

# Thai Navy delegation arrives on isles visit

**PORT BLAIR, APRIL 20** /- The Royal Thailand Naval Ship HTMS Longlom arrived at Haddo Wharf, Port Blair to mark the culmination of the 24th series of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) on Wednesday. The ship is commanded by Lieutenant Commander Alongkorn Butsarakrak. A Thai Naval Dornier flew a high level Thai Naval delegation led by Vice Admiral Suraphon Kuptapan of the Thai Navy to INS Vikramshila, Port Blair. Vice Admiral Suraphon Kuptapan had detailed discussions with Maj Gen PS Sai, Chief of Staff, Andaman and Nicobar Command on April 19. Apart from securing the trade sea route, the Coordinated Patrol also serves to enhance mutual understanding and inter-operability between the two navies. The CORPAT thus reflects the shared concerns between the two countries for a peaceful Indian Ocean for the benefit of international community. During the stay



at Port Blair till April 21, the visiting crew shall be engaged in interactions at various strata, including sports fixtures, ship visits, professional interactions and visits to places of historical and tourist interests.

# Adhyaksh reviews progress of rural projects in SA



**PORT BLAIR, APRIL 20** /- The Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, Mr Jaydeep Kumar Dey along with Zilla Parishad member, Choudhary constituency, Mr Gadadhar Majumdar inspected progress of various projects in the region on Wednesday. The team inspected construction of CC drain from Shri Kurma Rao's house to Shri Koshi's house at ward No. 1 under Bamboofat Panchayat by Zilla Parishad, maintenance of village road from Shiv Dasan Chowk to

Radhakrishnan Temple at Ward No. 2 at Bamboofat under Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, CC road along with retaining wall and culvert from Panigat Dam to Anna Nagar village road under Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, construction of Rural Road from Shri Hamid's house to Shri Nashir's house at Mannarghat ward No. 5 under Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, community toilet at Wimberlygunj adjacent to Children's Park, bus stop at Wimberlygunj Junction, construction of road

# XXth State School Games, finals of TT event held

ROOPA LALL

**PORT BLAIR, APRIL 20** /- In the ongoing XXth State School Games, finals of the table tennis event were held in the Multipurpose Hall of Netaji Stadium here on Thursday. The Assistant Supervisor (Sports) of Mayabunder zone was the chief guest on the occasion and distributed medals to the winners and runners-up teams.



In the girls' single division, Kaberi Rai of Diglipur Zone defeated Mili of Little Andaman Zone, while in the girls' doubles, Mili/Svetlana of Little Andaman Zone defeated Cleopatra/Pranthi Kumari of Nancowrie Zone. In boys' singles, T.Mohammed Farzan of Wimberlygunj Zone defeated S.C.Shakar of Nancowrie and the doubles event Abdul Shajid/Winfredo of Port Blair Zone defeated Godfrey/T.Valentine George of Car Nicobar.

# Nitish meets Sonia, calls for opposition unity to take on BJP

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 20** /- Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar today met Congress President Sonia Gandhi here and is learnt to have advocated

alliance of opposition parties to take on the BJP-led NDA. JD(U) also used the meeting to call for a joint opposition candidate for the election to the President's post and urged Gandhi to take the lead in the matter. Its spokesperson K C Tyagi, however, insisted that the issue of presidential election was not discussed in the meeting and added it was his party's view that a strong joint opposition candidate will be in national interest. "There should a joint opposition candidate for the top Constitutional post and Sonia Gandhi being the leader of the largest opposition party should take the lead," he said. Kumar has already taken up the matter with leaders of the Left parties and received a good response, he said. Another senior JD(U) leader said Kumar's visit to Gandhi's residence was a courtesy call as the Congress is the party's ally in Bihar and also because Gandhi had been ill for some time. "He did speak about the need for unity among opposition parties," he added. Kumar has been calling for forging an alliance of secular parties at the national level on the lines of the 2015 electoral grand alliance or 'Mahagabhandhan' in Bihar to take on the BJP-led NDA under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Congress is a partner in the Bihar government with Kumar's JD-U and Lalu Prasad's RJD after the three parties contested and won the assembly elections as part of the grand alliance.(PTI)

# SC to CalHC: Decide pleas on Gorkhaland law, agreement forthcoming

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 20** /- The Supreme Court today asked the Calcutta High Court to expeditiously decide the pleas relating to the constitutional validity of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act and an agreement promising transfer of powers from West Bengal government to the local authority.

