

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, MONDAY, APRIL 08, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



ENTERTAINMENT | 6

Drew Barrymore says Happy Gilmore sequel is in process



NATIONAL | 7

Nobody Will Lose Citizenship, Says Rajnath Singh On CAA Law

INTERNATIONAL | 8

Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visits Beijing to emphasize ties with strongest political ally



e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-15 Issue-96 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

Traffic restored on Jammu-Srinagar national highway

JAMMU, Apr 8: Authorities on Monday restored movement of vehicles on Jammu-Srinagar national highway. Officials said that the traffic was allowed ahead after landslide was cleared near Khooni Nallah.

Earlier both sides of traffic movement were stopped on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway after landslide hit near Khooni Nallah in Ramban district. The officials advised motorists to adhere to the advisories issued by Traffic Department and commute lane wise to avoid congestion on the highway.

DSEK orders change in School timings in Kashmir from April 12

SRINAGAR, Apr 8: Director School Education Kashmir on Monday ordered change in school timings in the Valley from April 12.

The changes will be effective for recognised government and private educational institutions.

While the schools within Srinagar Municipal Limits will work from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, those falling outside it and other areas (districts) of Kashmir division will work from 10:00 am upto 4:00 pm, as per the order by DSEK.

"All the concerned institutions must strictly adhere to the given order/instructions and any deviation in this regard will be viewed seriously," the order added.

Police in North Kashmir book three under PSA

SRINAGAR, Apr 8 (Agencies): Police on Monday said that three anti-national elements were booked under Public Safety Act in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Police spokesperson in a statement said, "Acting tough against ANEs Baramulla Police booked three persons namely Mysir Majeed Malik son of Abdul Majeed resident of

PM Modi's degree: No relief for AAP's Sanjay Singh in SC on plea against summons

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay the defamation summons issued against AAP MP Sanjay Singh for questioning the degree of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sanjay Singh had challenged the summons issued by a Gujarat court in the defamation case filed by

Gujarat University. Gujarat University registrar Piyush Patel had filed the defamation case against Delhi chief minister Kejriwal and Sanjay Singh over their alleged comments after the Gujarat high court set aside an order of the chief information commissioner for providing information about Modi's educational

degrees to them under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

In January, the Supreme Court stayed the proceedings before a trial court on the defamation complaint filed by the Gujarat University against Arvind Kejriwal and Sanjay Singh, news agency.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep

Mehta had passed the order while hearing Sanjay Singh's plea seeking a transfer of the case pending before a trial court in Gujarat outside the state, preferably in Kolkata.

The apex court had asked the Gujarat high court to take a decision within four weeks on a plea filed by the Aam

■ Turn to page 9

Over 2 lakh Tulips wow Sanasar Garden visitors

JAMMU, Apr 8 (Agencies): Around 2.5 lakh blooming tulips are oohing tourists at the picturesque Sanasar garden nestled amid the lush green meadows of Ramban district in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tulip garden at Sanasar has been thrown open for the public marking the beginning of new tourist



season. "Around 2.5 lakh tulip flowers are bloom-

ing on 40 kanals of land. ■ Turn to page 9

JK Police Identify over 100 active gangsters post Kathua shootout

JAMMU, Apr 8 (Agencies): Following the Kathua shootout, wherein a Sub-Inspector and a gangster were killed, Jammu and Kashmir Police have compiled a roster of over 100 active gangsters and notorious individuals who have been involved in criminal activities over the past 15 years across various districts.

The recent Kathua incident has prompted heightened vigilance among law enforcement, particularly against hardened

criminals. In Jammu district, 48 active history-sheeters have been identified, with 38 in Kathua and 30 in Samba districts.

A comprehensive 17-point strategy is underway to take action against these identified criminals, with some already apprehended. Their associates are also under surveillance.

It has been disclosed that these gangsters receive weapons from neighbouring Punjab, with illegal arms smuggled through drones from Pakistan. Notably,

the pistol used in the Kathua shootout was traced back to China and was smuggled from Punjab by the perpetrators.

There has been a reported increase in gang-related conflicts in Jammu in recent years, with incarcerated gang members allegedly orchestrating crimes from within jails with the aid of their associates.

While gang wars were prevalent two decades ago, sustained police operations and arrests have quelled the trend in Jammu.

Two held for 'Nuclear Bomb' threat at Delhi Airport

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (agencies): Two passengers were arrested by police for giving threat of a 'nuclear bomb' to security staff during frisking at Delhi's IGI airport, an official said on Monday.

The official said that the incident occurred on April 5.

This is a modal window. The media could not be loaded, either because the server or network failed or because the

■ Turn to page 9

J&K | Election Commission posts video of sweep program held at Gulmarg



SRINAGAR, Apr 8 (Agencies): The Election Commission of India (ECI) posted a video of a mega voter awareness programme under the systematic voters' education and electoral

participation (SVEEP) initiative in Jammu and Kashmir's Gulmarg.

ECI posted on the official account of X, the sweep program held at Gulmarg organized by

■ Turn to page 9

Police arrest man for Mosque Donation Box theft

SRINAGAR, Apr 8 (Agencies): A man has been arrested for stealing a donation box from a mosque in Jammu Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said on Monday.

A police station in Pattan received a complaint on April 4, from president of Masjid Baitul Huda Pattan regarding the theft. Next day a mobile tab was also stolen from State Bank of India from Pattan market.

Police probe revealed that the perpetrator was same for both cases. The Baramulla Police identified Nasir Ahmad Najar a Najar Mohalla Pattan resident who appeared to be involved in the two cases.

The culprit was traced to Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) Srinagar and was arrested, the police said.

"During interrogation, the alleged accused confessed to the crime and led to the place where he had concealed the stolen property, leading to the recovery of stolen property," it said.

Further investigation was underway.

MeT forecasts light rain after April 10 evening in J&K

SRINAGAR, Apr 8 (Agencies): Weatherman here on Monday forecast mainly dry weather in Jammu and Kashmir in next 24 hours and possibility of light rain and snow at many places towards evening of April 10.

A meteorological department official here told on till April 9, weather is expected to be generally dry.

"On 10th April, weather is likely to be partly to generally cloudy with light rain/snow (higher reaches) at many places towards evening," he

■ Turn to page 9

Eight absconders declared proclaimed offenders in Baramulla: Police

SRINAGAR, Apr 8 (Agencies): Police on Monday said that eight absconders have been declared proclaimed offenders in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

In a handout, the police said that On 01/04/2024, Court of Additional Sessions Judge Baramulla declared follow-

ing individuals namely Hilal Ahmad Ganie son of Assadullah, Mudasir Shafi Geelani son of Mohd Shafi, Mohd Maqbool Pandith son of Mohd Ramzan all residents of Khore Sherabad Pattan, Habibullah Sheikh son of Ab Aziz resident of Goom Ahmadpora Pattan, Shabir Ahmad Najar son of

Late Habibullah resident of Par Mohalla Pattan, Mohd Ashraf Dar son of Ab Khalid resident of Watwan Pattan Gh Nabi Najar son of Late Gh Rasool resident of Najar Mohalla Pattan & Fayaz Ahmad Mir son of Late Habibullah resident of Main Mohalla Pattan as Proclaimed Offenders in

case FIR No. 03/2008 under sections 2/3 EIMCO Act, 121 RPC, 19 UA(P) Act of Police Station Pattan on the application moved by Baramulla Police.

The police spokesman further stated that sometime before search warrant u/s 25 Police Act was obtained

from the court for arrest of the accused persons who could not be traced/ arrested as all are presently at PoJK/ Pakistan. Proclamation orders u/s 87 CrPC have been obtained from Court of Sub Judge Pattan against these eight individuals which have been pasted at

■ 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

Randhawa campaigns for contesting candidate Jugal Kishore

Says BJP workers, people to turn 400 plus LS seats slogan into reality

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Former Legislator and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Vikram Randhawa has appealed to the voters to make sure that they vote as early as possible on the election date at their respective voting centres and also make efforts for maximum voting by convincing the people that it is their right and duty to cast the vote.

Randhawa made these remarks during election campaign in favour of BJP contesting candidate and Member of Parliament Lok Sabha Jammu Reasi Parliamentary constituency Jugal Kishore Sharma in Narwal Panchayat of Bahu Assembly Segment.

While speaking further, Randhawa said

that today's campaign is aimed to create awareness among the voters about the policies of the Modi Government.

"We are aiming to increase 370 votes on every booth. The people are enthusiastic to vote for the BJP and we will reach out to every voter", he stated.

During the campaign, Former Legislator Vikram Randhawa was joined by Rashpal Verma Ex MoS, Rajiv Charak, Sunil Prajapati, Raj Kumar Ex Councillor, Neeraj Puri Mandal President, Amit Gupta, Noor Alam Ex Sarpanch, Mohd Sadiq Panch, Rafiq, Liaqat, Yakoub, Girdhari Lal and others.

Expressing their trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and to strengthen

his hands to win 400 plus seats in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, many prominent personalities of Narwal Panchayat and its adjoining areas joined the BJP.

The new entrants were heartily welcomed into the party fold by Former Legislator Vikram Randhawa and other BJP leaders present on the occasion.

He reiterated BJP's popularity, predicting a comfortable victory with over 400 seats in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Randhawa emphasized that "Abki Baar 400 Paar (This time, 400-plus seats)" is not merely a slogan but a resolve that will be scripted into reality with the help of dedicated BJP workers and the support of the people.

He praised the Modi

government's initiatives, including women empowerment (33 per cent reservation for women in state assemblies and Parliament), opportunities for youth through programs like Skill India and Startup India, and the bold decision to revoke Article 370, which he believes has paved the way for Jammu and Kashmir's development.

Randhawa stressed that the Modi government prioritizes the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir's people, citing significant progress since 2014, especially after the historic abrogation of Article 370.

He highlighted advancements in grassroots democracy, socio-political rights for tribal communities, opportunities for youth, opening

up of national institutions such as IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, IIMC. Moreover, he credited the Modi government with ushering in a new era of peace and development, liberating the UT from terrorism, militancy, underdevelopment, and dynastic politics.

Speaking on the occasion, Rashpal Verma Ex MoS and other BJP leaders also underscored various achievements of the Modi government and expressed optimism for the party's future endeavors.

They maintained that BJP is committed to the nation's prosperity, their visionary leadership embodies the values of integrity, innovation, and service, resonating with citizens across the country.

J&K people will overwhelmingly vote in favour of BJP: Khatana

'BJP brought an era of change in administration'

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament (RS), Gulam Ali Khatana has said that people of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory should overwhelmingly vote in favour of BJP candidates in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections starting from April 19, 2024 as the party in the last 10 years has accomplished historic developments in the UT under the leadership of PM Modi.

Addressing a large number of public gatherings during his visit to different areas of Basohli, Bani, Billawar, Rajbagh, Hiranagar etc in Kathua district Khatana said that BJP has brought a change in administration in the country by adopting the principles of honesty and hard work.

"We have to vote for BJP as it has stopped corruption and now works are done without

any considerations for something in return," he said adding that over 300 houses have been constructed in Kathua alone in an honest manner and nothing was demanded from anyone in return and this type of culture was nowhere seen in the country earlier.

The firebrand BJP leader said that middle man culture for getting works done in government office as also ended now and there is no discrimination under the leadership of PM Modi for any particular religion, region, sub-region, colour or creed as developments are taking place equally in every nook and corner of the country.

"The loyal public of J&K and also that of the country has welcomed such progress, developments and honest work culture and wants the same to continue further for which the public will surely vote overwhelmingly in favour

of BJP candidates to give the party over 400 LS seats in upcoming general elections which will also include the five seats from J&K and one from Ladakh Union Territory and the big victory for BJP in turn will usher the way for third term for PM Modi to helm the affairs of world's largest democracy," MP Khatana maintained.

He also said that such developments never took place under the rule of Congress which was busy in scams and scandals.

"Congress is responsible for killing masses in J&K in collaboration with NC and PDP by pushing the state into terrorism so that Abdullahs, Muftis and Gandhis may continue in power," Khatana maintained adding: "Congress, NC and PDP candidates visited public only for votes and after winning they never showed their face."

