

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



ENTERTAINMENT | 6

Ayushmann Khurrana signs recording deal with leading global brand



NATIONAL | 7

'One can trust snake but not BJP', says Mamata Banerjee at Cooch Behar rally

INTERNATIONAL | 8

In rare call, Russian defence minister warns French counterpart against sending troops to Ukraine



e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-15 Issue-92 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

IAF helicopter makes emergency landing in Ladakh, Pilots safe

LEH, Apr 4 (Agencies): An Apache helicopter of the Indian Air Force (IAF) made an emergency landing in Ladakh and sustained damage due to undulating terrain and high altitude, the IAF said on April 4.

The incident took place on April 3 and both the pilots on board are safe, it said.

The IAF has ordered a Court of Inquiry into the incident.

"An IAF Apache helicopter carried out a precautionary landing during an operational training sortie in Ladakh on April 3. During the process of this landing, it sustained damage due to undulating terrain and high altitude," the IAF said in a brief statement.

"Both the pilots on board are safe and have been recovered to the nearest airbase. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause," it said.

Weather clears after rains in J&K; Gulmarg records minus 1°C

SRINAGAR, Apr 4 (Agencies): Weather improved on Thursday after rain lashed the plains of Kashmir valley on Wednesday, plummeting the temperature.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar predicted on Thursday that the weather will generally remain dry on Thursday while there are chances of light rain or snow at isolated places towards Friday morning.

During April 11-12, light rain or snow at isolated places can occur, while there is a possibility of intermittent light rain or snow at many places during April 13-15, the MeT office said.

The MeT has advised farmers to resume farm operations except on April 5.

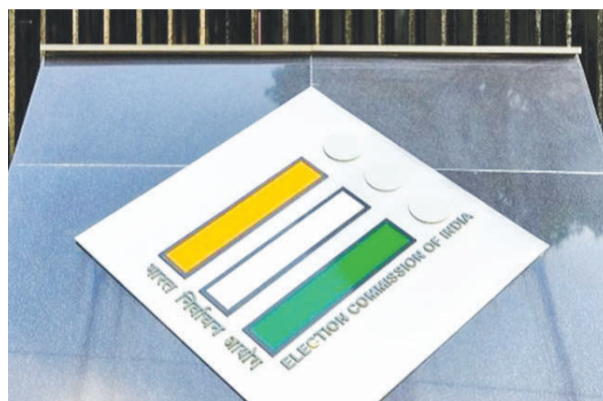
The Plains of Kashmir Valley experienced light to moderate rainfall, plummeting the temperature and disrupting normal activities on Wednesday.

According to the data available with the MeT office, Srinagar

EC issues guidelines to ensure genuine electors able to cast vote without Voter I Card

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Seeking to ensure that no genuine elector is deprived of the right to vote, the Election Commission has told state poll officers to ignore clerical or spelling errors provided the voter's identity can be established through the voter I-card.

It has also said that a voter I-card issued by the electoral registration officer of another assembly constituency will be accepted for identification provided the elector's name is in the electoral rolls of the polling station where he or she has turned up.



In case of a mismatch of photograph, the elector will have to produce one of the alternative photo documents listed out by the EC.

In an order issued last month, the EC said the electors who are not

able to produce their voter I-card will have to furnish one of the alternative photo identity documents for establishing their identity.

These include the Aadhaar card, MNRREGA job card, passbooks with

photograph issued by a bank or post office, health insurance smart card issued by the Labour Ministry, driving license, PAN card, and the smart card issued by the Registrar General of India under National Population Register (NPR).

The Indian passport, pension document with photograph, service I-cards with photograph issued to employees by central or state governments or PSUs, official identity cards issued to MPs, MLAs and MLCs, and Unique Disability I-card issued by the

Turn to page 9

UAPA Tribunal confirms banning of J&K Democratic Freedom Party as unlawful association

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal consisting of Delhi High Court Judge Justice Sachin Datta has confirmed the banning order of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (Shabir Shah's JKDFP) as an unlawful association.

The matter was conducted by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati and Advocate Rajat Nair for Ministry of Home Affairs. The confirmation order of the tribunal would now be notified by the Government in couple of days

Recently Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal for the purpose of adjudicating whether there is sufficient cause for declaring the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party as an unlawful association.

Notification issued stated that the central government hereby constitutes the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal consisting of Justice Sachin Datta, Judge, High Court of Delhi, for the purpose of adjudicating whether or not there is sufficient

cause for declaring the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) as an unlawful association."

The Government of India in October 2023 had declared 'Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party' (JKDFP) as an 'Unlawful Association' under Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967.

Press statement issued in this regard stated that, this organization has been involved in anti-national activities since year 1998 and its

Turn to page 9

Will win from Anantnag-Rajouri, says NC Chief Farooq Abdullah

JAMMU, Apr 4 (Agencies): National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah has downplayed the differences between his party and the People's Democratic Party over a seat-share arrangement in the Kashmir Valley and exuded confidence of winning from Anantnag-Rajouri in the Lok Sabha elections.

Abdullah's comment came after People's Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said the National Conference left her party with no option but to contest on three Lok Sabha seats, including Anantnag-Rajouri, in Kashmir.

The People's Democratic Party and the National Conference are



both constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc.

"I am not the owner of the People's Democratic Party. Please go and ask them," Abdullah said when asked about Mehbooba's remarks.

Replying to another question about the National Conference's fate in Anantnag-Rajouri after Ghulam Nabi Azad, the Democratic Progressive Azad Party chief and former chief minis-

ter of the erstwhile state, threw his hat in the ring, Abdullah said, "Inshallah, we will win. I will give it to you in writing."

Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a meeting of National Conference workers the in Ramban district.

He also campaigned for the Congress candidate in the Udhampur-Kathua seat, saying, "We are standing strong in favour of the INDIA bloc to save the Constitution of India."

Calling the Lok Sabha elections a "collective fight" to protect India's Constitution and unity, he said, "They (BJP) want to scrap the Constitution of India on one side. On the other side

Turn to page 9

NC, PDP have been beneficiary of Alliances with BJP: Ghulam Nabi Azad

SRINAGAR, Apr 4 (Agencies): Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has pooh-poohed the claims made by rival National Conference and PDP that his newly-formed party was in cahoots with the BJP and asked whether they are the 'B' teams of the saffron party going by their past coalition arrangements.

Talking to PTI Videos, Azad, who is contesting on his Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), highlighted his party's primary focus on reinstating full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and not on the lines that union territories like Delhi and Puducherry enjoy.

To a question that his party was seen as a B team of the BJP, Azad pointed out past associations of regional parties with the saffron party.

"A and B team are those from the valley who have been ministers in the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, father of the BJP,



or those who enjoyed governance with the help of saffron party MLAs in the erstwhile state," he said.

He highlighted his independent political stance, emphasising the need for self-reflection among these parties before casting aspersions.

"I have never taken any support. In (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's time, I was the leader of opposition, not the minister. When I was chief minister, I did not get any support from the BJP. You know who those political parties are and they also must know that before pointing fingers at others, they

should look at themselves first."

The PDP had a political alliance with the BJP, with both late Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and Mehbooba Mufti serving as chief ministers and Omar Abdullah of National Conference was a Minister of State in the Vajpayee-led government in 1999.

Azad criticised the practice of labelling opponents as A, B, or C teams, attributing it to fear and asserting the importance of voter choice in elections.

"... People who fear a particular person, they start attacking him. It's survival of the fittest. If people vote for me, let them vote. Let them select who can represent them in the Parliament," he said.

With the Supreme Court's directive to conduct assembly elections by September 30, Azad's decision to prioritise the Lok Sabha polls underscores his commitment to engaging with critical issues in the

Turn to page 9

MBA MOTORS

MERCEDES - BMW - AUDI

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

NAGROTA, JAMMU (J&K) +91-9086207123

H&ME extends working days, hours in Medical, Dental Colleges in J&K

JAMMU, Apr 4 (Agencies): In order to improve patient care, Health and Medical Education Department has extended working days and hours in all Government Medical and Dental colleges in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to an order, a copy of which lies with new reporting time in GMCs and GDCs will be 9 am while relieving time will be 5 pm on all days except Saturday.

"In order to improve patient care, 9 am will be reporting and 5 pm will be relieving time on weekdays with half an hour lunch break from 1:30 pm to 2:00 pm on all days except Saturday in all government

Turn to page 9

NC and Congress to fight LS polls together in five seats of J&K: Omar Abdullah

SRINAGAR, Apr 4 (Agencies): Former chief minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday announced that National Conference and Congress would jointly fight the five seats of Lok Sabha in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said this a day after the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) announced that it would contest all three seats in the Valley. The announcement set the stage for the National Conference and the PDP — partners in the Opposition INDIA bloc — to take on each other on the three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir. The Congress party is also part of INDIA alliance partner.

"They (Congress) have assured us and made it



clear that all the three candidates of NC will get their support. In the next one or two days after going to Delhi, it'll be clear that NC & Congress will fight together on five

seats in J&K," Omar told reporters in Srinagar.

He said NC leader and party president Farooq Abdullah has already started campaigning for the two Congress candi-

dates in Jammu region.

"My programme will also start and our effort will be that in both seats of Jammu and Udhampur Congress candidates should win. And

the same way Congress has assured that wherever in Kashmir they will utilize their influence to ensure the win of the NC candidates," the NC vice president said.

On AAP leader Sanjay Singh's bail in the Delhi excise policy case, Omar said he hoped that Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Manish Sisodia will also get bail in the case now. "The important thing is that the court observed that evidence was not produced for keeping Sanjay Singh in jail. This is the same case in which Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia have been arrested and we hope that they also get bail," he said.

Lone should do whatever he can, says Farooq Abdullah on his fir remarks

KATRA/JAMMU, Apr 4 (Agencies): National Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday downplayed the remarks of People's Conference chief Sajad Gani Lone on registering an FIR against him for his role in the alleged rigging of the 1987 Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls and said "he should do whatever he feels".

Lone on Wednesday said a case against NC president Farooq Abdullah and others for their role in the alleged rigging

of the polls will be the biggest confidence-building measure towards Kashmiris.

"As far as 1987 is concerned, I strongly believe that even today, the biggest CBM (confidence-building measure) towards Kashmiris will be an FIR in which Farooq saheb, Congress leaders and bureaucrats are named for rigging the election," Lone told reporters in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Wednesday.

"I understand what you are saying. I have heard

this. As per his will, Lone saheb should do whatever he can," Abdullah said replying to a question on Lone's remarks.

Responding to another question on PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's remarks on contesting elections in Kashmir, he said, "Can I stop anyone from contesting elections? It is a free country. Any one can contest." Dr Abdullah was on a campaign trail in support of Congress candidate Raman Bhalla as part of the INDIA bloc.

Apni party declares two candidates for LS constituencies of Kashmir Division



SRINAGAR, Apr 4 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party on Thursday declared two of its candidates for Lok Sabha constituencies of Kashmir division.

