

City Monitoring Report - 20th April, 2010

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Law and Order

2 criminals shot

The Ghaziabad police along with its Uttarakhand counterpart shot two dreaded criminals, Neeraj Gupta and Pawan Yadav alias Goldy, in an encounter in wee hours of Sunday. The two were involved in the sensational ICICI Bank robbery under Indira Puram police station, the police said.

Rs 1.35 lakh, two revolvers and a motorcycle have been seized.

According to SP (city) Vijay Bhushan, the two who were wanted in over a dozen cases were killed in an encounter near Kanwani.

The police had laid a trap near Kanwani. When the police signaled the bike-borne gangsters to stop they sped fast and opened fire at the police. The police reverted the action and the two criminals were wounded. They were taken to a hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

Neeraj Gupta was a resident of Haldwani while Goldy hailed from Amroha. Goldy was wanted in 11 cases while Neeraj had eight cases registered against him.

International drug racket busted, 3 Nigerians held

The racket came to light when a private courier service in Narayana detected 1.2 kilograms of heroin in the cover of four books inside a parcel. The traffickers had also put black carbon paper on the books to avoid X-ray detection at airport.

The address of the sender on the parcel destined for Burmingham, was found to be fictitious. After technical and manual surveillances, the sender of the parcel was identified as one Stanley, who had booked the parcel from Faridabad. He was arrested and he allegedly admitted to the crime.

Stanley disclosed that the parcels were handed over to him by one Pascal and Collin. He further disclosed that Collin and one Mandoga prepare the consignments of parcels and that one such consignment of heroin was to be delivered to him by Collin near Janakpuri District Centre.

On the basis of their interrogation, the third supplier, Pascal, was also apprehended with 700 grams of heroin.

According to police sources, the accused disclosed that the kingpin of the cartel is Mandoga.

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Law & Order

33 arrested for sand dredging in Vaitarna

The Vasai revenue officials conducted a raid at the Vaitarna Creek in Dolvi, Khardi and Khaniwade villages in Thane district and busted the sand mafia operating in the area on Sunday.

Bhiwandi sub-divisional officer Revati Gaikar said she and her staff went in three boats to check the sand dredging. Nearly 600 people were involved in illegal sand mining.

Revenue officials caught 25 persons in five boats stealing the sand. Another eight persons were held from the

coast, said Gaikar. "We handed them over to police and they are being interrogated," she added.

In the past one year, the Vasai revenue officials have seized 947 trucks and 32 pumps involved in sand mining and a fine of Rs 61.29 lakh has been collected. A posse of revenue and police officers has been posted at Kaner and Khanivade villages.

Meanwhile, CM Ashok Chavan is said to be working on amending the current rules to make way for stricter punishments to check sand mining.

Rs 5 lakh fake notes seized

The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Sunday arrested seven persons for carrying and supplying fake Indian currency notes. The police have seized fake currency amounting to Rs 5.1 lakh from the accused.

The arrests were made near Samadhan Society, Shastri Nagar in Santacruz (W), where the suspects had gone to deliver the notes. "We arrested them on a tip-off and are probing the case further," said a senior ATS official. The accused have been remanded in police custody till April 30.

Those accused are Mubarak Hussain (28), Himayun Khan (26), Mukhtar Ali (22), Mehdoor Shaikh (23), Badroo Shaikh (19), Akbar Shaikh (23) and Badal Afsar Shaikh (20), all residents of West Bengal. "The accused worked on a 20% commission. They came to Mumbai last week to deliver the notes," said an official.

The currency was in the denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000. "The paper used to manufacture the notes is of high quality. It seems like a bigger and organised racket. We have got some more information and are looking for the mastermind," said the official.

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Vedic link to Shasan arms haul

A day after activists of the CPM and Trinamool Congress clashed at Shasan in North 24-Parganas, police on Sunday arrested six persons for being involved in the incident.

Police have also seized a cache of arms and ammunition for some houses in the locality. Interestingly, two of the houses at Shasan's Kharibari belong to two persons involved in last year's Vedic Village arson. Both are absconding.

