BSP plans counter to thwart BJP's Dalit, backward outreach prog

LUCKNOW, APRIL 29/--/As the BJP tries to placate Dalit voters through outreach programmes like 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan' in run-up to the Lok Sabha polls next year, the BSP has asked its office-bearers and workers to fan out and initiate preemptive steps to ensure the ruling party does not make a dent in a vote bank that has traditionally backed it.

Party office-bearers, including coordinators and peoples' representatives, have been alerted against the "designs" of the BJP behind its leaders undertaking visits to villages for night stays and having dinners at Dalit homes, a BSP leader said, requesting anonymity. Under the 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan', which was launched earlier this month, the BJP has asked its MPs, including Union ministers, to spend at least a night in villages where SCs/STs constitute over 50 per cent of the population. They have been asked to ensure everyone in such villages is covered under government schemes that aim to provide LPG connections, vaccination to children, 'Jan Dhan' accounts and electricity for households.

The campaign is being seen as a part of the BJP's massive outreach to the rural poor, especially the Dalits, as it gears up for a string of assembly elections leading to the Lok Sabha polls due next year.

The BJP's campaign comes against the backdrop of opposition parties targeting the Narendra Modi government over its alleged anti-Dalit policies. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has already spent a night each in Pratapgarh and Amroha and held "chaupal" to take feedback on government schemes. He had dinner in a Dalit house.

The BSP leader said the BJP has realised it has earned the ire of Dalits, backwards and minorities because of its policies and the night stay is just an effort to keep them in good humour. "But such programme is not going to serve any purpose."

"How can the BJP wish away the anger and bad name it has earned by going all out to crush their voice during the 'Bharat Bandh' on April 2 and over its stand on dilution of the SC/ST Act...these programmes are merely an effort to somehow divert attention and a drama to show they are very concerned about Dalit issues," he said. Since BSP president Mayawati is in Delhi busy chalking out her party's strategy, she will be meeting her leaders only on her return in May and issuing directives in this regard, the party leader said.

Meanwhile, the BSP is maintaining a close watch on BJP's "sahbhoj" (community feast), night halts by its leaders in Dalit-dominated areas, their visits to Dalit memorials, yatras and schemes being launched by the saffron party to woo the community, he said. Mayawati has also questioned the purpose of having dinner with Dalit families when the government has been adopting "anti-Dalit policies". "First Congress leaders dined at the homes of Dalits and announced it to the world..Now, the BJP is walking in its footsteps. While people think that they are eating food cooked by Dalits, the reality is that it is prepared by upper castes in their own homes," she has said after Adityanath's Pratapgarh visit.

She has accused the BJP of "totally ignoring" the welfare of Dalits, adivasis, OBCs and upper caste poor and said that organising dinners was putting them in further trouble. "They do not care about the Dalit and backward classes but when elections come, they go for photo-ops and drama. The Congress and the BJP have proved to be two sides of the same coin. People won't be befooled, they know the truth," the BSP supremo had stated.

The Dalits constitute around 18 to 20 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's voting population. In the last Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had managed to wean away the Dalit voters mainly because of the Modi wave. The BSP is seeking to regain its lost ground. (PTI)

FIR against 2 TV news channels for broadcasting 'false stories'

GHAZIABAD, APRIL 29/--/A First Information Report (FIR) has been lodged here against two television news channels for allegedly broadcasting "false stories" following a complaint by the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA).

The GDA has alleged that the Hindi news channels had aired stories, levelling charges of Rs two crore bribery against its vice chairperson, based on one-sided version.

However, the channels -- Samachar Plus and News 1 India -- have refuted the allegations, saying they had tried to reach out to the GDA chairperson Ritu Maheshwari but she was not available immediately for comments.

One Trilok Agarwal had made a complaint to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's Office, alleging that he had paid Rs 50 lakh to the GDA Secretary and the same amount to enforcement department as bribe to stop the sealing action launched by the authority against illegal construction at the site of a builder, Anil Jain.

This news story was then broadcast by news channels Samachar Plus and News 1 India, Senior Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Krishna said.

Executive Engineer R P Singh has made the complaint to the police on behalf of the GDA, alleging that the channels had broadcast "false news" to blackmail the authorities, malign the image of the state government and administrative officials.

