh Singh, and Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra, along with their dedicated teams, stood steadfast, coordinating relief efforts with unwavering determination. Meanwhile, IPS Ajatshatru Bahadur Singh, Director of the State Relief Disaster Department, led his team in an unyielding fight against the blaze. Relief operations, initiated in four strategic phases by the District Administration, Police, and Municipal Corporation, saw the mobilization of over three hundred personnel, including firefighters, police officers, and municipal workers.

Despite the overwhelming odds, brave firefighters and volunteers worked tirelessly to combat the blaze, risking their lives to protect others and salvage what remained.

# Jain community to celebrate Mahavir Jayanti with much fanfare

The 15-day celebration Kalyanak Mahamahotsav the 2623rd birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir to start from April 6



Raipur, Apr 05: Like every year, this year also the 15-day 2623rd Mahavir Janam Kalyanak Mahamahotsav will be celebrated with great pomp by the Sakal Jain community in Raipur. Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav Committee 2024, President Jitendra Golchha, General Secretary Virendra Daga, Treasurer Amit Munat, Working President Amar Barlot, Media Incharge Praneet Jain while addressing the scribes here informed that Mahavir Jayanti is one of the most important festivals of Jainism. This festival is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Mahavir. This year Mahavir Jayanti is on Sunday, April 21, 2024.

Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav Committee 2024, President Jitendra Golchha said that Mahavir

Swami is remembered with reverence in the entire Jain community. And on this occasion, programs like pooja archana, prabhat pheri, shobha yatra, meeting, 'sant samagam', cultural programs, 'Bhog Prasadi' and 'Bhandara' will be organized in all the Jinalayas and Jain temples of Raipur. Religious discourse and symposium will also be held are organized.

The world class Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Mahamahotsav will be celebrated with much fanfare this year too. First of all, a 15-day Prabhat Pheri will be organized from April 6 to April 20, which will be organized in different Jain temples, colonies and wards. This Prabhat Pheri will be taken out from the wards every day from 6.30 am in which men will par-

icipate in white and women will participate in saffron attire. After the Prabhat Pheri every day, there will be a program of religious fancy dress and religious quiz for children aged 5 to 15 years. The Prabhat Pheri will start from Shwetambar Jain Temple Vardhaman Nagar in New Rajendra Nagar at 6.30 am and will end back at Shwetambar Jain Temple Vardhaman Nagar via Amlidih Chowk. In the daily cultural programs, 'Jeev Daya Diwas' has been organized on April 7th which is at 6 am. Starting at 11:00 and ending at 5:00 in the evening, the animals and birds 1 will be served, skill development program has been organized from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, community social worship on 12th April, social worship on 14th April at 8:00 am. General

Secretary Virendra Daga said Jain flag hoisting and other programs, Jain trade fair and Jain got talent show will be held on April 15th, cultural programme 'Jinshasan' will be held on April 16th, Lal Vardhaman Mahavir of Mata Trishala on 17th April.

On April 20th, Jain Kavitri Sammelan will held. He said that on 21st April, a huge grand procession, health camp, Shasan Ratna Samman, Aarti from 2623 lamps of Lord Mahavir will be organized every day. Along with organizing Mahavir Prasadi Bhandara, a 15-day blood donation camp has also been organized for the residents at various places in Raipur. Use of plastic will be completely banned throughout the event.

It is notable that the festival of Mahavir Janam Utsav is also celebrated by the followers of Jainism to commemorate the public welfare. Lokesh Kawadia, senior member of Jain Community, Media Incharge Praneet Jain and others were present.

# BJP complained about editing of CM Sai's video

Raipur, Apr 05: The BJP delegation on Thursday complained at the Civil Lines police station against editing and publicizing the video of Chief Minister Vishnudeo Sai. The delegation included District President Jayanti Patel, State Media Incharge Amit Chimmani, Election Commission Committee Head Vijay Shankar Mishra, Social Media Coordinator Somesh Pandey, Rasik Parmar, State Spokesperson Kedar Gupta, Amit Sahu said that the Chief Minister addressed the public meeting at Mahasamund on April 3, 2024. By tampering with the video, it has been shown to appeal for votes for Congress Party's Rajnandgaon candidate



Bhupesh Baghel, which is not only objectionable, but also a violation of the election code of conduct and an attempt to tarnish the image of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai. The applicant is deeply hurt personally by the said act and has suffered mental agony. Therefore, a crime should be registered against the creator of the said video released on social media

and punitive action should be taken and the said social media site channel should be banned immediately.

The delegation said that Congress is losing the elections badly, that is why now it is doing such acts, it is Congress's frustration and disappointment. For committing such acts, criminal cases should be registered against

Congress people and immediate action should be taken. Congress is a victim of complete mental bankruptcy and has descended to the lowest level of politics. The public will not accept editing of the video of Vishnudeo Sai, the Chief Minister of the state who comes from the tribal community. The people of the state will give a befitting reply to this.

# Ganja worth Rs 10 lakh seized in Raipur railway station



Raipur, Apr 05: The joint team of RPF and GRP has seized ganja worth more than Rs 10 lakh from Raipur railway station besides arresting four peddlers. Arrested peddlers have been identified as Sushil Selma (27), son of Raj Selma, Mahendra Pradhan (24) son of Birpradhan, Vishwanath Nag (23), son of Bhankarnag and Pradeep Suna (24), son of Banamali

Suna. All of them are residents of Odisha.

During checking on April 04, 2024, illegal narcotic drug Ganja was brought from Odisha in Platform No. 07 Railway Station Raipur. A total of 53 kg 100 grams worth Rs 10,11,100 was seized from peddlers. A case has been registered against them under Section 20 (B) of the NDPS Act with their arrest.

# Action on illicit liquor on instructions of Collector

One arrested with 60.120 bulk liters of country liquor

Raipur, Apr 05: On the instructions of Collector Dr Gaurav Singh, action has been taken against the sale of illicit liquor. On the basis of the complaint received by Deputy Commissioner Vikas Goswami, the joint team of Excise Team Circle Kharora, Circle Tilda raided village Kharora, Loharpara during patrolling on the night of 4th April and seized 60.120 bulk liters of country liquor worth Rs 36740 from one Ajay Dhiwar. Offence has



been registered against the Ajay Dhiwar under Section 34(2) and he has been sent to jail. Sub Inspector Preeti Kushwaha, Dilip Kumar Prajapati, Constable Digambar Bura played important role in action against illicit liquor.

# Four persons involved in betting nabbed



Police seizes 2 laptops, 14 mobile phones

Raipur, Apr 05: Telibandha police has nabbed four persons involved in betting for IPL matches and seized the mobile phones and laptops being used from the place where they were managing the set-up for betting.

The police got tip from an informer that some persons are preparing set-up for betting in the lane near Golden Sky Grand Emperia and the senior police officials directed TI Telibandha to nab them red-handed. So a combined

team of police from Anti-Crime and Cyber unit and Telibandha police reached the venue and nabbed four persons having set-up for playing online 'satta'. They disclosed their names as Saurabh Premchandani, Nikhil Dhameja, Manish Daulatani and Ayushman Ahuja.

The police also seized 2 pieces laptops, 14 mobile phones and 'satta-patti' (list of persons involved in playing 'satta') worth crores and entire cost of the materials seized around Rs 3.50 lakh. A case under section 4 (K) of Gambling Act and section 6 & 7 of Chhattisgarh Gambling Act and taken the matter under investigation.

# Interrogation of Saumya, Ranu continues for 2nd day

In coal scam

Raipur, Apr 05: Interrogation of suspended IAS Ranu Sahu and Deputy Collector Soumya Chaurasia, lodged in the women's cell of Raipur Central Jail, continued for the second day on Friday in the coal scam case. The team of Anti Corruption Bureau reached Raipur Central Jail in the morning to interrogate Ranu Sahu and Soumya Chaurasia. It may be mentioned that the court has given three days time to ACB and IOW to interrogate Ranu and Soumya.

Earlier on Thursday, Anti Corruption Bureau officials interrogated for seven hours. Informed sources

said that the ACB team asked suspended women officers about 30 questions each, but not a single satisfactory answer was received from them. On the contrary, they tried to escape by saying that they had been implicated in a false case.

The ACB team recorded his statement in the laptop brought with him. ACB interrogated coal scam mastermind Suryakant Tiwari, suspended IAS Sameer Bishnoi, Sunil Agrawal, Arvind Singh in liquor scam case, suspended ASI Chandrabhushan Verma, Satish Chandrakar, suspended constables Bhim Singh, Aseem Das and others in Mahadev App betting case. More than 50 businessmen associated with coal business are being summoned.

# Liquor scam: Anwar Dhebar on ACB remand till April 8

Raipur, Apr 05: Raipur special court has sent Anwar Dhebar on ACB remand till April 8 in the liquor scam case. ACB presented accused Anwar Dhebar in the court in the liquor scam case and sought his remand till April 15. On behalf of Dhebar, senior Supreme Court advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan and Raipur Court advocate Faisal Rizvi challenged the ACB proceedings. Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan challenged the legal jurisdiction of the ACB proceedings in the liquor scam case citing the Supreme Court's stay, Noida's FIR and the High Court's order.

## This is an election for nation building: Bharti

**Khairagarh, Apr 05:**

A Holi Milan Program was organised here for workers and officials of Pandadah Mandal in Ghotia, in which State BJP General Secretary Ramji Bharti was honoured. Dongargarh Assembly in-charge Surendra Singh Bannoana, co-in-charge Bhagwat Sharan Singh, Mandal President Narottam Sinha, former district president Tisheshwar Sahu, Sunil Jain and others were present in the program.

In the program, State General Secretary Ramji Bharti said that this election is not a general elec-



tion but an election for nation building; hence we have to tighten our belts and enter the election field and especially from Pandadah division we have to set a new record of victory. Assembly in-charge Surendra Singh Bannoana said that we all

have to fight this election with a new determination and with this victory we have to achieve the target of 400 and form a government with a strong majority.

Co-in-charge Bhagwat Sharan Singh said that with the two major

achievements of MP Santosh Pandey's tenure, Pandadah Mandal will be seen moving forward on new fronts of economic development in the coming years, in which Dongargarh Katghora rail line will open a new path of development, while from Rajegaon in Madhya Pradesh, like Rajnandgaon, this entire area will also move towards economic development with the construction of green field-way road crossing the forest to the capital. Former district president Tisheshwar Sahu said that if we fight unitedly, we will definitely get the lead in more votes from Pandadah Mandal.

## Justice PK Mishra releases book on 'Student Essays on Law & Sciences'

**In the presence of EC member and faculties of HNLU****Raipur, Apr 05:**

The Hidayatullah National Law University Press has brought out the publication, 'Student Essays on Law & Sciences', an edited volume of student essays. The book was released by Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra, Judge, Supreme Court of India, Justice Sanjay K. Agrawal, Judge, High Court of Chhattisgarh; Prafull Bharat, Advocate-General of Chhattisgarh; Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, Pro-Chancellor, IILM University; Rajneesh

**HMJ Prasanth Kumar Mishra of Supreme Court of India HMJ Sanjay K Agrawal of High Court of CG, Mr Prafulla Bharath Adv General of High Court of CJ, Prof Vivekanandan, VC of HNLU, EC members and Faculty.**

Srivastava, Principal Secretary, Law and Legal Affairs Department, Government of Chhattisgarh; Prof. (Dr.) V.C. Vivekanandan, Vice-Chancellor, HNLU Raipur in the presence of EC members and faculties on March 30.

The book is a culmination of a National Level Essay Writing

Competition organized by HNLU's Centre for Law & Sciences and Centre for Privacy & Data Protection. The competition, themed 'Is Law the Ultimate Science?', prompted students nationwide to explore and debate the intricate relationships between legal studies and the scientific domain. The competition's standout essays have

been thoughtfully compiled in this edited volume, providing fresh insights and perspectives on the evolving interplay between these two critical fields of study.

The book is based on the selected essays of the competition held recently with cash prizes of Rs. 10,000/- for Rhythim Sharma and Saumya Soni & Aditya Bhura were adjudged as the first & second runner's up accordingly winning cash prizes of Rs. 7,500/- & Rs. 5,000/- respectively. The book was edited by Dr. Debmata Mondal and Dr. Priyanka Dhar, Heads of the Centre for Law & Science and the Centre for Privacy & Data Protection respectively at HNLU.

## Vibha receives state level award for innovative teachers

**Khairagarh, Apr 05:**

Vibha Patkar, a teacher posted at Badhitola School of the block, was honored with the Shri Chinmoy Alankaran Samman of the National Label. Vibha Patkar was selected in the program organized by Shri Chhattisgarh Sakal Digambar Jain Samaj in Bhatapara on the occasion of Lord Adinath Janma Kalyanak Birth Jayanti Mahotsav for her excellent work in the field of education, innovation and all-round development of students along with continuous efforts and hard work to enhance their versatile talent.

Vibha Patkar, known as a versatile teacher, was selected along with 250 teachers from the state and other states on the Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav, in which, in view of her educational activities, the government registered institution Chinmay Sagar



Charitable Trust Bhatapara and Shri 1008 Honoured her with Innovative Teacher Award 24. Prakash Modi, Sumanlata Modi, Alok Modi, Abhishek Modi, Rajneesh Jain and others were present and DEO Lalji Dwivedi, BEO Neelam Singh Rajput, BRC Sujit Singh Chauhan, Assistant Director Rashmi Khare, Cluster Center Coordinator Dhritendra Singh, Principal Chandrabhan Sahu have congratulated the teacher on her achievement.

## Procession taken out on Karma Jayanti Mahotsav

**By Sahu Sangh Parivar****Sukma/Konta, Apr 05:**

A grand Kalash Yatra was taken out by the Sahu community in the Sukma district headquarters, in which the whole city echoed with the chants of Karma Mata. The President of Sukma District Sahu Sangh, Jagannath Raju Sahu, said that today on the auspicious occasion of Karma Jayanti, a grand aarti of Mata Karma was performed simultaneously at 11 am by all the District Sahu Sanghs, Tehsil Sahu Sanghs, Area Sahu Sanghs and Rural Sahu Sanghs of the whole of Chhattisgarh. Mata Karma is the goddess of devotee Shiromani service, sacrifice, devotion and dedication. The glorious story of Karmabai, the Goddess of worship of the supremely revered Sadhvi Bhakti Shiromani Maa Karmadevi, the revered goddess of all Sahu Teli community in the country and abroad, has been going on in the minds of people for the past thousands of years with a sense of devotion and reverence. She was born on Paap Mochani Ekadashi



in Samvat 1073, 1017 AD. This time the birth anniversary of Maa Karma Devi is celebrated on April 5.

Raju Sahu said that we learn self-confidence, fearlessness, courage, effort, equality and nationalism from the life of Maa Karmabai. She never bowed down to injustice. She accepted every sorrow and happiness of the world and faced it bravely. She increased the respect of women by living a prosperous family life. With her devotion, she saw Lord Krishna in person and took Bal Krishna in her lap and fed him Khichdi with her own hands.

During this, District Sahu Association Secretary Gupteshwar Gangber, Patron Kanhaiya Lal Sahu, Treasurer Dayaluram Sahu, City

President Tikaram Sahu, District Vice President Sevak Ram Gurupanch, Women District Vice President Mrs. Pramila Sahu, Doman Sahu, Tilochan Sahu, Tirath Sahu, District President of Officers Cell Chaman Lal Sahu, District President of Youth Cell Kailash Sahu, Dornapal Tehsil President Virendra Sahu, Konta Tehsil President Ramnath Sahu, Chhindgarh Tehsil President Naresh Sahu, Tongpal Tehsil President Ghanshyam Sahu, Gautam Sahu, Chovaram Sahu, Manas Sahu, Rupesh Sahu, Ishwar Sahu, Khamman Sahu, Santram Sahu, Khorbara Sahu, Jitendra Sahu, Mahesh Sahu, Lalu Sahu, Loknath Sahu, Lala Sahu and officials and workers of Sahu society were present.