After the Vedic Village incident in August, the two criminals — Israel (30) and Ibrahim (36) — were arrested and interrogated by the district police. They were, however, later granted bail after sleuths could not provide any concrete evidence against them in court.

Early on Sunday, a police team raided their houses and seized at least 20 guns of different range and categories apart from a huge cache of crude bombs and gun powder. However, both Israel and Ibrahim had got a whiff of the raid and fled before police could reach their houses.

"We could have nabbed them had we reached only about 10 to 12 minutes earlier," said a police officer.

Govt planning to pump in Rs 20 cr to preserve BBD Bag heritage

The heritage look of Dalhousie area is all set to get revived. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation is embarking on a Rs 20-crore Dalhousie heritage restoration project to bring back the heritage look of the area. The project mainly includes restoring the footpaths, installing lamp posts and garden landscaping.

The state-owned Mackintosh Burn Limited has been entrusted with the job to take on the project that will be implemented in phases for the next one year. The project has been sanctioned under the Centre's Jawaharlal

Municipal commissioner Arnab Roy said no heritage structure will be touched during the project. "The project only entails restoring the heritage look of the footpaths surrounding the GPO and installing lamp posts that compliments the heritage look of the area. Besides, some small garden landscaping will also take place in a few places," Roy said.

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Were 40,000 fans sitting on live bombs on Saturday?

Whether it was a terror plot or one by a prime mover and shaker to scuttle the matches out to Mumbai, Saturday's blasts and bombs put 40,000 lives on the line.

The question making Bangalore queasy is: did 40,000 spectators watch the match on Saturday, surrounded by bombs waiting to go off? One bomb was defused at 6.49 pm, even as the match was going on. Had it not been found, a horror story would have unfolded. Timed to explode at 8 pm at Gate 8, it would have ripped through hundreds of fans waiting to leave the stadium. In all, three bombs were found and defused on Saturday and two on Sunday. The first three were found by 7 pm on Saturday — 3.15 pm, 3.20 pm and 6.40 pm.

Traffic hit for 1 hour

Traffic was affected in and around the stadium, especially at Minsk Square, for over an hour, leaving commuters stranded in the sweltering heat. Traffic on Kasturba Road, Cubbon Road, Dickenson Road and M G Road were hit while the bomb disposal squad were trying to defuse the crude explosive materials.

Enthusiasts queue up

While bomb disposal squad personnel were furiously at work in and around the stadium, fans appeared to be least bothered. They stood outside Gate No 9, hoping for tickets for the semis. Little did they know, that the matches would be shifted to Mumbai later in the day.

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Godavari runs dry, hits Devadula project hard

Devadula lift irrigation project which is considered to be one of the most prestigious projects under Jalayagnam is lying idle for the last one year due to non-availability of water at the take-off point in river Godavari.

According to official sources, no water can be lifted from here unless the water level there was more than 74 metres. For the last one year, due to poor inflows the water level never went beyond 69 metres. As a result of it, Warangal district could not even get drinking water from this project which is meant to cater to the needs of Warangal, Karimnagar, Nalgonda and Medak districts through a series of 14 balancing reservoirs. It is designed to utilise 50 tmc of water from river Godavari.

To help utilise 50 tmc of water, the irrigation department had proposed to construct a balancing reservoir at Kanthalapalli 29 kms downstream to stabilise the water availability at Devadula project. But this project is also getting delayed due to cost escalation. As a result, the irrigation experts are now examining alternate ways like construction of a sub-surface concrete dyke. A dyke is a sub-surface wall.

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Politicos blocking slum rehab: Pinto

"Slum rehabilitation work in the city is hampered by political meddling as the elected representatives are against any project where they have no role to play," said Gerry Pinto, president of Mashal, an NGO, and former UNICEF project director.

Pinto was speaking with media after a day-long get-together of the activists working in urban community development, CHF international organisation and Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (Mashal). The event was organised in memory of late Ashok Kalamkar, former head of the Pune Municipal Corporation's Urban Community Development department, who died of heart attack last year.

Political pressure works in various ways. In Pune, several slum rehabilitation schemes were started, but things have not changed much. Projects where people are given the right to decide about their housing, face opposition from corporators who fear they may have no role to play in the process," said Pinto.

