

Union Minister's son sent to judicial custody in Bihar

Patna, April 1 : A Bihar court on Sunday sent Union Minister Ashwini Choubey's son Arijit Shashwat, accused of inciting communal violence in Bhagalpur, to judicial custody for 14 days.

Bhagalpur Senior Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar said that Shashwat, who had been evading arrest for over a week, surrendered and was produced in a court.

"Police have strong evidence against Arijit Shashwat and an FIR was lodged against him," he said.

Earlier, Shashwat surrendered at around 12.30 a.m. outside the Mahavir temple near the Patna railway station, shouting slogans



like "Jai Shri Ram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai", district police official Rakesh Dubey said. Last week, a case was lodged against Shashwat, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

leader, on charges of taking out a procession without prior permission, inciting communal sentiments and roaming with arms on the streets of Bhagalpur.

He moved a bail plea in a civil court, following which the court on March 27 sought the case diary from the police to ascertain his role in the communal flare-up on March 17.

The court then issued an arrest warrant against Shashwat.

Minister Choubey has dubbed the FIR "a piece of garbage" registered by "corrupt police officers".

Shashwat contested the last Assembly polls on BJP ticket from Bhagalpur and lost.

Minister flies to Mosul to get remains of killed Indians

New Delhi, April 1 : Union Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh on Sunday left for Mosul in Iraq to get back the remains of the Indians killed there by the Islamic State terrorists.

Though 39 Indians were killed as the Islamic State took over the city of Mosul in 2014, the mortal remains of 38 will be brought back as identification of one body is still pending, Singh said before leaving.

The Minister is expected to return with the bodies by late Monday, following which he will travel to Amritsar in Punjab and Patna in Bihar to hand over the mortal remains of the victims to their respective families.

A total of 27 persons from Punjab and four from Bihar were among the 39

killed. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had informed Parliament on March 20 that all 39 Indian construction workers kidnapped in 2014 from Mosul have been killed.

The Minister had earlier said that she will not consider them dead unless there was proof in this regard, rejecting lone survivor Harjit Masih's claim that the 39 Indians taken captive by the Islamic State were shot dead.

The Minister had said that the DNA samples collected from the missing Indians' relatives matched with 38 bodies, while the identity of the 39th body was yet to be fully confirmed since the DNA sample sent from someone else in his family as both his parents are dead.

Interpretation centre inaugurated at Konark temple in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, April 1 : Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday inaugurated a state-of-the-art interpretation and tourist facilitation centre at the Sun Temple at Konark to coincide with the Utkal Divas celebrations in Odisha. The centre at the Unesco World Heritage site costing Rs 45 crore showcases the unique architectural features of the temple, around 65 km from state capital Bhubaneswar.

Addressing a gathering, Pradhan praised the Indian Oil Foundation for developing the visitor-friendly infrastructure and associated facilities at the temple.

He also complimented Padma Vibhushan Raghunath Mahapatra for recreating the sculptural wealth of the sun temple at the interpretation centre for the benefit of both domestic and foreign visitors.

Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and Unesco representative in India, said the interpretation centre will not only educate tourists about the temple's rich history but also throw light on the natural and cultural heritage of Odisha. Built in the 13th century, the Konark temple was conceived as a gigantic chariot of the Sun god, with 12 pairs of exquisitely ornamented wheels pulled by seven horses.

CBI files Rs 19cr UCO bank fraud case

Bengaluru, April 1 : The CBI has registered a fresh bank fraud case amounting to Rs 19.03 crore that was sanctioned by UCO Bank to 18 fake borrowers under various home and property loan schemes with concessional interest rates in 2013 and 2016, it was announced on Sunday.

The agency's move comes in the wake of a complaint received from UCO Bank on March 27.

The Central Bureau of Investigation filed the FIR on March 29 naming five persons, including former UCO Bank Jayanagar's Branch Manager K.R. Saroja.

Others were middleman B.S. Srinatha and three approved valuers of the bank -- Jambunath and proprietor of two Bengaluru-based firms identified as Gopinath R. Agnihotri and N. Venkatesh.

It is alleged that Saroja, while her posting as a Chief Manager between August 26, 2013 and June 1, 2016, sanctioned and disbursed various home and property loans to 18 bor-



rowers with aggregate loans.

Saroja is accused of colluding with middleman Srinatha, who canvassed certain loan applications under the bank's schemes and submitted fake and fabricated documents to support the proof of income of the borrowers in order to become eligible to avail the loans.

"The accused persons then submitted fake building plan and licence and other land documents to the bank. Saroja is accused of receiving these documents as genuine and sanctioned the loans to

the applicants," the FIR said.

Later, the borrowers withdrew the disbursed amounts and utilised it for the purpose other than for which the loans were sanctioned, at the concessional rates of interest, thereby exposing UCO Bank to and undue pecuniary loss amounting to Rs 19.03 crore, it said.

