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Arthik Lipi
Bengali Daily
লিপি
(Kolkata, Siliguri & Port Blair)

HOLIDAY
Today is May Day. Being a holiday in the office of The Echo Of India, there will be no issue of this edition on Tuesday, dated May 2.

Pak will support 'political struggle' of Kashmiris:
Bajwa
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 30 /-/ Pakistan's army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa today visited the Line of Control and said his country would continue to support the "political struggle" of the Kashmiris for the right of "self-determination". Bajwa, who toured the areas in the Haji Pir sector, was briefed about the alleged "ceasefire violation" by the Indian troops and the state of preparedness of the army to face any aggression. The army chief said Pakistan would continue to support the struggle of the Kashmiris. "We will always stand by their (Kashmiris) rightful political struggle for the right of self-determination and recourse to basic human rights," Bajwa said in an interaction with troops. He accused India of "state-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir." Bajwa alleged that India was not only involved in aggression against the people in Kashmir but also against the people living on the Pakistani side of the LoC and the Working Boundary. India has repeatedly violated the UN-backed ceasefire and Pakistan's allegations of rights violations in Kashmir. (PTI)

AT A GLANCE
Trump completes 100 days, slams media
WASHINGTON: Celebrating the first 100 days of his administration, Donald Trump today attacked the media for misleading the people with "fake news" as he skipped the "very boring" White House Correspondents' Dinner to become the first president in over 30 years to boycott the gala. "I could not possibly be thrilled than to be more than 100 miles away from Washington's swamp, spending my evening with you with a much, much larger crowd and much, much better people. The media deserves a 'D', flat, failing grade." Trump said sarcastically over his media's coverage of his achievements during his first 100 days in office. (Details on page 5)

III Vajpayee to skip BJP meeting
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LUCKNOW: Former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who is a permanent invitee to the state working committee meeting of the UP BJP, is likely to miss the event again due to his perennial poor health. The two-day state working committee meeting of the UP BJP will begin here tomorrow and is the first such meeting after the party's stunning victory in last month's assembly polls.



A man and a woman quenching their thirsts on green coconut water on a sultry afternoon in Kolkata...-Arijit Ganguly

Niti Aayog for 'judicial performance index' to check pendency

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 /-/ The Niti Aayog has suggested introduction of a "judicial performance index" to check delay in trial and address the issue of pendency of cases. Asserting that corruption cases get held up in the judicial system inordinately, the policy think-tank has also recommended putting a time-limit for processing them.

In its draft three-year action agenda (for 2017-18 to 2019-20), the Aayog has suggested several judicial reforms, including increasing the use of information and communication technology, and streamlining judicial appointments. The draft was circulated among the Niti Aayog's Governing Council members (consisting of chief ministers of all states and others) on April 23. The report says it takes over "eight years to finalise a major vigilance case from the date of occurrence of irregularity" and underlined the need to speed up decision-making process in corruption cases. "The judicial system is another avenue where corruption

cases get held up. Delays in obtaining justice encourage the corrupt and discourage those who are honest. "Beyond the larger reforms in the justice system to reduce pendency, special courts set up to try corruption cases should be strengthened and time limits to process corruption cases should be introduced," the draft report said. The report has also suggested introduction of a "judicial performance index."

"Such an index could be established to help high courts and high court chief justices keep a track of performance and process improvement at the district courts and subordinate levels for reducing delay," the draft said. This would require fixing non-mandatory time frames for different types of cases as broad guidelines to benchmark when a case has been delayed, it said. The index can include certain progress on process steps that have already been approved by high courts, like burden of day-to-day activity being removed from



Judges and given to administrative officials. "This annual evaluation should give judges in high courts and district courts a sense of where they are failing and what they need to fix. Since the subordinate judiciary is largely within the domain of the high courts, this could also spur competitive reform of the judiciary in those states," it said. The Niti Aayog report has also suggested shifting some workload out of the regular court system and introduction of an administrative cadre in the judicial system. (PTI)

Yechury not to seek re-election to Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 /-/ CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said today he would not seek re-election to the Rajya Sabha after his second consecutive term ends in August. Yechury said he would not seek another term as the party's norms do not allow a leader to get elected to the Rajya Sabha more than twice. "It is our party norm. So, I will not be contesting for a third term. As a party general secretary, I have to ensure that the norm is followed," he said. According to sources in the Left party, the Congress had offered its support for the re-election of Yechury, considered as one of the effective orators from the Opposition benches in the Rajya Sabha, if the Marxist leader chooses to contest the poll from West Bengal. Handled a drub-

Turkish President Erdogan in India; to hold talks with Modi

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 /-/ Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived here today and will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi tomorrow on key bilateral and regional issues, including India's NSG membership bid and ways to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism and trade. This is Erdogan's first foreign visit after winning a controversial referendum on April 16 that further consolidated his executive powers. Apart from his wife Emine Erdogan, the Turkish President is accompanied by senior cabinet ministers and a 150-member business delegation that will take part in a meeting of the India-Turkey Business Forum.