The party announced two names who will contest forthcoming Lok Sabha elections from Anantnag-Rajouri, and Srinagar segments.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, party senior leader and

Chairman Parliamentary Affairs Committee Mohammad Dilawar Mir said that the party has decided to field Zaffar Iqbal Manhas from Anantnag-Rajouri and Mohammad Ashraf Mir from Srinagar as its Lok Sabha candidates.

He hoped that being a newborn political party in Jammu and Kashmir people will shower their love and sympathy towards candidates of Apni Party and who will try their best to represent aspirations of people before the country.

Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party is first political party which announced its candidate from Srinagar seat.

HSS Jhiri conducts rally for enrollment of students



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: The enrollment drive aims to enroll every child and provide them with quality education and it aims at boosting the literacy rate in J&K.

So some initiative were taken for achieving

and contributing in the above mentioned task at HSS Jhiri under the supervision and guidance of Principal Sarsa Ram.

Today a rally for attracting more and more admissions was conducted by Principal Sarsa Ram, staff and

students of HSS Jhiri with full zeal and enthusiasm.

Besides this Door to Door Enrollment Drive and Group awareness regarding Merits of HSS Jhiri at Jhiri Chowk and in some adjoining areas was also done by Principal and staff members.

Rahul, Priyanka among Congress star campaigners to address rallies in J&K likely next week

JAMMU, Apr 4 (Agencies): As many as 25 star campaigners from the Congress party, including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, to address rallies in support of their candidates contesting the Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

The top leaders of the Congress party are expected to visit next week.

"Around 25 top leaders from the party including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi will be visiting Jammu and Kashmir likely next week," party sources said.

They added that the leaders will address rallies in Jammu and Udhampur for Phase-1 and Phase-2 elections.

From Kathua-Udhampur Lok Sabha seat that will go to poll on April 19, the Congress candidate Choudhary Lal Singh will fight against the BJP two times sit-



ting Member Parliament and Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and from Jammu-Reasi Lok Sabha seat that will go to poll on April 26, Congress candidate Raman Bhalla will contest against BJP two times sitting Member Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma.

"The Congress party has rallied an impressive line-up of star campaigners, including top leaders like Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, to intensify and strengthen its campaign efforts for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections," they added.

As per party sources, party's Organization General Secretary KC Venugopal has issued a list of star campaigners visiting to Jammu and Kashmir comprising notable figures such as Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, Ambika Soni, Sachin Pilot, and others.

Under the banner of the INDIA alliance, which includes the National Conference and PDP alongside Congress, the party is gearing up to contest on two seats in Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Education Dept permits age relaxation for admission of students in class 1st

JAMMU, Apr 4 (Agencies): Relieving hundreds of parents battling for the admission of their children who have not attained an age of six years, the Jammu and Kashmir School Education Department has permitted the relaxation in age for admission of students in class first in 2024-25 academic session.

As per the circular issued by the Director, Jammu School Education Department, it is stated that a number of representations have been received from parents of some students stating that their wards are being denied admission in class 1st by the respective schools for the reason of

being less than six years of age and hence ineligible for admission as per the National Education Policy 2020.

"The issue has also been projected by some schools and the matter has been examined and it is felt that strict implementation of these provisions will lead to loss of academic year for some students who have already been admitted in pre-primary in the preceding year and therefore the request merits consideration," read the circular.

However, it further stated that an upper ceiling has to be fixed and the relaxation cannot be unending, adding, "it has accordingly been decided to gradually implement

the NEP and relax the age criteria for admission to class 1st for the academic session 2024-25, in view of the transition period."

"Besides, similar relaxations are being extended by some other states also," it read.

The circular mentioned that in its backdrop, it is brought to the notice of all concerned that as a one time exception, the students who shall be completing six years of age in the next six months (i.e. students completing six years of age upto September 30, 2024) from the start of academic session shall be allowed admission in the first class in the academic session 2024-25.

PVS asks Govt to intensify search for missing Navy soldier Sahil



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Pradesh Vishwakarma Sabha (PVS) President, Shashi Verma, highlighted the matter of the missing Navy soldier, Sahil Verma, son of Subah Chander, resident of Gao Manhassan.

Speakers and participants forcefully demanded the government to intensify the search for the missing Navy soldier, Sahil Verma.

It is deeply concerning that despite being missing for the past one and a half months, the government has remained silent on this serious matter, Verma said.

Pardesh Vishwakarma JK Sabha once again appealed to the government to expedite the search operation and provide clarity to the soldier's family.

Others who shared their views included Raj Kumar, Vijay Kumar, Sham Lal Chargoira, Bhagat Ram, Yash Pal Salgotra, Anil Kumar and others.

Dimple vows to support Cong candidates in LS polls



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to fulfill promises made in Parliament regarding the restoration of J&K statehood and holding assembly elec-

tions.

He also demanded clarity on the implementation of the instrument of accession conditions signed by Maharaja Hari Singh and the restoration of J&K Dogra statehood.

Additionally, he called for the revocation of AFSPA, release of innocent people from jails, and integration of POK

and Gilgit Baltistan into J&K state.

Dimple extended support to Congress party candidates in Parliamentary Elections and criticized BJP's slogans as hollow. He vowed to continue the fight for the restoration of J&K's special status, alleging Gulam Nabi Azad as a puppet of the BJP.

KDP Wing of DPAP establishes Udhampur Wing

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: In a joint statement issued by Kashmiri Displaced People (KDP) Wing of Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) through President Sanjay Dhar, Piaray Lal Pandit Chairman that Ashok Kumar Bhat Secretary KDP Wing DPAP J&K & Ex-Sarpunch Pulwama has since joined KDP Wing DPAP J&K for Udhampur District Displaced People and now under his Chairmanship a Displaced People Unit Udhampur stands established with the office bearers namely Joginder Singh Unit Pres-

ident Udhampur, Neeku Singh Unit Vice President Udhampur, Ramesh Koul, Anoop Singh, Karan Jyot Singh, Amrik Singh, Harvir Kour, Pradiman Bhat, Girdari Lal, Raja Ji Koul, Bharat Bushan, A. K. Koul and Raj Kumar Bhat.

The newly nominated office bearers under the patronage of Ashok Kumar Bhat Secretary KDP Wing DPAP J&K expressed their full faith in Kashmiri Displaced People Wing of Democratic Progressive Azad Party with earnest promises to work hard for the wing to make the Party a strong among public.

The Team has

expressed its gratitude to the Committee head for having established this unit of the party who have enjoined to support with all their efforts to work for the party and to campaign for seeking votes to the DPAP candidates during the ensuing Parliamentary Elections.

The President and Chairman of KDP Wing of DPAP have hoped that this Team will unitedly work for the betterment of displaced people residing in Udhampur District and thanked Shri Ashok Kumar Bhat Secretary establishing a dedicated team in the KDP Wing of DPAP J&K

Sharat appointed spokesperson of Kailakh Trust

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Renowned academician and media person, Sharat Chander Sharma, was felicitated by Mahant Rohit Shastri, President, Shri Kailakh Jyotish evam Vedic Sansthan Trust, Ban Talab, Jammu, its Trustees and members in a simple but graceful function held at the Warehouse Trader's Association Office, Nehru Market, Jammu.

In the same function, it was declared that the President, Trustees and Members of the Trust have appointed Sharat Sharma as the Spokesperson of the Trust.

Welcoming Sharat Sharma, Mahant Rohit Shastri said that with the induction of Prof. Sharat as Spokesperson of the



Trust, activities of the Trust would receive further boost as there would be a better communication between the Trust and society at large and the activities of the Trust would be sufficiently highlighted in the relevant fora.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Sharat Sharma said that under the leadership of Mahant

Rohit Shastri, the Trust is confidently moving toward the goal of promotion and propagation of Sanskrit. He said that he was impressed with dedication of Mahant Rohit Shastri towards Sanskrit, Sanatan and Duggar and he felt that his efforts should be supported by all. He hoped that as a spokesperson, he would be able to help

Mahant Rohit Shastri and the Trust to attain their goal of Ghar Ghar Sanskrit.

Prof. Sharat Chander Sharma has held various teaching and administrative positions during his long service of 42 years at Central Sanskrit University, Delhi, including those of the Dean, Modern Subjects, CSU, New Delhi, Principal and

Director of the Jammu Campus of the university. He has authored, translated and edited a number of books and conducted various academic workshops at Mumbai, Jaipur, and Jammu.

He has been associated with radio and television as a presenter, interviewer, and drama voice. He has been translating and broadcasting VVIPs' address to the nation and has been associated with selection and training of radio and television announcers.

The dignitaries present in the function included, Deepak Gupta, R K Chibber, K.K Sharma, Pawan Khajuria, Promod Sharma, Jagdev Singh Chib, Naresh Raina, Ankush Sharma, Ajay Sharma, Uttam Chand Sharma and others.

EDITORIAL

SAVE RIVERS

In simple language, change in the natural state of water is called water pollution. If we want to understand this in a more exaggerated way, then we can say that the undesirable change in the quality of water which is harmful for humans and animals is called water pollution. Thousands of pages can be written separately on why water is important for us. But what we are talking about here is that which are our sacred rivers and which are other sources of water. If they become so polluted that their water becomes of no use, then what will we do because the rain water is decreasing day by day. And on the other hand, our natural water sources are depleting or getting polluted, so can't we adopt some method so that our rivers and other water sources are protected from getting polluted or their pollution can be reduced to some extent?

So let us talk about sewage treatment plant (STP) where the harmful substances present in sewage can be reduced to a great extent by using beneficial microorganisms or bacteria.

Dirty water coming out of houses, which is commonly called municipal waste water, is also called sewage. Sewage contains many pathogenic microbes and other microorganisms, as well as large amounts of organic and inorganic substances. This sewage goes directly into the sewer, and from there is dumped into the rivers without being cleaned, due to which the pollution level of our rivers is increasing day by day. Apart from this, dirty water coming out from industrial units is also directly discharged into the rivers, overall all these are badly polluting the water of the rivers, badly affecting the Aquatic Ecosystem are ruining the system.

How is sewage treated (How sewage treated in STP)? The process of sewage treatment is done in sewage treatment plant in 3 steps, these three steps of treatment are:-

The first primary treatment is known as physical treatment.

Second secondary treatment which is also known as biological treatment.

Third tertiary treatment which is also known as chemical treatment.

This process is done in the primary settling tank. In this stage, pieces of stone, pieces of bricks, soluble particles of soil and solid particles dissolved in sewage are removed. The fragments separate the soluble particles of soil and solid organic waste through the process of sedimentation. Along with this, plastic, carton, clothes or other insoluble waste is separated with the help of sequential filtration (using mesh of different sizes). Inside the tank, heavy sediments move downwards and floating debris or supernatant rises to the top. The waste that comes up is called effluent and now it is sent to another secondary tank where microorganisms do biological treatment.

The most important stage of sewage treatment is that the effluent is fed into a secondary tank, where aerobic bacteria and fungi are present. These bacteria and fungi oxidize the organic matter present in the effluent due to which the pollution level of the effluent gradually reduces.

