

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, TUESDAY, APRIL 02, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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BRIEFLY

ECI orders Odisha govt to transfer 2 DMs, 5 SPs

BHUBANESWAR, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday ordered the Odisha government to transfer eight officers including two district magistrates, five superintendents of police and an IGP.

ECI secretary Rakesh Kumar in a letter to Odisha Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena directed him to transfer the officers to non-election related work.

"I am directed to state that the Commission has decided that the eight officers be transferred out to a non-election related post with immediate effect," read the letter.

IMD warns of heatwave spells lasting 10-20 days in April-June

BENGALURU, Apr 2 (Agencies): The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a harsh and arid summer over a majority of regions of the country during April-June, with a high probability of heatwave episodes lasting as long as 10 to 20 days during the period.

Summer season will begin on a warm note with day temperatures during April likely to remain significantly high over Madhya Pradesh, north and coastal Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar islands, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Heatwave spells lasting for 2 to 8 days (against a normal of 1-3 days) are most likely to affect Andhra Pradesh, Saurashtra-Kutch, Maharashtra and

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India will get permanent UNSC Seat, but it will have to work harder this time: Jaishankar

RAJKOT, Apr 2 (Agencies): External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar today said India will definitely get permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council as there is a feeling in the world that it should get the position, but the country will have to work harder this time for it.

He was speaking during an interaction with intellectuals in Gujarat's Rajkot city and was asked by the audience on India's chances of becoming the permanent member of the world body.

The United Nations was formed around 80 years ago, five nations — China, France, Russian Federation, the

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Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah defends son's controversial statement against Amit Shah

MYSURU, Apr 2 (Agencies): Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday defended his son Yathindra's statement targeting Amit Shah, which the BJP has termed as reprehensible and a personal attack on the Union Home Minister and lodged a complaint with the Election Commission.

Siddaramaiah said his son never intended to insult Shah and his statement was based on CBI's submission in the court. Addressing a party



meeting in Hanur town of Chamarajanagar district last Thursday, Yathindra, a former MLA, allegedly said: "Home

Minister Amit Shah is a goonda, rowdy, there was a murder charge against him in Gujarat and he was exiled, and (Prime

Minister Narendra) Modi did politics keeping such people next to him...."

A day later, the Karnataka unit of the BJP filed a complaint with the poll body describing the statement as a personal attack on the party leader and alleged that Yathindra had used "abusive and inflammatory language" against Shah. It said the statement violated provisions of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

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SC grants bail to AAP's Sanjay Singh in Delhi liquor policy case

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to AAP leader Sanjay Singh in the Delhi liquor policy case. The court's action came after the Enforcement Directorate said that it no longer requires Singh in custody.

A bench comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice P.B. Varale granted the bail while hearing Singh's plea challenging his arrest and remand in the money



laundering case. The court, however, pointed out that the concession

given to Singh should not be cited as a precedent.

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AAP MLAs meet Kejriwal's wife Sunita, assert CM should not resign



NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): AAP MLAs on Tuesday met Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal and asserted that the Delhi chief minister should continue to run the government from jail and not step down.

Kejriwal is in judicial custody till April 15 after his arrest last month by the Enforcement Directorate

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Mortar Shell Destroyed in controlled Blast in J&K's Samba

SAMBA, Apr 2 (Agencies): A mortar shell was found in a field and was later destroyed in a controlled explosion by a bomb disposal squad in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Tuesday, police said. The mortar shell, which was old and rusted, was noticed by a person working in his fields

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Rahul has no right to talk about democracy, his grandmother imposed Emergency: Shah

JODHPUR, Apr 2 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has no right to talk about democracy now as his grandmother and former prime minister Indira Gandhi put lakhs of people in jail and banned political parties during the Emergency, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday.

He hit back at INDIA

bloc parties over their 'Loktantra Bachao' (save democracy) rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, saying "no matter how many parties you gather, only Modi is going to come" as prime minister post-elections. The one who commits corruption will go behind the bars, the home minister asserted at his election rally in Jodhpur.

The people of the country are ready to make Narendra Modi the prime minister for a third time, he said, adding India will become the third largest economy during his next term.

Shah's reaction came a day after top INDIA bloc leaders exhorted the people to defeat the BJP to save democracy

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Mian Altaf Ahmad is not an outsider: Omar Abdullah

PAHALGAM, Apr 2 (Agencies): National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Tuesday scoffed at suggestions that party candidate for Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat Mian Altaf Ahmad was an "outsider" to the constituency, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi hails from Gujarat but contests elections from Uttar Pradesh.

"How is Mian Sahib an

outsider? He is as much from Rajouri-Poonch as much as he is from here (Anantnag) or elsewhere in Kashmir. If PM Modi can come from Gujarat and contest in Uttar Pradesh, your channels have no problems with that," Abdullah said.

"Leaders from south India go to the Rajya Sabha from north India

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Nearly 19 lakh Pilgrims visit Shri Mata Vaishno Devi in 3 months

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: In the first three months of the current year, more than 19 lakh pilgrims visited the holy cave shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, nestled in the Trikuta Hills of Katra town in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

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SC refuses to accept apology tendered by Baba Ramdev, Patanjali MD in misleading ads case

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it was not inclined to accept the apology tendered by Baba Ramdev and Patanjali Ayurved Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna in response to notices asking to show cause as to why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for allegedly flouting its directions.



The apex court, however, gave them a last opportu-

nity to file fresh responses.

The court was upset about an advertisement issued by the company on December 4, 2023, after it had assured the court on November 21, 2023 that it would not make any "casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine".

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Haryana IAS officer vacates 20-year-old stay on land deal, later husband and son 'buy' it

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): A multi-crore land deal in Haryana involving a woman IAS officer, her state information commissioner husband and a former additional chief secretary rank IAS officer has been halted after Panchkula revenue officials flagged discrepancies.

Ambala Divisional Commissioner Renu Phulia, in a quasi-judicial order on September 13, 2023, vacated a 20-year-old stay on the sale and purchase of a land parcel of 14 acres near Panchkula, originally belonging to an erstwhile king. She took just 16 days to decide the petition filed by former additional chief secretary Shashi Gulati's brother Prithvi Raj Chhabra.

Within a few months of the order, Renu's husband S S Phulia, currently the state information commissioner, and son Nilanchal decided to buy five acres of this land. A former IAS officer, S S Phulia was appointed state information commissioner in 2022.

On March 28, Shashi Gulati and her brother approached revenue officials in Panchkula to register nearly 12 acres of land. They claimed they had sold the land to four individuals for a total value of Rs 5.26 crore. Five acres of land were sold to Phulia's family, and the remaining land was to be sold to Shubham Juneja, a resident of Manimajra, and the wife of a former Indian Forest Services officer.

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MBA MOTORS

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DEALS IN SALE, PURCHASE, REPAIRING AND SERVICING OF USED CARS AND ORIGINAL SPARE PARTS

NAGROTA, JAMMU (J&K)

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Modi government steadfast to promote the Dogri language: Chander Mohan Sharma



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Advocate Chander Mohan Sharma, Senior leader of J&K BJP, recounted the endeavours of the Modi government to promote the Dogri language in Jammu & Kashmir and said that Dogri represents the irreplaceable culture and tradition of the Jammu region.

Dr. Pardeep Mahotra,

State Media Incharge, J&K BJP, and Sanjay Bakshi, member Media Department were also present in the Press Conference held at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Chander Mohan Sharma, appreciating the Modi Government for the promotion of the Dogri language in J&K said that under the Narendra Modi-led government, the

Railway Department has installed displaying the names of railway stations in Dogri and also initiated the announcement for the facilities of the passengers in Dogri.

Sharma said that to give due place to the Dogri language along with another regional language Kashmiri, the Modi government brought a bill in the Parliament. He said that Radio Kashmir

Jammu has also been renamed as Akashvani Jammu, with announcements in the Dogri language also, to boost the Dogri language further.

Chander Mohan Sharma said that the BJP government under the leadership of PM Modi is steadfast in giving due place to the Dogri language and taking all the essential measures. He, on the occasion, also

counted upon the numerous projects and unprecedented development in terms of infrastructure development to boost the road network, education and medical facilities. He also appealed to the people to vote in favour of the BJP in Parliamentary elections to give more strength to PM Modi to give further pace to development in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr Pardeep Mahotra said that when the Modi government brought the bill to include Dogri and Kashmiri languages as the official languages, NC leadership along with other political parties opposed the bill thus depicting the true nature of these parties. He said that parties like NC, Congress, and PDP have exploited the sentiments of people, and befuddled the gullible population. In fact, these political parties deliberately misused the power corridor to loot the public of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh emotionally, economically, and culturally.

'Essentials of Road Safety'; Awareness Campaign at Keri, Rajouri



Top News Report

RAJOURI, Apr 2: Road accident leads to loss of precious lives and serious injuries. In order to address this critical issue, an awareness campaign

focused on 'Traffic Safety' was conducted by Indian Army at Keri, Rajouri. The campaign was aimed at educating individuals, raising awareness about safe driving practices and encouraging responsible

behaviour for traffic. The informative session also provided comprehensive information on traffic rules, safe driving techniques and the consequences of reckless driving.

Bhalla files nomination today thousands join procession

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Thousands of Congress workers joined the procession of Raman Bhalla who filed his nomination today in the presence of NC patron Dr. Farooq Abdullah, AICC Incharge J&K Affairs Shri Bharatsinh Solanki, PCC President Shri Vikar Rasool Wani and AICC Joint Secretary Shri Manoj Yadav along with several senior leaders of JKPC, former ministers/legislators and functionaries of DCC, BCC's and Frontal wings from all parts of Jammu Lok Sabha Seat.

The procession carrying flags, started from near Maharaja Hari Singh Park and proceeded towards Shaheedi Chowk to DC office. A large procession was seen all along the route when one end reaching DC office while other end was near starting point near Hari Singh Ji Park..



Raman Bhalla along with senior AICC leaders as well Shri Tara Chand, Mula Ram, Ravinder Sharma, Yogesh Sawhney also accompanied in the open vehicle, which proceeded towards DC

office where Dr. Farooq Abdullah with senior NC leaders S/Shri Ajay Sadotra, Rattan Lal Gupta, Ram Paul joined them to Returning Officer Office to file nomination.

Later, on way back,

while addressing a large gathering at Shaheedi Chowk, Shri Solanki appealed to the people to vote for change and uproot the dictatorial regime of BJP. The peoples participation in large numbers shows the mood of the people and claimed that both Lok Sabha seats of Jammu and Udhampur will be pocketed by the congress party with thumping majority. The people have made up their mind to bring about change at the Centre and Modi Govt. will go after elections and INDIA block will form the Govt.

Vikar Rasool Wani said that BJP stands exposed

before the people on various fronts as the people have awakened against the divisive policies of the BJP. The Congress party has taken a lead to fight against the tyrannical regime of BJP which has amassed huge wealth through electoral bond scheme while the entire opposition is being targeted by the Modi Govt. He said that Prime Minister Modi and BJP know they are getting defeated, so indulging in such tactics but people will teach them a lesson.

Congress candidate Raman Bhalla thanked the people for huge participation in the rally today from all parts and appealed to throw the arrogant regime out of power for the large interest of poor and common man. People of Jammu have suffered a lot and will teach BJP MP and its leaders a lesson through ballot, in this election. He said that congress will come back to solve the problems of common man who are under huge economic distress and facing lot of hardships due to tax terrorism and price rise, record unemployment and lopsided development.

Manmohan Singh DCC President Jammu Urban conducted the proceedings of the rally in which several senior leaders addressed the gathering at Shaheedi Chowk Jammu.

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Sunil Prajapati, State President along with team tours different areas of the Jammu to garner support for his party in the wake of forthcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Sunil Prajapati said that NITI Aayog has endorsed that over 25 crore population has been pulled out of poverty over the past decade by envisaging a multitude of public welfare schemes. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi firmly believed that the development process of the country must pass through the establishment of state-of-the-art infrastructure, which acts as a medium for sustainable and inclusive

growth. He said that the Modi Government has ensured the implementation of this principle on the ground to help the underprivileged classes to overcome dearth, hardships, and poverty.

The senior BJP leader claimed that no government in the past had done so much for the poor like the Modi regime as it has tailored dozens of schemes exclusively for the poor strata to bail it out from the morass, which it confronted for the last many decades due to indifference of successive governments.

Assuring that PM Modi has much more in the offing for those who are still struggling to fight poverty, the senior party functionary sought

whole hearted support of the people in the Lok Sabha polls to realize the unfulfilled dreams of the people in the shortest possible time. He said, "PM Modi has fulfilled all his promises made in the run-up to polls in 2014 and 2019, thus it is time now for the people of J&K to reciprocate positively to strengthen the hands of PM Modi for another term to fulfill the remaining demands of the people and making the nation strong economically, socially and militarily as well".

During the meetings, Rohit Verma, Raju Bazigar, Purshottam Kumar, Joginder Singh, Deep Kumar and Thoru Ram present on the occasion.

Ban on ED/CBI, six months before elections-AAP

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Senior AAP leader, Mr. Kuldeep Kumar Rao, in a press statement issued here, has felt it expedient that in order to avoid character assassination of the leaders of opposition political parties at the time of elections, ED or CBI intervention need be stopped to ensure free, fair & fearless election, at least 6 months before election in the biggest democracy of the world & urging upon Chief Justice of India to take SUO-MOTO action in public interest to ensure cleanliness, transparency & fearless election in Indian polity to set an example before the democratic world. Citing an example of worst ever character assassination by BJP government of opposition leaders be it Sh. Arvind Kejriwal, CM Delhi, Sh. Hemant Soren acting Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Manish Sisodia. Dy CM Satyinder Jain, Health Minister AAP, Sanjay Singh MP, AAP & so many other opposition leaders, the AAP leader vehemently assailed the present government saying that Indian democracy, has earned a BAD NAME of acute black mailing of opposition leaders at the time of election to secure political gains throwing dust in the eyes of general masses there

by diverting the attention of masses from real issues like price rise, unemployment, de-valuation of Indian rupees as compared to US dollar, paper leakage, Diesel & petrol prices etc.

He further said that the comments & prediction of four pillars of Hindu faith- the Shankar Acharyas against the untimely opening of RAM MANDIR in Ayodhya quite pre-maturely ahead of completion & have said the temple is incomplete, so pran pratishtha at a time like this is not in line with the Vedas & Sanatana Dharma that- Kissan Andolan, murder of democracy in Chandigarh Mayor election, Electoral bonds ban, destruction of constitution, constitutional Institutions, Election Commission, Federal system, favoring handful Industrialist friends at the cost of Indian economy & masses etc are the signs before the world and Indian masses casting bad shadows and the days are not far when the doubts & prediction of Shankar Acharyas may not come true. He further pleaded that the Nation is still heading towards dictatorship as the job of Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, Finance Minister, Works Minister etc is being done by only one person who is always & always visible on the first page of every news paper, on

every channel of TV, on every Petrol Pump, Railway station, Bus stop and what not, the AAP leader said & added that the time when general elections in the country are round the corner, the populist assertion made by PM Modi are nothing but the bundle of lies, which is known across the country. He said that none of the promises made by our PM has been fulfilled, the debt over India has risen to three times high than it was before 2014, the rupee has fallen down tremendously as compared to US Dollar. India is lagging behind in various parameters than its neighbors' like poverty, hunger, malnutrition & promising of 15 lacs into the accounts of each house hold, doubling the income of farmers by ending 2022, MSP to the benefit of farmers, 2 crore jobs every year, removing corruption, decriminalization of politics, lowering prices of Diesel, Petrol, domestic gas, sand, Bajri, stones, making 100 smart cities, running of Bullet trains, constructing 1 model village in each constituency every year etc. Referring to grant of warding Bharat Rattan to revered Chaudhary Charan Singh & Dr. Swami Nathan, he termed it as an attempt to lure farmer community in view of ongoing agitation of farmers over demanding grant of MSP etc.

Four stranded ITBP vehicles rescued in Snow-bound Ladakh

Top News Report

Leh, Apr 2: Four ITBP vehicles stranded in the snow at 17,000 feet in Zursar were taken to safety by a team from Project Himank of the Border Roads Organisation in Ladakh on Tuesday, a defence spokesperson said.

The Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) team of Project Himank carried out the rescue operation and averted a disaster, the public relations officer for Leh of the defence ministry's Directorate of Public Relations said in a post on X.

"Responding to an ITBP distress call, the 755 BRTF Team - Project

Himank Leh mobilised resources in extreme weather to rescue four stranded vehicles at 17,000 feet in Zursar, averting a disaster," the Leh-based defence spokesperson said, sharing a few pictures of the rescue operation in the snow-bound area.

The official said it was not immediately known how many Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel were travelling in the four vehicles.

In another post, the Leh-based public relations officer said 50 BRTF rescued a trucker stranded while crossing Chang La at 17,600 feet on Sunday-Monday night.

INDI Alliance formed not to save democracy but to save corrupt

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2. The political Chanakya Amit Shah, while addressing the party workers and BJP leaders at the 'Shakti Kendra Pramukh Sammelan' at Polo Ground in Rajasthan ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, taunted the INDI Alliance, saying, "No matter how many parties come together in this 'Ghamandiya Gathbandhan' (arrogant alliance), Modi will still come."

The entire country knows that the dream of defeating Modi in the arrogant alliance will remain just a dream. This alliance of the opposition does not work to save democracy but to promote nepotism in politics. The 'Ghamandiya Gathbandhan' is only concerned about the family, besides whom nobody else matters. Whether it's Ashok Gehlot, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Uddhav Thackeray, or MK Stalin, all these leaders want to make their sons chief ministers. While Mamata

Banerjee dreams of making her nephew the CM, and Sonia Gandhi wants to make her son Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister. People of the country have realised, how can those who are worried about their own families care about the youth of the country? The real place for the leaders of the 'Ghamandiya Gathbandhan' tainted with corruption is jail, and this is becoming evident in the era of Amrit Kaal.

