

## SP feud: Ramgopal defends Akhilesh, lashes out at Shivpal

**ETAWAH (UP), APRIL 30 / -** Defending party president Akhilesh Yadav, Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav today said that Shivpal Yadav did not have any knowledge of the party constitution and advised him to work for the party and not 'talk nonsense'.

"He (Shivpal) has not read party constitution. Akhilesh cannot give party presidency to anyone. SP general body had unanimously elected him to the post, which he cannot give to anyone. Shivpal should not talk nonsense," Ramgopal said while talking to reporters here. He was asked by the media on

Shivpal's repeated demand from Akhilesh to hand over the party president's post to his father, party patron Mulayam Singh Yadav. "Party's membership drive is on and will continue till September 30. If Shivpal wants to become party president, he should participate in membership drive and ask his men to contest party polls. He (Shivpal) has nothing...he has only misled (Mulayam)," Ramgopal said.

Last week, Akhilesh had lost his cool when asked the same question by media persons. "You (media) read constitution of our party and Election Commission act (order), then you ask

the question. Have you all got only questions relating to my home (matters)? I don't like all questions. But after asked everytime. In whose family there is no dispute?" he said, while accepting that it was one of the reasons for SP's defeat in the assembly polls. When a television reporter wearing a saffron shirt had asked about Shivpal's statement, an infuriated Akhilesh had said, "He (the reporter) is new here. His colour is also saffron... I want to tell him and other journalists to fix any day in May, and I will answer all questions. But after that you should not ask any question about my family" (PTI)

## Journo accused of abetting suicide of jawan gets bail

**MUMBAI, APRIL 30 / -** The Bombay High Court has granted anticipatory bail to a woman journalist booked for abetting the suicide of an army jawan and also under the Official Secrets Act after observing that prima facie no offence is made out against the accused. Justice Ravi Mohite Dero on April 28 granted anticipatory bail to Poonam Agarwal, a senior journalist with The Quint and retired soldier and war veteran Deepchand Singh. Last month, the Deolali Camp police in Nashik registered a case against Poonam and Deepchand under various sections of the Indian Penal Code including abetment of suicide of the jawan from Kerala Roy Mathew.

The scribe was also booked under sections 3 (spying) and 7 (interfering with officers of the police or members of the armed forces of Union) of the Official Secrets Act.

According to police, she was booked for violating Army rules by entering prohibited areas and conducting a shoot there. Agrawal is accused of entering HeLines in Deolali camp without the permission of authorities and filming the premises besides carrying out a sting operation on Mathew and other jawans on February 24 in which she is said to have asked leading questions.

The case was registered after Mathew (33) was found hanging from the ceiling of a room in an abandoned barrack in Deolali cantonment here on March 2. According to police, Mathew featured in the sting opera-

tion carried out by Poonam and Deepchand exposing the 'buddy' (Sabayak) system in the Army and had committed suicide over fear and shame. Poonam and Deepchand approached the high court after a sessions court rejected their anticipatory bail pleas. Senior counsel Amit Desai, appearing for Poonam, argued that the sting operation was carried out in public interest and to expose the malaise in the Indian Army. The High Court after hearing the arguments said, "After viewing the said clip, it appears that the purpose of the sting operation was to show that the 'Sabayaks' were made to do menial work like taking their seniors' dogs for walks, taking their seniors' children to schools and so on." "Prima facie at this stage, the prosecution case as it stands is doubtful whether any offence under IPC or Official Secrets Act is attracted in the peculiar facts of the case," Justice Dero said.

"Merely because the sting operation was done in a prohibited area would not automatically attract provision of the Official Secrets Act," the court said. The court granted Poonam and Deepchand anticipatory bail on a surety of Rs 25,000 and directed them to appear before the police on three days: May 2, May 3 and May 4 for recording their statement and questioning. The court also directed Poonam to surrender to the police raw footage of the sting operation. Mathew had joined the Army 13 years ago and was working as an artillery gunner with the Rocket Regiment 214 in Nashik camp for the last one year. (PTI)

