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# *News digest*

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# NEWS DIGEST

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ദി.	-	ദീപിക
മാ.	-	മാതൃഭൂമി
എ.	-	എക്സ്പ്രസ്
കേ.കൗ.	-	കേരളകൗമുദി
ദേ.	-	ദേശാഭിമാനി
മ.മ.	-	മലയാള മനോരമ
മാധ്യ.	-	മാധ്യമം
മം.	-	മംഗളം
ജന്മ.	-	ജന്മഭൂമി
H.	-	The Hindu
P.	-	The Pioneer
N.I.E	-	New Indian Express
I.E.	-	Indian Express
T.O.I.	-	The Times of India
F.E.	-	Financial Express
E.T.	-	Economic Times
S.	-	The Statesman
T.	-	The Telegraph

സംസ്ഥാനവാർത്തകൾ

**സർവ്വവിജ്ഞാനകോശം ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഭരണസമിതി പുനഃസംഘടിപ്പിച്ചു**

സർവ്വവിജ്ഞാനകോശം ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ടിന്റെ ഭരണസമിതി മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി ചെയർമാനും സാംസ്കാരിക മന്ത്രി വൈസ് ചെയർമാനുമായി പുനഃസംഘടിപ്പിച്ചു. സാംസ്കാരിക വകുപ്പ് സെക്രട്ടറി, ധനകാര്യ വകുപ്പ് സെക്രട്ടറി, എന്നിവർ ഔദ്യോഗികാംഗങ്ങളും ഡോ. കെ.എൻ. ഗണേശ്, കെ.കെ. കൃഷ്ണകുമാർ, എസ്. രമേശൻ, ഡോ. കെ.എസ്. രവികുമാർ, ഡോ. സി.ആർ. പ്രസാദ്, ഡോ. എം.എ. സിദ്ദിഖ്, പ്രൊഫ. ജി. രാജശേഖരൻ നായർ, പ്രൊഫ. കെ.എൻ. ഗംഗാധരൻ, ഡോ. ലേഖ നരേന്ദ്രൻ, ഡോ. കെ. പാപ്പട്ടി, ഡോ. ജിനേഷ് കുമാർ എരമം എന്നിവർ അനുദ്യോഗികാംഗങ്ങളാണ്.

(കേ.കൗ.,01/04)

**കേരളം സമ്പൂർണ്ണ വൈദ്യുതീകരണ പദ്ധതിയിലേക്ക്**

രാജ്യത്തിന് മാതൃകയായി എല്ലാവിടുകളും വൈദ്യുതീകരിച്ച സംസ്ഥാനമായി കേരളം മാറുന്നു. ഈ മാസം അവസാനവാരത്തിൽ സമ്പൂർണ്ണവൈദ്യുതീകരണം പൂർത്തിയാക്കുമെന്ന് മന്ത്രി എം എം മണി അറിയിച്ചു. 99.12 ശതമാനം വീടുകളിലും ഇതിനോടകം വൈദ്യുതി എത്തിക്കഴിഞ്ഞു. മാർച്ച് 30 വരെ 1,33,409 ഗുണഭോക്താക്കളാണ് രജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്തത്. 1.25 ലക്ഷം അപേക്ഷകർക്ക് വൈദ്യുതി എത്തിച്ചതായും മന്ത്രി വാർത്താസമ്മേളനത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞു.

(ഭേ.,01/04)

**റേഷൻ കാർഡ് വിതരണം മേയ് മാസത്തിൽ**

സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ റേഷൻ കാർഡ് വിതരണം മേയ് മാസത്തിൽ പൂർത്തിയാകുമെന്ന് ധനമന്ത്രി പി. തിലോത്തമൻ പറഞ്ഞു. റേഷൻ കാർഡ് അച്ചടി പൂർത്തിയായി വരികയാണ്. കൊല്ലം ജില്ലയിലെ അച്ചടി പൂർത്തിയായി. മുൻഗണനാ പട്ടികയെ സംബന്ധിച്ച ആക്ഷേപങ്ങൾ പരിഹരിക്കാൻ ജില്ലാ തലത്തിൽ അദാലത്ത് നടത്തുമെന്നും മന്ത്രി വാർത്താ സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞു. ഭക്ഷ്യ ഭദ്രതാ നിയമം അനുശാസിക്കുന്ന പ്രകാരം സപ്ലൈ കോ താലൂക്ക് തല ഗോഡൗണുകളിൽ നിന്ന് റേഷൻകടകളിലേയ്ക്ക് റേഷൻസാധനങ്ങൾ നേരിട്ടെത്തിക്കും. ഇതിനായി എഫ്.സി. ഐ ഗോഡൗണുകളിൽ നിന്ന് സപ്ലൈ കോ താലൂക്ക് തല ഗോഡൗണുകളിലേയ്ക്ക് ധാന്യങ്ങളെത്തിക്കും. ഇതിനായി ഗതാഗത കരാറുകാരെ കണ്ടെത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. തിരുവനന്തപുരം, പത്തനംതിട്ട, ആലപ്പുഴ, എറണാകുളം, പാലക്കാട്, കോഴിക്കോട് ജില്ലകളിലാണ് ആദ്യഘട്ടത്തിൽ വാതിൽപ്പടി വിതരണം നടത്തുക. 75 താലൂക്കുകളിലായി 90 ഗോഡൗണുകൾ ഇതിനകം തയ്യാറായിക്കഴിഞ്ഞു.

(കേ.കൗ.,02/04)

**ഗതാഗതമന്ത്രിയായി തോമസ് ചാണ്ടി സത്യപ്രതിജ്ഞ ചെയ്തു.**

പിണറായി മന്ത്രിസഭയിലെ പുതിയ ഗതാഗത മന്ത്രിയായി കട്ടനാട് എം.എൽ.എ തോമസ് ചാണ്ടി സത്യപ്രതിജ്ഞ ചെയ്ത് അധികാരമേറ്റു. രാജഭവനിൽ പ്രത്യേകം തയ്യാറാക്കിയ വേദിയിൽ നടന്ന ചടങ്ങിൽ ഗവർണ്ണർ ജസ്റ്റിസ് പി. സദാശിവം സത്യപ്രതിജ്ഞ ചൊല്ലിക്കൊടുത്തു. മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയടക്കമുള്ള പ്രമുഖർ ചടങ്ങിൽ ചടങ്ങിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു.

(മാ.,03/04)

**കേരളത്തിൽ ഒന്നാം നമ്പർ 'കേരള'**

കേന്ദ്രമാനവ വിഭവശേഷി മന്ത്രാലയത്തിന്റെ റാങ്കിംഗിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ സർവകലാശാലകളിൽ ഒന്നാം റാങ്ക് കേരള സർവകലാശാലയ്ക്ക്. ഗവർണ്ണർ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയ അഞ്ച് കോടി രൂപയുടെ പ്രഥമ ചാൻസലേഴ്സ് അവാർഡ് നേടിയ അതേ മികവ് നിലനിറുത്തിയാണിത്. മെരിറ്റ് മാത്രം പരിഗണിച്ച് ഏകജാലകത്തിലൂടെ ബിരുദ-ബിരുദാനന്തര കോഴ്സുകൾക്ക് പ്രവേശനം നൽകുന്നതിനെയും, സംവരണ തത്വങ്ങൾ കർശനമായി പാലിക്കുന്നതിനെയും കേന്ദ്ര സമിതി പ്രശംസിച്ചു.

(കേ.കൗ.,04/04)

**ആവശ്യത്തിന് പണമില്ല : സംസ്ഥാനത്ത് ബാങ്കിങ് പ്രവർത്തനം താളംതെറ്റുന്നു**  
ആവശ്യത്തിന് പണമില്ലാത്തതിനാൽ സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ ബാങ്കിങ് പ്രവർത്തനം താളം തെറ്റുന്നു. പ്രധാന നഗരങ്ങളിലടക്കം ബാങ്കുകളിൽ ദൈനംദിന ഇടപാടുകൾക്കുപോലും പണം തികയുന്നില്ല. ട്രഷറികൾക്കും പോസ്റ്റ് ഓഫീസുകൾക്കും എസ്ബിഐയിൽനിന്ന് ആവശ്യമുള്ള കറൻസി ലഭ്യമാകുന്നില്ല. ആവശ്യമുള്ളതിന്റെ പകുതിയാണ് തികളാഴ്ച നൽകിയത്.ഒരാഴ്ചയായി എസ്ബിഐയിൽ കറൻസിക്കുമാത്രം രൂക്ഷമാണ്. ദൈനംദിന ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് തികയാത്തതിനാൽ എടിഎമ്മുകളിലും ബാങ്കുകൾ പണം നിറയ്ക്കുന്നില്ല. സാമ്പത്തികവർഷത്തിന്റെ അവസാന ഘട്ടമായതിനാൽ ട്രഷറികളിൽനിന്ന് കൂടുതൽ പണം പിൻവലിച്ചതും പ്രതിസന്ധി രൂക്ഷമാക്കി.

(ദേശ., 04/04)

**ആദ്യമന്ത്രിസഭയുടെ വജ്രജൂബിലി ആഘോഷങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇന്ന് തുടക്കം**

കേരളത്തെ മാറ്റിമറിച്ച ആദ്യ മന്ത്രിസഭ അധികാരമേറ്റതിന്റെ വജ്രജൂബിലി ആഘോഷങ്ങൾക്ക് ബുധനാഴ്ച തുടക്കമാകും. ഇ.എം.എസിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള ആദ്യ കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് മന്ത്രിസഭ ചുമതലയേറ്റതിന്റെ ജൂബിലിയോടനുബന്ധിച്ച് വിപുലമായ പരിപാടികളാണ് സർക്കാർ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്.

(ദേശ., 05/04)

**ഐ.ടി ജീവനക്കാർക്ക് വിനോദമൊരുക്കാൻ കമ്പനികൾക്ക് സർക്കാർപിന്തുണ**

ജീവനക്കാർക്കായി വിനോദോപാധികളൊരുക്കുന്നതിന് ഐ.ടി കമ്പനികൾക്ക് പിന്തുണ നൽകാൻ സർക്കാർപദ്ധതി. ഐ.ടി പാർക്കുകൾ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചാണ് ഇത് ആസൂത്രണംചെയ്യുന്നതെന്ന് ഐ.ടി പാർക്കുകളുടെ സി.ഇ.ഒ ജുഷികേഷ് നായർ പറഞ്ഞു. ഐ.ടി നയത്തിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കൊച്ചി ഇൻഫോപാർക്കിൽ വിവിധ കമ്പനികളുടെ മേധാവികളുമായുള്ള യോഗത്തിൽ സംസാരിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം.

(ദേശ., 05/04)

**വൈക്കം വിജയലക്ഷ്മിക്ക് ഡോക്ടറേറ്റ്**

ഗായിക വൈക്കം വിജയലക്ഷ്മിയെ യു.കെ. വേൾഡ് റെക്കാഡ് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി ഡോക്ടറേറ്റ് ബിരുദം നൽകി ആദരിക്കും. തുടർച്ചയായി ആറു മണിക്കൂർ ഗായത്രി വീണ വായിച്ച് ഏഷ്യാ ബുക്ക് ഒഫ് റെക്കാർഡ്, ഇന്ത്യാ ബുക്ക് ഒഫ് റെക്കാർഡ് എന്നിവയിൽ ഇടം തേടിയതോടെയാണ് അംഗീകാരം.

(കേ.കൗ., 06/04)

**നാടിന്റെ സുന്ദരം തൊടാൻ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി ഗ്രാമസഭയിൽ**

വികസനത്തിന്റെ കതിപ്പ് സമ്മാനിക്കാൻ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി ഗ്രാമസഭയിൽ എത്തിയത് ഉത്സവമായ പകർന്നു. പതിമൂന്നാം പഞ്ചവത്സര പദ്ധതി മികച്ച രീതിയിൽ നടത്തുന്ന സംസ്ഥാനമാക്കി കേരളത്തെ മാറ്റമെന്ന് മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി പറഞ്ഞു. സാമൂഹിക നീതിയിലധിഷ്ഠിതമായ വികസനമാണ് സർക്കാർ ലക്ഷ്യം വയ്ക്കുന്നത്. ദാരിദ്ര്യമില്ലാത്ത, അഗതികളില്ലാത്ത, ഭവനരഹിതരില്ലാത്ത സംസ്ഥാനമാക്കി കേരളത്തെ മാറ്റും. ഓരോ പഞ്ചായത്തും അങ്ങനെ മാറുമ്പോൾ സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന് മൊത്തത്തിൽ മാറ്റം ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്ന് മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി പറഞ്ഞു.

(കേ.കൗ., 06/04)

**സാമൂഹ്യ സുരക്ഷാ പെൻഷൻ വിതരണം തുടങ്ങി**

സാമൂഹ്യ സുരക്ഷാ പെൻഷൻ വിതരണം തുടങ്ങി. സഹകരണ ബാങ്ക് വഴി വീടുകളിലെത്തിയുള്ള വിതരണമാണ് ഇപ്പോൾ നടക്കുന്നത്. ബാങ്ക് അക്കൗണ്ട് വഴി പെൻഷൻ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നവരുടെ അക്കൗണ്ടിലേയ്ക്ക് പത്താം തിയ്യതിയോടെ തുക നൽകും. വിഷുവിനും ഈസ്റ്ററിനും മുമ്പേ എല്ലാവർക്കും പെൻഷൻ നൽകുമെന്ന് ധനവകുപ്പ് അറിയിച്ചു. 37,02753 പേർക്കായി 1114 കോടി രൂപയാണ് പെൻഷനായി നൽകുക. ബാങ്ക് വഴി 1929119 പേർക്ക് പെൻഷൻ ലഭിക്കുമ്പോൾ 1773634 പേർക്ക് വീടുകളിലെത്തിക്കും.

(കേ.കൗ., 07/04)

**മിന്നിത്തിളങ്ങി സൂരഭി**

മികച്ച നടി, ബാലതാരം, നടനുള്ള പ്രത്യേക പരാമർശം എന്നിവയടക്കം മലയാളത്തിന് ഒമ്പത് ദേശീയ ചലച്ചിത്ര പുരസ്കാരം. 'മിന്നാമിനുങ്ങ്' എന്ന ചിത്രത്തിലെ അഭിനയത്തിന് സൂരഭി മികച്ച നടിയും ഹിന്ദി ചിത്രമായ റുസ്തയിലൂടെ അക്ഷയ് കമാർ മികച്ച നടനുമായി. പുലിമുരുകൻ, മുന്തിരിവള്ളികൾ തളിർക്കുമ്പോൾ, ജനത ഗ്യാരേജ് എന്നീ സിനിമകളിലെ അഭിനയത്തിന് മോഹൻലാലിന് ജൂറിയുടെ പ്രത്യേക പരാമർശമുണ്ട്. ദിലീഷ് പോത്തൻ സംവിധാനം ചെയ്ത 'മഹേഷിന്റെ പ്രതികാര'മാണ് മികച്ച മലയാളചിത്രം. 'കണ്ണുദൈവ'ത്തിലെ അഭിനയത്തിന് ആദിഷ് പ്രവീൺ മികച്ച ബാലതാരത്തിനുള്ള പുരസ്കാരം മറ്റു മൂന്നുപേരുമായി പങ്കിട്ടു.

(ദേശ., 08/04)

**13-ാം പദ്ധതി രൂപവത്കരണം; വാർഡ്സഭായോഗങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടക്കം**

കോർപ്പറേഷൻ 13-ാം പദ്ധതി രൂപവത്കരണത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായുള്ള വാർഡ്സഭായോഗങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടക്കമായി. ആദ്യ വാർഡ്സഭായോഗം നാലാഞ്ചിറ വാർഡിൽ മേയർ വി.കെ. പ്രശാന്ത് ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു. അടുത്ത അഞ്ച് വർഷക്കാലംകൊണ്ട് 2800 കോടി രൂപയുടെ വികസനമാണ് കോർപ്പറേഷൻ വിഭാവനം ചെയ്യുന്നതെന്നും ഇതിന് വിദഗ്ദ്ധരെ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തി ആസൂത്രണസമിതിക്ക് രൂപം നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നും മേയർ പറഞ്ഞു. ആസൂത്രണ സമിതിയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ വിപുലമായ ചർച്ചകൾ നടത്തി തയ്യാറാക്കിയ വികസന കഴ്ചപ്പാടിനെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണ് പദ്ധതികൾക്ക് രൂപം നൽകുന്നത്. അടുത്ത വാർഷികപദ്ധതിയായി 306 കോടി രൂപയുടെ പദ്ധതി ഏറ്റെടുക്കുന്നതിന് സംസ്ഥാനസർക്കാർ കോർപ്പറേഷന് തുക അനുവദിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ തുക ഉപയോഗിച്ച് ഫലപ്രദമായ പദ്ധതികൾക്ക് ക്രിയാത്മകനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ വാർഡ് സഭകളിൽ നിന്ന് ഉയരണമെന്നും ഇതോടൊപ്പം കേന്ദ്ര-സംസ്ഥാനാവിഷ്കൃത പദ്ധതികൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ളവ നടപ്പാക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ടെന്നും മേയർ പറഞ്ഞു.