It is alleged that Agnihotri, Jambunath and Venkatesh had inflated the valuation and failed to give their fair valuation report of the sanctioned loan to the accused bank officials.

Army says it kills Lt Fayaz's killers, loses two men

Srinagar, April 1 : The Army said on Sunday that it lost two men in fierce gun battles which led to the killing in Jammu and Kashmir of eight militants including those who abducted and killed Lt Ummer Fayaz in May last year. Two civilians were also killed in two different operations, one each in Shopian and Anantnag districts, while a security offensive was going on elsewhere in Shopian, the Army, police as well as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said. Addressing a joint press conference at Avantipora in Pulwama district, Lt Gen A.K. Bhatt, Commander of the Army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps, said: "Today is a very special day for all our security forces. We have killed eight terrorists in two operations... A third operation against terrorists is still going on in Kachdoora village." Gen Bhatt said two terrorists responsible for killing Lt Fayaz when he was visiting his family on a holiday had been eliminated.

"I appeal to youths not to get lured by weapons. Anybody who uses weapons will be dealt with in the same manner we dealt with the terrorists today." He said Sunday's was the biggest anti-militancy operation in the Kashmir Valley in a long time. Jammu and Kashmir Police chief S.P. Vaid said that at the

site of one of the battles, Diagam, a Senior Superintendent of Police made a special effort to persuade the terrorists to surrender. He called the family members of the two terrorists in a bid to persuade them to give themselves up.

"Instead of surrendering, one of the holed up terrorists opened fire and the security forces had no option but to kill him." The other one we caught alive. Operations are carried out most professionally by the security forces.

"Two Army jawans have been martyred in the operation while some others belonging to the Army, CRPF and police have been injured." The officer said two civilian were also killed in the fighting. "One was the house owner in Dragad village where the terrorists were holed up and the other was injured in clashes in Kachdoora. Six civilians sustained bullet injuries and we hope they get well soon."

The police chief said all the seven bodies of local militants killed in Dragad have been claimed by their families.

He identified the killers of Lt Fayaz as Ahmad Malik and Rayees Thokar, both of whom were shot dead in Dragad.

The police chief said four to five militants were trapped in Kachdoora where the security forces were still battling the militants.

IMO to begin talks on reducing ship emissions

New Delhi, April 1 : The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) will begin talks in London on Tuesday to discuss proposals to limit and reduce emissions by ships. This might also be the deciding year for India to initiate steps to limit the increasing problem of emissions of greenhouse gases from maritime transportation, experts said on Sunday.

India has been one of the earliest members of the IMO, having ratified its convention and joined it as a member-state in 1959.

"Since 2016 uptil now, there have been several arguments made for and against an ambitious target. A more conservative approach led by China and supported by India and Brazil calls the targets to be data driven and for the adoption of a common but differentiated, responsibilities principle as it is in the Paris Agreement," an Indian negotiator, who is attending the London meeting, told IANS.

China is the world's largest fleet operator and the third largest in terms of total dead-weight tonnage.

Shipping has been excluded from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which

embraces common but differentiated responsibilities, precisely because it is a global cross-border industry where it is hard or impossible to break down individual countries' contributions.

The IMO instead operates on a non-discriminatory basis between ships - all face the same regulations, whichever country they're registered in.

According to a UN report, compared to China, India and Brazil were minor players in the shipping industry with 1.21 per cent and 0.88 per cent, respectively, of the overall world share.

Even the OECD's International Transport Forum (ITF), with 59 member countries including India, in a report released on March 27 talked about decarbonising maritime transport by 2035.

Zero emissions from shipping by 2035 is the most ambitious proposal on the table at the IMO, made by the climate-vulnerable Marshall Islands and allies.

This report, therefore, directly undercuts the arguments made by Japan that only 50 per cent decarbonisation much later by 2060 is technically feasible.

INTERNATIONAL

US Supreme Court urged to abandon Microsoft data privacy case

San Francisco, April 1 : The US Department of Justice (DoJ) has asked the Supreme Court to abandon its case against Microsoft over international data privacy after a law was signed to legally collect the data stored on foreign soil.

The DoJ, in a court filing posted late on Saturday, said the new law signed by President Donald Trump last week (on March 23) answered the legal question at the heart of Microsoft's case.

"So the case 'is now moot,'" CNN quoted the DoJ as saying.

Microsoft's legal battle began in 2013 when it refused to hand over emails stored on a server in Ireland to US officials.

It argued that sharing data stored on foreign soil could violate international treaties and policies and there was no law to provide any clarity.

The CLOUD Act, which was enacted on March 23 as part of the spending bill, established a legal pathway for the US to form agreements with other nations making it easier for the law enforcement to collect data stored abroad.

