

Western Times

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News Brief

CM Bhagwant Mann meets Kejriwal in jail, says Delhi CM given terrorists-like treatment

New Delhi, April 15 (IANS) Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who visited Delhi Chief Minister in Delhi's Tihar Jail on Monday, said that he is being given terrorists-like treatment by the jail authorities.

"Kejriwal is given terrorists-like treatment by the jail authorities. He is not being provided basic facilities. There was a glass wall between me and him when we met," the Punjab Chief Minister said.

Sources said that the meeting between the two took place within the confines of the prison's 'Jangla Muklat' room, a space partitioned by a glass wall with intercom facilities on both sides.

SC issues notice to ED on CM Kejriwal's plea against arrest

New Delhi, April 15 (IANS) The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice on a plea filed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging his arrest and subsequent remand by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy case.

Agreeing to examine the matter, a bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked the federal anti-money laundering agency to file its reply by April 24. The Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, allowed the petitioner side to file a rejoinder affidavit, if any, by April 27 to the reply filed by ED. The matter will be taken up next on April 29 for further hearing.

Man arrested for mother's murder in J&K's Sopore

Srinagar, April 15 (IANS) Police in J&K's Sopore area on Monday arrested a man for the murder of his mother.

Officials said that Amir Wani of Hadipora village in the Rafiabad area of Sopore was arrested in the murder case. The crime was committed during the night intervening of April 14 and April 15.

"The victim was attacked with a sharp weapon by the accused who is a driver by profession. The accused was arrested within hours of committing the crime."

Polling officials, security personnel to reach 26 polling stations in Mizoram on foot or boat

Aizawl, April 15 (IANS) Coping with natural challenges, polling and security officials deployed in 26 polling stations in different districts of Mizoram have to reach their destinations either by boat or on foot as these lack motorable access roads, officials said on Sunday.

An election official said that the polling officials escorted by the security personnel have to go to 15 polling stations in different districts by boat and have to navigate through hilly and forested areas to reach the remaining 11.

Govt signed over 10 accords in NE: Shah

Leading to surrender of over 10K militants

Agartala, April 15 (IANS) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that the Modi government has signed more than 10 accords in the northeast and facilitated over 10,000 insurgents to join the mainstream of life in different states of the region.

Addressing an election rally at Kumarghat in northern Tripura, the Home Minister said that during the Congress government at the Center, the total budget for tribal development across the country was only Rs 24,000 crore and the Modi government increased it to Rs 1.25 lakh crore. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made Droupadi Murmu,

the first tribal woman, as President of India. Before 2014, there were only 90 Eklavya Model Residential schools in the country and the Modi government in the last ten years has set up 740 such schools across India for the education of the tribal students, he said, adding that 21 per cent houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are meant for the tribals.

During the Congress government at the Center, Tripura got projects worth Rs 40,000 crore while during ten years of Modi government, the state received a large number of projects valued at Rs 98,000 crore, he pointed out. The Home Minister said that tourism,

connectivity, health, employment and infrastructure sectors are the priority of the Modi government both in the entire country and Tripura as well. He said that around 40,000 Renag tribals (from Mizoram) were settled in Tripura resolving their decades-old ethnic problems.

He said that in December 2017, the first election rally was organised at Kumarghat and efforts had started from that public meeting to oust the Left government and with the end of the Communist rule, a new era of development started in Tripura in 2018.

He said that Modi re-named the Agartala airport after then king Maharaja

Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Debbarman, who according to Amit Shah played a vital role in the development of the state.

Highlighting various development projects, he said that earlier Tripura had only one National Highway and now works are going on to construct nine National Highway projects, also extended the railway line upto southern Tripura's border-torn Sabroom, setting up of Special Economic Zone in Sabroom at a cost of Rs 1550 crore to boost both industries and employment. "Congress and Communists helped the infiltration and the Modi government stopped it with bold hands."



PATNA, Devotees perform rituals on the last day of Chaiti Chhath Puja at the bank of River Ganga, in Patna on Monday. UNI

EC cracks down on money power, seizes record Rs 4,650 cr

New Delhi, April 15 (IANS) The Enforcement Agencies have seized over Rs 4,650 crore before the first phase of polling on April 19, which is the highest-ever seizure of inducements recorded in the 75-year history of Lok Sabha elections, said the Election Commission on Monday.