Jodhamal student Hargun creates another record

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Hargun Kour, a 5-year-old student of Jodhamal Public School Jammu has created a record of performing 200 hula-hoops in one minute for the International Book of Records breaking the previous one of 180.

Hargun, as her name suggests, is a young prodigy who is very active and agile. She is fond of physical activities and performs challenging tasks which are beyond her age.

For her stupendous achievement, Hargun was awarded with the International Book of Records Certificate and a Trophy, in a glittering Award Ceremony organized at Guru Nanak Bhawan Auditorium, Amritsar.

The legendary actress

of yore, Ms Padmini Kolhapure and Mr Pankaj Vij, Director, CEO and Founder of International Book of Records felicitated the winners.

This little wonder who is the daughter of Mr Gagandeep Singh and Mrs Gagandeep Kour also participated in India's Talent War Season 3 and was selected in the Top 15 all over India for her achievement in hula-hoops.

Jodhamal School is proud of her rare accomplishment and wishes this young talented girl best wishes for her future endeavors.

Nandan Kuthiala, Trustee, Arati Kuthiala, Director, Mr. Girish Kumar, Principal, Mrs. Shefali Sanwal, Vice Principal complimented Hargun for this remarkable feat.

Poster Making Competition on "World Health Day" held at GDC Boys Kathua

Top News Report

KATHUA, Apr 8: Department of Chemistry, Govt. Degree College for Boys, Kathua organized a Poster making competition on the theme "My Health, My Right" on Monday under the ablest guidance of Principal, Prof. Seema Mir.

She addressed the Students by putting stress on health, being a prime factor it influences everyone's life in one or another way and needs to be monitored on regular basis.

Human body is itself a machinery and for its proper functioning every organ should work in a proper way, so it is mandatory for all to have regular medical check-ups in order to remain aware with the fact what is actually happening in our body.

Active participation was shown by large number of students of different streams/semesters and they displayed their views regarding said topic on a poster.

On this occasion Prof. Jagdish Kumar, Head of Department of Chemistry, encouraged students to adopt healthy lifestyle by avoiding Junk food and bad eating habits, incorporating exercise

and yoga in their life on regular basis. He said besides physical health, mental health is equally important for the general well-being of a person, so meditation should also be a part of our life for boosting mental health.

The whole event was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Shrdha Anand, Prof. Arun Kumar, Prof. Raj Kumari, Dr. Neha Sharma and Dr. Shivangi Sharma. The event was judged by Dr. Sanjay Karlipia (HoD Geology) and Prof. Ravinder Kour (Department of Physics). On the basis of their evaluation three best posters were selected in which Sania Billowria of Sem -2nd secured 1st Position, Tania Rajput of Sem 2nd

stood 2nd and Sohani Rajput of Sem 4th gained 3rd positions respectively.

All the Winners/Participants were given Certificate of Participation by the worthy Principal.

The whole event was concluded with formal vote of thanks by Prof. Shrdha Anand. Among other Faculty Members Prof. Shivani Kotwal (HoD English) and Prof. Pawan Kumar (Department of Geography) also graced the occasion.

Congress should clear its stand on Art 370: Dr Jitendra

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Apr 8: Making a scathing attack on Congress Party Union Minister and BJP Candidate for Udhampur, Kathua, Doda Lok Sabha constituency Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that Congress Party should clear its stand on Article 370.

Addressing a series of public meetings during his election campaign in Udhampur suburbs including Panchayat areas like Kambal Danga, Jib, Chk Shtambli, Garhi Rambel etc. Dr Jitendra Singh challenged Congress Candidate and its leaders to say that they will restore Article 370 if at all brought back to power.

He said, the Congress Party leaders during their campaign are beating about the bush and avoiding to take issues that they are answerable for.

Taking a serious view, Dr Jitendra Singh said, we will not allow the Congress Party to run with hare and hunt with hounds. He said, on the one hand, the Congress Party is avoiding to mention what is their stand on Article 370 and whether they are for the abrogation of Article 370 or for restoration of it, on the other hand, they are

fighting the election with the support of PDP and National Conference, which have publicly declared that are strongly opposed to abrogation of Article 370 and if given a chance they would seek to restore it.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who undid the acts of omission and commission committed over the years by successive Congress governments beginning from the first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and even though the then Congress leadership had agreed to include the Article 370 in the Constitution as a temporary provision, over a period of time, they could not muster courage to fulfil their own commitment and it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had the courage of conviction to correct the fallacies and lapses committed by the Congress Party.

Dr Jitendra said, the Congress Candidate and its leaders should also make their stand clear whether they are in favour of the citizenship rights to West Pakistan refugees, which have been restored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi or if they come to power they will snatch away their rights. Similarly, he said, the Congress Party should also make

it clear whether they are opposed to giving citizenship rights to Valmiki and as has been done by Prime Minister Modi or they would again revert back to the earlier position and take away the rights of the Valmiki and leave their children in the lurch to continue serving in menial jobs regardless of however high their qualifications they may achieve.

Dr Singh said, the Congress leaders are fooling the innocent masses by performing theatrics and mocking the BJP Karyakartas by making personalised remarks because they have no ideological stand.

Dr Jitendra also alleged that in the vast constituency of Udhampur-Kathua-Doda, the Congress Party is trying to divide the society on communal lines by taking one stand on this side of River Chenab and taking exactly opposite stand on the other side of River Chenab. He said, we will go to each and every household and expose the doublespeak policy of the Congress Party.

Accompanying Dr Jitendra Singh during the day-long tour were former Minister and MLA Pawan Gupta, local PRIs, Panches, Sarpanches and prominent BJP leaders.

World Health Day: 'My Health My Right' in Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi



Top News Report

RAJOURI/REASI Apr 8: World Health Day 'is a call primarily to encourage individuals to participate actively in enhancing own health and the communities. The theme of the 'World Health Day' for the year is 'My Health, My Right'. Indian Army organized lectures at Poonch, Rajouri and

Reasi Districts to spread awareness and encouragement to awam on the eve of 'World Health Day'. The lectures covered topics on Personal Hygiene, Cleanliness of surroundings, Disposal of Garbage with emphasis on 'Swatch Bharat Abhiyan'. Yoga sessions were also conducted to provide opportunity to the students to focus on physical and mental well-being.

Reasi Districts to spread awareness and encouragement to awam on the eve of 'World Health Day'. The lectures covered topics on Personal Hygiene, Cleanliness of surroundings, Disposal of Garbage with emphasis on 'Swatch Bharat Abhiyan'. Yoga sessions were also conducted to provide opportunity to the students to focus on physical and mental well-being.

Kazmi, Anu unveil 'Meri Bawe Aali Maa' Bhent



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: In a momentous event the Bhajan launch of "Meri Bawe Aali Maa Bhent" by the talented artist Deepak Kumar resonated with the spirit of cultural unity and heritage.

The unveiling ceremony, graced by prominent figures such as Sohail Kazmi, Anu Gupta, and attended by artists Darbari Lal and Surinder Rangeela, symbolized a poignant blend of art and camaraderie.

During the event, Sohail Kazmi, in a heartening declaration, emphasized the significance of the bhent as a representation of Jammu and Kashmir's rich tapestry of diversity. He lauded the act of a

Muslim artist presenting a Hindu devotional song, highlighting the ethos of coexistence and unity. As the auspicious occasion of Ramadan coincides with the upcoming Navratri, Kazmi expressed optimism about witnessing more such soulful renditions that bridge communities together.

Anu Gupta, Senior BJP leader, echoed a similar sentiment, underscoring the importance of nurturing and promoting the sanctity of Sanatan Dharma. Embracing the bhent as a cultural treasure, Gupta underscored the duty of all to cherish and propagate the essence of this timeless heritage.

Deepak Kumar, the soulful voice behind

"Meri Bawe Aali Maa Bhent," urged the audience to engage with his creation. Encouraging viewers to like, share, and subscribe to his channel, Deepak Kumar Jammu, he emphasized the role of each individual in preserving and celebrating the diverse cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

The event, characterized by an aura of camaraderie and mutual respect, served as a testament to the power of art in fostering interfaith harmony and preserving cultural legacies. As "Meri Bawe Aali Maa Bhent" resonates across communities, it stands as a beacon of unity and reverence in the beautiful landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

EDITORIAL

CLIMATE
CHANGE

Climate change is a topic which has become the center of discussion around the world these days. This subject discusses the natural changes around us as well as the effects of human activities. Climate change refers to changes in the state of air, snow, and oceans that affect modern life. In this essay we will consider the causes, effects, and measures to deal with climate change.

Reasons for climate change:

Energy Production: Electricity, energy, and fuel are being used extensively for industrial activities, vehicles, and energy production. This is resulting in excess water, air, and pollution, leading to climate change.

Indiscriminate vegetation use: Indiscriminate vegetation use increases the lethality of rainfall in areas where vegetation is harvested and causes more climate change.

Lack of water, wildlife and conservation: Excessive population and high economic development are leading to disorganization of wildlife species conservation and water conservation, thereby disrupting the natural balance.

Effects of climate change:

Emergency changes: Climate change is causing emergency changes, such as higher temperatures, more snowfall, and more freezing rain. This is causing emergency situations like floods, earthquakes, and storms at many places.

Climate-related diseases: Climate-related diseases are increasing due to climate change, such as heatstroke caused by high temperatures, which is leading to outbreaks of climate-related diseases.

Contextual loss: Climate change is causing contextual loss across the world, such as decline in snowfall, loss of glaciers and snowpack, thereby impacting the environmental balance. As a result, thousands of people are facing incurable life conditions related to the very foundation of life.

Changes in climate sustainability: Due to climate change, weather sustainability is changing, due to which irregularities in the agricultural sector are increasing. Due to high temperature and excessive snowfall, agricultural production is also being disrupted, due to which people are facing the problem of food security.

Sea level rise: Due to global warming, the sea level is rising, which is causing the problem of excessive water infiltration into areas located near the land. This problem is also affecting areas away from the coast, requiring many islands and cities to become boundaries.

Self-emissions arising from the effects of climate change: Due to the effects of climate change, self-emissions are taking place at many places. People are preparing themselves for self-reliance.

Measures to prevent climate change:

Clean Energy Production: To reduce climate change, we have to move towards clean energy production. By using new and innovative energy sources we can meet our energy needs and reduce pollution.

Sensitization and Education: Sensitization and education are needed to make people aware of the impacts of climate change. By making people aware of the causes of climate change and its potential impacts, we can make them calm and cautious. For this, it is important to support workshops and education programs organized by experts from the local level.

Natural conservation and restoration: We must support natural conservation and restoration to mitigate the effects of climate change. It is the responsibility of all of us to make plans for wildlife conservation, tree plantation, and water conservation and implement them successfully.

Energy sensitivity and use of clean energy: To increase energy sensitivity, we have to use clean energy. This is a good way to save energy in public transportation, industry, and domestic use, thereby reducing climate change.

Community Collaboration: Climate change poses huge challenges, and we can only overcome them together. Community collaboration is an important way we can jointly address the impacts of climate change. By connecting people and through collective efforts, we can move towards a safe, secure and healthy life.

Climate change is a big challenge, but only our support and cooperation will support us in it. We must address sustainability and increase sensitivity to our activities so that we can sustain ourselves and future generations in a healthy and secure future. From today itself, we should resolve to improve our system, follow cleanliness, and use energy properly so that we all can together face this important challenge.

Group Study - Advantages and Disadvantages

By: Vijay GarG

When the students study in small groups and share their views on a common educational topic, it is called studying in a group or group study. The group so formed is called a study group. The study group usually comprises of students which study in the same class or the same batch. It is not necessary that the students of a study group know each other. Before forming a study group it should be seen that all the participating students must share a common topic or syllabus for studying so that they can share their views with each other. The participating students regularly meet and discuss the topics with each other. The group may be formal or informal. Informal study groups are formed by the students in their friend circle for studying together the difficult topics or to prepare for exams. The formal groups are formed by the authorities or the faculty in schools and colleges or at the offices for working on a common project. In these types of group, the participants meet for researching a topic and to prepare a group project which is to be submitted to the schools, colleges or offices.