## No time table for closing of shops, business till midnight

**Kharora, Apr 05:**

There is no time table for closure of shops in the city and most of the shops are trading 11.30 pm i.e. almost midnight. The administration has no control over the opening and closing of shops and most of the shops at the intersections remain open till late night. Due to this, there is a gathering of people involved in criminal activities and small incidents keep happening every day. People have opined that the police administration should ensure that the shopkeepers in the city area are closed on time, so that untoward incidents can be avoided and all hotels and restaurants should follow the guidelines.

Operators have been directed to close the shutters by 11 o'clock. A time table has also been set for the shopkeepers of the city. Even after this, if anyone keeps the shop open, we will take action.

Surendra Srivastava, TI, Kharora

## Randomization of polling parties done in presence of Collector

**Bijapur, Apr 05:**

Lok Sabha General Observer for Bijapur (ST) Assembly Constituency 89 Bijapur (ST) under Bastar Lok Sabha through video conferencing from Jagdalpur was done in the presence of Collector and District Election Officer Anurag Pandey. District level second randomization of polling parties was done in the NIC room of the district office for conducting elections in 245 polling stations of Bijapur district under Lok Sabha constituency Bastar for Lok Sabha elections 2024. Randomization of 03 disabled people and 17

Sangwari polling parties was done for 245 polling stations of the district, in which employees of a total of 348 polling parties including 108 parties including reserve polling parties, 220 road polling parties including helicopter parties were identified for polling parties. Assistant Returning Officer Jageshwar Kaushal, Deputy District Election Officer Narayan Prasad Gawel, Deputy Collector and Nodal Officer Uttam Singh Panchari, District Education Officer Ramesh Nishad and District Women and Child Development Officer Lupendra Mahinag were present.

## Holi Milan Program of CMS held

**Anwari, Apr 05:**

Holi Milan Program of Chhattisgarh Manas Sangathan (CMS) tehsil Kurud District Dhamtari was held here on 1/4/2024 in village Navagaon (Thuha). The chief guest of the program was District Manas Sangathan Dhamtari President Ganraj Sinha, Vice President Kekati Sahu, Treasurer Pramila Sahu, Dularva Ram Sahu

Secretary, Roopram Sahu Joint Secretary, Special Guest Radhamohan Sahu Provincial General Secretary, Sharda Das Manikpuri and Tehsil President Bhakhara.

In the Holi Milan ceremony, there was a melodious and captivating presentation by the local Manas Mandali of village Navagaon, Jai Maa Saraswati Manas Mandali Bhaishbod, Jai Chandhi Mahila Manas Mandali

Singdehi, Amar Jyoti Manas Mandali of Joratarai. The coordinator of the program, Vijay Kumar Sahu, President Tehsil Kurud along with Secretary Dhanesh Sahu Village Kanharपुरi, Lekhran Sen, Omprakash Nishad Joratri, Ravi Sahu Bhaishbod, Neelkanth, Narayan Sahu, Bishat Sahu, Birendra Sahu, Omkar Das Budharu Tarak and many other villagers were present.

## Holi Milan ceremony organised

**Korea, Apr 05:**

A Holi Milan ceremony was organized by Brahmin Samaj Korea at Shagun Garden Khanda, in which members of the Samaj participated in large numbers and made the program successful. The program started by garlanding the photograph of Lord Parshuram and lighting the lamp, after which the stage introduction took place. In the program, the speakers talked about the need for an organized society and said that such events remove differences and establish brotherhood.

Chief guest BN Jha, Chief General Manager of SECL Baikunthpur region, said that the Brahmin community always works to show direction and has set an ideal with its wisdom and intelligence. He appealed to the people to work towards the society and other speakers called for removing the additions prevalent among the youth of the society and also discussed about education and employment of the society. On this occasion, Sub Area Manager RP Mishra, Mine Manager BK Pandey, Pandit Surya Narayan Tripathi, Rakesh Pandey, former District President Jai Nath Bajpai, Shailesh Tiwari, Dr Rakesh Sharma, KD Tripathi and a large number of people and their families participated.



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## SPORTS ROUND-UP

## 6 Jr cricketers selected for NCA camp

**Central Chronicle News**

**Raipur, Apr 05:** All India Junior Selection Committee has selected 6 students of Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS) for Under 19 camp at National Cricket Academy.

A press release issued here from the office of CSCS stated that Vikalp Tiwari, Suryakant Tiwari, Vivek Yadav, Varun Singh Bhue, Pratham Jachak and Abhyuday Singh have been selected for the NCA camp to be held from April

**Vikalp Tiwari****Suryakant Tiwari**

26 to May 22 at Cuttack and Surat. All the above players have been selected on the basis of their performance

in Cooch Behar Trophy and Vinoo Mankad Trophy organised under the aegis of BCCI.

## Varad, Vivan into final of Asian Tour U-14 Tennis tournament

**Central Chronicle News**

**Raipur, Apr 05:** No 4 ranked player Varad Undre defeated Vivan Mirdha with the score of 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 to enter into the final of the Asian Tour Under 14 Tennis tournament being organized under the aegis of Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association (CSTA) here on Thursday. Similarly, Vivan Bidsariya defeated Arsh Valke with the score of 7-6(5), 6-1, 5-7 in the second semi-final match.

In the Boys Double final match, the pair of Vivan Mirdha and Paranjay Shivach defeated the pair of Viven Bidasariya and Abiuday Singh with the score of 3-6, 6-3 (10-2) to clinch the title.

In the Girls Single for



Under 14 semi-final match, top ranked Shriniti Choudhary defeated Parnita to enter into the final whereas Harsha Kartik entered into final after her opponent Shristi Kiran suffered injury and had to withdraw.

In the Girls Double final match, the pair of Shriniti Choudhary and Jahanavi defeated the pair of Yashita and Shristi Kiran to win the title.

## More than 2 lakh voters to be participants of LS 2024

**Voting will be held in 306 polling stations of the district on May 7****Korea, Apr 05:**

For the commencing Lok Sabha elections 2024, voting will be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 under the third phase in Koriya district, which falls under Korba Lok Sabha parliamentary seat. Before this, notification will be published on April 12, and April 19 is the last date for filing nominations, while the scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on April 20 and April 22 is the date of withdrawal of nominations. The inclination of the voters in the Lok Sabha elections will be known during the



counting of votes on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

There are 228 polling stations in Baikunthpur development block and 78 polling stations have been made in Sonhat (partial) development block. There are 1 lakh 70 thousand 663 voters in Baikunthpur development block, while there are 36 thousand 552

voters in Sonhat (partial) development block. Talking about male and female voters, the number of male voters in Baikunthpur development block is 85 thousand 85 while the number of female voters is 85 thousand 572. Similarly, in Sonhat (partial) development block, the number of male voters is 18 thousand 230 while the number of female voters is 18 thousand 321. In this way 2 lakh 7 thousand 215 voters will be participants of healthy democracy.

According to information, there are 6 thousand 920 new youth voters, 2 thousand 188 disabled voters, the number of voters aged 85 years and above is 640, while 7 third gender voters will exercise their franchise. In last five years, voters increased by about

4 percent in Baikunthpur and 11 percent in Sonhat. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the percentage of male voters in Baikunthpur development block was 77.59 percent and the percentage of female voters was 75.57 percent. Similarly, in Sonhat (partial) development block, the percentage of male voters was 88.59 percent and the percentage of female voters was 85.81 percent, while this time, there has been an increase of 3.84 percent voters in Baikunthpur development block and 11.15 percent increase in Sonhat (partial) development block.

There are 8 assembly constituencies included in Korba parliamentary seat and seat includes 8 assembly constituencies in 4 districts. Rampur, Korba,

Katghora, Pali-Tanakhar of Korba district, Baikunthpur of Korea district, Manendragarh, Bharatpur-Sonhat of MCB district and Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi are Marwahi assembly seats. As soon as the code of conduct was imposed on March 17, property defacement teams were formed urban body and gram panchayat wise in the district, under which action was taken against property defacement. The entire staff is deployed to remove stickers, banners, paintings etc. under which, more than 2 thousand promotional materials from government institutions and 1 thousand 35 promotional materials from private buildings have been removed by taking action under defacement of property.

## Indian Coast Guard rescues 27 Bangladeshi fishermen

New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):

The Indian Coast Guard has rescued 27 Bangladeshi fishermen whose fishing boat had drifted inside Indian waters after its steering gear suffered a breakdown rendering them stranded at sea, officials on Friday said. The swift rescue operation took place on Thursday, they said.

"At about 1130 hrs on April 4, Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Amogh' during patrol at Indo-Bangladesh International Maritime Border Line (IMBL) sighted a Bangladeshi fishing boat (BFB) 'Sagar II' adrift inside Indian waters," the ICG said in a statement.

The ICG ship launched a boarding team to investigate. During investigation it was found that the boat had a "steering gear breakdown for the last two days



Personnel of India Coast Guard and Bangladesh Coast Guard during handing of Bangladeshi fishermen. Indian Coast Guard forces saved the lives of 27 Bangladeshi fishermen stranded in the middle of the sea and handed them over to Bangladesh on Friday.

and had been adrift since then which led to the boat drifting inside Indian waters", it said. The BFB had "27 crew/fishermen on-board".

The Indian Coast Guard's technical team tried to identify and rectify the defect, but it was observed that the rudder of the boat was "completely

damaged" and could not be repaired at sea.

"As the sea state and weather conditions were conducive, it was decided that the distressed boat will be towed to the Indo-Bangladesh IMBL and handed over to another Bangladeshi fishing boat operating across IMBL or to Bangladesh Coast Guard Ship in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indian Coast Guard and Bangladesh Coast Guard," the statement said.

In the meantime, the Indian Coast Guard regional headquarters at Kolkata established communication with Bangladesh Coast Guard and informed them about the incident and plan of action, officials said.

Bangladesh Coast Guard Ship (BCGS)

"Kamaruzzaman" was deployed by BCG for towing of BFB. "BCG ship 'Kamaruzzaman' arrived near the IMBL at about 1845 hrs on April 4. ICGS 'Amogh' handed over the 27 Bangladeshi fishermen along with their boat to BCG ship 'Kamaruzzaman'," the statement said.

"The operation reflects the commitment of Indian Coast Guard towards safeguarding precious lives at sea against all odds. Such successful search and rescue (SAR) operations will not only strengthen the regional SAR structure, but also enhance the international cooperation with neighbouring countries. This is in keeping with the motto of the Indian Coast Guard 'Vayam Rakshamah' which means 'We Protect'," it added.

## Independent MP S Ambareesh joins BJP in a boost to NDA ahead of LS polls

Bengaluru, Apr 05 (PTI):



Mandya MP Sumalatha Ambareesh joins the BJP ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Bengaluru, Friday.

Actor-turned-politician and independent MP from Mandya in Karnataka Sumalatha Ambareesh on Friday joined the BJP, in a boost to the NDA ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Terming it an "important and good day" in her political life, the 60-year-old said she is deeply inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, his dream for the country by 2047 and his dedication towards it.

"Listening to his (PM) speeches in the parliament, I have been inspired and I have understood things. Considering all these things, I felt joining BJP would be a right choice for me," she said, as she also thanked several state leaders including former Chief Ministers B S Yediyurappa, Basavaraj

Bomma and D V Sadanada Gowda for their cooperation. Veteran BJP leader Yediyurappa, state President B Y Vijayendra, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly R Ashoka, national General Secretary in-charge of elections in Karnataka Radha Mohan Das Agarwal and Sadananda Gowda were

among those who welcomed her into the party fold at its state headquarters here. With BJP ceding Mandya seat to its alliance partner JD(S) in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, Sumalatha, after consulting her supporters and wellwishers in Mandya, on Wednesday announced her decision to opt out of the elections, and join the BJP.

The wife of popular film star M H Ambareesh, Sumalatha had earlier staked claim for BJP ticket for re-election from the Mandya seat that was represented by her late husband in the past. But the party convinced her and gave it to JD(S). JD(S) state President and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy is now the alliance's joint candidate from Mandya. Kumaraswamy on Sunday met Sumalatha, and sought her cooperation in the polls.

## Alliance with BJP after polls depends on how they treat us: Kumaraswamy

Mandya, Apr 05 (PTI):

JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy has said he is sincerely working for NDA's better prospects in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls and the continuation of alliance with BJP, after the parliamentary elections, will depend on how his party and its leaders are treated.

The former Chief Minister further said that given an opportunity and if Prime Minister Narendra Modi has confidence in

him, he wants to be the agriculture minister, in the event of NDA coming back to power at the Centre.

In an exclusive interview to PTI Videos, after filing his nomination from Mandya on Thursday, the state JD(S) President said: "We being part of the NDA depends on how our party leaders are treated in the future.

We are sincerely working and we want a long-standing relationship with BJP. But ultimately we will take a decision depending

on how we are treated and how much respect we get from the BJP."

JD(S) headed by former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda joined the BJP-led NDA in September last year. As part of the seat-sharing agreement, the BJP would contest in 25 constituencies and the JD(S) in the remaining three — Mandya, Hassan and Kolar — in Karnataka.

Kumaraswamy, son of Gowda, made no secret of his desire to become Union Agriculture Minister. "It is

not only the aspirations of people of Mandya to see me as union minister, even my BJP friends feel that it will be good for the state if I become a minister.

I come from an agricultural background and given an opportunity I want to be the agriculture minister and bring a good name for the government. If the Prime Minister believes that I can do good work and if I am given an opportunity I want to work in the agricultural sector," he said.

## Congress rebel sends defamation notice to CM Sukhu

Shimla, Apr 05 (PTI):

A day after Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu claimed six Congress rebels and three independents were sold for Rs 15 crore each, one of them, Sudhir Sharma, Friday sent a defamation notice to him asking for a Rs 5-crore compensation.

Sharma is one of the Congress rebels.

During a rally in Himachal's Una district, Sukhu had on Thursday alleged that the Congress rebels are corrupt and will go behind bars.

He had said "we do not

have money but we have honesty, morality and support of the people" and alleged that the six Congress rebels and three independents were sold for Rs 15 crore each.

"We have proof as the facts have started unfolding in the police investigation and time has come to teach them a lesson," he had added.

The CM had made the remarks against the nine legislators including six Congress rebels and three independents who had voted in favour of BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha polls held on February 27.

These MLA had later joined the BJP and the six Congress rebels who were disqualified for defying a whip to be present in the assembly and vote in favour of the government during the cut motions and the budget were given tickets by the BJP from their respective assembly constituencies.

The police had registered an FIR against Independent MLA Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) and Rakesh Sharma, father of Congress rebel Chetanya Sharma (Gagret), and others for "electoral offences", bribery and criminal conspiracy.

The notice sent by the former minister and BJP candidate from Dharamshala assembly seat, Sudhir Sharma, said the statements and speeches of the chief minister which are false, derogatory and defamatory with no basics and substance, have been widely circulated through videos and newspapers, damaging his reputation, especially at a time when he is contesting the bypolls.

"There is neither any iota of truth in the CM's speeches nor he possesses any proof of the alleged false statements made in the public," it said.