This marks a sharp increase over Rs 3,475 crore seized during the entire Lok Sabha election in 2019. Significantly, 45 per cent of the seizures are of drugs and narcotics, which are under the special focus of the Commission.

In the country-wide operation, the EC said that the seizures were possible through comprehensive planning, scaled-up col-

laboration and unified deterrence action from agencies, proactive citizen participation and optimal engagement of technology.

The Commission said that the use of black money could have disturbed the level playing field.

In an incident in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, the Commission suspended the flying squad team leader for laxity in duty and selective checking of a cavalcade of a prominent leader. The commission has also taken strict action against approximately 106 government servants who were found assisting politicians in campaigning, thereby violating the Code of Conduct and instructions.

CEC Rajiv Kumar has

stressed strict compliance with BCAS instructions on surveillance and inspection of non-scheduled aircraft and helicopters by income tax, airport authorities and SPs of concerned districts, said the officials.

Border agencies have also been asked to keep a close watch on international checkpoints, and the GST authorities have to closely monitor godowns, especially makeshift godowns meant for storing freebies, the EC said.

Senior officials from the Election Commission visited every state and Union territory to emphasize the importance of combating the influence of money in elections months before elections and more intensively from January.

K'taka Cong slams BJP, NDA for 'women taking wrong path due to guarantees' comment, calls for protests

Belagavi, (Karnataka) April 15 (IANS) Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister, DK Shivakumar on Monday gave a call to women's organisations to stage protests against the state BJP and NDA, condemning the comment that "women are taking the wrong path due to the implementation of the government's guarantee schemes."

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, state Congress President Shivakumar slammed former Chief Minister and state JD(S) chief, HD Kumaraswamy for making the statement.

While criticising the state government's guarantee schemes during a roadshow at Tumakuru, Kumaraswamy stated last week that "women are tak-

ing the wrong path due to the implementation of guarantee schemes."

"Mr. Kumaraswamy, what do you mean by saying women are taking the wrong path? I urge all women's organisations to hold protests in all taluks (sub-districts). This is not about parties, but self-respect," Dy CM Shivakumar appealed.

He urged the women to "teach a lesson" to the BJP and NDA candidates in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. Defending the guarantees introduced by the Karnataka government, Dy CM Shivakumar added, "We implemented the

guarantees for the benefit of our women and their families. We have allowed women to travel free of cost in buses. Due to inflation, we are giving Rs 2,000 to every woman head of the family, and Kumaraswamy is telling you (women) are taking the wrong path."

"All 1.20 crore beneficiaries of the Gruha Laxmi scheme and 1.50 crore families of Gruha Jyothi programmes should participate in the protests. We don't want his (Kumaraswamy) apologies. Teach them a lesson in the elections," he said.

The Dy CM Shivaku-

mar also challenged Kumaraswamy to a discussion.

Slamming the JD(S) state chief for linking guarantees to an act of pickpocketing, referring to increasing excise and other taxes to provide freebies, Dy CM Shivakumar alleged, "Kumaraswamy is a pro in pickpocketing. That's how he had drawn similarities between pickpocketing and guarantee schemes. His apologies in this regard won't help."

"If one commits murder and apologises, will the person who has been killed come back to life?" the Dy CM questioned.

Royalty bows out of Pratapgarh LS seat, makes way for 'commoners'

Pratapgarh (UP), April 15 (IANS) Pratapgarh, a sleepy district situated about 200 kms from Lucknow, has been known for politics that was dominated by erstwhile royal families. Former royals have won and reached the Lok Sabha ten times from this constituency.

However, now this seat seems to be moving forward, leaving behind its royal history. Former Foreign Minister, Dinesh Singh, who belonged to the erstwhile royal family of Kalankar, represented this parliamentary seat four times and his daughter Ratna Singh thrice.

Apart from this, Ajit Pratap Singh of Pratapgarh estate was MP from here twice and his son Abhay Pratap Singh once.

Ajit Pratap Singh won for the first time on a Jan Sangh ticket and then on a Congress ticket while

Abhay Pratap Singh won from Janata Dal in 1991. Politics in the constituency played out between these two former royal families with the third family – the Bhadri estate headed by Uday Pratap Singh, playing a balancing factor. Things began to change when Ratna Singh lost elections in 2014 and 2019. She had switched from the Congress to the BJP in 2019.

Raja Bhaiyya, who is the scion of the Bhadri estate and the head of the Bainti estate, has not shown any inclination to contest the Lok Sabha elections. He remains a member of the state Assembly since 1993.