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Heat toll mounts to 48 in Orissa

With three more deaths, the sunstroke toll yesterday mounted to 48 in Orissa as the western and interior districts continued to reel under heat wave.

The three deaths were reported from Ganjam (2) and Dhenkanal (1) districts, officials said.

The worst affected area is the western part of the state where the mercury touched 45 degree celsius at Balangir. The maximum temperature was 44.6 degree C, 44.1 C and 44 C at Jharsuguda, Hirakud and Sambalpur respectively, Met office said.

However, state capital Bhubaneswar registered a fall in temperature to 38.4 degree C against day before yesterday's 40.5.

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Power minister summons senior officials for pep talk

Energy minister Ram Veer Upadhyay has called a meeting of all power officials of and above the rank of executive engineers on Wednesday. Though no official agenda has been disclosed by the energy department, sources said that the meeting would see the minister seeking a status report on revenue recovery and transmission losses.

But while the meeting is being viewed essential by the department, its timing has raised many an eyebrow — over 600 executive engineers have been called to the state capital at a time when the state reels under a severe power crisis.

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Blazing sun keeps people indoors

Lucknow recorded 44.0 degrees Celsius yesterday, forcing denizens to stay indoors and forget about the Sunday hung-outs. So, all that one got to see on the day were deserted roads with traffic being almost negligible.

The hot winds only added to the atrocious feel of the summers. While it was not difficult to spot young people zooming past on their motorbikes to make the most of their Sundays even till the last weekend, this time around even that crowd was missing.

The railway and bus stations were the places where, though reduced, but crowd of people was still visible. The people had come out only after covering their heads, faces and limbs to avoid a heat stroke.

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IPL guilty won't be spared: Pranab

With the Opposition projecting the IPL mess as the “mother of all evils” in Lok Sabha today, the government went all out to promise action against every wrong-doer involved in the controversy.

None other than Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee assured the House that no one would be spared in the clean-up act that was underway to trace the source of money invested in the league, which just cost the UPA its Minister of State for External Affairs Minister Shashi Tharoor.

“I can assure you that all controversial aspects of the IPL will be probed, including the sources of funding, how the funds were routed and invested. No guilty or wrong-doer will be spared,” Pranab said in Lok Sabha after the buoyed Opposition put Tharoor behind to train its guns on the IPL, consigning to the back-burner its earlier promises of speaking for the “aad aadmi”, especially on the food inflation front. At the end of the day, the Lower House had witnessed its own little Twenty-20 on IPL, with the Opposition and the UPA slugging it out.

Tharoor likely to make statement in LS

Former Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor is now expected to make a statement in the Lok Sabha tomorrow to explain his position regarding his involvement in the IPL Kochi franchise.

Though Tharoor has already given a personal explanation in this connection last week, this will be second opportunity for him to place his viewpoint on record.

According to government sources, a minister who resigns from the council of minister has the right to make a statement in Parliament. Tharoor met Finance Minister and Lok Sabha leader Pranab Mukherjee in this connection. Party sources said Tharoor’s statement was likely to be vetted by Mukherjee. His previous explanation had also been cleared by the senior leader. Tharoor resigned from the council of ministers last night following allegations that he misused office to get Rs 70 crore worth sweat equity for his friend Sunanda Pushkar from the IPL Kochi team owners.

UPA sources said since Tharoor had been implicated in a case of financial impropriety, it was agreed that he should be allowed to give his side of the story and clear the taint. “This would facilitate his re-entry into politics at a later stage,” explained a senior UPA minister. It was felt that since Tharoor had agreed to step down, he should be given a chance to defend himself.

It was also revealed that Tharoor was asked to resign after the government’s own internal probe had conclusively shown that he had committed financial impropriety. The dossier put together by the Intelligence Bureau, it is learnt, contained details of the text messages Tharoor had exchanged with the IPL commissioner Lalit Modi which stated that his OSD Jacob John would be in touch with him with regard to the IPL Kochi franchise.

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Huge quantity of arms seized in Baramulla

The security forces today busted a militant hideout in north Kashmir's Baramulla district and recovered a huge quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives.

