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India's gold demand rises 8 pc in Jan-March despite soaring prices

India's gold demand rose to 136.6 tons in the January-March quarter which represents an 8 per cent increase over the same quarter of the previous year, according to figures released by...

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Pujari Gautami, Additional Collector, who inspected the SC study circle

Additional Collector Pujari Gautami inspected the SC study circle in Siricilla town of Rajanna Sirisilla district on Tuesday. In view of the commencement of the three-month foundation...

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Laliga: Lewandowski hat-trick puts Barca back to second ahead of Girona showdown

A second-half hat-trick from Robert Lewandowski helped FC Barcelona come back from a goal down to beat Valencia 2-1 in the former Olympic Stadium in Montjuic...

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LS polls a fight between Gujarat's hegemony and Telangana's courage, says CM

Parkala, Mar 30 (IANS) : Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said the BJP-led Centre was booking cases against people for raising questions over its failures in fulfilling promises made to the people. "The BJP government registered a case against me in Delhi and a team of police was sent

to Gandhi Bhavan. In democracy, don't we have right to question on behalf of the SC, ST and down-trodden," he asked while addressing a public meeting here on Tuesday. "Did Revanth Reddy fear cases anytime? BJP is trying to intimidate me by sending police from Delhi.



Chandrababu Naidu has history of lies and betrayals: Andhra CM Jagan

Amaravati, April 30 (IANS) : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday slammed Telugu Desam Party (TDP) President N. Chandrababu Naidu over "lack of credibility" and history of "lies and betrayals".

Terming the next month's elections as a fight between the poor and Chandrababu Naidu's betrayals, he urged people to vote for the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) if they want the current welfare schemes to continue. Addressing election rallies at Tangutur in Prakasam district and at Mydukur in YSR Kadapa district, Chief Minister Jagan launched a scathing attack on the former Naidu.

Continued on pg 02

KCR slams Congress govt over delay in Rythu Bandhu disbursement

Hyderabad, Apr 30 (IANS) : Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekhar Rao on Tuesday lashed out at the Congress-led State government, stating that it was betraying the farmers of Telangana by not giving Rythu Bandhu assistance. Taking to social media platform X, Chandrashekhar Rao shared a video statement of Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao at a Congress party meeting in Khammam on Tuesday, admitting that when he asked for release of funds for disbursement of pending Rythu Bandhu scheme amount to farmers.



Development possible by BJP alone: Etala

Hyderabad, April 30 (NSS): Malkajgiri Lok Sabha constituency candidate Etala Rajender today said development in all spheres of the country was possible only with the BJP. On Tuesday, TDP leaders from Malkajgiri, advocate Sudheer, Forum for Better Malkajgiri vice-president Rakesh and others joined the party in the presence of Etala. BJP leaders Mohan Yadav, Bhanu, Krishna, Srilatha Reddy, Deepthi, Sandhya, Venu, Mahesh Yadav, Rajasekhar and Mahender participated in the event.



Congress creating tensions in society through fake videos: PM Modi

Zaheerabad (Telangana), April 30 (IANS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the Congress of misleading the people, creating tension in the society, and building an atmosphere of confrontation by making fake videos.

Addressing an election rally at Zaheerabad in Telangana, the Prime Minister said, "In this (case), the names of Telangana Congress and RR himself are coming up," ap-

parently referring to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who along with four other leaders of Telangana Congress has been summoned by the Delhi Police in a case related to doctoring a video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Tell me, can any countryman expect such acts from persons holding Constitutional posts," he asked the gathering.

He also alleged that Congress started a new industry in these elections to shatter the spirit of democracy to pieces.

PM Modi declared that as long as he is alive, he will not allow the reservations of Dalits, STs, and OBCs to be given to Muslims in the name of religion.

EC should issue notice to PM, demands Dr K Narayana



Hyderabad, April 30 (NSS): CPI national secretary Dr K Narayana today said the Election Commission should issue notices to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for speaking against the Constitution instead of issuing notices to CM Revanth Reddy. He alleged that the CMs of Delhi and Jharkhand, who

are opposed to the policies of the BJP government at the Centre, had already been put in jail and added that the BJP was making arrangements to put the new CM Revanth Reddy in jail. "It is trying to implicate those who are rising against the BJP by harassing them in some way or the other," he said. He alleged that the BJP was hatching a new conspiracy to remove any opponents in the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking to media persons along with CPI national committee member Palla Venkat Reddy and State secretariat member E T Narasimha at Maqdoom Bhavan here on Tuesday, he said the Delhi Police had denied issuing notices to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and added that Union Minister Amit Shah has assigned special responsibilities to the Delhi Police, which is under the purview of the Centre, to check what was being circulated on social media. He said they were being harassed even though they have nothing to do with the Delhi Police.



People flocking to KCR's meetings voluntarily: Jagadish Reddy

Suryapet, April 30 (NSS): Former minister and Suryapet MLA Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy today said K Chandrashekhar Rao's influence has started again in Telangana and added that people believe that only if KCR comes, they would be protected. Jagadish Reddy launched a door-to-door campaign in Suryapet constituency as part of the Lok Sabha election campaign.

Rahul is future PM of India: Jaggareddy

Hyderabad, April 30 (NSS): Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) working president Jaggareddy said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is the future Prime Minister of the country.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan here on Tuesday, Jaggareddy alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hatching conspiracies to abolish the reservation system and said that only when Rahul Gandhi becomes the Prime Minister, the weaker sections, especially SCs, STs and BCs and minorities will be benefited.

Responding to the summons served by Delhi police to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and other Telangana Congress leaders in connection with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's doctored vid-



eos, the TPCC working president said that the Delhi police had come to Gandhi Bhavan on the instructions of the BJP government.

"Narendra Modi made a controversial remarks the election campaign in Rajasthan that if Congress comes to power.

Not yet a heatwave, but why does Hyderabad feel like one?

Hyderabad, Apr 30 (IANS) : Hyderabad is currently experiencing a peculiar phenomenon that has left residents drenched in sweat despite the mercury not soaring to record highs. In what seems like a contradiction, the city is not officially in the grip of a heatwave, and humidity levels have remained relatively modest.



10th class public exam results out

Hyderabad, April 30 (NSS): The Telangana SSC Public Exams results were declared on Tuesday. According to Principal Secretary (Education) Burra Venkatesham who released the results here, overall 91.31 percent pass percentage was recorded in the results. The exams were conducted from March 18 to April 2 and a total of 5,05,813 students appeared.



Tab entries should be made from time to time for grain purchase details : Additional Collector Khimya Naik

Rajanna Sirisilla, April 30 (TIM Bureau) : The Additional Collector should make tab entries from time to time detailing the grain collected at the purchase centres. "Ordered by Khemya Naik. Additional collector on grain collection, tab entries on other items" Khemya Naik held a review meeting with officials of the Civil Supplies Department at his chamber in the District Integrated Office Complex on Tuesday. On this occasion, under the auspices of IKP, DCMS, PAX, MEPMA, they inquired about the details of grain collected so far.

Pujari Gautami, Additional Collector, who inspected the SC study circle

Rajanna Sirisilla, April 30 (TIM Bureau) : Additional Collector Pujari Gautami inspected the SC study circle in Siricilla town of Rajanna Sirisilla district on Tuesday. In view of the commencement of the three-month foundation course from May 1, the SC Study Circle in Sirisilla examined the arrangements for meals, hostels and accommodation and made several suggestions to the authorities.

Later, the Additional Collector spoke to the candidates undergoing training in the five-month foundation course. He called to make good use of the study circle. Aspired to go ahead as per the plan and reach the target. SC Study Circle Incharge Director Vijayalakshmi said that a total of



50 people have applied for the three-month foundation course, 28 are young women and 22 are young men. It has already been explained that the 5-month foundation course will continue. SC study circle staff and others participated here.

SHIRAM FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032 Administrative office: 6th Floor (level 2), Building No.02, Aarum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

POSSESSION NOTICE
Whereas, as the undersigned being the authorised officer of Shiram Finance Limited, (Shiram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited name Changed as Shiram Finance Limited, by its Incorporation Certificate dt.13-11-2022) a corporate body registered and incorporated as a company under the Indian companies Act 1956, is doing Non-Banking financial activities, having its Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032 and having its administrative office at 6th Floor (level 2), Building No.02, Aarum Q Parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710, under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules, on this 27th April, 2024.

Borrower Name and Address	Amount due as per Demand Notice
1) Yallama Veeraiiah S/o. Janaiah Aged About 50 Years, Occ: Business, O/o, Durga Bhavani Kirana & General Store and Kanaka Durga Fish Shop, O/o, Shivajayam Street, Chityala(V&M), Nalgonda Dist R/o: H.No. 3-95, Shivajayam Street, Chityala(V&M), Nalgonda Dist -508114 2) Yallama Nagalaxmi W/o. Veeraiiah Aged About 44 Years, Occ: House Wife, R/o. H.No. 3-95, Shivajayam Street, Chityala(V&M), Nalgonda Dist -508114 (Ind Add: H.No. 4-13, Chityala (V&M), Nalgonda Dist-508114 And Also at Yallama Nagalaxmi W/o. Veeraiiah R/o. Open house plot in Sy.No.104, block No.7 inside residential zone comprising a total extent of 525.63 sq.yards or 439.49 Sq.mts situated at newly developed area Chityal Grampanchayat Village and Mandal, Nalgonda District, Nalgonda Sub District. (PROPERTY HOLDER). 3) Mannem Saidulu S/o. Appaiah Aged About 47 Years, Occ: Business, R/o. H.No.4-10, Shivaji Nagar, Chityala (V&M), Nalgonda-508114	Rs. 97,09,500/- (Rupees Ninety Seven Lakhs Nine Thousand and Five Hundred only)

BHONGTIF1609290001 - Description Of The Immovable Property : (Property holder Name is Yallama Nagalaxmi W/o. Veeraiiah, Mortgage deed dated 01.10.2016 Registered as Document No 11504/2016 on the file of the office of Sub-Registrar at NAL-GONDA All that the open house plot in Sy.No.104, block No.7 inside residential zone comprising a total extent of 525.63 sq.yards or 439.49 Sq.mts situated at newly developed area Chityal Grampanchayat Village and Mandal, Nalgonda District, Nalgonda Sub District and Registration Dist, bounded on : East : Land of V.Yadagiri Reddy West : 12ft Width Joint way North : Plot of B.Yadamma South : Plot of V.Yadagiri Reddy.

This notice is also hereby to caution the general public at large that the authorized officer of SFL is in the lawful Possession of the immovable property mentioned herein above and the Borrowers or any person shall not after receipt of this notice transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise deal with/ alienate any of the above mentioned secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of SFL.

Place: Chityala -Sd/- Authorised Officer, Shiram Finance Limited
Date: 27-04-2024

SHIRAM FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032, Administrative office: 6th Floor(level 2), Building No.02, Aarum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

DEMAND NOTICE
Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors/ mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from SHIRAM FINANCE LTD, (Formerly known as Shiram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited name Changed as Shiram Finance Limited) We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of SHIRAM FINANCE LTD, under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 & in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 calling upon the following borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices. The notices issued to them on their last known addresses have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

S.No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	NPA Date	Date of Demand Notice
1	1) Khaja Kareemuddin, S/o: Khaja Azeemuddin, Age 26 Years, Occ: Self Employee, R/o: H.No: 1-3-289, Pahadi Nagar, Bhongiri, Nalgonda-508116, B/o: " Kareem Fruits Business ", 2) Khaja Azeem Uddin, S/o: Khaja Basheer Uddin, Age 51 Years, Occ: Self Employee, R/O: H.No: 1-3-289, Pahadi Nagar, Bhongiri, Nalgonda-508116, 3) Boyapally Narsimha Reddy, S/o: Ram Reddy, Age 54 Years, Occ: Self Employee, R/O: H.No: 4-74, Bili Nagar, Near Water Tank, Gudur, Nalgonda-508126, ...Borrowers/Co-Borrower/Guarantors/Legal Heirs	10-04-2023	23-12-2023
		Loan Amount Rs. 50,00,000/-	Amount Outstanding Rs.67,52,377/-

HMVYTHF2207290001 - Description Of The Immovable Property Schedule "A": House Bearing Municipal No. 1-3-289 Consisting of Six Rooms and Open Yard in All Admeasuring an area of Sq. Yards: 422. Equivalent of Sq.Meters: 352-846 Situated At Pahadi Nagar, Bhongiri, Rev. Bhongiri Town & Mandal, Nalgonda District. Within The Limits Of Bhongiri Municipality, And Bounded As Follows: Towards East: House Of Mohd Ibrahim Towards West: House Of Neigh's And House Of Khader Shareef Towards North: 21' Wide Road Towards South: House Of Neighbour's.