## Plea by man to take part in ASI's survey of Bhojshala-Mosque complex rejected

Indore, Apr 05 (PTI):

The Indore bench of Madhya Pradesh High Court has turned down the plea of a man seeking permission to take part in the ongoing scientific survey being carried out of the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar by the Archaeological Survey of India.

The application of Kuldeep Tiwari, one of the petitioners on whose plea the HC ordered the survey, was dismissed by a division bench comprising Justices SA

Dharmadhikari and Gajendra Singh on Thursday.

"The survey is on the verge of completion. Ultimately, the bunch of petitions shall be finally decided based on the report of the ASI after completion of the survey," the bench observed while dismissing the application.

"In view of the aforesaid, no ground is made out to permit the petitioner to participate or remain present during the survey," read the order, which was uploaded on the MP HC on Friday.

The scientific survey was ordered by the HC on March 11 and its started on March 22.

The Hindus consider Bhojshala, an ASI-protected 11th century monument, to be a temple dedicated to Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), while the Muslim community calls it Kamal Maula Mosque.

As per the arrangement made by the ASI on April 7, 2003, Hindus perform puja in the Bhojshala premises on Tuesdays, while Muslims offer namaz in the complex on Fridays.

## Foundation of Mahabharata was laid in Baghpat: Adityanath

Baghpat (UP), Apr 05 (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday termed Baghpat as the land from where the foundation of Mahabharata was laid against injustice and oppression. "This is the same land from where the foundation of Mahabharata was laid against injustice and oppression. Baghpat was one of the five villages that Lord Krishna had asked for the Pandavas, when he visited the court of Hastinapur 5,000 years ago," Adityanath said. "But Duryodhan could not give (those villages), could not take the blessings of the society...Hence Mahabharata had to happen," he added.

## VALEDICTORY CEREMONY



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar interacts with officer trainees at valedictory ceremony of IAS Phase-I (2023-Batch), at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, in Mussoorie, Friday.

## Ruling SKM chief PS Tamang 'guarantees' social uplift

Gangtok, Apr 05 (PTI):

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) president and chief minister PS Tamang on Friday released the party's manifesto for the upcoming assembly and Lok Sabha polls in the state promising social uplift.

The manifesto is based on nine guarantees for social uplift - dignity, capability, good governance, education, health, empowerment, pride, prosperity and social equality.

The 56-page manifesto titled "9 Guarantees of P S Tamang" was unveiled in the presence of senior party leaders and party supporters from Zoom-Salghari, Rinchhenpong, Daramdin and Soreng-Chakung constituencies of Soreng and Gyalshing districts.

"As we embark on this journey towards achieving 'Sunowlo Sikkim, Sammriddh Sikkim', I am

filled with optimism and determination. With our unwavering resolve and the trust placed in us by the citizens, I am confident that together, we will overcome challenges and realize our collective vision for a prosperous and inclusive society," Tamang said after releasing the manifesto at Chakung playground in Soreng district.

With a few days left before the state goes to simultaneous polls on April 19, Tamang, also the SKM president, started his campaign from the Soreng-Chakung assembly constituency.

The SKM party president will campaign across all six districts and will cover all 31 constituencies. It will conclude on April 15 when he will address a state-level "Jansabha" (rally) at Rangpo ground in Pakyong district.

The party supremo, who is contesting elections from two constituencies, Soreng-Chakung and Rhenock, urged party cadres to spread the message of the manifesto across the state.

"The next five years after the elections will be dedicated to the people of Sikkim who will see a major transformation from the existing scenario. The programmes and policies lined up in our manifesto will bring about positive change in society," he said.

Tamang said post delimitation, the number of seats in the state assembly will increase to 40 from the current 32. Also, 33 per cent of the 12 seats will be reserved for women, he said.

"All the 40 seats in the assembly will be reserved seats in the 2029 elections. Sikkim will be a tribal state in the coming days," he added.

## Bihar minister Maheshwar Hazari's son joins Congress

Patna, Apr 05 (PTI):

Bihar minister Maheshwar Hazari's son Sunny Hazari joined the Congress here on Friday, fuelling speculations that he may be fielded in the Lok Sabha polls.

Maheshwar Hazari, a senior JD(U) leader, stepped down as the deputy speaker of the assembly recently and now holds the crucial Information and Public Relations Department portfolio. State Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh welcomed Sunny Hazari to the party.

Singh was approached with queries by journalists who sought to know whether it was a "masterstroke" keeping in mind the reserved seat of Samastipur, where Shambhavi Choudhary has been fielded by Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) of Chirag Paswan, an NDA partner.

In a guarded response, he said, "Candidates are not

decided by the Congress at the state level. The screening committee shortlists names of prospective candidates and a final decision is taken by the Central Election Committee."

However, Sunny Hazari, who is a panchayat-level political worker from Samastipur, did not deny that he was raring to go and contest the seat, which has been in the past represented by his father as also his late grandfather Ram Sevak Hazari.

"I had been active in public life since the Mahagathbandhan days of my father's party. I do realise that my father might be upset with my decision to join Congress. I will try to convince him. If the party asks me to contest from Samastipur, I am game," he said.

Notably, Maheshwar Hazari is a cousin of Ram Vilas Paswan and is understood to have lobbied hard with Chirag, the late LJP founder's son, for a ticket for Sunny.

## Delhi HC directs inspection of coaching centres in Mukherjee Nagar

New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed inspection of the coaching centres operating in the Mukherjee Nagar area by a team of lawyers and the fire services here while seeking a report with respect to their status and safety.

A bench headed by Justice Yashwant Varma also asked the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to file a status report stating the total number of coaching centres in the locality.

The court's order came on a batch of cases concerning the operation of coaching centres in the area, including a case registered by it on its own after taking suo motu cognisance of a fire that broke out at a coaching centre there in June 2023.

formed the court that six coaching centres have been sealed on account of being non-compliant with the applicable regulations and action would be taken against other defaulters as well.

The court was also informed that around 21 centres have closed down on their own and notice of sealing has been issued to over 20.

Amicus curiae advocate Gautam Narayan said that although some centres have closed their operation, new centres might have come up in their place.

"In view of the aforesaid, we call upon the MCD to submit a fresh status report setting out the total number of coaching centres which may be operating in Mukherjee Nagar as on date," the bench, also comprising Justice Ravinder Dubeja, ordered.

"We also additionally constitute an independent team which would be headed by amicus curiae Gautam Narayan and which would independently inspect the area and submit a report on coaching centres operating there and now many of them are in compliance (with the applicable regulations)," it further said.

The court asked the member secretary of Delhi State Legal Services Authority to nominate five empanelled lawyers to assist Narayan in the exercise.

"We further direct Delhi Fire Services to undertake an independent exercise of verification of the area in question and submit a report on non-confirming coaching centres that may be identified," the court said, while directing that the matter be listed for hearing after 3 weeks.

# Initiative to provide water for animals praised

**Officials laud social organizations' compassionate initiative**

**Arang, Apr 05:**

As temperatures soar with the onset of summer, the commendable initiative spearheaded by the Peepala Welfare Foundation and the Rani Padmavati Mahila Sangathan, in collaboration with the public, to provide water containers for animals across the city has garnered widespread appreciation.



Public drinking centers have been established at various locations, ensuring that mute animals have access to essential hydration during the scorching heat. The initiative, aimed at alleviating the plight of animals during the sweltering summer months, has drawn praise from all quarters.

During a recent event attended by District CEO Kumar Singh Lahare, CMO KK Patel, Tehsildar Sita Shukla, BEO N.P. Kurre, and municipal staff, water was poured into containers for the benefit of mute animals. Officials commended the

initiative, hailing it as a noble and pious act of kindness.

The District CEO emphasized the importance of community cooperation in supporting such initiatives, underscoring the significance of extending compassion towards animals in need. Members of the Peepala Foundation, Rani Padmavati Mahila Sangathan, and Kosal Sahitya Kala Manch were also present, further highlighting the collaborative efforts of social organizations and the community in addressing the welfare needs of animals.

# Health camps drive voter awareness in Vananchal

**Mungeli, Apr 05:**

In a concerted effort to promote voter awareness and civic engagement, health camps have been organized in the villages of Vananchal under the Lormi development block, encouraging residents to participate in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Under the guidance of the Collector and District Election Officer, a voter awareness cum health camp was recently conducted in the Vananchal villages of Achanakmar and Chaparwa. The camp provided essential healthcare services, including health check-ups and treatments for 68 patients, alongside motivating vil-



lagers to exercise their voting rights in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Attendees were encouraged to pledge for 100 percent voter turnout, reinforcing the importance of democratic participation.

Additionally, a voter awareness rally was held to further disseminate information and inspire community members to prioritize voting. The ongoing Systematic

Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program underscores the district's commitment to achieving maximum voter turnout in the elections. Dr. Devendra Paikra, the Chief Medical and Health Officer, highlighted the district's multifaceted approach, which includes integrating voter awareness efforts with healthcare initiatives. In line with this ap-

proach, on Nutrition Day, health check-ups and vaccinations were administered to pregnant and lactating women across various health centers in the district. Concurrently, oaths were administered to ensure 100 percent voter participation in the Lok Sabha elections.

The initiative extended to 52 sub-health centers under the Lormi development block and 26 sub-health centers under the Patharia development block. The active participation of officials, including the Block Medical Officers, underscores the collaborative efforts to promote both public health and democratic engagement within rural communities.

# Voter awareness soars through Rangoli and Mehndi competition



**In Khairagarh District District officials and Bihaan Group Didis unite to promote 100% voting participation**

**Khairagarh, Apr 05:**

In a bid to bolster voter awareness, the District Panchayat of Khairagarh orchestrated a vibrant Rangoli and Mehndi competition, a creative endeavour aimed at foster-

ing civic engagement. Members of the Bihaan group from the Khairagarh development block, alongside representatives from the Women and Child Development Department, enthusiastically participated in the spirited competition.

Amidst an atmosphere brimming with artistic fervour, the talented Didis of the Bihaan Group utilized the medium of rangoli and henna to convey

poignant messages advocating for voter awareness. Through their intricate designs and skillful application of Mehndi, they championed the cause of 100% voting participation, urging citizens to exercise their democratic right diligently.

Gracing the occasion were esteemed dignitaries including Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat Khairagarh, Shishir Sharma, Women and Child Development Department Officer RK Jambulkar, Assistant Project Officer Prakashchand Taram, and Assistant Nodal SVEEP KK Verma, among others. The event witnessed the convergence of dedicated individuals from the Bihaan Group, whose unwavering commitment to civic engagement embodies the spirit of democracy and collective empowerment.

# Somnath Lodhi shines in Rugby Championship



**Arang, Apr 05:**

Somnath Lodhi, representing the Arang Rugby Football Club, has garnered recognition for his outstanding performance, securing a spot in the prestigious Chhattisgarh 15-s Rugby Football team.

Lodhi's exceptional display during the 3rd 15-s Senior Open National Rugby Championship held in Odisha earned him the selection, reflecting his talent and dedication to the sport. Leading the Chhattisgarh team, Somnath and his teammates demonstrated their prowess, advancing to the semi-finals and ultimately securing fourth

place in the tournament.

Upon this achievement, Somnath received accolades from various quarters. Arang MLA Guru Khushwant Saheb, along with patrons Yogendra Chandrakar and Aman Sahu from the Arang Youth and Sports Organization, extended their congratulations to the talented athlete. Additionally, members of the Arang Rugby Football Club, including Tanveer Raza, Rahul Nishad, Himanshu Lodhi, Vaibhav Nishad, and Gunjan Verma, joined in celebrating Somnath's success, highlighting the local support for budding athletes in the community.

# Nutritious Nyota Bhoj enlivens govt school in Janjigira

**Parents and officials unite to promote healthy eating**

**Kharora, Apr 05:**

A touching gesture of community support unfolded on April 3 at the Government Primary and Pre-Secondary School in Janjigira, as 170 students were treated to a Nyota Bhoj, generously sponsored by the parents of Udal Lalel, Basant Kumar Lasel, and Maheshwari Lasel. The Nyota Bhoj featured a nutritious spread of bananas and grapes, complementing the students' midday meal and promoting a wholesome diet essential for their health.

Basant Kumar Lasel's gracious gesture in hosting the Nyota Bhoj not only honored the school community but also underscored the importance of collective efforts in nurturing the well-being of



children. Udal Lalel was feted with a Shripal in recognition of his family's contribution to the school's welfare.

Amidst the festivities, the presence of esteemed individuals including Head Teacher of Pre-Secondary School, Janjigira - Ratiram Mirche, Gopal Prasad Verma, Basant Kumar Sahu, Preeti Banjare, Mithilesh Sahu; Head Teacher of Primary School, Janjigira - Seema Verma, Ashok Kumar Chelak, Urvashi

Navrange, and Vandana Sahu, alongside representatives from women self-help groups - Yashoda Chaturvedi, Anar Bai, Rajo Bai, Lakshmi Verma, and Amrit Bai Sahu, added to the communal spirit.

The event was further graced by the presence of Gaindlal Nayak, Sarpanch representative of village Janjigira, and Surendra Kumar Verma, President of the School Management and Development Committee.

# Collector conducts surprise inspection of Lala Jagdalpuri Library



**Jagdalpur, Apr 05:**

Collector Vijay Dayaram K on Wednesday conducted a surprise inspection of Lala Jagdalpuri Library and took stock of the arrangements in the library. He took stock of the implementation of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) system for entry and exit in the li-

brary, arrangements of reading room, e-learning room and cleanliness of the premises and gave necessary instructions to the in-charges. He discussed about other facilities for the students studying. On this occasion, District Education Officer Bharti Pradhan and Library Nodal Sharadchand Gaur were also present.

# Voter awareness initiatives launched

**Ahead of Lok Sabha 2024 elections**

**District authorities ensure polling station readiness with necessary facilities**

**Arang, Apr 05:**

In anticipation of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in 2024, District Collector Dr. Gaurav Kumar Singh and Assistant Returning Officer Pushpendra Sharma spearheaded a comprehensive meeting at the district level, convened under the auspices of Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat Arang, Kumar Singh Lahare. Emphasizing the importance of robust preparations, Officer Lahare outlined a series of measures aimed at ensuring a smooth and inclusive electoral process.

Key provisions included the



installation of water pots, emergency lights, and wheelchair facilities for disabled voters at all polling stations. Additional directives were issued for basic amenities, shade, electricity, and restroom arrangements, alongside the organization of voter awareness programs to enhance participation. With the deadline set for April 20, authorities urged prompt action to implement these arrangements.

Amidst the preparations, a democratic election oath was administered, underscoring the commitment to achieving 100 percent voter turnout. Lahare stressed the pivotal role of Gram Panchayats in foster-

ing awareness through various activities like Prabhat Pheri, human chains, street dramas, and SVEEP initiatives in Haat Bazars. Earlier, SDM Pushpendra Sharma and Tehsildar Sita Shukla convened a meeting with sector officers, issuing necessary directives to streamline operations. The Strategic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) team, comprising Tehsildar Mahendra Kumar Patel, Arvind Kumar Vaishnav, Seema Bhandekar, and ADEO Chhatradhari Sonkar, alongside village secretaries and local representatives, were actively involved in the preparations.

# Tehsildar removes illegal encroachments in Bagdehi



**Anwari, Apr 05:** Tehsildar Bamrao Tamboli promptly addressed the issue of encroachment on government land in the village of Bagdehi, located in the Bhakhara tehsil area. The encroached land, totaling 19.92 hectares and comprising three separate parcels identified as Khasra No. 195/1 (12.63 hectares, occupied by 16 persons), Khasra No. 1237 (4.93 hectares, occupied by 11 persons), and Khasra No. 1244/1 (2.36 hectares, occupied by 6 persons), had a total of 33 encroachments. With diligent efforts, Tehsildar Tamboli successfully freed the government land from the encroachers, ensuring adherence to lawful land use.