In 2014, the people of Rajasthan had given all 25 seats in Modi's bag with 55% votes; in 2019, they gave all 25 seats to Modi again with 61% votes. This time too, the people of Rajasthan have decided to give Modi 25 out of 25 seats with 70% votes, making it a hat-trick.

Before 2014, Sonia and Manmohan's Government plunged the entire country into darkness. But when the people of the country and Rajasthan made Modi the Prime Minister in 2014, "Since then, Modi has

shown that the government of Delhi belongs to the poor. Today, this same army of the poor is ready to clean up the Congress mess."

In the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the skilled guidance of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, the BJP has set a target of winning 400+ seats. Shah firmly believes that it's not the leaders but the workers who can achieve this goal. Today, every worker at the booth is ready to make Prime Minister Modi the PM for the third time.

If Modi's magic works in any election, then the factor of the famous Shah also influences the electoral preparations. Shah's presence in the electoral field ensures BJP's victory. The Chanakya of Indian politics Amit Shah's claim is going to be proven correct as once again in 2024, the lotus will bloom and Modi will become the Prime Minister.

EDITORIAL

ENJOY LIFE WITH
MEDITATION

Meditation is a practice whereby a person uses a technique and consciously focuses attention on a particular object, thought, activity. Meditation is primarily about achieving a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. Meditation can have different meanings. A child can concentrate on his book while reading. Meditation has also been described in Maharishi Patanjali's book 'Yoga Sutra'.

The main types of meditation are Mindfulness meditation, Spiritual meditation, focused meditation, Movement meditation, Mantra meditation and Transcendental meditation.

Meditation provides many benefits which includes Internal energy increases, qualities like positive thoughts, love, patience, generosity, forgiveness and compassion develop.

Meditation has been popular in Indian culture since the beginning. Lord Shiva always meditate remain sitting in posture. Apart from this, all the sages of ancient India often meditated and did penance. Meditation is very beneficial for those people whose mind remains very disturbed. A person can never do his work properly if the mind is not calm. The biggest benefit of meditation is that it removes negative thoughts and positive thoughts come into the person's mind. By meditating, a person's body becomes healthy and disease-free. The body's immunity increases. Blood pressure decreases. The person's stress reduces and memory power increases. The pace of aging slows down. This is the reason why meditation and yoga have become very popular nowadays. From big leaders to Bollywood celebrities to big businessmen, everyone has started doing it. The Prime Minister of our country Narendra Modi is promoting yoga and meditation a lot. He regularly does yoga and meditation and inspires all the countrymen to do the same. People who wake up every morning and meditate are filled with new freshness. Stagnation, inertia and tiredness go away. Meditation is very important for those doing creative work. This gives them new creative power. There are many benefits of meditating. By doing this the person becomes familiar with himself. He gets to know more and more about himself and attains enlightenment. By meditating a person comes to know the purpose of his life. All great leaders used to meditate. Mahatma Gandhi always gave the message of meditation and yoga. Many famous people like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Maharishi used to advise to do meditation and yoga.

Meditation increases a person's tolerance. Often we all see that we get distracted due to small difficulties, stress, problems in our life. Nowadays people commit suicide over small matters. People commit suicide after quarrelling with their wives.

People end their lives when they lose their jobs. They get upset when a marriage breaks up. In this way, we all face small problems in our life, but it does not mean that we should end our life. Meditation increases a person's tolerance. This is completely true. In Buddhism, Lord Gautam Buddha also considers meditation and yoga important. He attained knowledge by meditating himself. Therefore, do meditation regularly to remove everyday mental stress and anxiety. People who meditate daily keep their mind, soul and body purified. Just as clothes are cleaned when they become dirty, similarly meditation drives away our negative thoughts and purifies our mind, soul and body. By doing this our brain starts working faster than before and works in a positive direction. Meditation has no religion. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, people of any religion can do it. This is for the entire human race. By doing this the person comes closer to God. Students especially benefit from meditation. Students who meditate daily, their self-confidence increases, they feel more interested in studies, their memory improves and they remember what they have read. His attention does not wander here and there. Students are able to concentrate on their studies. His nature is good. Positivity remains in mind and thoughts. Due to which students perform well in studies. They are able to learn things faster. Many people suffer from lack of enthusiasm in their lives. They are just living, they neither see any purpose nor any meaning in their life. Such people must meditate. Without enthusiasm there is no success in any work, life seems like a burden. Curiosity is an essential element of life. This should be done in the morning. It is essential that you remain on an empty stomach. Spread a mat on the ground and sit. Meditation should always be done in a quiet place. Close both your eyes. One should sit straight while meditating. Keep your spine straight. Relax your shoulders and neck. Before doing this, do a little warm-up (exercise). After that close both your eyes and concentrate. While meditating, one should take long and deep breaths. Keep breathing steady. Your mind will become calm. Close both eyes and keep a smile on your face. After meditating, open your eyes slowly. In the end we would say that meditation opens every part of the mind. Meditation brings peace and success in every area of life. Start meditating today and enjoy a beautiful life.

West's disquiet about India: Meddling or friendly nudge?

By: K.C. Singh

The rumblings were audible in India for months as investigative agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the income-tax department had been selectively targeting Opposition leaders and parties. It was expected that once the elections to the Lok Sabha were announced the Model Code of Conduct would compel balanced restraint till the elections were over. However, if anything, the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on March 21 and exaggerated income-tax claims from the Congress, the main Opposition party, defied that logic. The un-levelling of the playing field continues under the very nose of the Election Commission.

Germany was the first country to express discomfort over this scenario. India reacted with calculated diplomatic ire, advising the Germans to mind their own business. But when the US state department expressed similar anxiety, the ministry of external affairs first strongly protested, although less stridently, and then followed up by summoning acting US deputy chief of mission Gloria Berben. India's expectation was that the matter would end there, both sides having appeased public opinion in their respective countries.

However, US state department spokesman Mathew Miller, when asked about the summoning of their diplomat, in seniority next only to the ambassador, had no hesitation in reiterating that "we continue to follow these actions closely, including the arrest of the Delhi CM". Not stopping there, he added that the US was also aware of tax authorities hampering the electioneering ability of the Congress Party by freezing their accounts. Mr Miller concluded

that they "encourage fair, transparent and timely legal processes for each of these issues". Justice and fairness of the proceedings was also emphasised.

Amongst those who were trolled in India was an anchor of a major television channel when he simply tweeted the latest US reaction. This writer's comments a day earlier on a major business television channel, when posted on X and YouTube, generated huge viewership and some acerbic comments. The main line of counterattack by pro-BJP elements was that comments on the fairness of Indian elections by foreign powers was a breach of Indian sovereignty and interference in India's internal affairs. All those reporting such criticism, and especially those pointing out the misuse of the agencies only against government's opponents were anti-national.

This writer, in his social media response, pointed out that the "bhakts", or hardcore BJP supporters, failed to perceive the difference between the government and the nation. Mark Twain's quote captures it perfectly that "loyalty to the country always, loyalty to a government when it deserves it".

The fracas raises the broader question about the validity of the Indian defence that any criticism of the Indian electoral processes is a breach of Indian sovereignty. US President Joe Biden came into office in January 2021 promising a summit of democracies, intending thereby to globally advance the values that the liberal democratic model represents. But the United States has a poor record historically of such evangelism. Late US secretary of state Zbigniew Brzezinski had named his memoir Power and Principle, underscoring the conflict in the conduct of foreign

policy between ethics and realpolitik. A case in point is Pakistan. The minute the Soviet Union militarily intervened in Afghanistan in 1979, the US sidelined its ire over Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul Haq's military coup, the hanging of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. A similar long rope was offered again to military dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf after Al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States.

However, India presents a separate case. Even during the Cold War, the US was drawn to India as a citadel of democracy in Asia. Thereafter, India became additionally attractive for its economic rise, huge market, increasing military strength and as a counterfoil to China. But its basic relevance persists as an established democracy, which shares the American commitment to a global liberal democratic order. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promoted this soft power of India by coinages like India as the "mother of democracies".

Understandably, thus, India's friends among the Western nations get concerned about any democratic slippage in India. In the European Union itself, they have similar anxiety about democratic recession in member nations like Hungary. Brazil, as the 21st century opened, was seen alongside Germany, India and Japan as a natural candidate for permanent membership of the UN Security Council. But after the short and democratically destructive presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, that edge is gone.

On March 28, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' spokesman also commented on the Indian elections, hoping in "India, as in any country that is having elections, that everyone's rights are protected,

including political and civil rights, and everyone can vote in an atmosphere that is free and fair". India may tell the UN to stick to more pressing issues like the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the protracted war in Ukraine. However, the fundamental question of partisan conduct by the investigative agencies cannot be ignored.

The Indian legal system is basically sound, but faces questions about its independence. One is symbolised by an anti-Opposition judge of the Calcutta high court quitting overnight to become the BJP's candidate in the forthcoming election. Similarly, an excessive number of sensitive political cases have gone to a Supreme Court judge with past Gujarat government links. This may be a coincidence but the Chief Justice must ensure, as the phrase goes, that "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion".

What can happen next? It is possible that, diplomatic demarches aside, the Indian government realises the damage that it is doing to India's reputation as a robust democracy. It may curb its inexplicable desire to overplay its winning hand, with possibilities of diminished gain. Separately, the highest court may freeze the income-tax orders and also start de-weaponising the Prevention of Money Laundering Act by restricting the detention powers of the ED. A warning signal was one member of the Election Commission suddenly resigning.

Hopefully, like the US institutions defending the democratic framework when defeated incumbent President Donald Trump attempted to subvert the verdict, Indian institutions will not completely wilt. It would be a mistake to ignore warnings from the US and other Western powers as mere bluster. The people of India may be thinking analogously and vote accordingly.

Benefits of an Aptitude Test in Education

By: Vijay GarG

Aptitude Tests assesses your logical reasoning and thinking ability. They consist of multiple choice questions and are held as proper exams. The tests are strictly timed. Generally, the time given depends on the number of questions in the test. Mostly, 60 to 90 seconds is given for one question. There are many different types of questions which can be asked in an aptitude test. These different types of questions can be categorized as:

Verbal Ability: It comprises the English speaking skills of a person. Spelling and grammar are included in it. It is based on the understanding of the accurate meaning of the words, formation sentence or sentence structure, idioms and proverbs. It tests the skills like understanding the information, recalling the information, and understanding of language concepts. The questions included in verbal ability can be of the following types:

Spelling questions
Missing word questions
Missing word questions
Synonyms and antonyms
Word pair questions
Comprehension
Reasoning questions
Numeric Ability: It includes basic mathematics like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. In some tests, data interpretation is also present which means the interpretation of charts and graphs. The numeric ability can be categorized as a speed test. A speed test means that the questions are very simple and the methods used to solve them are very clear. It is just considered with how many questions you can answer correctly within a given period of time. You are not allowed to use a calculator. The questions included in numeric ability can be of the following types:
Arithmetic questions
Sequence and series
Numbers represented by the alphabet
Data interpretation
Abstract Reasoning: It includes the questions which have a very little or no application in the real world. The question tests your understanding of patterns and figures and also the similarities and differences between shapes and figures. This test does not require any educational qualification.

Spatial Reasoning: It includes your ability to draw or interpret drawings. It tests your imagination. The question may require you to imagine a given drawing rotated at some angle or visualize a 2-dimensional drawing in a 3-dimensional view. It may also include visual assembly or disassembly of an object. The questions included in spatial reasoning can be of the following types:
Shape matching
Group rotation
Combining Shapes
3 dimension views

Maps and plans

Mechanical Reasoning: It tests your knowledge of mechanical and physical concepts. Your score significantly depends on your knowledge. The various aspects included in it are:

Levers
Gears
Pulleys
Electrical circuits
Springs Tools

Fault Diagnosis: It tests your ability to find faults in mechanical and electronic systems. This type of test is taken by those who want to work as technical personnel.

Data Checking: It tests that how accurately and speedily you can find out errors in the given data. Mostly, you would be given two columns of data and you have to find the differences between the two. The data is not much meaningful. This type of test is done for clerical jobs, administrative jobs, or jobs related to banking and accounting.

Work Sample: In this, you will have to give the sample of the work you are expected to do after you get the job. Therefore, it will involve a specific skill.

What is the Importance of an Aptitude Test?
The Aptitude Test can be used as a measure of the abilities of a person. These tests give the complete picture of a person's mind. The aptitude test is of a great importance for the students studying in school or those people who want to change their profession. The test will give them a precise result of what is the actual abilities of a person. The importance of an aptitude test can be understood by the fact that they being widely used now for various purposes. Some of them are:

Placement Purpose: If a job requires some specific skill or some particular trait in the person, it is evaluated by aptitude tests. For example, if you have applied for a data entry job, they will test your data checking skills or if you have applied for a job in the technical field they will test your mechanical reasoning or fault diagnosing ability. Mostly, the aptitude test is used in conjunction with a personal interview or a group discussion or both for job placement. It is difficult to cheat in an aptitude test, therefore, they are considered reliable by most of the interviewers. These tests give the interviewer an idea of the natural abilities, strength, and weaknesses of the interviewee.

Choosing a Career: The result of the aptitude test tells us about the skills or abilities of a person. This result is of great help in choosing a career. A person will get to know what he is good at and he should choose a career accordingly. For example, a person takes an aptitude test and the result shows that the person's verbal skills are excellent but the numerical skills are very poor. In this case, rather than choosing a career which requires him to enhance his numeric ability, it would be beneficial for him to choose a career which requires his verbal skills. Therefore, an aptitude test becomes guidance in choosing a career. One should definitely opt for an aptitude test before choosing a career. The

right time for this test is after passing the 10th standard exam. It will guide you to choose the correct stream.

Academic Improvement: If a student takes an aptitude test, it will directly or indirectly tell him his strong and weak subject. The student can, therefore, work on his weak subjects and improve them.

It is very important to include aptitude tests in education. As most of the multinational companies take the aptitude test of the person trying for the job, the tips and tricks for solving the aptitude tests must be taught to the students from the very beginning. If the students practice aptitude tests from the very beginning they will be able to solve them in proper time correctly. This would be beneficial for them when they go for recruitment. The schools should test the aptitude of the students at regular intervals so that the faculty can know the weak areas of their students. Moreover, it will tell the faculty if there is any fault in the curriculum or teaching methodology.

How to Prepare for an Aptitude Test?

If you are appearing for an aptitude test which is competitive or for placement purpose, here are some tips which could be helpful to you.

Learn Basics: There is no particular syllabus for aptitude test. Anything could be asked of you in the test. So, it becomes necessary that all your basic subjects, especially mathematics, is clear to you. You should know all the basics you learned in the school.

Everything is Important: In a competitive exam, even a single mark become very important. So, you should not leave any topic while preparing. Even if you find a topic difficult, do not leave it. Read that topic again and again or take help from your teachers. You do not know what will come in the exam, so you should prepare all the topics very well.

Practice: As it is said, practice makes a man perfect. You should go for mock aptitude tests. There are many books available for aptitude. The internet is flooded with aptitude tests which are free of cost. Go for them. The more you will practice, your speed will increase. You will also come across many different types of questions, which might increase your knowledge. It is also possible that you may get the same question you practised in the test.

Know your Weak Points: You should know in which topics you lag behind. You should prepare those topics first because you do not need much time to prepare those topics which you are good at.

Do not Waste Time: Time is very precious. If you get stuck on a question and you do not find any way out, leave it for that particular time and come back to it later.

Be Careful while Attempting: Most of the tests have negative marking. So just do not attempt the question if you are not sure about the answer. Do not assume your answer to be right. A zero is always better than a minus one.

Avoid Gaps: Avoid gaps in your practising routine as it can decrease your speed. Large gaps can make you forgetful. If you have a busy

schedule on a particular day, try to take out at least 30 minutes for practising questions. Do not waste any day without practising.

Have a Fresh Mind: Aptitude needs a lot of concentration which can be devoted only to a fresh and peaceful mind. If you had a fight with someone or you are feeling low or you have diverted mind, do not practice aptitude. If you will practice aptitude at this instance, you will get all your questions wrong because you will not be able to devote full concentration.

Take Care of Yourself: Body and mind are interlinked. For a healthy mind, the body should also be healthy and vice versa. Sleep well and eat well. Take at least 6 hours of sleep.

Disadvantages of an Aptitude Test
With all these advantages of aptitude tests, there also come disadvantages attached to them. The disadvantages of aptitude tests are:

Costly: It is quite costly to make an aptitude test or to administer it. To meet this cost, the institutes or organizations which hold these tests charge a huge sum of money from the students appearing for it. The companies which use aptitude test for recruitment have to spend a lot of money on these tests as the number of people appearing is quite a lot. For every different type of the job, the company has to modify the test which adds to the cost.

Stressful: Aptitude tests are quite stressful. A person appearing for the test devotes his entire mind to it before and during the test. If the person appeared for the test for placement or some other fruitful purpose, he would be tensed for the result. This increases the stress level.

Cannot tell Everything: Aptitude tests can only tell your weak and strong areas, but it cannot tell how well you can learn new things. It only tells about your natural abilities and intelligence, not about your interests. Moreover, it only tells about your mind, not about your personality. For example, your aptitude test results say that you would be good in the field of sales and marketing but you lack those speaking skills and confidence required for conversing with the customers, you will not be able to find success in these fields. Also, the tests cannot predict your artistic capabilities.