As the pollution of sewage water starts decreasing, the supply of oxygen also gradually starts decreasing, this can be understood from the quantity of BOD (BOD).

The bar is known as Biological Oxygen Demand. The dirtier the water, the higher will be the value of the bar. As the value of bar in sewage starts decreasing, so does its pollution. The level also starts decreasing.

The BOD value gives a measurement result from which we can know how much organic matter is present in any water body or dirty water and to what extent it is polluted. The amount of oxygen required by microorganisms or bacteria to oxidised the organic matter present in one liter of water is called BOD.

It is also known as chlorination, in this stage, bleaching powder or chlorine is added to the water which has been treated after secondary treatment, due to which the harmful substances present in it are further reduced and the water becomes clean to a great extent. It happens. However, only after biological treatment, sewage water is discharged into rivers and the remaining sludge can be used as fertilizer in fields or to make biogas.

If we treat the dirty water coming out from homes and industrial units in sewage treatment plants in advance, the pollution level of our water bodies and rivers will reduce to a great extent.

There is little hope but it may happen in the future.

Some such technology should be developed by which we can completely eliminate pollution.



By: Vijay GarG

Emergence of social media, changed the course of history. Many believe that the Internet has aided the democratization of information; anybody may post anything on the Internet and have it heard. The Internet has broken down artificial barriers such as geographical borders and socioeconomic divides and has aided in forming a global community, seamless marketplaces, and common customers.

Role of Media in Social Life

The media plays a significant role in shaping our social lives and how we interact. Previously, media was primarily consumed through traditional television, radio, and print platforms. However, with the proliferation of the internet and social media, the media landscape has changed dramatically, and the role of media in our social lives has also evolved.

Domain of Impact

The social impact of media has been observed in four main domains -

Changing Ways of Interaction

One major change in social interaction is the shift towards online and digital communication. The internet and social media have provided new ways to connect and share information, ideas, and experiences. For example, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow people to create profiles,

share content, and connect with friends and strangers worldwide. These platforms have also provided new opportunities for individuals and organizations to reach and engage with large audiences.

There has been an issue of creating a false sense of self on these platforms, which is then reinforced through the validation one gets here. The adolescent population, still in a crucial and malleable stage of development, tends to get drawn to these platforms as they provide escapism from their own complicated lives. This may significantly impact their identity and self-concept. Vijay GarG and colleagues have found that social media use in adolescents is associated with low self-esteem and self-worth.

The anonymity of these platforms is inviting for those who find face-to-face interaction tenuous. However, there is a risk of cyberbullying and delving further into isolation that comes with investing too much in this artificial reality. Researchers found that communication with strangers in chat rooms increased feelings of isolation and dejection and decreased companionship delving further into the isolation that comes with investing too much in this artificial reality. Communication with strangers in chat rooms increased feelings of isolation and dejection and decreased companionship.

Increasing the Amount of Content to Consume

Another change in the role of media in social life is the increase in the amount of content available to consume. The internet has made it easier for people to access and share almost unlimited information and entertainment. This has led to a proliferation of content, including news articles, videos, podcasts, and more, which can be accessed anytime, anywhere. This has led to concerns about fractured

attention spans being a symptom of regular social media use. An issue parallel to the abundance of information is one of data privacy.

Through the terms and conditions listed by these websites, one finds an attempt to gather a social media user's data and sell it to third parties keen on getting their products to the world. The problem is that the average user needs to be aware of this privacy breach and may not actively moderate what they share on these platforms. The issue will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Dwindling Privacy

The issue of data privacy in social media has gained increasing attention in recent years as people have become more aware of the amount of personal information collected and shared online. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter often collect vast amounts of data on their users, including information about their activities, interests, and connections. This data is used to personalize the user experience and target ads to specific audiences.

However, there are several concerns about how social media companies handle data privacy. One concern is that users may need to be fully aware of the extent of the data that is being collected and how it is being used. This can make understanding the potential risks of sharing personal information online difficult.

Another concern is that social media companies may need adequate safeguards to protect user data from unauthorized access. There have been numerous instances of data breaches and other security lapses that have exposed user data to potential misuse or abuse. In addition, there are concerns about how social media companies use data for targeted advertising. Some

argue that these companies have too much control over the information presented to users and can create a biased or distorted view of the world.

This phenomenon is often associated with social media, as people tend to follow and engage with accounts that align with their beliefs and views. The problem with echo chambers is that they can contribute to the polarisation of society by limiting exposure to alternative viewpoints. This can make it difficult for people to understand the perspectives of others and hinder the exchange of ideas and the ability to find common ground.

People exposed only to information that aligns with their beliefs may be more likely to accept and believe false or misleading information. This can lead to the spread of misinformation and undermine the credibility of news and other sources of information. In addition, echo chambers can contribute to forming extremist views, as people may be more likely to encounter and engage with extreme or fringe viewpoints. This can increase the risk of radicalization and seriously affect individuals and society.

Conclusion

The media has played a significant role in shaping our social lives and how we interact. The shift towards online and digital platforms and the increased amount of content to consume have created new opportunities for connection and engagement. However, these changes have also raised concerns about their impact on individuals and society.

(Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational columnist Malout)

Botox for Hair



By: Shahnaz Husain

Hair Botox, this non-invasive treatment has gained popularity in recent years due to its ability to treat a variety of hair concerns such as frizziness, split ends, and lack of shine.

Hair botox' is a term used to describe a hair treatment that aims to rejuvenate and restore damaged and broken hair fibres.

The hair on your head loses fullness and elasticity as it ages, just like your skin due to pollution, lifestyle, stress and heat on strands. It's perfect for those with dry, brittle, and color-damaged hair.

Hair Botox acts as the ultimate deep conditioning treatment that coats hair fibres with a filler, such as keratin making it a safe and painless process.

It helps people who are seeking solutions for Split ends, Damaged hair, Frizz and dryness, Hair lacking volume or

sheen, and Naturally wavy or curly hair. Hair Botox treatment doesn't require any surgery or a significant amount of downtime

Besides taming the frizz, the treatment also adds moisture and shine to the hair. It suits everyone regardless of hair type. It works equally well on any type of hair, from fine and straight to thick and curly.

The procedure involves a specialised formula containing proteins, amino acids, vitamins, antioxidants, and, in some cases, hyaluronic acid is used. These ingredients penetrate the hair shaft and repair damage while also providing hydration and improving hair health.

The treatment allows the ingredients to penetrate deep into the hair shaft, infuses the hair with intense hydration while replacing/filling in the lost cuticle layers, creating a protective barrier, coating the hair shaft in essence, gluing the cuticle layers down, and temporarily filling in/replacing lost cuticles.

Your hair first will be needed to be given a thorough wash to get rid of the excess oil, dirt and chemicals.

A post-hair botox shampoo should be mild, gentle and free of sulfates, sodium chloride, silicones, and parabens that will keep hair cuticles closed and smooth. Besides, a moisturizing conditioner should be formulated with natural seed oils, hydrolyzed proteins, and other plant extracts. You can Apply a hair

mask once a week to moisturize the hair.

Your hair will then be dried in sections and the botox treatment will be applied thoroughly through your hair, from the roots to the tips. The treatment is then left on for about 60 minutes, after which a soft hair cleanser is used to wash the botox off.

Your hair will be dried first, then heat- straightened to help seal in the treatment in the fibers of your hair.

The infusion of nourishing ingredients restores the natural hydration balance, leaving the hair noticeably softer and more manageable. It rejuvenates hair by infusing it with powerful nutrients, proteins, and moisture, revitalising even the most damaged strands.

This results in stronger, smoother, and more manageable hair that looks healthy and vibrant.

Botox hair treatment provides long-lasting results. Botox is supposed to last around 4 months making it a cost-effective and preferred choice for those seeking sustained improvements in hair texture although the exact time frame will vary from person to person.

However, results can differ based on the person's hair type, the product used, and the professional applying it. Always discuss it with your health care professional or dermatologist beforehand.

The treatment fills in any

broken or thin areas on each hair strand to make the hair appear more full and lustrous.

With its ability to reduce frizz, restore shine, and improve manageability, hair botox has become a sought-after solution for those seeking to revive and nourish their hair to its full, healthy potential.

Various plant extracts, such as aloe vera, green tea, or chamomile, may be included in hair botox products for their soothing, antioxidant, or anti-inflammatory properties. These ingredients can increase hydration, improve texture, reduce frizz, and make styling an easier feat.

Hair Botox is considered safe for use, although as with any hair treatment, there is a risk for skin irritation, burns or an allergic reaction.

To reduce the risk of damaging side effects, the treatment shouldn't come in contact with your skin.

Always choose a reputed salon and professional to do the procedure. Be sure to share any allergies or sensitivities you may have with them. Use a patch test to check for allergies or adverse reactions before using the product all over your head.

(The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

PM Modi has brought peace & prosperity to J&K: YV Sharma

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Y. V Sharma, the spokesman of the BJP, exhorted the people of J&K to vote overwhelmingly for BJP during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

He requested the voters to vote for BJP as every vote cast by them is essentially a vote for Narendra Modi who has unleashed an unprecedented growth of peace & infrastructure development in J&K.

He said that the basic element for development, be it economic, infrastructure, education or even spiritual is the necessity of peace.

The Govt of Narendra Modi with the support of Manoj Sinha, the HLG of J&K combined with the conviction of the local BJP leadership & wholehearted support of the people of J&K has ensured a period of peace in J&K that was just not thinkable a few years back. It is also true that there have been some unfortunate incidents related to terrorism during this period but gone are the days when calendars were issued for observation of strikes & bandhs. Gone are the days when stone pelting was a norm during which scores of youth lost their lives. To keep the schools, colleges, markets & other business establishments open used to be an unprecedented challenge. Under the Modi government open schools & colleges are a norm & children & youth are busy getting educated. New vistas have opened for skill development. It is these very students who will help in the development of J&K

at a later stage.

The Govt under Narendra Modi has enhanced the interaction of the youth of India with the people of the rest of the country through several programmes. The youth of J&K are witnessing the growth story of India with their own eyes. There are several programmes for the students who go for studies in other parts of the country.

The development of women centered self help groups is creating a new environment of togetherness & enhancing entrepreneurship which is bound to give boost to the economy in villages & towns across J&K. Thrust is also on tourism & with the advent of philosophy of home stays new areas of the UT are coming on the tourist map with consequent benefits to the local economy.

Modi government has also laid stress on development of health infrastructure. The District Hospitals along with Ayush Health & Wellness Centres & Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are changing the face of the health infrastructure. The Ayushman Card provided to every citizen of J&K under the PMs Ayushman Bharat Yojna has ensured that healthcare is available to every cross section of the society & none feels financially troubled in case of a medical situation.