(മാ., 09/04)

**ഗ്രാമങ്ങളുണർന്നു**

ഒമ്പതാം പഞ്ചവത്സരപദ്ധതിയുടെ തുടക്കത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ ജനങ്ങൾ ആസൂത്രണത്തിനായി ഒത്തുകൂടുകയുണ്ടായി. ഈ ഒത്തുചേരലാണ് പിൻക്കാലത്ത് ജനകീയാസൂത്രണമായി അറിയപ്പെട്ടത്. ഏകദേശം 30 ലക്ഷം പേരാണ് നാടിന്റെ വികസനനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളുമായി ഗ്രാമ/വാർഡുസഭകളിൽ എത്തിച്ചേർന്നത്. അവിടെ രൂപപ്പെട്ട പല പദ്ധതികളും പിൻക്കാലത്ത് യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമായി. വികസനത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ മേഖലയിലും ഉണർവും ഉയർച്ചയും ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്ന പദ്ധതികളായിരുന്നു അവയിൽ പലതും. എന്നാൽ, ഉൽപ്പാദനമേഖലയിൽ പ്രതീക്ഷിച്ചത്ര വിജയം കൈവരിക്കാനായില്ല. ഇരുപതു വർഷത്തിനുശേഷം നമ്മുടെ ഗ്രാമങ്ങളും നഗരങ്ങളും വീണ്ടും ഉണർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. ലക്ഷ്യം നവകേരള സൃഷ്ടിയാണ്. ഒമ്പതാം പഞ്ചവത്സരപദ്ധതിയിൽ ഉണ്ടായതുപോലെ വൻജനപങ്കാളിത്തം പതിമൂന്നാംപദ്ധതി രൂപീകരണത്തിലും ഉണ്ടാകും. ഗ്രാമസ്വരാജ് എന്ന സങ്കല്പം ഗാന്ധിജിയുടേതാണ്. എന്നാൽ, അത് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ ഒരിടത്തും നടപ്പാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. 73, 74 ഭരണഘടനാഭേദഗതിയോടെ ജനാധിപത്യപരമായ അധികാരവികേന്ദ്രീകരണത്തിനുള്ള പുതിയ വാതായനം തുറന്നു. ഈ സുവർണാവസരം ഫലപ്രദമായി വിനിയോഗിച്ചത് കേരളമാണ്.

(ദേ., 10/04)

**പത്താം ക്ലാസ് വരെ എല്ലാ സ്കൂളുകളിലും മലയാളം നിർബന്ധം**

അടുത്ത അദ്ധ്യയനവർഷം മുതൽ പത്താംക്ലാസ്സുവരെ സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ എല്ലാ സ്കൂളുകളിലും മലയാളം നിർബന്ധമാക്കിയുള്ള ഓർഡിനൻസിന് പ്രത്യേക മന്ത്രിസഭായോഗം അംഗീകാരം നല്കി. കഴിഞ്ഞ മന്ത്രിസഭായോഗത്തിൽ ഹയർസെക്കൻഡറിതലം വരെ മലയാളം നിർബന്ധമാക്കാനാണ് ആലോചിച്ചതെങ്കിലും പ്രായോഗിക ബുദ്ധിമുട്ട് കണക്കിലെടുത്താണ് പത്താം ക്ലാസ് വരെ മാത്രമാക്കാൻ പ്രത്യേക മന്ത്രിസഭായോഗം തീരുമാനിച്ചത്. ഗവർണ്ണർ അംഗീകാരം നൽകുന്നതോടെ നിയമം നിലവിൽ വരും. മലയാളം പഠിപ്പിക്കാത്ത സ്കൂളുകളുടെ അംഗീകാരം റദ്ദാക്കാൻ ഓർഡിനൻസിൽ വ്യവസ്ഥയുണ്ട്. സർക്കാർ, എയ്ഡഡ്, സ്വാശ്രയ, സി.ബി.എസ്.ഇ, ഐ.സി.എസ്.ഇ സ്കൂളുകൾക്കെല്ലാം നിയമം ബാധകമാണ്. നിയമലഘനം നടത്തുന്ന സി.ബി.എസ്.ഇ, ഐ.സി.എസ്.ഇ. സ്കൂളുകളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനാനുമതിയും എൻ.ഒ.സിയും റദ്ദാക്കും. നിയമത്തിലെ വ്യവസ്ഥകൾ ലംഘിച്ചാൽ പ്രധാന അധ്യാപകൻ 5000 രൂപ പിഴ നൽകണം. സ്കൂളുകളിൽ മലയാളം സംസാരിക്കുന്നത് പ്രത്യക്ഷമായോ പരോക്ഷമായോ വിലക്കാൻ പാടില്ല.

(കേ.കൗ., 11/04)

**ജില്ലാസഹകരണ ബാങ്ക് ഭരണസമിതികൾ പിരിച്ചുവിട്ടു**

കാലാവധി അവസാനിക്കാൻ ഒരു വർഷത്തിലേറെ ബാക്കിനിൽക്കെ, സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ 14 ജില്ലാ സഹകരണ ബാങ്കുകളുടെയും ഭരണസമിതി പിരിച്ചുവിട്ടു. ജില്ലാബാങ്കുകളുടെ ഭരണം അഡ്മിനിസ്ട്രേറ്ററേയോ അഡ്മിനിസ്ട്രേറ്റീവ് കമ്മിറ്റിയെയോ ഏൽപ്പിക്കാൻ സഹകരണ രജിസ്ട്രാർക്ക് അധികാരം നല്കുന്ന ഓർഡിനൻസ് ഗവർണ്ണർ അംഗീകരിച്ചു. കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസം മന്ത്രിസഭയും ഇതിന് അനുമതി നല്കിയിരുന്നു. ഒരു വർഷത്തേക്കാണ് അഡ്മിനിസ്ട്രേറ്റർ നിയമനം.

(മാ.,12/04)

**ജലസമൃദ്ധിക്കായി ഒരു പുതൂനമ്പ്: വിഷുദിനത്തിൽ തുടക്കം**

പ്രകൃതിയുടെ പച്ചപ്പ് വീണ്ടെടുക്കാൻ ജലസമൃദ്ധിയുടെ രണ്ടാം ഘട്ടമായ 'ജലസമൃദ്ധിക്കായി ഒരു പുതൂനമ്പ്' പദ്ധതിക്ക് വിഷുദിനത്തിൽ തുടക്കം. കാട്ടാക്കട മണ്ഡലത്തിലെ എല്ലാ വീട്ടിലും ഫലവൃക്ഷവിത്തുകൾ പാകി മുളപ്പിക്കുകയാണ് ലക്ഷ്യമെന്ന് ഐ.ബി. സതീഷ് എം.എൽ.എ വാർത്താസമ്മേളനത്തിൽ അറിയിച്ചു. കുടുംബശ്രീ അംഗങ്ങൾ, തൊഴിലുറപ്പ് തൊഴിലാളികൾ എന്നിവർ ഓരോ വീടുകളിലെത്തി വിത്തുകൾ പാകം. വിത്തുകൾ പരിപാലിക്കുന്നതിന് കുടുംബശ്രീ അംഗങ്ങൾ നേതൃത്വം നൽകും.

(ദേ.,13/04)

**പ്രാദേശിക വികസനം : 13-ാം പദ്ധതിക്ക് മാർഗരേഖയായി**

സംസ്ഥാനത്ത് 13-ാം പഞ്ചവത്സരപദ്ധതിയുടെ ഒരുക്കങ്ങളായി. നവകേരളത്തിനായി സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ വിഭാവനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ജനകീയാസൂത്രണം രണ്ടാംഘട്ടത്തിന്റെ നിർവ്വഹണച്ചുമതലയുടെ മുഖ്യപങ്കുവഹിക്കുന്ന തദ്ദേശസ്ഥാപനങ്ങളുടെ ആദ്യവർഷപദ്ധതിക്കുള്ള മാർഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ തദ്ദേശസ്വയംഭരണവകുപ്പ് പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചു. പഞ്ചവത്സരപദ്ധതി ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാർ നയം അംഗീകരിക്കാനാകില്ലെന്നുള്ള ഉറച്ച തീരുമാനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമാണ് പഞ്ചവത്സരപദ്ധതി നടപടികൾ. വാർഷികപദ്ധതിക്ക് മെയ് അഞ്ചിനകം ജില്ലാ ആസൂത്രണസമിതിയുടെ അംഗീകാരം വാങ്ങണമെന്നും നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചു. കേരളത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ച ഉന്നതങ്ങളിലേക്ക് എത്തിക്കുന്നതിനൊപ്പം സാമൂഹ്യനീതിയുടെയും പരിസ്ഥിതിസുരക്ഷയുടെയും മാതൃകയായി മാറ്റാനുള്ള ദൃഢനിശ്ചയത്തിന്റെ പ്രഖ്യാപനമാണ് മാർഗരേഖയിലുള്ളത്. സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിനൊപ്പം തദ്ദേശസ്ഥാപനങ്ങളുടെയും വിദഗ്ധരുടെയും സന്നദ്ധപ്രവർത്തകരുടെയുമൊക്കെ ഊർജ്ജിതപ്രവർത്തനം ഉറപ്പാക്കാനുള്ള നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളാണ് മാർഗരേഖയിലുള്ളത്.

(ദേ.,14/04)

**കെ.എസ്.ആർ.ടി.സി: ബസുകളുടെ വിവരം തത്സമയം അറിയാൻ ഓൺലൈൻ സംവിധാനം**

കെ.എസ്.ആർ.ടി.സി ബസുകളുടെ സ്ഥാനം, വേഗം എന്നിവ അറിയാൻ കഴിയുന്ന ഇൻറലിജൻസ് ട്രാക്കിങ് ആൻഡ് ഇൻഫർമേഷൻ സംവിധാനം മുഴുവൻ ബസുകളിലും സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ തീരുമാനം. ബസുകളുടെ വിവരങ്ങൾ പൂർണ്ണമായും ഓൺലൈൻ പ്ലാറ്റ്ഫോമിലേക്ക് മാറ്റുന്നതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി റെയിൽവേയുടെ മാതൃകയിലാണ് പുതിയ ക്രമീകരണം. ഇതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി കെ.എസ്.ആർ.ടി.സി ജീവനക്കാരിൽ ബി.ടെക് കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ സയൻസ്, എം.സി.എ. യോഗ്യതയുള്ളവർക്ക് പരിശീലനം നൽകാൻ നടപടി തുടങ്ങി. ഇത്തരം യോഗ്യതയുള്ള മുന്തൂറുള്ള പേർ കെ.എസ്.ആർ.ടി.സിയിൽ ഉണ്ടെന്നാണ് വിവരം. ഗ്ലോബൽ പൊസിഷനിങ് സിസ്റ്റം (ജി.പി.എസ്) സാങ്കേതികവിദ്യയുടെ സഹായത്തോടെയാണ് പുതിയ സമ്പ്രദായവും നടപ്പാക്കുന്നത്.

(മാ.,15/04)

**ഡിജിറ്റൽ പണമിടപാടുകളിൽ 23 മടങ്ങ് മുന്നേറ്റം**

കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാർ നോട്ട് അസാധുവാക്കൽ പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച നവംബറിനെ അപേക്ഷിച്ച് കഴിഞ്ഞമാസം ഡിജിറ്റൽ പണമിടപാടുകളിൽ ഉണ്ടായത് 23 ഇരട്ടി വർദ്ധന. 2,425 കോടി രൂപ മതിക്കുന്ന 65 ലക്ഷം ഇടപാടുകളാണ് കഴിഞ്ഞമാസം നടന്നത്. നവംബറിൽ 2.80 ലക്ഷം ഇടപാടുകൾ നടന്നപ്പോൾ, ആകെ മൂല്യം 101 കോടി രൂപ മാത്രമായിരുന്നുവെന്ന് നീതി ആയോഗ് അഭിപ്രായപ്പെട്ടു. ആധാർ അധിഷ്ഠിത ഇടപാടുകൾ 2.5 കോടിയിൽ നിന്ന് അഞ്ച് കോടിയായി ഉയർന്നു.

(കേ.കൗ.,16/04)

**ഇന്റർഫെയ്ഡ് ഡയലോഗ് സൗഹൃദസന്ദേശ യാത്രയ്ക്ക് മാജിക് പ്ലാനറ്റിൽ ഇന്നു തുടക്കം.**

ലോക സമാധാന സന്ദേശവുമായി ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഇന്റർഫെയ്ഡ് ഡയലോഗ് ഇന്ത്യ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുന്ന സൗഹൃദസന്ദേശ യാത്രയ്ക്ക് തിങ്കളാഴ്ച വൈകിട്ട് അഞ്ചിന് കഴക്കൂട്ടം മാജിക് പ്ലാനറ്റിൽ തുടക്കം കുറിക്കും. കേന്ദ്ര സാമൂഹ്യനീതി മന്ത്രി രാമദാസ് അത്താവാലെ ഉദ്ഘാടനംചെയ്യും. ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഇന്റർഫെയ്ഡ് ഡയലോഗ് ഇന്ത്യ ചെയർമാൻ ജസ്റ്റിസ് പി. കെ. ഷംസുദ്ദീൻ അധ്യക്ഷനാകും. ഡിസംബറിൽ ഡൽഹിയിൽ നടത്തുന്ന ലോക സമാധാന സമ്മേളനത്തിന്റെ ഔദ്യോഗിക പ്രഖ്യാപനം ഡോ. കെ ജെ യേശുദാസ് നിർവഹിക്കും. സമാധാന സന്ദേശം ലോകമാകെ വ്യാപിപ്പിക്കാനും ജനതയെ നന്മയുടെ പാതയിൽ നയിക്കാനും നാളെകൾക്ക് സഹവർത്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ കരുത്തുപകരാനുമാണ് ഇത്തരമൊരു നവ പദ്ധതിക്ക് തുടക്കമിടുന്നതെന്ന് ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഇന്റർഫെയ്ഡ് ഡയലോഗ് ഇന്ത്യ ചീഫ് കോഓർഡിനേറ്റർ വി. കെ. അബ്ദുൽ അസീസ് അറിയിച്ചു.

(ദേ.,17/04)

**എല്ലാ മെഡിക്കൽ കോളേജുകളിലും എയിംസ് മാതൃകയിൽ ട്രോമാകെയർ**

റോഡപകടത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്നവരുടെ ജീവൻ രക്ഷിക്കാൻ ന്യൂഡൽഹിയിലെ ആൾ ഇന്ത്യ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഒഫ് മെഡിക്കൽ സയൻസ് (എയിംസ്) മാതൃകയിൽ സമ്പൂർണ്ണ ട്രോമാകെയർ സംവിധാനം മെഡിക്കൽ കോളേജുകളിൽ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തുമെന്ന് മന്ത്രി കെ.കെ. ശൈലജ പറഞ്ഞു. എയിംസിലെ ജയപ്രകാശ് നാരായണൻ അപ്പെക്സ് ട്രോമാകെയറുമായി ധാരണയിൽ എത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. കഴിഞ്ഞ മാസം 23 ന് എയിംസ് സന്ദർശിച്ച് മന്ത്രി ചർച്ച നടത്തിയിരുന്നു. സർക്കാരിന്റെ അഭ്യർത്ഥന പ്രകാരം എത്തിയ എയിംസ് ട്രോമാകെയർ സെന്റർ മെഡിക്കൽ സൂപ്രണ്ട് ഡോ. സജീവ് ബോയ്, ഡോ. തേജ് പ്രകാശ് എന്നിവർ ഇന്നലെ മന്ത്രിയുമായി കൂടിക്കാഴ്ച നടത്തി. എയിംസ് മോഡൽ നഴ്സ് ഓറിയന്റഡ് ട്രോമാകെയർ രീതി കേരളത്തിൽ നടപ്പാക്കാനും ധാരണയായി. അത്യാധുനിക നിലവാരമുള്ള ട്രോമാകെയർ സംവിധാനമായിരിക്കും ആശുപത്രികളിൽ സജ്ജീകരിക്കുക. തുടക്കത്തിൽ ഏഴ് മെഡിക്കൽ കോളേജുകളെ നോഡൽ സെന്ററുകളായി മാറ്റും. തുടർന്ന് ജില്ലാ, താലൂക്ക് ആശുപത്രികളിലെ കാഷ്വാലിറ്റികളിലേക്കും വ്യാപിപ്പിക്കും. ഇതിനായി എയിംസുമായി കരാർ ഒപ്പിടും. തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ട ഡോക്ടർമാരെയും നഴ്സുമാരെയും എയിംസിൽ അയച്ച് പരിശീലനം നൽകും. റോഡ് സുരക്ഷാ വാരാചരണത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി ഡോക്ടർമാർക്കും നഴ്സുമാർക്കുമായി ഒരു ദിവസത്തെ വർക്ക്ഷോപ്പും നടത്തും. ഇതിൽ എയിംസ് പ്രതിനിധികൾ പങ്കെടുക്കും.

(കേ.കൗ.,18/04)

**എല്ലാവർക്കും വീട് പദ്ധതി സഫലമാകുന്നു; ഫ്ളാറ്റ് നിർമ്മാണം ആദ്യ വാർഷികത്തിന്**

സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിന്റെ അഭിമാന പദ്ധതി 'ലൈഫ് മിഷൻ' സഫലമാകുന്നു. എല്ലാവർക്കും വീട് എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തിനായി കേന്ദ്ര-സംസ്ഥാന പദ്ധതികൾ സംയോജിപ്പിച്ചാണ് മിഷൻ രൂപീകരിച്ചത്. ഇതുപ്രകാരം, ഭൂമിയുള്ളവർക്ക് വീടിനുള്ള ധനസഹായം നൽകിത്തുടങ്ങി. 14 ജില്ലകളിലെയും ഭൂരിതരക്കാായി ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്ന കെട്ടിട സമുച്ചയങ്ങൾക്ക് സർക്കാരിന്റെ ആദ്യവാർഷികത്തിന് തന്നെ തറക്കല്ലിടും. പദ്ധതിയുടെ ഭാഗമായി 4000 വീടുകളുടെ നിർമ്മാണം ആരംഭിച്ചു. ഇവർക്കുള്ള ധനസഹായത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യഗഡു വിതരണം ചെയ്തു. കടുബശ്രീയാണ് നിർമ്മാണത്തിന് നേതൃത്വം കൊടുക്കുന്നത്. കേരളത്തിലെ 93 നഗരസഭകളിലായി 29000 വീടുകൾക്ക് പ്രധാനമന്ത്രി ആവാസ് യോജന അർബൻ പദ്ധതി പ്രകാരം അനുമതി കിട്ടിയിരുന്നു. ഇതിലുൾപ്പെട്ട വീടുകളുടെ നിർമ്മാണമാണ് തുടങ്ങിയത്.