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers and/ or their guarantors (where ever applicable) to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the applicable rules there under. Please note that under Section 13 (13) of the said Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.

Date:29-04-2024 Place: Bibinagar Sd/- Authorised Officer, Shiram Finance Limited

SHIRAM FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032, Administrative office: 6th Floor(level 2), Building No.02, Aarum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.

DEMAND NOTICE
Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors/ mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from SHIRAM FINANCE LTD, (Formerly known as Shiram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shiram Transport Finance Company Limited name Changed as Shiram Finance Limited) We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of SHIRAM FINANCE LTD, under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 & in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 calling upon the following borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices. The notices issued to them on their last known addresses have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

S.No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	NPA Date	Date of Demand Notice
1	1) Venkata Srinivasa Vara Prasad, S/o: Rangaiah, R/o. H.No: 16-31-521 & 522, P.No.403, 6th Lane, Talla Subhasri Apartments, K.P.H.Colony, Kukatapally, R.R.District - 500 072. 2) K. Madhavi Latha, D/o: K. Narasimha Rao, Age: 43 Years, Occ: House Wife, R/O: H.No: 16-31-521 & 522, P.No.403, 6th Phase, Talla Subhasri Apartments, K.P.H.B.Colony, Kukatapally, R.R.District - 500 072. 3) N. Sundar Raj, S/o: Rukkaiah, R/O: Q.No.508/A, Bheil Township, Medak District. ...Borrowers/Co-Borrower/Guarantors/Legal Heirs	13-11-2014	23-02-2024
		Loan Amount Rs. 20,00,000/-	Amount Outstanding Rs.1,05,42,111/-

LKDPILT1305110001 - Description Of The Immovable Property Schedule "A": All that the plot Bearing No.12-D, in Sy.No.19 And 21, Admeasuring 672 Sq.Yards Or 561.71 Sq.Mts., Out of total extent of A 2.27 Guntas Situated at Bachupally Village, and Gram Panchayat, Quthbullapur Mandal, Under SRO Quthbullapur, Ranga Reddy District and Bounded As Follows: Towards East: Grave Yard Towards West: 33 Ft Wide Road Towards North: Plot Nos. 10-A-D, 10/B-D, 13-D, and 14-D Towards South: Road

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers and/ or their guarantors (where ever applicable) to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the applicable rules there under. Please note that under Section 13 (13) of the said Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.

Date:29-04-2024 Place: Kukatapally Sd/- Authorised Officer, Shiram Finance Limited



Revanth Reddy's visit to Sirisil on May 3

Rajanna Sirisilla, Apr 30 (TIM Bureau) : State Chief Minister Enumula Revanth Reddy will visit Rajanna Sirisilla District Center on May 3. The CM will participate in the public meeting held on Friday as part of the parliamentary elections. Sirisilla Constituency Congress Party In-Charge KK Mahender Reddy revealed that an open meeting will be held on the ground near the local old Ellamma temple on May 3 at three o'clock in the afternoon. On Tuesday, the premises of the public meeting were inspected along with the ranks of the local Congress party. An election campaign meeting is being held in support of Congress Party's parliamentary candidate Velichala Rajender Rao. Congress leaders are making arrangements to hold a

Congress leaders visited the site

huge public meeting. On this occasion, KK Mahender Reddy appealed to the people and Congress ranks to participate on a large scale and make the meeting a success for the victory of Velichala Rajender Rao, the candidate of Karimnagar Congress Party. Congress leaders Nagala Satyanarayana Goud, Gaddam Narasiah, Choppadandi Prakash, Vaidya Sivaprasad, Manya Prasad, Akunuri Balaraju,

Nerella Srikanth, Reddy Naik, Kudikyakala Ravi, Vengala Lakshmi Narasiah, Velumula Tirupati Reddy, Kamuni Nalini Kanth, Bairi Prabhakar, Neeli Ravinder, Bhimavaram are among the Congress leaders under scrutiny. Srinivas, Piska Madhu, Boppa Devaiah, Gautham and others participated.

Training of Master Trainers

Rajanna Sirisilla, April 30 (TIM Bureau) : Master trainers were trained in the context of Lok Sabha elections. Vemulawada ARO, RDO Rajeshwar trained 35 master trainers of the district in the NIC hall of the district integrated office complex on Tuesday. A day before polling, on the day of polling, PO, APO and OPO explained the duties to be performed. According to the rules and regulations of the Election Commission of India, all the employees assigned election duties have been directed to perform their duties. After that he cleared the doubts of the master trainers. Asked about their problems. Here Sirisilla RDO Ramesh, CPO Srinivasachari, Master Trainer Pathuri Mahender Reddy "Master Trainers and others participated.



Chandrababu Naidu has history of lies and betrayals: Andhra CM Jagan

Continued From pg 01
"Chandrababu Naidu, now aged over 75 years, has a history marked by lies and betrayal, with seemingly no regret..." he said and asked how the former Chief Minister became the brand ambassador for development with a bogus report. He urged people to differentiate between the bogus report of Naidu and the progress report of the YSRCP. "How do you differentiate who is a leader with credibility," he asked and mentioned that Naidu, in his element of self-promotion, often states, 'If you want a job, you need to vote for Babu'. The YSRCP chief claimed that only 32,000 jobs were created between 2014 and 2019 when Naidu was the Chief Minister. Chief Minister Jagan claimed that his government created 2.31 lakh government jobs while the total number of government jobs created since Independence was only four lakh. The Chief Minister alleged that Naidu failed to fulfil his promise in 2014 that his first signature after assuming power would be to waive farm loans of Rs. 87,612 crore. He also failed to fulfil promises of crop insurance and input subsidy for farmers. "Weren't you responsible for the Basheerbagh firing on farmers, who were protesting against a hike in power tariff," Chief Minister Jagan asked, referring to the 2000 incident in Hyderabad when Naidu was the Chief Minister of combined Andhra Pradesh. The YSRCP chief said he has placed before people the progress report of the last 58 months.



The death of Samala Malleshham is a great loss to the labor world for the CPI party

Rajanna Sirisilla, April 30 (TIM Bureau) : CPI National Executive Committee members Comrade Chada Venkata Reddy consoled the family members of CPI senior leader Comrade Samala Malleshham from Sirisilla town who passed away recently due to ill health. They paid tribute to his portrait by placing floral garlands. He spoke on this occasion. He said that the death of Comrade Samala Malleshham is a great loss to the labor world for the CPI party. He said that he had mobilized thousands of people in Rayini pond and continued the struggle for housing sites and played a vital role in providing housing sites to thousands of people. He said that Samala Malleshham fought with great faith and determination in naming the Telangana armed struggle leader Comrade Baddam Ellareddy as BY Nagar. Sirisilla is said to have fought for the

Chada Venkat Reddy is one of the members of the CPI National Executive Committee

workers for three decades for the working class on which lakhs of people live depending on the association of beedi industry and powerloom industry as an industrial sector. Comrade Samala Malleshham said that even in the context of beedi industry facing crisis, he stood in front of the working class as a great militant leader in mobilizing the beedi workers in struggles and fighting for their rights. He said that the loss of such a great leader is a great loss for the working class. CPI district secretary Gunti Venu, district executive members Pantam Ravi, Kadari Ramulu, Ajja Venu, Meesam Laxman, Soma Nagaraju, Nalla Chandramouli and others participated in this program.



Total support for BJP-JD-S alliance in K'taka : Pralhad Joshi

Hubballi (Karnataka), Apr 30 (IANS) : BJP is going to get total support in the elections to 14 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Pralhad Joshi stated in Hubballi on Tuesday. Speaking to reporters, Joshi said that during voting in south Karnataka, people are backing the BJP-JD-S alliance. "Popular support is needed in the interest of the country towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The people should come out in large numbers and participate in voting," he appealed. "The increase in percentage of voting does not mean that Prime Minister

Modi has won. The party workers of the alliance should not sit at home and see to it that the voting is done to the highest level," Joshi added. Meanwhile, former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda attacked Congress over distribution of guarantee handbills to people in the state. "Great person Rahul Gandhi who does not deserve to contest from Uttar Pradesh has shifted his base to Kerala and is contesting election from there. This development will misguide the people and cheat them. The handbills are used to fool people in the state," he charged.

INDIA bloc aims to divide the country on religious grounds: UP CM Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow, Apr 30 (IANS) : Lashing out at the Congress on Tuesday, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Congress manifesto is harmful to India, the world's largest democracy.

Talking to reporters at his official residence, the chief minister said that the BJP had entered the elections with the issues of development, security, and governance.

The first phase of voting was held on these issues, but just before the first phase, the manifesto of Congress, the most important component of the INDIA bloc, drew the attention of the entire country. "The Congress, in its manifesto, wants to lay the foundation for the country's di-

vision on religious grounds by supporting issues ranging from implementing Taliban rule to personal law. The BJP will strongly oppose it in any case," he added. He said that everyone had read the statements of Congress advisor Sam Pitroda.

During the tenure of the UPA government, reports from the Ranganath Mishra Committee and the Sachar Committee were brought in by the Congress, he said. "Additionally, in Karnataka, the government led by the Congress is forcibly including Muslims in the reservation for backward classes, thus unfairly dividing the rights of the OBCs" he said. He further said that by discussing the Inheritance Tax, conducting an X-ray of property and

seizing property, they aim to lay the foundation for the country's division on religious grounds. "Along with this, they are also discussing taking half of the inheritance property and reintroducing laws such as personal laws. The partition of this country took place due to these reasons. If any political party tries to do this, it will be opposed at all costs," he said. "Naxalism is on the decline in India. If there is any attempt to revive this, we will never accept it. The BJP government has been taking action against corruption from the beginning. However, if anyone tries to impose dacoity on the property of the common man, we will not allow it to happen," said the chief minister. Attacking the Congress and its allies for "en-



dorsing a Taliban-like mentality" in the country's politics, the chief minister said, "They are trying to resurrect the Maoist insurgency and are attempting to demean women by reintroducing practices like triple talaq through personal laws. Hence, in the present scenario, the BJP is opposing these issues." He mentioned that "we are bringing up these issues and capturing the public's attention. The public's attention is constantly being drawn to what is the mentality of Congress.

CBI recovers huge cache of arms, explosives from house of Shahjahan's relative at Sandeshkhali

Kolkata, Apr 30 (IANS) : The CBI on Tuesday afternoon conducted a raid at the residence of a relative of suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas District and seized a huge cache of firearms and explosives. Sources said the CBI got a tip off about the cache of arms and crude bombs at the residence of Shahjahan's relative Hafizul Khan, who is also an elected panchayat member from the ruling party. Soon after getting the information, a CBI team escorted by personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces conducted the raid at the residence that was located



within a pisciculture farm. Till the time of filing of the report the CBI team was engaged in a search operation at the house. It is suspected that the firearms, explosives and crude bombs were stocked there for use on polling day in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. Sources said, following Shahjahan's arrest and increased movement of different central agency sleuths.



We will implement UCC in entire country, it is 'Modi ki Guarantee': Amit Shah

Bhopal, Apr 30 (IANS) : Assuring that it is a 'Modi ki Guarantee' (PM Modi's guarantee), Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the government led by the BJP will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country.

Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Guna, Amit Shah accused the Congress of playing appeasement politics by encouraging the reform of personal laws. "Rahul Baba, do whatever you want for appeasement. As

long as the BJP is there, we will not allow personal law to be brought in. This country will run on a Uniform Civil Code. This is the soul of our Constitution, we have just brought UCC in Uttarakhand.

This is Modi ji's guarantee, we will implement UCC across the country," Amit Shah told the gathering. He also mentioned that the Congress used to threaten that there would be a bloodbath if Article 370 is removed, but not a single incident has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir since its abrogation.

"It's been five years since Article 370 was removed... Forget about bloodshed, not a single stone was pelted. This is the Narendra Modi-led BJP government, and not the Congress government," he said. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is contesting from Guna on BJP's symbol for the first time. Scindia contested the last Lok Sabha on a Congress ticket and lost against BJP's K.P. Yadav in 2019. One year later, Scindia along with his 22 loyalist MLAs joined the BJP.



Kerala CM's principal secretary unable to vote after EPIC number duplication

Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 30 (IANS) : K.M. Abraham, former chief secretary of Kerala and present principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, on Tuesday suffered a rude jolt when after standing in the queue to cast his vote he failed to press the button on the electronic voting machine, as he was told that the number on his Electors Photo Identification Card (EPIC) had already been cast. The poll officials when they searched with the EPIC number using Abraham's number, found that a woman with the same EPIC number had already cast her vote, as the voters' list contained the woman's name. A peeved Abraham had no other choice but to return without casting his vote but he registered a complaint with the Thiruvananthapuram district collector -- the chief election official in the state capital district.