# Collector takes stock of evaluation work

**Of answer sheets of Board exams**

**Jagdalpur, Apr 05:**

Collector Vijay Dayaram K. took stock of the evaluation work of answer sheets of board examination at Jagtu Mahra Government Higher Secondary School of the city. He took cognizance of the average number of students getting lower and higher marks in the evaluation from the teachers checking the answer sheets. During this, he gave instructions to the District Education Officer to put teachers on duty for evaluation as per requirement. The papers of Geography, History, Science, Mathematics, Commerce, Hindi and English were being examined at the center on Wednesday.

It is known that



Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education (CGBSE) Raipur has received 66957 answer sheets for the High School Certificate Examination year 2024 for Bastar district in which 181 teachers are being checked. Similarly, 35110 answer sheets have been received for the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination year 2024 in which 125 teachers are being examined. District Education Officer Bharti Pradhan and school management officials were present on this occasion.

# Patwari nabbed red-handed while accepting bribe

**For getting land records updated by a farmer**

**Surajpur, Apr 05:**

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has nabbed a Patwari red-handed while accepted bribe of Rs 5000 from a person trying to get his name updated in the Patwari records after death of his father and mother. Initially the person paid him Rs 2000 and told him that rest 3000 will be paid later. It was as per the complaint lodged with ACB and trap laid, the Patwari Ragopal Sahu of Pt. Ph.H. No. 17 Telaimnda and in-charge Patwari P.H.No. 02 Garm Govindpur, Tehsil



Ramanujnagar, district Surajpur was nabbed on the premises of SBI Surajpur while accepting cash of Rs 3000. The accused was booked under section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 (Amendment 2018).

The complainant Sunil Kumar Singh informed that he had asked for updation of his land in the name of mother and father, who had died and for this

the Patwari was asking for bribe of Rs 5000-10000. It was after having words the amount was finalised for Rs 5000 and out of which he paid Rs 2000 earlier and on which the Patwari told him that the work will be done only after receiving balance Rs 3000. On this Singh decided to get him nabbed from ACB and so the complaint was lodged and trap was laid at SBI premises in Surajpur.

# Illicit liquor in large quantity seized

**In action by Dhamtari, Kurud, Sihawa and Kurud thana area**

**Dhamtari, Mar 05:**

In the action taken against illicit sale of liquor at three places by the police in Dhamtari, Nagri, Sihawa and Kurud, a total of 46 quarter bottles of country liquor and 7.5 lts of raw 'Mahua' liquor; Honda motorcycle worth Rs 30000 and sold amount of Rs 480 totalling 35,630 was seized and a case under section 34(2), 34(1), 34 (1)K of the Excise Act was filed against four accused. This action against illicit sale of liquor would continue in the coming days.



In the raid conducted by Kotwali in Dhamtari, two accused were nabbed with 22 quarter bottles of coun-



try liquor worth Rs 1980 and 18 quarter bottles of country 'Masala liquor worth Rs 1980 along with

the motorcycle worth Rs 30000 was seized. The two accused are Lilesh Kumar BayaS/o Asharam Baya (35), R/o Dhamtari and Nandlal Dhruv S/o Ramji Dhruv (19), R/o Dhamtari.

In the action taken by Kurud Police, one accused was nabbed with 16 quarter bottles of plain country liquor worth Rs 1440 and sold amount of Rs 180 totalling 1620 was seized. The accused nabbed was Rajkumar Barle S/o Balachand Barle (25), R/o Mongara Road, Kurud Thana Kurud.

In the action taken by Kurud Police, one accused was nabbed with raw 'mahua' liquor. In the action taken by Nagri Police, one accused was nabbed with 3.5 lts of raw 'Mahua' liquor worth Rs 350 and

sold amount of Rs 300, totalling 650.

In the action taken by Sihawa police, one accused Prem Sagar Nagwanshi, S/o Late D Nagwanshi (34), R/o Ghatula Thana, Sihawa was nabbed with 4 lts of 'mahua' liquor worth Rs 400 and cash of Rs 100, totalling Rs 500.

In the above action, Cyber Crime in-charge Inspector Sunny Dubey, TI Kotwali SI Laxmikant Shukla, Thana Sihawa ASI Narendra Sahu, Thana Kurud ASI Kamil Chand Sori, Thana Nagri ASI Tansingh Sahu, Cyber Head Constable Devendra Rajput, Lokesh Netam, constable Yogesh Nag, Deepak Sahu, Mukesh Mishra, Manoj Sahu and others gave valuable contribution.

## Bilawal Bhutto calls for judicial reforms

Month after Pak's apex court terms his grandfather's conviction mistrial

Karachi, Apr 05 (PTI):

A month after Pakistan's Supreme Court observed that the conviction of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the result of a mistrial, his grandson and foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto said that the time had come to introduce judicial reforms.

Last month, Pakistan's Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa-led Supreme Court



bench concluded that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) founder Bhutto's conviction in 1979 was the result of a mistrial.

The hearing was based on a special case sent in 2011 by then president Asif Ali Zardari to the Supreme Court to revisit his father-in-law Bhutto's conviction

for abetment in a murder case and his eventual hanging in 1979.

Addressing party workers and supporters at an Iftar on Thursday in Larkana district on the occasion of the 45th death anniversary of the late Bhutto, Bilawal said that the PPP would ask the new federal government to undertake such judicial reforms.

"It is time to initiate judicial reforms. The PPP will ask the federal government to undertake these reforms," the PPP chairman told the gathering.

"We want to provide speedy justice to the people. We want to fulfil our

promise," Bilawal, the PPP chairman was quoted as saying by The Express Tribune newspaper.

Bilawal recalled that his mother and former prime minister late Benazir Bhutto had made the judicial reforms an integral part of the Charter of Democracy (CoD), which was signed with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif in May 2006.

In collaboration with the PML-N, Bilawal claimed, that 90 per cent of the CoD had been implemented, including the restoration of the 1973 Constitution in its original form and giving rights to the provinces.

## DANISH FRIGATE HDMS NIELS JUEL



The Danish frigate HDMS Niels Juel, number F363, is docked in Korsoer, Denmark. Denmark's Armed Forces said a technical problem arose with a Harpoon missile on board the Danish frigate HDMS Niels Juel as it was taking part in a test while anchored in the Korsoer naval base.

## Israel dismisses 2 officers over deadly drone strikes on aid workers in Gaza

Tel Aviv, Apr 05 (AP):

The Israeli military said Friday that it has dismissed two officers and reprimanded three others for their roles in drone strikes in Gaza that killed seven aid workers on a food-delivery mission, saying they had mishandled critical information and violated the army's rules of engagement.

The findings of a retired general's investigation into the Monday killings marked an embarrassing admission by Israel, which faces growing accusations from key allies, including the US, of not doing enough to protect Gaza's civilians from its war with Hamas.

The findings are likely to renew scepticism over the Israeli military's decision-making. Palestinians, aid groups and human rights organisations have repeatedly accused Israeli forces of firing recklessly at civilians throughout the conflict — a charge Israel denies.

"It's a tragedy," the military's spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, told reporters. "It's a serious event that we are responsible for and it shouldn't have happened and we will make sure that it won't happen again."

With pressure mounting on Israel to hold itself accountable, Hagari and other officials late Thursday shared with reporters the results of the military's uncommonly speedy and detailed investigation.

It was unclear whether the punishments and the apology would calm an international outcry over the deaths of the World Central Kitchen workers or reassure international aid groups that it was safe to resume operations in Gaza, where nearly a third of the population is on the brink of starvation.

The food charity itself called the investigation

and disciplinary actions "important steps forward."

"However it is also clear from their preliminary investigation that the IDF has deployed deadly force without regard to its own protocols, chain of command and rules of engagement," the statement said. "Without systemic change, there will be more military failures, more apologies and more grieving families."

According to what spokespeople said were the Israeli army's rules, targets must be visually identified as threats for multiple reasons before they can be hit. But the investigation determined that a colonel had authorised the series of deadly drone strikes on the convoy based on one major's observation — from grainy drone-camera footage — that someone in the convoy was armed. That observation turned out to be untrue, military officials said.

## US man executed for killing Indian national and another person

In Oklahoma in 2002

Houston, Apr 05 (PTI):

A 41-year-old man convicted of shooting and killing two people, including an Indian, in the US state of Oklahoma in 2002 has been executed, the state's first execution of the year.

Michael Dewayne Smith was executed on Thursday by lethal injection at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester town, Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond said in a statement.

Smith had been on death row for the murders of 24-year-old Indian store clerk Sharath Pulluru and 40-year-old Janet Moore in separate incidents on February 22, 2002.

Oklahoma Attorney General released a statement after Smith was declared dead, saying: "I am grateful that justice has been served."

"I pray that today brings

some measure of peace for the families of Janet Miller-Moore and Sharath Pulluru. It has been a long and difficult 22 years for their loved ones, and my heart aches over the agony they have endured," he said.

"I want the people of Oklahoma to know that the victims of Michael Smith were good and decent people who did not deserve their fate," Drummond said.

"Sharath, a bright young man with a generous spirit, was the first in his family to come to the United States to pursue an education. He was fun to be around, was an inspiration to his family, and had a promising future," he said.

He added that the two were murdered because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. "That was all. I am grateful that justice has been served," he said.

In a statement, the Pulluru family said, "Sharath was the life of our family.

## Ukraine fires more than 50 drones against Russia

Kyiv, Apr 05 (AP):

Ukraine fired more than 40 drones into Russia's bordering Rostov region, Moscow defense officials said on Friday, in what appeared to be one of its biggest air attacks in the war and as Kyiv's forces step up their assaults on Russian soil. Russia's Defense Ministry said a total of 44 drones were "intercepted and destroyed" in the Morozovsk district, more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the border.

The attack damaged a power substation, Rostov Gov. Vasily Golubev said.

Russian media reported that there is a military airfield near the town of Morozovsk, but it was unclear whether the airfield was the target of the attack.

The Russian defense ministry said nine more drones were intercepted over Russia's border regions of Kursk, Belgorod, Krasnodar and the nearby Saratov region.

Ukrainian officials rarely comment on such strikes and provided no immediate response.

Drone warfare is a key feature of the war, which has extended into a third

year since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour. On the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, where fighting is largely bogged down, low-cost drones are used by both sides to knock out expensive military hardware.

The Kremlin's forces have used large numbers of Iranian-designed Shahed drones to bombard urban areas of Ukraine.

Kyiv, in turn, has developed small but fast-growing defense industry where drones, including deadly unmanned sea vessels, are proving effective.

## UN human rights body calls for halt to weapons shipments to Israel

Geneva, Apr 05 (AP):

The UN's top human rights body called on countries to stop selling or shipping weapons to Israel in a resolution passed on Friday that aims to help prevent rights violations against Palestinians amid Israel's blistering military campaign in Gaza.

The 47-member-country Human Rights Council voted 28-6 in favour of the resolution, with 13 abstentions. The sweeping measure, which takes aim at an array of Israeli actions such as impeding access to water and limiting shipments of humanitarian aid into Palestinian areas, also calls on UN-backed independent investigators to report on shipments of weapons, munitions and "dual use" items — for both civilian and military purposes — that could be used by

Israel against Palestinians. It is not binding.

Western countries were divided, with the US, Germany and others opposing the resolution, several abstaining and some European countries voting in favour.

Israel — at times joined by the United States — has regularly and roundly criticised the council for its alleged anti-Israel bias.

The council has approved far more resolutions against Israel for its actions toward Palestinians over the years than against any other country.

The council is wrapping up its first session of the year, which began on February 26, with action on more than 40 resolutions on subjects as diverse as the rights of the child; the environment and human rights; genocide prevention; and

rights situations in countries like Sudan, Belarus and North Korea.

The resolution comes amid a growing focus on weapons shipments to Israel — notably by its strongest backer, the United States — as Israel continues its military campaign in Gaza that has led to the killings of nearly 33,000 Palestinians that began in response to the attacks in Israel by armed militants on October 7.

In a sign of Washington's growing impatience with Israel's handling of the military campaign, US President Joe Biden issued a stark warning to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday that future US support for Israel's Gaza war depends on the swift implementation of new steps to protect civilians and aid workers.

## SUNAK'S CRICKET SESSION AT OVAL



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak takes part in a cricket practice session whilst meeting participants in the ACE Programme, during a visit to the Oval cricket ground in south London, on Friday, April 5.

## Pakistan Peoples Party nominates former PM Gilani for Senate chairman

Islamabad, Apr 05 (PTI):

Former Pakistan prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani has been nominated by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) as its candidate for the coveted post of Senate chairman as part of the power-sharing agreement between his party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), according to a media report on Friday.

A notification nominating Gilani was issued on Thursday by Jamil Soomro, political secretary to PPP

chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Geo News reported. According to a post-poll agreement between the PPP and the PML-N that formed a coalition government after the February 8 general elections, the post of president, Senate chairman and governorship of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were given to the PPP, while the posts of Senate deputy chairman, National Assembly speaker and governorship of Sindh and Balochistan were given to the PML-N.

## No evidence of Bushra Bibi being poisoned, says personal physician



Islamabad, Apr 05 (PTI):

Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi has not been given any poisonous substance, her personal physician has said following a medical checkup after allegations by the ex-prime minister that the former first lady was poisoned while incarcerated at his private residence which was turned into a sub-jail.

On April 2, Khan during the hearing of the 190

million pound Toshakhana corruption case in Adiala jail informed Judge Nasir Javed Rana that there had been an attempt to poison the former first lady and added that she had marks on her skin and tongue as a side effect of the "poisoning".

"I know who is behind it," the 71-year-old former prime minister said, without naming anyone.

He said that if any harm came to 49-year-old Bushra, the Pakistan Army chief (Gen Asim Munir) should be held responsible as members of an intelligence agency were controlling everything at his Bani

Gala residence in Islamabad and Adiala jail in Rawalpindi.

**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORK**  
 E-Tender Notice No. 42-Mech-BSP-LHB-Earthing  
 Date: 26.03.2024

Name of Work: Maintenance of different schedules and supply of spares of wheel set earthing equipment provided in LHB Coaches at Coaching Depot, Bilaspur for a period of three years on open tender basis. Tender Value : ₹ 3,06,54,654/- (Rupees Three Crore Six Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Six Hundred and Fifty Four Only). EMD: ₹ 03,03,300/- (Rupees Three Lakh Three Thousand Three Hundred Only). Opening of Tender: 12:00 hrs on 18.04.2024.

Further all details are available on Railway's website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Except E-tender no other mode of submission of tender will be accepted.

Sr. Coaching Depot Off. (JAG)  
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Ministry of Culture  
 Government of India

**Lalit Kala Akademi**  
 National Academy of Art  
 Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi - 110 001

**64th National Exhibition of Art**

The 64th National Exhibition of Art will be held in the month of July - August 2024. The minimum age of participation is 25 years. The entry forms can be obtained from **Lalit Kala Akademi Head Quarters** at New Delhi and Regional Centres at **Bhubaneswar** (Phone: 0674-2391884), **Kolkata** (Phone: 033-24641719), **Chennai** (Phone: 044-28291692), **Lucknow** (Phone: 0522-2324067), **Garhi, New Delhi** (Phone: 011-26431849), **Shimla** (Phone: 09459279179), **Patna, Ahmedabad, Agartala** and from **State Lalit Kala Academies, Zonal Cultural Centres and Art Organisations**.