(മാ.,19/04)

**എ.ടി.എമ്മുകൾ അടച്ചിട്ടാൽ ലാഭം കോടികൾ**

ഇടപാടുകാർക്ക് ഉപകാരമില്ലാത്ത, പണ വരൾച്ച നേരിടുന്ന എ.ടി.എമ്മുകൾ തൽക്കാലം അടച്ചിടാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചാൽ ബാങ്കുകൾക്ക് ലാഭം കോടികളും സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന് നേട്ടം വൈദ്യുതി പാഴ്വലവിൽനിന്നുള്ള മോചനവും. ആറ് മാസത്തിനിടെ രണ്ടാംതവണയും കടുത്ത പണക്ഷാമം നേരിടുന്ന ഭൂരിഭാഗം എ.ടി.എമ്മും അനാവശ്യമായി തുറന്നുവെച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഇവയിൽ ലൈറ്റും എ.സിയും പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കാൻ വരുന്ന വൈദ്യുതിയും അതിന് വരുന്ന തുകയും ഒഴിവാക്കാനെങ്കിലും അടച്ചിടുകയാണ് അഭികാമ്യമെന്ന് ബാങ്ക് വൃത്തങ്ങളിൽതന്നെ അഭിപ്രായമുണ്ട്. രാജ്യത്ത് 90 ശതമാനം എ.ടി.എമ്മും പണ വരൾച്ച നേരിടുന്നതായാണ് കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ സ്വതന്ത്ര ധനകാര്യ ഏജൻസികൾ നടത്തിയ പഠനം കണ്ടെത്തിയത്. ഉത്തരേന്ത്യയിൽ പ്രശ്നം രൂക്ഷമാണ്. ഡൽഹിയിലാണ് കറച്ചെങ്കിലും ഭേദം. ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യയിലും നാൾക്കനാൾ സ്ഥിതി വഷളാകുന്നുണ്ട്. നോട്ട് അസാധുവാക്കലിനുശേഷം രണ്ടാം തവണയാണ് ഇടപാടുകാർ സമാന പ്രശ്നം നേരിടുന്നത്.

(മാ.,20/04)

**ഷീല തോമസ് ഭരണപരിഷ്കാര കമ്മീഷൻ മെമ്പർ സെക്രട്ടറി**

അഡീഷണൽ ചീഫ് സെക്രട്ടറിയായി വിരമിച്ച ഷീല തോമസിനെ ഭരണ പരിഷ്കാര കമ്മീഷൻ മെമ്പർ സെക്രട്ടറിയായി നിയമിക്കാൻ ഇന്നലെ ചേർന്ന മന്ത്രി സഭായോഗത്തിൽ തീരുമാനമായി. പൊതു

ഭരണവകുപ്പ് അഡീഷണൽ ചീഫ് സെക്രട്ടറിയായിരുന്ന ഷീല തോമസ് തന്നെയാണ് കമ്മീഷൻ മെമ്പർ സെക്രട്ടറിയുടെ ചുമതലയും നിർവഹിച്ചിരുന്നത്.

(കേ.കൗ.,21/04)

**ശസ്ത്രക്രിയയില്ലാതെ വാൽവ് മാറ്റൽ ശ്രീചിത്രയിൽ വിജയം**

ശസ്ത്രക്രിയയില്ലാതെ ഹൃദയ വാൽവ് മാറ്റിവയ്ക്കുന്ന ആധുനിക ചികിത്സാ മികവ് തിരുവനന്തപുരം ശ്രീചിത്ര ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് മെഡിക്കൽ സയൻസ് ആൻഡ് ടെക്നോളജി സ്വന്തമാക്കി. നെഞ്ചും ഹൃദയവും തുറക്കാതെയും ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം നിറുത്താതെയും ഹൃദയ വാൽവ് മാറ്റിവയ്ക്കുന്ന ട്രാൻസ് കത്തീറ്റർ അയോർട്ടിക് വാൽവ് റീപ്ലേസ്മെന്റ് (ടി.എ.വി.ആർ) ആണ് വിജയകരമായി നടത്തിയത്. ഇടുപ്പിലെ രക്തക്കുഴലിൽ കൂടി വാൽവ് കടത്തി അസുഖം ബാധിച്ച വാൽവിന്റെ സ്ഥാനത്ത് ആൻജിയോഗ്രാഫിയുടെ സഹായത്തോടെ ഉറപ്പിക്കുന്നതാണ് ടി.എ.വി.ആർ. ഹൃദയം തുറന്നുള്ള ശസ്ത്രക്രിയയുടെ സങ്കീർണതകൾ ഒഴിവാക്കൽ ഇതിലൂടെ കഴിയും.

(കേ.കൗ.,21/04)

**സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ പകുതിയിലേറെ കൃഷി നശിച്ചു: കേന്ദ്രസംഘം**

കടുത്ത വരൾച്ചയിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ വൻ കൃഷിനാശമുണ്ടായെന്ന് കേന്ദ്രസംഘത്തിന്റെ വിലയിരുത്തൽ. വരൾച്ചമൂലം ചില മേഖലകളിൽ 50 ശതമാനത്തിലധികം കൃഷിനശിച്ചതായി സംഘത്തിന്റെ തലവൻ കേന്ദ്ര കൃഷിമന്ത്രാലയ ജോയിന്റ് സെക്രട്ടറി അശ്വതികുമാർ പറഞ്ഞു. ജലസ്രോതസ്സുകൾ വറ്റിവരണ്ടു. നാണ്യവിളകളും വൻതോതിൽ നശിച്ചു. ദേശീയ ദുരന്തപ്രതികരണ നിധിയിൽനിന്ന് നഷ്ടപരിഹാരം ലഭിക്കത്തക്കവിധം റിപ്പോർട്ട് സമർപ്പിക്കുമെന്ന് വരൾച്ചാദുരിതം നേരിൽ വിലയിരുത്താനെത്തിയ അദ്ദേഹം വ്യക്തമാക്കി. മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി പിണറായി വിജയനുമായി സംഘം ചർച്ചനടത്തി. കൃഷി, കടിവെള്ളം, മൃഗസംരക്ഷണം ഉൾപ്പെടെ പ്രധാനമേഖലകളിലുണ്ടായ ആഘാതം സംഘം വിലയിരുത്തി. കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾ സംസ്ഥാനത്തോട് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. നേരിട്ടുകണ്ട സ്ഥിതിയും ചേർത്ത് ഒരാഴ്ചയ്ക്കകം കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാരിന് റിപ്പോർട്ട് സമർപ്പിക്കുമെന്ന് അശ്വതികുമാർ പറഞ്ഞു. ദേശീയതലസമിതി ഇത് പരിശോധിച്ച് കേന്ദ്ര ആഭ്യന്തരമന്ത്രി ചെയർമാനും കൃഷിമന്ത്രിയും ധനമന്ത്രിയും അംഗങ്ങളുമായ ഉന്നതതല സമിതിക്ക് ശുപാർശ സമർപ്പിക്കും.

(ദേശ.,22/04)

**ഇന്ത്യയിലേക്കുള്ള പണംവരവ് 9% ഇടിഞ്ഞു**

വിദേശത്തുനിന്ന് വികസ്വരരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കുള്ള പണംവരവ് ഗണ്യമായി ഇടിയുന്നുവെന്ന് ലോകബാങ്ക് റിപ്പോർട്ട്. ഇന്ത്യയിലേക്കുള്ള പണത്തിന്റെ വരവ് 2016 ൽ മുൻവർഷത്തെ അപേക്ഷിച്ച് 8.9 ശതമാനം കുറഞ്ഞു. 42310.6 കോടി രൂപയാണ് ഇന്ത്യക്ക് ഇതുവഴി നഷ്ടമായത്. 30 വർഷത്തിനിടെയുണ്ടായ വലിയ ഇടിവാണിതെന്നും രണ്ടുവർഷമായി തുടരുന്ന ഈ കൂപ്പുകുത്തൽ 2016 ൽ വികസ്വരരാജ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് കനത്ത നഷ്ടമുണ്ടാക്കിയെന്നും ലോകബാങ്ക് വസന്തകാലസമ്മേളനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി പുറത്തിറക്കിയ 'കടിയേറ്റവും വികസനവും: സംഗ്രഹം' എന്ന റിപ്പോർട്ടിൽ പറയുന്നു. വിദേശരാജ്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്നുള്ള പണത്തിന്റെ ഒഴുക്ക് കണക്കിലെടുത്താൽ ഏറ്റവും മുകൾത്തട്ടിൽവരുന്ന ഇന്ത്യ, ഈ ഇടിവിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ ഇരയാണെന്നും റിപ്പോർട്ട് വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു. റഷ്യയിലും ഗൾഫ് സഹകരണ കൌൺസിൽ (ജിസിസി) രാജ്യങ്ങളിലും അസംസ്കൃതയെണ്ണയുടെ വിലയിടിഞ്ഞതും സാമ്പത്തികവളർച്ച കുറഞ്ഞതുമാണ് വിദേശ പണമൊഴുക്ക് കുറഞ്ഞതിന് പ്രധാന കാരണങ്ങൾ.

(ദേശ.,23/04)

**എൽപിജി ഇറക്കുമതിയിൽ ഇന്ത്യ രണ്ടാം സ്ഥാനത്ത്**

ലോകത്ത് പാചക വാതകം ഇറക്കുമതി ചെയ്യുന്ന രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെ പട്ടികയിൽ രണ്ടാം സ്ഥാനത്തായി ഇന്ത്യ.

മാർച്ചിൽ അവസാനിച്ച സാമ്പത്തിക വർഷത്തിൽ രാജ്യം 11 ദശലക്ഷം ടൺ എൽപിജിയാണ് ഇറക്കുമതി ചെയ്തത്. ഈ കാലയളവിൽ ജപ്പാന്റെ ഇറക്കുമതി 3.2 ശതമാനം കുറഞ്ഞ് 10.6 ദശലക്ഷം ടണ്ണായി. ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ എൽപിജി ഇറക്കുമതി ചെയ്യുന്നത് ചൈനയാണ്.

(മാ.,24/04)

**മാതൃഭൂമിക്ക് അച്ചടിമികവിനുള്ള അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര പുരസ്കാരം.**

പത്രസമാപനങ്ങളുടെ അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര സംഘടനയായ വാൻ ഇഫ്ര ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയ പതിനാറാം ഏഷ്യൻ മീഡിയ അവാർഡ്സിൽ അച്ചടിമികവിനുള്ള പുരസ്കാരം മാതൃഭൂമി സ്വന്തമാക്കി. മാതൃഭൂമി കൊല്ലം എഡിഷന്റെ അച്ചടിക്കാണ് വെങ്കലമെഡൽ ലഭിച്ചത്. ക്വലാലംപൂരിൽ നടന്ന പബ്ലിഷ് ഏഷ്യ സമ്മേളനത്തിലാണ് പുരസ്കാരങ്ങൾ വിതരണം ചെയ്തത്.

(മാ.,24/04)

**നിയമസഭ ഇന്നുമുതൽ; 32 ദിവസം നീളം**

ചൊവ്വാഴ്ച ആരംഭിക്കുന്ന നിയമസഭാസമ്മേളനം 32 ദിവസം നീളം. പതിനാലാം നിയമസഭയുടെ അഞ്ചാം സമ്മേളനം ബജറ്റ് പൂർണ്ണമായി പാസാക്കുന്നതിനായാണ് പ്രധാനമായി ചേരുന്നത്. ബജറ്റ് ധനാഭ്യർത്ഥനകളെ സംബന്ധിച്ച ചർച്ചയ്ക്കും വോട്ടെടുപ്പിനുമായി 13 ദിവസവും അനുദ്യോഗികാംഗങ്ങളുടെ കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ആറുദിവസവും നീക്കിവെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. കഴിഞ്ഞ സമ്മേളനത്തിന് ശേഷം സർക്കാർ പുറപ്പെടുവിച്ച നാല് ഓർഡിനൻസുകൾക്ക് പകരമുള്ള ബില്ലുകളും പാസാക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. സമ്മേളനം തുടങ്ങുന്ന ദിവസം 2017 ലെ മദ്രാസ് ഹിന്ദു മത ധർമ്മ എൻഡോവ്മെന്റുകൾ (ഭേദഗതി) ഓർഡിനൻസിന് പകരമുള്ള ബിൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുമെന്ന് സ്പീക്കർ പി ശ്രീരാമകൃഷ്ണൻ അറിയിച്ചു.

(ഭേ.,25/04)

**മധ്യവേനലവധി ക്ലാസുകൾ പാടില്ലെന്ന് ബാലാവകാശ കമ്മീഷൻ**

ഹയർസെക്കൻഡറി, വൊക്കേഷണൽ ഹയർ സെക്കൻഡറി, സി.ബി.എസ്.ഇ., ഐ.സി.എസ്.ഇ. ഉൾപ്പെടെ സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ എല്ലാ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലും മധ്യവേനലവധിക്കാലത്ത് ക്ലാസുകൾ നടത്തുന്നതിന് വിലക്ക് ഇതുസംബന്ധിച്ച ഉത്തരവ് പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കാൻ ബാലാവകാശ കമ്മീഷൻ പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസവകുപ്പ് പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ സെക്രട്ടറിക്ക് നിർദ്ദേശം നൽകി. മധ്യവേനലവധിക്കാലത്ത് ക്ലാസുകൾ നടത്തുന്ന സ്കൂളുകളിൽ ശുദ്ധജലലഭ്യത ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തണമെന്ന് കമ്മീഷൻ ഫെബ്രുവരി 25-ന് നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചിരുന്നു. കടുത്ത ചൂടും ജലക്ഷാമവും അവഗണിച്ച് കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ക്ലാസ് നടത്തുന്നതായി കമ്മീഷന് ഒട്ടേറെ പരാതികളും ലഭിച്ചു. ഇതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ് കമ്മീഷൻ കർശനനിർദ്ദേശം നൽകിയത്.

(മാ.,25/04)

**മഴക്കാലരോഗ മുൻകരുതൽ : സർക്കാർ ആശുപത്രികൾക്ക് 350 കോടിയുടെ മരുന്ന്**

മഴക്കാല രോഗങ്ങളെ നേരിടാൻ എല്ലാ ആശുപത്രികളിലും ആവശ്യത്തിന് മരുന്ന് സൂക്ഷിക്കാൻ നടപടിയായി. ആരോഗ്യമന്ത്രി കെ കെ ശൈലജയുടെ നിർദ്ദേശ പ്രകാരം മെഡിക്കൽ സർവീസസ് കോർപ്പറേഷൻ 350 കോടി രൂപയുടെ മരുന്നാണ് മഴക്കാല പകർച്ചവ്യാധി പ്രതിരോധത്തിനും ചികിത്സയ്ക്കുമായി വാങ്ങുന്നത്. 165 കോടി രൂപയുടെ മരുന്നുകൾ എത്തിച്ചു. ബാക്കി 40 ശതമാനം മരുന്നുകൾ മെയ് 10 നകം ലഭ്യമാക്കും. മെഡിക്കൽകോളേജ് ആശുപത്രികൾ മുതൽ പ്രാഥമികാരോഗ്യകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിൽവരെ കാലവർഷാരംഭത്തിനു മുമ്പേതന്നെ സൗജന്യ മരുന്ന് വിതരണത്തിന് ഇത്ര കൂടുതൽ തുക ചെലവിടുന്നത് ആദ്യമാണ്. മഴക്കാല രോഗ ചികിത്സ കൂടുതൽ കാര്യക്ഷമമാക്കാൻ സർക്കാർ വാങ്ങുന്ന മരുന്നുകളുടെ ലിസ്റ്റ്

പുനഃക്രമീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. നിലവിൽ 585 മരന്നാണ് ലിസ്റ്റിലുള്ളത്. ഇവയുടെ ഗുണനിലവാരം വിശദ പരിശോധനയ്ക്ക് വിധേയമാക്കാനാണ് കെ.എം.എസ്.സി.എൽ.-നോട് സർക്കാർ നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചത്. ആധുനിക ചികിത്സയിലെ മാറ്റങ്ങളുടെയും 2015 ലെ ലോകാരോഗ്യ സംഘടനാതീരുമാനങ്ങളുടെയും അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ കാലഹരണപ്പെട്ടതും ഗുണനിലവാരം കുറഞ്ഞതുമെന്നു കണ്ടെത്തിയ 35 മരന്നാണ് പട്ടികയിൽനിന്ന് ഒഴിവാക്കിയത്. പകരം 40 പുതിയ മരന്ന് ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തി. ഇതോടെ കെ.എം.എസ്.സി.എൽ പട്ടികയിൽ 590 മരന്നായി.

(ദേ.,26/04)

**പി.കെ.കുഞ്ഞാലിക്കുട്ടി എംഎൽഎ സ്ഥാനം രാജിവെച്ചു**

മലപ്പുറം ലോക്സഭാ ഉപതിരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിൽ വിജയിച്ച പി.കെ.കുഞ്ഞാലിക്കുട്ടി എംഎൽഎ സ്ഥാനം രാജിവെച്ചു. വേങ്ങര നിയമസഭാ മണ്ഡലത്തിലെ എംഎൽഎയായിരുന്നു കുഞ്ഞാലിക്കുട്ടി.വൈകിട്ട് നടന്ന യുഡിഎഫ് യോഗത്തിന് ശേഷമാണ് സ്പീക്കറെ കണ്ട് രാജിക്കത്ത് നൽകിയത്. മലപ്പുറം എംപിയായിരുന്ന ഇ.അഹമ്മദിന്റെ നിര്യാണത്തെ തുടർന്നാണ് മണ്ഡലത്തിൽ ഉപതിരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് നടന്നത്. 171023 വോട്ടിന്റെ ഭൂരിപക്ഷത്തിനാണ് മുസ്ലിംലീഗ് സ്ഥാനാർത്ഥിയായ പി.കെ.കുഞ്ഞാലിക്കുട്ടി എൽഡിഎഫ് സ്ഥാനാർത്ഥിയായിരുന്ന എം.ബി.ഫൈസലിനെ പരാജയപ്പെടുത്തിയത്.