## UP govt mulling loan waiver for 'Divyangs'

**BALLIA (UP), APRIL 30 / -** After waiving loans of farmers, the Uttar Pradesh government is contemplating forgoing loans upto Rs 1 lakh of the differently-abled or 'Divyangs'. "Like farmers' loan waiver scheme, the government is going to waive loans upto Rs 1 lakh of 'Divyangs'. We will also provide them loans upto Rs 1 lakh at an interest rate of 4 per cent only." Backward welfare and Handicap welfare minister Om Prakash Rajbhar said here today. For resolving problems of the 'Divyangs', the government will also hold "Samadhan Diwas" on the second Wednesday of every month. The minister said the government is also mulling creating new categories of "most backwards" and "most Dalits". "As per plan which is being worked out, 'most backwards' will be given reservation from the existing provisions for backward category. Similarly, 'most Dalits' will also be given reservation from the existing SC category. For this work is in process," he said. He said the new categories have been planned to provide more facilities to needy persons. (PTI)

## Vistara, IAF airplanes collision averted at Chandigarh International Airport

**CHANDIGARH, APRIL 30 / -** A major mishap was averted when an Air Vistara flight was asked to abort its take off at the last moment to avoid crashing into an Indian Air Force plane that was landing on the same runway at the International Airport here. Sources said the timely intervention by the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) prevented the mishap from happening when the Delhi-bound Air Vistara flight was about to take off from here yesterday after an IL-76 cargo plane of the Indian Air Force (IAF) sought permission for landing on the runway.

The Air Vistara flight had 151 passengers on board and was scheduled to departure at 3.20 pm. However, it got delayed and left past 5 pm, officials said. They said as the plane accelerated to take off, it was asked to abort and return to the gate by the ATC. After the incident, Vistara tweeted, "regret the trouble, take off was aborted as per instructions from ATC at Chandigarh airport." IAF officials said that the decision to abort take off of the private airline was taken by the ATC keeping in view the safety norms. (PTI)

## Parl panel on external affairs visits Leh

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 30 / -** The Parliamentary Committee on external affairs, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, visited Leh in Jammu and Kashmir where army officials briefed them about the security situation in the region.

"The committee, comprising five Members of Parliament under the chairmanship of Shashi Tharoor visited Fire and

Fury Corps, Leh yesterday on a study tour," a defence spokesman said here today. The Committee members were welcomed by Major General A S Chowdhry and senior officers of the Fire and Fury Corps, the spokesman said. The Parliamentary Committee was briefed about the security situation and dynamics in the region, he added. (PTI)

## Plight of migrants to find voice on All India Radio

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 / -** UNESCO will air series of radio programmes to evoke sympathy amongst urban dwellers towards migrants, starting tomorrow on the International Labour Day. "Khanabadoshon Ki Duniya" (A World of Migrants) is a series of 10 radio programmes - 3-4 minutes each - produced by

UNESCO featuring several real-life situations involving migrants and the challenges they face in accessing their rights and entitlements. The first radio programme will be aired tomorrow on three channels of All India Radio - FM Gold, FM Rainbow and MW Indraprastha. The complete series will be broadcast over a period of 4 weeks, on

weekdays, twice a day, from May 1 till May 26. The radio programmes will highlight unique characteristics of migrants in the cities. Like their work as agents of development, upholders of cultural diversity, contributors to skill diversity, symbols of new aspirations and migrant working woman. "The approach adopted is to evoke

empathy amongst urban dwellers by focusing on similarities between migrants from rural areas and residents from urban areas," UNESCO said in a release. The series will focus on sharing the experience and contributions of migrants to the cities they migrate to and thereby disrupt the homogeneous image, it added. "We

wish to draw attention to the brave choices migrants make and encourage city dwellers to ensure that migrants feel part of a city which is welcoming, inclusive and recognises migrants' entitlement to a dignified life," said Marina Faetamina, the section's chief and programme specialist, social and human sciences, UNESCO (New Delhi). (PTI)