Conclusion
Considering both the advantages and disadvantages, it is concluded that do not stick to what your aptitude test result says. For choosing a career, there is no harm in taking the test but doing exactly what the result says is not right. Have a deep thought and connect the test result with your interest and your personality and then make a decision for choosing a career. If you are appearing for the test for other purposes, that is, placement or something else, prepare for it. The test will not be easy.

(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist Malout)

JU organizes Expert Lecture on "Stress Management for Younger Generation through Spirituality"



Top News Report

KATHUA, Apr 2: University Institute of Engineering and Technology (UIET), Kathua Campus, University of Jammu organized an Expert Lecture on Stress Management for Younger Generation through Spirituality.

The resource person was Col. Manoj Sharma, who is commanding 126 TA Battalion at Madhopur. During the course of his career as a company commander, the officer has served along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir sector and western borders of Punjab. He also served in Africa (Congo) as Part of the United

Nations Peace keeping force. He remained part of the Mobile TRG team in Myanmar to train the Myanmar Army for the United Nations mission.

For his dedication and diligent services, Col Manoj Sharma has been awarded with "GOC-in-C Commendation Card" and "Force Commander's certificate of appreciation".

Drawing from his extensive real-life experiences, Col. Manoj Sharma provided invaluable insights and practical guidance on navigating the challenges of stress in today's fast-paced world, particularly targeting the younger generation. Throughout

the session, Col. Manoj Sharma emphasized the significance of integrating spirituality into one's daily life as a powerful tool for managing stress and maintaining mental equilibrium. His thought-provoking anecdotes and profound wisdom resonated deeply with the audience, inspiring them to adopt a holistic approach to wellness. He further underscored the transformative power of spirituality in promoting mental well-being and resilience among the younger generation.

Prof. Arvind Jasrotia, Rector, Kathua Campus, University of Jammu, in his message underscored the importance

of fostering a supportive environment for students to address their mental health concerns and encouraged the continuation of similar events in the future. He also added that the expert lecture served as a platform for meaningful dialogue and reflection on the pressing issues of stress management among the younger generation. He stressed that accepting the challenges of stress in today's fast-paced world promotes holistic development and well-being among today's student community. Prof. Jasrotia further said that by fostering conversations around spirituality and mental health, the campus aims

to empower students to lead fulfilling and balanced lives.

Dr. Sourabh Shastri, I/c Coordinator, UIET, Kathua Campus (JU) welcomed the resource person. He stressed that such motivational lectures guide students on the profound role spirituality plays in navigating the complexities of modern life. Recognizing the importance of mental health and holistic well-being, he emphasized the campus's commitment for providing students with the necessary tools and knowledge to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

The program was coordinated by Er. Sandeep Raj and Er. Vedika Khullar.

Er. Sushant Gagal, Dr. Seema Jamwal, Dr. Shivani Sharma, Er. Amarjeet Chopra, Er. Komal Khadotra, Er. Palvi Verma, Er. Vishavjeet Singh, Er. Sourabh Gupta, Er. Ritika Gupta, Dr. Ritu Sharma, Er. Himani Khajuria, Er. Aroshi Gupta, Er. Princy Sharma, Er. Puneet Kour, Er. Shivani Sharma, Er. Karan Kumar, Er. Arjun Kapoor, Er. Rohit Khatru, Er. Jeewanjot, Dr. Sunny Sharma, Dr. Nomita Sharma, Dr. Meenakshi Singh, Pranav Ratta, were also present during the lecture.

Amit Kapoor demands removal of Chairman of JKFFRC

Says Pvt schools harassed parents on name of high fees, uniforms, arbitrary books

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Amit Kapoor, President of Parents Association Jammu, raised questions on the functioning of JKFFRC and protested strongly today demanding the immediate removal of its Chairman. He said that an efficient Chairman should be appointed to bring its functioning on track. Along with this, he said that school mafia is being run under the guise of white collar, which is looting parents by charging high fees, uniforms and arbitrary prices of books.

He said that books and uniforms are changed in schools every year for looting, whereas under the new education policy, only NCERT or JKBOSE books can be used in schools. Continuing his series of protests against the private school mafia, Amit Kapoor held a strong protest in Jammu today as well.

Addressing the protesters, Amit Kapoor said that the private school mafia is looting parents

by changing books and uniforms every year and at the same time, the schools whose fees have been approved by JKFFRC are also charging more fees than that. He said that as far as JKFFRC is concerned, it only forms a complaint cell and when a parent complains, its chairman asks the parent to withdraw his complaint or settles the matter by reducing his fees a little, but more fees are being charged from the rest of the parents. He said that the investigation committees formed by the department are also just nominal and they too are just watching the spectacle of parents being looted by doing the formality.

He said that the Director of School Education Department has issued a circular and warned the schools violating the rules, but as far as the CEO of Jammu division is concerned, he has completely failed to implement this circular at the ground level, due to which the parents are

quite disappointed.

He said that when the CEO of Poonch took action in this matter, he was transferred. He said that all this problem can be solved only when the Chairman of JKFFRC is transferred and a new Chairman is appointed in his place. He has also urged the Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir to take the complaints of parents seriously and take concrete steps towards taking strict action against the schools violating the rules. Amit Kapoor has warned that if no action is taken against the school mafia, then he will continue the movement started against it and the series of protests started by him will also continue.

Along with this, he also reiterated the demand for giving two years relaxation in age to the children of first class. He said that the children who are currently enrolled should be given two years relaxation in age so that there is no impact on their future.

Skoda Auto India enhances digitalisation strategy to fuel New Era of growth in India



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Skoda Auto India has already ushered in the New Era with the announcement of its all-new compact SUV. Taking a stride further into the New Era with user engagement, customer involvement and digitalisation, the

company launched a flurry of 360-degree digital activities that saw it achieve landmark sales and get closer to its customers and fans.

Speaking on the occasion, Petr Janeba, Brand Director, Skoda Auto India, said: "With the ever-changing digital landscape, plat-

forms and mediums, it is imperative to pioneer new ways of enhancing the customer experience and journey. Our digital strategies are designed to ensure our products and services reach out to our customers and fans, in a language of their choice. The Name Your Skoda campaign garnered over 1,50,000 entries till date for our soon-to-be-launched all-new compact SUV. The recently concluded, first-ever, fully digital 24-hour sale celebrating our 24 years in India resulted in 709 Skoda cars being booked in a single day. Besides, we have further enhanced our Skoda verse India NFT umbrella with the roll out of the Skoda Gearheads community. With these we are constantly adapting and evolving to reach out to even more customers to meet their needs and aspirations in this vast and diverse market."

Construction of lane and drain started in Ghou-Manassan Ward 5



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Construction of 120 mts lane and drain was started today in Ward No. 5 of Village Ghou-Manassan under Municipality Transport Master Plan (MTMP) scheme. The locals present on the occasion appreciated the quick response towards their just and genuine demand.

Speaking on the occasion, Ex Vice Chairman of Municipal Committee Ghou-Manassan Krishan Lal Kaith said that Village Ghou-Manassan has progressed a lot towards development in last five years.

Others who spoke included Bishan Dass, Ram Lal, Madaan Lal, Rajesh Kumar and Raj Mistry

Kishtwar police recovers huge quantity of illicit liquor

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Apr 2: In a significant crackdown on illegal activities, District Police Kishtwar have recovered 71 bottles of illicit liquor (22 ltr) from Kuleed area of Kishtwar town.

During routine patrolling a Police Party of Police Station Kishtwar noticed some suspicious activities on a chicken shop in Kuleed area.

The Police party on reaching the shop started search of the shop and during search 71 bottles of illicit liquor (22 ltr) has been recovered. In this regard a case FIR No. 90/ 2024 under relevant provisions of law has been registered at Police Station Kishtwar against one bootlegger



namely Suraj Kumar S/O Khushi Ram R/O Waseer Kuleed and his associate.

District Police Kishtwar remain steadfast in their commitment to eradicating all forms of illegal

activities and ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens. They urge the public to continue providing valuable information to assist in maintaining law and order in the district.

Sanjay Nayar takes over as ASSOCHAM President

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Sanjay Nayar, a well-known name in the global financial markets and Founder and Chairman, Sorin Investment Fund has taken over as President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

Nayar with extensive experience in international finance replaces Ajay Singh, completing his tenure at the Chamber.

Nayar brings an experience of four decades in global financial and capital markets, including 25 years at Citi and nearly 14 at KKR, before retiring last year. He established KKR India operations in 2009 after leaving Citigroup.

At KKR, Sanjay led investments of around USD 14 Billion in Private Equity, Real Estate, Infrastructure, and Credit with Private equity being the largest at approximately USD 10 billion valuation.

Sanjay worked across senior leadership positions in Citigroup for 25 years in India, UK, and USA.

He served as the CEO of Citigroup's Indian and South Asian operations and was a member of



Citigroup's Global Management Committee and Asia Executive Operating Committee.

He serves as a Non-Executive Director at the new-age E-commerce company NYKAA founded by him and his wife Falguni Nayar. Sanjay was recently appointed as a non-official member of the Board of Trade, Government of India, representing the private sector, and is a member of the National Startup Advisory Council. He is also a member of the Board of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), the Governing Board of the Indian School

of Business (ISB), a member of the Advisory Board of Habitat for Humanity, Chairman of Grammen Impact Investments India (GIII); and Founder - Board Member of Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP).

"It is indeed a great honor for me to be elected as the President of ASSOCHAM, the apex institution with a history of over 100 years in its service to the Nation. During my Presidency, my ASSOCHAM colleagues and I will work closely with the government on the visionary goal of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for India to become a developed nation with a multi-fold increase in the country's per capita income and continuation of bold economic growth. I look forward to supporting the efforts being made by the industry to achieve the country's sustainability goals.

"India remains a bright spot in the global economy and we must leverage this position further. Given the recent success of Startup Mahakumbh led by ASSOCHAM, I look forward to catalyzing the startup culture backed by private and public savings", he said.

"ASSOCHAM would continue to play a pro-active role in the endeavour of nation building. Aligned with its four growth pillars, I look forward to furthering efforts to facilitate the MSME segment, through improved financing and digitization. The Chamber would remain an active partner of the government in the policy formulations for inclusive growth with a sense of social responsibility", said Mr Nayar.

Extending a warm welcome to the new President, ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said Sanjay's leadership would help the Chamber strengthen its four pillars of growth. In the coming year, ASSOCHAM will lean on Sanjay's experience and network to further facilitate the growth of the MSME segment, especially the use of emerging technologies such as AI. The chamber has been working passionately on the four pillars of Sustainable, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment, and Digitization. He said the chamber would work towards realizing the avowed objective of India joining the status of a developed country in the next two decades.

Saroori pledges to fight for Statehood, land & job protection in Parliament

Top News Report

BATOTE, Apr 2: DPAP Vice Chairman and Lok Sabha Seat Candidate Udhampur- Doda G.M. Saroori was welcomed with warmth and enthusiasm during his recent visit to Batote.

Addressing a gathering of dedicated workers, Saroori reiterated his commitment to amplify the people's voice in parliament and work towards the betterment of the region.

He appealed for unity among the community to foster regional progress and development. He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving common goals and aspirations.

Saroori highlighted DPAP's significant role in defending people's rights, citing the party's stand against the land order and successful prevention of bulldozers. He specifically lauded DPAP Chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad's efforts in parliament, where he staunchly opposed the revocation of Article 370, representing the sentiments of the people effectively.

Saroori praised Azad as the lone voice advocating for public issues in parliament, underlining DPAP's commitment to prioritizing the people's welfare.

He reiterated DPAP's core mission of promoting development initiatives and advocating for peace in the region. He emphasized that DPAP's agenda is solely focused on development and societal harmony.

Meanwhile, Provincial President Jugal Kishore Sharma, urged the public to reject divisive forces that seek to create rifts based on religion and caste. Sharma emphasized the importance of electing representatives to parliament who prioritize raising public issues and working for the people's welfare. Sharma expressed confidence in DPAP Vice Chairman and LS Seat Candidate G.M. Saroori's ability to represent the public effectively and address their concerns in parliament.

Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami highlighted Saroori's track record and commitment to serving the people with justice and dedication. He reit-

erated DPAP's stance on issue-based politics, emphasizing the need for representatives who prioritize public welfare, unity, and harmony over divisive agendas.

Among others who were present on the occasion were Provincial President Jugal Kishore Sharma, Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami, Arun Singh Raju Secretary, Gourav Chopra, Shahrugh Bhatti Zonal Gen Secretary, Ch Mohd Farooq Provincial Gen Secretary, Vishal Chopra Provincial Gen Secretary, Arif Salaria, Arif Salaria District General Secretary, Jagdish Chand District Vice President Ramban, Block President Atta Mohd Zargar, General Secretary Youth Chenab Valley Mohd Ishaq, Sr VP Batote Abdul Salam, Govind Singh, Hans Raj, Neelma Devi, Shamim Begum, Chet Ram, Ali Mohd Shan, Khem Raj, Mohd Rafiq Shan, Krishan Chand, Vijay, Mohd Aslam, Shadi Lal, Abdul Rashid, Mohd Imran, Mohd Hussain, Mohd Rafiq, Hanif Shan, Tariq Rather, Akhtar Wani and others.

'Box Office matters more than awards, says three time National Award-winning actor Rajat Kapoor

As an actor he rarely falters. Rajat Kapoor, the three-time National Award winning director and actor, has wowed us more than once. So, it comes as no surprise as he delivers another noteworthy performance in Lootere, streaming on Disney+Hotstar. Yet, in his vast filmography which includes movies like Drishyam, Mulk, Kapoor & Sons, Dil Chahta Hai and Bheja Fry, he considers the part of the captain of the ship in Lootere as an exception.

Seen in nearly 50 films, a meaty role that allows him to 'truly sink his teeth and get the juice out of it' is not an everyday norm. He is not a fan of pirate dramas for, "There is hardly any such genre and only few films internationally fall in this category." He thinks Lootere is essentially a gangster thriller. As the series has received much appreciation, he lauds its young director Jay Mehta. He can't say whether Jay, son of celebrated director Hansal Mehta, is his father's son but pats him on the back not just for his technical brilliance but passion and perseverance.

A filmmaker himself, however, the director in Rajat takes a backseat when the directorial reins are in others' hands. He avers, "It doesn't matter whether the director is young or old,



first-timer or veteran, I am a very submissive actor. Even though I might offer a suggestion or two, ultimately I do become part of the larger goal of director's vision."

While the world might be going gaga over how OTT has transformed the landscape of entertainment, he is not sure whether streamers have in any way changed audiences' tastes in India. "Sure, people are watching documentaries. But that number is still small. Anyway, there were always people who were into different kind of cinema."

Take him, with a film-buff father, at the age of 16, he was part of a film society in Delhi. Introduction to world cinema, the likes of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Ingmar Bergman, had already

happened when he entered the Film Training Institute of India, Pune.

However, acting was never by conscious design. While his nuanced role of an abusive uncle in Mira Nair's Monsoon Wedding (2001) would be forever etched on our minds, at that point he was not looking at a career in acting. Today, he might agree that OTT has done wonders for actors, but on a platform where a star is born every other day, he is not looking for that one part which will define him. "I don't think there is one such role which will prove your mettle. Ultimately you want to be remembered for your entire body of work," he says.

And his impressive oeuvre includes much-lauded directorial endeavours like Ankhon Dekhi.

He specialised in film direction at his alma mater and remembers how much the guidance of stalwarts Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani enriched him. With three National Awards under his belt, he is honest enough to admit that beyond honours and laurels, 'box office matters more'. But he also insists, "Ultimately one works neither for awards nor for money, but whether one has done something that will outlive you."

His drive to achieve that goal reflects in his film Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa, which was screened at MAMI Film Festival. For the actor in him, besides Amazon series Khauf, there is the next season of Tanaav, which he promises would be 'better than the first'. On unflattering comparisons with the original Fauda, which was a rage in India, he would not comment simply for he has not seen the Israeli series.

Actually, OTT where the space for indie cinema is dwindling does not figure in his viewing experience; at least web dramas don't. But he would want viewers to catch up with Lootere, which among other things he says is 'fun'. His reflections on life and his journey may not come across as fun or funny, but candid, calm and collected he sure is.

'Entering my fitted clothes era,' Parineeti's chic response to pregnancy rumours



Parineeti Chopra on Monday has debunked rumours of her pregnancy by sharing a video of herself wearing

'fitted clothes'. Recently, during the trailer launch of her upcoming streaming movie Amar Singh Chamkila,

Parineeti wore a loose black coloured kaftan dress.

Rumour mills were abuzz with the speculation around the actress' pregnancy, after her recent wedding with AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha. However, the actress had earlier put all rumours to rest, as she took to Instagram stories and wrote a note: "Kaftan dress = pregnancy, Oversized shirt = pregnancy, Comfy Indian kurta = pregnancy."

On Monday, Parineeti took to Instagram and shared a reel, wherein she can be seen wearing a white top, matching pants and blazer. The Ishaqzaade actress is giving major boss lady vibes in the outfit.

The video includes a caption that reads: "POV - wearing well fitted clothes today, because when I tried a kaftan dress...", then the video shows several news headlines stating 'Is Parineeti Chopra pregnant?'

Shruti Haasan starts shooting for Chennai Story

Shruti Haasan, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to her recently released song Inimel with director Lokesh Kanagaraj, has started shooting for her next project.

Her next project is an international film, titled Chennai Story. It will be helmed by BAFTA-nominated director Philip John.

On Monday, Shruti took to Instagram and shared glimpses from the sets of the film and the mahurat shot.

The actress also shared a video of herself enroute to the set in her car. Shruti shared the video with the caption: "New day. New movie. New energy. Thankful." Chennai Story marks Shruti's third international outing after Treadstone and The Eye.