How to form a Study Group?

Forming a study group is not an easy task. Furthermore, there are many consequences. The group may be or may not be successful. Forming a study group needs many wise decisions. Here are some points which should be kept in mind while forming a study group: Deciding the Number of Members: The first decision to be taken is about the number of members in the group. The maximum number of students in a study group should not be more than five. This is a very important decision as the number of students has a direct impact on the group. If the numbers of students are very less, that is, just two members of the group, the group will be very inefficient. There will be a limited discussion. The group will turn out to be very boring. For a healthy discussion, two people are not enough. Often, when two people study together it is not termed as a group study. If the number of students is very large, that is, eight to ten members in a group or even more than that, then also the group will be very inefficient and unsuccessful. It is so because it is very difficult to communicate with so many students at a time during a discussion. Most of the people feel ignored. Moreover, time management becomes very difficult. All the students may not be free at a common time. In this case, it becomes very difficult to decide a fixed time for studying in a group. Deciding on a place for studying also becomes a problem as more number of students needs more seating arrangements to be made. So, deciding the number of students in the study group is the first and foremost decision to be made.

Choosing the Members of Groups: The second decision should be to select who all will form a part of your group. While choosing the students, a number of members should be kept in mind. The members should be chosen in such a way so that they can make the group efficient. Taking an example, suppose a student wants to form a study group for the preparation of his final exams, he should choose the members in such a way that neither all the members should be too intelligent nor all of them should be very

weak in studies. If all the students are very weak, there will be no one in the group who can take the responsibility of teaching other members. If all of them are very intelligent, the group turns out to be useless. The intelligent students will know almost everything in the syllabus and there will be no topic for discussion. Each and every member will then prefer self-study. The intelligence level of the group members should be balanced. The group should comprise of weak students as well as the intelligent ones so that the intelligent students can teach the weak students. In this way, the weak students will get to know and understand the topics and it will be a revision for the intelligent students. Before choosing the members, it should be kept in mind that none of the members possesses any hard feeling for any other member of the group. This may lead to conflicts in the group leading to the failure of the study group. Therefore, the members of the group should be chosen wisely for the successful functioning of the group.

Choosing Leader: Every group requires a leader or a captain. The leader should be so chosen such that he is familiar with all the other members of the group. The leader would be responsible for almost everything in the group. The leader will organize meetings for the group. It is the responsibility of the leader to check that any discussion in the group should not take an unhealthy form. The leader should take the decisions about the timings of the groups. The leader will decide where the group members will meet. Also, it is the duty of the leader to regularly communicate with all the members for the proper functioning of the group. The leader should send regular emails or text messages to the members to fix the next meeting of the group.

Deciding Timings and Venue: The timings and the venue for the group meetings should be chosen in such a way that all the members are comfortable with it. In case, a group member is not comfortable with the timings or the venue, it should be immediately changed. If this is not done, the person will feel ignored and may exit the group. The timing should be so chosen that all the members are free at that time. While choosing the venue, it should be seen that all the members can easily reach over there. If the venue is very far or very near to the residence of any group member, it may lead to conflicts.

Study or Research Plans: Before forming the group, it should be decided that which all topics will be discussed in the group. The topics chosen should be of common interest to all the group members. After every meeting of the group, it is the duty of the group leader to decide the next topic, with the consent of other members of the group, which will be discussed in the next meeting of the group. It will be a very effective plan if a proper timetable is made indicating which topic will be discussed in which meeting.

Connect with Experts: Connect the group with one of the experts like a professor or a teacher who can guide all the members on the topics of discussion. While studying together, any doubt in any topic occurs; the group members should be able to contact the teacher for their help. It is a very important task because the students cannot have answers to every question. While studying new thing there may be a lot of doubts which other members of the group fail to explain. In this, an expert advice is needed.

What are the Characteristics of a Successful Study Group?

For a successful study group, these are the characteristics:

Each group member participates in the discussion. Only then the discussion can be healthy. If any member is quite all the time during the discussion it indicates that the topic is not of his interest or he is not satisfied with the group.

The group members should listen to each other. The discussion should not take the form of a debate. Any member should not interrupt while another member is speaking.

The group members should be already prepared with the topic of discussion. If all the members are already prepared it leads to a healthy discussion and a good exchange of knowledge.

There should be no hesitation among the group members. They should be able to ask questions of each other very freely. If this is not the case, the doubts may remain in the minds of the members which may cause a problem in the future.

While discussing, the members should not move to any other topic. There should be a consistent discussion on a single topic.

The group members should respect each other. There should be no hard feelings. There should be no criticism while discussion.

What are the Advantages of Study Group?

There are many advantages of studying in groups. These advantages make group study the first and foremost choice of some students in exam time. They are described below:

Regularity: When the student has to do self-study, it is likely that he will postpone it to some other time just due to laziness. In such a situation, a student who does not like studying will not study properly. But in the case of group study, regularity is maintained. It becomes compulsory for all the members to regularly participate in the discussion organized by the group. In this way, even those students who are unwilling to study will have to study regularly. The group should be disciplined enough that there is no place of excuses for studies from anyone.

Better Learning and Understanding: Every student cannot understand all the topics in the syllabus but every student definitely understands some topics of the syllabus. This is the key factor which makes studying in group advantageous for all the students. The can explain the topics which they know properly to the other members of the group. Moreover, during self-study, some topics are so difficult that they could not be understood alone. They require help. This help is sometimes provided by the study group. In this way, every student gets to know each and every topic of the syllabus. Moreover, students retain in their mind the things they talk about. If they discuss the topics related to their syllabi in the study group, they will retain it in their mind. This nullifies the need for cramming.

Different Perspectives: Every student does not think the same. While doing self-study, a student will think only in one single direction. This provides him with limited knowledge only. Moreover, due to thinking in one direction can cause the student to different things to be the same. This ultimately leads to confusion or incorrect knowledge. In the case of group study, the students will discuss with each what their perspectives on

the topics are. The thinking ability of all the students is increased in this way. The different possibilities associated with the topics arise in the minds of the students.

Makes Learning Enjoyable: While studying for a long time, a student get tired. Self-study usually becomes boring. Sometimes, the students may also fall asleep. But, while studying in a group, learning is not a burden; rather it is a fun task. Students enjoy while discussing the topics and learning becomes way more interesting.

Less Stress: Mostly, the students are very tensed before the exams. While studying in groups, the students feel relaxed. The atmosphere becomes lighter. With less stress, there are more chances to succeed in the exams.

Enhanced Communication Skills: During a group study, students interact with each other. There is a healthy discussion going amongst them. This discussion boosts their confidence. It also increases their vocabulary. Communication skills of the student are enhanced.

What are the Disadvantages of Group Study?

With so many advantages, there are a few disadvantages associated with group study. Some of them are:

Losing Way: while studying in groups, the members often lose their ways from the topics and the discussion goes to another topic. A lot of time is wasted in this way. As the members meet for small fixed time, wasting time is not at all acceptable for the effective functioning of the group.

Gossips: when the members also form a social group apart from a study group, gossips are the only thing which happens during the group meeting. Everyone discusses the random stuff rather than discussing the topics which were already decided for discussion. If the members are classmates, they may start complaining about their teachers and other classmates. This makes the study group unsuccessful and useless.

Conflicting Topics: It becomes very difficult to choose a topic which is of a common interest to all the students. This may lead to conflicts in the group. Some people may also even exit the group.

Inefficient Decision: If the decision about the timing, venue, and the number of members, topics or selecting the group members are not properly taking, it may lead to failure of the group. It is a very hard task to take these decisions. A lot of things have to be kept in mind before taking these decisions. Despite so much thinking, the decisions usually turn out to be failures because it is very difficult to make a decision which keeps all the group members happy.

Conclusion

Studying in groups is a fun task. But it should be noted that the study group does not turn into an only fun group or a social group. During the group meetings, only the pre-decided topics should be discussed. The leader should be responsible for maintaining discipline in the group. But if someone is very shy and is not able to interact with group member, group study is not meant for him. The student should then go for self-study. He should not waste his time by studying in groups as it will not be fruitful for him.

Yoga improves the Athletes sports performance



By: Vijay GarG

Drawing from ancient yogic principles, this approach not only enhances performance but also fosters holistic wellbeing

The mental and emotional well-being of athletes is just as crucial as their physical fitness for optimal performance and overall health. Both professional and amateur athletes encounter numerous stressors in their training and competitions, which were further heightened by the pandemic, impacting their access to resources and support systems.

It is essential to approach athletic training with the lens of integrative healthcare to enhance mental and emotional resilience. In competitive environments, athletes face significant psychological

stressors such as injuries, performance pressure, high expectations, and demanding training regimens, often leading to sleep disturbances, eating disorders, sports anxiety, and other serious issues. Sudden cardiac arrests (SCAs) are also a leading cause of death among student-athletes, with at least 1 in 300 young individuals having underlying cardiac abnormalities.

Therefore, the ability to manage and recover from stress, known as resilience, is crucial for success in sports and other endeavours, improving endurance, agility, discipline, and overall quality of life. Integration of yoga-based resilience training can facilitate athletes' journeys by enhancing their mental and emotional well-being.

Clinical Impact of Yoga: Yoga-based Resilience Trainings offer numerous benefits to athletes through various underlying mechanisms. One key mechanism is the regulation of stress hormone levels, particularly cortisol, which is essential for the body's response to stress. Practices such as deep breathing and meditation help regulate cortisol release, and improve emotional stability. Additionally, yogic modalities promote neural plasticity, enhancing cognitive function and motor

skills vital for sports performance. Such mental health interventions also stimulate the autonomic nervous system, inducing relaxation and reducing physiological stress markers.

Efficacy of Yoga-Based Resilience Training

Resilience training methodologies, rooted in ancient Indian Knowledge Systems, combine yogic, breathwork, and meditation techniques. The principles align with sports psychology, emphasizing mental resilience, focus, and emotional regulation among athletes for peak performance. Through non-invasive meditative protocols, athletes develop heightened awareness of their breath and emotions, enabling them to navigate competition pressures calmly and clearly. Studies involving cricketers have shown yoga's positive impact on physical fitness, speed, and accuracy.

Embracing Challenges and Opportunities: The integration of Yoga-based Resilience Training into sports presents both challenges and opportunities. Scepticism among athletes and coaches enables the traditional prioritisation of physical conditioning over mental well-being. Additionally, cultural miscon-

ceptions may hinder acceptance in sports cultures unfamiliar with yoga-based practices. Logistical hurdles, including access to qualified resources and suitable facilities, further impact widespread adoption.

However, these challenges also offer opportunities for dialogue, education, and collaboration. Open discussion and evidence-based education can dispel scepticism and foster understanding within the sports community. Collaboration across disciplines—such as yoga, sports psychology, and sports science—can tailor yoga-based programs to athletes' specific needs. Innovation in training methods, supportive environments within sports organisations, and ongoing research into their effectiveness are also vital. Addressing these challenges and embracing opportunities can allow sports communities to harness the full potential of yoga-based interventions to enhance athlete resilience and elevate athletic excellence.

(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist Malout)

Aryans organises Iftar Party

Singers Alaap & Sarang Sikandar addressed Aryans students

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: To celebrate the Holy Month of Ramadan, students of Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh organized an "Iftar" party at Aryans Campus. On the occasion, Singers Alaap & Sarang Sikandar & Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group addressed Aryans students. On this occasion, dates, Bananas, Biryani, Kheer and juice were distributed to the Kashmiri students while breaking their fast.

Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group while congratulating all said that the majority of students studying in



Aryans are from Jammu & Kashmir. He added that earlier the JK students along with staff have organized Iftar parties in Srinagar also. Alaap & Sarang also

congratulated all and said that they are happy to know that Aryans JK students have developed Ramadan App. The Ramadan App is an Android app to help

the Muslim community manage their time during Ramadan. The app helps with the variations in sehar time that Muslim people may experience during Ramadan due to

biological or physical factors.