The FIR -- naming the chief editors and the local correspondents of the news channels -- has been lodged at Sihani gate police station under various IPC sections, the SSP said.

GDA Vice-Chairperson Ritu Maheswari told PTI that news aired by the channels shows their "blackmailing mentality" and is a "criminal act".

The Executive Editor of Samachar Plus, Praveen Sahni, said the story is based on the compliant of the victim and the channel had sought the version of GDA vice chairperson but she did not attend their call.

"The complaint (as mentioned in the story) was sent to the Prime Minister's Officer and the UP Chief Minister's Office also," he added. The Editor-in-Chief on News 1 India, Anurag Chaddha, said the story his channel aired was based on the victim's complaint. "It was not false or gossip. Our local correspondent had tried to contact Maheshwari but she was not available," he said.

Meanwhile, builder Anil Jain has made a complaint to the district magistrate against Trilok Agarwal and his wife Shalini Agarwal, alleged extortion attempt.

An FIR on Jain's compplaint has been lodged at Kavi Nagar police station.

Jain also contradicted the allegations levelled in the complaint of Agarwal and said that he has not paid any amount to any official to get undue favour from the GDA.

Investigations in both cases have been initiated, SSP Krishna said. (PTI)

UP govt planning 1,000 hospitals under PPP mode

LUCKNOW, APRIL 29/--/ The Uttar Pradesh government is planning to construct around 1,000 hospitals under public-private-partnership (PPP) mode to provide good healthcare facilities to people, Health Minister Sidharth Nath Singh said.

He said that leading consulting firm Ernst&Young has been asked to prepare a detailed project report.

"This will be an extension of the central government's Ayushman Bharat scheme," Singh said today.

"We are in the process of identifying two community health centres in each district. Their land, about three acres each, will be given on a long-term lease to private company which will construct a 100-bed hospital, along with an operation theatre and diagnostic centre," he said.

The project is likely to begin from November this year.

The minister said that he will move a proposal in the cabinet to set a basic minimum module (BMM) for filling posts of doctors in district hospitals.

"There is a rule for the same at present which is not being followed. Transfers of doctors are taking place erratically. Once the cabinet clears the BMM, it will become mandatory for establishment of certain posts in all hospitals," he said.

For example, Singh said, there will be posts for ENT specialists, paediatricians, gynaecologists and orthopaedic surgeons.

Unless all these posts are filled, no arbitrary transfers from such hospitals will be permitted, he said.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal listening to the 'Mann Ki Baat Progamme' with residents of village Babail, district in Panipat on Sunday.

Digital recording facilities in schools: Tenders invited

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 29/--/Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) has invited tenders to equip all secondary schools in the state with digital recording and video conferencing facilities as part of the ambitious Hi-Tech School programme. Under the unique programme, 45,000 classrooms in 4,775 schools are in the process of being upgraded as hi-tech.

There will also be an array of 'Student Reporters' from all schools with their own web-based school televisions that will be interconnected.

As part the state government's Public Education Rejuvenation Mission, KITE has begun the process for deploying video recording devices for digital content preparation at schools along with video conferencing systems, a KITE press release said.

KITE has released the national tender for 4,775 numbers of multi-function printers, HD DSLR camera, HD webcam and 42-inch LED TVs, the deployment of which would be completed by June.

It has already provided laptops, multimedia projectors, projector ceiling mounting kit, USB speakers and Screens to 34500 schools, which are required to make classrooms hi-tech. All schools have been provided with high speed broadband internet connectivity, while the networking of classrooms is fast progressing, the release added.

As many as 75 per cent classrooms have been made hi-tech till date and in order to make the rest of the classrooms hi-tech by June, KITE has planned for the school survey to start by the middle of May.

In the backdrop of schools and classrooms becoming hi-tech, KITE has started imparting specific IT training to over one lakh teachers of standards eight to 12, from April 28.

Though this training, teachers would also get acquainted with Samagra resource portal developed by KITE, which enables teachers to undertake lesson planning in digital form and also has a bouquet of digital resources in the form of video, animation, pictures, audio and simulations.

"We have taken efforts to convert all schools into digital platforms, by enabling them to independently develop educational contents for various educational mediums such as Samagra resource portal, KITE VICTERS channel, school TVs, documentaries and films," KITE, Vice-Chairman and Executive Director, K Anwar Sadath said.