The movie, adapted from Timeri N. Murari's bestseller The Arrangements of Love, is set against the backdrop of Chennai.

It is a coming-of-age romantic and Shruti plays the pivotal role of Anu, a spunky private detective.



You know him as Khalid Mir in Raazi, Hathi Ram in Paatal Lok and Pradip Kamat in Three of Us. Read on to know the man behind those faces...

There are stars and then, there are actors. Jaideep Ahlawat is a star-actor, in a league of his own, which we are told by Namrata Joshi, who moderated a session with the actor on Day 4 of Cinevesture International Film Festival at Taj-Chandigarh. We couldn't agree more with her, though the actor would rather have us believe that he is a mere product of a writer's creation and a director's vision. What he says may be true, but like Joshi said, he indeed is a star-actor. The jam-packed ballroom at Taj-Chandigarh bore testimony to the actor's stardom!

While his career spans over a decade, Ahlawat is also one of many actors who have benefited from the OTT boom. He credits his success to one basic thing - good writing. "Good writing is what makes my character look good on screen. It's not just me who did a great job in Paatal Lok, it was the writer, director, cinematographer and many others. I was only the face of that collective



effort," he explains.

He is old fashioned when it comes to reading his scripts too. "I prefer to have a hard copy of the script and read it, rather than hear it from someone as part of narration. When someone narrates it, he puts in his own emotion to the character, but when I read it, I make my own impression. It's raw and authentic," he says.

On the contrary, while shooting for a scene, the intense Ahlawat prefers to have instructions and comments from his director and writer to get

into the skin of the character. And, as another Netflix outing, Three of Us, is being appreciated for its unique tale told in a simple manner, he says, "It's the digital medium that has given freedom to writers and directors to experiment and tell a tale in the long format and in many seasons." Which reminds us of the second season of Paatal Lok, which is in the offing.

Ahlawat calls filming for Paatal Lok is a 'beautiful-painful feeling, which is satisfying as well'. He adds, "It's an

example of complicated, nuanced writing."

Talking about his personal journey from a village near Rohtak, Haryana, to Mumbai, Ahlawat says acting wasn't the original career option for him. A student of medical stream in Jat College, Rohtak, like many of his peers, his aim was to get into the Armed Forces. But he couldn't crack the SSB exams, and it broke him completely. After watching the play Oedipus, which moved him to tears, he found his calling in theatre. The stage liberated him. "Plays became my mode of survival. Acting brought me happiness, I could eat and sleep again, and get out and meet friends," he says.

And this is source of happiness that propelled him to pursue a post-graduate course in FTII Pune. "I never thought of making money through acting. Even if you are an average actor, you can sustain yourself in Mumbai. So, it was always about good work."

For him, there is no compromise when it

comes to a quality product. Even if it means chopping of his own lines from the script, which could have made or marred his image in his debut film Aakrosh. Ahlawat recalls how he asked writer Aditya Dhar to cut down his eight-line scene to three, as those extra lines made no sense to him. "I do poetry recitation in Hindi and Urdu. Poetry is all about brevity. A poet expresses in two lines what a writer does in 200 words. So, I went to Aditya and told him that 'ye teen char linein to bakwas lag rahi hain'. And he said it was the first time a new actor was reducing his own lines. He was shocked by my suggestion, but we are friends till date because of that incident." Be it Khalid Mir in Raazi, Shahid Khan in Gangs of Wasseypur, Hathi Ram in Paatal Lok or Pradip Kamat in Three of Us, he enjoys every performance because 'acting is breathing' for him and everything else, money or expensive clothes just 'a bonus'.

Kajol's hilarious wish for 'birthday boy' Ajay Devgn

One of Bollywood's most serious actors, Ajay Devgn, turned 55 on Tuesday and his actress-wife had the most hilarious way of wishing her star husband.

Kajol took to X and shared a picture of the actor.

The actress wrote, "Since I know ur soooooo excited about ur birthday that ur jumping up and down like a kid and clapping ur hands and turning in circles at the thought of your cake... lemme start the day off by wishing u a very very happy birthday @ ajaydevgn."

"PS:- if anybody has a

video of him doing any of this pls send it to me immediately #Birthday-Boy," she added.

Kajol and Ajay have worked together in several films such as 'Gundaraj', 'Raju Chacha', 'Ishq', 'Pyaar Toh Hona Hi Tha', 'U, Me Aur Hum' and 'Tanhaji', among many others.

In 1994, the two started dating while filming 'Gundaraj'.

The two got married in 1999 in a traditional Maharashtrian ceremony. In 2003, Kajol gave birth to their daughter Nysa and seven years later in 2010, she gave birth to their son Yug.



Saiyami Kher calls for cycling-friendly infra in Mumbai

Actress and an avid cyclist Saiyami Kher has voiced her concerns regarding the safety of cyclists in Mumbai amid the city's ongoing infrastructure development. The actress highlighted the challenges posed by the narrowing of roads due to the construction of metro tracks, flyovers, and coastal roads, leaving little space to ride safely. Saiyami said, "There's been an increasing number of cyclists facing accidents and unsafe environments. The entire city is dug up, every major and smaller connecting road, making it difficult for cyclists to navigate." "This has not only



been an inconvenience and should be addressed, but the fact that it has also led to people's death is really shocking," she said.

The actress said that every "city should have infrastructure for open air fitness options of which cycling is a major option for many, and to know that this can be hazardous is really sad."

"The authorities need to do better, the current conditions aren't conducive for anyone to take health and fitness in open spaces in Mumbai given the current scenario," she added. Saiyami emphasises on the importance of wearing safety gear.

Lok Sabha elections: 'Wipe out Congress from everywhere', says PM Modi in Uttarakhand poll rally

Asking people to further strengthen him, Modi said he has guaranteed to make India the third-biggest economy in the world in his third term.

RUDRAPUR, Apr 2 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on Rahul Gandhi for his remark suggesting there would be a "conflagration" in the country if the BJP gets a third term.

Kick-starting his Lok Sabha campaign in Uttarakhand from Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar district, he said staying out of power has made the Congress desperate and asked the people to wipe out the party from everywhere.

"Congress' shehzada has threatened, there will be fire if Modi gets another term in office. Staying out of power has made them so desperate that they are now talking about setting things on fire. Would you let them do



it? Wouldn't you punish them?" Modi said this while accusing the party of trying to push the country towards instability and anarchy.

At a rally in Delhi's Ram-lila Maidan on Sunday, Rahul Gandhi had said that if the BJP wins the election through

"match-fixing" and changes the Constitution, then the country would be "set ablaze" and it would not survive.

The prime minister also asserted that action against the corrupt will go on. "Don't you think the corrupt should go to jail? The corrupt are threatening

and abusing me. But they can't deter me. Action against each one of the corrupt will continue," Modi said.

The prime minister's remarks come amid an opposition onslaught on the ruling party in the wake of the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and JMM leader Hemant Soren in connection with separate corruption cases.

Asking people to further strengthen him, Modi said he has guaranteed to make India the third-biggest economy in the world in his third term.

Modi's guarantee means fulfilment of the guarantee, he said.

"Development happens when the intentions are right. Right intentions lead to good results," the prime minister added.

Congress with Rs 12 lakh crore scams competing with Modi with zero corruption charges: Amit Shah



BENGALURU, Apr 2 (Agencies): Union Home Minister Amit Shah questioned how Congress after being involved in scams worth Rs 12 lakh crore during the ten year period of UPA government can compete with PM Narendra Modi who has zero charges of corruption against him.

Addressing party workers at Shakti

Kendra Pramukh Sammelan organised on Tuesday in Bengaluru, Shah said that in the last 23 years as Chief Minister of Gujarat and Prime Minister of India, there have been no corruption charges against Modi. This is because he has displayed a transparent governance, he said.

Further, Shah said that Modi worked for the last 10 years in the country

while taking a break, while Congress leaders have to search for their leader Rahul Gandhi who goes on international trips every few months.

Speaking about BJP in Karnataka, Shah said that in 2014, Karnataka elected 17 seats with 43 per cent vote share, in 2019, it increased to 25 seats with 51 per cent vote share.

"This time I want it to be 28 seats with 60 per cent vote share," he demanded. He also mentioned that during the UPA government, they had given Rs 1.42 lakh crore grants to Karnataka in ten years, which was Rs 4.91 lakh crore during NDA's ten-year tenure.

'BJP approached me to join party or face jail': AAP leader Atishi

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Delhi Minister Atishi said on Tuesday that the BJP approached her to join the party to "save my political career". The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader also claimed that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) would arrest her in a month if she refused to join.

While addressing a press conference in Delhi, Atishi said she was approached to join the party via her close aides.

"The Prime Minister and BJP have made up their mind that they want to crush the Aam Aadmi Party and all its leaders and want to eliminate them," she said.

"The BJP intends to arrest four more AAP leaders before the Lok Sabha elections: me, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Raghav Chadha and Durgesh Pathak."

The AAP leader's revelation came a day after the Enforcement Directorate claimed that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal named Atishi

and Saurabh Bharadwaj while being questioned in connection with the excise policy case.

According to the probe agency, the AAP supremo told them that "Vijay Nair didn't report to him but to Atishi Marlena and Saurabh Bharadwaj and his interaction with Vijay Nair was limited [sic]."

Nair, the former communication-in-charge of the party, is one of the accused in the case. He is currently in jail.

On the probe agency's claim, Atishi said at the press conference that "yesterday the ED took Saurabh Bharadwaj and my name in court, on the basis of a statement which has been with the ED and CBI for one and a half years".

"This statement is there in the ED chargesheet as well as in the CBI's. So what was the reason for raising this statement? The reason is that now the BJP feels that despite Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, and Satyendra Jain being in jail, the AAP remains united

and strong. Now they are planning to put the next line of leadership of the Aam Aadmi Party in jail," the Delhi Minister added.

When asked if Arvind Kejriwal would resign from his posts as Chief Minister and AAP national convenor as he is currently in Tihar Jail in connection to the Delhi liquor policy case, Atishi said, "There are two constitutional and legal provisions related to this in our country. Representation of the People Act says that if you have a conviction for more than two years, then you cannot remain a public representative".

"Arvind Kejriwal has not been convicted. Arvind Kejriwal enjoys the overwhelming majority of the Delhi Assembly, so there is no reason for him to resign. If Arvind Kejriwal resigns today then it will be a very simple and straightforward solution for the BJP to topple the opposition governments."

Arvind Kejriwal was arrested on March 21



by the Enforcement Directorate, and was sent to the custody of the federal agency till March 28. His custody was extended by four days, which ended on Monday, following which the Rouse Avenue Court sent him 14-day custody until April 15.

The BJP, however, has rejected Atishi's claim, with MP Manoj Tiwari saying the party has "zero tolerance against corruption", adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stand is to remove corruption.

In a statement to ANI news agency, Tiwari said if the "kingpin of the scam is saying that other people are involved, they should be questioned".

"The people of Delhi understand it very well. There is a saying in English that thieves have been exposed."

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla told the news agency that AAP has "a track record of speaking the most number of lies and making the most number of untruthful statements".

"They say it's vendetta politics. Are they implying the courts are doing a vendetta? Are they implying that the courts are hand in glove with the BJP and are orchestrating this? If they have all the evidence in their command, why don't the courts give them relief?" he questioned.

2 dead, several injured after bus collides with lorry on Chennai highway

TRICHY, Apr 2 (Agencies): Two people were killed, and 10 others suffered injuries in a collision between an Omni bus and a lorry near Paalpannai on the Trichy-Chennai highway on Monday night. The bus was travelling from Chennai to Kambam in Theni district.

The Omni bus, carrying 34 passengers, collided with a truck loaded with bricks from the rear, resulting in the

immediate deaths of the bus driver and an elderly woman.

Passersby and rescue teams managed to rescue 10 passengers, who were then shifted to Trichy Government Hospital for medical treatment.

Police have launched an investigation and are searching for the lorry driver, who fled the scene of the accident.

Further investigation into the incident are ongoing.

"Senseless": India Rejects China's "Invented Names" For Arunachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Ministry of External Affairs today firmly rejected attempts by China to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh and asserted that assigning "invented names" will not alter the reality that the state "is, has been, and will always be" an integral and inalienable part of India.

The statement was issued by the MEA in response to media queries in the wake of China releasing a fourth list of 30 new names of various places in Arunachal Pradesh amid Beijing's stepped-up assertions in recent weeks to re-emphasise its claim over the Indian state.

"China has persisted with its senseless attempts to rename places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. We firmly reject such attempts. Assign-

ing invented names will not alter the reality that Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India," MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was quoted as saying in the statement.

On March 28, India said that Beijing may "repeat its baseless claims" as many times as it wants but that is not going to change New Delhi's position that Arunachal Pradesh "was, is and will always remain" an integral and inalienable part of the country.

Mr Jaiswal had said this during his weekly press briefing, in response to a query on China continuing to harp on its claim over Arunachal Pradesh. His comments after Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian had reiterated China's claim.

9 Naxalites killed in encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur; arms seized

RAIPUR, Apr 2 (Agencies): In a major anti-insurgency operation, nine Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, police said.

Bijapur district comes under the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency, which will go to polls in the first phase of general elections on April 19.

The gunfight took place at around 6 am in a forest near Lendra village under Gangaaloor police station area, when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation. Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P told agency.

After the exchange of fire stopped, bodies of four Naxalites were recovered from the spot along with a light machine gun, barrel grenade launchers and other arms and ammu-



nitions, he said. Later, five more bodies were found at the encounter site, the IG said, adding that search operation was still underway in the area.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard, Special Task Force, Central Reserve Police Force and its elite unit Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were involved in the operation, he said.

Notably, Naxalites carry out the Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) in the summer season

between March and June every year and step up their activities. A large number of attacks on security forces have taken place in the Bastar region during this period.

On March 27, six Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Basaguda area of Bijapur, police earlier said.

With the latest incident, 42 Naxalites have been killed so far this year in separate encounters with security forces in Bastar region, comprising seven districts including Bijapur, according to police.

BJP announces 112 candidates for Odisha Assembly elections, repeats most sitting MLAs

BHUBANESWAR, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday renominated 21 of its 22 sitting MLAs, except Bramhagiri legislator Lalitendu Mohapatra for the upcoming Assembly election commencing on May 13.

Announcing candidates for 112 out of 147 assembly constituencies, the party has named Upasana Mohapatra, niece of Lalitendu and daughter of former Congress MLA late Lalitendu Mohapatra for the coastal seat of Brahmagiri under Puri parliamentary constituency.

After denying Lok Sabha ticket to sitting Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari, the central election committee of the BJP has nominated him for the Brajarajnagar assembly seat he had unsuccessfully contested three times.

Prominent faces on the list of candidates include state BJP president Manmohan Samal,



who has been fielded from the Chandbali seat despite losing the last three elections in a trot.

Of the nine elections Samal has so far contested, he was only successful in 2004 by winning the Damnagar seat. He was the revenue minister in the coalition government led by Naveen Patnaik.

The other notable nominations are leader of opposition Jayanarayana Misha and sitting MLA from Bhawanipatna Pradipta Kumar Nayak. The party has reposed faith in them despite serious health issues.

There were speculations that Mishra's daughter Subhashree and Nayak's wife may get the tickets for the respective seats.

The party has not named any candidate for the Nilagiri seat after the resignation of sitting MLA Sukanta Nayak, who switched camps to BJD on Sunday.

With the nomination of only eight women candidates, the BJP seems to be far away from its commitment of ensuring 33 per reservation for the fairer sex in the legislature. Senior leader and former min-

ister Surama Padhi has been denied a ticket for the Ranpur seat.

The major beneficiaries in getting tickets are those BJD leaders parachuted into the saffron party just before the election.

Arabinda Dhali, who recently rejoined the BJD, has been named as the candidate for the Jayadev seat, which he currently represents in the assembly.

Similarly, popular actor and former BJD MP from Berhampur, Sidhanta Mohapatra, has been named for the Digapahandi seat, replacing another cine artiste Pinky Pradhan, who was aspiring for the nomination.

Another Odia actor and former BJD MLA from Korei, Akash Das Nayak, who joined the BJP two days ago, is now the saffron party candidate for this assembly seat. Priyadarshi Mishra is the other ex-MLA of BJD to get nomination from Bhubaneswar North.

The party has named

Babu Singh for Bhubaneswar Ekamra and Jagannath Pradhan for Bhubaneswar Central seats, respectively.

While the saffron party's youth leader, Tankadhar Tripathy, will fight the Assembly polls from Jharsuguda, MLA Kusum Tete will contest from the Sundargarh Assembly seat, and Biswaranjan Badajena from the Chhiliika Assembly seat.

Jagannath Pradhan has been fielded from Bhubaneswar Central, Babu Singh from Bhubaneswar Ekamra and Prithiviraj Harichandan from the Chhiliika Assembly seat.

The party also selected sitting MLA Suryabanshi Suraj, son of BJP leader late Bisnu Sethi, from Dhamnagar Assembly seat, Padmalochan Panda from Simulia, Rajendra Das from Soro, Gobinda Chandra Das from Remuna, Manas Kumar Dutta from Balasore, Braja Pradhan from Jaleswar, and Irasis Acharya from Bhatli.

North Korea has fired intermediate range missile into its eastern waters, says South Korea

There are concerns that North Korea could further dial up pressure in an election year in the United States and South Korea

SEOUL, Apr 2 (Agencies): North Korea on Tuesday test-fired a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile toward waters off its eastern coast, South Korea's military said, adding to a series of weapons demonstrations that have raised tensions in the region.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile was launched from an area near the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, but it did not immediately confirm how far the weapon flew. The North had said last month that it tested a solid-fuel engine for its new-type intermediate-range hypersonic missile as it tries to expand its arsenal of weapons aimed at remote US targets in the Pacific, including the military hub of Guam.