YV Sharma said that there is a complete thrust on infrastructure development of J&K, be it in roads, railways or air travel. AIMS are coming up in Jammu as well in the Kashmir Division of the UT. It is understood that the railway track shall be through to Srinagar

& Baramulla in the Kashmir Valley by the end of the year 2024. The Modi government has taken up the difficult task of 8 laning of Delhi - Amritsar - Jammu - Katra expressway & the task is going ahead at neck-break speed. The hallmark of the Modi govt has been the huge scale of the projects & the assurance that the are completed at a fast pace. The upcoming ring roads in Jammu & Kashmir Divisions are a befitting example of the vision of the BJP government under the PM, Modi. The newly operational battery buses in the cities of Jammu & Srinagar have brought in a new sense of comfort while travelling in these cities. They also are an effort of the government to bring down noise & air pollution.

Earlier, Jammu would crave for a university or an engineering college, but the Modi Government has provided IIT & IIM to Jammu. The landscape of Jammu on the Nagrota periphery has completely transformed & Jambu Zoo has provided an additional recreational spot for the people of Jammu.

YV Sharma said that in an unprecedented move the government under Narendra Modi is in the process of developing power plants in the Chenab basin that shall have an installed capacity of more than 3000 MW. These power plants are expected to be completed in another 2 to 3 years. The installed capacity of these power houses shall be more than the total installed capacity of power houses that came up in J&K in last 70 years.

He further said that the thrust of

the government towards digitisation has brought in a new sense of transparency. Many of the civic services are now available on an individual's mobile or a pad. This has also brought in revolution in the education sector too, for students now have access to data, books & new & modern learning techniques enabling them to understand their area of interest better.

He further said that reservation for the Pahari community, the Gaddis, the displaced people from Pakistan & women in the legislature, Parliament & local bodies has empowered these forgotten communities. Abrogation of Article 370 is the most important feather in the cap of our PM. This long-awaited step brought parity amongst all Indians & gave them a sense of purpose.

He also added that there is thrust on part of the government to establish industrial estates & several key players have already started coming in. The government has also introduced New Industrial Policy for the entrepreneurs to invest in J&K. The fruits of this effort shall also be visible in near future.

YV Sharma requested the voters of J&K that in order to ensure that the fruits of peace & development are further anchored in the UT of J&K & they attain permanency the people of J&K must vote for Narendra Modi in hordes & strengthen his hands. He appealed to the voters to vote for Dr. Jitendra Singh & Jugal Kishore in Udhampur & Jammu Lok Sabha constituencies.

HSS Bhalra organises awareness about "Mission Prerana"



Top News Report

BHADARWAH, Apr 4: An awareness program was organised by Govt PM Shree Higher Secondary School Bhalra here on Thursday.

The program which is an experiential learning program launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India was conducted by Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Koul (Teacher/Associate NCC Officer/Zonal Counseling Incharge).

While briefing the students about the opportunities of Mission Prerana for students to explore country's great culture through

their journey of Vadnagar, a living city, its history, archaeology and traditional Bharliya Gyan Parampara, Dr Koul said that it offers a unique and inspiring experience for students.

"The aim of Prerana is to inspire the students of all the districts of the country from a place from where the inspirational journey of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi started," he explained. More than 130 students of GHSS Bhalra right from class 9th to 12th have been registered in the Mission Portal, said Dr. Koul.

On this occasion, Dr Nitin Singh Kotwal

teacher of the institution also provided the technical information regarding the registration and participation in the Mission Prerana.

Expressing her views, Adarshika Manhas students of 10th class elaborated about the Prerana School, which allows students to experience and internalize their values through the latest technology.

Notably, the awareness programme was organized under the direction of Chief Education Officer Doda Parkash Lal Thapa and was supervised by Pardeep Singh Billawria (Principal of the Institution).

Illegal mining goes unabated in Kulgam village, authorities unmoved

Top News Report

KULGAM, Apr 4: Despite the high court ban on the illegal mining, residents of Gund-Tankipora area of Devsar belt south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Thursday complained that illegal extraction in the area is going on unabated.

They said that they have informed the concerned departments several times but nothing has been done so far to stop the menace in the area, locals alleged.

Despite assurances from authorities that it would be stopped, they failed to stop illegal mining and allowing violators to use heavy machines. The residents appealed concerned authorities several times to conduct the on-spot inspection to know the scale of mining



and impacts on the adjacent areas but that never happened, said a local resident.

He added that due to illegal mining, the area has become vulnerable to floods. "From years

these mining mafias are jeopardizing the lives of the residents and its adjacent areas," he said.

They have appealed the Lt. Governor led administration to intervene in the matter and to stop the

illegal mining in the area.

When Contacted District Mineral Officer (DMO) Kulgam, Murtaza Bashir said that they are already working on it, adding that those found guilty will be dealt strictly as per law.

President launches India's first home-grown gene therapy for cancer

Top News Report

NEW DELHI/JAMMU, Apr 4: The President of India, Droupadi Murmu launched India's first home-grown gene therapy for cancer at IIT Bombay today (April 4, 2024).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the launch of India's first gene therapy is a major breakthrough in our battle against cancer. As this line of treatment, named "CAR-T cell therapy", is accessible and affordable, it provides a new hope for the whole of humankind. She expressed confidence that it will be successful in giving new lives to countless patients.

The President said that CAR-T cell therapy is considered to be one of the most phenomenal advances in medical science. It has been available in the developed nations for some time, but it is extremely costly, and beyond the reach of most patients around the world. She was happy to note that the therapy being launched today is the world's most affordable CAR-T cell therapy. She said that it is also an example of the 'Make in India' initiative; a shining example of the

'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. The President was happy to note that India's first CAR-T cell therapy is developed through collaboration between the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and Tata Memorial Hospital in association with industry partner Immuno ACT. She said that this is a praiseworthy example of academia-industry partnership, which should inspire many more similar efforts.

The President said that IIT Bombay is renowned, not only in India but across the world, as a model of technology education. In the development of CAR-T cell therapy, technology is not only being put in the service of humanity, but partnerships have been with an eminent institution from another field as well as with industry. This has been made possible by the focus IIT, Bombay has placed on research and development over the last three decades. She said that with the knowledge base and skills of the faculty and students of IIT Bombay and other similar institutions, India as a whole, would benefit greatly from the technological revolution underway

NHM employees demand release of due salary before Eid



Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Apr 4: Employees working under the National Health Mission (NHM) in various hospitals across Jammu and Kashmir have appealed to the government to release their pending salaries before the upcoming Eid al-Fitr festival.

Dr. Nazir Hussain, Medical Officer, the District President of the NHM Employees Association in Kishtwar, issued a statement urging the government to prioritize their grievances.

"Eid al-Fitr, considered the most important occasion for the Muslim community, is celebrated worldwide with joy and

enthusiasm," Dr. Nazir said in the statement.

"The festival is only a few days away, and NHM employees are expecting the government to release their salaries."

He further added, "On this important occasion, I appeal to the authorities to release the salary for the month of March so that employees can manage Eid expenses and celebrate the festival with joy and happiness."

Dr. Nazir urged the administration to release their pay and allow their families to celebrate Eid festively. He expressed hope that the Jammu and Kashmir UT government will acknowledge this "genuine and justified" demand.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor launches All-New Urban Cruiser Taisor

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), today launched the All-New Toyota Urban Cruiser Taisor, a dynamic addition to its robust and full range of versatile SUV line-up in India. Marking the company's re-entry into the A-SUV segment, the All-New Toyota Urban Cruiser Taisor is positioned to offer a sense of prestige derived from the modern styling, cutting-edge features and advance technologies, which also makes it a perfect choice for Indian customers. The new product further reinforces the company's commanding presence in the SUV category.

The All-New Urban Cruiser Taisor is available in 1.0L Turbo, 1.2L Petrol and E-CNG options. The 1.0L Turbo is available in 5 Speed Manual Transmission and 6 Speed Automatic Transmission, thus offering a versatile choice for customers who prioritize both power and performance preferences. While the 1.2L



Petrol comes in 5 Speed Manual Transmission and Intelligent Gear Shift (IGS), the 1.2L E-CNG is available in 5 Speed Manual Transmission.

The All-New Urban Cruiser Taisor delivers maximum power of 100.06 PS @ 5500 rpm in the 1.0L Turbo option, offering a power packed driving experience with segment best fuel efficiency of 21.5* km/l for Manual and 20.0* km/l for Automatic. The 1.2L Petrol Engine offers maximum power of 89.73

PS @6000rpm with a fuel efficiency of 21.7* Manual and 22.8*(AMT) km/l.

The All-New Urban Cruiser Taisor is also available in the E-CNG option offering fuel efficiency of 28.5* km/kg.

Present at the event Masakazu Yoshimura, MD and CEO of Toyota Kirloskar Motor and Regional CEO at Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) said, "The Indian market has always been of paramount importance to us, both in terms of product offerings and introduction

of advanced technologies. This emphasis was further underpinned by the recent creation of a new region where the Indian market plays an even more crucial role acting as the hub of the new "India, Middle East, East Asia & Oceania Region". At Toyota Kirloskar Motor, we believe that the company is strategically positioned to capitalize on its 25-years excellence legacy backed by an aspiration to establish new standards in the Indian automotive industry.

Homestay Entrepreneurial Development Program handholds participants at CUJ

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: School of Business Studies, Central university of Jammu under the guidance and mentorship of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor, CUJ and Abhishek Sharma, DC, Samba motivated local residents of the samba district to register Homestays as a new business venture addressing income and employment generation.

Skill development course on Homestay Entrepreneurship Development Program for Youth of District Samba under SANKALP enters 3rd week wherein practical exposure is being provided by field experts.

In this context Tourist Officer and Coordinator of the course Mr Rajesh Raina interacted with the participants of the course and shared his valuable insights about the Homestay registration process and discussed success



stories of Homestays in the region.

Project Team apprised that during next week participants shall be taken to resorts, restaurants and homestays along with institutes of repute to provide hands-on training. It is pertinent to mention here that the present MoU was signed between the District Skill

Committee, Samba and School of Business Studies, Central University of Jammu in the presence of LG Manoj Sinha during his visit to campus.

The training Programme is conducted by faculty members from School of Business Studies including Prof. Jaya Bhasin, Dr. Neelika Arora, Dr. Ranjeet Kumar Raman, Dr.

Amit Gangotia, Dr. Bharti Gupta, Rahul Thakur, Dr. Shahid Mushtaq, and Dr. Anju Thapa.

Tourist Officer Rajesh Raina arranged the participants and provided administrative and logistic support for smooth conduct of the Programme along with Amanpreet Singh, Superintendent, ITI Samba.

Kapil Sharma's The Great Indian Kapil Show lacks the zing despite the return of Sunil Grover

It's a huge thing for stand-up comedian and actor Kapil Sharma to run a celeb talk show, titled The Great Indian Kapil Show, on OTT giant Netflix. In many ways it's also symbolic, considering he started off in 2007 by winning a similar-sounding comedy reality show — The Great Indian Laughter Challenge Season 3.

Notably, every Netflix show that has the word 'India' — Indian Matchmaking, Indian Predator (series), Bad Boys Billionaires: India, Crime Stories: India Detectives and even stand-up special Vir Das: For India — in the title has brought business to the platform!