In addition to this, free software applications have been made available to schools, which facilitates editing, audio video mixing, animation of educational video contents which are shot by students and teachers using handycams, he said. Through this initiative, said to be first of its kind in the country, every school would get an opportunity to explore various steps of video production, right from script making till a complete video content, and also to broadcast the same through the school channels. (PTI)

Gorakhpur infant deaths: Kafeel Khan walks out of jail

GORAKHPUR (UP), APRIL 29/--/Kafeel Khan, who was booked in connection with the death of infants at a state-run hospital here last year, walked out of jail today.

Khan, who worked as nodal officer at the Baba Raghav Das Medical College, was granted bail by the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday.

His wife Shabistan Khan, daughter and other family members welcomed him.

"Kafeel Khan was freed from jail this evening. Although he was granted bail by the Allahabad High Court on April 25, the delay was due to some other procedures," jail superintendent Ramdhani said.

Various organisations, including members of 'Adhikar Morcha' wearing saffron scarves came in support of Khan. They also carried banners and posters with 'Dr Kafeel hamara hero' (Dr Kafeel is our hero) and 'congratulations' written on them.

After coming out of jail, Kafeel hugged his wife and daughter and said, "The honourable high court has clearly said that there is no evidence against me. You know what my family went through in the last eight months. I do not know what my fault is".

When asked who was the real culprit behind the incident, he said, "I have mentioned it in my letter".

Khan had written a letter from jail which was made public by his wife at a press conference in Delhi.

In the letter, the former nodal officer at BRD hospital, mentioned that payment to oxygen supplier at the hospital was not made because the fund for the same was not released.

More than 60 children, mostly infants, had died at the hospital within a week in August, 2017. There were allegations that the deaths occurred due to disruption in oxygen supply. The BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government, however, had denied that shortage of oxygen led to the deaths. In its report submitted on August 23, 2017, a committee under Chief Secretary Rajive Kumar had recommended initiating criminal action against then principal of the hospital Rajiv Mishra, HoD Anaesthesia Paediatric department Satish, in-charge of 100-bed AES ward Kafeel Khan and Pushpa Sales.

On August 24, an FIR was filed against nine persons, including Mishra, his wife Purnima Shukla, Kafeel Khan and the proprietors of M/s Pushpa Sales. On September 2 last, Khan was arrested and subsequently removed from his post in the hospital. (PTI)

A man quenching his thirst in front of historical Charminar to beat the heat in Hyderabad on Sunday.

India has chance to re-emerge as global powerhouse of edu: Naidu

KASARGOD (KERALA), APRIL 29/--/Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu today said the nation has a chance to re-emerge as a global powerhouse in the field of education, but for that changes in syllabus and improvement in infrastructure are needed.