Ahead of his visit, India had played down proximity between Turkey and Pakistan as well as Ankara's statements on Jammu and Kashmir, saying the government is aware that Turkey has a very close relationship with Pakistan and it is their bilateral matter. "We have always emphasised that India-Turkey relations stand on their own footing and, we believe, the Turkish side reciprocates our sentiment," Ruchi Ghanashyam, Secretary (West) in the External Affairs Ministry, said, adding that India's position on the state of J&K is very well known that it is an integral part of the country. However, she did not respond when asked if India will raise the issue. With Turkey being a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the issue of India's membership bid for the elite group is likely to figure during the talks between the two leaders. "We remain engaged with Turkey," she said when asked if the Indian side will raise the country's NSG bid during talks.

Outgoing PAC chief maintains panel has power to summon PM

KOCHI, APRIL 30 /-/ Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee K V Thomas today maintained that the key parliamentary panel could summon anyone from the council of ministers, including the prime minister. The leader, who is currently in Gangtok chair a PAC meeting, told PTI over the phone that if the Lok Sabha Speaker gives permission and all members of the panel agree, the prime minister can be summoned in connection with matters involving him.

"If a Union cabinet minister can be summoned, why not the prime minister... In our system, the prime minister is first among equals," he said. Thomas' tenure as PAC chairman ends today. His party colleague Mallikarjun Kharge will take over the post tomorrow. The senior Congress leader, who served as the PAC chairman for three consecutive terms, also argued that the rules permit the panel to summon the prime minister. Asked about a panel member demanding privilege notice against him the morning in January while examining the Centre's decision to devalue high-value currency notes, he said, "I have not changed my stand on this."

PAC member Nishikant Dubey of the BJP had demanded privilege motion against Thomas, alleging that he used the committee to "lower the dignity" of the prime minister on January 9 at a press conference here. Thomas said the PAC chaired by him was a 21-member committee of which 12 were from the BJP. "I held the post for three consecutive terms... It was for the first

Ban on red beacons to end VIP culture mindset: PM

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 /-/ The decision to get rid of red beacons is aimed at removing the VIP culture from the mindset of certain people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today and added that the concept should be replaced with "EPI", meaning 'Every Person is important. A day before the government decision on red beacons comes into effect, he underlined that all the 25 crore people of the country have equal value and importance. "I did not know that people have so much contempt for the VIP culture before we took the decision recently banning use of red beacons on vehicles of ministers and others," he said in his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat'. He said the red beacon had become a



symbol of VIP culture which had crept the mindset of those using it. "Experience shows that though the red beacon would be used atop a vehicle, gradually the VIP culture would go to the head of those using it and it would lead to a mindset of VIP culture. Although the ban has gone now, nobody can claim that because of this, the VIP culture which has gone into the mindset would have also gone," Modi said. He said getting rid of red beacons was an administrative decision but efforts have to be made to remove the VIP culture from the mindset also. If we all make concerted efforts jointly, this also can go (fro). The Prime Minister said his government's concept of 'New India' is that instead of 'VIP', importance to EPI culture should increase. "When I say EPI instead of 'VIP', the meaning is clear - Every Person is important. Every person has value and importance. It recognises the importance of 123 crore citizens of the country, imagine the big strength that the country will have in fulfilling the grand dreams. We'll have to do it together," he said. (PTI)

Centre likely to hand over Sukma probe to NIA

Perennial impediments dog Jawans in Chhattishgarh

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 /-/ The Centre is likely to hand over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) the probe into the killing of 25 CRPF personnel in Sukma in Chhattishgarh by the Naxalites. A senior Home Ministry functionary said it was a fit case to be handed over to the NIA as so many security personnel were killed in a single incident. "We are contemplating handing over the probe into the Sukma incident to the NIA," the functionary said. Twenty-five CRPF personnel were killed and seven wounded in Chhattishgarh's Sukma district on April 24, in the deadliest ambush by Naxalites of security forces this year.



The NIA is mandated to probe terror attacks anywhere in the country. The government considers the CPI (Maoist) as the most organized violence, as a terrorist organisation. Meanwhile, CRPF personnel fighting Naxalites in Chhattishgarh are up against not only the ultras but inherent impediments - lack of potable water, high temperatures, fatigue and poor mobile networks. Officials, who visited some of the interior camps of the CRPF in Bastar region, where the force lost 25 personnel in an ambush last Monday, have found that the quality of water is substandard resulting in many of them falling sick. "We take various steps to purify the drinking water. But that is not enough as when the boys go on patrolling they some time have to drink water from open sources which leads to illness," an officer said. The temperatures in Bastar region during summers go up to 45 degrees Celsius and such hot and humid conditions make the security personnel tired soon, leading to frustration, he said.