Entry Forms can also be downloaded from Akademi's website: <http://lalitkala.gov.in>

The last date for submission of Entry Form is 15th May, 2024. The duly filled and sealed form may be addressed to Secretary, Lalit Kala Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi - 110001. For any further information please contact on phone numbers: 011-23009200.

Rajeev Kumar Secretary I/c V. Nagdas Chairman  
 CBC 09105/12/0002/2425

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## CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 12 No. 06

### Questionable Tactics

#### India's Denial Amid Allegations

The report by 'The Guardian', alleging India's involvement in targeted killings of wanted terrorists on Pakistani soil, has raised serious concerns and warrants a closer examination of India's foreign intelligence operations. According to the report, Indian intelligence operatives, purportedly linked to the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), have been accused of orchestrating nearly 20 targeted killings in Pakistan since 2020. These operations, allegedly carried out by unknown gunmen, have targeted individuals charged with violent terror offenses. The timing of these alleged killings, coinciding with an escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan, raises questions about the motives behind such actions. While India has vehemently denied these allegations, dismissing them as "false and malicious anti-India propaganda," the details presented in 'The Guardian' report cannot be easily dismissed. The report suggests a shift in India's approach to national security following the Pulwama attack in 2019, attributed to the Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed. It claims that Indian intelligence agencies have adopted a more aggressive stance, targeting elements outside the country before they can launch attacks or cause disturbances. However, the methods described in the report, including the alleged recruitment of jihadists and payments to local criminals, raise ethical and legal concerns. Targeted killings in foreign territories, if proven true, would not only violate international norms but also undermine India's reputation as a responsible member of the global community. India's Ministry of External Affairs has reiterated that targeted killings in other countries are "not the government of India's policy," emphasizing a previous denial made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. While such denials are expected, they do little to address the specific allegations presented in 'The Guardian' report. Moreover, the involvement of Indian intelligence operatives allegedly operating from the United Arab Emirates adds another layer of complexity to the issue. If proven true, it would suggest a coordinated effort to carry out extrajudicial actions beyond India's borders, further complicating India's diplomatic relations with its neighbors. The Indian government must address these allegations transparently and thoroughly investigate the claims presented in the report. Any violation of international law or misuse of intelligence resources must be met with accountability and corrective measures. In the face of escalating tensions and security threats, it is imperative for India to uphold the principles of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. Targeted killings, if used as a tool of state policy, not only erode these principles but also undermine India's moral authority on the global stage. As the international community scrutinizes these allegations, India must demonstrate its commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and adherence to international law. Anything less would not only tarnish India's reputation but also undermine regional stability and security.

### Judicial Prudence Amidst Apprehensions

Yash pal Raihan



In the turn of events surrounding the arrest and subsequent bail of Sanjay Singh, a Rajya Sabha member affiliated with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), several pertinent questions regarding the functioning and integrity of our investigation agencies have come to light. Singh's release on bail after a six-month stint in Tihar Jail due to the lack of established money trails raises eyebrows not just on the specifics

of this case but on the broader functioning of our law enforcement bodies. The fundamental principle guiding our investigation agencies should be one of impartiality, transparency, and adherence to the rule of law. Unfortunately, recent trends suggest a deviation from these ideals. Over the years, particularly in the past decade, concerns have been raised about the politicization of these agencies, with allegations of them being used as tools by the ruling government rather than as impartial arbiters of justice. Even the Supreme Court, the custodian of justice in our democracy, has expressed reservations about the modus operandi of these agencies, issuing strictures against their methods. Singh's case underscores the delicate balance between justice and political vendetta. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Singh last October, alleging his involvement in a money laundering scam. However, during the subsequent legal proceedings, the ED failed to furnish concrete evidence linking Singh to the alleged crime. The Supreme Court, rightfully demanding transparency and evidence, found the ED's case lacking, leading to Singh's bail. One of the key issues highlighted by this case is the stringent provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Under this law, individuals are often presumed guilty until proven innocent, contrary to the basic tenets of justice. The burden of proof falls heavily on the accused, making it challenging for them to secure bail. This inversion of the presumption of innocence contradicts the very essence of our legal system and warrants a critical review of such provisions. Moreover, the manner in which arrests are conducted under the PMLA raises serious concerns. The law grants wide-ranging powers to investigating officers, including the authority to arrest individuals based on mere suspicion. Such arbitrary use of power undermines the principles of due process and fair trial, resulting in prolonged detention and undue hardship for the accused. The decision by the Supreme Court to grant bail to Singh should serve as a wake-up call for our investigation agencies to introspect and reevaluate their methods. It is imperative that these agencies operate within the confines of the law, devoid of any political influence or bias. Justice must not only be done but also seen to be done, without fear or favour. Furthermore, the central government must take proactive measures to dispel any perception of misuse of investigation agencies for political ends. Upholding democratic values and ensuring the integrity of our institutions is paramount for the credibility and reputation of our nation on the global stage. While the bail granted to Sanjay Singh may be a victory for justice, it also raises pertinent questions about the functioning of our investigation agencies. It is incumbent upon us, as a society committed to the rule of law, to demand accountability, transparency, and fairness in our criminal justice system. Anything less would be a disservice to the principles upon which our democracy stands.

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

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

### KARNATAKA WATER CRISIS



Residents carry pots after collecting drinking water amidst ongoing water crisis, in Chikkamagaluru, Friday, April 5.

## Sport: A Catalyst for Global Unity and Peace

DR. KRISHNA KUMAR VEPAKOMMA



Sport, beyond its mere entertainment value, stands as a beacon of hope and unity in a world often marred by division and conflict. Its transformative power extends far beyond the playing field, resonating deeply within communities and nations alike. In an era where the pursuit of peace and harmony is paramount, sport emerges as a powerful force for positive change, fostering camaraderie, understanding, and resilience.

At its core, sport embodies values that transcend cultural and societal boundaries. It instills in individuals the virtues of fairness, teamwork, equality, and perseverance. Through friendly competition and the shared passion for success, sport bridges divides, bringing people together in pursuit of a common goal. It serves as a universal language, uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds under the banner of sportsmanship and camaraderie.

The United Nations, recognizing the universal appeal of sport, has harnessed its potential to advance development and peace efforts worldwide.

By leveraging sports-related campaigns and initiatives, the UN endeavors to promote physical and mental well-being, social integration, gender equality, and economic development. The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, observed annually on April 6th, serves as a poignant reminder of sport's ability to effect positive change.

Under the theme "Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies," the global community reaffirms its commitment to harnessing sport's potential for social transformation. Through educational programs, community outreach initiatives, and advocacy campaigns, sport serves as a catalyst for fostering understanding, tolerance, and respect across cultures.

The Sports for Nature initiative, launched in December 2022, underscores the intersectorality of sport and environmental conservation. By promoting principles such as protecting nature and promoting education, the initiative aims to drive transformative action for nature in sports by 2030. Through sustainable practices and environmental

stewardship, sport emerges as a powerful agent of change, contributing to the preservation of our planet for future generations.

On this International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, let us celebrate the unifying power of sport. Together, let us harness its potential to drive positive change, foster peace, and build a brighter future for all. As we stand on the cusp of a new era, let us embrace the spirit of sportsmanship and solidarity, uniting as one global community in pursuit of a more peaceful and inclusive world.

Sport has long been recognized as a powerful tool for promoting peace and unity among nations. From ancient Olympic Games to modern-day international sporting events, the ability of sport to transcend cultural, political, and geographical boundaries is evident. Whether it's the World Cup bringing together nations from around the globe or the Olympic Games promoting friendship and respect among athletes, sport has the unique ability to foster understanding and cooperation on a global scale.

One of the key reasons why sport is such an effective tool for promoting peace and unity is its ability to bring people together from different backgrounds and cultures. Regardless of race, religion, or nationality, individuals can come together as teammates or competitors on the field of play. Through shared experiences and common goals, sport helps to break down barriers and build bridges between communities that may

otherwise be divided.

Moreover, sport has the power to inspire and motivate individuals to work towards common goals both on and off the field. Whether it's overcoming adversity, striving for excellence, or working together as a team, the lessons learned through sport can be applied to real-world situations, including efforts to promote peace and unity.

Furthermore, sport has the potential to promote social inclusion and gender equality by providing opportunities for individuals from marginalized or underrepresented groups to participate and excel. By breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes, sport can empower individuals to overcome discrimination and achieve their full potential.

In addition to its social and cultural impact, sport also has economic benefits that can contribute to peace and stability in communities around the world. From creating jobs and stimulating local economies to promoting tourism and attracting investment, sport has the potential to bring prosperity to communities that have been affected by conflict or poverty.

Overall, sport has the power to bring people together, promote understanding and cooperation, and build a more peaceful and inclusive world. As we celebrate the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, let us recognize the importance of sport as a catalyst for global unity and peace, and commit to harnessing its power to create positive change in our communities and beyond.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Heat hurts

The span of Spring is cut short from what it used to be, a usual event for last few years. Climate change impacts our country with increased intensity and casualties. The data and research regarding health effects of heat wave are still at neonatal stage. A customized Heat management plan should be rolled out by NDMA, IMD and NCRB. Number of health professionals should be increased to promote adoptive measures simultaneously in public places and workplaces. On Monday last, the Indian Meteorological Department warned that heat waves would sustain for 10-20 days, a rise from four to eight days. There is hardly any time to waste now.

Arka Goswami, Durgapur, West Bengal

#### Focus on Real Threats

So despite India and Sri Lanka bound under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969 revolving around Katchatheevu island; how ridiculously can it be brought into the discourse by making a mockery of mutually accepted international agreements framed around half a century ago. Instead of making a mountain out of a molehill, located outside the maritime boundary of India; would the "nationalists" enlighten the country about the latest status of Chinese occupation in Ladakh following the fatal assault upon Indian soldiers in Galwan. Why don't the "patriotic" brigade concentrate its time, energy and resources to protect the North-West boundary of the nation so as to ensure that Pathankot Gurdaspur Uri Pulwama does not get repeated on Indian soil in future.

Kajal Chatterjee, Kolkata

#### Judicial Inquiry Urged

The Supreme Court's inquiry into the government's inaction against Patanjali Ayurved's COVID-19 cure claims is long overdue. These assertions were made during the pandemic's height, warranting swift legal response. Ramdev's association with the ruling party may have influenced the delay, necessitating scrutiny. Additionally, political figures endorsing unscientific remedies must be held responsible for their actions.

MK Nair, Raipur

#### Heatwave Alert Issued

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts a blend of rain and heatwave in states like Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab in the coming days. State governments must prioritize crafting heat action plans, mobilizing healthcare staff, implementing workplace adaptations, and raising awareness about heatwave risks. Urgent preparedness is essential. Residents should be educated on heatwave coping strategies to mitigate potential risks.

Rajkumar Kailasam, Kannur

## Let Kerala Win The Day For India

Kajal Chatterjee

When several Rajput kings were seen to serve the court of Akbar The Great or used to engage in matrimonial relationship with the Mughals so as to remain on the safe side, Rana Pratap was standing tall with an erect spine and simply refusing to surrender to the might of the ruling power. However witnessing the plight of his hungry thirsty children and spouse while leading a life of exile for months in the hot arid environment of the Aravallis following his defeat at Haldighati, the much perturbed Rana Pratap had written a letter of surrender to Akbar.

As the letter first reached the hands of the Court poet Prithviraj, he didn't transmit it to the King. Rather the much saddened poet wrote to Rana Pratap to consider his decision of surrender as the latter was the last warrior standing erect for the cause of

the Rajputs! And of course Rana Pratap continued in his path of struggle by respecting the sentiments of the poet Prithviraj and the beleaguered Rajputs.

This sequence, read on the pages of Amar Chitra Katha during early childhood, hit my mind whenever any highly reasonable intellectual of Kerala writes about a change within the hearts of the Malayali society who have all along served as beacon of secularism and humanity in the communally polarised India.

Though the state does not witness sectarian flare up unlike say Uttar Pradesh or Gujarat; but an undercurrent of religious tension is indeed making its presence felt. But the other side of the coin also definitely exists and that shining light of harmony gets represented by the annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage circuit.

The circuit featuring Sabarimala Temple does not see complete fruition without setting foot on two other

shrines as well - - Erumeli Nainar Juma Masjid in Kottayam district (commemorating Ayyappa's friendship with a Muslim youth) and Arthunkal St. Andrew's Church in Alappuzha district (in honour of the Ayyappa's friendship with a Christian priest) to offer prayers.

While the Hindu devotees circumambulate the mosque by chanting mantras, they take bath in the church pond according to rituals before prayer with the said mosque and church authorities liberal opening their doors for the Hindus during the pilgrimage season.

We have heard of incidents where the office-bearers of the Sree Mahavishnu Temple in Kerala had organised an iftar gathering for Muslims on the temple premises! And that of the Cheruvally Muslim Jamaat Mosque, Kayamkulam, not only arranging the Hindu marriage between Anju and Sharath Sasi on the request of the poor

mother of the bride; it organised a feast for 1000 people and gifted 10 gold sovereigns and Rs. 20 lakh to the bride.

And how can we forget that specimen of ultimate humanity in Kerala where azan got sounded from the podium within a temple complex followed by breaking of Ramadan fast (with the authorities arranging dates, dry foods and snacks) amidst ringing of temple bells for evening aradhana! And all spontaneously without any planning.

It was a daylong religious function organised at the Santhagiri Ashram in Kozhikode with the imam of the Palayam mosque (Thiruvananthapuram) and few other dignitaries following Islam in attendance. As the Kerala Opposition leader VD Satheesan took the mike; he realised that for some of the guests, it was time for their evening prayers. Without any prodding from anybody, Satheesan vacates the podium after intimating that he would start his presidential address

only after the imam and the others had broken their fast! This is called sensitivity and humanity at its divine best.

Soon after a Muslim gentleman takes the mike and sounds the azan, the audience (irrespective of religious faith) stands up in respect with coincidentally the temple bells starting ringing for evening aradhana! The ashram hurriedly arranges food and water enabling the imam and his co-religionists to break the fast with none other than Satheesan joining them.

Let's hope that the combined divine force of the good human beings of "God's own country" will enjoy the last laugh and uproot the merchants of hatred from the soil of Kerala and India on a permanent basis. Let the religious syncretism of Kerala win the day for India also.

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

**BRIEF**

**Mining commences**



**Panaji:** Resumption of mining by Vedanta is a historic day for Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said. The firm said it had started mining operations at Bicholim mineral block in the state. It had emerged as the successful bidder for the block in 2022. According to the company, Bicholim Mineral Block is the first auctioned mine to become operational since 2018, when the Supreme Court imposed a blanket ban on mining in the coastal state.

**IPO opening**

**New Delhi:** Teerth Gopicon Ltd, an engineering construction and development company, on Friday fixed the issue price at Rs 111 per share for its initial public offering which will hit the capital market on April 8. The Ahmedabad-based company, which mainly focuses on roads, sewerage and water distribution projects, looks to raise up to Rs 44.40 crore from the SME public issue, the company said in a statement.

**MoU signed**



**Panaji:** Digital travel platform Agoda on Friday said it has inked an agreement with Goa Tourism. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Agoda is poised to unveil the state's diverse holiday offerings and attractions to its global network of travellers, the company said in a statement.

**Loan growth**

**New Delhi:** State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Friday said it has posted a credit growth of 16.31 per cent at Rs 2.03 lakh crore for the March quarter. The outstanding credit was Rs 1.75 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2023, BoM said in a regulatory filing.