(മാ.,27/04)

**സർക്കാർ വാഹനങ്ങളിൽ ബീക്കൺ ലൈറ്റ് ഒഴിവാക്കും; റജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ നമ്പർ നിർബന്ധമാക്കും**

സർക്കാർ വാഹനങ്ങളുടെ ബീക്കൺ ലൈറ്റ് ഒഴിവാക്കുന്നതിനും മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയുടെയും മന്ത്രിമാരുടെയും വാഹനങ്ങൾക്കു റജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ നമ്പർ കൂടി നിർബന്ധമാക്കാനും മന്ത്രിസഭ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. വിഐപി സംസ്കാരം അവസാനിപ്പിക്കുകയെന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ മേയ് ഒന്നു മുതൽ രാജ്യത്തെ വാഹനങ്ങളിൽ ബീക്കൺ ലൈറ്റിന് നിരോധനം ഏർപ്പെടുത്താൻ കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാർ തീരുമാനിച്ചിരുന്നു. തീരുമാനം വന്നതിനെ തുടർന്നു പല മന്ത്രിമാരും ഗവർണ്ണറും സ്വമേധയാ ബീക്കൺ ലൈറ്റ് ഒഴിവാക്കിയിരുന്നു. ഇപ്പോൾ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയുടെയും മന്ത്രിമാരുടെയും വാഹനങ്ങളിൽ മോട്ടോർ വാഹനവകുപ്പിന്റെ റജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ നമ്പർ പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കുന്നില്ല. പകരം കേരള സ്റ്റേറ്റ് 1, 2, 3 തുടങ്ങിയ നമ്പറുകൾ മാത്രമാണ് ഉള്ളത്. മന്ത്രിസഭയിലെ സ്ഥാനം അനുസരിച്ച് ഒന്നാം നമ്പർ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിക്കും രണ്ടാം നമ്പർ അടുത്ത കക്ഷി നേതാവിനും എന്ന ക്രമത്തിലാണ് അനുവദിക്കുന്നത്. പുതിയ തീരുമാനത്തോടെ മന്ത്രിവാഹനങ്ങളിൽ റജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ നമ്പർ കൂടി നിർബന്ധമാക്കും. ഗവർണ്ണറുടേത് ഒഴികെയുള്ള രാജ്ഭവൻ വാഹനങ്ങൾക്കും നേരത്തെ തന്നെ റജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ നമ്പർ നിർബന്ധമാക്കിയിരുന്നു. അതേസമയം, ആംബുലൻസ്, ഫയർഫോഴ്സ്, പൊലീസ് തുടങ്ങിയവയുടെ എമർജൻസി വാഹനങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടർന്നും ബീക്കൺ ലൈറ്റ് ഉപയോഗിക്കാം.

(മ.മ.,27/04)

**ഓർമ്മകൾ ജ്വലിച്ച് പ്രത്യേക സഭാസമ്മേളനം**

കേരളത്തെ പുതുക്കിപ്പണിത ആദ്യമന്ത്രിസഭയുടെയും ലോകം ഉറുനോക്കിയ ആദ്യനിയമസഭയുടെയും ഇരമ്പുന്ന ഓർമ്മകൾ ജ്വലിച്ചു. ചരിത്രമുറങ്ങുന്ന പഴയ നിയമസഭാമന്ദിരം ഒരിക്കൽക്കൂടി സമ്മേളനവേദിയായി. നടപടി ക്രമങ്ങളിലൊന്നും അധികമാറ്റമില്ല. സഭയിലെ ഭൂരിപക്ഷത്തിനും പുതിയ അനുഭവമായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ചിലർക്ക് ഗൃഹാതുരസ്മരണകൾ ഉണർത്തുന്നതായി സമ്മേളനം. രാജ്യത്തിന് മാതൃകയായ ഒട്ടേറെ നിയമനിർമ്മാണങ്ങൾക്ക് സാക്ഷ്യംവഹിച്ച ഈ മന്ദിരത്തിൽ വർഷത്തിൽ ഒരിക്കലേങ്കിലും സമ്മേളനം ചേരണമെന്ന് ചിലർക്ക് ആഗ്രഹം. എല്ലാ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലും മലയാളം നിർബന്ധമായി പഠിപ്പിക്കണമെന്ന് വ്യവസ്ഥചെയ്യുന്ന ബിൽ, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ വായ്പാ തിരിച്ചടവിനുള്ള 900 കോടിയുടെ സർക്കാർപദ്ധതി എന്നിവ സമ്മേളനത്തിന് തിളക്കമേറ്റി.

(ദേ.,28/04)

**വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവായ്പ : 900 കോടിയുടെ തിരിച്ചടവ് പദ്ധതി**

വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ വായ്പയെടുത്ത് തിരിച്ചടക്കാൻ കഴിയാതെ കടക്കണിയിലായ പതിനായിരക്കണക്കിന് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്കും കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്കും കൈത്താങ്ങായി സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിന്റെ വായ്പാ തിരിച്ചടവ് സഹായ പദ്ധതി. ആദ്യ മന്ത്രിസഭയുടെ വജ്ര ഭൂമിലിയുടെ ഭാഗമായി പഴയ നിയമസഭാ മന്ദിരത്തിൽ ചേർന്ന നിയമസഭാ സമ്മേളനത്തിലാണ് മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി പിണറായി വിജയൻ പദ്ധതി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചത്. വീടും വസ്തുവും ഈടുവെച്ച് കടക്കണിയിൽപ്പെട്ട, സാമ്പത്തികമായി പിന്നോക്കം നിൽക്കുന്ന കുടുംബങ്ങളെ സഹായിക്കുന്ന പദ്ധതിക്ക് 900 കോടി രൂപയുടെ ബാധ്യതയാണ് സംസ്ഥാനതല ബാങ്കേഴ്സ് സമിതി കണക്കാക്കിയത്. 500 മുതൽ 600 കോടി രൂപവരെയാണ് സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിന് ചെലവ് പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നത്. ഒമ്പതു ലക്ഷം രൂപവരെ വായ്പയെടുത്ത വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് പദ്ധതിയുടെ പ്രയോജനം ലഭിക്കുമെന്നും ചട്ടം 300 പ്രകാരം മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി സഭയിൽ വെച്ച പ്രസ്താവനയിൽ വ്യക്തമാക്കി.

(ദേശ.,28/04)

**അഴിമതി ഏറ്റവും കുറവ് ഹിമാചലിലും കേരളത്തിലും**

രാജ്യത്ത് ഏറ്റവും അഴിമതി കുറഞ്ഞ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ കേരളവും ഉൾപ്പെടുന്നതായി സെന്റർ ഫോർ മീഡിയ സ്റ്റഡീസിന്റെ പഠനം വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു. അഴിമതി ഏറ്റവും കുറവ് ഹിമാചൽ പ്രദേശിലാണ്. തൊട്ടു പിന്നിലാണ് കേരളത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥാനം. ഹിമാചലിൽ മൂന്ന് ശതമാനവും കേരളത്തിൽ നാല് ശതമാനവും ചരത്തിസ്ഗഡിൽ 13 ശതമാനവും കുടുംബങ്ങൾ അഴിമതിക്ക് ഇരയായിട്ടുണ്ട്. കഴിഞ്ഞ ഒരു വർഷത്തെ കണക്കാണിത്.

(കേ.കൗ.,29/04)

**ഷേറി സേവിംഗ്സ് പലിശ പ്രതിമാസം ലഭിക്കും**

ഷേറി, പബ്ലിക് ഷേറി സേവിംഗ്സ് ബാങ്ക് അക്കൗണ്ടുകളുടെ പലിശ പ്രതിമാസം നൽകാൻ സർക്കാർ ഉത്തരവായി. ഈമാസം 22 മുതൽ പ്രാബല്യമുണ്ടാവും. ഷേറി കോഡ് അനുസരിച്ച് സാമ്പത്തിക വർഷത്തിന്റെ അവസാനമോ അക്കൗണ്ട് അവസാനിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോഴോ ആണ് പലിശ നൽകി വന്നിരുന്നത്.

(കേ.കൗ.,29/04)

**1650 കോടിയുടെ പദ്ധതി; കലാശാലകൾ ഇനി ഹൈടെക്**

സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ സർവകലാശാലകളുടെയും ആർട്സ് ആൻഡ് സയൻസ് കോളേജുകളുടെയും മുഖഛായ മാറ്റാൻ 1650 കോടിയുടെ പദ്ധതികൾ. പഠനത്തോടൊപ്പം ഗവേഷണവും സമ്പുഷ്ടമാക്കി മികവിന്റെ കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളാകാൻ 52 കോളേജുകൾ ഒരുങ്ങുന്നു. ഇതിൽ നാല് കോളേജുകളെ ഗവേഷണത്തിന്റെ ഹബ്ബാക്കി മാറ്റും. പദ്ധതിക്ക് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവകുപ്പ് രൂപം നൽകി. അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യവികസനത്തിനൊപ്പം ലബോറട്ടറി നവീകരണവും ലൈബ്രറി വിപുലീകരണവുമാണ് പ്രധാനം. ഇതിനായി 48 കോളേജുകൾക്ക് എട്ട് കോടി രൂപവീതം നൽകും. തിരുവനന്തപുരം യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി കോളേജ്, എറണാകുളം മഹാരാജാസ് കോളേജ്, തലശ്ശേരി ബ്രണ്ണൻ കോളേജ്, പാലക്കാട് വിക്ടോറിയ കോളേജ് എന്നിവയാണ് ഗവേഷണ ഹബ്ബുകളാകുക. ഇവയ്ക്ക് 35 കോടി രൂപ വീതം ലഭിക്കും. പരമ്പരാഗത വിഷയങ്ങളിലുള്ള ഗവേഷണമല്ല ലക്ഷ്യം. നൂതനവിഷയങ്ങളിലുള്ള ഗവേഷണങ്ങൾ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കാനും അത് ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്താനും നിർദ്ദേശമുണ്ട്. ആധുനിക സംവിധാനങ്ങളോടെയാകും ലാബുകൾ പുനഃക്രമീകരിക്കുക. മിക്ക കോളേജിലും ലാബ് സൗകര്യം പരിമിതമാണ്. ലൈബ്രറികൾ ഡിജിറ്റലൈസ് ചെയ്യും. ഗവേഷണപ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള കൂടുതൽ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തും.

(ദേശ., 30/04)

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Industries grossly pollute Ganga**

Nearly 30% of the so-called Grossly Polluting Industries (GPI), along the Ganga, were not complying with norms according to a year-long survey by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). “Between December 2015 to January 2017, 302 GPIs were inspected by the CPCB of which - 141 units were found to be complying with stipulated norms, whereas 96 were found non-complying and 65 were found closed. Closure directions were issued to 45 non-complying units, show cause notices to 37 and letters to 14 non-complying units,” Minister of State for Water Resources Vijay Goel informed the Lok Sabha .

(H.,01/04)

### **Can't ban MPs from other professions: SC**

“There are doctors who became IAS officials and engineers who are diplomats,” Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar said, finding no merit in a petition to ban legislators from practising other professions, especially law. A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar, dismissed a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay despite strong arguments raised by the latter that beedi or liquor barons eventually become MPs and sit on committees to influence the destiny of their businesses. “This is a serious conflict of interest. There are politicians who sign at Parliament and come here to appear for private clients is that not conflict of interest? They get salaries as parliamentarians, why should they come as lawyers,” Mr. Upadhyay argued. The Chief Justice said he had a valid point, but the court could not frame policies.

(H.,01/04)

### **Qutub Minar turns blue on World Autism Awareness Day**

The Qutub Minar was lit in blue coloured lights to observe the ninth annual World Autism Awareness Day as a part of the international light it up blue campaign to raise awareness about the disorder. “Lighting up the minaret in blue is a symbolic representation towards inclusion for disability and a real attempt to create a shift in consciousness,” Archana Nayar, Founder, Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE), said. Recognised internationally, World Autism Awareness Day witnesses events across the globe that attempt to sensitise people towards the disorder as well as aim at increasing acceptance of autistic individuals in the mainstream society.

(H.,02/04)

### **Govt. will help reduce pendency: PM**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar that the government would make its share of “contribution” to help fulfil his “resolve” to reduce the burden on the judiciary and deal with the high number of pending cases. The Prime Minister made the pledge after observing the “pain” in Justice Khehar’s speech in which he lamented the pendency of cases in the higher and lower courts.

(H.,03/04)

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### **Defence Ministry nod to buy Barak missiles**

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) of the Defence Ministry approved the purchase of Barak surface-to-air missiles (SAM) for the Navy among other proposals estimated at Rs. 860 crore. This was the first DAC meeting after Finance Minister Arun Jaitley took additional charge as Defence Minister following the sudden exit of Manohar Parrikar to take charge as the Chief Minister of Goa after the Assembly elections.

(H.,04/04)

### **Govt. seeks opinion on changes in RTI Act**

The Centre has sought public opinion on proposed amendments to the Right to Information Act, with respect to the powers of the Central Information Commission (CIC), filing of applications, complaints and appeals. The suggestions have to be submitted to the Department of Personnel and Training by April 15. An amendment proposes that an applicant can file complaints within 135 days of filing the application under the Act, and in case of delay a request for condonation will also have to be filed. There is another provision empowering the CIC to convert a complaint into a second appeal.

(H.,04/04)

### **Nation bids adieu to Amonkar**

Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Kishori Amonkar was cremated with full state honours a day after she died. She was hailed by the music and political fraternity as an extraordinary singer whose soulful renditions will live on forever.

(H.,05/04)

### **New policy on education for special children**

The Department of Primary and Secondary Education will frame a draft policy on the education for children with special needs. This will address issues such as access to school, teaching aid, teaching methodology, and employing special teachers..

(H.,05/04)

### **Confusion reigns on CAG audit of GST data**

The crucial question about how and where auditors should get access to GST data continues to hang fire, even as hundreds of CAG auditors are being put through specialised training in anticipation of the implementation of the new tax regime from July 1. Various government officials, including ministers, have been insisting that the proposed tax regime will come into force as scheduled. The GST Network (GSTN), which is the nationwide electronic backbone of the tax regime, will go live for testing in early May.

(H.,05/04)

### **Rs. 2 lakh cash transaction cap not applicable on deposits & withdrawals: Government**

The Rs. 2 lakh cap on cash transactions will not apply to deposits in and withdrawals from banks,

the government clarified , adding that capital expenditure of more than Rs. 10,000 will not be eligible for depreciation allowance. "that no person shall receive two lakh rupees or more, (a) in aggregate from a person in a day; (b) in one transaction; or (c) in transactions relating to one event or occasion from a person, otherwise than by an account payee cheque or draft or through a bank account," a statement said.

(H.,06/04)

### **'Antibiotics linked to polyp growth'**

Long-term use of antibiotics increases the risk later in life of developing colon polyps, often a precursor of bowel cancer, researchers said. The findings, published in the journal *Gut*, boost evidence that the digestive tract's complex network of bacteria may play a key role in cancer emergence. Earlier research has linked antibiotic use to developing bowel cancer but the potential association with these abnormal growths had not been explored.

(H.,06/04)

### **India, Russia seal deal on Kudankulam Unit 1**

India has taken over full operational control of Unit 1 of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP). India signed a joint statement with Russia on the final takeover of the unit, formally marking the full transition. The agreement was signed between representatives of Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. and the ASE Group of Companies, a subsidiary of ROSATOM State Atomic Energy Corporation of Russia. With the deal, the Russian and the Indian sides have confirmed fulfilment of all warranty terms and obligations of the contractor (ASE Group of Companies) for the construction of Unit 1, Rosatom said in a statement .

(H.,07/04)

### **Kirti Chakra for Gorkha martyr**

Kirti Chakra, the second highest peacetime gallantry award, was posthumously conferred on Lance Havildar Prem Bahadur Resmi Magar of Gorkha Rifles by President Pranab Mukherjee at the defence investiture ceremony. The late Lance Havildar eliminated four terrorists during an operation in Jammu and Kashmir on June 16 last year.

(H.,07/04)

### **High Court seeks to know Central and Maharashtra government's policy on HIV positive employees**

The Bombay High Court has directed the Centre and the Maharashtra government to inform about their respective policies, if any, regarding continuation of employment of HIV positive persons. A division bench headed by Justice Anoop Mohta was hearing a petition filed by a former employee of the Navy whose service was terminated after it came to light that he was HIV positive. The petitioner, who worked as a sweeper, challenged the termination and sought direction to the Navy to at least give him pension

(I.E.,08/04)

### **PMO discusses ways to involve realty companies in PM's housing scheme**

Ways to involve private real estate developers in the government's ambitious 'Housing-for-all by 2022' programme was discussed at a meeting in the Prime Minister's Office with focus on removing the "bottlenecks". The meeting called by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra discussed how the benefits of the interest subsidy on affordable housing could reach the prospective home buyers at the earliest, sources said.

(I.E.,08/04)

### **Courts should take pragmatic view of rights of consumers: Supreme Court**

It is necessary for courts to take a "pragmatic view" of the rights of consumers in disputes concerning them since customers are at a disadvantage as compared to service providers, the Supreme Court has said. The court noted that Parliament had enacted the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and provision of limitation in the Act cannot be "strictly construed to disadvantage" a consumer in a case where service provider itself was instrumental in causing a delay in settling the claim.

(I.E.,09/04)

### **President Pranab Mukherjee makes passionate appeal to citizens to go cashless**

The Centre received a boost from President Pranab Mukherjee who passionately called on the nation to extend support to the mission of cashless India. He stated that all efforts of the Government will achieve their end only if people were to adopt them pro-actively. The President was speaking on the occasion of the 100th mega draw of lots for Lucky Grahak Yojana and Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

(I.E.,09/04)

### **AICTE all set to release model exam format**

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has set the ball rolling for the provision of a model examination format to technical education institutions to test the students' understanding of concepts and skills, as part of a slew of reforms finalised recently by the technical education regulator. "The final exams being conducted by the institutions shall test the understanding of the concepts and the skill — rather than the subject knowledge," says a recent resolution of the AICTE. "A model exam format would be prepared and shared with the institutions and the technical universities for suitable adoption. This aspect would be reviewed at the time of approval."

(H.,10/04)

### **SC junks PIL against Indus water treaty**

The Supreme Court dismissed a PIL that sought to declare the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan as illegal and unconstitutional. "This treaty is of 1960 and this treaty has held good for more than half-a-century," a bench led by Chief Justice of India J S Khehar said while dismissing the PIL filed by lawyer M L Sharma in his personal capacity. The bench, however, made it clear that the order dismissing the PIL "does not put any impairment on anybody", and that the court had only declined to entertain Sharma's petition.

(I.E.,11/04)

### **Modi presents Swachh Bharat as tribute to Gandhi**

Stating that over 1.88 lakh villages across 130 districts in the country have been declared as Open Defecation Free since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission two and half years ago, PM Narendra Modi said cleanliness was the only way to live by the principles of Mahatma Gandhi in the 21st century. Modi was speaking at 'Swachhagraha: Babu Ko Karyanjali' at the National Archives of India. The event was held to mark the 100th anniversary of the Champaran Satyagraha, the first non-violent movement led by Gandhi to protest against the British policy of forcing farmers in Bihar's Champaran district to cultivate indigo instead of food crops.