On the occasion, Aryans Faculty including Er Mudassir Ahmad Sheikh, Er Jahangir Rashid, Er Shahid Lone, Er Rayees Ahmad, Er Mehran Wani, Shahid Bashir, Abrar Ahmad, Amir Akbar, Shakir Ahmad, Aadil Farooq etc. were present. It is to be mentioned that Iftar is the meal eaten by Muslims to break their fast after sunset every day during Ramadan. While fasting, they eat in the morning before sunrise and then don't eat all day until the sun sets. It is very important to breakfast at the one particular time that the calendar says.

GDC Darhal celebrates World Health Day



Top News Report

DARHAL, Apr 8: On the occasion of World Health Day, Government Degree College (GDC) Darhal organized a grand event on campus as part of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The event was aimed at raising awareness about the importance of health and promoting healthy lifestyle practices among the college community.

The Principal of GDC Darhal, Prof. Zameer Ahmed Mirza, presided over the event. All faculty members and students actively participated in the various activities that were organized.

The event was coordinated by the IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) and NSS (National Service Scheme) committees of the college, headed by their respective conveners, Dr. M Saleem Wani and Dr.

Mohd Akhlaq.

The program commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Saleem Wani, who highlighted the global theme of World Health Day 2023, "Our Planet and our Health." He emphasized the urgent need to protect the environment and prioritize health and well-being for a sustainable future.

Dr Akhlaq Ahmed conducted the proceedings of the dais and invited various students to deliver speeches, present skits, and perform songs and poetry that focused on different aspects of health and hygiene. They discussed the importance of nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and preventive healthcare.

Dr. Ghulam Abbas and Dr. Taseem Ahmed led interactive sessions on the benefits of herbal medicines and the role of geography in shap-

ing health outcomes, respectively

Dr. Anzar Ahmed shared his insights on the health benefits of spiritual practices and meditation.

The event culminated with a prize distribution ceremony, where participants were recognized for their outstanding performances.

In his concluding remarks, Principal Prof. Zameer Ahmed Mirza congratulated the IQAC and NSS committees for organizing a successful event. He urged the students to adopt healthy habits and contribute to the overall well-being of their community and the nation.

The World Health Day celebration at GDC Darhal was a resounding success, serving its purpose of promoting health awareness and inspiring the college community to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Tariq Hussain starts Election Campaign through Door-to-Door outreach



Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Apr 8: Tariq Hussain Keen, BJP Secretary, has taken the lead in invigorating the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections with a series of impactful initiatives, including joining programs, election campaigns, and Shakti Kendra Path Yatras.

Today marked a significant milestone as the campaign witnessed extensive door-to-door outreach in Shakti Kendra Anjole, Keshna, and Keshwan, situated in Block Mughalmaidan.

The event was graced by esteemed senior leaders of the party, including Sh Girdari Lal, Khandey Sahib, as well as Shakti Kendra Pramukhs and Booth Presidents from

all Shakti Kendras.

The palpable enthusiasm exhibited by the residents of these villages serves as a testament to their unwavering support for BJP workers, reaffirming their confidence in the party's vision and leadership.

The warm reception received during the door-to-door outreach reflects the strong bond between the BJP and the local community, highlighting the resonance of the party's message and its commitment to addressing the needs of the people.

Tariq Hussain Keen expressed his gratitude for the overwhelming response, stating, "The enthusiasm displayed by the residents of Shakti

Kendra Anjole, Keshna, and Keshwan is truly inspiring. Their unwavering support fuels our determination to work tirelessly towards fulfilling their aspirations and building a prosperous future together."

As the Lok Sabha elections draw nearer, the BJP remains steadfast in its commitment to engaging with citizens at the grassroots level, amplifying its message of progress, development, and inclusivity. Through initiatives like door-to-door outreach and Shakti Kendra Path Yatras, the party aims to strengthen its bond with the electorate and secure a resounding mandate in the upcoming elections.

Inspirational runner title for Katra doctor in Half Marathon

Top News Report

KATRA, Apr 8: First time participant in the home UT of J&K, a lady doctor, Shalini Sharma, who hails from the holy town of Katra in district Reasi emerged 'inspirational runner' in the just concluded SMVD Katra Half Marathon. She surprised many after finishing close to the title winner athlete with personal timings of 2:07:55. Title winner Rimpi Devi had a timings of 2:06:05. Daughter of prominent wrestling promoter of J&K and former Joint Secretary of J&K Sports Council (JKSC), Shiv Kumar Sharma, Shalini, a Radiologist, presently serves with Mother and Child Hospital Gurugram in Haryana. After finishing her 21 kilometer Half Marathon, the local runner was appreciated by one and all, especially after she become inspiration for the entire women fraternity of the town, which otherwise shows little interest in sports activities.

Dimple calls for more action against crime, drug peddling

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: In a press conference, President Sunil Dimple of Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir expressed gratitude to the Jammu Kashmir Police for their stringent action against drug peddlers and criminals.

He particularly thanked DIG Sunil Gupta and SSP Dr. Vinod Gupta for initiating the "Operation All Clear" in the Jammu region.



Dimple also called for the closure of wine shops in Jammu and demanded strict measures against drug-related activities.

He pledged full cooperation with the J&K Police in tackling crime and urged political parties to refrain from utilizing criminals and drug peddlers for electoral purposes.

Furthermore, Dimple appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfill promises made regarding J&K's status

and called for the restoration of J&K's statehood and the revocation of AFSPA. He also demanded the release of innocent detainees and advocated for the integration of J&K, Ladakh, POK, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Dimple pledged support to certain MP candidates and criticized the BJP's slogans as hollow, emphasizing the continuation of their fight for the restoration of J&K's special status.

Alumni of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University interacts with students



Top News Report

KATRA, Apr 8: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University Alumna Shaurya Chakra Awardee Assis-

tant Commandant Bibhor Kumar Singh visited the Campus.

During his stay at SMVDU he interacted

with students on several platforms. The School of Electronics and Communication (ECE) organized a successful meetup session at Lecture Theater of SMVDU, featuring one of its most distinguished alumni.

The session provided a platform for students to interact with the alumnus, who shared his college experiences, insights on national development, and the dangers of drug use.

The alumnus motivated students to stay away from drugs, highlighting their detrimental impact on both individual and

societal well-being. He emphasized the importance of a drug-free life for national progress and social harmony. Drawing from his own life experiences, the alumnus spoke about his dedication to the Indian Army. He recounted his sacrifices and operational endeavors, inspiring the students with his commitment and bravery.

The interactive session proved to be a valuable learning experience for the ECE department members, who expressed their pride in having the opportunity to engage with such an accomplished individual. Dr. Neeraj

Tripathi, Dr. Vikram Singh and Ashish Suri are very instrumental in organizing the event. Dean Faculty of Engineering, Professor Kumud Ranjan Jha felicitated Bibhor Singh and wished him good luck for future.

Dr. Anil Bhardwaj, HoD ECE, is thankful to the Honorable Vice Chancellor who is very supportive in this event, without whom it is not possible to organize this enriching event with an Indian Brave Heart. Head School of ECE is also thankful to Registrar, Ajay Kumar Sharma and all the administrative staff.

Bajaj Finance hikes FD rates for most tenures by up to 60 bps; highest rate continues at 8.85%



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Bajaj Finance Ltd., part of Bajaj Finserv Ltd., one of the country's largest financial services groups, has announced hikes in Fixed Deposits (FDs) rates across most tenures.

Effective April 3, 2024, the company has increased FD rates for senior citizens by up to 60 basis points in the 25-to-35-month tenure and 40 basis points in the 18-to-24-month tenure.

For non-senior citizens, rates have been hiked by up to 45 basis points in the 25-to-35-month tenure, 40 basis points in the 18 and 22 month tenures, and 35 basis points in the 30 and 33-month tenures.

The move presents an opportunity for savers to secure stable and better

returns in prevailing market conditions.

Senior citizens can continue to avail FD rates of up to 8.85% and non-senior citizens can take benefit of rates of up to 8.60%, by booking digitally in the 42 months tenure.

Sachin Sikka, Head - Fixed Deposits & Investments at Bajaj Finance, said, "Our enhanced rates across several investment buckets present an attractive proposition for investors seeking stability. Over the years, millions of depositors have placed their trust in the Bajaj brand. We continue to stay focused on offering them a better experience, more value and a safe option for their savings."

Bajaj Finance's customer franchise stood at approximately 83.64 MM

as of March 31, 2024. The company has emerged as the country's largest deposit-taking NBFC with a Deposits book of over Rs. 60,000 crore as of March 31, 2024.

Net users on its App platform were 49.19 million as on December 31, 2023. The Bajaj Finserv App is the 4th most downloaded app in the financial domain on Play-store in India as per data. io report.

The Bajaj Finance Fixed Deposit program has the highest stability ratings with CRISIL's AAA/Stable and ICRA's AAA/Stable, offering one of the safest investment options for investors. The company's App also offers an Investment Marketplace where customers can access a wide array of mutual funds.

GDC Bishnah organizes 5-day long Plantation drive

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Eco-club, GDC Bishnah in collaboration with Department of Botany organised 5-day long Plantation drive from April 4 to 8, 2024 under the theme "Plantation for Green campus".

The programme was organised under the able guidance of Dr. Shallu Samyal, Prin-

cipal of the college.

The aim of the Plantation drive was to foster among students the importance of plants for survival of life on planet Earth and to make campus green and beautiful.

Prof. Sania Hamid Convener, Eco club and HoD Botany delivered a formal welcome speech. She briefed that the motive of orga-

nizing this event is to raise awareness on changing climatic conditions

Plantation drive commenced on 4th of April in which Senior faculty members, students of the college and members of Eco-club planted varied saplings along the length and breadth of the campus.

On consecutive days of Plantation drive,

outgoing students of semester-6 also planted various sapling of plants in the Campus. All students, faculty members as well as non-teaching staff enthusiastically participated in this Plantation drive.

On the concluding day of Plantation drive, Dr Shallu Samyal, Principal of the college addressed the students. She

applauded the efforts of students and members of Eco Club and encouraged them for organising more such programmes for environmental awareness in future. The programme was conducted by joint efforts of members of Eco Club Dr. Sunil Kumar Saliada, Dr. Shiv Kumar Khajuria, Prof. Shivani Raina, Prof. Nisha and Prof. Kusum.

Show-runner and writer of the series *Big Girls Don't Cry* Sudhanshu Saria believes there is no tolerance for mediocre stories on OTT platforms, as the audience has a multitude of choices now

The makers of Prime Video's recent coming-of-age drama *Big Girls Don't Cry* (BGDC) took their cameras right inside the uncharted territory of an all-girls boarding school. Set in a hilly region, the series boasts of stars like Pooja Bhatt, Tanya Abrol, Loveleen Sharma and Suchitra Pillai, but also launches new group of female actors. The series has been directed by Karan Kapadia (two episodes), Sudhanshu Saria (two episodes), Nitya Mehra (one episode) and Kopal Naithani (one episode).

The National-Award winning director Saria, also the show-runner and writer of the series, says that more than finding problems in collaborating with fellow writers and directors, everyone's input made a difference.

Saria elaborates, "It can be a very good thing if the synergies are right and talents are complimenting each other. It gives you multiple perspectives and makes the show

all the more relatable." He adds, "It also allowed multiple units to shoot at the same time, which hastened the process."

Garnering fame Sudhanshu had won National Award for his 2020 film, *Knock Knock Knock*, a psychological thriller set in Darjeeling, and garnered fame at International Film Festivals, including Berlin, Busan, Hong Kong, Israel, Estonia and more. His short films, *A Tight Spot* and *His New Hands*, and even feature film debut, *Love* (2018), did the rounds at various festivals.

As Saria embraces OTT with BGDC, does he find any similarities between parallel cinema and OTT medium? "Not really. The only similarity that I can draw is in my approach towards content, whether it's for digital space or film festivals. I am trying to discover myself while telling new and innovative stories. Audiences today are not looking for the same stuff, they have exposure to films and series



from all around the world, so to keep them engaged and interested you really need to innovate as well as try new things," explains Saria.