Collaboration with multiple agencies helping us rein in illicit trade : Mizoram DGP

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : Highlighting the effective role of recent collaborations with multiple enforcement agencies in tackling illicit trade, Anil Shukla, Director General of Police, Mizoram said that there remains ample room for enhancing capacities. Addressing the 'In Conversation Series' organised by FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy) on Tuesday, Shukla said, "We have established fruitful collaborations with multiple agencies, including the Assam Police, BSF, Narcotics Departments, and the Customs Department. While these partnerships have been valuable, there remains ample room for enhancing our capacities further. I am eagerly anticipating FICCI CASCADE's initiative to organise and facilitate such a platform for our officers, which will undoubtedly con-

tribute to our ongoing endeavours in combating illicit trade effectively. The most important or worrisome aspect of smuggling is the movement of drugs in the form of high-quality heroin, ganja and meth. The drug trade has been escalating nearly every year. In 2023, drug seizures amounted to a value of Rs 190 crore." Shukla further emphasised that the Indo-Myanmar border presents a significant challenge due to its porous nature, lacking fences and characterised by vast rugged and riverine terrain. Situated within the Golden Triangle, Mizoram experiences substantial trafficking of drugs and contraband. Moreover, the region grapples with the smuggling of areca nut, foreign cigarettes and the illicit trade in exotic animals, he highlighted. He delved into the landscape of counterfeiting and smug-



gling within North-East India, with a specific focus on Mizoram, highlighting the associated challenges. Shukla outlined potential strategies to combat this issue, emphasising the importance of a community-centric approach and the enhancement of enforcement and investigative mechanisms. He also welcomed the proposal of a capacity building exercise that can be organised by FICCI CASCADE for the Mizoram Police to bolster the efforts in tackling these threats effectively. Regarding potential solutions to the smuggling problem, Shukla emphasised that while there may not be ready-made solutions, investing in intelligence gathering and cultivating sources is imperative. He stressed the importance of establishing a network of individuals who possess a deep understanding of local intricacies and terrain.

Falsely accusing spouse of infidelity constitutes mental cruelty: Delhi HC

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : The Delhi High Court recently ruled that falsely accusing a spouse of having an extramarital affair and denying parentage of children amounts to severe mental cruelty.

The decision was delivered by a Division Bench comprising Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, who upheld a family court's verdict that denied a husband's plea for divorce on the grounds of alleged cruelty by his wife.

The court said that making baseless accusations against a spouse, especially involving character and fidelity, and further rejecting the children's legitimacy inflicts profound mental anguish and damages the matrimonial bond irreparably.

The Bench noted that such actions represent the gravest form of insult and cruelty, disqualifying the accuser from obtaining a divorce on these



grounds. During the proceedings, it was revealed that although the husband had repeatedly accused his wife of unfaithfulness and inappropriate relationships with multiple men, he admitted during cross-examination that he had never witnessed any compromising situation. "... it is pertinent to observe that the appellant has consistently and persistently, adamantly raised doubts about the character of the respondent and has made unsubstantiated and reprehensible allegations against the character of the respondent and has asserted that she was having illicit relationship not only with one but with many other persons," the court noted.

Man, wife arrested in Delhi for drug peddling



New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : Delhi Police have arrested a couple for drug peddling in the national capital, said an official here, adding that heroin valued at over Rs 20 lakh was recovered from them. The accused were identified as Rajesh Rana a.k.a Bunty (44), and his wife Neelam Rana (43), residents of Tilak Nagar. Police said that Rajesh Rana has been found previously involved in 23 criminal cases and his wife in eight cases. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said that technical and manual surveillance was mounted to nab the Proclaimed Offender, Neelam Rana.

OPINIONmail



MAY DAY IN 2024 IS A REMINDER TO THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS OF A LONG BATTLE FOR RIGHTS

It was May Day when workers all over the world were waking up to the reality that they too have rights, as a class. For us in India, outcome was All India Trade Union Congress that came into existence in 1920, with Lala Lajpat Rai as president. Capitalism had started settling in. Even in agrarian sector, it had entered forcing the peasants to slog on their own fields like agri workers with a pittance of return not even enough to meet the basics. Industries were coming up in urban areas like in Bombay, there were cotton mills and in Calcutta, jute mills and so were workers, slogging for sixteen to sometime even twenty hours without a right of their own.

It was also beginnings of an awareness that revealed that it was labour that they were selling, not freedom. In the primary stage, it was a blind torture, workers went through all the hardships with lips sealed. But soon they realized their own power, being the kingpins in the entire production process. They were landless peasantry and starving workers. Here started emergence of early labour consciousness. There were restrictions passed in 1881 and 1891, on women and child labour, though nobody cared about them. With age no bar, even seniors and very young had to go down the mines, handle cotton without ventilation and slog for long hours. It was a time when the awareness started turning into action. Workers started fighting, but cause was not very clear yet. Between 1882 to 1890, there more than twenty five strikes recorded in Bombay and Madras. In these struggles, it was the community consciousness that was leading them, not yet the class.

The period was almost the same when the workers started rising almost all over the world. In some countries, like in United States and Canada, they had started observing the first Monday of September as Labour Day. The American Federation of Labour and other trade unions called for industrial strike all over the US on May 1, 1886, demanding 8-hour workday, a schedule of eight hours for labour, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. Thousands of workers in Chicago on May 4, 1886 organised a mass meeting on the same demands. A bomb exploded at a labour rally in Haymarket Square followed by shelling by the police forces, killing seven police officers, labourers, and at least four bystanders. Workers across the United States came together protesting against the police firings and demanding their rights and to fight for better working conditions after the movement took a violent turn.

Though there was not enough evidence available, Judge imposed the death sentence on seven of men and last was given fifteen years of imprisonment. On November 11, 1893, four of them were executed. Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned the remaining leaders. Actually evidences were found that it was a conspiracy to victimize the striking workers. The strike demanding eight hour shift was taken up all over the world. Second International issued a declaration in 1889 that first May would be celebrated as Workers Day.

But within two centuries, as the modern era is fading under the influence of scientific technological revolution, corporate are firm so far as workers' duty hours are concerned. Hard earned rights, for which masses have sacrificed their lives, have been replaced by same exploitative steps, stretching the work hours to twelve or more hours. The hard-won workers' rights that were enshrined in the earlier labour laws have been undemocratically and unconstitutionally either diluted or deleted in the name of 'ease of doing business'. There have been countrywide strikes by AITUC and other organizations against the central government's anti-worker policies and actions, but without any result. The entire set of Labour laws have been confined to Four Labour Codes. Under the new labour code, the term 'factory' excludes employers with less than 20 workers from any liability, the daily working hours have gone from eight to twelve, with many states already in the process of implementing it. Employers with less than 300 workers in their factories no longer need prior permission from appropriate government authorities for layoff or closure.

(By Krishna Jha)

EDITORIAL
the indian mail



PRIME MINISTER'S VICIOUS SPEECH AGAINST MUSLIMS IN POLL CAMPAIGN VIOLATES CONSTITUTION

The prime minister's vitriolic speech of April 21, delivered two days after the first phase of polling of the Lok Sabha elections, has been widely condemned both in India and abroad. The language and bigotry which he displayed to incite hatred against the Muslim community and the political parties whom he accused of favouring them were reminiscent of the rhetoric he employed in his speeches immediately after the Gujarat pogrom against Mus-

lims that happened in 2002 when he was the chief minister. It is important to analyse why he has felt the need to revert to them once again so early in this election campaign.

102 seats went to the polls on the April 19. Of these, 40 belong to Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and the BJP will almost certainly draw a blank here. The rest of the seats are - 12 in Rajasthan, 8 in Uttar Pradesh, 6 in Madhya Pradesh, 5 each in Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Assam, 4 in Bihar, 3 in West

Bengal, 6 in North East, 1 in Chhattisgarh and 1 in Jammu & Kashmir. In the last election, the BJP had swept to victory in the states to which they belong. There are indications, however, that the BJP's performance this time in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Bihar was below par and, if this trend continues, BJP dreams of a third term with an overwhelming majority, will remain just that - dreams.

(IPA Service)

ORGANISED CONGRESS OFFERS BJP A TOUGH ELECTORAL BATTLE IN RAJASTHAN

With second phase of election on April 26, Lok Sabha election on all 25 constituencies in Rajasthan will conclude. In every constituency, the Congress has offered BJP tough electoral battles, which made none less than Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lose his cool, who out of frustration started communal tirade against the Congress during the second phase of election campaigns. In such a close electoral battle, we are bound to see the state bringing up surprises, and hence the certainty expressed about BJP's winning all the seats has given way to uncertainties.

It was a very high-stake election for the BJP and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since they are seeking for their third term. The party had won 24 seats in 2019 election.

UBT SHIV SENA FORCED TO SWEAT IT OUT AS POLLS HEAT UP IN MAHARASHTRA

Skies are clear and the heat unbearable. Will people step outdoors to vote? The first phase saw some reluctance. One more lacklustre phase and Prime Minister Narendra will have nothing new to coin. But voting is being tied to the 'mangalsutra' and it ain't different in Maharashtra where Uddhav Thackeray is under pressure to prove his Hindutva credentials.

What's new, however, is that migrant workers working in Maharashtra's businesses and industries, hailing from the Hindi belt, have been granted leave and sent home to vote. The orders have come directly from the "top" and shows that the relatively low turnout in the first phase of polling hadn't gone down well with the BJP top brass. The Election Commission's decision to hold polling in the "summer months" is being decried as a "mistake"; also, this is the "season of marriages" in Rajasthan, which kept "whole villages" engaged in tying the knot. All these are being touted as reasons for the relatively low voter turnout. Reports of amends being made are circulating. Orders have gone to achieve "400 paar" at any cost. Chief Ministers, deputy chief ministers and Members of Parliament along with top party functionaries are all under pressure to deliver and Maharashtra is no exception. Going all out includes recruiting the likes of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has since April 24 started speaking Prime Minister Modi's language. Shah's diatribe targeted Uddhav Thackeray. The UBT Sena chief was at the receiving end and the BJP's Hindutva agenda was on full display.



MAMATA-KOLKATA HIGH COURT CONFRONTATION HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS

Will the Calcutta High Court hold West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee guilty of contempt of court? Political circles are abuzz with anticipation ever since Banerjee came out with her sensation allegation: "They (the BJP) have bought off the Calcutta High Court." Her disenchantment with the functioning of the Calcutta High Court was evident in her remark that the HC declared the 2016 SSC recruitment null and void under the influence of the Modi-led BJP, the ruling party in the Centre. This accusation from Mamata Banerjee in the form of a public address must be taken seriously not only by the judiciary, especially by the CJI D Y Chandrachud, but also by the chief justice of Calcutta High Court Justice T. S. Sivagnanam. He must do some introspection what went wrong, what mistake did the court commit that provoked

Mamata, a sitting chief minister, to make such a gravely serious public remark. It was in July 2023 that the Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had accused a section of the Calcutta High Court of acting in a partisan manner to "strengthen a particular political party" and had expressed hope that the judiciary would work impartially and without prejudice. He had also said: "The manner in which the (Calcutta) high court is making a particular political party stronger and healthy is unprecedented in India's post-Independence history."

HOW BHAGAWAT GITA EGGED ROBERT F KENNEDY JR. TO STAND AGAINST PRESIDENT BIDEN

Robert J Oppenheimer was inspired by it, T.S. Eliot was fascinated by the slokas and now an independent candidate aspiring for the White House revealed he was egged on to put a fight for the top job by the Bhagawat Gita. Robert F. Kennedy, nephew of the legendary US president, John F. Kennedy, and son of Robert Kennedy, senior, has declared his candidature for the US president as an independent candidate. He had tried to get the Democratic Party nomination for the fight but was stopped to ease the way for incumbent Joe Biden.

IN MIDDLE EAST WAR, U.S. FACING A BIG DILEMMA ON HOW FAR TO GET INVOLVED

Deterrence is straightforward! It means stopping the enemy from taking action by threatening military force. The US, with its powerful global military, should easily be able to deter Iran, which has outdated military equipment, including warships and fighter jets older than the first Moon landing. However, in reality, it has been very tough to deter Iran. Air strikes do not work well against rebel groups and militias because their main goals are to keep fighting and staying alive, not letting things run smoothly. These groups are also prepared to sustain casualties, making them tough to intimidate. A full-scale invasion may be the



only surefire method to deter them, but history shows such actions often come with serious consequences. Since October 7, Iran's proxy militias in Syria and Iraq have launched over 160 attacks on American forces. While some of these attacks were more for show than actual harm, the attack on January 28, which killed three American soldiers at a north-eastern Jordan base, was deadly.