(I.E.,11/04)

### **Parliament clears landmark HIV Bill**

With Parliament passing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2017, people living with HIV and AIDS are guaranteed equal rights in medical treatment, admission to educational institutions and jobs. Terming the unanimous passage of the Bill in the Lok Sabha "historic", Health Minister J.P. Nadda said the government "stands committed to free treatment of HIV patients".

(H.,12/04)

### **SC sets aside compensatory tariff to Tata Power, Adani Power**

The Supreme Court set aside an Appellate Electricity Tribunal decision allowing power generator giants Adani Power and Tata Power to charge compensatory tariff from their consumers spread across States including Gujarat and Haryana. The tribunal, in a judgment on April 7 last year, permitted the companies to hike the tariff after Indonesia — where they source coal, to power their plants — decided in 2010 to align its coal export prices to international market prices instead of what they have been charging for the past 40 years.

(H.,12/04)

### **Global interest in PSLV soars**

The PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) space vehicle has received more than double its normal share of inquiries from prospective customers ever since it launched a record 104 satellites in a single flight in February. A world best, 101 small foreign commercial spacecraft were taken up at once in that feat, catapulting the PSLV's overall commercial tally to 180.

(H.,13/04)

### **Right to access Internet cannot be curtailed, says SC**

Citizens have the right to access the Internet to gain information, wisdom and knowledge and their right cannot be curtailed unless it encroaches into the boundary of illegality, the Supreme Court observed. Calling the Internet a "virtual world" and a "world which is invisible in a way," the Supreme Court observed that the fundamental right of expression includes "the right to be informed and the right to know and the feeling of protection of expansive connectivity" the Internet offers on the click of a button.

(H.,14/04)

### **Conduct NEET in Urdu in 2018-19: SC**

In a big relief to Urdu medium students, the Supreme Court directed the Centre and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to induct Urdu as a medium of language for NEET 2018-19. However, the court agreed with the CBSE's stand that it was too late in the day to accommodate Urdu in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test scheduled for May 2017. The Board also said that holding supplementary exams exclusively for Urdu medium students for NEET 2017 would "dilute" the sanctity of the exam.

(H.,14/04)

### **Pranab Mukherjee confers President's Standard on Armoured Corps Centre**

President and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Pranab Mukherjee conferred the prestigious President's Standard on the Armoured Corps Centre and School, urging the training institute to strive for professionalism in years ahead. The President also released a Special Day Cover during the ceremony. The presentation is acknowledgment of the meritorious service rendered by the selected units over the years. The Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S), which is known as Mecca of Black Berets and commanded by Major General Praveen Dixit, was honoured in recognition of "commendable service" rendered as a flagship mechanised warfare institution, providing world-class training to men behind the machines

(I.E.,15/04)

### **SC for equal pay to paramilitary officers**

The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to consider a plea by an association of Central police forces seeking 'equal pay for equal work' for performing duties similar to that of group 'A' services officers. "We think it apt to say that if the conferment of monetary benefit can assuage the grievance of the respondents (central police organisations officers), the Union of India may rethink the matter without disturbing its sense of discipline as it conceives.

(H.,16/04)

### **Railways told to pay relief to woman who lost legs**

The Bombay High Court has asked the Railways to take a decision on granting compensation to a woman, who lost both her legs while trying to board a moving train at the Khandala station two years ago. A division bench of Justices Abhay Oka and Anil Memon, while hearing a petition filed by the victim, Sejal Ladola, recently directed the Railways to decide on the compensation in the light of the peculiar circumstances of this case and posted the matter for final disposal. The Railways raised a technical issue and argued that the woman had an alternative remedy to approach the Railways Claims Tribunal to seek compensation.

(H.,16/04)

### **Intelligence agencies rapped over terror hits**

A parliamentary panel has rapped intelligence agencies for the terror attacks in Pathankot, Uri and a few other places saying these strikes "exposed the deficiencies" of the agencies but there was no analysis of their "failure". The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, headed by

senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram, said a year had passed since the January 2, 2016 terror attack at the IAF station in Pathankot but the probe has not been completed by the National Investigation Agency.

(H.,17/04)

### **CBI goes after shell companies**

After the Enforcement Directorate cracked down on shell companies nationwide, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has started filing cases for financial frauds involving such firms, especially for exchange of demonetised notes. The CBI filed a major case of deposits in "benami" accounts in Gujarat, where bank officials found that several account-holding companies were not doing any business, as shown on paper.

(H.,17/04)

### **Appointment of judges: SC collegium clears pending files, 90 names**

The Supreme Court collegium has cleared "every pending file" on appointments to higher judiciary. The names cleared by the collegium include lawyers and judicial officers. Sources said the collegium headed by Chief Justice of India J S Khehar held day-to-day sittings and cleared 90-odd names from among the pending names, while rejecting almost 40 per cent of the total names recommended by collegiums of various high courts, almost all of them for reasons of lack of integrity.

(I.E.,18/04)

### **Hindi may become must till Class X in CBSE schools**

Students of schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) may have to compulsorily study Hindi till Class X with recommendations of a parliamentary panel in this regard getting the President's nod. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has also been instructed to form a policy in consultation with the State governments to make the language compulsory.

(H.,19/04)

### **Centre promises election reforms**

The Union government told the Supreme Court that it had constituted a task force to frame a road map for implementation of the Law Commission's recommendations on decriminalisation of politics. A Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Navin Sinha asked the Centre to file an affidavit during the day on a PIL petition seeking debarment of convicts for life from contesting polls and stopping them from entering the judiciary and the executive. The Bench listed it for final hearing on July 10.

(H.,19/04)

### **Indian railways train toilets set for makeover**

Toilets in the trains, an abiding pain-point for the Railways and its passengers, are finally set to get

a major makeover to resemble those in premium-class airlines. Railways is ready with a prototype of new ergonomic, modular toilets for all AC as well as non-AC classes. Made of imported Korean material, the interiors of western-style toilets for AC coaches are predominantly white with soft, non-reflective LED illumination. The typical steel sink has been replaced with a modular wash-basin. The toilet seat is attached with stainless steel, anti-theft fittings. Railway engineers had also tried sensor-based touch-free taps as well, but that idea was done away with, sources said.

(I.E.,20/04)

### **From President and Prime Minister down: lal batti is off**

The Union Cabinet decided to ban the use of red beacons on all VIP vehicles, including those of the President, Vice-President and Prime Minister, from May 1. Emergency services, like ambulances and fire brigade, will be allowed to use blue beacons. "From May 1, no person in the country will be able to put a red light on their vehicles. There is no exception to this," said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, briefing mediapersons after the Cabinet meeting. "The government is of the considered opinion that beacons on vehicles are perceived as symbols of VIP culture and have no place in a democratic country," said the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways in a statement. It hailed the decision as a "historic" step towards strengthening healthy democratic values.

(I.E.,20/04)

### **PM Modi to honour bureaucrats on Civil Services Day**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will honour bureaucrats for Excellence in Public Administration on the occasion of Civil Services Day in New Delhi. Prime Minister Modi will confer the Prime Minister's awards for Excellence in Public Administration to Districts and other Central and State organisations for effective implementation of Programmes and Innovation. The awards have been instituted with a view to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts and Organizations of the Central and State governments for the welfare of common citizen.

(I.E.,21/04)

### **3 new schemes to facilitate access to justice**

Emphasising "digital inclusion for Digital India", Union Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated three welfare initiatives that would facilitate access to justice for the poor. Prasad launched the schemes, namely, 'Pro-bono (in public interest) legal services', 'Tele-law service' and 'Nyaya Mitra', which aim to connect those in need of legal aid with lawyers through use of technology. Under the 'Pro-bono legal services', lawyers can register themselves to volunteer pro-bono services for litigants who are unable to afford it. 'Tele-law service' seeks to connect litigants with lawyers through video conferencing facilities. Under Nyaya Mitra, a retired judicial officer, or an executive officer with judicial experience, will be put in charge of assisting those suffering due to judicial delays.

(I.E.,21/04)

### **Can't issue Centre directive to reclaim Kohinoor: Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court refused to issue any directive to the Centre to reclaim the Kohinoor diamond

from the United Kingdom, and maintained that diplomatic processes are not to be regulated by the courts. "How can we pass order to get it back from a different country? And then you ask us to stall an auction in England. Can a court in India pass an order for something happening in a different country? What kind of petition is this," a bench led by Chief Justice of India J S Khehar asked the counsel for the petitioner NGO that had urged the court to pass orders for retrieving the gem.

(I.E.,22/04)

### **PM Modi to officers: Decide without fear, don't promote self on social media**

Take decisions without fear, and don't use social media for self-promotion — these were the two key messages in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to bureaucrats on Friday. "If a decision is taken with honest intention, truthfulness and for the welfare of public, there is nobody in the world who can raise a finger at you. Yes, something may happen momentarily, but I am with you," said Modi, addressing the gathering of bureaucrats, mostly IAS officers, on the occasion of Civil Services Day.

(I.E.,22/04)

### **NITI Aayog offers a chance to learn: PM**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the NITI Aayog's Governing Council meeting, an opportunity to learn about the best practices of various states. At the meeting, NITI Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya will speak about the way ahead for India's rapid transformation, Mr. Modi said. There will also be a presentation on the GST. "I look forward to hearing from the State Chief Ministers on their unique developmental efforts to transform India," he added. He said the States have carried out reforms in many areas.

(H.,23/04)

### **India calls for dismantling of terror havens**

India strongly condemned Friday's attack in Afghanistan and blamed externally backed terrorists for the incident that killed at least 140 soldiers of the Afghan National Defence Forces. Indirectly pointing at Pakistan for offering support to the Afghan Taliban that carried out the attack in Mazar-e-Sharif, India called for dismantling of safe havens of terrorism. Following the attack which targeted soldiers praying in a mosque, Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences on social media even as the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) called for justice.

(H.,23/04)

### **Army to re-orient HR policy considering societal changes**

Battling rising complaints relating to service matters from its personnel, the Army has decided to reorient its human resource policy considering "rapid" societal changes. At a six-day annual commanders' conference, the top brass of the army deliberated on a broad range of issues including grievances relating to salary, promotions and anguish among some jawans over the Sahayak system, and it was decided to address them while taking a more pragmatic approach.

(T.O.I.,24/04)

**Goldman Prize for Prafulla Samantra, the activist who blocked Vedanta's Niyamgiri mine**

Social activist Prafulla Samantra was announced one of six winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, in San Francisco. The prize citation said this was for his " historic 12-year legal battle that affirmed the indigenous Dongria Kondh's land rights and protected the Niyamgiri Hills from a massive, open-pit aluminum ore mine." Mr. Samantra was one of the key leaders responsible for rallying tribes, indigenous to Odisha's Niyamgiri region, and using legal provisions to thwart mining-to-metals conglomerate, Vedanta. The company has been forced to suspend plans to mine bauxite.

(H.,24/04)

**Avoid shortcuts, ensure poor's welfare: PM Modi to Chief Ministers**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked BJP CMs to avoid "populist shortcuts" and concentrate on efficient delivery of welfare programmes that are intended to benefit the last man in the queue in keeping with his government's enhanced focus on the poor post-demonetisation. Modi's discussions with 13 BJP chief ministers and five deputy CMs saw him stress the need to avoid poorly designed schemes driven by political exigencies as this had proved to be the bane of Congress policies that spoke of the interests of the poor but failed to make a difference. The Prime Minister said that party should be ready to work at an intense pace to make a palpable difference in the lives of people and this needs implementation of schemes accorded a high priority by NDA.

(T.O.I.,25/04)

**Panel moots UID numbers for cows**

The Centre has proposed issuing "Unique Identification Number Sequences" for cows and their progeny to protect them from cattle smuggling. The plan is the brainchild of the Union Agriculture Ministry for "tamper-proof identification of cattle using polyurethane tags with a Unique Identification Number Sequence."

"The Ministry of Agriculture has devised a method of tamper-proof identification of cattle using polyurethane tags with Unique Identification Number Sequence. This may be made mandatory for all cow and its progeny throughout India for all cattle that is owned," said a government committee report filed before a Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar.

(H.,25/04)

**'India has talent to win Nobel, needs support from govt'**

Stressing on the need for more government investment in Science in India, Nobel Laureate Roger D Kornberg said that if India supports its scientists in a similar manner as that of the US and UK, the country can also win Nobel prizes. "India has more talent. What is lacking is support and it must come from the government," said Kornberg, who is in the city to attend the 5th Department of Science & Technology (DST) Internship Programme at Punjab University. "That isn't an investment that is made in order to win a Nobel, it is an investment in the future of a country."

(I.E.,26/04)

**SC seeks common law against cross-border cattle smuggling**

The Supreme Court asked the Centre to extend to the India-Bangladesh border areas the rules framed to counter cross-border cattle smuggling to Nepal. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar was informed by government counsel that the Livestock Animals Rules and Case Property Animals Maintenance Rules to prevent cattle-smuggling across the Nepal border, framed

in December 2016 on the basis of the Supreme Court's orders, were now with the Union Law Ministry prior to its notification.

(H.,26/04)

### **Lokpal Act workable in present form: SC**

Pushing for the immediacy of a Lokpal for transparency in government and public life, the Supreme Court said the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act of 2013, in its original form, is an "eminently workable piece of legislation". There is no need to keep its implementation in abeyance till the parliamentary standing committee's proposed amendments are incorporated, the court observed. In a judgment, a Bench led by Justice Ranjan Gogoi disagreed with the government's stand that appointment of Lokpal is not currently possible as there is no Leader of Opposition in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha.

(H.,27/04)

### **SC seeks law to regulate NGO funds**

The Supreme Court suggested that the government ought to frame a statutory law to regulate the flow of public money to the NGOs even as the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) recommended the registration of 159 FIRs against various NGOs for swindling government funds. A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar suggested introducing a law after perusing guidelines handed over by the government to the court, appointing NITI Aayog as the nodal agency for NGO registration.

(H.,27/04)

### **PM launches low-cost regional flights**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the lives of the middle class were being transformed, while inaugurating the first flight under the UDAN —Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik — scheme for regional connectivity. The Prime Minister inaugurated the first UDAN flight on the Shimla-Delhi route and simultaneously flagged off flights on the Kadapa-Hyderabad and Nanded-Hyderabad sectors through a video conference from Shimla.

(H.,28/04)

### **'Rising pollution levels reduce lung function among diabetics'**

Even a 10 microgram per cubic metre rise in particulate matter (PM 10) level can increase breathlessness and reduce lung function among diabetic persons. The results of the Wellcome Trust Genetic study are a startling indicator of how diabetic patients are at great risk of impaired lung function due to air pollution in Pune. This is the first time researchers aimed at investigating the long-term pulmonary effects of air pollution in Pune where the typical concentrations of PM 10 in the ambient air is above 100 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The study "Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Among Diabetic and Non-diabetics: Insulin Resistance in Diabetic Patients", is set to be published soon in the Environmental Science and Pollution Research.

(I.E.,28/04)

### **India, Sri Lanka sign energy pact**

Following the overarching Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and

Sri Lanka, both sides will collaborate in a host of energy and infrastructure projects across the island. The Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi says the MoU provides a road map that will require further discussions.

(H.,28/04)

**Cyprus, India call for decisive action against hosts of ‘violence factories’**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades strongly pitched for decisive action against states supporting, sheltering and sustaining “violence factories” in their regions. The two leaders held detailed discussions on bilateral as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. These included ways to boost trade ties and U.N. Security Council reforms. Both sides also signed four pacts, including one for air services and another on cooperation in merchant shipping.

(H.,29/04)

**Turkey seeks defence ties with India**

Looking beyond traditional military ties with Pakistan and the NATO member countries, Turkey is eager to build a defence partnership with India. A senior Turkish official said that apart from defence, Ankara wants to explore nuclear and space opportunities with India and intends to join hands with it for a more just world order.

(H.,29/04)

**Rohatgi braces to defend India at UNHRC**

India will highlight its “impartial” justice system when it sends its top law officer, Attorney-General Mukul Rohatgi, to the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Mr. Rohatgi will defend India’s case against allegations of violations in Jammu and Kashmir, torture, minority rights and recent strictures against NGOs. Mr. Rohatgi said he would convey that the treatment of 26/11 terrorist Ajmal Kasab and 1993 Mumbai blasts convict Yaqub Memon proves the Indian legal system’s “impartial” standards.

(H.,30/04)

**Law to ensure tax compliance: FM**

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the fear of consequences owing to strict and expeditious enforcement of law would ensure that as India evolved from a developing to a developed economy, it would be a highly tax compliant society. “Once we are able to make an example out of some of the offenders, the others will realise the benefits compliance,” said Mr. Jaitley at an Enforcement Day event. Advocating use of technology for detecting evasion, Mr. Jaitley said the Enforcement Directorate should expeditiously use the penalising powers to deal with any non-compliance, particularly money laundering. “Full compliance in taxation and currency laws has always been one of the features of developed states. If you go to the developed world, violations are rare. Those who violate are strictly called upon and are answerable to the law and there are very strict penal consequences,” Mr. Jaitley said.

(H.,30/04)

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## **NEWS FROM OTHER STATES**

### **ANDHRA PRADESH**

#### **Aadhaar must at paddy centres**

East Godavari District Collector H. Arun Kumar said Aadhaar was mandatory for farmers to sell their produce in the government-run paddy procurement centres. He said that it would help curtail benami transactions and import of paddy from other States. "Interlinking of the Aadhaar for paddy procurement will help the government procure paddy from genuine farmers, as the unique identification number provides information of the extent of the land holding of the farmer and the quantum of produce being sold by him." he said, while asking the officials of the Civil Supplies Department not to allow paddy purchase in the absence of an Aadhaar copy.

(H.,05/04)

#### **Andhra Pradesh: Annual 60-day ban on fishing invoked, fishermen demand high compensation**

The government has released orders for the annual 60-day ban on fishing by motorised and mechanised boats in entire east coast. The ban that begun on the midnight of April 14 reportedly has fishermen recounting their bitter experiences in regard with the payment of compensation they are entitled to. Nearly 900 fishermen are yet to receive compensation from last year, Satya Narayana, a representative of the Fishermen Association of Vizag alleged.