## RBI holds repo rate at 6.5 pc for 7th consecutive time; home, auto EMIs to remain unchanged

Mumbai, Apr 05:

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday kept the benchmark interest rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the seventh time in a row, citing concerns over food inflation in view of IMD's prediction of above normal maximum temperatures during April to June.

As RBI has held key policy rates steady, the EMIs on home and auto loans are likely to remain stable for some more time. The central bank has kept interest rates unchanged since February, 2023. While unveiling the first bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI has retained its growth and inflation forecast for the current fiscal at 7 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively.

"After a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and finan-



cial developments and the outlook, it (MPC) decided by a 5 to 1 majority to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said. He further said that the six-member MPC would remain focused on withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns to the target, while supporting growth. Referring to inflation, Das said food price uncertainties continue to weigh on the inflation trajectory going forward. Also, the tight demand-supply situation in pulses

and the production of key vegetables warrant close monitoring, given the forecast of above normal temperatures in the coming months. "Wheat harvesting is by and large over... wheat availability will not be affected as much as it did 2 years ago, when there were heatwave conditions starting from March. So, in wheat there is not so much concern. But vegetable prices will have to be watched and any other impact that heat wave conditions may produce," Das said at a post policy press briefing.

Retail inflation in February was 5.1 per cent, with food basket inflation at 8.66 per cent. For the full 2023-24 fiscal, inflation is projected at 5.4 per cent. In the current fiscal, the RBI expects inflation to be around 4.5 per cent; Q1 at 4.9 per cent; Q2 at 3.8 per cent; Q3 at 4.6 per cent; and Q4 at 4.5 per cent.

## Equity markets gain marginally to scale new peaks after RBI policy decision

Mumbai, Apr 05:

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty registered marginal gains to hit fresh lifetime highs on Friday after the Reserve Bank maintained the status quo on key interest rates amid a negative trend in global markets. The six-member rate-setting panel of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday kept the benchmark interest rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the seventh time in a row. It also expressed concerns over food inflation given IMD's prediction of above-normal maximum temperatures during April-June.

The 30-share BSE



Sensex inched up 20.59 points or 0.03 per cent to settle at 74,248.22. The index oscillated between the intra-day peak of 74,361.11 and the low of 73,946.92. The broader NSE Nifty with a marginal gain of 0.95 points at 22,513.70. As many as 28 components

of the 50-share benchmark ended in the red. "Although the RBI policy meeting unfolded as anticipated, concerns over food inflation and warnings of a heat wave tampered sentiment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

## ExxonMobil is proud to celebrate 50th anniversary of Mobil 1

Bengaluru, Apr 15:

ExxonMobil is proud to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the introduction of Mobil 1 motor oil to the global marketplace. In 2024, ExxonMobil will commemorate its 50-year history of the Mobil 1™ brand with a series of initiatives across partnerships, motorsports, and virtual reality, each of which will highlight the brand's legacy and what's to come.

Beginning as the first full synthetic automotive motor oil and later expanding into a line of Mobil 1 branded oils, the Mobil 1 brand has been at the forefront of engine protection for gas-powered and more recently, hybrid and electric cars delivering unmatched quality and performance for the past five decades. Today, Mobil 1 is the world's leading synthetic motor oil brand with an unwavering commitment to innovation, collaboration and customers.

## India building up gold reserves: Das

Mumbai, Apr 05:



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das during a press conference after delivering the Monetary Policy Statement, at the RBI headquarters in Mumbai, Friday, April 5, 2024.

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said India has been building up gold reserves as part of its forex deployment. "We are building up gold reserves that is a part of our reserve deployment," Das told reporters at the customary post-policy review press conference here.

He did not give any specifics on the quantum of gold buys, but pointed to the official data which shows an increase in the value of gold reserves. As per official data, the value of gold in the forex reserves stood at USD 51.487 billion as on March 22, which is USD 6.287 billion higher than the value as at end-March 2023.

As per a recent news report, RBI bought 8.7 tonne of gold in January alone which is the highest in two years. The central bank's gold holdings had touched 812.3 tonne at the end of January from 803.58 tonne in the preceding month, as per the World Gold Council. The price of gold

has also seen a rally over the last few months. Earlier in the day, Das announced that the overall forex reserves have touched an all-time high of USD 645.6 billion as of March 29, a breakup of which will be made available on Friday evening with the release of the weekly statistical supplement (WSS). Speaking to reporters, Das said RBI has consciously focused on building forex reserves over the last four-five years to act as a buffer against any future risks where there are dollar out-

flows from India.

He also said the central bank's approach on the forex front adds strength to the national balance sheet as well. Das also said that having a stable rupee is a priority for the Reserve Bank. After acting against two non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) following concerns on their business practices, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said there is no "system-wide" problem with such lenders.

Addressing the customary post-policy press conference, Das said it is not fair to perceive the actions "which came on consecutive days last month" as a "spate" of regulatory interventions. "As a part of the supervision, we take regular review of all players, particularly the major players. I don't want to say that this is a system-wide problem because we have supervised all the players. The action is only in outlier cases," Das said. Earlier, he also said the country's financial sector is "stable".

## Rupee rises 9 paise to close at 83.30 against US dollar post RBI policy decision

Mumbai, Apr 05:



The rupee appreciated 9 paise to close at 83.30 (provisional) against the US dollar as the Reserve Bank of India on Friday kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the seventh time in a row. However, a strong US dollar against major rivals overseas and elevated crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.44 against the greenback. The unit hit an intra-day high of 83.26 and a low of 83.45. The local unit finally settled at 83.30 (provisional) against the dollar, 9 paise higher from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee recovered 14 paise to close at

83.39 against the US dollar. The rupee gained as the RBI's monetary policy remained the focus. The central bank kept CPI and GDP projections for FY25 unchanged at 4.5 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, said Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. "After a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and financial developments and the outlook, it (MPC) decided by a 5 to 1

majority to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said. He further said that the six-member MPC would remain focused on the withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns with the target while supporting growth. While unveiling the first bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, the RBI has retained its growth and inflation forecast for the current fiscal at 7 per cent and 4.5 per cent, respectively. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on risk aversion in global markets and a strong US dollar. The surge in crude oil prices and FI outflows may also weigh on the rupee.

## Need to watch veggie prices in summer; inflation may take time to moderate to target: RBI

Mumbai, Apr 05:

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said "we need to watch for movements in vegetable prices in this year's summer", which the Met office has predicted to be warmer. Speaking to reporters after the rate-setting panel voted in favour of the seventh consecutive status quo in rates, Das said the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) key objective is to get the inflation rate to the 4 per cent target set for it by the government on a durable basis, and the "last mile" is the most challenging. "We have to watch what impact it (higher temperatures) has especially



on food crops, and in that, I have mentioned certain key vegetables," Das said, replying to a question on the Indian Meteorological Department's warning of heat waves till June.

He, however, sounded more confident on wheat, saying much of the harvesting is by and large over. "Wheat there is not so much worry, but vegetable

prices have to be watched... and any other impact that the heat wave conditions may produce," he said.

Deputy Governor Michael Patra said food inflation has been highly volatile in the recent past, and while actors pushing it up keep changing constantly, the efforts are focused on ensuring that this does not spill over into the rest of the consumer price inflation (CPI).

Stating that inflation pressures are emanating from items such as egg, meat, and fish, and also rice, Patra said in the recent past there have been short-term episodes where cereals, vegetables have led to a spike in food inflation.

## Gold declines Rs 150; silver tumbles Rs 700

New Delhi, Apr 05:

After hitting an all-time high, gold price declined Rs 150 to Rs 69,900 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday amid fall in rates of the precious metal in the global markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 70,050 per 10 gram in the previous session.

Silver tumbled Rs 700 to Rs 81,000 per kg. In the previous trade, it had ended at Rs 81,700 per kg.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 69,900 per 10 gram, down by Rs 150 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst -



Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,287 per ounce, down USD 10 from the previous close. "The ongoing trend in gold is

expected to persist as long as geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and expectations of interest rate cuts remain in focus," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said.

Also, silver was quoting lower at USD 26.75 per ounce. In the previous close, it had ended at USD 27.05 per ounce. "The US nonfarm payroll report (March) to be released on Friday, will be crucial for the yellow metal prices.

A robust report will weigh on the metal as it is looking somewhat over-bought in the near term, though prospects remain positive for medium to long term horizons. "However, geopolitical tensions are resurfacing, which may limit the downside," Praveen Singh - Associate VP, Fundamental Currencies and Commodities at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

## RBI's decision shows resolve to ensure price stability, says experts

Mumbai, Apr 05:

Reserve Bank's monetary policy decision of keeping the key interest rate unchanged and focus on moderating inflation shows a resolve on the part of the central bank to ensure price stability and sustained economic growth, experts opined on Friday.

The RBI kept the benchmark interest rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the seventh time in a row, citing concerns over food inflation in view of IMD's prediction of above-normal maximum temperatures from April to June. As the central bank held key policy rates steady, the EMIs on home and auto loans are likely to remain stable for some more time. The RBI has kept interest rates unchanged since February 2023. "We stand by RBI's commitment for 'unwavering focus on price stability' to ringfence the

economy from global headwinds, including geopolitical situation and the resultant supply chain disruptions," Assocham Secretary General Deepak Sood said. The central bank has successfully shielded the economy from global uncertainties over the past few years, he added. President of industry body PHDCCI Sanjeev Agrawal too said the RBI's decision on its policy rates will propel economic activity and boost economic growth.

"We expect a repo rate cut as and when headline inflation softens around 4.5 per cent," he said. The RBI also retained its growth and inflation forecast for the current fiscal at 7 per cent and 4.5 per cent, respectively. Raul Kapoor, Co-CEO of Andromeda Sales and Distribution, the RBI governor highlighted how inflation is gradually decreasing and emphasised

the robust growth in India's economic landscape. "These domestic conditions of diminishing inflation and promising growth prospects set the stage for a potential rate cut.

We anticipate that in the upcoming MPC meetings, the RBI will likely announce a rate cut ranging from 25 to 50 basis points, provided the current conditions continue to improve," he said. Commenting on the monetary policy, S K Narvar, Group Chairman of Trident Realty, said the RBI's decision reflects a strategic approach aimed at nurturing economic recovery and fostering stability.

"This move is set to benefit potential homebuyers by ensuring affordability and sustaining momentum in the housing market. With consumer demand driving the real estate sector, especially in

luxury housing, the decision to maintain the repo rate status quo supports feasible macroeconomic indicators and encourages new homebuyers to invest in property," Narvar said.

HS Bhatia, managing director, Kelwon Electronics and Appliances Pvt Ltd, the manufacturing partner of Daewoo India, opined that while the RBI's decision to hold the repo rate is positive for consumer durables, a wait-and-watch approach might emerge.

"Consumers may prioritise essentials if inflation remains a concern. However, a strong 7 per cent GDP growth (projection) is a confidence booster," he added.

Ayush Lohia, CEO of Lohia Auto, was of the opinion that the central bank's decision offers a sense of steadiness within the broader economic framework. "Within the EV sector, stable interest

rates can have a favourable influence on the accessibility and financing of electric vehicles, stimulating greater consumer adoption of cleaner transportation alternatives. This corresponds with our objective of advancing sustainable mobility and mitigating carbon emissions," he added. While unveiling the monetary policy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also announced several other developmental and regulatory measures. Das announced that certain modifications to the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) framework are proposed towards facilitating better management of liquidity risk by banks. Anil Gupta, Senior Vice President, Co Group Head-Financial Sector Ratings at ICRA, said typically the savings deposits attract a lower outflow rate of 5 per cent in the next 30 days while calculating the LCR.

## Shakti Pumps successfully raises Rs. 200 crores through QIP

Pithampur, Apr 05:



Shakti Pumps (India) Limited, India's leading manufacturer of solar pumps & motors, announced successful closure of a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) of Rs.200 crores.

The QIP issue garnered significant interest from qualified domestic institutional investors and was fully subscribed by two large Mutual Funds - LIC Mutual Fund and SBI Mutual Fund, endorsing the growth potential of the Solar Pumps industry and Shakti Pumps' leadership position in the industry. Keeping in view the immense potential for growth in the Solar Pumps industry, a major portion of the funds raised through QIP will be strategically deployed towards increasing the capacity of pumps/mo-

tors, inverters/VFDs, and structures. The solar pump industry through the PM KUSUM Scheme, led by the Government, has huge opportunities ahead as it is estimated that there are over 14 lakh solar pumps under Component B (Off Grid Pumps) and 35 lakh solar pumps under Component C (On Grid Pumps) to be installed.

Mr. Dinesh Patidar, Chairman, Shakti Pumps (India) Limited commented, "We are delighted with the successful closure of this institutional placement and the confidence these marquee investors

have placed on us, which further strengthens our commitment to reaching new horizons.

Being industry leader, SPIL has been receiving new orders consistently, which have positively added to our order book of Rs. 2050 crores, as on December 31st, 2023, to be executed in the next two years. Our order book also includes repeat orders from some states which reaffirms our product quality, and the trust farmers have on our products. Anticipating a further surge in orders, we are preparing ourselves to capture the growth opportunities that lie ahead. With this fund raise, our balance sheet is placed well and will give us the opportunity to improve our market presence and consistently delivering strong results in the times ahead."

## Police bust spurious liquor racket in Mudhipar

● Cache of illicit liquor seized, accused apprehended

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 05: In a significant operation, the police have uncovered a clandestine operation involved in the production and distribution of spurious liquor in Mudhipar village, the largest village in the Khairagarh zone, located 20 km from the district headquarters.

SP Trilok Bansal, addressing the press conference, disclosed that the Cyber Cell and Gatapar Jungle Police Station received intelligence from an informant regarding the manufacturing, bottling, labeling, and sale of counterfeit country liquor in government-authorized liquor shops. The perpetrators were allegedly affixing fake holograms to mimic authentic products.

Acting swiftly on the tip-off, a joint team comprising Gatapar police and the cyber cell conducted a raid at the residence of Nanhu Sinha in the Lalmati locality of Mudhipar village. The raid resulted in the seizure of 459 bulk liters of spurious liquor.

Among those apprehended during the operation were Gamendra Sen, aged 24, Nand Kishore Sinha alias Linda, aged 30, and Kailash Rajak, aged



28, all residents of Khairbana and Pandadah police stations. Additionally, Harish Verma (Nagpure), aged 23, hailing from Ghatni police station in Maharashtra, was detained. Notably, a minor involved in the illicit activity was also apprehended at the scene.

SP Bansal stated that during the legal proceedings, a thorough search of the premises was conducted. The search yielded a significant quantity of illegal liquor-making materials and related paraphernalia.

Among the recovered items were 1250 quarter bottles of country liquor, each containing 180 liters, totaling 225 bulk liters valued at Rs 112,500. Additionally, six blue-colored jars, each with a capacity of 35 liters, were discovered unlawfully, along with 234 bulk liters of liquor prepared from DHB, valued at Rs 117,000.

Furthermore, the search uncovered 14

empty jars of 17 liters valued at Rs 2,800, two full jars of 17 liters of water valued at Rs 460, and a 50-liter jerrycan containing a spirit-like liquid bearing the label of Agriflame Agri Product Company, valued at Rs 20,000.

Additionally, 35 liter empty jerrycan of blue color is priced at Rs 500, 150 liter empty blue colored drum is priced at around Rs 800, 3 White colored chadi worth Rs 100, empty quarter bottles 200 worth Rs 2000 wherealso recovered.