Ex UK minister says Germany's Scholz should send missiles to Kyiv

London, Apr 30 (IANS/DPA) : Former UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has called on German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to agree to send Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine, as he continues to resist this step despite repeated pleas from Kyiv. "I think the reason is you can't incrementally help Ukraine, you know, a bit of this and a bit of that. Do we want Ukraine to win? Or do we want them to lose?" Wallace said. While he understands Scholz's reasons for concern regarding a possible escalation of the conflict, these are unfounded, Wallace said. "We've seen throughout this whole process, that Russia's red lines are like chalk, they just brush off the chalkboard," he said. "Ukraine will abide by any restrictions you put on them. So you could give them Tau-

rus. And you could add all sorts of restrictions about where you want it used or not used," said Wallace of the missiles Kyiv has been requesting for months. He also dismissed comments made by Scholz that suggested British and French troops are in Ukraine, programming cruise missiles. "He was wrong," said Wallace. "I can't tell you how Storm Shadows and Scalps are programmed. But it doesn't involve people standing around in an airport in Ukraine, it doesn't need to do that." While applauding Germany for ramping up its support for Ukraine, the former minister reiterated his harsh criticism of Scholz's leadership. "I think he's not a leader for conflict at the moment. And there is conflict on our shores.

Ukrainian minister remanded in custody after corruption allegations

Kyiv, Apr 30 (IANS/DPA) : Ukraine's highest anti-corruption court has ordered the pre-trial detention of Agriculture Minister Mykola Solskyi on suspicion of misappropriation of state land worth millions. The preventive measure is initially set to run until June 24, media in Kyiv reported on Tuesday, citing the court. There is a possibility that Solskyi will be released on bail, the reports said. The minister had previously submitted his resignation but continued to deny any guilt. Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk published the handwritten letter of resignation on

Facebook on Tuesday. Parliament will decide on the dismissal soon, Stefanchuk wrote. Investigators from the National Anti-Corruption Bureau had handed Solskyi a notice of suspicion on Tuesday. The minister is alleged to have brought a total of 1,250 plots of land totaling almost 2,500 hectares into the possession of his agricultural holding between 2017 and 2021. According to the investigators, this involved a value of 291 million hryvnia (\$7.34 million). The law enforcement authorities said they also thwarted the attempt, which is said to have involved further plots of land worth 190 million hryvnia. The minister denied the allegations. "There was no corruption. Nobody took any money,"



Solskyi wrote in a statement broadcast by public television. "Furthermore, none of the suspects had signed over land to themselves or relatives," he added. Solskyi, a lawyer by profession, had previously admitted that in 2017, he had represented several private individuals in a dispute over land against state-owned companies in the Sumy region in

question. In 2019, Solskyi was elected to the unicameral parliament, the Supreme Council or Rada, via the presidential party list in the early elections initiated by President Volodymyr Zelensky. He chaired the agriculture committee from 2019 until he was appointed minister of agriculture in March 2022.



North Korean leader oversees test-firing of new multiple rocket launcher shells

Seoul, April 30 (IANS) : North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has supervised a test-firing of new shells for a multiple rocket launcher, saying the weapon system will bring about a strategic change in shoring up the country's artillery force, state media reported Tuesday. Kim watched the firing of 240 mm-calibre multiple rocket launcher shells on Thursday that were produced at a newly established national defence industrial enterprise, Yonhap news agency reported. He underscored the need for the state-owned enterprise to "surely carry out the munitions produc-

tion plan for this year in a qualitative way," and affirmed the rocket launcher system would help bolster the country's artillery force, according to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The national defence industrial enterprise was established under the wing of the Second Economy Commission, an organisation in charge of North Korea's munitions industry. The KCNA did not disclose other details, but it is rare for the North to publicly reveal a munitions factory under such a name. In February, North Korea said it had newly developed "controllable" 240 mm rocket launcher shells, a move that could boost its

weapons capabilities with improvements in range and precision. The 240 mm multiple rocket launchers are believed to target South Korea's broader capital area. Observers said North Korea appears to be ramping up the development of rocket launcher shells in a bid to supply them to Russia for use in Moscow's war with Ukraine and double down on weapons tests targeting South Korea. North Korea and Russia have been deepening their military cooperation following the summit between Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin in September.



Three dead after mini car falls into paddy field in Japan

Tokyo, April 30 (IANS) : Three teenagers died after a mini car fell into a paddy field in the western Japanese prefecture of Tokushima, local authorities reported on Tuesday. Around 10.30 p.m. local time on Thursday, a report was made to emergency services that a mini car fell from prefectural road Route 24 in the town of Chosei in Anan City, Xinhua news agency reported. Four teenagers, all aged 18, were in the car and were rushed to the hospital, with three of them later confirmed dead, according to local police. The survivor suffered minor injuries. The car was found with the driver's side down, and police suspect that the light car, travelling southbound on the prefectural road, for some reason veered off into the nearby paddy field. The exact cause of the accident is under investigation, but local authorities have said the possibility of drunk driving or driving without a license is low.



China's top diplomat: 'Negative factors' up in relationship with US

Beijing, Apr 30 (IANS/DPA) : On the last day of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to China, Beijing has warned of a deterioration in relations between the two powers. Although the two sides are talking to each other again, the "negative factors" in the relationship between the US and China have increased, said China's chief diplomat Wang Yi on Tuesday in Beijing. Wang cited China's right to develop being "unreasonably sup-

pressed" as one of the reasons. According to him, the two countries are faced with the question of whether their relationship will either stabilise or slide into a downward spiral. According to US media reports, Blinken said that progress had been made in some areas to close the gap between the two countries. However, he wanted to express clearly and directly the issues on which there were differences of opinion with China.

S. Korea doctors' protest : More medical professors considering weekly breaks

Seoul, Apr 30 (IANS) : Professors from around 20 major medical schools in South Korea will decide on Tuesday whether to take a weekly day off while struggling to fill the void of trainee doctors who have walked off their jobs for more than two months, officials said. The emergency committee for national medical professors will hold a general meeting online later in the day and discuss the potential suspension of all surgeries and treatment for outpatients once a week, according to its officials, Yonhap news agency reported. "Professors have hit their limit both mentally and physically," said a committee official, adding: "We will review whether to take a day off on a regular basis, and details will be fixed in accordance with the situation

of each hospital." Despite looming closures, hospitals will likely continue the operations of their emergency rooms and intensive care units, he added. The committee involves professors from around 20 medical schools, and those affiliated with some of the schools have already decided to have a weekly break starting next month. Earlier, professors of the Seoul National University's medical school vowed to suspend their work on April 30, and they will decide on possible regular breaks later. The professors serve as senior doctors at major hospitals. The move came as more than 90 per cent of the country's 13,000 trainee doctors have walked away from their duties at general hospitals since February 20 in protest of the government's decision to increase the number of medical school seats by 2,000 starting next year from the current 3,058.



The government and the medical community have not yet found a breakthrough in their conflict. The medical community cited heavy workloads and extreme fatigue as major reasons for the move, however, it is also seen as a way of adding pressure by the medical community on the government to seek a breakthrough as the plan on the medical school admission quota for next year is supposed to be finalised by end-April. Adding to the woes, medical professors have submitted their resignations since

March 25 in support of the collective action by junior doctors, which was supposed to take legal effect after one month. The government launched a special presidential commission on medical reform Thursday for talks on the issue with the medical community, including doctors. It also decided to allow universities to make their quotas ranging from 50 to 100 per cent of what the government assigned for next year.

Pakistan rejects US report on human rights practices

Islamabad, Apr 30 (IANS) : Pakistan has "categorically" rejected a report by the US State Department over the human rights violations in the country last year, saying that only a "politically motivated report can ignore the alarming situation in Gaza". "It is deeply concerning that a report purported to highlight human rights situations around the



world ignores or downplays the most urgent hotspots of gross human rights violations such as in Gaza."

EC failed to ensure fair polls in Bengaluru Rural LS seat, alleges Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru, Apr 30 (IANS) : Former Chief Minister and JD-S state President H. D. Kumaraswamy alleged on Tuesday that the Election Commission has failed to ensure fair elections in Bengaluru Rural parliamentary constituency. Bengaluru Rural is said to be a high-profile and most sensitive parliamentary seat in the state. Dy CM D.K. Shivakumar's

brother D.K. Suresh is contesting against former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda's son-in-law, Dr C. N. Manjunath here. Addressing reporters, growing desperate from the fear of losing the election in Bengaluru Rural seat, Kumaraswamy stated that attempts were made to distribute Rs 10,000 gift cards to voters in Kanakapura Assembly constituency represented by Dy CMD. K. Shivakumar. Kanakapura comes

under Bengaluru Rural seat. In many places, incidents of violence have been reported when BJP and JD-S workers questioned this. "The police has lost its power and it is not in a position to initiate action against anyone," Kumaraswamy alleged. The Congress has also been distributing Rs 505 cash along with a sweet dish from Mahadeshwara hill (Hindu pilgrimage centre) to

voters. They have attacked those for questioning this, he stated. In Kunigal town one of the workers committed suicide on Tuesday night, in the backdrop of being assaulted and threatened by the Congress workers. "No one is caring for the complaints and in this scenario, the election is being held in the state," Kumaraswamy slammed. "The Karnataka state has been turned into a banana republic. The



gift cards worth Rs 10,000 are also distributed in the names of prominent local Congress leaders of that particular Assembly constituency. Fair elections are not conducted here. Even after complaints being lodged at the Election Commis-

sion, there is no action taken," Kumaraswamy reiterated. "Instead of conducting elections in this manner, the Election Commission can allow distribution of money and gift cards openly. The cards have the photographs of Congress prominent leaders including MLAs and code numbers and QR codes," Kumaraswamy charged. "The democratic system is turned upside down. I appeal to the voters of Bengaluru Rural seat, to not come under the influence," he said.



Cong-INDI alliance's 'hidden agenda' is to snatch rights of SC, ST, OBC and give to Muslims: JP Nadda

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : Launching a scathing attack against the Congress and INDIA bloc, BJP National President J. P. Nadda on Tuesday said the opposition's "hidden agenda" is to "snatch" the rights of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and other backward classes and give them to Muslims. Appeasement politics of the opposition is evident in the Congress Manifesto, the BJP president said. He said, "BJP does not want Muslims to be neglected, but they should not take undue advantage at the expense of other communities." "The Congress says that Muslims have the first right to the country's resources, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi says that they belong to the poor," he added. "In December 2006, then Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh's remark on Muslims having the first right to the country's resources was not inadvertent. It was an intentional statement as during a press conference in April 2009, while replying to a question in Mumbai, Manmohan Singh once again justified and reiterated his statement and said that minorities, especially Muslims, should be given priority, and they should have first right to the country's resources," he said. Claiming misrepresentations in Sachar Committee's report, he said the condition of Muslims has been portrayed as even worse than Dalits in it, which means that Congress had already laid the groundwork for declaring Muslims as Scheduled Castes to give them the benefits of SC reservation," he said.

UP BJP focusses on 26 seats for a third consecutive win

Lucknow, Apr 30 (IANS) : The Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh is working overtime to ensure a third consecutive win on more than two dozen seats that it had won in the 2014 and 2019 elections. The exercise is part of a larger strategy to win all 80 seats in the state. Among the 26 odd MPs who will be trying their luck for a third consecutive term from the same constituency are Prime Minister Narendra Modi from

Varanasi, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh from Lucknow and Mahendra Nath Pandey from Chandauli. Others in this category include former Union minister Mahesh Sharma from Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bhola Singh from Bulandshahr, Satish Gautam from Aligarh, Dharmendra Kashyap from Aonla, Hema Malini from Mathura, Ajay Mishra Teni from Kheri, Rekha Verma from Dhauraha, Rajesh Verma from Sitapur and Sakshi Maharaj from Unnao.



