

Stress on organic in awareness programme for farmers



SANJAY AGARWAL
RONGPO, JULY 8/- The Biring club under Rhenock constituency has organised an awareness programme for farmers on organic products in East Sikkim. Attended by Agriculture Minister Sonmath Paudyal and MLA Bikram Prasad, resource persons and officers from different departments in their speech especially stressed on the organic mission, facilities provided by the department are free of cost. Organic products and technical advice too. Bikram Pradhan in his speech highlighted on the field training of poultry farming and pig, goat and cow rearing to the villagers. Sonmath Paudyal as the chief guest thanked the Biring club for organising such a programme for the uplift of the farmers of the area. He said that the state government had made a good market for the organic products in the state and all villagers were free to sell their products openly in any market.

Training on kitchen gardening



SANJAY AGARWAL
RONGPO, JULY 8/- A one-day training programme on kitchen gardening was conducted by Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Agri-Technology Management Agency, West Sikkim, at Sankhu, an aspirational village, on Saturday under Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan. Attended by panchayat president Tulshi Bahadur Chawan and panchayat members from the concerned ward, 73 progressive farmers participated. official from FS& ADD and HCDD Subject Matter Specialist Agri Extension from Krishi Vikas Kendra West Sikkim Bishon Pradhan was present. Bishon Pradhan highlighted the importance of kitchen garden for nutrition supply and year-round vegetable cultivation and explained the layout and management of kitchen gardens with multi-level cropping for year-round supply of fresh vegetables and fruits for families. The training program concluded with the distribution of various vegetable seeds.

1-Day programme in Malli



SANJAY AGARWAL
RONGPO, JULY 8/- Malli in South Sikkim is gearing up to organize the 72nd Independence Day at Malli Bazar ground in a grand manner after a long gap. The Independence Day Celebration Committee Malli has also formed to celebrate the day with a football tournament. General Secretary of the newly formed committee Satesh Rai informed that this year an open football tournament was the main attraction of the programme. The final will be held on August 15. The winner and runners-up of the tournament would be awarded with cash prizes of Rs 1 lakh and Rs 60,000 respectively.

Rajasthan ambulance scam: CBI court issues warrant against former Union minister's son, 2 others

JAIPUR, JULY 8/- A special court here has issued bailable warrants against Ravi Krishna, director of Ziqzita Health Care Pvt Ltd and son of ex-Union minister Vayalar Ravi, and two others in connection with alleged corruption in the running ambulance services in Rajasthan.

The CBI had named Krishna, Mumbai-based company's CEO Sweta Mangal and employee Anthony Alex and the Ziqzita Health Care as accused in the chargesheet filed on June 4, the officials had said. "The CBI court has now summoned all the named accused and the company through its authorised representative to face trial by way of bailable warrants taking cognisance of the charge sheet against the accused. All the accused have been directed to appear before the court on August 23," Jogennder Singh Rajawat, counsel for BJP leader and Jaipur deputy mayor Pankaj Joshi, who filed the initial complaint, had said on Saturday. It is alleged in the FIR that ambulance service with telephone number 106 was set up by the previous Vasundhara Raj government.

The service was provided by EMR company. When the Raj government returned to power, a complaint was filed with the Jaipur Police and the state government asked the CBI to take over the probe. The case was registered by the state police on the basis of allegations levelled by some politicians. The case was taken over later by the CBI. The complainant had alleged that when the Gehlot government came to power, they found various "irregularities" in the services and recommended calling fresh tenders for it. CBI sources had said it is alleged that the terms of tenders were tweaked in such a way (making it mandatory for the ambulances to have GPS among others) that it favoured Ziqzita Health Care Ltd, making it the sole bidder. They said it is alleged that 450 such ambulances were put in service for 35 districts.

The FIR registered by the state government had named former chief minister Ashok Gehlot and alleged directors of the company, Congress leader Sachin Pilot, Karti Chidambaram (son of former Union minister P. Chidambaram), Ravi Krishna, Ziqzita Health Care, Mangal, and then Health Minister of the state, Duru Mirza, and the director of the National Rural Health Mission. However, the chargesheet filed after three years of investigation does not name Gehlot, Pilot, Chidambaram or Mirza as accused. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had also registered a money laundering case against the directors of Ziqzita and raiding the company's offices. On April 3, 2017, the ED attached the properties of Ziqzita and its directors under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act-2002.