(I.E.,15/04)

#### **Naidu's directive on office spaces in administrative city**

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has suggested to the officials of the AP Capital Region Development Authority (AP CRDA) to ensure that the offices of various departments, from the level of heads of departments to the lower-rung staff, are located at the same place in the administrative city but in distinct blocks to avoid confusion for people visiting the Government Complex for various purposes. He has also insisted that all the major and minor roads be connected to the National and State highways.

(H.,20/04)

#### **A.P. issues notice on land for n-plant**

The Andhra Pradesh government issued a notification for land acquisition to build India's biggest nuclear power plant at Kovvada in the Ranasthalam mandal of Srikakulam district. The outgoing Collector, P. Lakshmi Narasimham, signed on the crucial notification. The hurried decision to issue the notification led to an uproar, as the government is yet to conduct the public hearing which is mandatory under the Land Acquisition Act, 2013. The Left parties alleged that the public meeting conducted as part of the Social Impact Survey is being shown as the official public hearing. The parties are surprised that the government is going ahead with the land acquisition when questions remain on the building of reactors by Toshiba-owned Westinghouse after the latter filed for bankruptcy.

(H.,21/04)

**40,000 'erroneous' payments in Aadhaar-linked subsidy disbursal**

The input subsidy that the State government paid to a farmer, Venkatamma, has been debited to one Vincent Rajkumar's account. This is one of the nearly 40,000 suspected erroneous payments in the first-ever Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) disbursal of input subsidies — given as part of drought relief — to around 18 lakh farmers in the State, this year. While the State government that opted for AEPS — billed as the best platform for fool-proof direct benefit transfer — has streamlined subsidy payments integrating it with Bhoomi platform, this may also have resulted in payments of input subsidy to wrong beneficiaries, depriving deserving farmers of their rightful subsidies in these 40,000 cases.

(H.,29/04)

**ASSAM**

**AS-TOURISM**

Union Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Rs. 98.35 crore for a Heritage Circuit in Assam under the Swadesh Darshan scheme. This amount which has been sanctioned for development of the Tezpur, Majuli and Sivasagar circuit, Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture Mahesh Sharma announced following a meeting with Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

(H.,04/04)

**AS-BRAHMAPUTRA**

A total of 871 km of the mighty Brahmaputra in Assam will be dredged with the Centre bearing its expenditure, said a senior official of the Inland Water Transport department. Survey of 300 km of the Brahmaputra has been completed so far by the State PWD department for dredging of the river, said Inland Water Transport director B. B. Dev Choudhury while participating in an All India Radio news talk show last night.

(H.,10/04)

**Draft population policy: Assam govt proposes strict two-child norm**

The government in Assam has proposed a strict two-child norm in order to tackle the population explosion faced by the state, with Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma saying no person would be eligible for government benefits and engagements, including jobs, if the proposed norm was flouted. "Persons will not be eligible to apply for government jobs, and for that matter any kind of government service including that of becoming members of the panchayat and civic bodies. Assam is facing a dangerous population explosion, and this is one of the several measures we have proposed in the draft population policy," Sarma said.

(I.E.,11/04)

**CHHATTISGARH**

**Backward district's Dream 30 grooms poor kids with quality education**

A Chhattisgarh government initiative to provide specialised and quality education in the state's Jashpur district has bore fruit. Two students, who were part of the Dream 30 initiative, are among

10 toppers in class X Chhattisgarh board exams, whose results were declared on Friday. The initiative was launched in May 2016 in the impoverished district with 67 per cent tribal population to educate meritorious children from poor families. "There is already a government programme called Sankalp which has 150 students, but that takes students after class X. We realised that it was important to give meritorious students an opportunity to build a base before that and launched Dream 30, funded by District Mineral Foundation," said Jashpur district magistrate Priyanka Shukla. "Under the scheme, 200 students applied, and 30 were selected for a residential school with specialised attention."

(I.E.,22/04)

### **25 CRPF men killed in Maoist attack**

In one of the deadliest attacks on security forces, Maoists killed 25 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel and injured seven in Sukma district of south Chhattisgarh. In retaliatory fire, 10 to 12 Maoists were shot dead. The attack took place when a team of around 100 men, belonging to the 74th battalion of the CRPF, based at the Burkapal camp on the Dornapal-Jagargunda road in south Sukma, was out to provide protection for road construction work in the area. According to the Anti-Naxal Operations unit of the Chhattisgarh police, the Maoists ambushed the CRPF team at about 12.55 p.m. near Burkapal.

(H.,25/04)

## **DELHI**

### **JNU to rename central library after Ambedkar**

The Jawaharlal Nehru University gave its nod to the renaming of the varsity's central library as B.R. Ambedkar Library following demands from the BJP's student wing ABVP.

(H.,14/04)

### **Delhi MCD election results 2017 live updates: Amit Shah credits PM Modi for BJP's success; Ajay Maken offers to step down**

The BJP retained all the three MCD corporations after registering landslide wins. The party made huge gains in North, South and East MCDs. The AAP was routed in the civic polls and failed to retain its supporters, unlike in the 2015 assembly polls. The Congress finished third but made reasonable gains in Delhi. The MCD polls were held on April 23 that saw a voter turnout of around 53.58 per cent, marginally higher than the 2012 elections.

(I.E.,26/04)

## **GUJARAT**

### **'Dry' Gujarat in a fix over SC order**

The Supreme Court's ruling to close all liquor shops within a range of 500m from national and State highways has created a peculiar situation for 'dry' Gujarat, where sale and consumption of liquor is

prohibited. Except those holding permits issued by the state health department, no one can consume liquor in the State. However, there are more than 50 licensed liquor shops, mostly in resorts and luxury hotels. These cater to permit holders and to tourists who get temporary permits.

(H.,07/04)

### **Gujarat govt transfers 45 IAS officers**

In a major bureaucratic reshuffle before the Gujarat Assembly elections, the state government transferred about 45 IAS officers, including collectors of at least a dozen districts. Prominent transfers include that of Jenu Devan, collector of Banaskantha, who has been appointed as the new managing director (Tourism), Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd; N Srivastava, who held this post has been transferred. A few days ago, Devan received Prime Minister's Award for excellence in Public Administration for the work done under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) where the irrigation potential of the district had gone up by over 85,000 hectare.

(I.E.,26/04)

## **HARYANA**

### **Haryana: Over 50 per cent of estimated wheat reaches mandis**

More than 50 per cent of the wheat estimated to be procured this year has arrived at mandis across Haryana. The procurement, which began on April 1, will continue till May 15. On the basis of inputs from the state agriculture department, officials of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs have estimated procurement of 75 lakh metric tonnes (MT) this year. Last year, it was 67.7 lakh MT. Over 40 lakh MT wheat have arrived till Monday.

(I.E.,18/04)

## **JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

### **Girls take Srinagar streets by storm**

Angry male teenagers and youth in their early twenties throwing stones on the streets of the Kashmir Valley is commonplace. But what has taken everyone by surprise is girls, some in their school uniforms and others donning hijabs, also joining the protesters, hurling rocks and venting their anger on police vehicles. Perhaps the first time they took to the streets was last week, when many of them were at the forefront of the protests. At least one of them was even seriously injured in the violence. On Monday, many protested again, bringing the commercial hub, Lal Chowk, to a standstill. The girl students belonged to the prestigious Government Women's College, M.A Road, and juniors from the nearby Kothi Bagh Higher Secondary School. They were seen raising anti-India and pro-azadi slogans.

(H.,25/04)

### **Social media sites blocked in Valley for a month, public order cited**

Moving to contain transmission of "objectionable contents to spread disaffection amongst the public at large" and "inciting them to commit various offences", the J&K government decided to block 22

social networking sites including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube across the Valley for "one month or till further orders, whichever is earlier, in the interest of maintenance of public order". The decision to block social networking sites was taken a day after Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti chaired a meeting of the Unified Command Headquarters in Srinagar. Days earlier, the government had blocked 3G and 4G services on Internet mobile.

(I.E.,27/04)

## **KARNATAKA**

### **Govt. office schedule revised to help staff cope with excessive heat**

The State government has issued an order changing the working hours of all government offices in Ballari, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur and Yadgir districts of the Kalaburagi Revenue Division and Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts coming under the Belagavi Revenue Division from 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. from Saturday to help employees cope with the extreme heat wave conditions prevailing in these districts. A press release here said that the decision was taken based on the renewed appeal made by the Regional Commissioners of Kalaburagi and Belagavi divisions and the Karnataka State Government Employees Association. This change in the working hours of government offices would be in place till May 31.

(H.,01/04)

### **Hassan district museum to get a new building**

The Hassan district museum of the State Archaeology Department, which has been housed in a rented building for 35 years, is set to get a new building in three months. The department has taken up construction of a three-storeyed building in the district library campus at a cost of ₹1 crore. Hassan district is known for Hoysala structures and many from around the world visit the place for study purpose. However, with no proper structure to house the museum, the archaeological structures have been displayed in a rented building belonging to Hassan City Municipal Council on Maharaja Park premises.

(H.,07/04)

### **Health Dept. focus now on blood cell disorders**

With 3.5% of the population in Karnataka suffering from blood cell disorders, the government is setting up a division for such disorders under the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare. The division, which will function under the National Health Mission (NHM), will monitor the screening and treatment of persons suffering from blood cell disorders, including thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia and haemophilia.

(H.,10/04)

### **Karnataka power tariff up by 8%**

The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) announced a hike of an average 8% in tariff for 2017-18, against the 25% increase the Electricity Supply Companies (Escoms) had sought. The average tariff increase is now 48 paise per unit, ranging from 15 paise to 50 paise per unit, for

all categories. The hike the Escoms had asked for was ₹1.48 per unit. The new tariffs, though announced late, will be applicable from April 1. Last year, the KERC had hiked tariffs by an average 9%, which amounted to a 48 paise average hike. The increase sought was ₹1.02 per unit.

(H.,12/04)

### **Development work launched in Dagginal**

Though the successive governments had taken steps to take up development work in backward and most backward taluks in the State based on the D.M. Nanjundappa report on regional imbalances, Dagginal village in Holalkere taluk, which is the birth place of Nanjundappa, was in pathetic condition owing to lack of basic facilities. So steps are being taken to implement various development works in the village, Minister for Social Welfare and district in-charge H. Anjaneya has said.

(H.,17/04)

### **Workshop on PoCSO Act**

The District Legal Services Authority will, in association with the district administration and others, organise a workshop on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PoCSO) Act on the Sri Hanuman temple premises at Madhanbhavi. District Principal and Sessions judge V. Shreeshananda will inaugurate the workshop. Deputy Commissioner S.B. Bommanahalli and officials from various departments will take part in the workshop being organised to create awareness among the public about the PoCSO Act, according to a release.

(H.,19/04)

### **Now, drone sprayer to help farmers**

Now, farmers in Raichur district can use drones for agriculture purpose. Normally, it is the Police Department that uses such equipment to capture aerial photographs for security purpose. The Department of Agriculture Machines and Technology of the University of Agricultural Sciences here has, after continuous research for more than a year, come out with a drone fixed with sprayer to help farmers spray pesticides on crops effectively.

(H.,21/04)

### **This year's tobacco crop size leaves growers, activists unhappy**

The Tobacco Board's decision to increase the crop size for Karnataka from last year's 95 million kg to 99 million kg during 2017-18 has left the tobacco farmers as well as the anti-tobacco activists dissatisfied. While the anti-tobacco activists are livid with the board increasing the crop size in contravention of India's commitment to WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and progressively reduce tobacco cultivation, tobacco farmers are also far from satisfied for the restrictions placed on the crop size — particularly when the international demand was high and the prices were attractive. The Indian Tobacco Association (ITA), comprising manufacturers and exporters, had submitted an indent to the board for an increased demand of 105 million kg of tobacco from Karnataka during 2017-18.

(H.,22/04)

### **Karnataka seeks ₹3,310 cr. for rabi crop loss last year**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urged the Centre to release ₹3,310 crore to Karnataka as compensation for rabi crop loss suffered last year. The State had incurred crop losses to the tune of ₹7,097 crore. Mr. Siddaramaiah, who attended the 3rd Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog in New Delhi chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said farmers have been reeling under drought for the sixth successive year, and 139 and 160 taluks had been declared drought affected in kharif and rabi seasons respectively. Noting that Karnataka believed in constructive federalism while keeping the State and nation's interest paramount, Mr. Siddaramaiah regretted that the overall grants for major schemes under centrally-sponsored schemes had been decreased up to a maximum of 50%.

(H.,24/04)

### **Naxal-hit gram panchayat shows the solar way in Udupi**

Pramod Madhwaraj, Minister of State for Fisheries, Youth Affairs and Sports, declared the Naxalite-affected Amasebail Gram Panchayat (GP) as the first fully solar GP in Udupi district. The Amasebail GP has three villages — Amasebail, Rattady and Machattu — with 1,872 houses. While 1,000 houses have been provided with four solar lamps, 497 houses have been provided with two. The remaining houses already had solar lamps thanks to previous schemes.

(H.,28/04)

## **MADHYA PRADESH**

### **EVM fault: Poll panel team for M.P.**

Hours after allegations that a voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machine linked to an EVM in Madhya Pradesh dispensed only slips with the BJP symbol, the Election Commission decided to send a team of officials to the State. It sought a report from the poll authorities in the State, where bypolls are due on April 9. Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Bhanwar Lal was appointed to supervise the Ater and Bandhavgarh Assembly bypolls.

(H.,02/04)

### **Madhya Pradesh govt, DMRC to ink pact to supply power from Rewa project**

Madhya Pradesh government will sign a power purchase agreement (PPA) with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on April 17 to supply 24 per cent of electricity generated from the Rewa ultra mega solar project to be set up in the state. "DMRC will sign the agreement with the parties concerned at a function. Under the PPA, DMRC will get 24 per cent solar power of Rewa UMSP. The rest of the power will be supplied to the state," Madhya Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Department (NRED) Principal Secretary Manu Shrivastava told PTI.

(I.E.,15/04)

**MAHARASHTRA**

**Maharashtra: Farmers who suffered real losses should get waiver, says MLA Imtiyaz Jaleel**

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) demanded that only those farmers who have suffered “real” losses should be given the benefit of farm loan waiver. “Loan waiver for farmers is necessary but only those who have suffered real losses should be given this benefit,” AIMIM MLA from Aurangabad Central Imtiyaz Jaleel said. Jaleel also supported State Bank of India (SBI) Chairman Arundhati Bhattacharya’s statement made last month that such waivers disrupt credit discipline among borrowers. “The statement made by the SBI chief is true and should be thought off during granting waiver,” said Jaleel addressing reporters in Aurangabad.

(I.E.,08/04)

**Railway loses revenue as sugar production falls in Pune**

A sharp dip in the sugar production in Pune and adjoining areas has led to a fall in the earning of Pune Division of the Indian Railways too, as the freight earning from sugar transport has fallen by 25 per cent over the last year. Due to the drought situation last year, sugar production in the state had come down to half of its average annual production — from 86 lakh tons in 2015-16 to 41 lakh tons in 2016-17.

(I.E.,11/04)

**Making change, making change-makers**

A group of Adivasis, mostly women, some with babies in their arms, sit in a small, dark room, looking at a big white screen mounted on a wall. The screen is lit by a projector. A young man, a teenager really, clicks a key on a laptop and a video begins playing. The letters on screen are in English, which most of the people in the room cannot read. The young man — his name is Ketan — relays the contents of the video to the audience in Marathi. The video is about how to pay electricity bills online. “Click on *mahadiscom.in*,” Mr. Ketan says. “You can do this if you use the internet,” he says, a little later. And then, still later, “A debit card is the same as an ATM card.” The video plays twice, but the audience still looks bemused.

(H.,16/04)

**Maratha reservations: Govt files affidavit in Bombay HC, no objection if data on record is made available to commission**

The state recently filed an affidavit before the Bombay High Court stating that the government had no objection if the data on record in the court related to the subject of reservations for Marathas was made available to the newly-constituted Maharashtra State Commission For Backward Classes for ‘assistance and further action’. Besides the main petition challenging Maratha reservations in jobs and education, two petitions had been filed recently seeking that the issue be referred to the newly-constituted commission.

(I.E.,18/04)

**Pune: Scattered efforts take steam out of measures to check falling air quality**

The need for a science-based urban Air Quality Management (AQM) programme was strongly felt way back in 2004 after Pune was found to be the fifth most polluted city in the country. Along with the National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Pune Municipal Corporation launched an Air Quality Management (AQM) Cell. Then too, the values of PM 10 and PM 2.5 had exceeded permissible limits, indicating that the particulate air pollution was of serious concern.

(I.E.,27/04)

**Maharashtra's first village of books comes up in Satara, plans now for 2nd one**

Maharashtra is all set to get its own village of books modelled on the lines of the famous Hay-On-Wye in Wales on May 4. That day, CM Devendra Fadnavis will inaugurate this book-lovers' delight in Bhilar village in Satara district which is close to both Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani. Twenty-five bungalows in this small village, which lies in nature's lap and is well-known for its strawberry farms, will each house a library with books devoted to specific themes such as novels, poetry, children's literature, women's writings, biographies and autobiographies. These houses will also provide a bed and breakfast facility for tourists. The libraries can be accessed for free. Initially, 15,000 books in Marathi would be displayed in the 25 libraries, while English and Hindi books will be made available in the next three months.

(T.O.I.,29/04)

**MANIPUR**

**Manipur not to reappoint retired govt staff**

The Manipur government has decided to dispense with services of retired employees who have been engaged in almost all State government offices, stated a directive issued by Chief Secretary O. Nabakishore to all Commissioners. Previous Congress government had engaged on contractual basis several technical and non-technical employees after superannuation as there were restrictions on fresh appointments to vacant posts due to financial crunch.

(H.,06/04)

**ODISHA**

**Patnaik returns home without red beacon**

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ordered withdrawal of red light from all VIP vehicles in the State. Mr. Patnaik also returned to his residence without the red beacon in his official vehicle. The CM's order came hours after the Central government announced its abolition on any vehicle other than ambulances, police vehicles and fire brigade vehicles from May 1.

(H.,20/04)

**PUNJAB**

**Punjab, Haryana hoteliers to move SC for review of order**

With the bulk of pubs in Chandigarh going dry after the Supreme Court banned liquor sales within 500 metres of National and State Highways, hoteliers staged a 'silent protest'. The hoteliers of the city, the capital of both Punjab and Haryana, have decided to move the Supreme Court with a plea for a review of the order. They said the ban has hit the hotel industry in Chandigarh, where the tourism industry relies on hotels and restaurants along highways.