Moreover, authorities discovered 1,150 fake holograms, labeled with manufacturing dates spanning 2022-23, priced at Rs 1,030. Additionally, 140 blue-colored bottles bearing the inscription "Chhattisgarh Distillies Limited Kumhari" in English were found, valued at Rs 400 each.

Among other seized items were an old Honda Dream Yuva motorcycle with serial number CG 08

AM 8437, estimated at Rs 40,000, and an old Honda Activa motorcycle with serial number CG 04 MU 5890, valued at approximately Rs 50,000.

Furthermore, five mobile phones were recovered, valued at around Rs 50,000 collectively, along with a cash amount of Rs 12,000. The cumulative value of

the recovered items amounted to Rs 409,590. This evidence prima facie indicates violations of Section 34(1A), 34(2), 36, 49A, and 59A(1)(2) of the Excise Act. Moreover, the nature of the crime also implicates sections 420, 465, 468, 471, and 34 of the Indian Penal Code. Subsequently, a case has been registered, and the investigation is underway.

### Illicit liquor syndicate dupes government

The accused orchestrated a scheme wherein they replicated and distributed country-made plain liquor from government liquor shops in the surrounding areas. Gamendra Sen and Nand Kishore Sinha were involved in procuring empty bottles from country liquor shops and individuals selling such bottles. These bottles were then stored at the residence of a minor accomplice until a sufficient quantity was amassed. Once the requisite number of bottles was acquired, the accused would inform Harish Verma (Nagpure), a resident of Gondia, Maharashtra, to arrange for the spirit from Maharashtra and deliver it to Mudhipar. Subsequently, all the accused collectively prepared country-made plain liquor from the sourced spirit, which was then filled into the empty bottles procured earlier.

Dhanshyam Singh Rajput, aged 45, a resident of Dewarbiya district, Bemetara, presently residing in Jayanti Nagar, Durg, facilitated the bottling process, ensuring that the counterfeit liquor was packaged in bottles resembling those from government liquor shops. The accused meticulously replicated stickers, holograms, and lids, thereby deceiving consumers into believing that the liquor was genuine government-issue product. The illicitly produced liquor was then distributed in the area, with the proceeds from sales divided equally among the accused. Consequently, the scheme not only undermined government revenue but also posed a significant threat to public health and safety.

### Four accused arrested are habitual criminals

During the press conference, SP Bansal, alongside Additional SP Neha Pandey and SDOP Lalchand Mohle, disclosed that Gamendr Sen, Nandkishore Sinha, Kailash Rajak, and Ghanshyam Singh Rajput are habitual offenders with prior criminal records. These individuals have had cases registered against them in various police stations under the Excise Act.

## Manohar Gaushala trustee honoured with Samaj Ratna Award

● Padam Dakalia recognized for animal welfare efforts

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 05: Padam Dakalia, trustee of Manohar Gaushala, has been honoured with the prestigious Samaj Ratna Alankaran Award. The recognition comes as a tribute to his outstanding contributions to animal welfare.

A grand celebration unfolded in Bhatapara, commemorating the birth anniversary of Lord Adinath. Amidst this joyous occasion, Dakalia was bestowed with the Samaj Ratna decoration in a cere-



mony organized by the Sakal Digambar Samaj Chhattisgarh, under the auspices of the Muniraj Chinmay Sagar Charitable Trust. Present at the event were dignitaries including Prakash Modi, the Sakal Digambar Jain Samaj Chhattisgarh State President, and senior social worker.

Expressing his gratitude, Dakalia attributed the honour to the inspiration provided by Guruvarya Shri, emphasizing the importance of kindness to life. He extended his thanks to his parents for instilling values, as well as his fellow trustees and associates for their unwavering support.

## Crackdown on illegal sand mining

● Multiple cases registered to curb royalty theft

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Apr 05: In a concerted effort to curb illegal sand excavation, transportation, royalty theft, and storage, the Mineral Department in the district, under the directive of Collector Aji Vasant, has intensified its enforcement actions. Regular patrols and monitoring activities are being conducted by mineral staff across both urban and rural areas of the district.

According to reports from the Mineral Officer, significant progress has been made in preventing royalty theft related to mineral sand. Between March 30th and April 1st, the departmental staff registered a total of 11

cases across various locations including Uрга, Kanaki, Kurudih, Barampur, Imliduggu, and Bhilai Khurd.

In response to these cases, fines totaling Rs 3,34,160 have been imposed. Specifically, in six cases involving mineral sand, fines amounting to Rs 1,32,693 have been collected, while fines totaling Rs 2,01,414 have been recovered from five cases involving mineral stone.

The penalties collected have been promptly deposited under the mineral income head, reflecting the administration's commitment to upholding the rule of law in the mineral sector. In addition to imposing fines, vehicles involved in illegal activities are being seized, and appropriate actions are being taken under relevant acts governing mines and minerals, including minor minerals.

## Farmers left waiting for payments on paddy

Central Chronicle News

Anwari, Apr 05: Despite the commencement of paddy procurement for the Kharif crop by the state government last November and completed in the last date of January 2024, the farmers in Anwari continue to wait anxiously for payments at the procurement centers.

Rajendra Kumar Sahu, a resident of Nagar Panchayat Bhakhara, Ward Number 9, shared his ordeal, stating that he had sold 50.80 quintals of paddy from his Kharif crop at the Bhakhara procurement center. However, despite the pas-



sage of several months, he is yet to receive the payment owed to him. The delay has subjected him to financial strain, with mounting pressure from outstanding debts.

Expressing his frustration, Sahu urged the government administration to expedite the disbursement of payments for the procured paddy without further delay.

## Farewell ceremony and Nyota Bhoj held SDO of PHE arrested by ACB while taking bribe

Central Chronicle News

Birkoni, Apr 05: The Government Primary School in Achridih (Nayapara) resonated with warmth and camaraderie as it hosted a heartfelt farewell ceremony and Nyota Bhoj for the departing students of class 5.

The event commenced with an auspicious start as the School Management and Development Committee Chairman, Rakesh Jangde, invoked blessings from Goddess Saraswati, setting the tone



for the day's festivities. Class IV students extended a warm welcome to their seniors, presenting them with pens as tokens of goodwill.

Head teacher, Ishwar Sahu, took the opportunity to impart words of wisdom, encouraging the

graduating students to embark on their future journeys with confidence and determination. As part of the Nyota Bhoj tradition, teacher Chandrasah Sahu graciously distributed an array of dishes, fruits, and sweets to all attendees.

Adding to the joyous

ambiance, the children showcased captivating dance performances, enthralled the audience with their talent and enthusiasm. The smooth conduct of the program was overseen by teachers Khillesh Sonber and Rajendra Hanumantha.

Distinguished guests including President Rakesh Jangde, Educationist Kunjibihari Singh Thakur, Dr. Bhagwati Sahu, and several esteemed educators graced the occasion, extending their best wishes to the graduating class.

## SDO of PHE arrested by ACB while taking bribe

Contractor's complaint leads to officer's arrest

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 05: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) carried out a decisive operation in Chuikhadan on Thursday, resulting in the arrest of a Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department, Rajesh Madave, caught red-handed while accepting a bribe.

The ACB team, in collaboration with the Economic Offenses Investigation Bureau, conducted a raid at the PHE office following



complaints of corruption. During the operation, Madave was apprehended as he was allegedly demanding bribes from contractors in exchange for facilitating the

passage of bills. The arrest comes after a contractor, Praveen Kumar Tiwari, lodged a complaint against Madave for demanding illicit payments over several months.

Frustrated by the persistent demands, Tiwari approached the Economic Offenses Investigation Bureau, triggering the ACB's intervention. The raid resulted in the confiscation of a bribe amounting to Rs 1.5 lakh, marking a substantial breakthrough in the fight against corruption within the public sector. Authorities have indicated that the accused officer will face legal action under economic offenses laws, alongside charges of violating civil service conduct regulations.

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## Mungeli's lifeline Agar River drying up

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 05: The Agar River, once a lifeline flowing through the heart of Mungeli city, is now grappling with a severe drying crisis exacerbated by pollution and neglect. Despite its historical significance, the river has witnessed a dramatic decline in water levels, compounded by the inflow of dirty water from drains.

In recent years, the Agar River has struggled to maintain its flow, with water scarcity becoming increasingly apparent as early as January. What was once a vibrant watercourse has now

been reduced to a channel of wastewater, tainted by the discharge from city drains. The accumulation of pollutants has led to the proliferation of rot and decay within the river.

Residents lament the sorry state of the river, yearning for the return of clean flowing water. Traditional discharge points such as Pachari Ghat, Kachari Ghat, Pulpara, and Bada Bazaar have become conduits for sewage, exacerbating the pollution problem.

Efforts to bolster water levels through structures



like the stop dam near Pandara Kapa have been hampered by neglect and lack of maintenance. The anicut constructed by the Irrigation Department in Bada Bazar has failed to impound water effectively due to its low height.

Plans for river beautification and infrastructure development, including roads and promenades along the riverbanks, have languished despite announcements from political leaders. The failure to implement these initiatives underscores the urgent need for concerted action to rejuvenate the Agar River.

Residents are calling on public representatives and government authorities to prioritize the restoration of the river, including comprehensive measures to address pollution and ensure sustainable water management. Failure to act swiftly risks consigning the Agar River to mere history, depriving future generations of its once-vital presence in Mungeli's landscape.

The work will be started as soon as the plan is approved in the name of river bank beautification.

- Anubhav Singh, Chief Municipal Officer, Mungeli

## India ready for Australia challenge ahead of Paris Olympics

Perth, Apr 05 (PTI):

The in-form Indian men's hockey team will look to pass the "litmus test" that the formidable Australian side will pose at home when the two face off in a five-match Test series beginning here on Saturday.

The series offers India a chance to gauge their strengths and capabilities ahead of the Paris Olympics.

"This series serves as a litmus test for our team's preparedness ahead of the Paris Olympics. We aim to fine-tune our strategies and identify areas for improvement to ensure we are in peak form for the mega event.

"Our focus will be on executing our game plan effectively and adapting to the challenges posed by the Australian side," chief coach Craig Fulton said.

The away assignment offers the ideal chance for India to break their decade-long dry spell against Australia and secure a Test series win.

Notably, India won the last away Test series against back in 2014.

Fresh from their im-



pressive performances in the FIH Pro League in February, the Indian squad, under the leadership of Harmanpreet Singh, is approaching this assignment with confidence.

India's exceptional abilities and unwavering determination were evident as they clinched victories in three out of four matches in Bhubaneswar (with-

in regulation time) and re-

mained unbeaten in Rourkela (also within regulation time). However, they had lost both their matches against Australia.

With the two sides drawn in the same group at the Olympics, the Test series provides the perfect platform for both to gauge each other's strengths and weaknesses before the ultimate showdown in Paris Games. "We are geared up

for the challenge that lies ahead. Every match is an opportunity for us to showcase our skills and make our nation proud. We are aware of the tough competition Australia presents, but we are confident in our abilities and our preparations," captain Harmanpreet said.

"As a team, we are united and determined to give our best on the field. Our goal is to not only perform well in this series but also to learn and grow as a unit, laying a strong foundation for our campaign in the Paris Olympics."

India and Australia have clashed on the hockey field a total of 43 times since 2013, according to data from the FIH Data Hub.

Among these matchups, Australia have emerged victorious 28 times, while India have celebrated triumph in eight games. Additionally, seven matches have concluded in a draw.

With India ranked fourth and Australia fifth in the current world rankings, the stage is set for a gripping battle between two hockey powerhouses.

Match starts 2PM IST.

## RCB, RR look to tackle similar worries to make headway in IPL

Jaipur, Apr 05 (PTI):

Struggling Royal Challengers Bengaluru and high-flying Rajasthan Royals bizarrely have similar worries to address when they face each other in the Indian Premier League here on Saturday.

The eighth place where RCB are currently on the 10-team table is a fair indication of their troubles, but Rajasthan's all-win record so far and the resultant second place do not necessarily mirror their turmoil.

An overwhelming top-order is the intertwining factor between them. The RCB top-order comprising skipper Faf du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell, Cameron Green and Rajat Patidar is a storehouse of talent and explosiveness. But none of them have fired either in isolation or in unison, except star batter Virat Kohli, the current Orange Cap holder with 203 runs, who has made two fifties.

Patidar showed a glimpse of his clean shot-making abilities while registering 29 in their 28-



run defeat against Lucknow Super Giants, but he needs to do a lot more to prop up the RCB middle-order. The Bengaluru outfit will hope for a reversal at the

Sawai Man Singh Stadium, a venue that carries similar traits as RCB's home - Chinnaswamy Stadium - in terms of a smooth pitch and a blistering out-

field adding value to the batters' shots.

But the aforementioned RCB quartet has company in the Royals' ranks. Yashasvi Jaiswal entered this iteration of IPL on the back of some excellent recent efforts, but the left-handed opener has made just 39 runs from three matches, and Jos Buttler offers a similar story.

The England T20 captain is yet to be in his intimidating self, and has managed 35 runs from three outings and his strike-rate across these matches is a mere 85.

The Royals' batting has largely revolved around captain Sanju Samson (109 runs, one fifty) and the highly-improved Riyan Parag (181 runs, 2 fifties) and at some point, the duo will require solid support from others.

However, Rajasthan have an edge over their opponents in the bowling department.

Pacers Trent Boult and Nandre Burger and veteran leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal have worked up a nice early rhythm and have shared 16 wickets between them.

## Tiafoe beats Duckworth in 2nd round of US Men's Clay Court



Houston, Apr 05 (AP):

Defending champion Frances Tiafoe beat James Duckworth 6-2, 6-7 (4), 7-5 on Thursday night in the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championship to advance

to the quarterfinals for the third straight year. The third-seeded American had 15 aces and didn't face a break point against the Australian.

"Every win is big right now, to just kind of build it," Tiafoe said. "Tonight was huge." He improved to 8-7 this season.

"I wish I won in straights, but I definitely played pretty well," Tiafoe said. "I thought I played really well in the first set. He can serve really well. I had some chances, some break points, but good serves from him and he really made it tough for me."

## Mumbai Indians get Suryakumar boost

Ahead of clash against Delhi Capitals

Mumbai, Apr 05 (PTI):

In a big boost for struggling Mumbai Indians, world number one T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav trained with the team here on Friday after a long injury layoff and unleashed his trademark shots without any visible discomfort, raising hopes that he could compete in the team's next IPL match against Delhi Capitals.

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians are languishing at the bottom of the 10-team table, having



lost all three matches so far and if Suryakumar plays, the Hardik Pandya-led team will hope that his presence helps them with the anticipated turnaround.

The 33-old aggressive batter has been out of action since January. He un-

derwent a surgery to treat sports hernia and was also nursing an ankle injury which he had sustained during India's tour of South Africa late last year.

Suryakumar was the first to arrive for the training session at the Wankhede Stadium, more

than an hour before his teammates came for the afternoon session.

Suryakumar walked into one of the two nets and batted for more than an hour, not looking to exert himself but getting his body in rhythm and getting his strokes going a few days after he was given the clearance to join the Mumbai Indians' squad by the National Cricket Academy (NCA) staff.

The right-handed batter unleashed strokes in all parts of the ground while batting against throw-down specialists and MI spinner Kumar Kartikeya.

## Yuki-Olivetti pair advances to Marrakech Open semifinals



Marrakech, Apr 05 (PTI):

India's Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti knocked out third seeds Nicholas Barrientos and Rafael Matos to breeze into the men's doubles semifinals of the ATP Marrakech Open here.