UP govt to dump employees in their 50s if found unfit for duty

LUCKNOW, JULY 8/- The Uttar Pradesh government is contemplating "compulsory retirement" for employees aged 50 years and above if they are found neglecting their duty, an order that has not gone down well with around 16 lakh employees. "You all (departmental heads) should complete screening of all the employees above 50 years of age for compulsory retirement by July 31. For considering 50 years of age, the cut-off date will be March 31, 2018," a government order issued by additional chief secretary Mukul Singhla read.

"It means employees who have completed 50 years by this date will be considered for screening," the order said. It also said that according to rules, any government employee - whether temporary or permanent - can opt for retirement. The order has, however, not come down well with the employees, with the president of UP Secretariat Employees' Association Yadvendra Mishra saying that such attempts were aimed at harassing employees.

"It will not be tolerated," he said, adding that a meeting would be held here tomorrow to discuss the order and decide the course of action. While such orders have been in vogue since 1986, the same was not being implemented in its spirit by several departments, said officials. Now to make sure that the order is implemented, all departments have been asked to complete screening of employees for the purpose of compulsory retirement by July 31. Employees who crossed 50 years on March 31, 2017, will have to undergo screening, the order stated. The screening test is mandatory for all government employees who have crossed the 50-year mark by July 31. It is expected that over 4 lakh such employees working in various state government departments would qualify for such screening and detailed report of their work and performance would be submitted by 31st of July. The order, dated July 6, has been marked to the additional chief secretary, principal secretaries and secretaries in the government. Quoting original Rule 56 of the Finance Handbook, the order stated that the appointing authority, at any given time, can give retirement to temporary or permanent government employees by giving notice after he attains 50 years of age. The time period of this notice will be three months. It also quoted that such attempts were aimed at harassing employees.

Following this, orders were passed in 1989, 2000 and 2007 as well for the implementation of the same. However, officials said the order was not being implemented by several departments and the screening committees were not meeting annually, as was the norm.

Cong rakes up Panama Papers leak to corner Chhattisgarh CM's son

RAIPUR, JULY 8/- The Chhattisgarh unit of the Congress claimed today that it has proof that "Abhishek Singh", the name revealed by International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in the Panama Papers, referred to chief minister Raman Singh's son Abhishek.

Abhishek Singh is a BJP Lok Sabha MP from the state's Rajnandgaon constituency. "Ahead of changing the spelling of his name, Abhishek was allegedly the director of a company and used to spell his name as Abhishek. He had resigned from the company before contesting Lok Sabha elections in 2014," state Congress chief Bhanupesh Bacheti told reporters at a press conference in Raipur. According to documents revealed by ICIJ, "Abhishek Singh" was shown to be having offshore assets and the residential address mentioned in his foreign bank account was "Raman Medical Store, New Bus Stand, Ward Number 20, Vindhya (wasini) Ward, Kawardha", Baghel said. "Although chief minister Raman Singh and his son Abhishek have continuously denied knowing any person by the name Abhishek Singh, they have, at the same time, also ignored demands by the Congress to register an FIR for misusing the address of a chief minister," he said. Abhishek Singh was allegedly the director of Chat Estates Private Limited and used to spell his name as Abhishek, before changing the spelling of his name to the current one, he alleged. Chat Estates Private Limited was registered in November 2011 for which the Gurgaon address of a person named Sonal Thakur was provided by the company, he said. "As per the documents, initially, there were three directors - Abhishek Singh, son of Raman Singh, Aishwarya Hada, wife of Abhishek Singh and Sonal Thakur, daughter of Mahendra Kalchuri," he alleged. He said that "Abhishek Singh" resigned from the post of director before contesting Lok Sabha polls in 2014. The signature of director Abhishek Singh, on Form 32, Memorandum of Association and balance sheet of Chat Estates Private Limited and the signature of the affidavit submitted by Abhishek Singh during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections was virtually the same, Baghel alleged.