After 2022 Netflix special Kapil Sharma: I'm Not Done Yet, he is back but this time his team of comedians wouldn't be joining in from the crowd, but be on the stage. The stand-up special was less funny and more personal, where he talked about the battle with mental health and his equation with fame. But the Netflix's latest show, with Kapil Sharma hosting the Indian celebrities from all walks of life, comes across as 'televisionisation' of OTT.

No lasting impression. For the premiere episode, nei-



ther Kapil's team of comedians and 'laughing' judge Archana Puran Singh, nor guests, Ranbir Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor and Ridhima Kapoor Sahni, made an impression. The return of Gutthi aka Sunil Grover was the only high point of the show, especially for the character's history with celeb-guest Ranbir Kapoor. The banter between Kapil Sharma and Grover (Dafli), which crosses the boundary of reel, taunts and becomes too real, brought back the memories of the infamous 'mid-air' fight between the two in 2017.

The choice of guests for the inaugural show didn't give the comedians, Kiku Sharda, Krushna Abhishek and Grover,

much space to work around. Had there been Alia from the Kapoor house, it would have been an interesting twist, especially as the couple never appeared together on any show. Krushna dressed as Animal character Abrar Haque, a la Bobby Deol, and Kiku mimicking Sunny Deol didn't add to the fun element at all.

Need to up his game. Kapil is the only winner from The Great Indian Laughter Challenge who has made it big in the industry, but he needs to up his game in the coming episodes. After all, it is not easy to keep OTT audience hooked, especially with a sea of options available to them.

However, celebrities from the television industry are all rooting for Kapil's show and looking forward to the upcoming episodes.

Celeb speak. It will take time. The audience for television and OTT platforms are different, and since we have the remote in hand there are options galore. Kapil is good at comedy, the freshness is surely retained but it will take time for TV audience to come to an OTT platform to watch a specific comedy show. Angad Hasija, actor.

Promising start. Kapil Sharma's Netflix start was like reliving old memories. His laughter filled the screen, bringing back the joy we all love. Now, I'm excited to see how he keeps the magic alive in this new digital age. It's a promising start to what looks like a fun season ahead. Varsha Hegde, actress.

Need diversified content. Kapil Sharma's transition to Netflix is interesting. His first episode is entertaining, but I wonder if it will cater to a wider audience beyond his usual fan base. I hope the content diversifies beyond the usual gags. Mrunal Jain, actor.

Sonakshi Sinha steals the show in Bhansali's 'Tilasmī Bahein' from 'Heeramandi'



The second song of filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-anticipated web series,

Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar, titled Tilasmī Bahein, is now out.

Composed by the director-creator himself, the song features Sonakshi Sinha in her most ethereal avatar yet. The song, composed by the maestro Bhansali himself and sung by the enchanting Sharmistha Chatterjee, promises to be a visual and auditory treat for fans.

In the mesmerising music video, Sinha's portrayal of the courtesan Fareedan is nothing short of captivating. Dressed in a resplendent beige sequin sari, Sinha exudes allure and charisma as she enchants viewers with her dance, filmed in one continuous take.

The song offers a tantalising glimpse into the lavish and mysterious world of Heeramandi, leaving audiences eagerly anticipating more.

Priyanka Chopra joins the documentary 'Born Hungry' as a producer

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas' production company Purple Pebble Pictures has announced her new film as a producer.

It is in collaboration with the production team of Barry Avrich's new feature documentary Born Hungry. Taking to Instagram, Priyanka treated fans with this exciting news by sharing an article with a note.

The note said, "Aligning with stories and filmmakers that have the ability to move the audience by having a unique point of view is what we always look for at @purplepebblepictures. @barryavrich22's new feature documentary, Born Hungry is exactly that. I was so moved by Sash's incredible story of resilience and determination, and also that it is an amazing rendition of an extremely sensitive story, so it was a no-brainer for us to collaborate."

Born Hungry premiered at the Palm Springs International



Film Festival 2024 and will screen at the Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto on April 26.

'When they grow up...', Shekhar Kapur working on 'Masoom: The Next Generation'

Internationally recognised filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, who is currently working on a sequel to his directorial debut film 'Masoom' (1983) titled 'Masoom: The Next Generation' says, "This film portrays the lives of all the characters you saw in the earlier one — all grown up. I am not going to say more; you will need to watch the film."

The original was adapted from Eric Segal's 1980 novel 'Man, Woman and Child' which was also adapted into a Malayalam movie 'Olangal' and a Hollywood movie 'Man, Woman and Child'. Kapur's film starred Naseeruddin Shah and Shabana Azmi in lead roles along with Tanuja, Supriya Pathak and Saeed Jaffrey. It featured Jugal Hansraj, Aradhana and Urmila Matondkar as child actors. The screenplay, dialogues and lyrics are by Gulzar with music by RD Burman.

The filmmaker, who till recently was the director of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII),



Pune, recalls that though his stint was interesting, he could have done much more. "Owing to the Covid, the institute was non-functional for most of my term. There was a lot more that I could give had it been (functional)," he said.

However, this Padma Shri recipient whose film 'Elizabeth' (1998) a fictional account of the reign of British Queen Elizabeth I, which was nominated for seven Academy Awards feels that more than film schools, we need several schools of creativity that can impart more rounded knowledge. "See, film schools teach techniques, and they keep changing at a fast

pace. Nobody edits like they used to a few years back. Schools of creativity can impart knowledge on how to tell stories and engage people — that should be the core specialisation of every filmmaker," says Kapur.

"If you are a painter and have witnessed war, you will interpret it with your peculiar metaphors while presenting it on the canvas. I get attracted to stories of moral conflicts. Point is, which conflict attracts me most and stays with me in a particular space of time," says this BAFTA, National Film, National Board of Review and three Filmfare Awards winner.

In Chandigarh, during

the recently concluded Cinevesture International Film Festival (CII), Kapur felt it was extremely important that film festivals do not remain confined to the metros only. "I am glad that they did this festival here. Those living in smaller towns too should get an opportunity to witness cinematic excellence."

For someone who works both in India and abroad, there is not much difference except the politics of getting to a film and releasing it.

"From calling action to cut, what happens in between is the same everywhere in the world. But yes, working in the West is like going to a supermarket, where everything is well-organised for you. In India, it's like going to a 'chor bazaar', you don't know what you are getting. But remember, chaos can be a great driver of creativity. I can get bored with the idea of absolute organisation and like the idea of chaos to wake myself," he said.

Even as there is much

conversation around how artificial intelligence (AI) will change filmmaking, Kapur opines that it will be a definite game changer and disrupter.

"It's the most democratic technology that has hit us. People keep saying that it will kill many jobs. But since the Industrial Revolution, 95 per cent of people do not like their jobs — the boss/employee structure etc. AI is bound to give people an opportunity to explore themselves — their creativity and humanity, and the synergy between the two. This technology will in fact create more jobs. Do you need to learn coding to create an app anymore? Crumbling all pre-established structures, you will hear about a boy sitting in Dharavi with his computer and giving prompts to make something of his life. The same goes for new-age filmmakers who are not able to get a breakthrough in theatres and OTT. AI will devise a new method of distribution," concludes the 78-year-old filmmaker.

Had to unlearn a few things as musician, says Diljit Dosanjh on playing Chamkila

The best thing about acting is that one can start from zero, says singer-star Diljit Dosanjh who had to "unlearn" certain things to play the character of slain Punjabi musician Amar Singh Chamkila in the upcoming Imtiaz Ali film.

Dosanjh, who is a popular name in not just Punjabi and Hindi cinema but also a globally recognised musician, said he mostly relied on Ali's "clear vision" to create Chamkila on the screen.

Chamkila, a grassroots singer who ruled street concerts in the '80s in Punjab, was shot dead along with his singer-wife Amarjot in 1988.

"I had to unlearn things and start from zero. It's a plus point in the life of an artist to do this. It's

tough to start from zero because you often get lost in your own personality and you feel this is who you are (but) the best thing about an actor's job is that you get the opportunity to start from zero, and I look at this as an opportunity," Dosanjh told agency in an interview.

The 40-year-old actor said he relied completely on Ali to portray the nuances of Chamkila, regarded as one of the best live-stage performers to have come from Punjab.

"I didn't do much prep for the film, Imtiaz sir prepped a lot. He had a clear vision about the character of Chamkila. I knew Chamkila as an artist, but I had no idea about how he was as a person or how he would



perform on stage. I got a lot of help from Imtiaz sir." Dosanjh believes the

audience will get to know the late musician well through the movie. "I personally believe

everyone knows about Chamkila. However, if there are some people who don't know about him, then it's an interesting story to watch. It's not just the story of an artist but the story of a person, his journey, and what all happened in the 1980s in Punjab.

"It is not a fictional story; it is true. I feel there's something to learn from this film too. Those who don't know about Chamkila will know about him and those who are fans of Chamkila will definitely watch the film."

"Amar Singh Chamkila" is set to premiere on April 12 on Netflix. It is produced by Mohit Choudhary, Select Media Holdings LLP, Saregama, and Window Seat Films.

Ayushmann Khurrana signs recording deal with leading global brand



Actor-musician Ayushmann Khurrana has signed a global recording deal with entertainment company Warner Music India. The first release from the partnership is set to drop in May.

Ayushmann, who has

lent his voice to numbers such as Mitti Di Khushboo, Paani Da Rang and Mere Liye Tum Kaafi Ho, said, "I have always wanted to collaborate with like-minded people in my pursuit of creative excellence." He said he

wanted to take his music to the global audience. He added: "I'm confident that with Warner Music India by my side, I will make some significant strides in this realm. I cannot wait to unveil my next song. It will be a new sound that people haven't heard from me before."

Jay Mehta, Managing Director of Warner Music India and SAARC, said, "Ayushmann has experienced unparalleled success with his films, and we're excited to see him now scale new heights as a pop star. With his passion for music, we are thrilled to build an iconic roadmap for him on his music journey."

PM Modi slams RJD, Congress over corruption in Bihar's Jamui

Says both the parties have insulted Bihar

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched the NDA's Lok Sabha election campaign from Bihar's Jamui.

While campaigning for Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan, he said people of Bihar have decided to give all 40 Lok Sabha seats to the NDA and help in achieving the 400-plus target.

Modi said the NDA took Bihar out of the muck it was under RJD's tenure.

While refraining from naming Pakistan, the PM said unlike the Congress regime, the BJP-led NDA Government hit back the country that used to attack India and restored the glory of the Magadha Empire.

"The Congress and the RJD have brought disgrace to the country. Ten years ago the world used to consider India



as a weak and poor country. A country that cries for flour today, used to attack India and the then Congress government used to take the issue before other countries. India has started hitting back, reviving the ancient glory of Magadha Empire," the PM said. He said that India today is the

world's fifth largest economy. "The identity of Jamui was synonymous with Naxalism. Government's schemes never reached Jamui because of Naxalites. Naxalites never used to allow roads to be built. Naxalism has been rooted out," Modi said. Taking a dig at the Opposition, the PM said that those who

gobbled up land in the name of giving jobs to the poor in the Railways can never do any good for the people of Bihar.