Microsoft batted in favour of the new law, saying the CLOUD Act

provides a legal clarity the company sought.

Brad Smith, President and Chief Legal Officer at Microsoft, said the inclusion of the CLOUD Act in the funding bill negotiated by congressional leaders of both parties was a critical step forward in resolving an issue that has been the subject of litigation for over four years.

"The proposed CLOUD Act creates a modern legal framework for how law enforcement agencies can access data across

borders," Smith wrote in a blog on March 21.

"It's a strong statute and a good compromise that reflects recent bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress, as well as support from the Department of Justice, the White House, the National Association of Attorneys General and a broad cross section of technology companies," he added.

Smith highlighted that the law also responds directly to the needs of foreign governments

frustrated about their inability to investigate crimes in their own countries.

"Once passed, the US government will need to move quickly to establish with other like-minded countries new international agreements, similar to what has already been negotiated between the US and the UK," Smith added. Although the measure was supported by major tech giants, several privacy and civil liberties advocates criticised it.

According to CNN,

Trump lashes out after California Governor pardons immigrants

Washington, April 1 : US President Donald Trump lashed out at California Governor Jerry Brown after he pardoned five immigrants facing possible deportation, the media reported.

"Governor Jerry 'Moonbeam' Brown pardoned five criminal illegal aliens whose crimes include (1) Kidnapping and Robbery (2) Badly beating wife and threatening a crime with intent to terrorize (3) Dealing drugs. Is this really what

the great people of California want?" the President tweeted on Saturday.

The "Moonbeam" reference is not one of Trump's often used original diminutives but it dates back to the 1970s, reports CNN. It was coined by well-known Chicago newspaper columnist Mike Royko because of Brown's then-new age ideas on topics like energy and weather satellites.

On Friday, the Democratic Governor

granted 56 pardons and 14 commutations.

"Those granted pardons all completed their sentences years ago and the majority were convicted of drug-related or other non-violent crimes," a statement from Brown's office said.

A spokesperson for Brown's office told CNN they found Trump's comments "rather curious given President Trump's proclamation declaring April 'Second Chance Month' to 'celebrate those

who have exited the prison system and successfully reentered society".

The spokesperson reiterated that the pardons were granted "to individuals who have demonstrated exemplary behaviour and have lived productive and law-abiding lives following their conviction".

Trump's Twitter attack on Brown is the latest in a longstanding feud between his administration and California over immigration.

UAE suspends 'good conduct certificate' for foreign job seekers

Dubai, April 1 : The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday suspended the implementation of the new "good conduct certificate" for foreign job seekers until further notice.

The move was announced by the Ministry Of Human Resources and Emiratization without giving any further details, reports Xinhua news agency.

The "good conduct certificate" initiative by the UAE cabinet was raised



on February 4, which stated that an expatriate immigrating for work should provide a police

document from his country as a proof of non-criminal history or convictions. The cabinet also said that expatriates, who make 80 per cent of the UAE's total population of 10.5 million, would be committed to provide a good conduct certificate if they change jobs within the Gulf state, but only if the new employer demands it.

The report suggested that foreign embassies in the UAE described being "inundated" with requests from their citizens.

Layoffs to save \$34 million annually: Snap Inc

San Francisco, April 1 : Snap Inc., the parent company of Snapchat, has said that its recent layoffs of about 220 employees will save it \$34 million per year in salaries and taxes, as well as a one-time benefit of \$31 million related to stock-based comp forfeitures. The company made the disclosure in a securities and exchange commission filing, technology website Variety reported late on Saturday.

Earlier in the week, Snap confirmed that it laid off about 100 employees, with the cuts mostly affecting its sales team.

This third round of layoffs came after Snap cut the jobs of a couple dozen employees across its hardware and recruit-

ing divisions in 2017. This was followed by two dozen more cuts in January.

During the same time, Snap instituted a company-wide system for evaluating employee performance and CEO Evan Spiegel then told managers that "they would be required to make 'hard decisions' about evaluating their teams going into the 2018 calendar year". Tech website Cheddar report Snap slowed its hiring rate by nearly 60 per cent last quarter and reported having 3,069 employees at the end of 2017.

"The reduction in force is to align resources around our top strategic priorities and to reflect structural changes in our business," the company said in the

filing. Snap also revealed that it expects to lose \$25 million to \$45 million because of ending lease obligations for offices in Southern California to centralise its corporate headquarters in Santa Monica, California. Those charges would be incurred primarily in the second and third quarters of 2018 "based on current exit plans". Snap has also leased 300,000 square feet of office space in Santa Monica and has listed 14 of its Venice Beach locations -- totalling 163,000 square feet -- for sublease, Variety cited property news portal CoStar News as saying.

It has also leased 79,000 square feet of office space at the Santa Monica Airport.