The apex court also remanded to the High Court the pending plea of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) seeking implementation of the GTA Act and the 2011 tripartite memorandum of agreement (MoA) on transfer of powers. "If the High Court says that the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act is unconstitutional and it does not survive there, then the whole exercise here (in the Supreme Court) will be to-

tally futile," a bench of Chief Justice J S Khehar and Justices D Y Chandrachud and S K Kaul said. The order to remand back the plea of GTA came after the apex court perused the orders passed by the High Court in various petitions challenging the validity of the GTA Act and the MoA. "We are informed that the vires/constitutional validity of the GTA Act and the MoA have been assailed before the Calcutta High Court..." "Having given our thoughtful consideration, we are of the view that firstly, the issue of validity of the GTA Act and the notification are needed to be determined and only after that the implementation of the Act and MoA can be dealt with," the bench said and directed the High Court to decide the petitions as "expedi-

tiously as possible". The apex court, on April 18, had asked the West Bengal government to file on record the orders passed by the High Court in matters challenging the constitutional validity of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act. Senior advocate P R Rao, appearing for GTA, had said it was an elected body and the state government was not holding even the civic polls in the area following under it. Prior to this, GTA had moved the top court seeking implementation of the Act and MoA. West Bengal government's refusal to transfer administrative power and various subjects to it, in spite of a tripartite agreement that was reached between the Gorkha agitators, the state and the Centre in 2011. The apex court had agreed to

hear the plea and asked the GTA to place on record the notification issued by the West Bengal government in 2011 in which it had promised transfer of powers through the MoA arrived at in the tripartite meeting. The MoA for the creation of GTA was signed on July 18, 2011 at Paitail Village near Siliguri in the presence of then Home Minister P Chidambaram, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Gorkha Jannukti Morcha leaders. Recently, the GTA moved the High Court against the state government and Election Commission for alleged delay in holding of elections to four municipalities in Darjeeling hills. The five-year term for Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Mirik municipalities had come to an end in December last year.(PTI)

# Sena MP Gaikwad engages in 'verbal spat' with cops



**MUMBAI, APRIL 19** /- Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad allegedly had a heated argument with cops during a protest over non-functioning of ATMs at Latur in Maharashtra region, police said. Videos of the alleged heated argument between Gaikwad, his supporters and police personnel at Latur in Maharashtra region, have gone viral on social media. In the visuals, Gaikwad is purportedly seen arguing with a police officer, during a protest over non-functioning ATMs at Latur. The Lok Sabha member from adjoining Osmanabad constituency, Gaikwad, who reached

Latur yesterday, had sent his aide to withdraw money from an ATM at Latur. However, the aide returned empty-handed, saying the ATM had run out of cash. This happened with a few other ATMs, prompting the Sena MP to go out and stage a protest with his supporters outside an ATM. When policemen arrived and requested Gaikwad to discontinue his protest as it was hampering the vehicular traffic, the Sena MP allegedly shouted at them, police said. Giving his version of the incident, Gaikwad said, "There is no money in the ATMs for the last 15 days. What should we do? They (the BJP-led government) asked us to give them 50 days (after demonetisation, for formalisation of financial transactions). We gave them 100 days, then 200 days. It is the job of the (Union) Finance Minister and the Finance Minister of Maharashtra. It is also the job of the Guardian Minister of Latur district to rectify the situation." (PTI)



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan addressing a seminar on center-state ties at AKG center at Thiruvananthapuram.

# BJP using Governors to impose its political interests: Vijayan

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 20** /- Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan today hit out at the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre and alleged that the saffron party was "using Governors to impose its political interests in states." "BJP's attitude is to use Governors for its purpose and what happened in Goa and Manipal is the best example for it," he said while inaugurating a seminar on 'Centre-State relations' here.

Referring to the formation of BJP-led governments in Goa and Manipal, Vijayan said Governors of these states did not even invite the party (Congress), which got a majority in the polls, and instead handed over power to a party (BJP) which came second. "It was an undemocratic move and not in tune with the spirit of Constitution. Centre-state relations have become very bad under the BJP government. The position taken by the Centre, especially towards the non-BJP led state governments, has even led to tension between the Centre and states on certain issues," he said. Recalling his meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal yesterday, Vijayan said the Centre has not even recognised him (Kejriwal) as the Chief Minister. "Some Central leaders have come out openly stating that he had only the role of an advisor," Vijayan said. He alleged that the Centre was implementing the RSS's policies that challenge the federal system and were taking steps to "centralise powers while talking about decentralisation." "Alleging that the Centre was making the states weak, the Left leader said the most anti-democratic step was the unilateral dissolution of the Planning Commission. "Another unilateral step was the cutting down of the state's share of resources to 60-40 from 80-20," he said. Vijayan alleged that the agenda was to replace the federal system with "Central authority" in the country. Referring to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Kerala Chief Minister said many states have said that they have a problem with the tax regime. Opposition leader in the state Assembly Ramesh Chennithala.(PTI)