It was the North's first known launch event since March 18, when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a live-fire drill of artillery systems designed to target South Korea's capital.



Japan's coast guard shared an assessment of the country's Defense Ministry that the missile has already landed but still urged caution for vessels passing the area. Japanese broadcaster NHK said the missile likely didn't reach the country's exclusive economic zone.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have risen since 2022 as Kim used Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a distraction to accelerate his testing of missiles and other weapons. The United States and South Korea

have responded by expanding their combined training and trilateral drills involving Japan and sharpening their deterrence strategies built around strategic US assets.

There are concerns that North Korea could further dial up pressure in an election year in the United States and South Korea.

The weapons North Korea have tested this year include an intercontinental ballistic missile designed to target the US mainland as well as cruise

missiles and "super-large" multiple rocket launchers aimed at the Seoul capital area.

The latest launch came two days after North Korea reaffirmed its plans to launch several reconnaissance satellites this year in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. South Korea's military said Monday there were no signs that a satellite launch is impending at the North's main launch facility in the northwest.

Kim has described satellites as crucial for monitoring U.S. and South Korean military movements and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles. Last November, North Korea put a military spy satellite into orbit for the first time, drawing condemnations from the US, South Korea, Japan and others, which view the launch as a cover for testing the North's long-range missile technology. North Korea has argued it has the sovereign right to launch spy satellites.

Aid group says Israeli strike kills 7 of its workers in Gaza, including foreigners

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Apr 2 (Agencies): An apparent Israeli airstrike killed six international aid workers with the World Central Kitchen charity and their Palestinian driver, the aid group said Tuesday, hours after it brought a new shipment of food into northern Gaza, which has been isolated and pushed to the brink of famine by Israel's offensive.

Footage showed the bodies of the dead at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah. Several of them wore protective gear with the charity's logo.

The food charity founded by celebrity chef José Andrés said early Tuesday that the seven killed include citizens of Australia, Poland, the United Kingdom and a US-Canada dual citizen.

"This is a tragedy. Humanitarian aid workers and civilians should NEVER be a target. EVER," WCK spokeswoman Linda Roth said in a statement.

The source of fire late Monday could not be independently confirmed. The Israeli military said it was conducting a review "to understand the circumstances of this tragic incident."

"Despite coordinating movements with the (Israeli army), the convoy was hit as it was leaving the Deir al-Balah warehouse," in central Gaza, the group said in a statement. It said the team had unloaded more than 100 tons of humanitarian food aid brought to Gaza on the maritime route.

Three aid ships from Cyprus arrived earlier Monday carrying some 400 tons of food and supplies organized by the charity and the United Arab Emirates, the group's second shipment after a pilot run last month. The Israeli military was involved in coordinating both deliveries.

The US has touted the sea route as a new way to deliver desperately needed aid to northern Gaza, where the UN has said much of the population is on the brink of starvation, largely cut off from the rest of the territory by Israeli forces.

Israel has barred UNRWA, the main UN agency in Gaza, from making deliveries to the north, and other aid groups say sending truck convoys north has been too dangerous because of the military's failure to ensure safe passage.

The UNRWA said in its latest report that 173 of its "colleagues" have been killed in Gaza in the violence. The figure does not include workers for other aid organizations.

World Central Kitchen board member Robert Egger and the media reported that the Australian killed in Monday night's strike was 44-year-old Zomi Frankom from Melbourne.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it was urgently seeking to confirm reports of an Australian death. The department said in a statement: "We have been clear on the need for civilian lives to be protected in this conflict."

Protests erupt in Pakistan over abduction of Hindu girl

DERA MURAD JAMALI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Amidst growing outrage, members of the Hindu community and traders in Dera Murad Jamali took to the streets to condemn the recent abduction of a young girl, Priya Kumari, and demanded urgent action for her recovery, Dawn reported.

Criticising the Sindh government's perceived incompetence, protesters voiced their frustration over the failure to locate and rescue Kumari, who was abducted from Sukkur just days ago.

Showing placards, demonstrators vehemently denounced what they described as the routine abduction of innocent children in Sindh and highlighted the deteriorating security conditions for religious minorities, as reported by Dawn.



Led by senior Hindu community figures Mukhi Manak Lal and Seth Tara Chand, the rally drew participants from various sectors of society.

Notable attendees included Taj Baloch, representing traders, Liaqat Ali Chakar from JI's youth wing, Mir Jan Mengal, president of the wholesale market, Molana Nawabuddin Domki, Khan Jan Bangulazi, and Harpal Das.

The leaders urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to take immediate and decisive action to ensure

the safe return of the girl and to deliver justice to the minority community. They issued a stern warning of nationwide protests if their demands go unheeded.

Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP) has also strongly condemned the religious persecutions of minorities in Pakistan and urged the next government to bring legislation of equal status for all communities.

HRFP has highlighted that many people from Christians, Hindus, Ahmadiyya's, Sikhs and other communities have been victimised in differ-

ent attacks during the last few months.

Human Right Focus Pakistan (HRFP) is a non-government organisation (NGO) established in 1994 to work for the promotion and protection of human rights, with special focus to religious minorities, women and children "The newly elected representatives and the government must make legislation for equal status of all citizens as per founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision and thoughts," it stated.

"The recent cases are addition to suffering, and the growing numbers has made minorities more vulnerable," HRFP added.

Naveed Walter, the President of Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP) said that even in the short duration of the year so far, several alarming incidents have been reported.

Judge expands Donald Trump's gag order after ex-president's social media posts about judge's daughter

NEW YORK, Apr 2 (Agencies): The judge in Donald Trump's April 15 hush-money criminal trial declared his family off-limits to the former president's rancor, expanding a gag order days after Trump assailed his daughter and made false claims about her on social media.

Manhattan Judge Juan M Merchan amended a week-old ban on Trump making public statements about witnesses, jurors and others connected with the case after the presumptive Republican nominee lashed out at Loren Merchan, a Democratic political consultant in several posts on his Truth Social platform.

Trump is still free to criticize Merchan and another key figure in the case, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, an elected Democrat who's leading the hush-money prosecution. But under the revised gag order, the D A's family is now off-limits from his rhetoric, too.

"This pattern of attacking family members of presiding jurists and attorneys assigned to his cases serves no legitimate purpose," Merchan wrote.

"It merely injects fear in those assigned or called to participate in the proceedings that not only they, but their family members as well, are fair game," for Defendant's vitriol."

A violation could result in Trump being held in contempt of court, fined or even jailed.

Trump's lawyer, Susan Necheles, declined comment. A spokesperson for the district attorney's office also declined comment.

Trump's hush-money case, one of four criminal cases against him, centers on allegations that he falsely logged payments to his former lawyer Michael Cohen as legal fees when they were for Cohen's work covering up negative stories about Trump



during the 2016 campaign. That included \$130,000 Cohen paid porn actor Stormy Daniels on Trump's behalf so she wouldn't publicize her claim of a sexual encounter with him years earlier.

Trump pleaded not guilty last April to 34 counts of falsifying business records, a felony punishable by up to four years in prison, though there is no guarantee that a conviction would result in jail time.

He denies having sex with Daniels and his lawyers have said that the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses, not part of any cover-up.

Trump touched off a firestorm last Wednesday — the day after the original gag order was issued — when he suggested on Truth Social, without evidence, that Merchan's rulings were swayed by his daughter's political consulting interests and wrongly claimed that she had posted a photo on social media showing him behind bars.

Trump complained that the original gag order was "illegal, un-American, unconstitutional" and that the judge was "wrongfully attempting to deprive me of my First Amendment Right to speak out against the Weaponization of Law Enforcement" by Democratic rivals.

Trump's posts put Merchan in an extraordinary position as a judge and a father. Just two weeks before jury selection in the historic first-ever criminal trial of a former president, Trump's lawyers and prosecutors wrangled in a series of

court filings over the bounds of the original gag order and whether Trump had overstepped them.

"It is no longer just a mere possibility or a reasonable likelihood that there exists a threat to the integrity of the judicial proceedings," Merchan concluded Monday. "The threat is very real. Admonitions are not enough, nor is reliance on self-restraint."

Merchan responded after prosecutors asked him Friday to "clarify or confirm" the scope of the gag order and to direct Trump to "immediately desist from attacks on family members."

Assistant District Attorney Joshua Steinglass implored Merchan to "make abundantly clear" to Trump that the gag order protects the judge's family, Bragg's family and the family members of all other individuals it covers.

He urged Merchan to warn Trump "that his recent conduct is contemptuous and direct him to immediately desist."

Trump's lawyers fought the gag order and its expansion, citing constitutional concerns about restricting Trump's speech further while he's campaigning for president and fighting criminal charges.

On Monday, they said they would soon ask again for Merchan to step aside from the case — promising a court filing in the coming days seeking his recusal based on what they said were "changed circumstances and newly discovered evidence."

Merchan refused the defense's demands to

exit the case last year when they first made an issue of his daughter's consulting work and questioned \$35 worth of donations he'd made to Democratic causes during the 2020 campaign, including \$15 to Biden.

Merchan said then that a state court ethics panel found Loren Merchan's work had no bearing on his impartiality. He ruled last September that he was certain of his "ability to be fair and impartial" and that Trump's lawyers had "failed to demonstrate that there exists concrete, or even realistic" reasons for recusal.

Trump's original gag order, issued last Tuesday, had barred him from either making or directing other people to make public statements on his behalf about jurors or potential witnesses in the hush-money trial, such as his lawyer-turned-nemesis Michael Cohen and porn star Stormy Daniels.

The order, echoing one in Trump's Washington, D.C., election interference criminal case, also prohibits any statements meant to interfere with or harass the court's staff, prosecution team or their families. Those prohibitions still apply, along with the newly minted ban on comments about Merchan's and Bragg's families.

Merchan, in expanding the gag order, also warned Trump he'll forfeit his right to see the names of jurors — which are otherwise being kept from the public — if he engages in conduct that threatens their safety or integrity.

"Again, all citizens called upon to participate in these proceedings, whether as a juror, a witness or in some other capacity, must now concern themselves not only with their own personal safety, but with the safety and the potential for personal attacks upon their loved ones," Merchan wrote. "That reality cannot be overstated."

Crew of cargo ship Dali that took down Baltimore bridge to remain on board till probe is complete

NEW YORK, Apr 2 (Agencies): The crew of 20 Indians and a Sri Lankan of the crippled container vessel that collided with a key Baltimore bridge last week is "busy with their normal duties" and will remain on board until the investigation into the accident is completed, the company that owns the vessel has said.

The container vessel Dali collided with the 2.6-km-long four-lane Francis Scott Key Bridge over the Patapsco River in Baltimore in the early hours of March 26. The 984-foot cargo ship was bound for Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Just minutes before colliding with the bridge, there was a total blackout on the ship, indicating that the vessel lost engine power and electrical power, according to US media reports.

"It is confirmed there are 21 crew members on board. The crew members are busy with their normal duties on the ship as well as assisting the National Transportation Safety Board and Coast Guard investigators on board," a spokesperson of Grace Ocean Pte and Synergy Marine told agency.

On how long the crew would have to stay on board the ship, the spokesperson said: "At this time, we do not know how long the investigation process will take and until that process is complete, the

crew will remain on board."

The Singapore-flagged Dali is owned by Grace Ocean Pte Ltd and managed by the Synergy Marine Group. Earlier, the non-profit organisation Baltimore International Seafarers' Centre had said that the Indian crew on board the container vessel was "healthy".

The Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi earlier said that there were 20 Indians on board Dali and the Indian embassy in Washington was in close touch with them and local authorities.

Last week, US authorities began interviewing personnel on board Dali. The Synergy Group had said in a statement that the NTSB boarded the vessel on Wednesday and collected documents, voyage data recorder extracts, and other evidence as part of their investigation.

Grace Ocean and Synergy confirmed the safety of all crew members and two pilots aboard the vessel. They, however, reported one minor injury and said the injured crew member had been treated and discharged from a hospital.

Six people, who were part of a construction crew repairing potholes on the bridge when the collision occurred, are presumed dead. Divers recovered the bodies of two

of the construction workers from a red pickup truck found submerged in the river and a search was on for the remaining four victims.

US President Joe Biden said that the crew on board Dali had alerted transportation personnel about losing control of the vessel, enabling authorities to close the Baltimore bridge to traffic before the devastating collision, "undoubtedly" saving lives.

Meanwhile, a temporary alternative route for ships is to be opened in the US city of Baltimore following the collapse, officials announced.

Efforts are underway to remove debris from the water. A 200-tonne piece of the bridge was removed.

Those involved in the clean-up have been cutting debris from the bridge into smaller pieces that can be removed and taken to a disposal site.

The collapse of the bridge has effectively shut down operations at Baltimore's port, affecting about 8,000 jobs and about USD 2 million in daily wages for those workers, US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said last week.

Between USD 100 million and USD 200 million worth of trade went through the port daily before the bridge's collapse, and the port was America's largest for handling vehicle imports, Buttigieg said.

Udhampur among India's top 3 districts in rural road construction: Dr Jitendra

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Apr 2 : Union Minister and BJP Candidate for Udhampur, Doda, Kathua constituency Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that Udhampur has emerged among India's top three districts in rural road construction under Central PMGSY scheme and this has been possible only because of the prioritisation given by the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 10 years.

Dr Jitendra accused the Congress led governments in the past, including the UPA government from 2004 to 2014, of following a policy of regional discrimination as a result of which the upper hilly remote areas and far flung peripheral panchayats of district Udhampur remained unconnected by road because these did not receive the kind of attention deserved. As a result of this, he said, the people of this far flung region had to suffer the agony and hardship of carrying their patients and the elderly members of the family physically for movement from one place to the other or in a 'palki'. This, in turn, also

led to increase in morbidity as well as mortality because of lack of healthcare facilities and lack of accessibility to health centres, he added.

Addressing a series of massive public meetings during his election tour of the upper reaches of district Udhampur including the areas like Basantgarh, Lati, Gordy, Landar, etc., Dr Jitendra said, Udhampur because of its typical topography with a large part of the district located on difficult terrains this road construction work should have been undertaken several decades ago but as a deliberate design it was not done in spite of the fact that the PMGSY scheme for the rural road construction was also introduced by NDA-1 under PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee but not carried forward with the same spirit by the successive governments till Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014 and Udhampur was given the top priority.

Thanking Prime Minister Modi for having given due attention to this region Dr Jitendra said, today the people in the far flung areas have not only received the benefit of connectivity but this has in turn also boosted their morale and

awakened their aspirations to engage in trade and business. Dr Singh said, significantly the lavender cultivation which for the first time in the country began from the small town of Bhaderwah in the same constituency has now been undertaken also in these areas of Udhampur district particularly Ladi and Basantgarh. This is going to be an important source of lucrative livelihood for the local youth, he said and added that the earlier governments led by Congress and its allies made false promises to the youth of giving government jobs to each individual, which he said could not have been possible. Though lavender and other means of livelihood were available in this region, but the Congress governments did not bother to explore the national resources available, he alleged.

Dr Jitendra said, with 'Kaladhi' being recognised under the category of 'One District One Product' for Udhampur, this area in the upper hills of the district is particularly known for this recipe and will also in the years to come provide an avenue of food industry and food StartUps.

Kerala: High Court judge's driver beaten to death over pet dog's barking

KERALA, Apr 2 (Agencies): In a shocking incident in Kerala's Kochi, a 45-year-old man, who was under treatment at a city hospital after being brutally beaten up by a gang over the barking of his pet dog, died on Monday.

The victim, Thottungal Parambil Vinod, was the driver of Kerala High Court judge Satish Ninan.

Police had already arrested four postal department employees for attempted murder after Vinod was attacked at his house on the Mullasserri canal road on March 25.

Those arrested were identified as Ashwini



Golkar (27) from Uttar Pradesh, Kushal Gupta (27) from Ghaziabad, Utkarsh (25) from Rajasthan, and Deepak (26) from Haryana. The accused were staying at a rented apartment close to Vinod's house.

According to local media reports, one of the accused, who was passing by Vinod's house, threw a sandal at his German Shepherd dog when it barked at him from inside the gate.

On questioning this, Vinod was also brutally roughed up by the gang, the reports claimed.

Vinod was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of a city hospital, but he succumbed to his injuries on Monday.

FROM PAGE 1

AAP MLAs meet Kejriwal's wife Sunita, assert CM should not resign

(ED) in connection with a money-laundering case linked to his government's now-scrapped excise policy.

During Tuesday's meeting, the AAP MLAs told Sunita Kejriwal that two crore people of Delhi stand with the chief minister and he should not resign at any cost, party leaders said.

Of the AAP's 62 MLAs in Delhi, 55 were present during the meeting.

Four MLAs are out of station while three -- Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain -- are in jail, the AAP leaders said.

The BJP has demanded that Kejriwal should resign as chief minister following his arrest in connection with the alleged liquor policy scam.

Senior leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said the MLAs wanted to meet Sunita Kejriwal after Kejriwal's arrest. However, the meeting was delayed due to the party's protests against the arrest and the opposition INDIA bloc's rally at Ramlika Maidan.

The AAP MLAs met Sunita Kejriwal and nearly two dozen of them expressed their views, the Delhi Minister said.

Since Kejriwal can interact with her through videoconferencing from Tihar jail, the MLAs urged Sunita Kejriwal to communicate to him their message that he should keep running the government from behind bars without tendering his resignation, Bharadwaj added.