The unseeded Indo-French combine upset Colombian Nicholas Barrientos and Rafael Matos of Brazil, eking out a close 7-6(5) 6-7 10-7 win in the quarterfinal that lasted almost two hours on Thursday.

They will face second seeds Lucas Miedler and Alexander Erler of Austria in the last-four stage of the ATP 250 event.

The quarterfinal was fought on an even keel with both pairs winning 50 per cent of the total points. Bhambri and Olivetti hit 10 aces as compared to their opponents' three.

Bhambri has teamed up with Olivetti for the first time this season, having played with Dutch player Robin Haase in most of the tournaments.

The Indian had paired with former partner Michael Venus from New Zealand at the Miami Masters where they made a first round exit.

Bhambri's best performance of the season came at in ATP 500 Dubai, where as qualifiers the Indian and Haase reached the semifinals, earning crucial 225 ranking points.

Ranked 62, the 31-year-old Bhambri is India's second highest ranked player behind world number one Rohan Bopanna.

It will be interesting to see if Bopanna chooses Bhambri as his partner for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Bopanna being a top-10 player will have the choice of selecting his partner.

## Virat Kohli under lot of pressure this IPL: Steve Smith

Mumbai, Apr 05 (PTI):

Virat Kohli is "under a lot of pressure" in the on-going IPL owing to the collective failure of Royal Challengers Bengaluru batters, feels former Australia captain Steve Smith who wants the RCB teammates to come good in the supporting act.

Kohli has waged a lone battle for RCB this IPL season with 203 runs in four matches at 67.66 with two fifties. The second-best batter, Dinesh Karthik, is way behind with 90 runs in as many games. Despite Kohli's consistency, RCB have fal-



tered with three losses in four matches throwing them as far back as the seventh spot in the points table.

The likes of Glenn Maxwell, skipper Faf du Plessis and Cameron Green have been underwhelming so far with the bat. "He needs the other

key batters to stand up with him, and if they do that, they can turn things around for their season. But, at the moment, they're not so a lot of pressure is on Virat," Smith, a member of the Star Sports Incredible Star Cast, told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the channel's studio here.

"I doubt he'd be putting extra pressure on himself. (But) some of the other top-order and middle-order (batters) need to help Virat," he said.

Smith warned that Kohli is not going to score runs in every match and RCB batters must get their act together.

## NZ will come good against Pak: Allen

New Delhi, Apr 05 (PTI):

Eight of their senior players are missing from the line-up due to IPL duties but young New Zealand batter Finn Allen is confident that the new-look side would still be a handful for hosts Pakistan when the two sides clash in a five-match T20 International series starting April 18. Trent Boult, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner and Kane Williamson are all missing from the line-up for the away engagement due to the ongoing league. "It is an awesome opportunity with players being away at the IPL, for young guys such as Tim



Robinson, who have shown their talent and had a good Super Smash tournament here in New Zealand during the summer," Allen told PTI Videos in an interaction facilitated by Sony Network which has acquired broadcast rights of

New Zealand cricket's home engagements. "...it is rewarding for those guys and allows them to get an opportunity at the top level to see where they stand against a formidable Pakistan side," he said. All-rounder Michael Bracewell will be leading the side. He has not been seen in international cricket since March last year following a ruptured Achilles and a broken finger and returned to domestic engagements only recently. "I guess with the upcoming series, we batted out with them at home not too long ago but it is on their turf now and we know from tours in the past, that they are pretty tough to beat at home," the 24-year-old said.

## Candidates Chess Pragganandhaa holds Firouza: Gukesh draws with Gujrathi



Toronto, Apr 05 (PTI):

Indian Grandmaster R Pragganandhaa overcame some tense moments before settling for a draw against France's Firouza Alireza while D Gukesh could do little against compatriot Vidit Gujrathi and shared the spoils in the first round of the Candidates chess tournament here. It was a quiet start as all four

games in the men's section ended in draws while in the women's event Zhongyi Tan drew the first blood at the expense of compatriot Tingjie Lei with the remaining three games ending in draws.

India's R Vaishali played out a draw against country-mate Koneru Humpy, Russians Aleksandra Goryachkina and Kateryna Lagno signed peace while the lowest ranked and only non-Grandmaster Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria had a good start holding Anna Muzychuk to a draw.

In the men's section the all-American battle between Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura also ended in a draw while Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan started off with an easy draw as white against Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia.

## Jofra Archer a concern but Ben Stokes has taken right call: Stuart Broad



Mumbai, Apr 05 (PTI):

Former England pacer Stuart Broad has backed talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes' decision to opt out of this year's T20 World Cup due to fitness reasons but expressed concerns about fast bowler Jofra Archer's never-ending injury woes.

Supporting Stokes' pull-out from the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and the USA, Broad said the defending champions will miss his aura but have enough resources to replace him as a player. "Whatever Ben decides to do for the well-

being of himself is the right decision. Ben Stokes has made some incredible decisions in his career that have paid off for him," Broad, a member of the Star Sports Incredible Star Cast, told PTI in an exclusive interaction at their studio here.

"He wants to get back to (being) the all-rounder that he was and he feels like getting some workload through the knee in a controlled environment, without the help of a scale to pressurise the nature of a T20 World Cup, is the best choice," he said.

While Archer has found it difficult to cope with the elbow injury to his bowling arm, getting an England contract for two years is a sign that the management believes the ace pacer would be back to his best soon. Broad said he is hoping to see him back in the World Cup.

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## RJD promises 3 LS seats from its quota to VIP



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav with Vikasheel Insaan Party Chief Mukesh Sahani and other leaders during a press conference, in Patna, Friday.

Patna, Apr 5 (PTD)

Former Bihar minister Mukesh Sahni on Friday joined RJD-led Mahagathbandhan in the state, less than three years after he had quit the alliance to join the NDA. The announcement came at a press conference addressed by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav along with Sahni, a Bollywood set designer turned politician who heads Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP). Yadav said, "Seat-sharing formula has already been announced for the

INDIA bloc in Bihar. The RJD has got 26 seats. We will give three from our quota to Sahni's party." Notably, in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the VIP had contested as a Mahagathbandhan ally, but ahead of state assembly elections a year later, Sahni quit the alliance and joined the NDA. In the new government headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Sahni became a minister, understandably at the instance of the BJP, which also helped him become a member of the legislative

council since he had failed to get elected to the assembly. Sahni, who uses the sobriquet "son of mullah" to project himself as a leader of castes traditionally involved in fishing, was expelled from the cabinet after he rubbed the BJP the wrong way while campaigning for his party in Uttar Pradesh. Subsequently, all four VIP MLAs also joined the BJP while Sahni was left high and dry after his legislative council term ended, shortly after his expulsion from the cabinet.

## Woman accused in JNU sexual harassment case 'Pronounced guilty before trial'

New Delhi, Apr 5 (PTD)

A former JNU student and sole woman co-accused in a sexual harassment case, which is being protested by the victim at the varsity's main gate since April 1, has alleged that she has been "unfairly targeted" by students affecting her mental wellbeing. A complaint of an alleged sexual harassment was filed against four people, including two former students, by a female student on March 31 demanding action by the university. The woman co-accused in the alleged incident said that she is already branded as "guilty" and her photographs are being circulated publicly tarnishing her reputation while the inquiry is still underway. "The baseless accusations and the subsequent public destruction of my character have seriously affected my mental wellbeing. I feel unfairly targeted and humiliated in the eyes of the JNU community," she told PTD. "My picture was released without my consent, further violating my privacy and dignity," the co-accused said alleging that a one-sided story was

being propagated among the students with vested interest. Slamming the administration, the co-accused said, "I find it alarming that I have been immediately put out of bounds by the administration without a fair and impartial inquiry, essentially being labelled guilty without due process." "The shock I feel is profound and deeply personal. I believe in the principle of fair inquiry and am willing to cooperate fully in the event of an actual investigation," she added. The varsity administration had declared the two former students out-of-bound on April 1 and initiated an inquiry into the matter, Chief Proctor Sudhir Kumar told PTD earlier. On Thursday, the varsity administration issued proctorial inquiry notice to 21 students, including the victim and JNUSU president Dhananjay, for blocking the main entrance gate of the campus. The victim initiated an indefinite strike on April 1 outside the main gate of the campus against perceived inaction by the administration over her complaint.

## CPI(M) manifesto calls for BJP's defeat, warns of 'existential crisis'

New Delhi, Apr 5 (PTD)

The CPI(M) manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls called for the defeat of the ruling BJP and strengthening of the Left, a call which was also made in its manifesto for 2019, and alleged the secular character of democracy was affected both the times. This time, the appeal in the manifesto, which was released on Thursday, emphasises that India is facing an "existential crisis". While the Left party stuck to its stand on several issues, the manifesto for the first time promised scrapping laws like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). In its manifesto in 2019, the Left party had called for the defeat of the BJP blaming the ruling party for "sharpening communal polarisation", and assault on all constitutional authorities. The manifesto this time gives a call to "every patriot" to ensure the defeat of the BJP and its allies. Defending secularism featured prominently in the CPI(M) manifesto, and was a key issue

in 2019 as well. Last time, they had flagged "attacks on democracy", citing examples like functioning of the Parliament allegedly being curtailed, undermining the primacy of the CBI, and attacks on the right to freedom of expression, while this time the manifesto called for scrapping laws like the UAPA, National Security Act (NSA) and PMLA, as well as the contentious CAA. The Left party's poll promise came in the backdrop of a chief minister and a former chief minister from the opposition parties - Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Hemant Soren of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) - being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), and allegations by several opposition parties of central agencies being misused by the Union government. The CPI(M) promised a legal guarantee of a minimum support price (MSP) for farmers according to the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations. An MSP for farmers found place in the 2019 manifesto of the party as well, where they backed farmers' right to sell their produce at an MSP which is at least 50 per cent high-

er than the total cost of production. While calling unemployment the "biggest failure" of the Modi government, the CPI(M) promised inclusion of 'Right to Work' in fundamental rights, a law to guarantee employment in urban areas as well as unemployment allowance, filling up all vacant posts in government departments, doubling the MGNREGA budget and removing the 100-day cap. These issues were there in the party manifesto in 2019 as well. While in 2019, the party had called for reservation for women in the Parliament and assemblies, this time, as a bill for reservation has already been passed, the party demanded that it should be implemented immediately. The Left party's manifesto also had a section on children, where they promised universalisation of the ICDS to cover all children from the age of 0-6 years, and for youths, they have promised a new "National Youth Policy". Both the promises were also made in the 2019 manifesto too. On economy, the CPI(M) called for reversing privatisation of the public sector; and called for a tax on the super rich.

## Nomination form of SP's Khajuraho candidate rejected

Panna (MP), Apr 5 (PTD)

The nomination form of the Samajwadi Party's (SP) candidate from Khajuraho Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh was rejected after scrutiny by the returning officer on Friday. The Congress had left the seat for SP as per the seat-sharing arrangement within the opposition's INDIA bloc. "The Panna district collector, who is also the returning officer, rejected the nomination papers of Meera Yadav as she had not signed the 'B form' and also failed to attach a certified copy of the 2023 Assembly elections voters' list," a senior official told reporters.

The BJP has fielded sitting MP and its state unit president Vishnu Dutt Sharma from Khajuraho. Yadav's husband Deep Narayan Yadav told reporters that they would move the high court against the returning officer's order. "The form was verified yesterday after scrutiny. There is a rule that if there is any discrepancy, it is the duty of the returning officer to get it rectified even if the candidate is illiterate," he said. "Yesterday, the form was found to be alright. Today, two shortcomings were pointed out. First, the voters' list attached with the form is not certified or it is old. Signature was supposed to be made at two

places, but it was made only in one place," he added. Yadav also claimed that they did not get a certified copy of voters' list till April 3, and hence attached a copy that was available. "We requested him (collector) that we still had time as we had come before 3 PM (deadline), and it could be rectified. He should have told us yesterday about it and we could have done it by now," Yadav added. To a question, he said there were 15 other candidates in the fray, and "we will support one of them after consulting our senior leaders." The election will be contested under any circumstances, he added.

## Man thrashed for giving money to kids to buy savouries

Thane, Apr 5 (PTD)

The police in Maharashtra's Thane district on Friday registered a case against two individuals for allegedly thrashing a carpenter after he gave money to two kids to buy savouries, an official said. The incident took place on Thursday when the 25-year-old complainant was on his way to a dar-gah in the Bhiwandi area. Two children approached the complainant and asked him for money to buy savouries, the official said. However, when the carpenter obliged, two men got into an argument with him, demanding to know why he had given money to the children.

## Cal HC orders NIA probe into death of BJP activist

Kolkata, Apr 5 (PTD)

The Calcutta High Court on Friday directed the central government to hand over to NIA the investigation into the death of a BJP activist in violence before the 2023 panchayat elections in West Bengal. Deceased Bijay Krishna Mohanty's son Prasenjit in a petition sought handing over of investigation from the state police to the NIA, stating that his BJP activist father died after being attacked by ruling Trinamool Congress supporters in East Midnapore district's Moyna area with bombs and other weapons. The state had sent a report on the incident to the central government since the incident of violence involved alleged bursting of bombs, which is a scheduled offence under the NIA Act.

## SC asks Delhi finance secy to release money, makes DJB party to AAP govt's plea

New Delhi, Apr 5 (PTD)

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Delhi government's Principal Secretary (Finance) to release funds to the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and made the utility, responsible for supplying potable water to the national capital, a party to a plea filed by the ruling AAP dispensation alleging non-release of

money. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, appearing for Principal Secretary (Finance), that the Delhi government, which has filed the plea against its own official, has not made

the DJB a party. "They have not made the DJB a party. This is the authority which is making requisitions for the funds," Jethmalani said. "We will implead DJB (as a party) to find out from them (about the dues)...In the meantime, please release funds which are liable to be paid," said the bench. At the outset, senior ad-

vocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Delhi government, said the minister concerned has written six times to the finance secretary and yet the entire fund has not been released. Observing that it wanted to know about the outstanding funds from the water utility itself, the bench said these issues needed to be sorted out.

## 92-yr-old man to exercise his franchise for first time this LS polls

Sahibganj, Apr 5 (PTD)

Ninety-two-year-old physically challenged Khalil Ansari will exercise his right to cast vote for the time in the Lok Sabha elections after Jharkhand Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) directed Sahibganj district election officials on Friday to register his name in the electoral roll with immediate effect, an official said. CEO K Ravi Kumar was in Sahibganj on Friday and made surprise inspections at polling booths in Munder block of the district, around 450-km from Jharkhand's capi-

tal Ranchi. He also visited several villages and met senior citizens and physically challenged voters, according to an official release. During his visit, he asked Ansari if he was a registered voter. "I never exercised my franchise as my name is not there in voter list," Ansari told the CEO. A resident of Badkhori village, Ansari is a resident of Rajmahal parliamentary constituency, which will go to polls on June 1. Kumar directed the officials to enroll his name in the electoral roll with immediate effect.

Ansari expressed his thanks to the CEO and said, "I will cast my vote for sure for the first time."  **गंजोपन का इलाज** अत्याधुनिक तकनीक द्वारा केश प्रत्यारोपण FUT एवं FUE तकनीक द्वारा **गंजोपन का इलाज** **कालड़ा बर्न एवं** प्लास्टिक कॉस्मेटिक सर्जरी सेंटर आर.के.सी.के.सामने, चौबे कालोनी एवं पंचपेड़ी नाका, धर्मपुरी रोड, कलर्स मॉल के पास, रायपुर कॉल: 9827143060/8871003060

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