

Western Times

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News Brief

Several trains affected in Punjab as farmers squat on tracks

Chandigarh, April 17 (IANS) Farmers on Wednesday squatted on railway tracks at the Shambhu railway station in Punjab, hampering the movement of at least 35 trains. The farmers have kept the national highway at the interstate border blocked near Shambhu to mark protest over the demands, including a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) by the Centre, since February 13.

As the protesters were moving ahead to block the railway tracks, the police tried to stop them, which led to a scuffle between them. After breaking barricades, they sat on the track.

No trace of missing persons yet, says Kashmir IGP on boat tragedy

Srinagar, April 17 (IANS) A day after six students died and six were rescued when a boat capsized in the Jhelum River in J&K's Srinagar district, officials said on Wednesday that there is still no trace of three missing persons. V.K. Birdi, IGP (Kashmir) zone told reporters that the search operation to trace the three persons is underway. "Rescue operation continued till late night and was resumed in the morning. We haven't found the bodies yet," the IGP said. On Tuesday, six students died and six were rescued after a boat capsized in the Batawara area of Srinagar city in the Jhelum River.

PM Modi to visit Karnataka on April 20

Bengaluru, April 17 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Karnataka on April 20 and will address election rallies in IT capital Bengaluru and Chikkaballapur city.

Prime Minister Modi will first address the election rally at 4 p.m. in the Chikkaballapur city. He will also visit Bengaluru to address a gathering at the Palace Grounds at 6 p.m. Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje, who is contesting the election from Bengaluru North Lok Sabha Seat said that PM Modi will address from the Palace Grounds in Bengaluru. "There are 10 to 15 party workers in every booth the committees which have been formed. We have appealed to all of them to attend the programme. Ward, Mandal and district officer bearers must attend the event without fail from 32 assembly constituencies of the region.

PM Modi urges 'Ram bhakts' to become witness to Surya Tilak event, shares video link

New Delhi, April 17 (IANS) The grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya, teeming with surge of devotees since early morning hours of Wednesday, witnessed a grand spectacle this afternoon as 'Surya Tilak' was performed on Ram Lalla. The three-minute-long phenomenon took many devotees by surprise as they made a bee-line for the temple on the occasion of Ram Navami. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, taking to his X account, has urged the Ram bhakts across the globe to become part of this mesmerising event and watch the stunning 'Surya Abhishek' of Lord Ram.

First Ram Navami after Pran Pratishtha in Ayodhya is generational milestone: PM Modi

New Delhi, April 17 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion of Ram Navami on Wednesday and said "Ayodhya is in immense joy" and celebrating the birth anniversary of Lord Ram after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony. Ayodhya is observing its first Ram Navami after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony at Ram Temple on January 22.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "The first Ram Navami after the Pran

Pratishtha in Ayodhya is a generational milestone, weaving together centuries of devotion with a new era of hope and progress. This is a day crores of Indians waited for. Innumerable people devoted their lives to this sacred cause."

"May the blessings of Prabhu Shri Ram always remain upon us and guide our paths towards righteousness and peace, illuminating our lives with wisdom and courage," he said.

The PM also said, "I

have full faith that the life of Maryada Purushottam Lord Shri Ram and his ideals will become a strong basis for building a developed India. His blessings will provide new energy to the resolve of Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also extended greetings to people. He said on X, "Jai Shri Ram! Best wishes to everyone on the holy festival of Ram Navami," the senior BJP leader wrote on X.

"The life of Maryada

Purushottam Lord Ram is a symbol of the struggle for justice, social welfare and self-respect.

The Lord established the highest ideal of sacrifice for truth and religion through his life and guided the entire world for ages. This year, celebrating the birth anniversary of the Lord in the temple of his birthplace after 500 years is a matter of pride for all Ram devotees. I pray to God for everyone's welfare," Amit Shah said.



AYODHYA, Divya Abhisheka of Prabhu Shri Ramlalla Sarkar at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir, on the occasion of Shri Ram Navami, Ayodhya on Wednesday. UNI

Kerala CM attacks Congress over CAA

Palakkad (Kerala), April 17 (IANS) Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday again attacked Congress MP Rahul Gandhi over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), asking why he is and his party silent over the issue.

"Why is Congress, especially Rahul Gandhi silent over CAA? Congress should admit that they are on the same page with Sangh Parivar over CAA," Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said while addressing a mammoth election rally in Palakkad.

He said that people and different organisations all over the world are critical of the controversial CAA but surprisingly Congress is silent on such a pressing issue.