Moving past the 2022 release, *Sanaa*, starring Radhika Madan, Sohum Shah and Pooja Bhatt, jumping onto a series like BGDC and now excited about his next film *Ulajh*, also with big names like

Janhvi Kapoor, Gulshan Devaiah and Roshan Mathew, Saria has come far. For the future, he would rather take the road less taken. "I think what we have seen, especially after the pandemic, is that there is no appetite or tolerance for mediocre stories. No matter what the budget, the story must be cutting-edge, new and compelling.

Now how that story is executed and who it is aimed at determine its budget. Which actors are you able to get also determine the reach and therefore the budget? So it all comes down to good script, everything else comes later and is secondary."

The director calls it an 'absolute honour' and 'overwhelming' experience to receive a National Award at such an early stage of his career. He adds, "Given the level and depth of talent in our country, it is a big honour. It is really encouraging."

Casting Pooja

Bhatt plays the central character in BGDC and gave a wonderful performance as headmistress Anita Verma of *Vandana Valley Girls*. Saria says, "Pooja Bhatt and I just finished a film together, *Sanaa* (2018), where we had quite a phenomenal time. So when we were very early into the casting of BGDC, we knew we

needed somebody singular and talented, like Pooja Bhatt. A simple phone call was all it took, as she was all excited to join. She said yes before she had read the script."

He is also full of praise for seven brilliant new actors in BGDC — Aneet Padda, Lhakyla, Akshita Sood, Afrah Sayed, Avantika Vandana, Vidushi and Dalai. "All my focus right now is on making sure that the most number of people take a chance, enter this world and see what these actors have been able to accomplish in BGDC," he signs off.

Discovering new talent

From the very onset, Saria and others were very clear that they must find a young cast. They had no interest making a 30-year-old play an 18-year-old. Saria explains, "We spent nearly eight months in finding the right cast. And when these seven girls came on board, each of them slid into their roles so beautifully."

Sandra Oh joins Aziz Ansari's comedy film *Good Fortune*

Sandra Oh, who is known for her roles in *Killing Eve* and *Arli\$\$*, has been roped in for Aziz Ansari's directorial *Good Fortune*. The film also stars Seth Rogen, Keanu Reeves, and Keke Palmer.

Oh's role is being kept under wraps, as is the plot of the movie. The film is Ansari's second directorial project, following the Searchlight dramedy *Being Mortal*, which was shut down in 2022 because of allegations of bad behaviour by cast member Bill Murray. He previously directed his 2022 comedy special *Nightclub Comedian* for Netflix, as well as 11 episodes of the critically acclaimed Netflix series



Master of None.

The actor-filmmaker said, "Sandra Oh is wonderful and I'm so excited she is a part of our film."

Oh is currently seen starring opposite Awkwafina in *Quiz Lady*, which premiered at last year's Toronto Film Festival.

At an event in Dehradun recently, actress Gul Panag talked about how women can empower each other

At an event in Dehradun recently, actress Gul Panag talked about women empowerment. "Women empowerment starts with uniting women. When I am with women, I feel that I have my own empowerment. Because I believe that one woman can inspire and encourage another woman. And I consider myself very fortunate that I am here. I was invited, and I was given a chance to speak. The challenges that women are facing are universal. They should be talked about. I believe it will make these challenges easy," she said.

She added, "In the environment and society where we are condi-



tioned to put everybody before us, we typically put ourselves last. Now what that does is compromise our ability to do the very job that's been thrust on our shoulders. Take care of the family; take care of the home. And whatever it may be — whether you're a stay-at-home mother or a working mother — whatever you do, you have a disproportionate share of responsibility on your shoulders. And those shoulders need to be strong." Gul Panag is known for her versatility, she has made a mark in the entertainment industry as well as in various other fields.

Gul started her journey in the world of glamour by winning the Miss

India title in 1999. She later represented India at Miss Universe 1999. She made her Bollywood debut with the movie *Dhoop*. Some of her other movies include *Dor*, *Turning 30* and *Student of the Year 2*, among others. She has several web shows to her credit, including *The Family Man*, *Paatal Lok* and others.

"I'm 45 right now and think prioritising my health has had a very big role to play in me being able to do all that I'm able to do. If we are not strong, if we are not capable, then we will not be able to do all the things that are on our wish-list. We must eat healthy," she said.

'Love, Sex Aur Dhokha 2' ropes in transgender woman Bonita Rajpurohit in lead role

Transgender woman Bonita Rajpurohit is set to star in a leading role in Dibakar Banerjee's upcoming film "Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2", the makers said on Sunday.

The film, a sequel to Banerjee's 2010 film "Love Sex Aur Dhokha", will be released on April 19. It is produced by Ektaa R Kapoor of Balaji Motion Pictures.

According to the makers, Rajasthan-born Rajpurohit is the first transgender woman to lead a Hindi film. She will play Kullu in the movie.

"With 'Love Sex Aur

Dhokha', released in 2010, Ektaa introduced many new faces to the entertainment industry. This time, Ektaa becomes the first producer to launch a transgender-woman as a lead in 'Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2'. Bonita Rajpurohit will be seen playing the character of Kullu in the film," according to a press release.

Rajpurohit, who previously worked at a production house and as a model, said starring in the film was a dream come true.

"To see women like me on screen, to see



trans representation on screen is my biggest motivation. I never thought I'd work in films. Here, I'm getting to play a lead character in a Bollywood film. Some dreams just come true.

"It's not about playing a character. It's about touching my trigger point and doing it audaciously in front of a camera takes a lot," the budding actor said in a video shared on Instagram page of Balaji Motion Pictures.

"Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2" also stars Mouni Roy, Tushar Kapoor, Sophie Choudry, and Anu Malik.

Makers reveal teaser of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' on Allu Arjun's 42nd birthday



The makers of "Pushpa 2: The Rule" on Monday launched the teaser of the much-anticipated film on the occasion of lead star Allu Arjun's 42nd birthday.

Directed by Sukumar, "Pushpa 2: The Rule" follows the first installment "Pushpa 1: The Rise", which sets up a clash between Arjun's titular character and Malayalam star Fahadh Faasil's inspector Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat.

Production banner Mythri Movie Makers shared the teaser on its official X page. Also starring Rashmika Mandanna as Srivalli, the film will hit the screens on August 15.

"Celebrate his arrival. Adore his fire within. Experience the

goosebumps. #Pushpa2TheRuleTeaser out now. Happy Birthday Icon Star @alluarjun THE RULE BEGINS on 15th AUG 2024," the post read.

Arjun, who greeted fans outside his Hyderabad house at midnight, expressed gratitude for their love and support.

"I thank each and everyone of you for the birthday wishes! My heart is full of gratitude. Please take this teaser as my way of saying thank you!" he captioned the teaser of "Pushpa 2: The Rule" in an X post.

According to a press release, the 1.08 minute-long clip features the 'jaathara' sequence from the upcoming film. 'Jaathara', also known as 'Sammakka Saralamma Jaathara', is a

festival celebrated in the state of Telangana to honour the Hindu tribal goddesses.

Steeped in colour and tradition, the teaser sees Arjun's Pushpa Raj decked up in a sari, jewellery and make-up, as he wields a trident and bashes up adversaries to music composer DSP's rousing soundtrack amid the 'jaathara' celebration.

The first glimpse of the sequel may have presented the protagonist in a different avatar, but his swag remains the same.

"Pushpa 1: The Rise" depicted the rise of a low-wage labourer (Arjun) in the smuggling syndicate of red sandalwood, a rare wood that grows only in the Seshachalam Hills of Andhra Pradesh state.

It released in India in association with Muttamsetty Media on December 17, 2021 and went on to become one of the biggest money-spinners of the year earning over Rs 350 crore.

The film also established Arjun as a pan-India star, earning him his first best actor National Award. Composer DSP also won his maiden National Award for "Pushpa: The Rise".

Drew Barrymore says Happy Gilmore sequel is in process

American actor and film producer Drew Barrymore shared on a recent episode of *The Drew Barrymore Show* that Adam Sandler is working on a script for the *Happy Gilmore* sequel.

After Christopher McDonald, who portrayed Shooter McGavin in *Happy Gilmore*, said in March that Sandler had shown him a first draft of the sequel,



Barrymore claims she texted her longtime friend and co-star on 50 First Dates to confirm whether the remark was accurate.

In a preview from the latest episode of *The Drew Barrymore Show*, she dropped news of their conversation, generating more buzz surrounding the possible sequel.

"I want it. I need it. I stayed up last night with

my daughter watching *Billy Madison*," said Barrymore. "I sent Sandler a video of it.

He sent me another video back and I'm waiting to see if he's confirming about the *Happy Gilmore 2* script."

She said Sandler backed up McDonald's story. "This just in, I have breaking news — I'll just say this from my source that it is 'in process.'"

Congress overlooked needs of poor for decades since independence, never understood their pain: PM Modi

During the Congress regime, corruption had become the country's identity, the Prime Minister said.

RAIPUR, Apr 8 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hit out at the opposition Congress, saying it overlooked needs of the poor for decades since independence and never understood their pain.

Addressing a rally in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, which will go to polls on April 19, he also said that the Congress' manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections has the Muslim League imprint.

During the Congress regime, corruption had become the country's identity, he said.



"Since independence, the Congress overlooked needs of the poor for decades and never understood their pain," the PM

said. "People said what will happen to the poor during the COVID-19 pandemic, but I said I will give free vaccine and ration to them," he said, adding that "due to my government's efforts, 25 crore people have risen above the poverty line."

The prime minister said he had come to thank the people for supporting his government in the last 10 years.

"Crores of my countrymen, my mothers and sisters have become my raksha kavach (protective shield)," he said.

Nobody Will Lose Citizenship, Says Rajnath Singh On CAA Law



NAMAKKAL (TAMIL NADU), Apr 8 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asserted that no Indian, irrespective of their faith, will lose citizenship with the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

He charged the opposition Congress and DMK with "creating confusion" over the issue.

Rajnath was speaking after taking

out a roadshow here in support of the party's Namakkal candidate for the April 19 Lok Sabha elections, KP Ramalingam.

The BJP always implemented what it promised and the construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya, abrogation of Article 370 and the CAA were such assurances, he said.

"We promised a citizenship act, and we did it. I want to clarify that any citizen of India--whether they are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew--nobody's citizenship will go away," he said.

"The DMK and Congress are creating confusion on the matter," he alleged.

On the abolition of triple Talaq, he said "mothers and sisters" from any faith are "our mothers and sisters." "Any atrocity against our mothers and sisters of any religion, we stand with them and we proved this by ending triple talaq," he said.

New govt will transfer Rs 1 lakh into accounts of SC/ST women: Rahul Gandhi

SEONI, Apr 8 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday exuded confidence to win the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and said the new government will transfer Rs 1 lakh annually into accounts of women belonging to SC, ST, and backward categories.

Addressing a rally at Dhanora in Seoni district, which is part of the Mandla Lok Sabha constituency, Gandhi also assured to provide guaranteed apprenticeships to unemployed youths.

"Our manifesto mentions three to four revolutionary steps taken by us like transferring Rs 1 lakh into (bank) accounts of women belonging to SC and ST categories, backward classes, and for women from poor families. This way we will provide thousands of rupees in their accounts every month," he said.

Congress has fielded former minister and MLA Omkar Singh Markam from the



Mandla constituency against the sitting MP and Union minister Fagga Singh Kulaste.

The Congress has also promised to double the money being paid to Asha and Anganwadi workers, Gandhi said.

"We will also bring a new law to ensure that every unemployed youth in the country gets a one-year apprenticeship in the public and private sector during which they will also get Rs one lakh as allowance," the former Congress chief said.

After completing the apprenticeship, they will get a job at the same place if they perform well, he added.

"After forming a gov-

ernment at the Centre, we will end the contractual system in employment and will fill 30 lakh vacancies in the government sector," Gandhi said.

The Congress government will frame a law to ensure that farmers get adequate MSP for their crops for which they have been agitating for a long period, he said.