## Play explores Indo-Pak relations through a tale of friendship

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 / -** As an ingrained rivalry between two diplomats from India and Pakistan turns into an informal companionship, a new play 'A Walk in the Woods' explores the futility of efforts to improve relations between the neighbouring nations. The play opens with an irritable Indian diplomat Raj Chinappa, played by Raji Kapur, seriously cooing his Pakistani counterpart, and each of them opens increasingly grossly impatient by Lutfullah's casual demeanour, the latter goes on to discuss his favourite suit makers and the scenic beauty of the surroundings. He insists on becoming friends with Chinappa, rather than being a mere negotiator, and each of Chinappa's sentences is subsequently met with a quick retort by Lutfullah. As the play unfolds, the conversation takes a serious turn, transforming into commentary on the fate of the cross-border relations, which, both agree, depend not on the countries' wishes but on those of the rulers and interlocutors. "Year after year we are sent here to meet each other, to discuss our problems, and play blame games. But we end up trading proposals, hurling accusations, and measuring our arms and ammunition like schoolkids. What we need is better education, healthcare, employment and birth control. All these meetings are a ridiculous waste of time. All our proposals invariably amount to nothing. We keep failing," says an exasperated Lutfullah. The second half fails to entertain Lutfullah in the first half, the Chinappa falls to entertain Lutfullah in the first half, the two men getting more informal with each other and the Pakistani diplomat getting more cynical. As the last attempt by the two to reach an amicable status is rejected by the leaders of their countries, Lutfullah's decision to retire from his service is met with disbelief from Chinappa, who had grown a liking for the diplomat from across the border. "As so many before us and many more to come, we also have done nothing. The new man will also do nothing but trade proposals. There is never going to be any progress here," says Lutfullah with a sense of loss. Based on Lee Blessing's work of the same name, the play was directed by Ratna Pathak Shah. The play concludes with a dejected Lutfullah asking Chinappa, "What should we talk about now?" "Let's talk about nothing," says a content Chinappa as he takes off his shoes to get drenched in the rain in the woods. (PTI)



Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu (C), Veteran Santoor Maestro Shikumar Sharma with Hansa Yogendra Director of Yoga Institute Inaugurating the centenary Logo of Yoga Institute, in Mumbai.

## Lakhs of vehicles in Delhi flouting vehicular emission norms: EPCA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 / -** Delhi, a global air-pollution hotspot, has lakhs of vehicles flouting the mandatory pollution under control certificates while the PUC testing network, established by the government, has found. The blatant violations, that potentially imperil the health of millions, have put the spotlight on around 970 centres in the city, that are certified to check the emission content of around 70 lakh vehicles in the city. The audit report has been submitted to the Supreme Court. EPCA (Environmental Pollution - Prevention and Control) is an SC-appointed body. As per Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, every BS-III emission-compliant motor vehicle needs to go for a pollution test every three months while BS-IV vehicles have to take the test annually. According to estimates

of EPCA, every quarter there should be around 59 lakh PUC tests in Delhi, but the period of November 2016 to January 2017 (3 months) shows tests of only 3.7 lakh vehicles, which works out to a compliance rate of 23.2 per cent. "A large number of vehicles in Delhi remain outside the PUC testing network," the report states, adding that even among the vehicles turning up for tests, the failure rate is extremely low and that the existing norms cannot even identify at least 15 to 20 per cent grossly polluting vehicles in the on-road fleet. "Nearly all vehicles pass the tests. Due to poor recording of failed tests and due to very lax norms the overall failure rate in Delhi is 4.69 per cent. For the diesel vehicles tested, the failure rate stands at 88 per cent, compared to 5.18 per cent for petrol vehicles," it says. A serious flaw is the

fact that failed tests are not recorded as vehicle owners refuse to pay the test fee if their vehicles fail. As a result, the pass-fail data compiled by the transport departments show very poor failure rate. "It is therefore, important to mandate advance payment of fees before the test is conducted and the software should be changed accordingly to plug this loophole," the audit says. According to the report, the current PUC norms are so weak, especially for the pre-BS-IV vehicles that dominate the on-road fleet, that not only do most vehicles pass the test, but a great part of them actually pass with as high as an 80 per cent margin from the norm. As per the law, a vehicle found not carrying a valid PUC Certificate is liable to be prosecuted under Section 190(2) of the Motor Vehicles Act. "The overall assessment has revealed that

there are serious quality concerns in the way PUC tests are conducted and equipment are maintained in numerous PUC Centres across the NCR region. In Delhi alone there are 971 centres but the transport department has only 28 inspectors and among them only one inspector is available for actual on ground inspection in so many stations," the report observes.