Modi said that both the Congress and the RJD have insulted Bihar. He said that both parties had used their might to stop the Ram Mandir from becoming a reality.

"Both the Congress and RJD insulted Karpoori Thakur. Our government conferred the country's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, on Karpoori Thakur (posthumously). Even then, they scoffed at our decision. It was under our government that the 500-year dream of a Ram Mandir was fulfilled. The Congress and the RJD had used their might to stop the Ram Mandir from becoming a reality. Even today, they don't get tired of hurling insults at Ram Bhakts and the Ram Mandir," Modi added.

'One can trust snake but not BJP', says Mamata Banerjee at Cooch Behar rally



COOCH BEHAR (WB), Apr 4 (Agencies): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the BJP of not following the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the Lok Sabha polls and asserted that the poisonous snake can be trusted but not the saffron camp.

Addressing a rally in Cooch Behar, Banerjee alleged that the central investigating agen-

cies, BSF and CISF are working at the behest of the BJP and urged the Election Commission to look into it and ensure a level-playing field.

"You can trust a poisonous snake; you can even pet it, but you can never trust the BJP... The BJP is destroying the country," she said.

Asserting that her party -- TMC -- will not bow before the "threat of central agencies," Banerjee urged women

in Cooch Behar to file police complaints if "there are instances of BSF torturing locals" ahead of the polls, scheduled for April 19.

"The central investigating agencies, the NIA, Income Tax, BSF and CISF are working for the BJP. We will humbly plead to the Election Commission to ensure a level playing field as central agencies are working for the saffron camp," she said.

The BJP only follows the principle of one nation, one party, Banerjee said.

"It is a matter of shame that the person against whom there are several cases has been appointed as MOS home affairs," she said in apparent reference to Nisith Pramanik.

BJP's Smriti Irani takes swipe at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for 'changing families'

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): BJP leader and Union Minister Smriti Irani, the party candidate for former Gandhi family bastion of Amethi, on Thursday took a swipe at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for "changing families."

Smriti, who defeated Gandhi in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, accused Rahul of running away from Amethi, which the Congress party's Gandhis always called a family.

"Who changes families? Who runs away from family. In 2019 Wayanad was not the first choice of Rahul Gandhi. He chose Wayanad because he ran away from Amethi. If Gandhis call Amethi their family why did they abandon Amethi?" Asked Smriti who was in Wayanad today for the nomination filing of BJP candidate and state unit chief K Surendran who is contesting opposite Rahul and CPI's Annie Raja in Wayanad.

Smriti also attacked Rahul for "trying to hide the flags of SDPI, the political front of banned outfit PFI."

"Rahul Gandhi was trying to hide



the flags of SDPI after accepting their support in Wayanad," said Smriti even as Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said Gandhi should have the courage to accept SDPI support openly.

Smriti said Rahul would abandon Wayanad just as he abandoned Amethi.

The Congress is yet to declare a candidate for Amethi, a seat Gandhi family retained for decades including in 2004, 2009 and 2014 when Rahul was an MP here.

Rahul lost Amethi to Smriti by around 50,000 votes.

Smriti today said Amethi did not even have a blood bank in the 50 years that the Gandhi family held it.

Nation paid price for BJP's compulsion to get 'chanda' at all costs: Congress

Congress general secretary Ramesh alleged that 33 loss-making firms donated electoral bonds worth Rs 582 crore with 75 per cent going to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): The Congress on Thursday alleged that the BJP's compulsion to get donations at all costs saw it go ahead with the electoral bonds scheme without heeding RBI's astute advice, as it claimed that over Rs 430 crore was donated to the ruling party by 33 companies that had negative or near zero profit.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh shared a media report on X which claimed that 33 loss-making firms donated electoral bonds worth Rs 582 crore with 75 per cent going to the



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"There are four primary channels of corruption in the Electoral Bond Scam, and with each passing day, more examples emerge to confirm the shocking reality of the corruption which has engulfed this country through Narendra Modi's encourage-

ment," Ramesh alleged.

"An update on the latest revelations on the 'Farzi Companies' who have been donating chanda to the BJP Chanda Do, Dhandha Lo; Theka Lo, Rishvat Do; Hafta Vasuli; Farzi Companies," he said in a post on X.

Ramesh claimed that Rs 434.2 crore was

donated to the BJP by 33 companies that had negative or near zero profit after tax in aggregate over seven years (2016-17 to 2022-23).

"The aggregate net losses of these 33 companies were over Rs 1 lakh crore.16 out of these 33 companies paid zero or negative direct taxes in aggregate," he said.

Most of these 33 companies are likely shell companies built for the purpose of money laundering, Ramesh said.

He also claimed that Rs 601 crore was donated to the BJP by six companies that had positive net profits in aggregate from 2016-17

to 2022-23, but whose electoral bond donations exceeded their aggregate net profit significantly.

These companies were likely acting as fronts for other companies, he alleged.

"When the Electoral Bonds Scheme was first floated by the Modi Sarkar, the RBI raised concerns regarding the high possibility of it being used for money laundering.

The BJP's compulsion to get chanda at all costs saw it go ahead with this scheme without heeding this astute advice. The nation has paid the price!" Ramesh said.

Sonia Gandhi, Ashwini Vaishnaw, among 14 sworn in as Rajya Sabha members

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw were among the 14 who took oath as members of the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Vice-president and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar administered the oath to them in the new Parliament house building.

While Sonia Gandhi took oath as a member of the Upper House from Rajasthan, Vaishnaw was sworn in as a member of the same house from Odisha.



Congress leader Ajay Maken from Karnataka, BJP leader R P N Singh from Uttar Pradesh, and BJP member Samik Bhattacharya from West

Bengal were among the 14 who took the Rajya Sabha oath.

YSRCP leaders Gola Babu Rao, Medha Raghunath Reddy, and

Yerum Venkat Subba Reddy also took oath as members representing the state of Andhra Pradesh.

They all later took a

group photograph with the RS Chairman.

Sonia Gandhi has become a Rajya Sabha member for the first time. She took oath in the presence of Leader of the House Piyush Goyal and Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

Her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was also present during her oath-taking.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh and secretary general P C Mody were also present.

Gourav Vallabh joins BJP hours after quitting Congress



NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Professor Gourav Vallabh, a Congress spokesperson known for representing the party in finance and economy-related TV debates, announced his resignation from the party on Thursday morning and joined the BJP in the presence of BJP General Secretary Vinod Tawde.

Describing the grand old party as 'directionless,' Vallabh had penned a letter to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, highlighting issues such as the caste census. He expressed his inability to advocate 'anti-Sanatana' slogans and stated that he is quitting the party.

After joining BJP, Gourav Vallabh he said that this has been his view since Congress rejected the invitation to attend the Pran Pratishtha in Ayodhya. "I posted a letter in the morning on various social media platforms...In that letter, I wrote all the pains of my heart...This has been my view from the beginning that the temple of Lord Shri Ram (in Ayodhya) should be built. An invitation was received and Congress rejected the invitation, I cannot accept it...The leaders of the alliance raised questions on Sanatana, why was Congress not responding to it?...I joined BJP today and I hope to use my ability and knowledge to take India forward..." Vallabh in a post on X had said, "The way Congress party is moving for-

ward directionless today, I do not feel comfortable with it. I cannot raise anti-Sanatana slogans, nor can I abuse the wealth creators of the country. Therefore, I am resigning from all positions and primary membership of the Congress party."

Vallabh's resignation letter further alleges that the party's grassroots level has deteriorated, failing to grasp the aspirations of New India. He expressed disappointment, stating that the party struggles to attain power or effectively function as an opposition. He finds it challenging to bridge the gap between senior leaders and grassroots workers, which is crucial politically.

He also had stated that he was upset with the stance taken by the party of staying away from the Ram Mandir 'Pran Pratishtha' programme in Ayodhya.

"I am a Hindu by birth and a teacher by profession. This stance of the party has always irritated and troubled me. Many people associated with the party and (INDIA) alliance speak against Sanatana Dharma and the party's silence on it is like giving it tacit approval," Vallabh said.

He asserted the necessity for direct communication between party workers and leaders for fostering positive change. Vallabh criticized the party's current trajectory, noting contradictory stances on issues like caste-based census and perceptions of being against the entire Hindu society, which he believes undermines the party's fundamental principles.

"On one hand we talk about caste census, while on the other hand we are seen opposing the entire Hindu society. This style of working is giving a misleading message among the public that the party is the supporter of a particular religion. This is against the fundamental principles of the Congress," he said.

2-Year-Old Rescued From 16-Foot Deep Borewell In Karnataka After 20 Hours

The child fell into the borewell when he went out to play near his house.

KARNATAKA, Apr 4 (Agencies): A two-year-old boy who fell into a borewell in Karnataka was rescued after a 20-hour-long operation.

Rescue operations had begun around 6.30 pm on Wednesday evening after the child fell into a 16-foot deep borewell in Lachayan village.

According to the police, the child fell into the borewell when he went out to play near his house.

The boy is believed to have

fallen head first. The matter came to light when someone heard the child cry and immediately informed the family.

Authorities had dug a pit about 21-feet deep parallel to the borewell using an excavator to rescue the boy.

It is still not known how the child is doing. A medical team is stationed at the spot with oxygen, and an emergency first aid medication including injections have been kept ready. An



ambulance has also been kept on stand-by to shift the child to



a hospital at Indi immediately once rescued.

In rare call, Russian defence minister warns French counterpart against sending troops to Ukraine

MOSCOW, Apr 4 (Agencies): Russia's defence minister warned his French counterpart against deploying troops to Ukraine in a rare phone call and noted that Moscow is ready to take part in talks to end the conflict.

Sergei Shoigu told French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu that if Paris follows up on its statements about the possibility of sending a French military contingent to Ukraine, "it will create problems for France itself," according to a statement from the Russian Defence Ministry. It didn't elaborate.

The conversation followed French President Emmanuel Macron's comments in February, in which he said that the possibility of Western troops being sent to Ukraine could not be ruled out.

The call marked the first such contact between Russian and French defense ministers since October 2022.



Shoigu noted Moscow's "readiness for dialogue on Ukraine", emphasising that a planned round of peace talks in Geneva would be "senseless" without Russia's involvement. He added that possible future negotiations could be based on a draft document, which was discussed during Russia-Ukraine talks in Istanbul in March 2022.

Media reports have said that the draft negotiated in Istanbul weeks after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine envisaged that Ukraine will abandon its bid to join NATO and remain neutral. No final deal was reached and the talks collapsed quickly after.

The Russian Defence Ministry also said in its readout of Wednesday's call that Lecornu

offered condolences over the March 22 attack on a suburban Moscow concert hall that killed 145 in the deadliest assault on Russian soil in decades.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his officials have sought to link Ukraine and the West to the attack despite Kyiv's fierce denial, a claim of responsibility issued by an affiliate of Islamic State group and an advance warning that the US had issued to Moscow about imminent attack.