Gandhi alleged the BJP has been purposefully terming tribal people as "vanvasis" instead of calling them "adivasis" with a motive to uproot them from their land and snatch their first right on the water, forest and land.

"They want to give their (tribals) land to industrialists," he said.

BJP and allies cheated their way into power in Maharashtra, left state in shambles: Congress

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): The Congress on Monday alleged that the BJP and its allies first "cheated their way" into power in Maharashtra and have since left the state in shambles, asking how much the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi cost.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his rally in Maharashtra's Chandrapur.

"The BJP and its allies first cheated their way into power and have since left the state in shambles. The statue of Shivaji Maharaj in the Arabian Sea that the PM laid the foundation stone for seven years ago is illustrative of his governance style: seven years later, it has been silently abandoned by his government," Ramesh said.

"What hope can the common people have from a man who has given 'jumlas' even to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj?" he said in a post on X.

Ramesh said farmers in Maharashtra



have had an incredibly challenging year and in November, the state government declared that 60 per cent of rural Maharashtra faced drought conditions last year.

"Between March and September, more than 16 lakh hectares of agricultural land was affected by unseasonal rains in the kharif season. Then, over 60% of districts suffered major damage to the rabi crop due to hailstorms and unseasonal rains in November and February," he said.

Despite all of these hardships, farmers received no assistance from the government and haven't received their insurance compensation either, he said.

"In 2014, the PM had

promised farmers in Yavatmal District he would give MSP at 1.5x the cost of production, in accordance with the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations. Why has the PM forgotten this promise?" the Congress leader said.

In its 2024 Nyay Patra, the Congress has committed to a legal guarantee for MSP, as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission, a loan waiver for farmers, and a mandatory transfer of all insurance payments for crop loss within 30 days, he pointed out.

What is the BJP's vision to support Maharashtra's farmers, he asked.

"According to the Government's own data from

the NCRB, two youths in Maharashtra commit suicide every day because of unemployment even as 2.5 lakh jobs are vacant across the state. To make matters worse, paper leaks have plagued almost every competitive exam conducted under CM Eknath Shinde's government," he said.

Ramesh pointed out that in the latest case, hundreds of PhD holders boycotted the common entrance test (CET) after finding that exam papers were not properly sealed.

This exam had already been cancelled once in late December when the question paper turned out to be the same as the 2019 SET exam, he said.

"The BJP and its allies have been irresponsible and have left the futures of lakhs of honest students hanging in the balance. Why has the PM failed to create opportunities for Maharashtra's youth?" he said.

Ramesh said that in its 2024 Nyay Patra, the Congress has guaranteed 'Paper Leak se Mukti' with new laws

to prevent leaks from occurring in the first place.

"We've also guaranteed the filling of 30 lakh vacancies at the central level, and a new Right to Apprenticeship Act to provide 1 year of employment to every graduate below the age of 25. What is the BJP doing to ensure the prosperity and security of young India?" he said.

Ramesh said Maharashtra's 2022 political crisis showed the nation that the BJP's greed for power is much greater than its regard for democratic values.

"They did not hesitate to use their ill-gotten Electoral Bonds chanda to buy Shiv Sena MLAs, and have destroyed Maharashtra's political culture in the process.

We now know that the Electoral Bonds Scam cost Indian citizens Rs.4 lakh crore -- the question is how much did the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi cost?" the Congress general secretary said and asked the prime minister to break his "silence" on these issues.

'Modi ki guarantee' means putting opposition leaders in jail post-Lok Sabha polls: Mamata

KOLKATA, Apr 8 (Agencies): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of taking action against the corrupt after June 4 meant that opposition leaders would be imprisoned post-Lok Sabha elections.

Results of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections from April 19 to June 1 will be announced on June 4.

Addressing a rally

at Bankura, the TMC chief alleged that the National Investigation Agency had gone to Bhubapatnagar in Purba Medinipur district without informing the local police.

"The Prime Minister is coming to West Bengal to address election rallies. I have no issues with that. But the way he is saying that stern action will be taken against the opposition over corruption after the Lok Sabha poll results is unacceptable," she said.



Modi, while addressing an election rally in Jalpaiguri on Sunday, had claimed that while he says "remove corruption", the opposition says "save the corrupt", promising more strin-

gent action against the corrupt after June 4.

"Is this how a Prime Minister should speak? What if I say I will put BJP leaders in jail after the election? But I will not say this as this

is unacceptable in a democracy," she said.

"This is actually 'Modi ki guarantee', putting all opposition leaders in jail after June 4," Banerjee alleged.

A team of the NIA was allegedly attacked by a mob on Saturday when it went to arrest two main suspects in a 2022 blast case in Purba Medinipur district, sparking a political slugfest with Banerjee accusing the investigators of assaulting the villagers.

"Publicity": Delhi Court On Petition To Remove Arvind Kejriwal As Chief Minister

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): The Delhi High Court on Monday remarked that a petition seeking the removal of Arvind Kejriwal from the post of Chief Minister was filed for "publicity" and the petitioner deserved to have "heavy costs" imposed on him.

Justice Subramonium Prasad made the observation while transferring the petition filed by former AAP MLA Sandeep Kumar to the court of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan where similar petitions were heard earlier.

"This is just for publicity," Justice Prasad said.

"Since similar matters have been listed and disposed of by the Acting Chief Justice, list this petition before the bench headed by the Acting Chief Justice," he said.

After transferring the petition, Justice Prasad said, "I would have imposed heavy costs." In his petition, Kumar has said that after Kejriwal's arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case, the leader has incurred an "incapacity" to carry out the chief minister's functions under the Constitution.

The plea said the AAP leader's "unavailability" complicates the constitutional mechanism and he can never function as the chief minister from prison according to the mandate of the Constitution.

"Article 239AA(4) of the Constitution provides for the Council of Ministers with the chief minister at the head to aid and advise the lieutenant governor in the exercise of his functions in relation to matters with respect to which the legislative assembly has power to

make laws.

"The aid and advice to the lieutenant governor are practically not possible without the chief minister being a free person available to render his aid and advice under the Constitution," the petition said.

"Issue a writ of quo warranto against respondent no.1, that is, Arvind Kejriwal, the incumbent chief minister of Delhi, by calling upon him to show by what authority, qualification and title he holds the office of the chief minister of Delhi under Article 239AA of the Constitution and after an inquiry, dislodge him from the office of the chief minister of Delhi with or without the retrospective effect," the petition prayed.

The matter will now be listed for hearing on April 10.

Mr Kejriwal, who was arrested by the ED on March 21, is in judicial custody till April 15. He is currently lodged in Tihar jail.

The high court had earlier rejected two public interest litigations (PILs) seeking Kejriwal's removal from the chief minister's post.

On April 4, a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet P S Arora refused to entertain a PIL on the issue, saying it was Mr Kejriwal's personal choice to continue as the chief minister.

Earlier, the bench had dismissed a similar PIL, observing that the petitioner had failed to show any legal bar that prohibited the arrested chief minister from holding office. It had observed that there was no scope for judicial interference in the matter and that it was for the other organs of the State to look into the issue.

Delhi court denies interim bail to BRS leader K Kavitha in excise policy scam

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): A court here on Monday denied interim bail to BRS leader K Kavitha in the Delhi excise policy-related money laundering case.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja dismissed the plea, saying the stage was not right to enlarge her on interim bail.

Kavitha had approached the court for interim bail, saying



her 16-year-old son has exams and needs

his mother's "moral and emotional support".

The ED had opposed the submission, claiming Kavitha destroyed evidence and influenced witnesses in the case.

The agency had alleged that Kavitha is a key member of the "South Group", which has been accused of paying the ruling AAP in Delhi kickbacks of Rs 100 crore in return for a big share of liquor licences in the national

capital.

Kavitha, 46, was arrested from her Banjara Hills residence on March 15 amid protests by BRS supporters.

She was then sent to seven-day ED custody the next day.

Her custodial interrogation was later extended by three days. She was sent to 14-day judicial custody last Tuesday.

94 dead in Mozambique after unlicensed ferry boat capsizes, official says

Five people had been rescued out of nearly 130 believed to have been on board

MAPUTO, Apr 8 (Agencies): At least 94 people died, including children, and 26 are missing after a ferry boat capsized off the northern coast of Mozambique, an official from the country's Maritime Transport Institute (INTRASMAR) said.

The vessel was an overloaded fishing boat and was not licensed to transport people, Lourenco Machado, an administrator of INTRASMAR, said on state television on Monday.

"On Sunday we registered a maritime incident where at least 94 people died when a barge carrying 130 people capsized. We have recovered 94 bodies and 26 are missing," he said.

The boat was ferrying people from Lunga in Nampula province to



Mozambique Island, he said, adding that initial reports indicated that it was hit by a tidal wave.

The passengers were fleeing a cholera outbreak, said state broadcaster TVM, citing another local maritime administrator.

Jaime Neto, secretary of state for Nampula province, also said that the passengers were fleeing cholera, according to the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC).

"Because the boat was overcrowded and

unsuited to carry passengers, it ended up sinking," he told the BBC, adding that many children were among the dead.

Videos posted on social media X showed many bodies lying on a beach and some people carrying the bodies of children. Reuters could not immediately verify these videos.

Mozambique and other countries in Southern Africa have been battling cholera outbreaks since last year.

South Korea launches its 2nd military spy satellite amid animosities with North Korea

Says their satellites would boost their abilities to monitor each other and enhance their own missile attack capabilities

SEOUL, Apr 8 (Agencies): South Korea has launched its second military spy satellite into space, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.

The Koreans each launched their first spy satellites last year — North Korea in November and South Korea in December — amid heightened animosities. They said their satellites would boost their abilities to monitor each other and enhance their own missile attack capabilities.

South Korea's second spy satellite was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Sunday evening local time, which was Monday morning in Seoul.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the satellite was successfully separated from a rocket. It said it will check whether the satellite functions properly via its communications with an overseas ground station.

Under a contract with SpaceX, South Korea was to launch five spy satellites by 2025. South Korea's first spy satellite launch on December 1 was made from



California's Vandenberg Space Force Base.

South Korea in 2022 became the world's 10th nation to successfully launch a satellite with its own technology by using a homegrown rocket to place what it called a "performance observation satellite" in orbit. But experts say it's economical to use a SpaceX rocket to launch spy satellite and that South Korea needs more launches to ensure the reliability of a rocket.

North Korea is also eager to acquire its own space-based surveillance network to cope with what it calls military threats

posed by the United States and South Korea.

After two launch failures earlier in 2023, North Korea placed its Mallyongong-1 spy satellite into orbit on November 21.

North Korea has since said its satellite had transmitted imagery with space views of key sites in the US and South Korea, including the White House and the Pentagon. But it hasn't released any of those satellite photos, and foreign experts doubt whether the North Korean satellite can transmit militarily meaningful imagery.

On March 31, Pak Kyong

Su, vice general director of the North's National Aerospace Technology Administration, said North Korea is expected to launch several more reconnaissance satellites this year. During a key political conference in late December, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to launch three additional military spy satellite in 2024.

The UN bans North Korea from conducting a satellite launch, considering it as a disguised test of its long-range missile technology.

The North's November satellite launch deepened tensions on the Korean Peninsula, with both Koreans taking steps to breach their 2018 agreement to lower down military tensions.

In recent years, North Korea has been engaged in a provocative run of missile tests to modernize and expand its weapons arsenals, prompting the U.S. and South Korea to strengthen their military drills in response. Experts say North Korea likely believes that an enlarged weapons arsenals would increase its leverage in future diplomacy with the US.

Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visits Beijing to emphasize ties with strongest political ally

BEIJING, Apr 8 (Agencies): Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Beijing Monday to display the strength of ties with close diplomatic ally China amid Moscow's grinding war against Ukraine.

The two continent-sized authoritarian states, increasingly in dispute with democracies, seek to gain influence in Africa, the Middle East and South America. China has backed Russia's claim that President Vladimir Putin launched his assault in 2022 because of Western provocations, without producing any solid evidence.