Mian Altaf Ahmad is not an outsider: Omar Abdullah

seats, you have no issues with that. Mian Sahib contests from within Kashmir valley and you start raising questions. Does he not have the right to contest from the Rajouri-Poonch Anantnag seat?" he asked.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah defends son's controversial statement against Amit Shah

Speaking to reporters here, Siddaramaiah said: "Yathindra has given a statement based on the CBI report in the court. Is the CBI report to the court right or wrong? Based on the CBI's submission to the court he has said it. He has no intention to insult Amit Shah." The BJP also alleged Yathindra's statement reflected his upbringing. Responding to this, Siddaramaiah said it is the BJP which does not know "Samskara" (culture).

On BJP's claim of winning 400 seats across the country in the coming Lok Sabha elections, the Chief Minister said: "You know why (BJP is saying this), because they will get less than 200 seats. They have done a survey. Their tally is less than 200, so they are strategically saying '400' (seats)." Asked how many seats that the Congress will win nationally, Siddaramaiah said he has no information about his party's target, but he is confident that the outfit would bag up to 20 seats out of the total 28 in the State.

Mortar Shell Destroyed in controlled Blast in J&K's Samba

at Rajpura village in Ghagwal, a police official said. He said a police party along with a BDS team was rushed to the scene and the mortar shell was later destroyed at the scene without causing any damage.

SC grants bail to AAP's Sanjay Singh in Delhi liquor policy case

The top court told Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, who appeared for the ED, that no money was recovered from Singh's possession and the allegation of him receiving a Rs 2 crore bribe could be tested in the trial.

In a post-lunch session, Raju said that the central probe agency does not require Singh's custody further.

The AAP leader was arrested in the case by the ED on October 4 last year. The ED case is based on an FIR registered by the CBI.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Health Min-

ister Satyendar Jain are under judicial custody in the money laundering case.

IMD warns of heatwave spells lasting 10-20 days in April-June

western regions of Madhya Pradesh this month. This month, performance of the pre-monsoon rainfall shall be below average, mainly over coastal India, eastern and south peninsular India, thereby continuing the dry trend since February over these regions.

"Most regions in the country will experience above normal maximum temperatures during the summer season this year. Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, northern Odisha, adjoining Gangetic West Bengal and eastern India regions could experience normal or below normal temperatures," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general, IMD, during the release of the temperature outlook for April-June season on Monday.

There is a high probability of heatwave episodes lasting as long as 10 to 20 days (against a normal of 4 to 8 days) during the upcoming three months, the IMD said. Rainfall associated with pre-monsoon conditions are expected to be below normal over most regions; aridity and shortage of water will add to the overall increased heating forecast during the summer season this year.

Rajasthan, Gujarat, Saurashtra-Kutch, Maharashtra, north Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha will experience extreme high day temperatures and heatwaves this summer. More importantly, there will be higher than normal heatwave spells during April to June, the Met department has warned.

The El Nino conditions — the abnormal warming of the sea surface recorded along the equatorial Pacific Ocean — had commenced last June. After peaking in December last year, El Nino conditions had begun to ease, but warm conditions continued to prevail and significantly drove up the global temperatures. El Nino conditions are known to suppress rainfall over India and increase temperatures, globally.

"We cannot attribute a single phenomenon for the prolonged heatwave spells. But during El Nino years, the number and intensity of heatwaves remain higher than normal," Mohapatra explained.

Multiple global climate models have forecast that the ongoing El Nino conditions will wane off completely and be replaced by El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions by June, when India's southwest monsoon onset is realised.

During February and March, the southern peninsular India had experienced hotter than normal weather conditions. Heatwave conditions were reported from Maharashtra, northern Karnataka, Saurashtra-Kutch and parts of Rajasthan during late March. The maximum temperatures recorded during the past week reached 42.6 degrees Celsius in pockets of Akola in Maharashtra and Phalodi in Rajasthan.

Rahul has no right to talk about democracy, his grandmother imposed Emergency: Shah

and the Constitution and alleged that the opposition has been deprived of a level-playing field in the Lok Sabha elections due to the government's "dictatorial" actions.

Rahul Gandhi had accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to do "match-fixing" in the Lok Sabha polls and warned that if the BJP wins the election through this endeavour and "changes" the Constitution, then the whole country would be "finished".

The public meeting was aimed at highlighting the issue of "attack on democracy" including the alleged misuse of agencies against opposition leaders in the aftermath of the arrest of AAP chief Kejriwal and JMM leader Hemant Soren and income tax notices to parties.

India will get permanent UNSC Seat, but it will have to work harder this time: Jaishankar

United Kingdom, and the United States — decided among themselves to become permanent members of its security council,

Jaishankar said.

At that time, there were a total of around 50 independent countries in the world, which has over time increased to around 193, he said.

"But these five nations have kept their control, and it is strange that you have to ask them to give us their consent for a change. A few agree, a few others put forward their position with honesty, while others do something from behind," he said.

This has been going on for several years, the minister said.

"But now, there is a feeling across the world that this should change, and India should get a permanent seat. I see this feeling increasing every year," he said.

"We will definitely get it. But nothing big is ever achieved without hard work," Jaishankar said.

"We will have to work hard, and this time we will have to work even harder," he added.

The Union minister said India, Japan, Germany and Egypt have put forward a proposal together before the UN and he believes this will take the matter a bit forward.

"But we must build pressure, and when this pressure increases... There is a feeling in the world that the UN has weakened. There was a deadlock in the UN on the Ukraine war and no consensus was reached in the UN regarding Gaza. I think as this feeling increases, our chances of getting a permanent seat will increase," he said.

When asked about baby girl Ariha Shah, who was taken away from her Indian parents by authorities in Germany and sent to foster care, Jaishankar said he was personally aware of the matter and monitoring it.

"The girl has been given to the child services. We are dissatisfied with this. We do not want the child to be raised as per the German culture. Her parents have moved the court and the matter is being heard," the minister said.

"At my level I have raised the issue with my counterpart. Our effort is to find some solutions," he added.

In his address at the event, Jaishankar said India has proved in the last 10 years that democracy can deliver.

The world is amazed at India moving towards 7 per cent growth despite the COVID-19 pandemic hampering growth, he said.

"The world believes that India as the fastest growing large economy can become the engine of global growth," he said. The world understands that India has technological talent, he added.

World agencies such as the UN understand India's achievements in social sectors like access to water, electricity, roads, health, schooling, etc, the external affairs minister further said.

"We should understand that being the fifth largest economy, on the way to becoming the third largest and with the biggest population, the world believes us to be talented people and expects us to contribute to resolve challenges," he added.

SC refuses to accept apology tendered by Baba Ramdev, Patanjali MD in misleading ads case

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah, which pulled them up in the matter, finally agreed to give one more chance following Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's intervention.

The bench, which perused an affidavit filed by Balkrishna, took exception to it shifting the blame to the company's media department. "We are not willing to accept such an explanation... Your media department is not a standalone island in your office is it... that wouldn't know what is happening in the court proceedings? And proceedings of such a serious nature. So your apology is not persuading this court really to accept it. We think it's more of a lip service," said Justice Kohli.

Hearing a plea by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) accusing the company of allegedly violating provisions of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, and making statements critical of allopathy, the bench had on March 19 sought the personal presence of Acharya Balkrishna and Baba Ramdev before it. The duo had appeared before the court on Tuesday.

In the affidavit filed in response to the notice, Acharya Balkrishna said he "regrets

that the advertisement in question which was meant to contain only general statements inadvertently included the offending sentences... The same was bona-fide and added in routine course by the media department of the... Company," he said, adding "the personnel of the media department of the... Company were not cognizant of the order dated 21.11.2023."

Appearing for Balkrishna and the company, Senior Advocate Vipin Sanghi accepted that there was a mistake, but it did not convince the court. "But what did you do in November? What engages us is what you did and how you conducted yourself after you give an undertaking to this court in November. The whole thing follows from then — lapse by you, lapse by your company, and lapse by the third proposed contemnor (Baba Ramdev) who is the co-founder and promoter of the same brand. Conducting press conference the next day. You were all cognizant of the court proceedings. You can't feign ignorance. That's the point," the court said.

Balkrishna's affidavit had also said that the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act was passed when scientific evidence was lacking in Ayurveda research.

Justice Kohli also took exception to this and said, "Even today, one of the statements made by you in your so-called unqualified apology is that the Act itself is archaic. So shall we assume that every Act which is archaic shall not be implemented or enforced in law? An Act remains an enactment, which has to be enforced as a law of the land till it remains on the statute book".

As Sanghi agreed, Justice Kohli added, "For you to then say that there is scientific research and therefore... When there is an Act that governs the field, how can you violate it with such impunity? That all your advertisements are in the teeth of that Act. And to top it all and that's adding insult to injury, that you had given an undertaking to this court, a solemn undertaking, and you violate it with impunity!"

Sanghi replied, "There has been a lapse." "Therefore, be ready for the follow-up consequences is all we are saying. We are not willing to look at this apology which is perfunctory in every respect," said Justice Kohli. Sanghi said the company's motive was not commercial benefit, but Justice Kohli reminded that "you are a commercial organisation".

Justice Amanullah added that such comments are for public consumption. "You are here for contemnor. Restrict yourself to that. You can't take this grandstanding. We will not give you this platform... that you are serving the nation. Please do not".

Appearing for Ramdev, Senior Advocate Balbir Singh also expressed his unconditional apology and said the response affidavit was ready but was not filed as it was felt that he should personally apologise to the court first before filing any reply.

Justice Amanullah, however, said the apology "is not coming from the heart". "You are representing somebody who is in the teeth of an order of the court. And being a co-founder of the same organisation, we refuse to believe that he wasn't well aware of the consequences that will flow in the teeth of an undertaking given to this court by the managing director of the company," said Justice Kohli.

The judge added, "For you to... hold a press conference in 24 hours shows that you were cognisant (of the court order)... And despite that you floated it... And after two months, you come out with the advertisements... which also portray you as a promoter... How do you explain this?"

Balbir Singh said, "I'm not trying to defend any position. There is a wrong and we are not defending it."

About the press conference, he said, "That's not the way the court order should have been taken. I completely apologise. We have realised that there's a mistake which should not have been committed."

"Not just the Supreme Court, every court in this country, when an order is passed, has to be obeyed in letter and spirit..." responded Justice Kohli.

Haryana IAS officer vacates 20-year-old stay on land deal, later husband and son 'buy' it

According to officials, the market value of the land was much higher than the current deal.

On March 29, the state government stopped registering a piece of land after

Panchkula Deputy Commissioner Sushil Sarwan requested guidance from Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) T V S N Prasad, who immediately instructed the revenue officials to stop registering any transfer deeds. According to officials, the Panchkula revenue officials are yet to determine the surplus area of the 1,396-acre land previously owned by the king Sardar Bhagwant Singh.

According to official records, Shashi Gulati and her family purchased 14 acres of land from the late king's legal heirs in the village of Beed Firozadi in Panchkula district. The late king owned approximately 1,396 acres of land in seven villages of Panchkula: Beed Babupur, Beed Firozadi, Bhareli, Sangrana, Barwala, Jaloli, and Fatehpur Viran.

Official sources say that there has been a stay on the land of some villages in Panchkula for the past 20 years as the officials wanted to know which parts of the land from the king's land fall under the category of surplus under the Haryana ceiling on land holdings Act, 1972, or which areas fall under the 'permissible area'. The surplus area goes to the state government while the permissible area can be sold and purchased by individuals.

On February 24, 2023, the Punjab and Haryana High Court directed Panchkula's SDM to redetermine the surplus area according to law. In compliance, the officials started the proceedings.

Meanwhile, in their petition to the Ambala Commissioner, Shashi Gulati's family sought to revoke the stay order claiming the land concerned did not fall under the surplus category. They also pointed out that the stay on the sale and purchase was vacated twice earlier: once by the then-Ambala Commissioner Alok Nigam in 2004 and again by the then-Panchkula deputy commissioner in January 2017.

Renu Phulia overturned the stay order, which was issued by the SDM in 2003 with a quasi-judicial order in September 2023.

When contacted by The Indian Express, Renu Phulia claimed that her family's talks to buy the land took place a considerable time after her order.

She said: "When they (Shashi Gulati family) filed a petition before her court, we had no talks regarding purchase of the land concerned. They filed the case in routine, I decided it in routine. They were given permission to sell the land concerned as it is a permissible area."

"Later, our talks took place in October-November 2023 when they said they wanted to sell the land. We decided to buy the land as it belonged to the permissible area. My husband made a deal to buy five acres of land for Rs 42.5 lakh. My husband informed the Chief Information Commissioner about it. I also took permission from the government to purchase land in the name of my husband and son. My husband gave an advance installment in December 2023. As per the collector rates, we have paid the stamp duty for a value of Rs 2.25 crore for five acres of land."

Nearly 19 lakh pilgrims visit Shri Mata Vaishno Devi in 3 months

A Shrine Board official said that this year from January to March, over 19 lakh devotees visited the cave shrine, adding, "In 2023, 18,33,266 devotees paid obeisance at Bhawan, which means around 77,838 more pilgrims visited the Bhawan in the said period."

He stated that in January this year, 6,16,609, in February 4,32,925 and in March 8,61,570 pilgrims visited the Bhawan as compared to last year, in January 5,24,184, in February 4,14,432 and in March 8,94,650 devotees.

"At present, 25,000 to 35,000 pilgrims are daily reaching Katra to trek a 13-kilometer track to reach Bhawan, and the rush is expected to swell during Navratras starting from April 9 and ending on April 17 thereafter, from May mid onwards in view of the summer vacations."

The official added that on the weekends, the figure is between 40,000 to 45,000, adding, "Expecting a huge rush in the coming days, the Shrine Board is making various arrangements to facilitate a smooth journey for the pilgrims."

Vistara pilot crisis: At least 38 flights cancelled today; Centre, DGCA seek reports

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Vistara is likely to cancel up to 70 flights on Tuesday a day after the airlines cancelled 50 flights, according to a PTI report.

These include 15 flights from Mumbai, 12 from Delhi and 11 from Bengaluru, according to TV reports.

The civil aviation ministry has sought a detailed report from Vistara regarding flight cancellations as well as measures being taken to deal with the inconvenience caused to passengers.

DGCA has asked also asked the airline to submit a daily report on cancellations and



delays of flight services. The aviation regulator added that its officials are monitoring the situation in order to ensure that Vistara is providing

required facilities to passengers in case of flight cancellations and delays in order to minimise the inconvenience to fliers. This comes amid lack

of pilots as many of them have reported sick to protest against salary reduction. The airlines has warned that the pilots who fail to agree

to the revised pay structure will be left out when Vistara merges with Air India, said reports.

"We have decided to temporarily reduce the number of flights we operate, to ensure adequate connectivity across our network," a Vistara spokesperson stated.

Vistara has apologised for the flight cancellations and delays. The airline promised that the operations will resume at regular capacity soon but did not give further details.

On Monday, besides cancellation of 50 flights, 160 more services were delayed.

ABFRL shares surge 17% as Louis Philippe, Van Heusen brand operator to be listed separately

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Shares of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd (ABFRL) leaped 17 per cent on Tuesday morning after the company announced demerger of its fast fashion and retail business into a separate listed entity.

Aditya Birla Fashion's demerger of Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MFL), which operates fast fashion brands like Louis Philippe, Van Heusen, Allen Solly and Peter England aims to unlock opportunities for value creation. Casual wear brands like American Eagle and Forever 21 are also operated by MFL.

The stock climbed 16.86 per cent to Rs



247.40 on the BSE while on the NSE, it jumped 16.93 per cent to Rs 247.50.

This comes a day after the ABFRL board authorised the company's management to evaluate the vertical demerger of Madura Fashion & Lifestyle business.

"The proposed demerger will enable the creation of two separately listed

companies as independent growth engines with distinct capital structures and parallel value creation opportunities," ABFRL said.

Following the merger, ABFRL aim to increase growth capital "within 12 months" to strengthen its balance sheet and pursue the large growth opportunity, the company added.

India's manufacturing sector growth hits 16-year-high in March



MUMBAI, Apr 2 (Agencies): India's manufacturing sector growth climbed to a 16-year high in March on the back of the strongest increase in output and new orders since October 2020, amid reports of buoyant demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) surged to a 16-year high of 59.1 in March, from 56.9 in February, reflecting stronger growth of new orders, output and input stocks as well as renewed job creation.

In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's March manufacturing PMI rose to its highest level since 2008. Manufacturing companies expanded hiring in response to strong production and new orders. On the back of strong demand and a slight tightening in capacity, input cost inflation picked up in March," Ines Lam, Economist at HSBC, said.

Manufacturing output rose for the 33rd month running in March, and to the greatest extent since October 2020. Growth quickened across the

consumer, intermediate and investment goods sectors. Inflows of new work strengthened from both domestic and export markets. New export orders increased at the fastest pace since May 2022, the survey said.

Quantities of purchase increased at the quickest rate since mid-2023, and one that was among the strongest in nearly 13 years, as companies sought to build up stocks in advance of expected improvements in sales.

On the job front, after leaving payroll numbers broadly unchanged in the previous two months, manufacturers in India

took on additional workers in March. The pace of job creation was mild, but the best since September 2023, the survey said. On the price front, despite remaining modest by historical standards, cost pressures were at their highest in five months. Companies reported having paid more for cotton, iron, machinery tools, plastics and steel.

However, customer retention remained a priority for goods producers who raised their charges to the least extent in over a year.

On the outlook for the Indian manufacturing sector, companies remained confident on an average, with 28 per cent forecasting output growth in the year ahead and 1 per cent expecting a contraction.

The overall level of sentiment remained elevated, but slipped to a four-month low as inflation concerns weighed on confidence.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

While Type 2 diabetes is more common, Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the healthy pancreas, affecting its ability to produce insulin and regulate blood sugar. The patients, therefore, may require regular insulin injections.