"When we pointed out that Rahul Gandhi did not take up the CAA issue during his nationwide yatra and nor in Wayanad, they

(Congress) started attacking us," the Chief Minister said. He said that the CAA was announced when the country was in the election

TN MLA Jayaraman admitted to hospital

Chennai, April 17 (IANS) AIADMK leader and former minister in late J. Jayalalithaa's government, Pollachi V. Jayaraman (71), was admitted to the ICU of a private hospital in Coimbatore on Wednesday after he collapsed. The doctors treating Jayaraman, the sitting MLA from Pollachi Assembly constituency, told IANS that his condition is stable at present though he will be under observation at the hospital for a few more days. According to AIADMK leaders, Jayaraman was actively campaigning in the Coimbatore Lok Sabha constituency for the past few days.

mode. "There is no also mention of the CAA in the Congress manifesto. When we asked about it, Leader of the Opposition (LoP) V. D. Satheesan said it's there in the manifesto but despite our best efforts, we were unable to find it. Ironically, Congress-led UDF Convener said that they are not bothered about CAA," the Chief Minister said Vijayan. He said that his government has decided that they will not implement the CAA in the coastal state.

"We have also approached the apex court against the CAA," he said.

"When the CAA issue was raised in the parliament there were 18 MPs from Congress-led UDF. Why did they not speak against it," the Chief Minister asked. There are around 3.30 crore Muslims in Kerala which roughly constitute 24 per cent population of the state.

'Surya Tilak' illuminates Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, mesmerising pictures surface

Ayodhya, April 17 (IANS) The lights dimmed at noon but the sun rays filtered through to kiss the forehead of Lord Ram and performed 'Surya Tilak' -- an event that had been much awaited.

This phenomenon lasted for a duration of approximately three minutes, during which the 'aarti' was performed amidst the blowing of conch shells.

The ritual, known as Surya Abhishek or Surya Tilak, involved the sunrays directly touching the forehead of the deity. This symbolic gesture created a divine atmosphere within the temple premises on the birthday of the Lord Ram.

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, (IIT-R) were tasked with creating the

Surya Tilak mechanism, a unique feature of the Ram Mandir.

The IIT team had conducted two successful trials in preparation for the Surya Abhishek ceremony, which took place on Ram Navami on Wednesday. The team had developed a specialised apparatus equipped with high-quality mirrors and lenses

to ensure that the sun rays are precisely directed onto Ram Lalla's forehead at the designated time.

According to reports, the apparatus consists of a gearbox fitted with reflective mirrors and lenses. Its purpose is to reflect sunrays from the third floor near the shikara into the 'garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum) at the speci-

fied time.

The components used in the tilak apparatus are made of brass and bronze materials, chosen for their durability and resistance to corrosion. The gearbox has been meticulously engineered to align with the lunar calendar, ensuring that the sun is accurately positioned on Ram Navami day each year.

BJP-led govt never discriminated in delivery of welfare schemes: PM

Guwahati, April 17 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that the BJP-led government has never discriminated in the distribution of welfare measures to the beneficiaries.

Addressing a huge public gathering in Assam's Nalbari district, PM Modi said, "Whether it is free ration distribution or the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, benefits have been passed to the people without any discrimination." He also promised to install solar panels in households to make electricity free in the country.

"We have taken the initiative to install solar power cells on the rooftops of houses. It will not only make your electricity bill zero; in the future, when you buy electric vehicles, the travel cost on the road will also become zero," PM Modi said, adding that in this ambitious scheme, there will be no discrimination at all under the BJP rule. The Prime Minister also promised that senior citizens, who have at-

tained 70 years of age, can avail of free treatment through the Ayushman Bharat Scheme in the coming days.

"I want to tell everybody that Modi will take responsibility for the treatment of the elderly, irrespective of their family background. Every family, whether they are poor, servicemen, or upper-class people, will be eligible to avail of the free treatment scheme of the government. I am going to do this big work, and yes, there will be no discrimination here also," he said.

PM Modi also attacked the Congress party and alleged that the opposition-led erstwhile governments were responsible for the earlier situation in the northeast.

"Congress has a separatist agenda for the northeast, whereas Modi has kept this region close to his heart," he said.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the development initiatives of the ruling dispensation. He said, "Earlier, there were

no roads in Assam, while in the last 10 years, more than 2,500 km of national highways have been built in the state. At least 2000 km of roads are being constructed in Darang, Udalguri, Korajhar, etc., areas."

PM Modi mentioned the Central government's Lakhpati Didi scheme. He said, "We have pledged to make three crore women in the country as Lakhpati Didis. We shall make them drone pilots, and women from Assam will take advantage of this initiative."

The Prime Minister also asserted that the BJP government's decision to scrap triple talaq has benefited the Muslim society in Assam. "As we have removed the triple talaq by law, along with my Muslim sisters, their other members of the family are also relieved after this decision," he said. PM Modi also mentioned that he has devoted every moment to fulfilling the aspirations of the people of this country. He said, "That is why I say 24 x 7 for 2047."