(H.,04/04)

**Punjab wants 5 more BSF units for better security**

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh sought five additional Border Security Force (BSF) companies from the Centre to strengthen the Indo-Pak border along the State. In a meeting with Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Capt. Amarinder pointed out that the BSF deployment in the State needs to be strengthened along the lines of Jammu and Kashmir. At present, the State has one BSF battalion deployed for about 32 kilometres.

(H.,23/04)

**TAMIL NADU**

**Indira Banerjee appointed CJ of Madras High Court**

Justice Indira Banerjee, currently a judge of the Delhi High Court, has been appointed by the President as the Chief Justice of Madras High Court. Ms. Justice Banerjee would be the second woman after Justice Kanta Kumari Bhatnagar (June-November 1992) to head the chartered court. Born on September 24, 1957, Ms. Justice Banerjee enrolled as an advocate in 1985 and practised both in the original and appellate sides of the Calcutta High Court. She was appointed as permanent judge of the Calcutta High Court on February 5, 2002, and was transferred to the Delhi High Court on August 8, 2016.

(H.,01/04)

**Campaign to keep Marina Beach litter free**

The Marina Beach was a beehive of activity as personnel from the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Chennai Port Trust, along with their families, turned up with brooms and metal scoopers morning to clean the beach. The beach cleaning activity at the INS Adyar office located near the Napier Bridge was part of the golden jubilee celebration of Indian Navy. The Eastern Naval Command, Navy Office INS Adyar, has scheduled several events throughout the year starting from April 1 this year to March 31, 2018, as part of 'Swarn Varsh' celebrations.

(H.,03/04)

**'Classification of farmers irrational'**

Giving a direction to the State government to extend the farm loan waiver scheme to all farmers, a Division Bench of the Madras High Court headed by Justice S. Nagamuthu justified its decision by quoting Article 14 (right to equality before law) of the Constitution. "Article 14 is primarily a guarantee against arbitrariness in the State action. Though it permits classification, it completely prohibits class classification.

(H.,05/04)

**A ray of hope for children with cancer**

This year, the Ray of Light Foundation, which provides free medical treatment to children with cancer from less privileged families, is planning to help treat 60 children under a new project, 'Children's Cancer Cure 2017'. At an event to launch the project, founder-trustee of the Foundation, Priya Ramachandran said the foundation was started 15 years ago, and has so far treated 124 children and 85% of them are well. The children come from across the State and Andhra Pradesh, and receive specialised medical care at Kanchi Kamakoti Children's Trust Hospital. The foundation spends up to Rs. 5 lakh on each child.

(H.,19/04)

**TELANGANA**

**Sindhu named sportsperson of the year**

Rio Olympics silver medallist P.V. Sindhu was named the 'Sportsperson of the Year' and former India off-spinner N. Shivlal Yadav was given the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the award function of Telangana Sports Journalists' Association for the year 2016. Telangana Sports Minister T. Padma Rao Goud presented the 'Best Team of 2016' award to Sunrisers Hyderabad, which won the last year's IPL. Team mentor V.V.S. Laxman along with P. Kiran, head of Gemini TV of Sun Network, received it.

(H.,03/04)

**Telangana, A.P. face problem of plenty in power sector**

In three years down the line, will it be a problem of plenty for the two Telugu-speaking States with regard to the power sector? From acute shortage of power experienced post-bifurcation, both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have turned power-surplus within two years of their inception, thanks to the proactive policies of the State governments. But given their ambitious plans for capacity addition through conventional means as well as renewable sources, the two States will soon be compelled to explore options for effectively managing their surplus power failing which it could impact the finances and operations of the distribution companies as well as consumer tariffs, Prayas (Energy) Group said in its report.

(H.,09/04)

### **Growing apples in the tropics**

Apple cultivation isn't something one expects to see in the tropics. But in the hills of north Telangana, an experiment to change that is, literally, bearing fruit. In a small orchard in Dhanora village, Kerameri Mandal, Kumram Bheem Asifabad district (one of the four districts carved out of what was Adilabad) apple trees planted a year ago are fruiting. The achievement is a result of a few years of experimentation in apple genomics by scientists from the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, which produced 'low-chilling' varieties of the plant, that is, they are able to withstand hot weather.

(H.,13/04)

### **Will not beg, will fight it out, says Telangana CM**

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao asserted that his Government was committed to ensuring implementation of enhanced reservation for Muslims, Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes as it was a major step in overcoming discrimination being faced by these communities and giving them representation proportionate to their population in the State.

(H.,17/04)

### **Privilege notice on legislature secretary**

Telugu Desam Party legislator S. Venkata Veeraiah has served a notice of Privilege Motion against Legislature secretary S. Raja Sadaram for "wilfully insulting" him. In the notice submitted to Assembly Speaker S. Madhusudanachary, the TDP legislator said the TDP members were invited to the second meeting of the seventh session of the Assembly held on April 16. He said the Legislature Secretary called him and requested to attend the BAC meeting on April 15. However, on reaching the Assembly on April 15, Mr. Veeraiah said he was not allowed to attend the meeting as he was suspended for the entire session. "Mr. Raja Sadaram, knowing the facts, wilfully wanted to insult me in the meeting," he said.

(H.,19/04)

### **Chief Minister urges Centre to share wage burden of farm labour**

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao suggested that 50 per cent of wages paid by farmers to labourers for agricultural operations be met by the Central government from Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Speaking at the Chief Ministers' conference as part of the third governing council meeting of NITI Ayog, presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at New Delhi, Mr. Rao said that 50 per cent of wages to labourers be paid from MGNREGS and the balance 50 per cent by farmers who employed them in their fields. This will not only help farmers in timely agricultural operations, but ensure employment to weaker sections.

(H.,24/04)

## TRIPURA

### **Tripura forms panel to review salaries**

In a move that will benefit 1,75,073 employees and 57,688 pensioners, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar announced the formation of a pay revision committee. Former Chief Secretary G.K. Rao will head the three-member panel that will submit a report to the State government in 45 days. Employees' unions, in fact, have been demanding a pay hike for a long time citing the discrepancy in pay structures between employees of the State and Central governments. Passing a resolution in this regard, the council of ministers set four terms of reference to recommend new pay scales based on salary structures of 2009.

(H.,06/04)

## UTTAR PRADESH

### **Irrigation schemes to be taken up soon in Bundelkhand: Uma Bharti**

Irrigation schemes will soon be taken up in the parched Bundelkhand region, Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti said. Bharti, who met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow, said a Development Council will be constituted soon for the backward region. On the demand for a separate Bundelkhand state, she said a state reorganisation commission has to be first set up for it where a resolution will have to be moved. "Actually Bundelkhand falls in two states, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh people on that side are not ready for a separate state first this matter will have to be resolved," she told mediapersons.

(I.E.,08/04)

### **SC pulls up U.P. govt. on official housing**

The Supreme Court asked the Uttar Pradesh government to respond to a petition seeking contempt of court action against State authorities for failing to vacate five former chief ministers overstaying in government bungalows. A Bench led by Justice Dipak Misra sought the response from the Director of Estates of the State government within three weeks as to why the government bungalows allotted to them were not vacated in time. Uttar Pradesh-based NGO 'Lok Prahari' sought action against the authorities for acting in contempt of a Supreme Court verdict on August 1, 2016 directing them to ensure that the former chief ministers vacated the bungalows.

(H.,12/04)

### **U.P. freezes 'Samajwadi' pension**

Days after ordering a judicial probe into the Gomti River Front, the Yogi Adityanath-led government is now going after another flagship scheme launched by the previous Akhilesh Yadav government, the Samajwadi Pension Scheme. The Chief Minister has not only ordered a probe to find out if those receiving benefits under the pension scheme are eligible but also scrapped the word Samajwadi from its name.

(H.,13/04)

## UTTARAKHAND

### **Uttarakhand HC orders EVMs sealed**

While hearing a petition alleging tampering of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the Vikasnagar constituency, the Uttarakhand High Court ordered that the EVMs of the constituency be sealed. The court ordered that the EVMs pertaining to Vikasnagar be "preserved" and kept in a sealed room. "The process of sealing shall be carried out in the presence of the Judicial Magistrate, Vikasnagar," the order stated. Former Cabinet Minister and Congress leader Navprabhat had approached the High Court over alleged tampering of EVMs in the Vikasnagar constituency, from where Mr. Navprabhat had contested as the Congress candidate.

(H.,28/04)

## WEST BENGAL

### **Saving charm of old Kolkata**

A campaign to save Kolkata's architectural legacy, reflected in the city's unique and colourful neighbourhoods or 'paras,' has gone international with the launch of a website dedicated to the cause. The plea to retain the distinctive middle class abodes that are seen as crucibles of cosmopolitan modernity began with a series of articles in 2012, and came centre stage when author Amit Chaudhuri wrote to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in mid-2015. The website, [callegacies.com](http://callegacies.com), was unveiled earlier this week at Jadunath Bhavan Museum & Resource Centre, once the house of historian Jadunath Sarkar.

(H.,02/04)

### **Bengal doctors jittery over attacks**

Concerned over attacks on doctors at State-run hospitals by family members of patients, the Alternative People's Health Initiative (APHI), a forum of doctors and other health workers, came out with several suggestions to curb such attacks on them. Representatives of eight State-run hospitals are part of the APHI. The development assumes significance with the Trinamool Congress government trying to streamline practices of private hospitals in the State. On March 3, the Assembly passed the West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency) Bill, 2017, bringing the functioning of private hospitals under greater government scrutiny.

(H.,16/04)

### **Soon, underwater tunnels will connect Howrah with Kolkata**

On April 14, a day considered auspicious in many parts of the country as it marks the beginning of New Year, a gigantic Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) began cutting deep inside the bed of the Hooghly river, commencing the construction of the first underwater metro tunnel in the country. By the end of July, two tunnels running parallel will connect the twin cities of Howrah and Kolkata

located on either side of the Hooghly. The tunnels are being dug at a depth of 30 metres below the earth's surface and 13 metres below the riverbed.

(H.,23/04)

**Kolkata gasps as NO<sub>2</sub>, pollutants rise from car fumes, dust, coal fuel**

Regular complaints of wheezing, cough, cold, flu and bronchitis among residents could be blamed on the toxic air they breathe, given that Kolkata and Howrah have consistently been recording high concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the air. The increased count leads to respiratory distress and corrodes the lining of the lungs, affecting a person's immunity.

(T.O.I.,28/04)

**SAIL pins hopes on Tasra coking coal project**

Public sector behemoth Steel Authority of India Ltd. is pinning its hopes on the Tasra project in the Jharia coalfields in Dhanbad, in its bid to secure supplies for raw material that it now has to import in a major way. The country's largest steel producer (hot metal output at 19 million tonnes in (2016-17) needs about 15.5 million tonnes of clean coking coal annually. More than 80% of its requirement is imported while the rest is met from indigenous sources. Imports rise in tandem with the poor quality and unavailability of indigenous coal. The requirement is set to increase to about 20 MTPA once SAIL gets into the 23 million tonnes per annum production stage post-expansion in 2020.

(H.,30/04)

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Donald Trump signs twin executive orders targeting trade 'cheaters'**

US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order seeking a comprehensive review of the massive trade deficit totaling more than \$500 billion per annum with 16 countries, including China and India. He also signed a second order that seeks to strictly enforce anti-dumping laws. It would ensure that the US fully collects all duties imposed on foreign importers that "cheat", Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. The announcement, which comes just days ahead of Trump's first meeting with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, is widely seen as targeting China, even though US officials have insisted that it does not single out that country. "They're cheaters. From now on, those who break the rules will face the consequences and there will be very severe consequences," Trump said without naming any country.

(T.O.I.,01/04)

### **Myanmar goes to polls for by-elections, in first vote since Suu Kyi swept to power**

Myanmar goes to the polls for the first time since Aung San Suu Kyi's party swept to power a year ago, in an early indication of views on her leadership amid increased fighting with armed ethnic groups and slower economic growth. The by-elections will fill 19 vacant seats in the national and regional parliaments at a time when Suu Kyi is struggling to match the sky-high expectations that swept her National League for Democracy (NLD) to victory. In a televised address earlier this week, Suu Kyi acknowledged the public's frustration with the slow pace of reforms and development.

(I.E.,01/04)

### **Venezuela court drops bid to strip congress of power**

Venezuela's Supreme Court abandoned measures to seize power from the opposition-controlled legislature after the moves drew international condemnation and raised pressure on President Nicolas Maduro. Maduro had earlier said the court would review its controversial rulings, which prompted opposition calls for mass protest marches in the volatile country stricken by an economic and political crisis. The court said in a ruling published on its website that it was revoking a March 29 decision to take over legislative powers from the National Assembly, a move opponents had branded a "coup d'etat."

(I.E.,02/04)

### **Fungus that eats plastic may help clean environment**

Scientists have identified a soil fungus, which uses enzymes to rapidly break down plastic materials, an advance that could help deal with waste problem that threatens our environment. Humans are producing ever greater amounts of plastic — much of which ends up as garbage. Since plastic does not break down in the same way as other organic materials, it can persist in the environment over long periods of time. Now, researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences have found an unexpected solution to the growing plastic problem in the form of a soil fungus. Attempts to deal

with plastic waste through burying, recycling, incineration or other methods are variously unsustainable, costly and can result in toxic by-products, which are hazardous to human health.

(H.,03/04)

**'Israel blocking access to Gaza'**

Israel is blocking rights activists' access to and from the Gaza Strip, hampering their work, Human Rights Watch said. A new report from the rights group "documents how Israel systematically bars human rights workers from travelling into and out of Gaza, even where the Israeli security services make no security claims against them as individuals", it said in a statement.

(H.,04/04)

**Trump welcomes Sisi as part of bilateral reset**

U.S. President Donald Trump moved to reset U.S. relations with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi after the prior Obama administration's strained ties, giving him firm backing and vowing to work together to fight Islamic militants. "I just want to let everybody know in case there was any doubt that we are very much behind President Sisi. He has done a fantastic job in a very difficult situation. We are very much behind Egypt and the people of Egypt," Mr. Trump said in an Oval Office meeting with the Egyptian leader.

(H.,04/04)

**Taiwan to build eight submarines under indigenous shipbuilding project**

Taiwan plans to build eight submarines to bolster its current fleet of four ageing foreign-built vessels, a senior Taiwanese navy official said. "In our indigenous submarine project, we hope to be able to make eight submarines," Lee Tsung-hsiao, navy chief of staff, told lawmakers, confirming publicly for the first time the number of vessels being planned.

(I.E.,05/04)

**UN: 40-50 years needed to clear weapons in Iraq and Syria**

The United Nations says it will take 40 to 50 years to clear the mines, improvised explosive devices and other unexploded ordnance from Iraq and Syria. Agnes Marcaillou, director of the United Nations Mine Action Service, said "we are looking at decades of work for these countries to look like post-World War II Europe where we still find some unexploded ordnance here and there."

(I.E.,05/04)

**Drought in Kenya brings a surprise: More girls in school**

In this part of northwest Kenya, one of the worst droughts in years has left the land littered with carcasses of dead livestock – even hardy camels. Normally droughts here lead to the early marriage of girls, as pastoralist families look for dowry payments to help cushion the impact of livestock losses. But this time, something unusual is happening: Hard-hit herder families are instead selling drought-threatened livestock and using the money – along with government cash payments – to keep girls in school. "It is no longer profitable to exchange our young daughters with livestock, because when the animals die of drought, it is like we have lost the girl," Joyce Apus Ipapai, a

mother of eight from Lorengelup village, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

(I.E.,06/04)

### **Thousands of UK companies to report gender pay gap under new law**

Britain has become one of the first countries to require large firms to report pay discrepancies between male and female employees under a law that came into effect – as part of a push to promote gender equality in the workplace. The pay gap between British men and women is at a record low, the government said, with women earning 18 percent less than men in the UK in 2016.

(I.E.,06/04)

### **Fair economic ties between US-China top priority: Tillerson**

An economic relationship “that is fair on both sides” is our top priority, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said, as the Chinese President Xi Jinping landed in Florida to meet his American counterpart Donald Trump. “High on the list of our priorities is an economic relationship that is fair on both sides,” Tillerson told reporters at the West Palm Beach Airport as the Chinese President arrived here. Trump and Xi are to hold a series of meetings here. This is the first meeting between the two leaders.

(I.E.,07/04)

### **Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina embarks on four-day India visit**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina embarked on a four-day visit to India which will see signing of at least 25 bilateral agreements including in key areas of civil nuclear cooperation and defence. During her visit, which comes after a gap of seven years, Hasina will hold wide-ranging talks with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi tomorrow during which India is also set to announce a line of credit of USD 500 million to Bangladesh for military supplies.

(I.E.,07/04)

### **US to deploy 1500 soldiers in Afghanistan to combat al-Qaeda**

The United States will deploy 1,500 soldiers from Alaska to Afghanistan later this year as part of a regular rotation of forces in support of Washington’s counter-terrorism operation against the remnants of al-Qaeda. “These soldiers train rigorously in a wide range of climates and environments. I am fully confident in their ability to excel and overcome any challenges they will face during this deployment,” Maj. Gen. Bryan Owens, the commanding general of US Army Alaska, said in a statement. The deployment of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, is part of a regular rotation of forces in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, reports Khaama Press.

(I.E.,08/04)

### **France enshrines decision to close oldest nuclear plant**

The French government published a decree for closing the country’s oldest nuclear plant, fulfilling a campaign-trail pledge made by President Francois Hollande who is now in the final weeks of office. The decree, gazetted in the Official Journal which publishes government decisions, sets down the

conditions for closing a nuclear plant at Fessenheim, near the border with Germany. Fessenheim will cease operations when a new reactor, currently being built at Flamanville on the Normandy coast, "enters service," the decree said.

(I.E.,09/04)

**China probes chief of top insurance regulator**

China has opened an investigation into the head of its top insurance regulatory body, the anti-corruption watchdog said in an announcement that could signal problems for some of the country's most powerful companies. Xiang Junbo is being probed for "suspected serious violation of the Party's code of conduct," the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said in a brief statement on its website. The phrase is often a euphemism for corruption.