With Ajit Pratap Singh and Abhay Pratap Singh now deceased and Ratna Singh no longer active in politics, Pratapgarh has now opened its doors for 'commoners'.

Pratapgarh is famous for its Amla cultivation, and

for some parties, the constituency has left a sour taste just like the berries it grows. The BSP has not been able to win any election from here even once.

The SP managed to win in 2004 when it fielded Raja Bhaiyya's cousin Akshay Pratap Singh, also a former royal. Pratapgarh also has a sizeable Kurmi population and this helped the Apna Dal win the seat in alliance with the BJP in 2014.

In 2019, BJP's Sangam Lal Gupta won the seat and the party has re-nominated him for the 2024 polls. The SP has named Dr SP Singh Patel as its candidate – with an obvious eye on Kurmi votes. The BSP is yet to announce its candidate.

There are five Assembly constituencies under Pratapgarh Lok Sabha seat, namely Rampur Khas, Patti, Raniganj, Pratapgarh and Vishwanathganj.



HYDERABAD, Union Minister and Telangana BJP President G Kishan Reddy staging a protest Rythu Deeksha at the party office on Monday. Condemning the Congress government's 'Failure' the fulfill promises made to farmers. UNI

India-Uzbekistan joint military Exercise begins

New Delhi Apr 15 (UNI) The Indian Armed Forces contingent on Monday departed for Uzbekistan to participate in the 5th edition of India-Uzbekistan joint military Exercise DUSTLIK, a Defence Ministry statement said.

The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 15th to 28th April at Termez in Uzbekistan. Exercise DUSTLIK is a yearly event conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan. The last edition was conducted in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand in February 2023.

The Indian Armed Forces contingent comprising 60 personnel is represented by 45 personnel from the Indian Army, mostly from the battalion of the JAT Regiment, and 15 personnel from the Indian Air Force (IAF). The Uzbekistan contingent comprising about 100 per-

sonnel from Uzbekistan Army and Air Force will be represented by personnel from Southern Operational Command, part of the South-West Military District.

The aim of the exercise is to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations in mountainous as well as semi urban terrain. It would focus on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special arms skills.

Tactical drills to be practiced during the exercise will include creation of a joint command post, establishing an intelligence and surveillance centre, securing of landing site, small team insertion and extraction, special helicopter operations, cordon and search operations, room intervention drills and demolition of illegal

structures.

The complexity of this edition of DUSTLIK has been enhanced with conduct of multi domain operations as the contingent comprises of personnel from combat support arms and services besides Infantry.

Two women officers also form part of the IA contingent, including one from the Regiment of Artillery and another from the Army Medical Corps. Exercise 'DUSTLIK' will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting joint operations.

The exercise will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between soldiers of both the countries. This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further fostering bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

Cash, liquor, drugs worth Rs 4 cr seized in J&K, says EC

Jammu, April 15 (IANS) The Election Commission on Monday said that it has seized cash, liquor, drugs and freebies worth Rs 4 crore in Jammu and Kashmir in its crackdown on money power.

A statement by the ECI said that total seizures in Jammu and Kashmir are worth Rs 4.28 crore. This includes cash worth Rs 1.24 crore, liquor worth Rs 63 lakh, drugs worth Rs 2.35 crore and freebies/other items worth Rs 5.59,150. The seizures made were part of the countrywide operation undertaken by the enforcement agencies. The Election Commission in a statement said, "With General Elections 2024 underway, the ECI is on track for the highest ever seizures of inducements recorded in the 75-year history of Lok Sabha elections in the country."

It said that countrywide Rs 100 crore has been seized every day since March 1 and a record seizure of over Rs 4,650 crore was made even before the polling begins on April 19. The officials said this seizure is higher than the total of 2019 polls. "This marks a sharp increase over Rs 3,475 crore seized during the entire Lok Sabha election in 2019," officials said.

The ECI statement also mentioned: "The seizures have been possible by comprehensive planning, scaled-up collaboration and unified deterrence action from agencies, proactive citizen participation and optimal engagement of technology. Use of black money, over and above political financing and accurate disclosure thereof, may disturb the level playing field in favour of more resourceful parties or candidates in specific geographies."



ALWAR, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra waving supporters during a roadshow for the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign in support of party candidate in Alwar district of Rajasthan on Monday. UNI

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