Omar Abdullah opposes any move to postpone polls in Anantnag-Rajouri LS seat

Srinagar, Apr 30 (IANS) : Former Chief Minister and vice president of National Conference (NC), Omar Abdullah on Tuesday opposed any move to postpone the voting date in Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat. Speaking at a hurriedly convened press conference here, Omar Abdullah said, "A conspiracy is being hatched by the BJP to support its 'subsidiary parties' by trying to get the voting date postponed in the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency". He accused the Election Commission and the J&K

administration of trying to benefit the opponents of the NC. "We appeal and warn the Election Commission to desist from postponing the election in the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency. "The letter requesting postponement is signed by only those parties which are the subsidiary parties of the BJP. Interestingly, even the BJP and the Peoples Conference who are not contesting elections in this constituency are signatories to the postponement request. "What have they to do with this election? If I write a similar letter to the Election Commission about

Tamil Nadu, Kerala or Maharashtra, would they consider such a request where my party is not fighting any election," he asked. He said if the plea taken is the likely closure of the Mughal Road, then it is illogical. "If they can keep the road to Kargil, to Gurez, to Tangdhar and Machil open why can't they keep the Mughal Road open," he said. He said if campaigning by candidates is an issue then our candidate is sitting here and he says he can approach his constituency in Rajouri and Poonch through Reasi district.

Nomination of BJP's Birbhum candidate cancelled, Debranu Bhattacharya to contest

Kolkata, Apr 30 (IANS) : The nomination of former IPS officer and the BJP's candidate from Birbhum Lok Sabha constituency, Debashis Dhar, was cancelled on Tuesday on technical grounds. Following this, the BJP veteran from the district, Debranu Bhattacharya, who had already filed his nomination as the second candidate of the party on Thursday afternoon, is now the main contestant.



Should re-election be held with fresh candidates if NOTA gets a majority? SC issues notice to EC

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to examine a plea seeking directions to the Election Commission (EC) to frame guidelines or rules, if in any election, all the contesting candidates individually do not surpass NOTA. Issuing notice, a bench headed by CJI DY Chandrachud sought the response of the ECI in the matter. The plea filed by a motivational speaker Shiv Khera stressed on framing of rules to the effect that if NOTA gets a majority, the election held in the particular constituency be declared null and void and a fresh election be conducted. It referred to various orders passed by diverse State Election Commissions providing that NOTA shall be treated as a

"fictional candidate" and fresh elections were to be conducted in-case NOTA received the highest number of votes. Paying for uniform implementation of the NOTA vote option, the petitioner sought directions that the candidates who poll fewer votes than NOTA be debarred from contesting all elections for a period of 5 years. As per the petition, the ECI, in July last year, issued a letter stating that even if, in an extreme case the number of votes against NOTA is more than the number of votes secured by the candidates, the candidate who secures the largest number of votes among the contesting candidates shall be declared to be elected.

UP power dept cashier goes missing with Rs 52.5 lakh cash

Lucknow, Apr 30 (IANS) : A cashier at Lucknow Electric Supply Authority's (LESA) Mahanagar sub-divisional office allegedly vanished after stealing over Rs 52.5 lakh in collected revenue from customers. After waiting for more than a week, an official from the Executive Engineer's office filed a complaint with the Aliganj police station on Tuesday. The matter had been circulating internally at LESA since Ajay Kumar Verma, a cashier from Sector C, Indira Nagar under the



Ghazipur police station's jurisdiction, disappeared from his duties and failed to report to his supervisor. Verma, who was entrusted with collecting electricity bill payments as revenue for the department, went on leave on April 18 without informing any of his colleagues.

Left in Kerala will have a historic win: CM Pinarayi Vijayan

Kannur (Kerala), Apr 30 (IANS) : Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan soon after casting his vote here on Tuesday said the Left in the state will register a historic win. "The wave is very clear and the Left will register a historic win as there is a very clear anti-Centre and anti-Congress led UDF sentiments in Kerala and hence we will win big," said CM Vijayan. It was the CM himself who led the election campaign for the

Lok Sabha polls in Kerala. "The sentiment in Kerala among voters is very clear and the BJP will just have no impact here. There is a similar sentiment against the Congress-led UDF as their 18 MPs in the past five years did nothing for the state and worked against the state," added CM Vijayan. "Not only will the BJP in Kerala win, they are not going to even come second in any of the 20 seats in Kerala," said CM Vijayan.

Indian EV firm BluSmart crosses Rs 500 crore in annual run rate in FY24

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : Homegrown electric vehicle (EV) company BluSmart on Tuesday said it has crossed Rs 500 crore in annual run rate (ARR) in FY24, achieving 102 per cent growth over the previous fiscal year. The company's gross business value (GBV) delivered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 300 per cent over the last three years, it said in a statement.

"As we surge ahead, our commitment to building a fully integrated energy-infrastructure, mobility, and technology business remains unwavering," said Anmol Singh Jaggi, co-founder of BluSmart. "We are witnessing a rise in demand for sustainable mobility solutions, reinforcing the growth of a greener, more sustainable future," he added. BluSmart said it has the largest fleet in South Asia of over 7,300 EVs, which have covered 460

million "clean kilometres" saving 34 million kgs of CO2 emissions. The BluSmart charging network has also grown multifold and spans across prime locations in Delhi-NCR and Bengaluru. Earlier this year, BluSmart became the first mobility player in India to achieve 100 per cent emissions-free status. The fully integrated EV ride-hailing service provider aims to reach 10,000 EV fleet by the end of 2024.



Microsoft to invest \$1.7 bn in cloud, AI infrastructure in Indonesia

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : Microsoft on Tuesday announced that it will invest \$1.7 billion over the next four years in new cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure in Indonesia. The company also announced AI skilling opportunities for 840,000 people in the country and support for the nation's growing developer community. This marks the single largest investment in Microsoft's 29-year history in the country. "The investments we are announcing today -- spanning digital infrastructure, skilling, and support for developers -- will help Indonesia thrive in this new era," said Satya Nadella, Chairman and

CEO, Microsoft. According to the company, this investment will enable Microsoft to meet the growing demand for cloud computing services in Indonesia, as well as allow the country to capitalise on the significant economic and productivity opportunities presented by the latest AI technology. "We aim to empower Indonesians with the infrastructure and skills needed for the AI era, aligning with our national vision for digital prowess. It's a crucial step towards making Indonesia a hub for digital talent and innovation," said Dharma Simorangkir, President Director of Microsoft Indonesia. Meanwhile, Microsoft announced plans to provide AI skilling oppor-

tunities for 2.5 million people in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states by 2025. The tech giant will provide this training with the help of governments, nonprofit and corporate organisations, and communities in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The initiative builds on a range of existing Microsoft skills programmes in the region, which have already helped many people land jobs or make career changes, especially women, who are still under-represented in the tech sector, the company said.

Samsung Q1 operating profit soars, chip business back to profit

Seoul, April 30 (IANS) : Samsung Electronics said on Tuesday its operating profit went up more than ten-fold in the first quarter, with its chip business shifting to the black for the first time in five quarters. Samsung Electronics, the world's largest maker of smartphones and memory chips, said its operating profit reached 6.6 trillion won (US\$4.8 billion) for the January-March period, compared with 640.2 billion won a year ago. Its sales jumped 12.8 per cent to 71.9 trillion won, and

net profit soared 329 percent to 6.75 trillion won, the company said in a regulatory filing. The earnings beat market expectations. The average estimate of operating profit by analysts stood at 5.6 trillion won, according to a survey by Yonhap Infomax, the financial data firm of Yonhap News Agency. Samsung said it has invested 7.82 trillion won in research and development for the quarter ending March, marking the largest quarterly investment. The chip business earned 23.1 trillion won in sales for the three-month period through March, with an operating profit of 1.91 trillion

won. It is the first time that the company's semiconductor segment has posted profit since the fourth quarter of 2022. It logged an operating loss of over 15 trillion won last year amid a downturn in the global chip market. Strong demand for memory chips lent support to the better-than-expected performance of the company's chip business on rising DRAM and NAND flash prices, with steady sales of double data rate 5 (DDR5) products and massive solid state drives (SSDs).



Elon Musk sacking senior Tesla staff to further reduce costs: Report

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : Elon Musk is firing more people at his electric car company Tesla, after executing layoffs this month that affected 10 per cent of its global workforce, a media report said on Tuesday. Musk last week said it is time to "reorganise" Tesla as the electric car company registered \$1.13 billion in net profit in the January-March period this year, down 55 per cent from \$2.51 billion a year earlier. According to a report in The Information, Musk is "thinning his senior management team and laying off hun-

dreds more employees". Rebecca Tinucci, senior director of Tesla's Supercharger group and Daniel Ho, head of new products, are leaving the company, according to an email sent by Musk to senior executives. "We need to be absolutely hardcore about headcount and cost reduction," Musk wrote. Musk, who just visited China, or Tesla were yet to officially comment on the report. Tesla laid off over 10 per cent of its workforce this month, in a move necessary for the "next phase of growth".

FirstCry refiles papers for IPO to raise Rs 1,816 crore

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : Mother and child care e-commerce platform FirstCry has refiled its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for an initial public offer (IPO) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), to raise Rs 1,816 crore via fresh issue of shares. According to the recent DRHP, the offer-for-sale (OFS) component in the IPO comprises shareholders selling 5.4 crore equity shares. The market regulator had earlier claimed that the startup failed to disclose certain significant indicators in its draft

papers filed in December last year. The startup will utilise the fresh issue for investment in its subsidiaries and setting up of new modern stores under the brand name "BabyHug" and warehouses. It registered revenue of Rs 4,814 crore in the first nine months of FY24, with Rs 278.2 crore in loss, according to a report in Inc42. In January, the startup reportedly offloaded 6.2 million shares prior to the IPO filing. According to reports, Japanese investment giant SoftBank had sold shares worth \$310 million in FirstCry in two rounds.



India's gold demand rises 8 pc in Jan-March despite soaring prices

Mumbai, April 30 (IANS) : India's gold demand rose to 136.6 tons in the January-March quarter which represents an 8 per cent increase over the same quarter of the previous year, according to figures released by the World Gold Council (WGC) on Tuesday. Gold purchases have increased despite rising prices, reflecting higher incomes in a growing economy, according to market analysts. Out of the total gold demand, the jewellery demand in India increased by 4 per cent to 95.5 tonnes from 91.9 tonnes. The total investment demand (in

the form of bar, coin among others) grew 19 per cent to 41.1 tonne from 34.4 tonne. India's gold demand in value terms rose 20 per cent to Rs 75,470 crore during the quarter compared to the same period last year. The increase in the demand was higher from investors who saw gold as a safe-haven asset amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war. The Reserve Bank of India also stepped up buying of the precious metal which saw its gold reserves increasing by 19 tons in the January-March quarter this year.

Constituency watch : Historic Bardoli ready for electoral clash between BJP's Vasava and Congress' Chaudhary

Bardoli, Apr 30 (IANS) : The political atmosphere in the Bardoli Lok Sabha constituency has intensified, as candidates are gearing up for the upcoming elections. Prabhu Vasava, the incumbent MP and a former Congress MLA who switched to the BJP in 2014, is set to defend his seat. Vasava, who won the Bardoli seat for the BJP in both the 2014 and 2019 elections, on March 20 addressed his followers about a fraudulent Facebook page impersonating

him, reflecting the high stakes of the digital campaign. Challenging Vasava is Siddharth Chaudhary, a new face from the Congress who is the son of former Congress MP Amar Singh Chaudhary. Siddharth Chaudhary, who has served as the President of the Vyara Taluka Panchayat and is a member of the Zilla Panchayat, is a prominent figure in the ST community. Siddharth Chaudhary's involvement with the Youth Congress and his current role as the opposition in the Tapi Zilla Panchayat underscores his long-standing commit-

ment to public service. The Bardoli constituency, a reserved seat for Scheduled Tribes, encompasses seven Assembly constituencies including Mangrol, Mandvi, Kamrej, Bardoli, Mahuva, Vyara and Nizar. This seat has been a stronghold of the BJP since its establishment after the 2008 delimitation, which transformed it from the former Mandvi Lok Sabha constituency. Bardoli holds a significant place in the history of India's freedom movement, notably for the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 led by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It played a crucial



role in the struggle against colonial rule and this is where Vallabhbhai Patel earned the title 'Sardar.' Bardoli, the constituency's namesake, is a municipality situated about 35 km east of Surat in the Surat Metropolitan Region, on the banks of the Mindhola River. The city boasts a literacy rate of 86.78 per cent and the first election in this constitu-

ency was held in 2009, with Tushar Amarsinh Chaudhary from the Congress being elected as its inaugural MP. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Parbhuhai Vasava of the BJP won the seat with 742,273 votes, while Tushar Amarsinh Chaudhary of the Congress secured 526,826 votes.



Teen BJP activist found dead in mysterious circumstances in Bengal's Moyna

Kolkata, April 30 (IANS) : An 18-year-old BJP activist was found dead in mysterious circumstances in Moyna in West Bengal's East Midnapore district. The deceased was identified as Dinobondhu Midya, a resident of Goramohol village. His body was recovered early Tuesday morning at a storehouse of betel leaf there. As the cops reached the spot to recover the body, the local people protested and shouted slogans. They claimed that this was a typical case of murder, where the teenager was first killed and then his body was hung to make it appear as a suicide. The cops of the local police station started an investigation into the matter.