The Russian Defence Ministry said that during the call Lecornu tried to persuade Shoigu that Ukraine and its Western allies had no relation to the concert hall raid, but Shoigu insisted that Moscow has "information about Ukrainian trace in organising the terror attack".

"The Kyiv regime does nothing without approval of its Western handlers," the ministry quoted Shoigu as telling Lecornu. "We hope that the French special services weren't involved in it."

US election: Trump leads Biden in 6 of 7 battleground states, says latest opinion poll



WASHINGTON, Apr 4 (Agencies): Ahead of the upcoming US election scheduled for November, President Joe Biden is trailing behind his main opponent Donald Trump in six of the seven battleground states, according to a latest opinion poll. Voters are broadly dissatisfied with the national economy and there are deep doubts about Biden's capabilities and job performance, the survey conducted by the Wall Street Journal revealed.

Trump leads between two and eight percentage points in six battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and North Carolina. However, Biden is leading Trump by three points in Wisconsin.

In every state in the survey, negative views of the president's job performance outweigh positive views by 16 percentage points or more, with the gap topping 20 points in four states. By contrast, Trump earns an unfavourable job review for his time in

the White House in only a single state — Arizona — where negative marks outweigh positive ones by 1 percentage point, The Wall Street Journal reported.

According to Real Clear Politics, which keeps tracks of all the major national polls, Trump and Biden are in a neck-to-neck fight this fall. An average of major national polls shows that Trump is leading Biden by 0.8 percentage points.

"Biden and Trump both easily became their party's presumptive nominees last month, but each candidate will face a long and difficult campaign in a rematch of the 2020 contest. In a race expected to be razor-tight, a handful of battleground states will likely determine the winner."

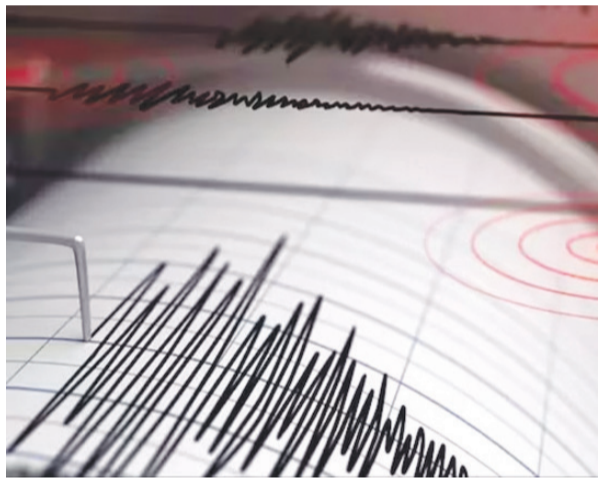
Earthquake of magnitude 5.5 hits China's Qinghai

QINGHAI, Apr 4 (Agencies): An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale hit China's Qinghai on Thursday.

"A 5.5-magnitude earthquake hit Mangya city in northwest China's Qinghai Province on Thursday, with a depth of 10 km, according to the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC), state-run media reported.

No casualties were reported till the time of filing this report.

The jolt came only a day after an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale struck



Taiwan on Wednesday, also triggering a tsunami in Japan's Yonaguni Island. At least nine people were killed, and more than 1000 others were injured.

This was the stron-

gest earthquake to hit Taiwan in 25 years since a 7.2-magnitude temblor struck the country's Nantou county in 1999, killing more than 2,500 people and injuring over 1,300 others.

NASA selects 3 firms to develop vehicle to explore Moon's surface

SAN FRANCISCO, Apr 4 (Agencies): The US space agency NASA has selected four companies — Intuitive Machines, Lunar Outpost, and Venturi Astro-lab — to develop a lunar terrain vehicle (LTV) that Artemis astronauts will use to travel around the Moon's surface.

The vehicle will help conduct scientific research during the agency's Artemis campaign at the Moon and preparing for human missions to Mars, NASA said in a statement.

"We look forward to the development of the Artemis generation lunar exploration vehicle to



help us advance what we learn at the Moon," said Vanessa Wyche, director of NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

"This vehicle will greatly increase our astronauts' ability to explore and conduct science on

the lunar surface while also serving as a science platform between crewed missions," Wyche added.

NASA intends to begin using the LTV for crewed operations during Artemis V.

The contract with "firm-

fixed-price task orders" has a combined maximum potential value of \$4.6 billion for all awards.

Each provider will begin with a feasibility task order, which will be a year-long special study to develop a system that meets NASA's requirements through the preliminary design maturity project phase.

Between Artemis missions, when crews are not on the Moon, the LTV will operate remotely to support NASA's scientific objectives as needed.

Outside those times, the provider will have the ability to use their

LTV for commercial lunar surface activities unrelated to NASA missions, said the space agency.

"We will use the LTV to travel to locations we might not otherwise be able to reach on foot, increasing our ability to explore and make new scientific discoveries," said Jacob Bleacher, chief exploration scientist at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

Through Artemis, NASA will send astronauts — including the first woman, first person of colour, and its first international partner astronaut — to explore the Moon.

Five Iran security personnel dead in Jihadist-claimed attacks: TV

The attacks occurred in Sistan-Baluchistan province which has for years faced unrest involving drug-smuggling gangs, rebels from the Baluchi minority, and Sunni Muslim extremists.

TEHRAN, Apr 4 (Agencies): At least five Iranian security personnel have been killed in two attacks claimed by a jihadist group in the country's southeast near Pakistan, state media reported on Thursday.

The attacks occurred in Sistan-Baluchistan province which has for years faced unrest involving drug-smuggling gangs, rebels from the Baluchi minority, and Sunni Muslim extremists.

"Five member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the police died as martyrs

during two night-time terrorist attacks against a Guards base in Rask and a police post in Chabahar, "Majid Mirahmadi, vice-minister of the interior, told state TV.

General Mohammad Pakpour, who heads the Guards' land forces, said on television that 15 attackers were killed during clashes with security forces.

Mirahmadi said more than 10 security force members were hurt during the clashes that began Wednesday evening.

The Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice, in Arabic),



claimed the attacks on its Telegram channel. Based in Pakistan, the Sunni Muslim rebel organisation, formed in 2012, is listed as a "terrorist" group by Iran and also by the United States.

Jaish al-Adl claimed an attack in December that

killed 11 officers, one of the deadliest attacks in years, at a police station in Sistan-Baluchistan's city of Rask.

The group claimed another police station attack in Rask that killed one officer on January 10. A week later, Iran

said it retaliated with missiles and drones against Jaish al-Adl over the border in Pakistan. Pakistan then said it carried out air strikes against ethnic separatists inside Iran.

The rare cross-border fire added to regional tensions during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, but by late January the two countries sought to ease tensions.

Impoverished Sistan-Baluchistan province, which also borders Afghanistan, is one of the few mainly Sunni provinces in Shiite-dominated Iran.

Earthquake of magnitude 6 strikes Japan day after Taiwan disaster

HONSHU, Apr 4 (Agencies): An earthquake of magnitude 6 struck off the east coast of Japan's Honshu in the Fukushima region on Thursday, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC) said. This came a day after a strong earthquake of 7.4 magnitude hit Japan's neighbouring country, Taiwan, killing nine people and injuring more than 1,000 others.

The EMSC said the earthquake was at a depth of 32 kilometres (19.88 miles).

The earthquake in Taiwan, which was the strongest in the island nation in 25 years, triggered a tsunami on Japan's Yonaguni Island - lying on the east coast of Taiwan. However, no fresh tsunami warning has been sounded after Thursday's earthquake in Japan, agency reported, citing the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA).

A video footage that has been shared widely on social media captured the earthquake striking Japan.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries after the earthquake, tremors of which were also felt in the

capital Tokyo.

Tepeco, the operator of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, said "no abnormalities" were detected at the venue or other places in the region, agency reported.

After the Taiwan earthquake on Wednesday, authorities in Japan said a tsunami wave measuring about 1 foot was detected on Yonaguni Island about 15 minutes after the jolts. The JMA had warned that tsunami waves of up to 3 metres were expected to reach the country's southwestern coast.

According to the JMA, this was the first tsunami warning in Okinawa in 26 years, with the last one issued in 1998 after a 7.7 earthquake struck south of Ishigaki Island.

The earthquake in Taiwan on Wednesday centered off the rural and mountainous Hualien County just before 8 am (local time). Buildings shook violently in the capital Taipei, whereas in Hualien, they were inclined at severe angles and ground floors crushed. Nearly a dozen hotel workers have been located, while as many as 38 remain missing.

Families shelter in tents as rescuers seek people cut off by Taiwan quake

HUALIEN, Apr 4 (Agencies): Relief workers set aside stuffed toys, blankets and baby formula for families sheltering Thursday in an elementary school in Hualien, the epicentre of Taiwan's biggest earthquake in a quarter of a century.

"We have all the necessary stuff -- blankets, toilet and a place to rest," said Indonesian Hendri Sutrisno, who occupied a tent with his wife and two-month-old baby.



The 30-year-old professor at Hualien's Dong Hwa University and his family were among more than 100 people who chose to stay in tents set up at an elementary school after a 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Taiwan

on Wednesday. The aftershocks of the quake -- the biggest since a 7.6 magnitude disaster in 1999 killed 2,400 people -- came thick and fast, and by Thursday morning Hualien had experienced more than 300 rolling

tremors.

Hendri said he and his wife hid under a table with their baby when the first quake hit, before grabbing their things and fleeing the building.

"Our worry is when the big aftershocks happen it might be really hard for us to evacuate one more time -- especially with the baby," he told agency.

"So it will be better, wiser for us to stay here," he said as the infant slept in a stroller.

Russian strikes kill four in Ukraine's second city Kharkiv

KYIV, Apr 4 (Agencies): Russian air strikes overnight in Ukraine's second largest city Kharkiv killed four people and injured 11, officials said Thursday.

Three rescue workers died during a second strike on a residential building in a "densely populated district of Kharkiv", Igor Terekhov, the mayor of the eastern city, wrote on Telegram.

Another person died in a drone attack on another building, he said. Police described



the fourth victim as a 68-year-old woman and said 11 people had been injured in the night attacks.

Kharkiv governor

Oleg Syneubov said Russian forces had launched "at least 15 drones", some of which had been downed.

Ukraine's cities are the

target of Russian strikes almost every night, with Kharkiv, near the north-eastern border, among those most regularly attacked.

Ukrainian officials have urged the country's allies to supply more anti-aircraft defence systems, in particular modern US-made Patriot systems.

US military aid to Ukraine has been drying up, with a \$60-billion funding package currently stalled in Congress.

Home sales across top 8 cities rise 9% in January-March

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): The residential real estate market in India saw strong momentum, sales hitting a decadal high in 2023 and data indicates that sales in major markets like Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad have continued to remain strong this year, in part aided by strong demand for homes priced upwards of Rs 1 crore in cities like Mumbai. The sales uptick in these markets comes even as prices have also continued to go up.

According to consultants Knight Frank, home sales rose 9 per cent year-on-year to 86,345 units in the January-March quarter, which was the second highest number in the past six years.