"With the cost of insulin

remaining a concern for many, our groundbreaking research shows that a low-fat vegan diet that doesn't restrict carbs may be the prescription for reducing insulin needs, managing blood sugar levels, and improving heart health in people with Type 1 diabetes," said Hana Kahleova, the study's lead author and director of clinical research at the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, US.

Low-fat vegan diet found to lower insulin needs in Type 1 diabetics, lower risk of heart disease

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): A low-fat vegan diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains and beans can help reduce insulin needs in people affected by Type 1 diabetes, a new research has found.

It also found that changes in body weight, brought about by the plant-based diet, helped lower participants' resistance to insulin by improving sensitivity. Glycemic control, or glucose levels in the blood serum, was also observed to get better. The improvements were, in turn, found to correspond to lowering the risk of heart disease in these patients.

For the study, the researchers randomly assigned 58 adults with Type 1 diabetes to either a low-fat vegan group with no limits on calories or carbohydrates or a portion-controlled group reducing daily calorie intake for overweight participants and keeping carbohydrate intake stable over time.

During the study period of 12 weeks, the participants on the low-fat vegan diet were found

to require 28 per cent lesser insulin, with their body's response or sensitivity to insulin improving by 127 per cent.

The researchers observed these effects to be associated with body weight, which fell by about five kilograms on an average. The body weight of individuals in the portion-controlled group, on the other hand, changed non-significantly.

They also associated the improved insulin sensitivity with increased carbohydrate and fibre intake.

The results support previous research that links a lower fat and protein intake with reduced insulin requirements and improved sensitivity in people with Type 1 diabetes, the researchers said.

The team further linked these improvements to lowering cardiovascular risks of disease and death, known to be higher in Type 1 diabetic patients.

They found the participants' reduced reliance

on external insulin to correspond to a nine per cent lowered cardiovascular risk.

The lowered glucose levels in the blood serum corresponded to a 12 per cent and about 9-12 per cent reduced risk of heart attack and cardiovascular disease, respectively, they said.

The team also found that total cholesterol in the low-fat vegan group came down by 32.3 milligrams per decilitre (mg/dL), compared to 10.9 mg/dL in the portion-controlled group.

LDL cholesterol, or "bad" cholesterol, fell by 18.6 mg/dL in the vegan group, and corresponds to an almost 20 per cent reduced risk for a major cardiac event, including heart attack and stroke, the team said.

The levels did not change significantly in the portion-controlled group, they found.

The study authors, however, acknowledged that larger trials are needed to confirm these findings.

Researchers find how ketogenic diet improves severe mental illness

Main purpose of the small pilot trial is to help researchers detect signals that will guide the design of larger studies

STANFORD, Apr 2 (Agencies): The common antipsychotic medication used for severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder might have unintended consequences. Although these medications aid in the regulation of brain chemistry, they frequently result in metabolic adverse effects, such as obesity and insulin resistance, which are so upsetting that many patients cease taking them.

According to a recent pilot study conducted by doctors at Stanford Medicine, a ketogenic diet helps these individuals' mental health in addition to restoring their metabolic health while they continue their drug regimen. The findings, which were released in Psychiatry Research, indicate that nutritional interventions can be quite effective in addressing mental health conditions.

"It's very promising and encouraging that you can take back control of your illness in some way, aside from the usual standard of care," said Shebani Sethi, MD, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences and the first author of the new paper.

The senior author of the

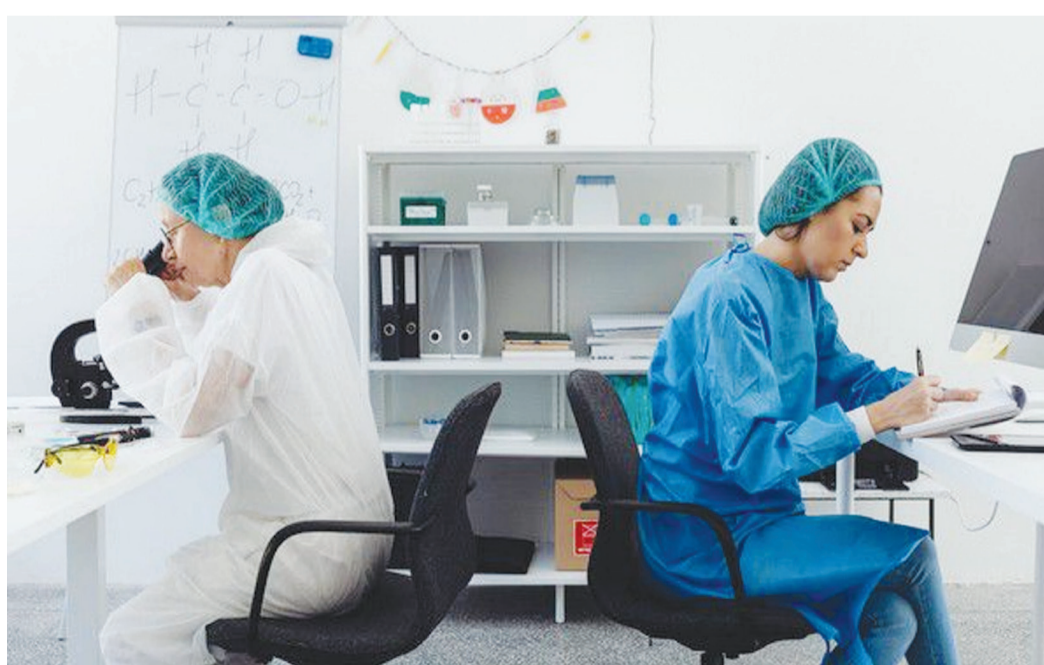
paper is Laura Saslow, PhD, associate professor of health behaviour and biological sciences at the University of Michigan.

Sethi, who is board certified in obesity and psychiatry, remembers when she first noticed the connection. As a medical student working in an obesity clinic, she saw a patient with treatment-resistant schizophrenia whose auditory hallucinations quieted on a ketogenic diet.

That prompted her to dig into the medical literature. There were only a few, decades-old case reports on using the ketogenic diet to treat schizophrenia, but there was a long track record of success in using ketogenic diets to treat epileptic seizures.

"The ketogenic diet has been proven to be effective for treatment-resistant epileptic seizures by reducing the excitability of neurons in the brain," Sethi said. "We thought it would be worth exploring this treatment in psychiatric conditions." A few years later, Sethi coined the term metabolic psychiatry, a new field that approaches mental health from an energy conversion perspective.

In the four-month pilot trial,



Sethi's team followed 21 adult participants who were diagnosed with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, taking antipsychotic medications, and had a metabolic abnormality—such as weight gain, insulin resistance, hypertriglyceridemia, dyslipidaemia or impaired glucose tolerance. The participants were instructed to follow a ketogenic diet, with approximately 10 per cent of the calories from carbohydrates, 30 per cent from protein and 60 per cent from fat. They were not

told to count calories. "The focus of eating is on whole non-processed foods including protein and non-starchy vegetables, and not restricting fats," said Sethi, who shared keto-friendly meal ideas with the participants. They were also given keto cookbooks and access to a health coach.

The research team tracked how well the participants followed the diet through weekly measures of blood ketone levels. (Ketones are acids produced when the body

breaks down fat—instead of glucose—for energy.) By the end of the trial, 14 patients had been fully adherent, six were semi-adherent and only one was non-adherent.

The participants underwent a variety of psychiatric and metabolic assessments throughout the trial.

Before the trial, 29 per cent of the participants met the criteria for metabolic syndrome, defined as having at least three of five conditions: abdominal obesity, elevated triglycerides, low HDL cho-

lesterol, elevated blood pressure and elevated fasting glucose levels. After four months on a ketogenic diet, none of the participants had metabolic syndrome.

On average, the participants lost 10 per cent of their body weight; reduced their waist circumference by 11 percent; and had lower blood pressure, body mass index, triglycerides, blood sugar levels and insulin resistance.

"We're seeing huge changes," Sethi said. "Even if you're on antipsychotic drugs, we can still reverse the obesity, the metabolic syndrome, the insulin resistance. I think that's very encouraging for patients."

The psychiatric benefits were also striking. On average, the participants improved 31 per cent on a psychiatrist rating of mental illness known as the clinical global impressions scale, with three-quarters of the group showing clinically meaningful improvement. Overall, the participants also reported better sleep and greater life satisfaction.

"The participants reported improvements in their energy, sleep, mood and quality of life," Sethi said. "They feel healthier and more hope-

ful." The researchers were impressed that most of the participants stuck with the diet. "We saw more benefit with the adherent group compared with the semi-adherent group, indicating a potential dose-response relationship," Sethi said.

There is increasing evidence that psychiatric diseases such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder stem from metabolic deficits in the brain, which affect the excitability of neurons, Sethi said. The researchers hypothesize that just as a ketogenic diet improves the rest of the body's metabolism, it also improves the brain's metabolism.

"Anything that improves metabolic health in general is probably going to improve brain health anyway," Sethi said. "But the ketogenic diet can provide ketones as an alternative fuel to glucose for a brain with energy dysfunction."

Likely there are multiple mechanisms at work, she added, and the main purpose of the small pilot trial is to help researchers detect signals that will guide the design of larger, more robust studies.

Riyan Parag reminds me of young Suryakumar at MI: Rajasthan Royals assistant coach Shane Bond

MUMBAI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Rajasthan Royals assistant coach Shane Bond has described in-form Riyan Parag as a player of "extreme talent" and likened him to a young Suryakumar Yadav who joined Mumbai Indians several years ago and went on to become one of the most explosive T20 batters in the world.

The 22-year-old Parag has brought his rich form from domestic cricket into the IPL, striking two high quality fifties to help Rajasthan notch up wins in all three games so far.

Parag's latest effort came against Mumbai Indians in his side's six-wicket win on Monday. He dropped anchor to spearhead Royals' chase of 126, scoring 54 not out off 39 balls with the help of five fours and three sixes.

"He (Parag) sort of reminds me a little bit of Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), who came to Mumbai a few years ago. He looks like that - he has got extreme talent. He has just matured as a cricketer, even though he is only 22," Bond, who is also the RR bowling coach, said at the post-match press conference.

Bond played a crucial role in developing bowling talents at MI in his nine-year stint with the Mumbai-based franchise from 2015 onwards, before shifting base to Jaipur this year.

"He (Parag) has had an outstanding domestic season, obvi-



ously, batting up the order. The trade we made with Devdutt (Khan), bringing Avesh (Khan) in, that was to put Riyan up into a position which was probably better suited," the former New Zealand fast bowler added.

Suryakumar, the world's number one T20 batter, joined MI in 2011 and spent four years at Kolkata Knight Riders from 2014-17 before he was brought back to the Mumbai side in 2018. He is recovering from a recent surgery.

Bond said Parag has had to play the role of a finisher in the IPL at a young age whereas other teams have experienced international players in that role.

"Riyan started so young, you forget that he was 17 or something, playing in one of the toughest spots in a batting lineup of No 6. You look at the characters who finish games around the IPL, they are generally pretty

experienced guys," he said.

"(The) Tim Davids, (the) Dave Millers... these are high quality players who play international cricket. Riyan has been tasked with that for a number of years. He is still a very young man, but he has got this wealth of experience behind him now.

"We are getting the best of him. The investment that RR have made of him, it's starting to reap the rewards. It is pretty exciting what he could offer for the rest of the season for us."

Bond also felt "selfless" Yuzvendra Chahal, who produced a measly spell of 4-0-11-3 to set up Rajasthan's win on Monday, could be back in India reckoning if he continues to deliver.

"The competition is pretty tough, so one of the real challenges for any bowler coming into this tournament is to forget that there is a World Cup, and you start bowling to get into a World Cup team," he said.

"If your team is successful, you are in a winning team, selections and rewards come from that. That has more of been our focus, to forget about all that other noise from the outside and just work really hard for each other.

"If we do that, I have got no doubt people are going to start talking like you are now about Chahal and whether he will feature in a World Cup or not. He is bowling beautifully, and if he keeps doing that, then we have got a massive chance in this tournament," he added.

Bond said having knowledge about opposition players also helps in making strategies for his current team.

"When you have obviously spent so much time with certain players, watched them every day and talked to them about their game and the way that they see the game, that definitely helps," he said.

"It was quite fun being on the other side of the team. A couple of dismissals, you get a lot of satisfaction from that."

MI pacer Akash Madhwal said a fresh pitch at the Wankhede Stadium assisted bowlers in the first game but maintaining tight lines was equally crucial.

"We had to get our basics right and had to bowl in the line of the stumps. The pitch had some help for the fast bowlers," said Madhwal, who returned 3/20.

Mirabai Chanu ends third in World Cup, books Paris berth



PHUKET, Apr 2 (Agencies): Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Mirabai Chanu qualified for the 2024 Paris Games after finishing third in the women's 49kg category Group B event of the IWF World Cup here.

Returning from a six-month injury layoff, Chanu lifted a total of 184kg (81kg+103kg) at the tournament, which is the final, and mandatory, qualifier for the Paris Olympics.

With the completion of her event, Chanu has fulfilled the criteria for Paris, which is participating in two compulsory events and three other qualifiers.

"It feels incredible to come back after an injury. Almost every lift I made today felt clean,

clear, and powerful, and I'm leaving this competition feeling strong and confident," Chanu said. "The rehabilitation was tough and demanding, but with the support of everyone involved in my rehab and recovery, I pushed through all the complications."

The 2017 world champion is currently ranked second in the women's 49kg Olympics qualification ranking (OQR) behind China's Jian Huihua.

The official announcement for the qualification will come after the conclusion of the World Cup when the OQR will be updated. The top 10 lifters from each weight class will qualify for the Paris Olympics.

Chanu, who last

competed at the Asian Games in September and suffered a hip tendonitis injury, was not at her best but was able to make five clean lifts.

Her final clean and jerk attempt of 106kg was deemed a no-lift on technicality. Her lifts in the snatch, and clean and jerk sections were nowhere close to her personal best efforts.

Given that she is coming off an injury and rehab, Chanu still has time to peak in July and her progress looks good. She will have a lot of ground to cover as her opponents had total efforts of up to 221kg in the A category today.

"Today's event was to assess how Mira's body is progressing given she is returning after six months of injury and rehabilitation. And more importantly to get her confidence back," chief coach Vijay Sharma said. "We were not bothered about the qualification, she has already qualified. Now we will focus on peaking at the right time in Paris," he added.

Childhood dream turned into reality: Sachin Tendulkar recalls World Cup 2011 win

NEW DELHI, Apr 2 (Agencies): Sachin Tendulkar went down the memory lane and recalled India's historic win in the World Cup 2011. In front of a packed house at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, MS Dhoni's men beat Sri Lanka by 6 wickets. Dhoni became the Player of the Match award after he scored an unbeaten 91 off 79 balls with the help of 8 fours and 2 sixes.

Tendulkar did not have the best of outings after he scored only 18 runs off 14 balls with 2 fours. He looked settled early in his knock before Lasith Malinga accounted for his wicket. However, India recovered from the early jolt and went on to chase down the target with 10 balls left in their innings.

Tendulkar dropped a post on his 'X' account, recalling the day when his 'childhood dream turned into reality'.

"Thirteen years ago, my childhood dream turned into reality. Forever grateful for the memories, the team,



and the incredible support of over a billion people," Tendulkar wrote.

India celebrates on glorious night in Mumbai More than 42,000 spectators witnessed the match live at the stadium, while millions followed the action on television across India and beyond.

Sri Lanka, captained by Kumar Sangakkara, opted to bat first upon winning the toss. Despite losing both openers relatively early, they managed to post a competitive score of 274 runs for 6 wickets thanks largely to Mahela Jayawardene's century (103 runs off 88 balls).

After India's top-order batters faltered early on, Gautam Gambhir

and Virat Kohli steadied the ship with a crucial partnership of 83 runs. When Kohli departed, Dhoni promoted himself up the order and formed another significant stand with Gambhir.

Gambhir fell agonisingly short of a well-deserved century, getting out for 97 runs in the 42nd over. Nevertheless, Dhoni remained unbeaten till the end, hitting the winning runs with a signature six over long-on off Nuwan Kulasekara.

The heroic performance cemented Dhoni's reputation as a cool-headed finisher and etched his name alongside Kapil Dev as one of India's greatest World Cup captains.

IPL 2024, RCB vs LSG: Fiery rivalry to be reignited as KL Rahul returns to Bengaluru

BENGALURU, Apr 2 (Agencies): In what promises to be yet another fiery clash in the Indian Premier League, Bengaluru are all set to lock horns with Lucknow at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The two sides will reignite their rivalry following hotly-contested encounters last season. The home side will be looking to bounce back to winning ways having succumbed to a humbling 7-wicket loss against Kolkata, while Lucknow will aim to keep their winning run going after beating Punjab by 21 runs.

The match will also see Lucknow captain return to his home town and his former team. Rahul played for Bengaluru for two years. He scored just 20 runs in five matches in his maiden IPL season in 2013 before returning to the Bengaluru-based franchise in 2016, when he scored 397 runs in 14 matches at an average of 44.11. The wicket-keeping batter has been the skipper of Lucknow since the team's



formation in 2022 and will be looking to make an impact against his former side on Tuesday.

In fact, Rahul has a phenomenal record against RCB, having scored 628 runs from 15 matches at a strike rate of 144.03. He averages 69.77 against RCB, which is the best amongst batters with over 400 runs, while hitting a century and four fifties against them. His record at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium is also good, having scored 362 runs in these games at an average of 36.20.

Facing Rahul will be superstar batter Virat Kohli, who has made an impressive start in IPL 2024. The former RCB

captain is the joint-highest scorer in the competition, having smashed 181 runs at an average of 90.50 in IPL 2024, and is level with Rajasthan's Riyan Parag in run-getters list.