Man impersonating Singapore Airlines pilot nabbed in Delhi airport area

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : A 24-year-old man impersonating a 'pilot' of Singapore Airlines was nabbed while wandering in the Metro Skywalk area near Delhi airport, police said on Tuesday. The accused was identified as Sangeet Singh, a resident of Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. According to police, on Thursday a person clad in a Singapore Airlines pilot uniform was spotted wandering in the Metro Skywalk area. "Presenting himself as a Singapore Airlines pilot to CISF personnel, he displayed an ID card hanging from his neck. Upon interception, he was identified as Sangeet Singh in possession of a Singapore Airlines ID card for in-

flight operations, which were subsequently confirmed to be counterfeit upon verification," said a senior police official. Investigations revealed that he had forged the IDs using an online app, Business Card Maker, and purchased the uniform accessories from Sector 9 in Dwarka. "Further inquiry revealed that he had completed a one-year Aviation Hospitality course in Mumbai in 2020, and had misled his family and acquaintances by professing to work as a pilot for Singapore Airlines," said the official. A case under sections 420, 468, and 471 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered against the accused, who was apprehended," the official added.ssh/dbp



Ailing Maratha leader Manoj Jarange-Patil goes in ambulance to cast vote in Jalna

Jalna (Maharashtra), Apr 30 (IANS) : Shiva Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil left in an ambulance from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) for neighbouring Jalna to exercise his franchise on E-day, on Tuesday. Jarange-Patil, who had rattled the Maharashtra Mahayuti government with his serial Maratha quota agitation and hunger strike starting from August 29, 2023, will cast his vote at his native Antarawali-Sarati village later this afternoon. Lying on a stretcher in a fully equipped ambulance which left Galaxy Hospital of Chhatrapati

Sambhajnagar, Jarange-Patil was in the care of a medical team to ensure an event-free 60 km-long journey to Jalna, an aide said. "After casting his vote, Jarange-Patil is expected to return to the hospital where he was admitted on Wednesday, after he suddenly felt unwell during a tour in Dharashiv (Osmanabad)," the aide from Satara told IANS. Appearing frail but firm, Jarange-Patil reiterated that he would not recommend the names of specific Lok Sabha candidate/s belonging to any political party to the Marathas for their support. "I will only say that you should vote wisely for those who will fight for your interest... and

not for those who are opposing the Marathas getting reservation from the OBC category," reiterated Jarange-Patil. Jarange-Patil will visit a polling station in Antarawali-Sarati village, where a deserted large marquee still stands testimony to the Maratha quotas stir he launched with the first 'fast unto death' agitation on August 29, 2023. Thereafter, there were at least four hunger strikes, protest marches, record public rallies to drum up the quotas cause and massive Maratha processions which reached the doorsteps of Mumbai in January, rattling the Mahayuti government.



Top CPI(M) leader EP Jayarajan in hot seat over 'talks' with BJP

Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 30 (IANS) : Political circles in Kerala are abuzz after confirmation of the news that there was a meeting between veteran CPI(M) leader and Left Convener EP Jayarajan and BJP Kerala incharge Prakash Javadekar. While the Congress is gung ho and is pointing out that it was warning about a secret pact between the two parties all along, the CPI(M) brass is rattled by the development. What has hurt the CPI(M) the most is the fact that controversial middleman TG Nandakumar was present when the two leaders met. Though rumours about the meeting between the BJP and the CPI(M) leaders was already doing the rounds for some time, the controversy erupted as Jayarajan admitted soon after casting his vote at Kannur on Friday that Prakash Javadekar came to his son's apartment in the state capital.

"The visit took place a few months ago. Javadekar was passing through the capital city and he paid a casual visit to my son's apartment. When he veered the talks towards politics, I said, I am not interested in discussing politics. This present controversy is needless and has been raked up by Sobha Surendran (Alappuzha BJP candidate) and a few others and I will take legal action against them," said Jayarajan. Reacting to Jayarajan's admission, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan after casting his vote at Kannur said it was wrong on the part of Jayarajan who is known for being friendly with everyone, and he should have been careful as in the past also this had come out. Using a vernacular saying to warn Jayarajan, CM Vijayan said, "Even if Lord Shiva becomes friendly with a sin-



ner, he will also turn a sinner." However, softening his stand a bit CM Vijayan added, "It is common knowledge that during election time politicians meet many people. Those who are attacking Jayarajan are targeting the CPI(M) and the ruling Left, but the people know the political angle behind this." However, CM Vijayan came down heavily on Nandakumar and described him as a person for whom money is everything. The Congress was in an upbeat mood over the development and Leader of Opposition, VD Satheesan said that finally the people of Kerala have come to know that what he and the Congress had been saying about the tacit understanding between the BJP and the CPI(M) in Kerala, was true.

Gujarat govt transfers, hands new postings to 12 IPS officers

Gandhinagar, Apr 30 (IANS) : The Gujarat government on Tuesday announced immediate transfer and appointment of several IPS and SPS officers across the state to optimise leadership within the police force. Gagandeep Gambhir, IPS, has been appointed as the Inspector General of Police (Administration) in Gandhinagar. This move involves downgrading the existing post of Additional Director General of Police to Inspector General. Raghavendra Vatsa, IPS, will now serve as the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) for Surat City. His appointment comes with the upgrading of the previously held post of Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime).



BJP, Cong candidates in Darjeeling will not be able to cast votes for themselves

Kolkata, Apr 30 (IANS) : Raju Bista and Dr. Munish Tamang, the BJP and Congress candidates respectively from Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency, one of the three in West Bengal going to polls in the second phase on Tuesday, will not be able to cast their votes for themselves. This is because neither Bista nor Tamang is a voter from Darjeeling. Both are voters from Delhi since the national capital had been their "work-

places" for years. Although born in Kalimpong, after his higher studies Tamang had spent almost his entire professional life as an academician in Delhi. Because of this, all his citizenship identity-related documents are based out of the national capital. Similarly in the case of Bista, a businessman in personal life, have all his professional set-ups based out of the national capital.



Ram temple now features in children's drawing and craft books

Ayodhya, Apr 30 (IANS) : The impact of the grand Ram Janmabhoomi temple built in Ayodhya has started reflecting in various spheres. An innovator has come up with drawing and craft books for children which will introduce them to the life, character and ideals of Lord Ram as soon as they start schooling. Sai Prasad Bekanalkar, who has come to Ayodhya from Kolhapur, Maharashtra, said that both the exercise booklets have been prepared on the theme of Ramayana.



PM Modi's rally in Goa will increase our vote count, says Pramod Sawant

Panaji, Apr 30 (IANS) : Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday said the party's vote count and lead in both the Lok Sabha seats in the state will increase after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally on April 27. BJP leaders on Tuesday took stock of the preparation for PM Modi's public meeting scheduled to be held at Sancoale in South Goa. "People are eager to attend the public meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Around 50,000 people will gather. It will have a positive impact on both Lok Sabha seats in the state. Our lead will increase after the meeting," CM

Sawant said. BJP's Goa unit president Sadanand Tanavade, speaking to reporters, said that his party would be winning in both the seats. "We will also hold a meeting of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. We are getting good responses from across the state," Tanavade said. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fielded Union Minister Shripad Naik from North Goa and industrialist Pallavi Dempo from South Goa. The coastal state will go to the polls on May 7, in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections.

People will give befitting reply to Cong: Raj CM on phone-tapping accusations against Gehlot by ex-aide

Jaipur, Apr 30 (IANS) : Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said on Tuesday that people are ready to give a befitting reply to the Congress on issues like "corruption, paper leaks and its policy of appeasement". Chief Minister Sharma made the remarks reacting to the phone-tapping accusations made by Lokesh Sharma, the ex-OSD of former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, on

Tuesday. "The public knows everything about how they played politics. I want to tell you that the public will give a reply to their policies of corruption and appeasement. Even in paper leak cases, youths will give a strong reply to Congress," the Chief Minister said, adding that "people trust our PM (Narendra) Modi, who is working to realise the dream of Viksit Bharat 2047." Addressing a press conference



on Wednesday, Lokesh Sharma, the then OSD to Gehlot, held the ex-Chief Minister responsible for the "phone-tapping incident" which created a huge uproar during the political crisis in

Rajasthan in 2020. Lokesh Sharma alleged that Gehlot himself handed him a pen drive which carried three audio clips along with a piece of paper.

BJP had no role in 2020 political crisis in Rajasthan: Gajendra Shekhawat

Jaipur, Apr 30 (IANS) : Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said on Tuesday that the BJP had no role -- direct or indirect -- to play in the political crisis in Rajasthan in 2020.

"We have said this before, and we are saying this again that the BJP had no role to play in the political crisis that faced the state in 2020," Shekhawat told the media at his residence on Tuesday. Attacking the Congress, he said the party levelled many allegations against him, and the BJP leadership to fulfil its political intentions.



Neha murder case: K'taka CM consoles family, assures 'harshest punishment' for accused

Hubballi (Karnataka), Apr 30 (IANS) : Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visited the residence of slain MCA student Neha Hiremath, who was brutally stabbed to death, on Tuesday to console her family members here. After the visit, Neha's father Niranjan Hiremath -- a municipal councillor of the Congress -- said that the Chief Minister assured him that the government will get the killer hanged soon. CM Siddaramaiah, after paying a flower tribute to the victim,

spoke to her parents and consoled them. He said that the government has established a special court to fast-track the trial in the case and the accused will get the harshest punishment for the heinous crime. "Action would be taken as per the law in such a manner that no miscreant would dare to indulge in such acts," CM Siddaramaiah told media persons after meeting the victim's family. "I don't politicise this case. Niranjan Hiremath is in grief. We have given him courage and we

will stand with him. The family will be protected," he added. Niranjan Hiremath earlier told the media that the Congress party, especially Karnataka in-charge Randeep Surjewala, had promised him that they will get the capital punishment for the accused in 90-120 days. "The party leaders have told me directly that they will get the killer hanged. He should be hanged and this is our demand," he said. "Justice will not be served to us until the killer is hanged," the victim's father said.

LS polls: Congress names Varsha Gaikwad as party nominee from Mumbai North Central seat

Mumbai, Apr 30 (IANS) : The Congress on Tuesday nominated Mumbai unit city chief Varsha E. Gaikwad as the candidate for the prestigious Mumbai North Central Lok Sabha constituency. A four-term MLA and ex-minister, Gaikwad, 49, is a prominent Dalit leader of the Congress and currently serving as the first woman president of the Mumbai unit since June 2023. In the past, her father, late Eknath Gaikwad had represented Mumbai North Central in Lok Sabha (2004), and was



also the city party head. Later, Priya Dutt was elected from here in 2009. With Varsha Gaikwad's candidature, the curtains have fallen on a clamour within the party to nominate a Muslim candidate from Mumbai North Central.

Lok Sabha election results in TN crucial for Palaniswami and AIADMK's future

Chennai, Apr 30 (IANS) : The results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu will be crucial for AIADMK General Secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS). After party coordinator and former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam (OPS) was ousted from the party along with his supporters in the July 11, 2022 meeting of the AIADMK's General Council,

the party is solely under the control of Palaniswami and his close associates. As the AIADMK snapped ties with the BJP in September 2023, it had to be content to have small parties like the DMDK, the SDPI, and the PT as its allies in these elections, while the party contested the 2019 Lok Sabha and 2021 Assembly elections in alliance with the BJP and the PMK. With the BJP and the PMK allying with the OPS faction now,

there was a general perception that the AIADMK would not be able to pose any challenge to the ruling DMK and its allies in the Lok Sabha polls. However, the party, under Palaniswami put up a spirited fight with him shouldering the entire responsibility of the election campaign, crisscrossing the entire state and delivering scathing attacks on Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and the DMK. It remains to be seen how his cam-

paign has helped his party's poll prospects. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the AIADMK won only one seat - Theni, contested by P. Ravindhranathan, the son of OPS. If the AIADMK fails to get any seats now and NDA candidate T.T.V. Dhinakaran wins the poll from the AIADMK stronghold of Theni, then, the situation would be difficult for Palaniswami. If such a situation arises, OPS, expelled interim General Secre-



tary, V.K. Sashikala, and Dhinakaran could join together and try to take over the AIADMK. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the AIADMK

received 30.56 per cent of votes and only one seat and in the 2021 Assembly elections, 33.29 per cent votes and 66 Assembly seats.