Russian state news agency Tass said the ministers would "discuss the situation in Ukraine and the Asia-Pacific region, issues of bilateral cooperation and interaction in the international arena," quoting Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova.

Lavrov is expected to meet with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, who has visited Russia during the conflict and maintained China's line of not dubbing the Russian war in Ukraine an invasion.

China has at times taken an



equally combative tone against the U.S. and its allies. China and Russia have held joint military drills, and are seen as seeking to supplant democracies with dictatorships in areas where they wield influence.

Despite its clear backing of Russia in the Ukraine war, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters Monday that "China has an objective and fair position on the Ukraine issue."

"We have been actively promoting peace talks and political solutions. China is not a creator or party to the Ukraine crisis,

and we have not and will not do anything to profit from it," Mao told reporters at a daily briefing.

China has also said it wasn't providing Russia with arms or military assistance, although it has maintained robust economic connections with Moscow, alongside India and other countries.

"We have always controlled the export of dual-use items in accordance with the law," Mao said, referring to industrial items that can be used for both industrial or military purposes, such as drones.

"The relevant country should

not smear or attack the normal relations between China and Russia," Mao said. "The relevant country" was a reference to the U.S., Russia and China's chief geopolitical rival.

In a phone call last week with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, U.S. President Joseph Biden pressed China over its defense relationship with Russia, which is seeking to rebuild its industrial base as it continues its invasion of Ukraine. And he called on Beijing to wield its influence over North Korea to rein in the isolated and erratic nuclear power.

Adding to the tension between the two countries, U.S. lawmakers generated new legislation that would ban TikTok, the popular social media application, if its China-based owner ByteDance doesn't sell its stakes in the platform within six months of the bill's enactment.

Lawmakers are concerned Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over data on the 170 million Americans who use TikTok.

All Chinese firms, especially those in the social media sphere, are obligated to hand over user data to the government.

4 Charged With Murder Over Killing Of 15-Year-Old French School Boy

EVRY (FRANCE), Apr 8 (Agencies): Two brothers and two other young people have been charged with murder over the killing of a 15-year-old boy that has heightened concern about violence in French schools.

Two of the accused -- a 20-year-old and a minor -- were jailed, while the other two minors were held in pre-trial remand for beating 15-year-old Shemseddine as he left school, Evry prosecutor Gregoire Dulin said in a press release early Monday after the overnight hearing.

"The entire nation is in mourning," education minister Nicole Belloubet posted on social media platform X after the schoolboy died of his injuries on Friday, a day after being attacked in Viry-Chatillon, a town around 20 kilometres (12 miles) south of Paris.

He was beaten by a group, including two brothers, in a dispute linked to their younger sister on "subjects relating to sexuality", prosecutor Dulin said in an earlier statement.

"Fearing for her reputation and that of their family, they had ordered several boys to no longer have contact with her. They (the brothers) then learned that the victim boasted of being able to speak freely with their sister," he said.

Three people wearing balaclavas attacked Shemseddine as he left school in Viry-Chatillon, police said.

He died of his wounds on Friday. Police then detained five suspects, including three 17-year-olds, a 15-year-old and a 20-year-old.

The 15-year-old is the only suspect the prosecutor did not want held

in custody.

It was the second assault last week, after a 13-year-old girl was left temporarily comatose after being attacked outside her school in the southern city of Montpellier on Tuesday.

Both incidents come at a time of heightened tensions around French schools, after threats of attacks were made against dozens of educational establishments.

"We have a form of uninhibited violence among our teenagers and sometimes among increasingly younger ones," President Emmanuel Macron said Friday before the teenager died.

"Schools need to be shielded from this," he said, adding they should "remain a sanctuary for our children, for their families, for our teachers".

Palestinians returning to Khan Younis after withdrawal find unrecognizable city

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Apr 8 (Agencies): Streams of Palestinians filed into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis on Monday to salvage what they could from the vast destruction left in the wake of Israel's offensive, a day after the Israeli military announced it was withdrawing troops from the area.

Many came back to the Gaza Strip's second-largest city to find their former hometown unrecognizable. With scores of buildings destroyed or damaged, piles of rubble now sit where apartments and businesses once did. Streets have been bulldozed. Schools and hospitals were damaged by the fighting.

Israel sent troops to Khan Younis in December, part of its blistering ground offensive that came in response to a Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7 into southern Israel. Israeli authorities say 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and roughly 250 people taken hostage.

The war, now in its seventh month, has killed more

than 33,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to local health authorities, displaced most of the territory's 2.3 million people and left vast swaths of the beleaguered Gaza Strip uninhabitable.

"Many areas, especially the city center, have become unfit for life," said Mahmoud Abdel-Ghani, who fled Khan Younis in December when Israel began its ground invasion of the city. "I found that my house and my neighbors' houses turned to rubble."

Israel's withdrawal of troops from Khan Younis signaled the end of a key phase in its war against Hamas and brought Israeli troop levels in the tiny coastal enclave to one of the lowest since the war began.

Israel said the city was a major Hamas stronghold and says its operation over the past few months killed thousands of militants and inflicted heavy damage to a vast network of tunnels used by Hamas to move weapons and fighters. It also claimed to have found evidence that hostages were held in the



city.

With no military presence in the city, Hamas could seek to regroup there as it has in other areas where the military has scaled back forces.

The latest Israeli withdrawal also cleared the way for some Palestinians to make their way back to the area to comb through the mountains of debris to try to hold on to any possessions that remained.

Najwa Ayyash, who also was displaced from Khan

Younis, said she was unable to reach her family's third floor apartment because the stairs were gone. Her brother climbed his way up through the destruction and pulled down some possessions, including lighter clothes for his children.

Bassel Abu Nasser, a Khan Younis resident who fled after an airstrike hit his home in January, said much of the city turned into rubble.

"There is no sense of life there," the 37-year-old father of two children said. "They

left nothing there."

On Sunday, shortly after the military announced it had withdrawn, lines of Palestinians could be seen leaving Khan Younis with scant possessions.

By foot and on bicycle, they carried plastic bags and laundry hampers with whatever they could gather back to where they were displaced to. One carried a rolled-up mattress. Another a standing fan. One man used his bike to move plywood.

The military exodus from Khan Younis comes ahead of an expected Israeli offensive in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city where hundreds of thousands have fled fighting elsewhere to seek shelter and which Israel says is Hamas' last major stronghold.

The city shelters some 1.4 million people — more than half of Gaza's population. The prospect of an offensive has raised global alarm, including from Israel's top ally, the U.S., which has demanded to see a credible plan to protect civilians.

Allowing people to return to nearby Khan Younis could relieve some pressure on Rafah, but many have no homes to return to. The city also is likely filled with dangerous unexploded bombs left by the fighting.

Israel's military quietly drew down troops in devastated northern Gaza earlier in the war. But it has continued to carry out airstrikes and raids in areas where it says Hamas regrouped, including Gaza's largest hospital, Shifa, leaving what

the head of the World Health Organization called "an empty shell." Israel blames Hamas for the damage, saying it fights from within civilian areas.

Khan Younis' main Nasser Hospital has also been that target of Israeli raids, with troops storming it earlier this year because the military said the remains of hostages were inside.

The precise state of the hospital after the troops' withdrawal was unclear. Video from the hospital showed the emergency building appearing to be intact, but debris was strewn around its interior where thousands of displaced people once sought shelter before being forced to evacuate by the military.

Israel says its war aims to destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities and return the roughly 130 remaining hostages, a quarter of whom Israel says are dead. Negotiations brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the U.S. meant to bring about a cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages are underway.

Electric dream spurs growth but why is India's auto industry bracing for a challenge?

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): Automobile retail sales in the country saw a solid 10 per cent growth overall across categories in FY24, with some sections like bikes and scooters revving ahead amid increased electric adoption. Growth in passenger cars and SUVs were a comfortable 8.45 per cent while two-wheelers saw eye-popping growth of nearly 50 per cent.

Then why is India's sector bracing for challenges in the coming days?

It is much more than the ongoing election season, which is anyway a damp period for business activity. However, this time around, there are a few more worry factors compounding the whole scenario. With the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reporting a notable decline in consumer sentiment among urban Indians, the industry feels it will face a nuanced challenge.



"The downturn, characterised by a restraint in discretionary spending within urban income brackets adds a layer of complexity to the landscape," said Manish Raj Singhania, president of the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA), which came out with the retail sales data on Monday morning. "In this scenario, the decision of the MPC

of the RBI to keep lending rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent would continue to badly impact the retail sales of all vehicles, especially entry level vehicles as these buyers are extremely price sensitive. Given the continued inflationary trend without any relief in finance rates, these prospective buyers may continue to hesitate." Indian auto's best-case scenario is that these

clouds will blow over by June-July, when good rains, coupled with a new government taking charge, will act as a boost. (New government's) favourable policies and an anticipated good monsoon are expected to fuel demand, especially in rural areas and the commercial vehicle sector, which is closely linked to infrastructure projects and economic activity,

according to FADA.

The optimism stems from how the industry negotiated headwinds through financial year 2024, despite threats of a looming recession and rural slowdown visible since the pandemic. However, on the home run, it managed a commendable double-digit growth, with three-wheelers, personal vehicles (PV) and tractor segments setting new record highs, surpassing previous years' performances.

While the strong demand for SUV vehicles spurred the four-wheeler PV segment, electric adoption was a visible driver in the two-wheeler space, especially as the March 31 deadline for expiry of Fame-2 subsidies approached. While the lack of subsidies may impact electric vehicle sales in the first couple of months of the new financial year, it is expected that the government will come up with an alternative offer pretty soon.

Here's why gold price is rising despite stock market rally



MUMBAI, Apr 8 (Agencies): You may have heard that gold prices go up when the stock market is bearish. But why is the price of the yellow metal skyrocketing amid a record-breaking rally in the stock market?

Well, the major reasons are the potential US Fed rate cut in the coming quarters and China's aggressive accumulation of the precious metal. Other reasons include growing tensions in the Middle East and Central Asia, depreciating Rupee and uncertainties during the election year.

Gold prices were pushed up further on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on April 8. Gold futures, which mature on June 5, was pegged at Rs 70,981 per 10 gram on the exchange, surging .49 per cent over the previous close. Fresh positions built up by participants led to a rise in gold prices, PTI cited analysts as saying.

The price of 24-carat gold in Delhi on Monday touched Rs 71,430 per 10 gram. In Mumbai, it was recorded at Rs 71,280 per 10 gram and in Chennai, it was Rs 72,150 per 10 gram.

On April 5, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said India is accumulating gold as part of its forex deployment.

"We are building up gold reserves that is a part of our reserve deployment," Das told reporters at the customary post-policy review press conference here.

RBI reportedly bought 8.7 tonne gold in January, which is the highest in two years. Its gold holdings had touched 812.3 tonne at the end of January from 803.58 tonne in the preceding month, as per the World Gold Council.

Number of telecom subscribers grows marginally to 119.7 crore in Feb: Trai

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): The number of telecom subscribers in India increased 0.38 per cent to 119.7 crore in February 2024 as compared to the previous month, according to a TRAI report published on Monday.

The urban telephone subscription increased to 66.37 crore while rural subscription increased to 53.13 crore with a sequential growth rate of 0.40 per cent and 0.34 per cent, respectively.

The total broadband subscribers also increased from 91.10 crore at the end of January to 91.67 crore at February-end, as per the monthly subscriber report published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). Top five service providers constituted 98.35 per cent of the total broadband subscribers. These include Reliance Jio Infocomm (52.2 per cent), Bharti Airtel (29.41 per cent), Vodafone Idea (13.80 per cent), BSNL (2.69 per cent), and Atria Convergence (0.24 per cent).

All circles in both wireline and wireless seg-



ments registered growth in subscriber base in February, the report said.

The wireline subscriber base at the end of February increased to 3.31 crore with a monthly growth rate of 1.73 per cent.