PURI, Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has created a sand sculpture of Ramlala with message 'Happy Ram Navami' on the occasion of Shri Ram Navami at Puri beach in Odisha on Tuesday. UNI

PIL in Delhi HC seeks permission, facilities for CM Kejriwal to govern from jail

New Delhi, April 17 (IANS) A petition has been filed before the Delhi High Court advocating for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's ability to continue governing from judicial custody in the liquor policy case.

Filed by advocate Shrikant Prasad, the PIL petition seeks to facilitate virtual conferencing arrangements for CM Kejriwal to engage with cabinet ministers, ensuring uninterrupted governance.

The PIL also seeks to restrain media houses from sensationalising news about CM Kejriwal's potential resignation and the imposition of President's Rule in the capital.

Moreover, it targets Virendra Sachdeva, BJP Delhi president, alleging that his protests and statements create undue pressure for Kejriwal's resignation, disrupting peace and traffic flow with politically motivated intentions.

Prasad's petition stresses the commendable track record of Delhi's governance, particularly in the education and healthcare sectors over the past seven years. It contends that the present circumstances in the national capital violate fundamental rights under Articles 21, 14, and 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Asserting that neither the Constitution nor any law prohibits ministers, in-

cluding chief ministers or prime ministers, from governing from jail, Prasad's plea stresses the urgency of the matter, citing the need to ensure continuity in governance for the welfare of the people.

"As the makers of the Constitution were vigilant enough that there might be a situation when the politics of the country will enter into the worst and at that time just to keep the public fundamental rights upheld it is very much required that there is no

compulsion or any obligation for resignation, otherwise gravest repercussions may arise by repeating the same modus operandi for making any minister resigned," Prasad says.

The petition urges expedited consideration from the court, citing the exceptional governance of Delhi amidst CM Kejriwal's incarceration, attributed to alleged political motives and false implications in the liquor policy case.

--IANS

10 killed in Russian attack on Ukraine's Chernihiv: Zelensky

Kiev, April 17 (IANS/DPA) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for more air defence support from Western partners after a Russian missile attack killed at least 10 people on Wednesday.

"This would not have happened if Ukraine had received sufficient air defence and if the world had been determined enough to counter Russian terror," Zelensky wrote on Telegram. The search for victims among the rubble is continuing. According to Zelensky, 10 people have been found dead so far. Another 20 people have been injured in the attack on the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv, he said. Earlier, Mayor Oleksandr Lomako spoke of eight dead and 18 injured. The Ukrainians do not lack determination in their fight, Zelensky added. "We need sufficient determination from our partners and sufficient support that reflects this determination," he said. Regional governor Vyacheslav Chaus said that three missiles struck near the Chernihiv city centre and that civilian infrastructure was damaged. Chernihiv is located around 150 km north of Kiev, not far from the border with Russia.

When Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Chernihiv was attacked but not captured. In the past two years, it has been subject to frequent Russian artillery fire and aerial assaults.

IIT-K and BFI forge partnership to accelerate healthcare innovation in India

Kanpur, April 17 (IANS) The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K) and Block-chain For Impact (BFI) have announced a strategic partnership, under the BFI-Biome Virtual Network Programme to nurture innovations and driving advancements in healthcare in India.

As part of this collaboration, BFI will support IIT Kanpur in promoting entrepreneurial initiatives through the Startup Incubation & Innovation

Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur. According to an official release, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at IIT Kanpur by Prof. Kantesh Balani, Dean of Resources and Alumni (DoRA), IIT Kanpur; and Dr. Gaurav Singh, CEO BFI.

As part of this programme, BFI has pledged to allocate over \$150,000 across three years to develop programmes specifically tailored to healthcare-focused startups at IIT Kan-

pur's Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC).

This collaboration leverages IIT Kanpur's established leadership in fostering entrepreneurship and BFI's commitment to advancing biomedical research. By combining these strengths, the partnership aims to develop impactful solutions that address critical gaps in India's healthcare landscape.

Prof. Kantesh Balani,

DoRA, IIT Kanpur, said, "I am very optimistic about the partnership between IIT Kanpur and BFI. This MoU will help us share knowledge, support startups effectively, and improve our capacity-building efforts."

Dr. Gaurav Singh, CEO of BFI, stated, "Meeting the IIT Kanpur incubatees was incredibly inspiring. Their boundless energy and unwavering dedication to healthcare innovation are truly awe-inspiring. IIT Kanpur's exceptional support for these entrepreneurs aligns perfectly with our shared mission of accelerating impactful solutions in biomedical research. Through diverse initiatives in bio-medical research and innovation, district full-stack partnerships, and process-driven funding programmes, we are actively addressing critical gaps in India's healthcare landscape."

This partnership between IITK and BFI signifies a significant step forward in advancing healthcare innovation in India. By bringing together diverse expertise and resources, this collaboration holds immense promise for improving public health and ensuring equitable and accessible healthcare for all.



GHAZIABAD Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav, Congress Ghaziabad candidate Dolly Sharma and other leaders during a joint press conference, ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Ghaziabad on Wednesday. UNI

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