"However, the situation changed following foreign invasions and the British rule, and India lost its pre-eminent position in the field of education," Naidu said.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Following e-tenders are invited online by the Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah from tenderers having experience of similar nature of work and required financial capabilities including those registered with Irrigation/CPWD/SEB/MES or any Public Sector Undertaking for the following works : **Under Sr. DEN/3/HWH. Sl. No. 1. E-Tender No. 30_2018-19_zone dtd. 24.04.2018. Description of work :** Zone No. 18 (General Zone, Road Zone & Bridge Zone) under AEN/BDC P.E. 30.06.2019 (Jurisdiction - Zonal works for Km 38/0-41/0 (including Bandel yard, Bandel station & EMU carshed) in main line, Naihati Branch line km 02/2 to km7/17 and B.B. Loop 00 to 2.00 km, all service buildings, colonies including wood and sanitary and painting works, both maintenance and new works, all road works including level crossings & all bridge works including FOBs, RUBs/ROBs etc. under AEN/Bandel). **Approx Cost :** Rs. 1,00,00,000/-. **Earnest Money :** Rs. 2,00,000/-. **Sl. No. 2. E-Tender No. 31_2018-19_zone dtd. 24.04.2018. Description of work :** Zone No. 19 (General Zone, Road Zone & Bridge Zone) under AEN/BDC P.E. 30.06.2019 (Jurisdiction - Zonal works for Km 41/0-51/0 in main line, all service buildings, colonies including wood and sanitary and painting works, both maintenance and new works, all road works including level crossings & all bridge works including FOBs, RUBs/ROBs etc. under AEN/Bandel). **Approx Cost :** Rs. 1,05,00,000/-. **Earnest Money :** Rs. 2,02,500/-. **Sl. No. 3. E-Tender No. 32_2018-19_zone dtd. 24.04.2018. Description of work :** Zone No. 20 (General Zone, Road Zone & Bridge Zone) under AEN/KWAE P.E. 30.06.2019 (Jurisdiction - Zonal works for Km 02/0-104/0 (excluding Katwa) in BB Loop, all service buildings, colonies including wood and sanitary and painting works, both maintenance and new works, all road works including level crossings & all bridge works including FOBs, RUBs/ROBs etc. under AEN/Katwa. **Approx Cost :** Rs. 1,10,00,000/-. **Earnest Money :** Rs. 2,05,000/-. **Sl. No. 4. E-Tender No. 33_2018-19_zone dtd. 24.04.2018. Description of work :** Zone No. 21 (General Zone, Road Zone & Bridge Zone) under AEN/KWAE P.E. 30.06.2019 (Jurisdiction - Zonal works for Km 104/0 to 125/0 in BB Loop, A-K & Katwa-Balgona BG section (excluding Balgona) including Katwa station, all service buildings, colonies including wood and sanitary and painting works, both maintenance and new works, all road works including level crossings & all bridge works including FOBs, RUBs/ROBs etc. under AEN/Katwa). **Approx Cost :** Rs. 95,00,000/-. **Earnest Money:** Rs. 1,90,000/-. **Closing date and time of tender :** 31.05.2018 at 14.00 hrs. The details of tender are available at website **www.ireps.gov.in** Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. No manual offer will be accepted.

(HWH-26/2018-19) PPS

Tender Notices are also available at Eastern Railway's Website **www.er.indianrailways.gov.in**

Use of helmets, driving with seat belts on to be made compulsory in UP

LUCKNOW, APRIL 29/--/ Concerned over frequent road accidents taking a heavy toll in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the authorities to make wearing of helmets compulsory and ensure that drivers wear seat belts, never drive in inebriated state or talk on mobile phone or listen to music using headphones.

The directive came against the backdrop of the death of 13 school children in Kushinagar on Friday, where a train rammed into a van carrying them as the driver was allegedly listen to music using headphone and did not notice the train at the unmanned level crossing.

The chief minister held a high-level meeting of police and transport department officials and asked the people to follow traffic rules for their own safety and that of others, an official spokesperson said here today.

"One should drive carefully and follow traffic rules. Only then their life as well as that of others travelling on roads will be safe," Adityanath said, pointing out that the negligence of a van driver led to the accident in Kushinagar.

He said schools have to be made responsible for operating vehicles as per rules.

"If everyone follows traffic rules, chaos on roads will end and many accidents which cost precious lives can be averted. It is a great challenge for officials to regulate traffic properly and to compel commuters to follow rules," the chief minister said.

"There are people riding two-wheelers without helmets and those not wearing seat belts in four-wheelers, even school vehicles are not following all the rules. Students in large number travel on rickshaws and open three-wheelers. Transport department has been asked to prepare a new plan for it," he said.

Adityanath said the number of vehicles on roads were increasing by each day and without the support of people, the traffic police would not be able handle the situation effectively.

The chief minister suggested spreading awareness about the importance of obeying traffic rules, especially among students and said road safety must be included in curriculum of primary and secondary classes.

He also stressed on the need for holding regular camps to check fitness of drivers and vehicles.

"Surprise checking of fitness of buses and their drivers should be initiated," the chief minister said, and directed officials to take stern action against stunt bikers as several causalities were reported because of reckless driving.

To ensure better traffic management and to minimise the death rate during accidents, he asked officials to prepare a blue print of traffic management in each district and strictly implement them.

The police, transport, health and education departments should jointly prepare a plan for road safety, he said.

Meanwhile, a senior Uttar Pradesh minister today said that he will request the chief minister to bring a bill in the state legislature to ban use of earphones while driving and walking on road.

"People using earphones while walking on road or driving are a major reason for accidents. The driver of the school van (in Kushinagar) had also plugged in earphones which is why he did not notice the approaching train," labour minister Swami Prasad Maurya said. (PTI)