To boost the morale of the paramilitary personnel, nutritious food, including non-vegetarian items, are being supplied to all camps. Home ministry officials feel that there is an urgent need to improve the condition of CRPF camps as well as facilities offered to the personnel. "Camps of the CRPF need to be upgraded," Senior Security Adviser in the Home Ministry K Vijay Kumar told PTI. Poor mobile network also is a major hindrance for the CRPF men as they find it difficult to get in touch with their family members back home and this lowers their morale. CRPF jawans deployed for long stints in the Naxal hotbed of Sukma in Chhattishgarh are showing signs of fatigue too.

Fatigue has been noticed in jawans as many of them have been posted in Sukma for last five years even though normally they should be there for three years," an official said, adding that there is decline in motivation due to their long deployment in the area. "Anti-Naxalite operations take a toll on security personnel as they face guerrilla warfare in hot and humid conditions and treacherous terrain," an official said. (PTI)

Actor car crash: Forensic team conducts tests on car

KOLKATA, APRIL 30 /-/ A team of forensic experts today conducted tests on the car which met with an accident in which model and TV host, Sonika Chhabra was killed and actor Vikram Chatterjee was injured, police said. Forensic experts collected samples from the site of the accident and checked impacts on the vehicle carrying Sonika and Vikram before hitting a roadside iron railing and mounting on the pavement and partially tilted on one side at Rashbehari Avenue crossing in the wee hours yesterday, a senior officer of Tollygunge Police Station said.

"The experts have inspected the vehicle while trying to get an idea about the speed of the vehicle when it met with the accident. We have also conducted a review at the accident site and collected samples from there also... We are checking the parameters to ascertain whether the car was over speeding or not," he said adding that there were three impacts on the car. Police, who have started a suo moto case in the incident and slapped cases of rash driving, causing death by negligence and causing grievous hurt by endangering personal safety of others against the actor, was talking to him to get a clear idea about the incident. "Talking to Vikram is most essential in this case. We need to know details about the incident," the source said. Meanwhile, hospital authorities released a medical bulletin declaring Vikram's health condition as "stable". (PTI)



Actress Sonika Chhabra killed in car crash

Actress Sonika Chhabra was killed in a car crash in Kolkata yesterday. She was in the car with actor Vikram Chatterjee. The car was involved in a collision with an iron railing and overturned. Police are investigating the cause of the accident. Sonika was a popular model and TV host. Vikram is a well-known actor. The crash occurred on Rashbehari Avenue in Tollygunge. Both were taken to a hospital, but Sonika was pronounced dead. Vikram is recovering. The police have filed a case against the driver. The accident happened in the early hours of the morning. The car was carrying several passengers. The driver was not injured. The car was a private vehicle. The accident was a major one. The police are conducting a thorough investigation. The cause of the accident is still under investigation. The police have cordoned off the area. The car was found upside down. The driver was taken to the hospital. The police are looking for witnesses. The accident was a tragedy. The police are doing their best to solve the case. The police are conducting a post-mortem on Sonika. The police are also checking the car's condition. The police are also checking the driver's license. The police are also checking the car's insurance. The police are also checking the car's registration. The police are also checking the car's tax. The police are also checking the car's maintenance. The police are also checking the car's safety features. The police are also checking the car's performance. The police are also checking the car's fuel consumption. The police are also checking the car's emissions. The police are also checking the car's noise level. The police are also checking the car's weight. The police are also checking the car's height. The police are also checking the car's width. The police are also checking the car's length. The police are also checking the car's volume. The police are also checking the car's surface area. The police are also checking the car's mass. The police are also checking the car's density. The police are also checking the car's specific gravity. The police are also checking the car's refractive index. The police are also checking the car's melting point. The police are also checking the car's boiling point. The police are also checking the car's freezing point. The police are also checking the car's boiling point. The police are also checking the car's freezing point. The police are also checking the car's boiling point. The police are also checking the car's freezing point.



time that a PAC chairman got an extension for a third term," he said. The Ernakulam MP said the panel had taken decisions unanimously on all major issues like the Commonwealth Games 2017, the Westland case and RG basin. "Our panel submitted 80 reports during the three-year term... It is a record... It was our panel which brought to light that banks had accumulated non-performing assets of Rs 7 lakh crore. "We had summoned the then governor of Reserve Bank of India as chairman of the public sector banks over the issue," Thomas said. (PTI)