# Mock exercise on earthquake, tsunami on April 22 in Middle Andaman

**PORT BLAIR, APRIL 20** /- To enhance the capacity towards disaster preparedness among the community and stakeholders of Middle Andaman, a mock exercise has been planned to be conducted on April 22 at Rangat, Nimbutala, Aamkunj and Panchavati in Middle Andaman on earthquake and tsunami. In this connection, a Table Top-cum-Co-ordination conference was conducted on Thursday in the conference hall of Panchavati Samiti, Rangat involving all line departments, stakeholders, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Community by the Directorate of Disaster Management in coordination with District Administration, Middle Andaman.

The Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Monica Priyadarshini briefed about the proposed Mock Exercise, standard operating procedure of District Administration and urged all the participants to give full cooperation for the success of mock exercise of earthquake and tsunami so that people could be more aware towards any disasters. The Standard Operating Procedures of various departments, i.e. police, fire, health, transport, forest, AH & VS, APWD, civil supply, electricity, education, Gram Panchayat Rangat, Dasarathapur and Nimbutala were also discussed. The scenarios for the proposed mock exercise on earthquake and tsunami has been finalised which will be conducted at 10 am on the villages and response of each line department/stakeholders, PRIs and Community will be tested, a release from the Assistant Commissioner, Middle Andaman, Rangat said.

# Guj CM, ministers & babus remove red beacons from their cars

**AHMEDABAD, APRIL 20** /- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, his ministerial colleagues and senior government officials today removed red beacon lights from their official vehicles. The move comes a day after the Union Cabinet's decision to remove 'la bhattis' from all vehicles, including that of the Prime Minister and the President. Taking the lead, Rupani himself removed the red beacon light placed atop his official

SUV during his visit to Valsad district this morning. Union Minister Parshottam Rupala also took the beacon off his vehicle during his visit to Amreli district. Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told reporters in Gandhinagar that almost the entire cabinet and senior officials have implemented the Union Cabinet's decision. "Almost all the our cabinet colleagues, including myself, have removed

the red beacon from our cars today. The Chief Secretary along with many other bureaucrats did the same thing," Patel said on his arrival at the secretariat in his beacon-less vehicle. He added that the state government cannot direct Governor O P Kohli as well as Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court and other judges to follow the directive of Union Cabinet. "They would take the decision on their own," Patel said.(PTI)

claimed that he had told Dhinakaran that he will get a favourable verdict from the Election Commission of India in the party symbol case, he said. It has been learnt that he had allegedly struck a deal for Rs 50 crore for helping the AIADMK faction which the 'two leaves' symbol. Dhinakaran had last night served summons to him in the case. Assistant Commissioner Sanjay and another official served summons to Dhinakaran at his Besant Nagar residence here. The Delhi Police had also issued a lookout notice against Dhinakaran yesterday. The lookout notice was issued in the wake of inputs that Dhinakaran was an NRI and country to flee the country. The Crime Branch had on April 16 arrested an alleged middleman, Suresh Chandrasekhar in New Delhi in connection with the case. He

also claimed that he had told Dhinakaran that he will get a favourable verdict from the Election Commission of India in the party symbol case, he said. It has been learnt that he had allegedly struck a deal for Rs 50 crore for helping the AIADMK faction which the 'two leaves' symbol. Dhinakaran, the nephew of jailed AIADMK general secretary V K Sasikala, is facing a revolt by an influential faction of the party led by Chief Minister K Palaniswami and a host of ministers, who had on Tuesday declared the ouster of the once powerful aunt-nephew duo, and elected a hand of friendship to the Pannelsavam camp. Meanwhile, Senior AIADMK leaders M Thambidurai and D Jayakumar today separately called on Tamil Nadu Governor Ch Vidyaasagar

# Dhinakaran asked to appear before Delhi Police on Saturday

also the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, said Rao was his "friend" and described the meeting as a "courtesy call," while Finance Minister Jayakumar, who also holds the Fisheries portfolio, discussed the issue of Vice-Chancellor's appointment to the Tamil Nadu Fisheries University. "There is no political significance in this meeting. We did not speak politics at all," Thambidurai said when asked if he apprised the Governor of the ongoing rumblings in the ruling AIADMK. Thambidurai said Rao has been his friend since the former was a minister in the AB Vajpayee cabinet in 1998-99. "It was a courtesy call," Thambidurai said, adding, he used to meet Rao, also Governor of