A joint search party of the police and the 29 RR on specific information conducted a search operation in the Frasthal area in Kreeri and busted the hideout.

A police officer said: “The arms seized from the dump included one AK 47 rifle, five AK magazines, 111 AK 47 rounds, two Chinese pistols three Pistol magazines, 10 Pistol rounds, one cleaning rod, one AK 47 silencer, two RPG rounds and 27 UBGL grenades.”

“In addition, 27 Chinese grenades, 21 IED connectors, 16 IED circuits, 13 IED transformers, two IED batteries, one IED dynamo, one Kenwood handset, one spare battery, one Kenwood charger, four High explosive bombs, 804 pika rounds, three explosive sticks, one UBGL launcher and two 12-bore guns were also recovered from a dump in a stream,” the officer added.

“From the past three days there had been reports about presence of two suspected ultras in the area. Though the Army and the Samba police had launched an operation, we rushed our party to the area this morning,” an officer of the SOG told The Tribune.

However, despite hectic searches in the area none of the two suspected ultras could be spotted so far, he added. When contacted, Samba district SSP, Raghbir Singh, refused to comment.

Sources said, some villagers had spotted two armed men in Army fatigues, who threatened to kill them. The villagers reported the matter to the police.

BSNL staff strike

Around three lakh executive and non-executive BSNL workers would go on an indefinite strike from yesterday till their demands are fulfilled by the government.

The strike would be conducted against the proposed disinvestment of the public sector undertaking (PSU), retrenchment of one lakh workers through voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) and sharing of valuable BSNL infrastructure, including cables and towers, with private telecom companies.

The decision was taken in a joint action committee (JAC) meeting that was held yesterday under the leadership of its convener Nisar Ahmad.

The workers also demanded that the management and the government should not take an adamant stand and settle the issues through discussion with the JAC.

The main demands of the workers include rejection of the recommendation of the Sam Pitroda Committee, absorption of 1,500 ITS officers in BSNL and pension revision of the retirees.

The workers demand that the “anti- workers” recommendations of the committee should be outrightly rejected.

They said the proposal for disinvestment and VRS were in violation of the earlier assurances given to the workers unions and it should be dropped.

While demanding absorption of 1,500 ITS officers in the company, the workers said: “Though it is more than 10 years, these officers are still on deputation without absorption. This is adversely affecting the growth and future of BSNL.”

They also stated that the government and the management should ensure that sufficient lines were made available to BSNL for serving the public.

The workers want:

1. No disinvestment of the public sector undertaking
2. No retrenchment of one lakh workers through voluntary retirement scheme
3. No sharing of valuable BSNL infrastructure with private telecom companies
4. Rejection of the recommendation of the Sam Pitroda Committee
5. Absorption of 1,500 ITS officers in BSNL
6. Pension revision of the retirees

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Peshawar market blast claims 25 lives

At least 25 persons were killed when a suicide bomber struck during a protest organised by the Jamaat-e-Islami in this northwestern Pakistani city today, hours after a blast outside a police-run school killed a young boy.

The bomber detonated his explosive jacket in the famous Kissa Khwani Bazar at a short distance from a meeting organised by the Jamaat-e-Islami to protest frequent power cuts, witnesses said. The blast occurred at about 6.30 pm.

North West Frontier Province Senior Minister Bashir Bilour said 25 persons were killed.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Gulfat Hussain and senior Jamaat-e-Islami leader Haji Dost Muhammad were among the dead.

Forty-two persons, including policemen and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and workers, were injured, said Peshawar district administration chief Siraj Ahmed Khan.

He said the bomber was a teenaged youth who was part of the crowd that had gathered for the protest. The

bomber specifically targeted DSP Hussain and blew himself up after getting close to the police officer, Khan said.

Indian American is judge in California

Indian-American Vijay C Gandhi has been sworn in as a federal magistrate judge in a Californian district, making him only the second from the diaspora to become federal judge in the history of the US.

One of the youngest federal judges currently serving in California Central District, Gandhi, 38, is also the first Indian American federal judge in this district.

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