The sales growth was led by Mumbai, which saw sales surge 17 per cent to 23,743 units in the first quarter of the year, compared with 20,300 units sold in the same period a year ago. Another market that saw strong sales uptick was Hyderabad, where 9,550 homes were sold in January-March, up 15 per cent from 8,300 units that were sold in the year ago quarter.



Housing demand also remained strong in Pune, Kolkata and Ahmedabad, where sales rose 14 per cent, 12 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

However, sales in the National Capital Region saw only a 1 per cent uptick. In January-March, 15,527 homes were sold in the NCR, only slightly higher than the 15,392 homes that were sold a year ago. IT capital Bengaluru, meanwhile, saw sales dip 2 per cent to 13,133 units from 13,390 units in the quarter.

As the demand has been strong, residential real estate prices have continued to go up

in these cities. Hyderabad saw prices go up as much as 13 per cent year-on-year. That was followed by a 9 per cent YoY uptick in Bengaluru, 7 per cent in Kolkata, 6 per cent in Mumbai and 5 per cent in NCR and Chennai. Pune and Ahmedabad saw home prices go up 4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.

"The consistent increase in demand has spurred a rapid pace of residential development, resulting in the number of units launched surpassing sales figures for the last six quarters. A total of 93,254 new residential units were launched

in Q1 2024 registering a growth of 7 per cent YoY," said Knight Frank. Notably, the consulting firm pointed that the fundamental structure of the market has undergone significant changes, with the higher ticket sizes accounting for the majority of sales.

"The residential segment witnessed a significant surge, propelled by continued growth in sales in the higher price category of Rs 1 crore and above. This not only demonstrates a strong demand trajectory but also reflects buyers' confidence in making long-term commitments," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and MD

of Knight Frank India.

Homes priced above Rs 1 crore now account for 40 per cent of the total sales, compared with 29 per cent in the year ago quarter.

"The need for larger living spaces and an upgraded lifestyle was sparked during the pandemic continues to fuel demand in this segment. Sales in this segment have grown by 51 per cent YoY and it has been the primary driver for overall sales growth during the quarter," according to Knight Frank.

In contrast, homes priced in the Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1 crore bracket have seen their share in total sales decline to 33 per cent from 38 per cent.

Similarly, share of homes priced below Rs 50 lakh has declined to 27 per cent from 32 per cent. In January-March 2022, this segment had accounted for as much as 41 per cent of the market.

"The combined impact of rising prices, higher home loan rates, and the relatively adverse effects of the pandemic in this sector persisted, suppressing demand," said Knight Frank.

Vistara crisis: CEO promises roster revision as pilots are 'tired of flying'



NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Vistara pilots have pointed out that they are "flying at the edge of their maximum flight duty limitations" amid the ongoing crisis faced by the airlines.

"Pilots are flying at the edge of their maximum flight duty limitations. This is causing major health issues and everyone is falling sick frequently," NDTV quoted sources as saying.

Since Monday, several Vistara flights have either been delayed or cancelled due to shortage of pilots after many of them called in sick in protest of a revised remuneration. At least 125 flight services have been cancelled since the beginning of this month.

"Everyone is just tired from flying. The new FDTL (Flight Duty Time Limitations) rules should have given us some relief

but as expected that is also not happening," the sources said.

"Everyone is falling sick frequently. Pilots are already exceeding their max sick leaves in a year and ending up in leave without pay," they added.

The Vistara CEO Vinod Kannan told employees on Wednesday that the airlines will revise crew rosters and cut flights from May to address the pilots' concerns.

Sensex, Nifty hit fresh peaks as markets rebound in early trade

MUMBAI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Benchmark equity indices rebounded after two consecutive days of fall on Thursday with Sensex and Nifty touching their all-time high levels as investors rushed to value-buying in bellwether stocks ahead of quarterly result announcements amid mixed global trends.

The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 497.06 points or 0.67 per cent to hit all-time high of 74,373.88. The NSE Nifty climbed 144.70 points or 0.64 per cent to hit its fresh peak of 22,579.35.

Both the indices had ended lower in the previous two sessions.

Sensex recorded its previous peak on April 1 when it touched the intra-day high of 74,254.62. It had closed the session at 74,014. On the same day, Nifty also hit its peak closing level of 22,462. The 50-share benchmark had touched the intra-day high of 22,529.95.

Among the Sensex constituents, 28 stocks were trading in green with HDFC Bank, NTPC, PowerGrid, Tata Steel, and Axis Bank being the major gainers.

IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the only two deflators.

On the 50-share barometer NSE Nifty, as many as 46 shares were in the positive zone.

According to V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, global and domestic cues indicate that the market is likely to consolidate in the coming days and start responding to Q4 results as they start coming. So, Q4 results will be the next major trigger for the market from a sectoral and stock-specific perspective.

"Market expects good results from autos, capital goods, telecom and select pharmaceuticals. Financials, too, will report good results despite some NIM compression and, therefore, are likely to be favoured by investors," he said.

Asian markets were not trading. European markets ended Wednesday's session in green. The US markets closed with mixed note. S&P 500 and Nasdaq gained while Dow closed with a marginal loss.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,213.56 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.37 per cent to USD 88.68 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the BSE benchmark Sensex declined by 27.09 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 73,876.82. The NSE Nifty declined 18.65 points or 0.08 per cent to 22,434.65.

Army organises "RozGar Mela" at Rakh Muthi Military Garrison

Top News Report

AKHNOOR, Apr 4: In a bid to address the pressing issues of unemployment and foster inclusive growth, Indian Army organised a transformative "RozGar Mela" at Rakhmuthi Military Garrison, Akhnoor. Led by GOC Crossed swords division event, organised at Rakhmuthi, Akhnoor witnessed a massive turnout of job seekers and featured numerous employment opportunities offered by renowned companies.

Major General Sameer Srivastava, VSM, emphasised the significance of the initiative stating beyond employment reduction RozGar Mela is an initiative to open up new opportunities that are beyond, the reach of common citizens. The event served a platform



for job seekers to interact with potential employers, apply for positions and participate in the walk-in interviews with more than 3000 vacancies spending in sectors such as healthcare, education, engineering, healthcare, hospitality, and finance.

Participating companies like SBI, ICICI Bank, J&K Bank, Prahar Insurance, Bajaj Allianz, ZSB, Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries & Animal Husbandry conducted, walk-in interviews and

extended mediate job offers to eligible candidates. The fair also provided supplementary services such as resume, assistance and career guidance to aid job seekers in their quest. The success of this RozGar Mela underscores Indian Army's commitment to provide fair and dignified job opportunities to the individuals of border area villages of Akhnoor. Such initiatives will herald a new era of social economic growth.

Lecture on Patriotism held at Dharamkot

Top News Report

DHARAMKOT, Apr 4: 'Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion and attachment to one's country. This attachment can be a combination of different feelings such as ethnic, cultural, political or historical aspects and even language relating to one; own homeland.

Towards this end a lecture on 'Patriotism for the youth and residents was conducted at Dharamkot on 03 Apr 2024.

A total of 45 youth and residents attended the lecture. Mr Mohd Asuman, Teacher Government High School, Sartingal appreciated the measures during the event to keep the youth on main stream and to choose a healthy and progressive life.

He even conveyed that, these kind of initiatives by the Indian Army will help to mould the younger generation to make their choice in future as a progressive law abiding citizen.

Ganesh Chaudhary files nomination papers for Jammu Parliamentary seat

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 4: Shiv Sena Hindustan Party and Hindustan Shakti Sena Party candidate Ganesh Chaudhary filed nomination papers on Thursday. Yesterday also Ganesh Chaudhary had filled the nomination paper, but due to lack of some documents, he had to file the nomination form again on Thursday and after completing the documents, Ganesh Chaudhary filed the nomination paper for Jammu Parliamentary seat. A large number of his supporters were present with him on this occasion. Prominent among those present on



the occasion include District President Jammu Raj Kumar Gupta, Bari Brahmana President Sanjeev Kumar, Samba District President Nek Ram, Bishnah Block President Shankar Singh, Bishnah Block Vice President Mohanlal, Arnia Block Secretary Kamal Kumar, Yashpal, Rakesh Kumar, Ajay Kumar, Vikas Kumar, Surinder Chaud-

hary, Kamal Kumar, Madhu Bala, Madhu Devi, Suman Devi, Tripta Devi, Sonia Chaudhary, Geeta Devi, Pooja Devi, Asha Devi, Renu Devi, Shila Devi, Reena Devi, Asha Devi, Diya Birthi, Ripi Devi, Sunita Devi and others.

After filing nomination papers, Ganesh Chaudhary claimed his victory and appealed to all

the people to make the candidates of Shiv Sena Hindustan victorious. On this occasion, he also informed everyone about the public interest policies of Shiv Sena Hindustan Party and Hindustan Shakti Sena will be implemented in letter and spirit after victory. He said that SSH will make every possible effort to solve the problems of common man who are under huge economic distress and facing a lot of hardships due to tax terrorism and price rise, record unemployment and lopsided development" he said.

Following delimitation, Jammu parliamentary constituency comprises

18 assembly constituencies which include 11 from Jammu; three from Samba and Reasi district each and one Rajouri's Kalakote assembly constituency. Total electors are 17.66 lakh. As per the notification, nomination papers can be filed by candidates or their proposers not later than April 4, 2024. Scrutiny of the nomination papers will take place on April 6, 2024 at 11 am at Deputy Commissioner's Office Jammu. The candidates have the option to withdraw their candidature on April 8, 2024 until 3 pm. The polling on April 26 will be conducted from 7 am to 6 pm.

HDFC Bank shares climb 3% as March quarter deposits sequentially surge 7.5%, loans rise 1.6%

MUMBAI, Apr 4 (Agencies): Shares of HDFC Bank surged more than 3 per cent on Thursday morning. The stock reached an intraday high of Rs 1526.35 per share at 9.25 am.

This comes after the country's largest private lender said its gross advances at the end of the March quarter climbed 1.6 per cent to Rs 25.08 lakh crore from the December quarter.

The deposits of HDFC Bank in the March quarter jumped 7.5 per cent to Rs 23.8 lakh crore from the

December quarter.

The Mumbai-based bank's aggregate low-cost Current Account Savings Account (CASA) deposits climbed 8.8 per cent sequentially to around Rs 9.09 lakh crore.

The heavy weightage financial stock pushed the markets high during the early trade, helping the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty 50 reach record highs. Sensex leaped 0.73 per cent to 74,413.82 while Nifty 50 touched 22,592.10 as it surged 0.70 per cent.

HDFC Bank merged with its parent company HDFC Ltd on July 1. However, since the latter was a housing finance company, it did not have large customer deposits, thereby increasing the loan-to-deposit ratio in the merged entity.

Following this, HDFC Bank's gross loans grew 4.9 per cent while deposits increased by 1.9 per cent in the December quarter. The third quarter earning report in January resulted in HDFC Bank shares plummeting 10 per cent.