Assam : Unawareness among voters about constituency after delimitation, says Congress leader

Guwahati, Apr 30 (IANS) : Congress candidate in Guwahati Lok Sabha seat, Mira Borthakur Goswami, on Tuesday, said a significant number of voters in this Parliamentary constituency are still clueless about their polling booths after last year's delimitation exercise as the Booth Level Officers (BLO) have not done their duties properly. "I have been roaming around the constituencies



and I have noticed that many voters are still unknown about their Lok Sabha constituencies and polling booths as the delimitation exercise has changed a few things."

Tripura BJP served show-cause notice for campaigning through audio messages in silence period

Agartala, Apr 30 (IANS) : The Election Commission has served a show-cause notice to the BJP in Tripura for campaigning through audio messages on mobile phones during the silence period violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Tripura Chief Electoral Officer Puneet Agarwal also asked the ruling party late on Tuesday to immediately remove the posts made on the 'BJP Tripura' Facebook page in favour of a "particular party". The BJP has been asked to respond to the show-cause notice by Tuesday 10 a.m. The CEO in his notice said: "...it has been found that several posts (graphics and video) have been posted on the 'BJP Tripura' Facebook page in the last six hours. These posts tend to affect the campaign discourse within the silence period and are violating the above provisions of the Repre-



sentation of the People Act, 1951." "...the matter is prima facie found to violate the electoral laws. It is clear from the verified Facebook account of 'BJP Tripura' that an appeal to the people of Tripura East (ST) Parliamentary Constituency to vote in favour of a particular party has been made," the notice stated.

India, Japan review progress of Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway project

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : India and Japan on Tuesday reviewed the progress of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Railway (MAHSR) project during the 17th Joint Committee meeting held in an online format. Railways and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw co-chaired the meeting along with Masafumi Mori, Special Advisor to the Japanese Prime Minister.

From the Indian side, the meeting was also attended by top officials from the Railways and the Ministry of External Affairs as well as the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). Executives from relevant ministries and agencies, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economy, Trade and Industry, Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism as well as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) participated in the meeting from the Japanese side.



IMD issues red alert for several Odisha districts over severe heat wave conditions

Bhubaneswar, Apr 30 (IANS) : The IMD regional centre here on Tuesday issued a red alert for several districts of Odisha, warning people about severe heat wave conditions over the next two days.

The IMD predicted that the temperature would rise by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius during the next two days and that no major changes in the prevailing heat wave conditions were likely. Similarly, an orange warning has been issued for several other districts for the next couple of days.

The weather forecasting agency also forecast that severe heat wave conditions are very likely to prevail over nine districts - Gajapati, Ganjam, Balasore Mayurbhanj, Jharsuguda, Dhenkanal, Bolangir, Nuapada, and Kalahandi on April 26. Similar weather conditions will prevail in 15 districts of the state, including the above nine, on April 27. The IMD has advised people to take precautionary measures for hot weather while going outside during peak hours - between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Muslim community was used as vote bank by Cong but they remained poor: Eknath Shinde

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Maharashtra), Apr 30 (IANS) : Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde on Tuesday criticised the Congress party, saying that the Muslim community was used as a vote bank by the grand old party but the members of the minority community remained poor.

"Now, they (Congress) say we will change the Constitution because they have nothing else left. The false propaganda that the Constitution will be changed is going on. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it clear that no one will be able to change B.R. Ambedkar's Constitution as long as there is Sun and Moon," Shinde said.

Speaking at a media interaction, the Maharashtra Chief Minister said that Congress lacks authority to release the manifesto as they put the country backward for 50-60 years. "The country's fall was witnessed before 2014. There was corruption, riots, and bombings were witnessed... people have now decided to vote for 400 plus seats (to BJP-led NDA). If the country wants justice, if the country wants to become the superpower, there is no option but PM Modi," Shinde said.

On the manifesto of NCP (SP) which has proposed to set up a commission to address the problems faced by farmers and functioning without political interfer-



ence and also zero GST on agricultural and educational goods, Eknath Shinde said: "Sharad Pawar was the Union Agriculture Minister and the chief minister for four times. Why did the farmers meet their present fate? "We have paid compensation to the farmers in the last two years. The government gave away Rs 15,000 crore to the farmers hit by heavy rains and hailstorms. The Re 1 Crop insurance scheme was introduced. Ours is a government that will stand in favour of farmers," he added.

Mizoram once again grapples with African Swine Fever outbreak, 174 pigs dead

Aizawl, April 30 (IANS) : The Mizoram government has sounded a high alert after the African Swine Fever (ASF) struck again in the bordering state resulting in the deaths of as many as 174 pigs so far, officials said on Tuesday.

According to the officials of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary (AHV) Department, the outbreak of the ASF has been confirmed in three districts -- Aizawl, Champhai and Saitual. As per the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Disease in Animals Act 2009, the department has declared various villages and localities of the three districts as infected areas following the confirmation of ASF, and imposed a prohibition on the export or import of pigs from infected zones of the state and other states, besides the sale or slaughter of both healthy and sick pigs. Dead pigs must be buried with lime powder in designated areas, a department notification said. Mizoram Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister C. Lalsawivunga held a meeting with department officials to review the situation. He appealed to all concerned to adhere to the government's



guidelines and directives in the fight against ASF. The ASF first hit Mizoram in 2021 and since then, reports of the outbreak of ASF have been reported time and again. Between May 2023 and April 2024, the state witnessed the loss of thousands of pigs to the contagious disease. AHV Department officials said that the outbreak of the ASF mostly occurs when the climate begins to warm up and pre-monsoon rains commence in the state. At least 47,269 pigs and piglets have died between 2021-2023 in Mizoram due to the ASF outbreak while at least 25,182 pigs have been culled during the same period. The amount of losses incurred due to the ASF outbreak in the state has been estimated to be over Rs 132.20 crore affecting 19,017 families.



Goa grappling with unemployment & infiltration, time to bring change: Congress

Panajim Apr 30 (IANS) : Goa Congress President Amit Patkar said on Tuesday that the state is grappling with issues like unemployment and inflation and hence there is a need to bring about a change. Speaking during the launch of the party's campaign vehicles for the Lok Sabha polls, Patkar said that people who want to support the Congress can give a missed call on a given number, and the party workers will get in touch with them.

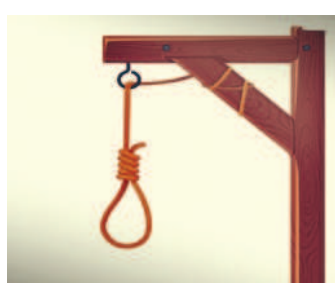
"People have decided to elect both our candidates -- Ramakant Khalap and Viriato Fernandes -- from the two LS seats in Goa," Patkar claimed. He said the campaign vehicles will move to all the Assembly constituencies to make people

aware about the 'Nyay Guarantees' announced by the Congress. Patkar said Goa is grappling with issues like unemployment and inflation and hence there is a need to bring in change. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised in 2014 that mining will resume in Goa. But the double-engine has failed in restarting mining, nor did it create jobs," Patkar said.

Leader of opposition Yuri Aema said the party is receiving good responses from across the state. "The double-engine government has failed to credit Rs 15 lakh in the savings accounts of the people. They have failed in all aspects and the people know that," Aema said.

'Kannauj seat no longer safe', Aparna Yadav warns Akhilesh

Lucknow, April 30 (IANS) : Aparna Yadav, the younger daughter-in-law of Samajwadi Party patriarch late Mulayam Singh Yadav, has said that the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat is no longer a cakewalk for the Samajwadi Party. Aparna, who is now in the BJP, said, "Akhilesh Yadav is following in his father's footsteps. Whenever Mulayam Singh believed the party needed him, he would enter the electoral fray himself." She, however, warned her brother-in-law not to take things for granted. "It won't be a cakewalk for the Samajwadi Party in Kannauj," she added. This is the first time that Aparna has openly spoken against Akhilesh Yadav. She claimed that Subrat Pathak, the sitting BJP MP from Kannauj, has done a lot of work in the constituency.



Odisha: Man gets death sentence in double murder case

Bhubaneswar, Apr 30 (IANS) : A court in Odisha's Nayagarh district on Tuesday sentenced a person to death for killing two persons including an elderly woman in Odagaon area of the district in 2019. The convict was identified as Niranjali Mallik of Kusha dhupa village in Nayagarh district. Niranjali, who was addicted to alcohol and other psychotropic substances, used to engage in violent acts against women in his village and other nearby areas, an official said.

Case filed against Tejasvi Surya for 'seeking votes on religious grounds'

Bengaluru, April 30 (IANS) : A case has been filed against Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Bengaluru South Lok Sabha constituency Tejasvi Surya for apparently seeking votes on religious grounds, an official said on Tuesday.

Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Kumar Meena said that the case was filed. "The case was filed at Jayanagar police station in Bengaluru under section 123 (3) for posting a video on X handle and soliciting votes on the ground of religion," the Karnataka CEO said. Tejasvi Surya, who is seeking re-election from Bengaluru South LS seat, had uploaded a video of 'Surya Tilak' on the forehead of Lord Shri Ram's idol on Tuesday on X.



Gurugram: 42 schools get notice for functioning without permission in Sohna

Gurugram, Apr 30 (IANS) : Despite having no affiliation from the Haryana government, many private schools in Gurugram's Sohna block are operational, which is a gross violation of educational norms. Moreover, despite restricting them from not enrolling any student from April 1, these schools have also been enrolling students for the new academic session. Taking serious note of it, Sangeeta Sanghi, Block Education Officer, Sohna, has served notices to 42 schools in Sohna block running without prior permission from the state government. The block education officer issued the notice to the school management, with a warning that necessary legal proceedings would be initiated for running a school without permission. The notice, a copy of which is available with IANS, reads: "Without permission, schools



will not continue and not admit students from the next Academic Session 2024-25. "Therefore, in compliance with the orders, you are directed in this matter that you will not continue your school and not admit students from the next Academic Session 2024-25 which is starting on 1st April failing which your school management/trust/society/Individual will be solely responsible for running the school without affiliation and this will be treated as

an offence as provided under Rule-191 A of Haryana School Education Rule, 2003. This notice must be taken into account for strict compliance with the orders." Meanwhile, the District Education Officer has directed all the Block Education Officers in the district to ensure the closure of all such schools in their area so that they cannot enroll new students. "We have served notice to at least 42 schools here in Sohna block operational without permission.

Maintain decency of language, former Chhattisgarh Deputy CM tells party mate

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : Former Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister T.S. Singh Deo has advised his Congress party mate Charan Das Mahant, the current Leader of Opposition in the state, to maintain decency of language in public discourse.

Reacting strongly to Mahant's recent controversial statement on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Deo told IANS in a candid chat that civility in political discourse is a must and should be followed by everyone, irrespective of a person's position in the party or the state.

It has been reported that Mahant, while campaigning for former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, recently made a controversial statement on PM Modi after which an FIR was also registered against the Congress leader.

"As far as I know Charan Das Mahant, he is a funny person. I don't know what he said and in what context. But, he should not have said anything about breaking PM Modi's head. Every per-



son needs to control his language," Deo told IANS. As the controversy escalated, Mahant expressed regret over his statement, saying it was misrepresented.

Deo also took on the BJP, saying there wasn't anything new in the party's manifesto.

"This has become PM Modi's manifesto and not that of the BJP's. It's all about Modi's guarantees. The party that says 'we are the largest political party in the world' has vanished somewhere. And, I am not saying this as a Congressman. But it is a dangerous sign for democracy if everything revolves around just one man," he said.

First time people of Punjab have own govt, says CM Mann in Khadoor Sahib seat campaign

Tarn Taran (Punjab), April 30 (IANS) : Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday hit out at leaders of all opposition parties as he said it was the "first time" that the people of the state had their own government.

Campaigning for the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat candidate, Laljit Singh Bhullar, in Patti in the border Tarn Taran district, he said that earlier there were only "raje" and "rajwade" who looted Punjab and amassed wealth and property, in indirect references to Amarinder Singh as the "raja" and the Badals as "rajwade". "In 2024, Punjab will become a hero... will set an example because all 13 candidates of

AAP will win and represent the state in the Parliament," he said.

Mann said traditional parties ruined "our childhood, they ruined our youth and they ruined the lives of elderly people. They are even ready to ruin the future of our children and our next generation. But we are going to vote against them. The times have changed".

Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said his decision to arrest AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal proved the BJP "is scared of AAP and Arvind Kejriwal".

"They think that by arrest-



ing Arvind Kejriwal they can stop the Aam Aadmi Party but they are mistaken. They can only arrest him, they can never arrest his thinking."

Mann said these elections are important. "We have to use our right to vote very carefully and sincerely, we are fighting to save our Constitution and our democracy."