A similar analysis has not been possible for Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, many towns of which fall in the National Capital Region, as the data is purely manual and complete data for all centres with adequate details are not available, the EPCA said. It has recommended making annual vehicle insurance policy mandatory and conditional with PUC certification, pending which this programme can "barely make any difference" to the air quality. (PTI)

## Rail scam: HC upholds trial court order allowing CBI plea

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 / -** The Delhi High Court has upheld a trial court order allowing the CBI to place on record two CDs containing purported telephonic conversations intercepted during its probe in the cash-for-post bribery case in the railways.

The case allegedly involves former Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansa's nephew Vijay Singla and others. Besides Singla, the other accused facing trial in the Rs 10 crore cash-for-post railway bribery case are Mahesh Kumar, then Member (Staff) of Railway Board, Manoj Dixit, director of Bangalore-based G N Tronics India N R Manjunath, alleged middlemen Ajay Garg and Sandeep Goyal, besides co-accused Rahul Yadav, Sameer Sandhir, Sushil Daga, C V Venugopal and M V Murali

Krishnan. Justice S P Garg dismissed the petition moved by one of the 10 accused, Sameer Sandhir, who had challenged the trial court's special judge February 2016 order, by which it had allowed the CBI's plea to place on record the CDs. "Prima facie, there is sufficient material on record to infer that both these CDs are relevant and can be produced as evidence during trial as per law.

"I find no illegality or material irregularity in the order (of a trial court), the petition lacks in merits and is dismissed," the court said. It also noted in its order that the prosecution is not expected to prove their authenticity and genuineness beyond reasonable doubt at this stage, merely because the CDs were filed at a stage, that is after the filing of the charge-sheet and the

supplementary charge-sheet. The CBI had moved the application before a trial court to place on record the CDs containing the purported telephonic conversation in pursuance to May 2015 order by the high court. The high court had directed the trial court to permit the agency to file appropriate application to bring on record the sealed CDs and decide whether these can be brought on record during recording of evidence and under which provision of law. During the arguments for the CBI's plea, all the 10 accused facing trial, opposed it contending there was no provision in the CrPc permitting the agency to bring on record the CDs which it did not deposit while filing charge sheets. The CBI, however, had said they had no intention to con-

## Murder accused MLA Amanmani shares stage with Adityanath

**GORAKHPUR, APRIL 30 / -** Murder accused MLA Amanmani Tripathi shared the stage with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and even sought blessings by touching his feet at an event here yesterday.

Tripathi (35), an independent MLA from Nautanwa assembly constituency in neighbouring Maharajganj district, was sitting a few seats away from Yogi Adityanath. He later got up, greeted the chief minister and touched his feet. Tripathi is facing charges of murdering his wife Sara. He was handed over five papers to Amanmani during his brief interaction. Senior BJP MLA from Campyarganj Fateh Bahadur Singh, who was overseeing preparations of the programme, said that he came to know later that Tripathi had touched the feet of the UP chief minister. Even BJP workers were surprised to see the murder accused MLA sharing the stage with Adityanath. "Who has repeatedly said that law and order is his top priority, BJP's Gorakhpur unit spokesperson Satyendra Sinha however said that, "Any public representative can greet the chief minister and touch his feet. There is nothing wrong in it." Amanmani's father Amanmani Tripathi has been elected MLA from Nautanwa four times and was a minister in the SP government headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav. Amanmani Tripathi is currently serving a life sentence in the Madhumitha Shukla murder case. (PTI)

## Lata Mangeshkar remembers Dada Saheb Phalke on his 148th birth anniversary

**MUMBAI, APRIL 30 / -** Melody queen Lata Mangeshkar has paid a tribute to the Father of Indian cinema, Dada Saheb Phalke on his 148th birth anniversary. The 87-year-old veteran singer took to Twitter where she remembered Phalke "Namaskar Who can forget Dada Saheb Phalke Ji, the Father of Indian cinema. Today is his birth anniversary. I offer my respectful greetings to him," Mangeshkar posted on Twitter. Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, popularly known as Dadasaheb Phalke, was an Indian producer, director and screenwriter and has one of the country's most prestigious awards named

after him. He gave India its first full-length feature film 'Raja Harishchandra' in 1913 and went on to make 95 movies and 26 short films in his career spanning 19 years. Phalke passed away on February 16, 1944 at the age of 73. (PTI)



Union Minister for Urban Development, Information & Broadcasting, M. Venkaiah Naidu calling on Dada Saheb Phalke award winner, K. Viswanth, in Hyderabad.