The Soureni constituency office of Hill Trinamool Congress was inaugurated by Trinamool Mirik sub-division committee president Anil Chhetri in the presence of constituency president Anil Subba on Sunday. — DEEP MILAN PRADHAN

Police yet to crack Burari death puzzle

NEW DELHI, JULY 8/- Even a week after the mysterious Burari deaths, the police are yet to come up with an answer to the puzzle related to the alleged mass suicide.

The police are delving into occult, psychology, superstition and latest investigative techniques to crack one of the most sensational cases in the national capital in the recent times. It's been a week since 11 members of the Burari-based Chundawat family were found dead under mysterious circumstances inside their house. At the centre of all this is a family member as 'sueb', one that was looking forward to Priyanka Bhatia's marriage. "The first wedding among the children" and had even started preparations for the big day that was scheduled in December. Last Sunday, when people were lazing around in the comfort of their homes, news channels suddenly started flashing about the deaths of 11 members of a family in north Delhi's Burari. With their faces covered in pieces of white cloth and mouths taped and hands and legs tied, a video showing 10 members hanging, was anything but gory.

Smaller parties gear up to take on Cong and BJP in MP polls

BHOPAL, JULY 8/- The Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh have been largely a fight between the Congress and the BJP for decades, but quite a few other political outfits are gearing up to enter the poll arena to take on the Big Two.

Outfits like the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Gondwana Ganatantra Party (GPP) and the newly floated SAPAKS Samaj, among others, are getting ready to throw their hats in the poll ring. Madhya Pradesh, which has a 230-member assembly, is scheduled to go to the polls by the year-end. The Congress, in Opposition since 2003, has named its veteran leader and former Union minister Kamal Nath as the new state president as part of its efforts to strengthen the party and dislodge the BJP from power. The BJP too, has made changes in its organisation ahead of the polls. The party has appointed Rakesh Singh, the Lok Sabha MP from Jabalpur who has vast organisational experience, as its state unit chief.

The AAP has already sounded the poll bugle by announcing 39 candidates way ahead of the polls, stealing a march over others, at least in selection of contestants. The Delhi-based party has said it will contest all the 230 seats. AAP convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is scheduled to address a meeting at Indore on July 15, signalling start of its campaign. Besides, a rebel group of the Janata Dal (United), led by former Union minister Sharad Yadav, is working on stitching a broad alliance with parties like the GGP, which has pockets of influence in tribal areas, and its breakaway faction, the Bharatiya Gondwana Party (BGP).

The Samanya Pichhada Eram Alpsankhyak Varg Samaj (General, Backward and Minority Welfare Society), better known as SAPAKS Samaj, an organisation born out of opposition to the government's reservation policy in jobs, promotion and education, has also decided to contest all the 230 seats. However, the BJP sees no threat from these smaller parties to its quest to retain power in the state and in fact thinks their presence will benefit it. "Politics in Madhya Pradesh is largely confined to two major parties, the BJP and the Congress."

Chouhan promises to make MP cities better than US

SAGAR, JULY 8/- Drawing a parallel between the US and Madhya Pradesh once again, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that his government would make cities in the state, going to polls this year, better than those in the US.

Addressing a function in Sagar on Saturday, Chouhan, who is helming the state since 2005, also said that the cities in the central state would emerge as the "cleanest, prettiest and developed cities," in the country in the next five years. Madhya Pradesh is going to polls later this year. "We are going to make Madhya Pradesh cities better than the US. Our government has been continuously trying to make the cities modern and we will continue to do so," Chouhan said while inaugurating urban development projects worth more than Rs 14,000 crore. The chief minister said: "Cities in Madhya Pradesh would become the cleanest, prettiest and developed in the country in the next five years."

This is not the first time that Chouhan had compared the infrastructure in Madhya Pradesh with the US. Addressing a business round-table organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum in Washington on October 24 last year, Chouhan had said that condition of roads in Madhya Pradesh was better than those in the US.



Jan Seva Samiti Pachak in East Sikkim has organised a plantation drive at Upper Pachak roadside on the eve of Purvayashan. Under the leadership of Samiti president Man Singh Rai different types of saplings were planted on the day. Local residents along with members of the Samiti participated in the drive. — SANJAY AGARWAL