Sexual harassment case: Delhi court dismisses ex-WFI chief's plea seeking further probe, lists hearing on framing of charges for May 7

New Delhi, Apr 30 (IANS) : A Delhi court on Tuesday dismissed an application by BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, seeking further examination of evidence concerning his whereabouts on the date -- September 7, 2022 -- of an alleged incident. Singh is accused in a sexual harassment case in which several women wrestlers accused him of indulging in inappropriate behaviour. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot of Rouse Avenue Court dismissed Singh's application. The judge also listed the matter concerning the framing of charges

against Singh for May 7. On April 18, the court deferred the hearing on framing of charges after Singh's application seeking further investigation in the case.

He had told the court that he was not in Delhi when one of the complainant wrestlers was allegedly sexually harassed. The application had argued for a detailed investigation into Singh's claims of being abroad when the incident purportedly took place.

The application had also demanded that the Delhi Police produce the Call Detail Record (CDR). Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastava, representing the Delhi Police, had opposed the application, arguing that the timing of the request was strategic and intended to prolong the

case. He had stressed the potential legal ramifications of reopening the investigation at this stage. Meanwhile, the legal counsel for the complainants had criticised the application as a tactic to delay the proceedings.

They argued that the necessary documents should have been procured earlier under Section 207 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which deals with the communication of evidence to the accused.

In February, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh had sought to be discharged in the case, citing delay in reporting the alleged offence and contradictions in the complainants' statements.

Earlier, during the proceedings, the complainants and police said



that there was ample evidence to proceed with the trial against the accused individuals. The Delhi Police had refuted the arguments of the accused that certain incidents occurred overseas and thus fell outside the jurisdiction of Delhi courts, contending that the alleged acts of sexual harassment, attributed to Singh, both abroad and in India, including Delhi, con-

stituted part of the same offence. His counsel had told the court that the incidents were said to have occurred in 2012 but were only reported to the police in 2023. In addition, he had contended discrepancies in the timing and locations of the alleged incidents, asserting no clear link between them.



Soldier dead, nine injured in accident in Sri Lanka

Colombo, April 30 (IANS) : One soldier died and nine others were injured when a lorry truck collided with an army cab in the area called Mankulam in northern Sri Lanka on Tuesday, police said. The police said the injured soldiers were rushed to a local hospital, Xinhua news agency reported.

The deceased is a 39-year-old sergeant of the Sri Lanka Army attached to the Murukkandi Army Camp in the north.

Accidents involving motor vehicles are common in Sri Lanka. There were 2,557 deaths resulting from 2,200 fatal traffic accidents in Sri Lanka in 2023.



Ex-Haryana CM Khattar addresses Vijay Sankalp rally in Gurugram

Gurugram, Apr 30 (IANS) : Former Haryana chief minister and senior BJP leader Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday addressed the Vijay Sankalp rally here to garner support for Union Minister and sitting MP Rao Inderjit Singh who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Gurugram Parliamentary constituency. A single-phase voting will be held in Haryana's 10 Lok Sabha seats, including Gurugram, on May 25 in the sixth phase of the 2024 Parliamentary polls. Addressing the Vijay Sankalp rally here which was interrupted by rain, Manohar Lal Khattar said that the rainfall during the rally was a blessing by Lord Indra for Rao Inderjit Singh's victory in the Lok Sabha elections. Speaking at the rally, the

former Haryana CM said that the BJP-led double-engine government at the Centre and in Haryana have done commendable development in the region.

He expressed confidence that the BJP will win all 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana. Khattar also urged the voters to ensure Rao Inderjeet Singh's victory by a huge margin to send him to Parliament again, and "add to the strength of Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

Speaking at the rally, Rao Inderjit Singh requested the people to vote for the BJP on May 25. The Union Minister said everyone needs to work to further strengthen the country by ensuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets a third term.



K'taka BJP to stick to its stand of cancelling reservation for Muslims, says Bommai

Hubballi, Apr 30 (IANS) : The BJP is committed to its stand of cancelling reservations for Muslims in Karnataka, former Chief Minister and BJP candidate from the Haveri Lok Sabha constituency, Basavaraj Bommai, said on Tuesday. He told reporters here that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was telling lies, that too about court proceedings. So far, the CM hasn't disclosed whether his government would cancel the reservation for Muslims or not in court. "Whatever the previous BJP government ordered, the same matter had been taken to the Supreme Court by

Ravivarma Kumar, a follower of Siddaramaiah. CM Siddaramaiah was behind this move. Subsequently, time was sought in court proceedings for which they have agreed," he said. "There is no change in our stand. It is not known whether the current state government will continue it or not. But the Congress party had opposed it long ago," Bommai said.

Bommai said Dr B.R. Ambedkar has clearly stated in the Constitution that there would be no religion based reservation. Despite that around 24 sub-sects in the Muslim community had been in 2A category of reservation. The Supreme Court didn't approve when

a similar exercise was carried out in Andhra Pradesh. But now the present Congress government had a different argument when it came to them, he stated.

Commenting on MCA student Neha Hiremath's murder on a college campus in Hubballi recently, Bommai claimed the probe into the case has gone off track.

If the state government doesn't have any intentions of protecting anyone, the case must be referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), said Bommai, who met the victim's family on Tuesday.



Gujarat: Former AAP leader Alpesh Kathiriya to join BJP

Gandhinagar, Apr 30 (IANS) : In a blow to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Alpesh Kathiriya -- the key architect behind the AAP's 27-seat win in the 2021 Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) elections in Gujarat -- is set to join the BJP on Saturday (April 27), along with his close aide Dharmik Malaviya. Kathiriya, a former ABVP member, termed his decision to join the BJP as a return to his roots within the saffron fold, marking a full circle in his political career. Kathiriya and Malaviya, who gained prominence during the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) quota agitation, have significant influence among the Saurashtra-origin and Surat-based youths of the Patidar community.

Nadal battles into fourth round in Madrid; faces Lehecka next

Madrid, Apr 30 (IANS) : Five-time champion Rafael Nadal continued his comeback from injury at the Madrid Open when he progressed to the fourth round in the Caja Magica. The Spaniard battled past Pedro Cachin 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-3 to reach the fourth round at a tour-level event for the first time since 2022. Nadal found himself ensnared in a battle of wits with Argentina's Cachin. After waltzing his way through the first set, the Mallorcan was forced to endure a marathon that surpassed the three-hour mark. However, whenever his

game abandoned him the Spaniard refused to back down. After dropping the second set, Nadal found extra whip and power off the forehand wing in the decider, while he looked physically strong to secure a hard-fought victory after three hours and four minutes. The 37-year-old is competing in his third tournament of the year, having lost in the second round in Barcelona last week. With his victory against World No. 91 Cachin, Nadal improved his clay-court record against players outside the Top 50 in the ATP Rankings to 162-1 since 2005. His only defeat in that 19-year period came against No. 73 Horacio Zeballos in Vina del Mar, according to ATP stats. Nadal's gaze will immediately shift to his next challenge. With barely a day to recover, in the last sixteen at the Caja Magica on Tuesday the Spaniard will meet Czech player Jiri Lehecka.



India to compete in Asia Rugby Men's 15s C'ship Division 1

Mumbai, April 30 (IANS) : The Indian Men's 15s Rugby team will chalk up another milestone in their journey to the Asian frontier as they will compete at the Asia Rugby Men's 15s Championship Division -1, for the first time ever. Qualifying for the Division -1 has brought the Indian team one step closer to competing on the highest level in Asia, the Asia Rugby 15s Championship. Led by seasoned campaigner Deepak Punia along with his deputy Hitesh Dagar, the men's team will go up against Sri Lanka for their first match on the April 30. On the other side, Qatar and Kazakhstan will fight for a spot in the finals, with the winner between India and Sri Lanka.

The winners of this competition stand to qualify for the Asia Rugby 15s championship to face off against higher ranked countries like Korea, Hong Kong China, and Malaysia, ranked 30, 24, and 50 on the world stage, respectively. This campaign sees 5 players making their debut. Vallabh Patil, Shakti Nag, Abhishek Shukla, Joginder, and Ajit Hansdah have shown tremendous promise and mental strength, qualities that propel them into the Indian team. Squad:

Deepak Kumar Punia (C), Hitesh Dagar (VC), Sanket Patil, Vallabh Patil, Suraj Prasad, Harvinder Singh, Javed Hussain, Shivam Shukla, Bhupendra Bokar, Mohit Khatri, Neeraj, Prince Khatri, Bharat Dagar, Mannu, Pradeep Tanwar, Joginder, Abhishek Shukla, Prabal Giri, Sukumar Hembrom, Rajdeep Saha, Shakti Nag, Asis Sabar. Ajit Hansdah, Devendra Padir, Bhupinder Singh, Suresh Kumar.



IOC promises innovation at Paris 2024 with help of AI

Geneva, April 30 (IANS) : The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has announced that the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide immersive and interactive on-site experiences with the help of AI-driven technologies. Ilario Corna, IOC's chief information technology officer said, "Our partnership with Intel has propelled us into a realm where emerging technologies, powered by artificial intelligence, are reshaping the world of sport for spectators, athletes, IOC staff and Partners.

LaLiga: Lewandowski hat-trick puts Barca back to second ahead of Girona showdown

Madrid, April 30 (IANS) : A second-half hat-trick from Robert Lewandowski helped FC Barcelona come back from a goal down to beat Valencia 2-1 in the former Olympic Stadium in Montjuic. The result sees Barca move back above Girona in La Liga ahead of its game in Girona next weekend and also means that Real Madrid can't assure the La Liga title in its match at home to Cadiz next week. Barcelona opened the scoring in the 21st minute when Fermin Lopez again showed his intelligence around the penalty area when he darted in between two defenders to head home Raphinha's pinpoint cross, reports

Xinhua. Barca's lead didn't last long in a rainy Montjuic after Hugo Duro leveled five minutes later. Valencia's top scorer chased down a long ball over the top and although Marc Andre Ter Stegen got to the ball with time to spare, he tried to clip the ball over the striker's leg, only to give Duro the gift of an open goal to put the ball into. Another ball over the top saw Peter Gonzalez through on goal before being wiped out by Ronald Araujo in the Barca area, with Pepelu stepping up to put Valencia ahead from the spot. The game took another dramatic turn in the last minute of the half



when Valencia goalkeeper, Giorgi Mamardashvili's control let him down and he committed handball outside his area as Lamine Yamal looked to beat him. Referee De Burgos Bengoetxea had no option but to send Mamardashvili off, leaving

Valencia to play the second half with 10 men. Barcelona levelled three minutes into the second half when Lewandowski flicked home a near-post corner, with Valencia claiming a positional offside from Fermin.



TUC 2024: India women go down to China, finish second in Group A

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : After already being qualified for the quarterfinals, the young Indian women's team lost 0-5 to host China in their last group stage encounter on Tuesday and finished second in Group A. In the open-

ing singles, Isharani Baruah took on Olympic champion Chen Yufei and even opened up a 6-4 lead in the first game before the Chinese took control of the match and won 21-12, 21-10.

T20 WC: Markram to captain as South Africa name 15-man squad

Johannesburg, April 30 (IANS) : Aiden Markram to lead the charge as South Africa on Tuesday announced the 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 to be played in the USA and West Indies from June 1-29. This will be Markram's first World Cup assignment since being named T20I captain. The team includes experienced batters Quinton de Kock, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller and the promising Tristan Stubbs. Also, the squad features two uncapped T20I players; wicket-keeper batter Ryan Rickelton and fast bowler Otniel Baartman. Rickelton finished as the leading run-scorer of the second edition of the SA20 with 530 runs at an average of 58.88 for MI Cape Town.



T20 WC: Archer named in Buttler-led England's 15-man squad
London, April 30 (IANS) : Fast-bowler Jofra Archer has been named in the Jos Buttler-led 15-member preliminary squad that will represent defending champion.

T20 WC: Rohit to lead India's 15-man squad, Hardik vice-captain

New Delhi, April 30 (IANS) : Rohit Sharma will lead the 15-member squad that will represent India at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and USA, scheduled from June 1 to 29. All-rounder Hardik Pandya will be Rohit's deputy in the showpiece event.



TPL 2024: My personal wish is that Rinku Singh makes it to the T20 World Cup team, says KKR owner Shah Rukh Khan

Kolkata, April 30 (IANS) : As the deadline to announce the squad for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 approaches, there is a lot of interest in the team composition with experts and fans alike expressing their opinions on who they want to see on that flight to the Caribbean for the mega event starting on June 1. While the fans await eagerly for the announcement of the squad, Kolkata Knight Riders owner Shah Rukh Khan has said that on the personal front.