Meanwhile, Mayank Yadav, a young pacer from Delhi, has taken over the spotlight by becoming the fastest bowler in IPL 2024. The 21-year-old clocked at 155.80 kmph against Punjab Kings to register the fastest delivery of this season. All eyes will be on the young speedster as he looks to impress following a three-wicket haul on his debut against Punjab.

HEAD-TO-HEAD The two teams have

faced each other just four times in the IPL, with RCB coming out on top on three occasions and LSG winning once.

With RCB winning their first three encounters between the two sides, LSG registered their first win over the Bengaluru-based franchise with a nail-biting 1-wicket win last season, which also became a back-drop for a heated clash between Kohli and then LSG team mentor Gautam Gambhir.

TEAM NEWS The biggest worry for LSG going into this game will be the fitness of Rahul, who played as an Impact Substitute in their recent win over Punjab Kings. The 31-year-old scored 15 runs off 9 deliveries against PBKS as LSG registered a comfortable 21-run win at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow.

LSG were led by West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran in Rahul's absence, and he confirmed that the team management would be taking the call on

Rahul's fitness on the day of the match.

"We will see how he is pulling up at nets, and will make a decision based on that," Pooran said on Rahul's fitness.

PITCH CONDITIONS The Bengaluru pitch is once again expected to produce a high-scoring encounter with RCB head coach Andy Flower predicting 200-plus scores in their clash against LSG. The temperature is expected to fluctuate between 29 and 35 degrees Celsius over the course of the game.

PREDICTED XIs RCB: Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis (C), Cameron Green, Glenn Maxwell, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat (WK), Dinesh Karthik, Mayank Dagar, Alzarri Joseph, Mohammed Siraj, Yash Dayal.

LSG: KL Rahul (C), Quinton de Kock (WK), Devdutt Padikkal, Nicholas Pooran, Marcus Stoinis, Krunal Pandya, Ayush Badoni, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohsin Khan, Mayank Yadav, Naveen-ul-Haq.

Young star's small and big leaps

Tamil Nadu Tennis Association's efforts in age-group tournaments yield success as Maaya Rajeshwaran achieves No. 1 ranking in Junior Under-18 category, fueled by ITF wins and rigorous training. Supported by family and coach Manoj Kumar, she aims for top-class status.

CHENNAI, Apr 2 (Agencies): The Tamil Nadu Tennis Association's initiative to have age-group tournaments on a regular basis and help its wards take part in ITF tournaments has paid rich dividends. Fifteen-year-old Maaya Rajeshwaran is the player to beat and succeed in the girls Under-18 category in the country. She has now achieved the No 1 ranking in the Junior Under-18 category. "I am happy and thrilled on becoming the No 1 Junior Under-18 ranked player. A lot of hard work has gone in achieving it. My recent wins in the ITF Juniors have helped me become the top-ranked player. Reaching the No 1 in Under-18 is a huge motivation and an accomplishment which I've always wanted to do," said the shy, yet confident, youngster.

Playing in ITF tournaments involves a lot of hard work, preparation, and travel.

Sometimes you have to be on your own without a travelling coach. In the ITF Juniors 2023 and 2024, Maaya won five ITF Juniors singles titles, three ITF Juniors doubles titles. She holds the record for the longest ITF Juniors winning streak and was second highest-ranked Indian in the ITF Juniors circuit. "A lot of hard work went behind it (to get the ranking). Me and my family put a lot of effort consistently and the results followed. Mainly, leaving the family behind for weeks while travelling for tournaments was really tough, but it was definitely worth it," insisted Maaya.

She is currently coached by Manoj Kumar. She practises at Proserve Tennis Academy, Coimbatore, for four hours every day. "Maaya is definitely an outstanding talent and has achieved a lot at a very young age. The fact that she played the qualifying of a Junior Grand Slam at 14



years is definitely an indicator of how good she is. I don't think any Indian has done this," said Manoj. "She has been with me for five years and has improved by leaps and bounds. She is an extremely aggressive player, likes to play early and is good off both flanks, absolutely fearless. The biggest strength is her belief in herself. She needs to work on her second serve, movement, and endurance," added Manoj. Maaya, in order to fulfill her goal of

becoming a top class player, has made the right steps and is supported by her parents. "Maaya is having open school education. This allows her to travel and play in events. She has been playing tennis from the age of eight years. She started playing first at KG Ramesh Tennis Academy, Coimbatore, and her first coach was KG Ramesh. When she won the Under-12 Nationals singles and doubles in Mumbai 2021, we decided that she has a future in tennis and we encouraged her to take the game seriously," said Revathi, Maaya's mother.

Maaya has been playing in tournaments abroad regularly and even had a fifth place at the U14 Australian Open, Melbourne. "My experience in playing tournaments abroad has helped me. Going outside and playing matches with different players and in different conditions taught me a lot and

also helped me realise areas that I need to work upon my game and how to go about it. The life of a tennis player without sponsorship is a big difficulty for a player from a modest family background. But I am keen to continue my quest to be a top ranked player in the world. I will be training in Europe and will try to play (qualify for) in Junior French open and Junior Wimbledon," said Maaya.

Manoj, too, believes that international exposure is the key to her growth. "For the future, we are looking at her to play both the juniors, especially the higher grade J 200, J 300, the grand slams and the women's pro tour. I think with the right support and guidance, she will go places. We are looking to find a good base abroad where she can train in a competitive atmosphere which will help her achieve her goals," opined Manoj.

Arrangements for 30th "Chhari Mubark Yatra" to Purmandal finalized

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: A combined meeting of Purmandal Utterbehni Shrines Development Committee, Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Management Trust, Dharmarth Trust, Dogra Sadar Sabha J&K and Heads of different Mandir committees and representatives of the administration was held on Tuesday under the Chairmanship of Th. Gulchain Singh Charak, President Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Management Trust, Dogra Sadar Sabha J&K and Purmandal Utterbehni Shrines Development Committee at Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Complex Gandhi Nagar Jammu to finalize the arrangements for the "30th Chhari Mubark Yatra to Purmandal Shrines" on Chetar Chaturdashi falling on 7th of April 2024.

After thread bare discussions, Charak urged Transport Department to make proper arrangement for the transport to be plied for the devotees, especially, from Purmandal Morh to Purmandal Utterbehni Shrines.



He also asked PHE officials to make proper arrangements for drinking water and electricity facilities en-route and 3 days congregation at Purmandal and Municipal Committee Bari-Brahmana and Tourism Department to provide cleanliness in Devika and around the temples at Purmandal and Utterbehni besides proper arrangement of wash rooms at the bank of Devika.

Concerned police asked to maintenance of law and order while PWD asked to repairs damaged spots on the road leading to the shrines.

Charak said Nodal officers Ranjit Singh, Disstt Panchayat Officer Samba will co-ordi-

nate with all the concerned departments for the proper arrangements during the Yatra and three days programme in which large number of devotees are expected to participate at the historical Shrines of Purmandal and Utterbehni.

He said that Special Chhari Pooja will be performed on April 6, 2024 at 05:00 PM at Shri Ranbireswar Mandir Jammu to be arranged by the Dharmarth Trust.

On 7th of April 2024 the Holy Chhari Yatra will be taken out from Ranbireswar Mandir by the Mahatmas led by Mahatma Rishi Ban at 07:00 AM, he said adding that there after performing Pooja Arch-

ana at Shri Raghunath Temple Jammu, the Holy Maces will reach at Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Gandhi Nagar where a grand Pooja will be performed and after that the holy Chhari will be taken in a procession joined by large number of devotees to Purmandal Shrines via Mahadev Mandir Gandhi Nagar, Shiv Mandir Trikuta Nagar, Shiv Mandir Greater Kailash, Shri Narsing Dev Mandir and Data Ranpat Dev Mandir Birpur and special reception will be organized by the Muslim and Sikh brethren led by Haji Bhashir Ahmed Malik and Khatab Husain at Kharah Madana and after passing through Mandal and

other areas will finally reach Purmandal shrines.

After that Mahatmas along with other representatives will perform a special pooja at the historical Shiv Temple Purmandal and then the holy chharis will be kept in the Mandir Complex for darshan of general public. All the devotees are requested to participate in the Yatra as per above mentioned programme.

Prominent among others who participated included S.C.Rekhi, (General Secretary) President- Dharmarth Trust, Col Karan Singh, V.K.Abrol, Romesh Thakur, Kulbhushan Bali, KB Magotra, Prithivi Raj, P.C.Gupta. Indu Bhushan Sharma, Kiran Rajput, Ashok Khajuria, Pritam Singh, and representatives of Bhandara Committee Bari-Brahmana, Purmandal-Utterbehni Shrines Development Committee, President and secretary of Ram Mandir Shastri Nagar, Panch Mandir Gandhi Nagar, Data Ranpat Dev Committee, Narsing Dev Mandir Birpur and other prominent persons.

Election Commission should transfer Local Officers to other states: Chandel

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: Hindu nationalist BJP leader Raju Chandel, while speaking to journalists in Jammu today, stated that the highest number of administrative officials and employees in Jammu and Kashmir are still working under the directives of Hurriyat Conference, National Conference, PDP, and Congress leaders, who do not prioritize the work of the Bharatiya Janata Party or other smaller parties, whether it is about providing security or implementing Prime Minister's housing development schemes and other initiatives.

Their actions are solely driven by the instructions of the leaders of the party that has been ruling Jammu and Kashmir for the past 70 years, which has resulted in the people of Jammu and Kashmir not receiving enough benefits. Only when the UT administration or officials in Delhi take action against them, some work gets done.

Chandel mentioned that as the parliamentary elections and the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections are approaching soon, the local officials should not create any discrepancies in the elections.

Therefore, he urged the Election Commission to identify officials and employees with connections to Gadwal and transfer them to other states as soon as possible.

Chandel also expressed that the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to provide justice and equality to the beleaguered people of



Jammu and Kashmir who have suffered for the past 70 years. In this process, corrupt officials and employees sitting in Jammu and Kashmir are proving to be the biggest obstacle, while the people of Jammu and Kashmir have already rejected the All Baba 40 Thieves Grand Alliance organization completely. However, corrupt officials and employees under the governance administration are not letting the innocent and needy people of Jammu and Kashmir flourish. All these issues can be addressed only by the Election Commission.

Therefore, Chandel strongly demand that the corrupt local employees and officials in Jammu and Kashmir be transferred to other states as soon as possible.

CPI(M) won't contest LS Polls in J&K to Consolidate Votes against BJP: Tarigami

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Apr 2: Senior CPI(M) leader in Jammu and Kashmir M Y Tarigami on Tuesday accused the BJP of resorting to dictatorship and said his party would not contest in the Lok Sabha seats in the Union territory to consolidate votes and get rid of "tyrants".

He sought to downplay the reported bickering within the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) constituents over seat sharing for the Lok Sabha polls, saying it is not an electoral alliance and every constituent has their own political interests.

"We will not contest (the Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir) directly. Our political approach in today's times would be to defeat the BJP, to stop them from forming government. They have already done a lot of damage to Jammu and Kashmir," Tarigami told PTI-Video in an exclusive interview here.

"We also appeal to other political parties to ensure that votes do not get divided. We hope we get rid of the tyrants soon," he said.

Asked about reports suggesting the coming together of the Ghulam Nabi Azad-led Democratic Progressive Azad Party, Altaf Bukhari's Apni Party and Peoples Conference headed by Sajjad Lone, Tarigami questioned the move and said, "We should have been loyal towards our people."

"They are stitching together a grand alliance. Against whom? I would have welcomed it had this alliance aimed at raising the genuine concerns of the people such as our statehood, and our land rights. What the present government did with us does not have a precedence in the history of Kashmir."

"Keeping differences aside, we should have been loyal towards our people at least. It should have been a fight for the rights of people," the

CPI(M) leader said.

He said it was unfortunate that Jammu and Kashmir has always been in the crossfire and there has been restlessness among its people.

"Pakistan has been making its own claims and our country, India, has been making its own claims. There has been a restlessness among people. The successive governments have also not been loyal towards the people of Kashmir."

"Today's government left no stone unturned to demolish the very foundation of the pact between the Centre and the people. We have always been deprived of our constitutional rights. They (BJP) eroded Article 370 also," Tarigami said.

The CPI(M) leader said, "If BJP had a clear roadmap, they would not have resorted to dictatorship. They downgraded Jammu and Kashmir into a Union territory. Look at the plight of government employees here. They are not even allowed to protest... Do you think people will show support towards BJP?"

Tarigami, who is also spokesperson of the PAGD, said it is not an electoral alliance and every constituent has their own political interests.

PAGD is an alliance of five political parties — National Conference, PDP, CPI(M), Awami National Conference and CPI — seeking the restoration of the special status to Jammu and Kashmir which was revoked with the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

"The DDC (District Development Council) elections were fought together despite the differences... Jammu and Kashmir had its own constitution but that's gone now. Our flag is gone, our land rights are gone, our permanent residency rights are gone. Statehood is also gone."

"Jammu and Kashmir is the only place where assembly elections have not taken place in the last 10 years. A state was divided without taking

into consideration the aspirations of the people. Whatever statements the constituents have given do not change the very idea of PAGD. It will always be relevant," he said.

Tarigami said there are disagreements even among leaders of the BJP.

Termining electoral bonds a "big scam", he hit out at the BJP and said, "If you want to do corruption, do not do it in the name of law. We (CPI-M) have not taken even a single penny (through electoral bonds)."

"In fact, we were the first ones to file a petition against electoral bonds in the Supreme Court. People should not take much time to understand what is going on in the country these days," he said.

On the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Jharkhand chief Hemant Soren in different corruption cases, Tarigami said, "The constitution is under attack. There is an assault on democracy. If you want to weaken or break a party, ED and CBI are there. These agencies do the needful for the government. If a person is corrupt, he joins the BJP."

Asked about the recent statement of Home Minister Amit Shah that the Central government will consider revoking the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir, he said the present government has been "relying on 'jumlas' (false promises) only."

"Shah had said that first there would be delimitation, then elections and then statehood. What happened to that chronology? If the environment (in J-K) is feasible for Lok Sabha elections, then why not for assembly polls? You must be knowing about the Pathribal, Machil and Shopian (fake) encounters. We all condemned the impunity that was given to the forces. We do not need these draconian laws in a democratic setup," he added.

Talla Jewellers & LFO-BHF organise Stationery Distribution Drive



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 2: In a heartfelt endeavour to support the educational journey of children, Live For Others - Being Helpful Foundation (LFO-BHF), in collaboration with Talla Jewellers, organized a Stationery Distribution Drive at Balgran, Channi Rama under the guidance of Vivek Parihar, CEO & Director LFO-BHF.

With the new academic session just around the corner, the initiative witnessed the distribution of a range of educational materials including notebooks, registers, pens, pencils, erasers, and sharpeners. Additionally,

to nourish their bodies as well as their minds, nutritious eatables such as oranges, bananas, juices, biscuits, bread cakes, and chocolates were also generously provided.

Beyond the distribution, members of the foundation engaged in lively games with children such as Kho-Kho, Football, and Cricket not only brought smiles to the faces of the youngsters but also strengthened bonds within the community.

Kashish Gupta, CEO Talla Jewellers said, "These kinds of essential distributions stands as a testament to the commitment of Talla Jewellers & LFO-BHF towards uplift-

ing underprivileged communities and fostering a culture of kindness and compassion."

Sahil Choudhary, Vice-President (Relief) of Jammu Province highlighted the pivotal role of such initiatives in empowering these children and also reiterated the foundation's core values of compassion and solidarity, emphasizing the importance of community engagement in creating lasting positive change".

The members who took part in this projects were Jyoti, Abhishek Gupta, Shurti, Kunal, Abhishek Raina, Abhinandan, Shubam, Babita, Diya and others.

Lt Gen JS Sidana takes over as 33rd Dir General of Electronics & Mechanical Engineers



Top News Report

NEW DELHI, JAMMU, Apr 2: Lieutenant General JS Sidana took over as the 33rd Director General of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (DGEME) and Senior Colonel Commandant of the Corps of EME on April 01, 2024.

During his career spanning over 38 years, he has held a variety of important regimental, command, instructional and staff appointments.

Before his present appointment, he was holding the post of Commandant of Military College of EME for a duration of two years. He has been the Major General of EME of HQ Central Command and commanded Army Base Workshop & EME Centre.

Lieutenant General JS

Sidana is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and was

commissioned into the Corps of EME from Indian Military Academy, Dehradun on December 14, 1985. His academic credentials include a Masters in Management Studies from Osmania University, M. Tech from IIT Kanpur and Master of Philosophy from Punjab University.

Upon taking over as the DGEME, Lieutenant General JS Sidana has encouraged all ranks of the Corps to embrace the power of technology and innovation to render effective engineering support to the Indian Army.

He also paid homage to the bravehearts of the Corps by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, New Delhi.

Police seizes 2 vehicles, arrests 2 persons in Kulgam

Top News Report

KULGAM, Apr 2: Cracking a whip on illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police have seized two vehicles and arrested two drivers in Kulgam.

A Police party led by SHO Police Station Devsar during patrolling at general road Peepora, Pahloo crossing seized two vehicles (tractors). Besides, arrested two

drivers on the spot, involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals from Nallah Vaishow.

The accused drivers have been identified as Zubair Ahmad Rather son of Hamidullah Rather resident of Sopat, Tengpora and Danish Ahmad Ganie son of Manzoor Ahmad Ganie resident of Bona Devsar. They have been shifted to police station Devsar where they

remain in custody.

Accordingly, case vide FIR no 23/2024 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Devsar and investigation has been initiated

People are requested not to indulge in any kind of illegal mining activities from any Nallah/river as it is the violation of Government rules. Persons found indulging in illegal mining activities shall be dealt as per law.