(I.E.,09/04)

**Sisi declares three-month state of emergency in Egypt**

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi declared a three-month state of emergency in Egypt following twin church bombings that killed dozens of people in two cities. Mr. Sisi announced the "state of emergency for three months" in a defiant speech at the presidential palace after a meeting of the national defence council.

(H.,10/04)

**G7 foreign ministers seek US clarity over Syria**

Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven major industrialised nations meet for an annual gathering, with Europe and Japan seeking clarity from the United States on an array of issues, especially Syria. The two-day summit in Tuscany comes as the United States moves a Navy strike group near the Korean peninsula amid concerns over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and as the West's relations with Russia struggle to overcome years of mistrust.

(I.E.,10/04)

**U.S., U.K call on Putin to rethink support for Syria**

The United States and Britain have called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to re-evaluate his country's support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In his first televised interview, H.R. McMaster, the National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump, pointed to dual U.S. goals of defeating the Islamic State terror group and removing Mr. Assad from power. As Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was making the Trump administration's first official trip this week to Russia, Mr. McMaster said Moscow will have to decide whether it wanted to continue backing a "murderous regime".

(H.,11/04)

**Beijing, Seoul discuss N. Korea sanctions**

China and South Korea agreed to slap tougher sanctions on North Korea if it carries out nuclear or long-range missile tests, a senior official in Seoul said, as a U.S. Navy strike group headed to the region in a show of force. North Korea marks several major anniversaries this month and often

marks the occasions with major tests of military hardware. The possibility of U.S. military action against North Korea in response to such tests gained traction following last week's strikes against Syria.

(H.,11/04)

### **Visit to India was hugely satisfying, says Hasina**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her visit to India was hugely satisfying. "There's nothing frustrating," she told journalists briefing about her four-day tour. During the April 7-10 visit, the Bangladesh Prime Minister was given a rousing reception by her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi who came to receive her at Palam airbase breaking the protocol. Ms. Hasina termed it a "pleasant surprise." She stayed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, which broke the tradition of selecting guests for the presidential palace.

(H.,12/04)

### **North Korea media warns of nuclear strike on U.S. if provoked**

North Korean state media warned of a nuclear attack on the United States at any sign of a U.S. pre-emptive strike as a U.S. Navy strike group led by a nuclear-powered aircraft steamed towards the western Pacific. Tension has escalated sharply on the Korean peninsula with talk of military action by the United States gaining traction following its strikes last week against Syria and amid concerns the reclusive North may soon conduct a sixth nuclear test.

(H.,12/04)

### **India has breached its commitment on Tibet issue: China**

China reiterated that the visit of the Dalai Lama to Arunachal Pradesh will have a negative impact on Sino-Indian ties, and accused New Delhi of breaching its commitment on the Tibet issue. In response to a question, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Beijing would take "further action" to safeguard its territorial sovereignty.

(H.,13/04)

### **Somali forces free Indian ship crew from pirates**

Somali security forces clashed with pirates early and freed nine seamen kidnapped from an Indian cargo ship this month, officials said. The pirates seized the dhow Al Kausar off Somalia's coast, part of a surge of attacks after years without a reported incident. The kidnappers took the crew onshore in central Galmudug state and clashed with troops two days later, the Territory Minister for Ports and Sea Transport, Burhan Warsame, said that they rescued the nine crew safely.

(H.,13/04)

### **Trump flips on NATO, China**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the military alliance of the U.S., Canada, 25 European countries and Turkey, is the "the bulwark of international peace and security", President Donald Trump said. "I said it's obsolete. Now it's no longer obsolete," Mr. Trump said, overturning a campaign position that drew intense criticism from Democrats and Republicans. Mr. Trump has

also reversed his positions on China, Syria and Russia in recent days, aligning his thinking closer to U.S. orthodoxy.

(H.,14/04)

### **Russia vetoes UN motion on Syria attack**

Russia vetoed a U.N. resolution that would have condemned the reported use of chemical weapons in a town in northern Syria and demanded a speedy investigation. The vote on the Security Council resolution drafted by Britain, France and the United States was 10 in favour, Russia and Bolivia against, and China, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia abstaining.

(H.,14/04)

### **Create conducive environment for elections: Nepal President**

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari has urged the people to create an atmosphere conducive for conducting local polls which is a must for implementing the new Constitution. Nepal has entered into a federal democratic system by adopting the new Constitution, so the election is a must to implement the Constitution, Bhandari said while addressing a programme in Itahari district in eastern Nepal.

(I.E.,15/04)

### **China seeks Russia's help to 'cool' North Korea situation**

China is seeking Russia's help to cool surging tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, the country's foreign minister has told his Moscow counterpart, after Beijing warned of possible conflict over North Korea. Fears over the North's rogue weapons programme have soared in recent days, with a US naval strike force deployed near the Korean peninsula, while President Donald Trump has warned the threat "will be taken care of" and Pyongyang has vowed a "merciless" response to any provocation.

(I.E.,15/04)

### **Canberra keen on joining naval games**

Australia is keen on joining the Malabar trilateral naval exercises among India, Japan and the U.S., and has requested observer status at the upcoming edition, scheduled for July. "Australia has requested that its military officers be allowed as observers during this year's Malabar exercises," a senior official told. While India is yet to take a call on Australia's request, a senior defence official indicated that it is unlikely to be accepted. "Let us first strengthen the cooperation on the bilateral front," the official said. A formal decision is expected shortly. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her visit to India was hugely satisfying. "There's nothing frustrating," she told journalists briefing about her four-day tour. During the April 7-10 visit, the Bangladesh Prime Minister was given a rousing reception by her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi who came to receive her at Palam airbase breaking the protocol. Ms. Hasina termed it a "pleasant surprise." She stayed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, which broke the tradition of selecting guests for the presidential palace.

(H.,16/04)

**North Korea: Amid tensions, US Vice-President Mike Pence says 'all options on table'**

A day after North Korea conducted a failed nuclear missile launch, US Vice-President Mike Pence gave a stern warning to North Korean military to stop their nuclear weapons programme. Pence, who visited the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) dividing North and South Korea, said that North Korean people and military "should not mistake the resolve of the United States of America to stand with our allies."

(I.E.,17/04)

**U.S. successfully tests upgraded nuclear bomb**

The United States has successfully tested the latest upgrade to its B61, sending General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon multi role fighter to drop the intermediate yield strategic and tactical thermonuclear bomb over a military training area in Nevada. The U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) said that the test was the first in a series of similar events necessary to qualify the upgrade for service.

(I.E.,17/04)

**Trump to sign executive order on reform of H-1B visa system**

U.S. President Donald Trump is set to sign an executive order that would tighten the process of issuing the H-1B visas and seek a review of the system for creating an "entirely new structure" for awarding these visas, the most sought-after by Indian IT firms and professionals. Mr. Trump is scheduled to travel to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the home state of House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, to sign the 'Buy American, Hire American' Executive Order.

(H.,18/04)

**Narrow win for 'Yes' camp in Turkish referendum**

Turkey's Opposition called for the annulment of a referendum giving President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sweeping new powers, as international monitors voiced concern over the campaign and vote count. With political tensions once again escalating in Turkey after a result that opponents fear will hand Mr. Erdogan one-man rule, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for dialogue to seek calm.

(H.,18/04)

**CPEC unrelated to Kashmir issue: China**

China reinforced its call for India's participation in the Belt and Road connectivity initiative, telling that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), on which India has its reservations, was not linked to the Kashmir issue. At a press conference, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that India would be represented at Beijing's high profile Belt and Road Forum on May 14. "Although the Indian leader will not be here, India will have a representative. We welcome the Indian representative as well as members of the business and finance community to take part in the summit," Mr. Wang said. India has objected to the CPEC as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. But Mr. Wang said that China's stance on CPEC projects "had no relationship with the [Kashmir] dispute".

(H.,19/04)

**China, EU to promote free and fair trade**

China and the European Union are holding their first high-level talks since President Donald Trump took office, with both eager to push a message of free trade and open engagement with the world. EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will co-chair the Seventh EU-China Strategic Dialogue with State Councilor Yang Jiechi, China's highest-ranking diplomat. They will discuss cooperation on issues such as climate change, as well as regional and security issues. The dialogue comes ahead of an EU-China summit scheduled for Brussels in June.

(I.E.,19/04)

**UK PM Theresa May wins Parliament vote to hold snap polls on June 8**

The United Kingdom is heading towards an early general election on June 8, after Parliament voted in favour of it, 522-13, reported news agency AFP. The proposal to hold snap elections was announced by Prime Minister Theresa May following a Cabinet meeting. May had said calling for early elections would ensure 'stability' during the course of the country's exit from the European Union. The elections were otherwise scheduled to be held only in May, 2020.

(I.E.,20/04)

**China issues stricter rules for officials to report assets**

China has issued stricter regulations requiring officials to report personal information, including assets, to the ruling Communist Party, state media said, in the country's latest effort to tackle corruption. China's President Xi Jinping sees extravagance and corruption as an existential threat to the party, whose authority is in part predicated on its ability to spread the gains of China's growth fairly among the Chinese people.

(I.E.,20/04)

**Chinese President Xi Jinping elected to key Congress of Communist Party**

President Xi Jinping has been unanimously elected as a delegate to the National Congress of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) at the Guizhou provincial party unit. 63-year-old Xi, regarded as the most powerful leader heading the party, military and the government, will complete his first five-year term during the 19th party Congress to be held later this year and start his second five-year term.

(I.E.,21/04)

**Donald Trump to order US Treasury to delve into taxes, post-crisis reforms**

U.S. President Donald Trump will order the Treasury to find and reduce tax burdens and review post-financial crisis reforms that banks and insurance companies have said hinder their ability to do business. A White House official said that Trump will issue an executive order directing the Treasury on the tax issues. He will also issue two memoranda asking for reviews of two parts of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform law – the Orderly Liquidation Authority that sets out how big banks can wind down during a crisis and the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC), which is made up of the country's top regulators.

(I.E.,21/04)

**Death toll in Afghan base attack rises to 140, officials say**

As many 140 Afghan soldiers were killed by Taliban attackers apparently disguised in military uniforms in what would be the deadliest attack ever on an Afghan military base, officials said. One official in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, where the attack occurred, said at least 140 soldiers were killed and many others wounded. Other officials said the toll was likely to be even higher. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because the government has yet to release official casualty figures.

(H.,22/04)

**Peaceful outcome for Korean peninsula still possible: Pence**

Denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula can be achieved peacefully because of Washington's new engagement with China, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said, despite growing fears North Korea could soon conduct a new nuclear test. South Korea is on heightened alert ahead of another important anniversary in the reclusive North that could be the trigger for a new nuclear test or launch of ballistic missiles, with a large concentration of military hardware massed on both sides of the border. Tensions have risen sharply in recent months after Pyongyang conducted two nuclear weapons tests last year and carried out a steady stream of ballistic missile tests in defiance of United Nations resolutions and sanctions.

(H.,22/04)

**Trump administration accuses TCS, Infosys of violating H-1B visa norms**

The Trump administration has alleged that top Indian IT firms TCS and Infosys have used unfair means to corner the lion's share of H-1B visas by putting extra tickets in the lottery system. However, the Trump administration wants to replace the matter with a more merit-based immigration policy. The White House statement last week read that a small number of giant outsourcing firms have dropped more applications which naturally sharpen their chances of success in the lottery draw. "You may know their names well, but like the top recipients of the H-1B visa are companies like Tata, Infosys, Cognizant — they will apply for a very large number of visas, more than they get, by putting extra tickets in the lottery raffle, if you will, and then they'll get the lion's share of visas," the senior official said, according to transcript of the briefing posted on White House website.

(I.E.,23/04)

**South Korea, allies brace for North Korea follow-up act**

Fresh off an immense North Korean parade that revealed an arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles, rival South Korea and its allies are bracing for the possibility that Pyongyang's follow-up act will be even bigger. North Korea often marks significant dates by displaying military capability, and South Korean officials say there's a chance the country will conduct its sixth nuclear test or its maiden test launch of an ICBM around the founding anniversary of its military.

(H.,24/04)

**Afghan defence minister, army chief of staff resign over deadly attack**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani accepted the resignation of the defence minister and army chief of staff after more than 140 government soldiers were killed in a Taliban attack on an army base last week, the president's office said.

(T.O.I.,24/04)

**Three African countries chosen to test first malaria vaccine**

Three African countries have been chosen to test the world's first malaria vaccine, the World Health Organization announced. Ghana, Kenya and Malawi will begin piloting the injectable vaccine next year with hundreds of thousands of young children, who have been at highest risk of death.

The vaccine, which has partial effectiveness, has the potential to save tens of thousands of lives if used with existing measures, the WHO regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said in a statement. The challenge is whether impoverished countries can deliver the required four doses of the vaccine for each child.

(I.E.,25/04)

**Powerful 6.9 quake shakes central Chile, no damage reported**

A powerful magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck off central Chile's coast, but there were no reports of injuries or damage and authorities ruled out the possibility of a tsunami. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake was centered in the Pacific about 22 miles (35 kilometers) west of the port city of Valparaiso and hit around 6:40 p.m. Buildings swayed in Santiago, the capital 70 miles (115 kilometers) miles to the east. The USGS revised the quake's magnitude down from an initial reading of 7.1.

(I.E.,25/04)

**Eyeing West Pacific, China launches first domestically-made aircraft carrier**

China has launched its second aircraft carrier, marking an incremental rise in its capacity to project power in the West Pacific. The aircraft carrier, called Type 001-A before it acquires a formal name, was transferred from dry dock into the water at a launch ceremony that started at about 9 a.m. at the Dalian shipyard of the China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation. Fan Changlong, vice-chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) chaired the launch ceremony.

(H.,26/04)

**Judge blocks Trump order on 'sanctuary cities'**

A federal judge ruled that United States President Donald Trump cannot coerce "sanctuary cities" to cooperate with immigration officers by withdrawing federal funds, media reports said. The temporary ruling by Judge William Orrick of the US District Court for the Northern District of California, followed a 70-minute hearing on April 14 over San Francisco and Santa Clara County's lawsuit over the executive order signed by Mr. Trump on January 25, Xinhua news agency reported.

(H.,26/04)

### **US Air Force tests unarmed ICBM**

An unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile was launched during an operational test from an air base in the state of California, amid growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with a single test re-entry vehicle was launched at 12.03 A.M. (local time) on Wednesday by a combined team of United States Air Force Global Strike Command Airmen. By all accounts the launch was a success, Xinhua news agency reported.

(H.,27/04)

### **India, US discuss measures to strengthen partnership at UN**

The US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley discussed with her Indian counterpart Syed Akbaruddin the economic and anti-corruption reforms undertaken by India to spur growth and measures to strengthen Indo-US partnership at the world body. Haley met Akbaruddin at the Permanent Mission of India to the UN. "They discussed peacekeeping reform and India's economic and anti-corruption reforms that have helped businesses and spurred growth," according to a statement issued by the US Mission to the UN. The two ambassadors also discussed the "close ties between the two countries and opportunities to further the partnership between the US and India at the United Nations."

(I.E.,27/04)

### **Pope Francis heads for Egypt as 'pilgrim of peace'**

Pope Francis flies to Egypt for a visit aimed at fostering reconciliation with the Muslim world against the backdrop of recent jihadist attacks on the Middle East's biggest Christian community. The 80-year-old pontiff is due in Cairo around 14.00 local time (1200 GMT) and his 27 hours on Egyptian soil will include a meeting with the grand imam of the Al-Azhar mosque, sealing a recent improvement in relations between Catholicism and the Sunni branch of Islam. Security will be extremely tight with Egypt under a state of emergency following two bombings in Coptic churches earlier this month that killed 45 people. All of the country's churches have been placed under additional protection because of the risk of another assault timed to coincide with Francis being in the country.

(I.E.,28/04)

### **IMF 'closely following' Donald Trump's economic policy amid concerns**

Amid a spate of policy changes in the US under the Trump Administration, the International Monetary Fund is closely following the developments in America, a top IMF official has said, noting that there is considerable uncertainty on specific policies. "Our latest World Economic Outlook assumes fiscal expansion by the US will carry momentum forward, raising US economic growth from 2.3 to 2.5 per cent in 2018, which is positive for the global economy," Tao Zhang, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, told PTI in an exclusive interview. "At the same time, there is considerable uncertainty on specific policies. We are following policy developments closely, and we will need to see details of the various proposals to better understand their implications," the top IMF official said.

(I.E.,28/04)

**UN Security Council backs new Western Sahara talks attempt**

The United Nations Security Council has unanimously backed the UN chief's attempts to restart negotiations to end the Western Sahara conflict and extended its peacekeeping mission for another year. The resolution came after the UN mission confirmed the Polisario Western Sahara independence movement had withdrawn its troops from the Guerguerat area in the disputed territory where they had faced off since last year with Moroccan forces.

(I.E.,29/04)

**North Korea test-fires ballistic missile in defiance of world pressure**

North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile, South Korea's and US militaries said, defying intense pressure from the United States and the reclusive state's main ally, China. US and South Korean officials said the test, from an area north of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, appeared to have failed, in what would be a fourth successive unsuccessful missile test since March. The test came as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned the UN Security Council that failure to curb North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes could lead to "catastrophic consequences".

(I.E.,29/04)

**Donald Trump to mark 100th day in office with rally**

United States President Donald Trump was scheduled to address a rally in Pennsylvania to mark his 100th day in office, even as the occasion turns out to be a replay of the polarised election campaign last year. Among other lingering, divisive debates, the 100th day would also underscore the President's confrontational style with the media as he would skip the White House Correspondents Association dinner. Among the several protest events planned across the U.S, in Washington, climate change activists would march from the Capitol to the White House. The last time a President skipped the correspondents' dinner was 36 years ago, in 1981, when Ronald Reagan was recovering from a bullet injury.

(H., 30/04)

**Turkey blocks access to Wikipedia**

Turkey has blocked online encyclopedia Wikipedia, the telecommunications watchdog said, citing a law allowing it to ban access to websites deemed obscene or a threat to national security. The move is likely to further worry rights groups and Turkey's Western allies, who say Ankara has sharply curtailed freedom of speech and other basic rights in the crackdown that followed last year's failed coup. "After technical analysis and legal consideration an administrative measure has been taken for this website (Wikipedia.Org)," the BTK telecommunications watchdog said in a statement on its website.

(H.,30/04)

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