"The overall wireline tele-density in India increased from 2.33 per cent at the end of January 2024 to 2.37 per cent at the end of February 2024. Urban and rural wireline tele-density were 6.10 per cent and 0.31 per cent, respectively during the same period," it said. BSNL, MTNL and

APPSFL, the three PSUs access service providers, held 28.18 per cent of the wireline market share as on February 29, 2024, TRAI said.

The total number of wireless subscribers increased to 116.46 crore, registering a monthly growth rate of 0.34 per cent.

Wireless subscription in rural areas increased from 52.67 crore to 52.85 crore at a monthly growth rate of 0.34 per cent, same as that of urban.

As on February 29, 2024, the private access service providers held

92.05 per cent market share of the wireless subscribers, whereas BSNL and MTNL had a market share of only 7.95 per cent.

The report said 1.15 crore requests were received in February for mobile number portability.

The highest number of requests received till date since the inception of portability services has been in Uttar Pradesh-East (about 8.86 crore) in North-West zone, and in Madhya Pradesh (about 7.33 crore) in South-East zone.

Air India to make Bengaluru International Airport its premier South Indian hub

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): Tata-owned Air India is planning to develop Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport as its premier south Indian hub, with an aim to boost air travel connectivity to and from India over the next few years.

The plan includes making Bengaluru the origin point of what is likely to be a 'hub-and-spoke' model, where long-distance travellers from other South Indian cities are taken to Bengaluru airport for their onward long-distance global flights.

Air India has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Karnataka to establish comprehensive maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities at Bengaluru airport. This deal is expected to create 1,200 new jobs and stimulate the MRO ecosystem in the country, which the government has been trying to stimulate through budget incentives in the last couple of years.

"Airline-airport synergy is key to elevated cus-



tom experience and efficient operations," said Air India MD & CEO Campbell Wilson. "We are therefore delighted to be strengthening our relationship with Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) with a view to developing a greater presence at the airport, expanding air connectivity as well as building a major MRO centre. This partnership agreement is a significant milestone in the ongoing transformation of Air India."

The deal involves not just Air India, but Tata group airlines like Vista-

ra and Air India Express, and involves launching more services to and from the airport situated in the southern metropolis suburb of Devanahalli. A dedicated lounge will also be set up at Bengaluru's Terminal 2 for premium passengers of Tata Group's Air India and Vistara.

Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO, BIAL, said, "As the busiest airport in South India, BLR Airport is dedicated to strengthening its position as the primary international gateway to Southern and Central India. This collaboration

aligns perfectly with the Ministry of Civil Aviation's vision of developing Indian airports as hubs, reflecting our commitment to enhancing the passenger experience. Given that over half of the international outbound travellers from Bengaluru and our catchment, head to Europe, North America, Australia, and the Far East, our alliance with Air India represents a substantial leap towards this goal. We aim to capture a significant share of long-haul routes from BLR Airport over the next five years."

Spirit of inclusivity, spirituality is our strength & we need to disseminate this sufi thought to young generation: Darakhshan



Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Apr 8: Chairperson of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi today chaired a Conference of Imams & Khateebas at Srinagar on Monday.

All Imams & Khateebas of Waqf Board participated in the conference while Waqf Board members Syed Mohammed Hussain and Dr Darakhshan Andrabi also participated in the conference.

Eid-al-Fitr arrangements were reviewed in the meeting and a

deliberation on propagation of the sufi ideology took place where in all religious preachers expressed their views on the responsibility of Imams and Khateebas on social awakening related to the hazards of the drug abuse, importance of peace and harmony in the society.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Andrabi said that it was the responsibility of the preachers to pass on the messages related to moral values and social values to the new generation in our society. "Spirit of inclu-

sivity and spirituality is our strength and we need to propagate this sufi ideology.

The teachings of our spiritual leaders and Walis and Rishis need to be disseminated to the youth", said Dr Darakhshan. She said that this was the age of the revival of the sufi thought in J&K and religious preachers have a bigger role to play. While extending Eid greetings to the religious preachers, Dr Andrabi wished them all the best for Eid prayers in their respective areas.

Centre for Molecular Biology, CUJ hosts Journal Club Seminar on "Oral Microbiome Dysbiosis"

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: The Centre for Molecular Biology at Central University of Jammu (CUJ) hosted a weekly journal club meeting. In the meeting, research scholar Mr Manish Kumar Mishra delivered a talk titled "Disrupting balance: Oral microbiome dysbiosis due to lifestyle habits."

The talk emphasized the significance of healthy lifestyle habits to maintain a healthy oral microbiome and how factors such as diet, oral hygiene practices, smoking, alcohol, stress, and medication use can influence the balance of the oral microbiome which ultimately leads to disorders like dental caries, periodontal diseases, oral thrush, halitosis, oral

cancers, etc.

The meeting was coordinated by Dr Narendra K. Bairwa, Associate Professor, CMB, CUJ.

The students, scholars, and faculty of the Centre had fruitful discussions about prioritizing oral health and adopting a healthy lifestyle to achieve overall well-being.

During the meeting, the peer group discussions were encouraged to advance the knowledge and raise awareness about oral microbiome dysbiosis.

Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Central University of Jammu, and Dr Swarnak Sharma, Director, Centre for Molecular Biology, praised the Centre's efforts in giving its students an excellent scientific environment.

Pawan Verma bags Prof. Ram Nath Shastri Memorial Award-2024

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: In a press note issued by Dogri Sanstha Jammu, it was said that in the final meeting of jury members for Prof. Ram Nath Shastri Memorial Award-2024 organized at Dogri Bhawan, Dogri Sanstha, Karamnagar, Jammu, Pawan Verma, young dogri poet was declared winner of 11th Prof. Ram Nath Shastri Memorial award for his collection of dogri poetry 'Jo Katteya So Mahlein'.

On this occasion, Prof. Lalit Magotra, President Dogri Sanstha Jammu said that out of the shortlisted books evaluated by Jury members, consolidated numbers went in favour of Pawan Verma who was awarded with this prestigious award for his first dogri book 'Jo Katteya So Mahlein'. He said that this year also a number of books were submitted by dogri writers which is an encouraging sign. He hoped that such awards will inspire more dogri writers to compile their works in book form and get acknowledged. The jury comprised of Prof. Veena Gupta, Inderjeet Kesar, Vijaya Thakur, Puran Chander Sharma and Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju'. It is pertinent to add here that this annual award is given by Dogri Sanstha in collaboration with family of Prof. Ram Nath Shastri for first ever book of the dogri writer written in last five years and carries a cash award of Rs 21,000, a memento and a shawl.

Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju', General Secretary Dogri Sanstha Jammu, on this



occasion said that this award is given on birthday of father of Dogri literature Prof. Ram Nath Shastri that falls on 15th April. He further added that this is a very prestigious award and every year there are so many entries and it is really tough task to select one of them for the award. But the process has to be followed and only one may get the honour. He extended his greetings to Pawan Verma for being bestowed upon this prestigious award and thanked all the participants and said that such enthusiasm shows that future of dogri literature is quite bright. He hoped to get same response in future also.

KL Rahul's intent under scanner ahead of T20 World Cup, continues lean run in short format

In the match against Gujarat Titans, KL played a struggling, conservative T20 knock, scoring just 33 runs in 31 balls

LUCKNOW, Apr 8 (Agencies): Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper KL Rahul continued his horrid run with the bat in the Indian Premier League (IPL), adding more fuel to the fire of speculations about his place in India's T20I set-up ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup starting in West Indies/USA from June 1 onwards.

In the match against Gujarat Titans (GT) at Lucknow's Ekana Stadium, KL played a struggling, conservative T20 knock, scoring just 33 runs in 31 balls, with three boundaries. His runs came at a sub-par strike rate of 106.45.

Having played four IPL matches so far, KL has scored only 126 runs at an average of 31.50, with an underwhelming strike rate of 128.57. He has scored a half-century, a knock of 58 in 44 balls against RR, but has otherwise registered scores of 15 in nine balls, 20 in 14 balls and 33. The wicketkeeper-batter has



been disappointing with the bat in the IPL since the 2023 edition, a season which was cut short by an injury. In the 2023 IPL, KL scored 274 runs in nine matches at an average of 34.25 and a sub-par strike rate of 113.22, with two half-centuries and best score of 74. Overall since IPL 2023, KL has featured in 13 matches for LSG,

two IPLs, KL is the only batter with a strike rate of below 120.

This raises concern over KL's intent while batting, as Ishan Kishan (170.37 strike rate), Sanju Samson (150.84 strike rate), Jitesh Sharma (126.08 strike rate) and Rishabh Pant (154.54) have shown better intent while batting in this IPL, making their T20 World Cup prospects very strong.

Though the batter has made a successful comeback in Tests and ODIs, his last T20I to this day remains against England, the semifinal clash of T20 WC 2022 in Australia, where India lost by 10 wickets. The tournament was a disappointing one for KL, scoring 120 runs in six matches at an average of 21.33 and a strike rate of just 120.75, with two fifties.

Since then, the selectors have gone with much younger, attacking players like Kishan, Jitesh and Samson in short format.

IPL 2024: Punjab Kings look to maintain 100 per cent home record as cricketing action returns to Mullanpur

MULLANPUR, Apr 8 (Agencies): After an inspiring win over the Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Punjab Kings are all set to return home for their next encounter of the ongoing season of the Indian Premier League.

They will face off against the Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday at the new PCA Stadium, Mullanpur, and this will be the first night match at the stadium under gorgeous bright lights.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan and Head of Cricket Development, Sanjay Bangar expressed excitement on the action returning to the dazzling home stadium.

The Kings' journey this season began with a tremendous win over the Delhi Capitals in front of the 30,000-strong crowd at the newly-developed stadium on March 23, 2024.

The enthralling cricketing action was made even better with loud fans and mesmerising music at the ground, giving the fans a chance to witness the IPL spectacle up close and personal.

To further make the experience an unforgettable one for everyone, a laser show has also been organized at the stadium on Tuesday during the match that is guaranteed to leave the fans

glued to their seats.

For the Punjab Kings' squad, the loud cheers from the fans are one of the key factors of motivation, and Dhawan asked the home crowd to fill up the stands once again and make their voices heard on Tuesday.

"We, as players, always want our fans to be the loudest. And Punjab fans already have it in their blood to be vocal and expressive at all times. So, we are delighted to return to our home crowd and cannot wait to meet with everyone who comes out to cheer for us at the stadium," Dhawan said.

Bangar further added that the side will work even harder to ensure that home crowd expectations are met.

"We are always aware that our fans want the best from us at all times. Whenever we are playing at home, our fans always have it in them to be the loudest and their constant support always inspires us to leave no stone unturned to get the desired results. So, I urge all the fans to fill up the stands to the brim once again on Tuesday, and help us add another win to our results and maintain our 100% home record," Bangar said.

Lizaad Williams joins Delhi Capitals as replacement for Harry Brook

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 (Agencies): South African fast bowler Lizaad Williams was on Monday roped in by Delhi Capitals as a replacement for batter Harry Brook in the ongoing Indian Premier League after the Englishman withdrew from the tournament to grieve his grandmother's death.

Since making his international debut in 2021, the 30-year-old Williams has represented South Africa in two Tests, four ODIs and 11 T20 Internationals.

He has joined Delhi Capitals at his base price of Rs 50 lakh.

"Lizaad Williams, the South African fast bowler, has been signed by the Delhi Capitals as a replacement for England's Harry Brook for the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024," the franchise said in a statement.

Brook, who was signed by Delhi Capitals for Rs



4 crore, withdrew from the league after his grandmother died in February.

"I was so excited to be picked by Delhi Capitals and was so looking forward to joining up with everyone. Whilst I don't think I should need to share my personal reasons behind this decision, I know there will be many asking why. So I do want to share this," he had shared on his social media page after withdrawing.

"I lost my grandmother last month -- she was a rock to me and I spent a huge amount of my childhood in her home; my attitude to life and

love for cricket was shaped by her and my late grandfather," the 25-year-old wrote.

In his inaugural IPL season last year, when he turned up for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Brook set the stage on fire with a 55-ball hundred against Kolkata Knight Riders only to end on an underwhelming note.

In all, he managed only 190 runs in 11 matches after the franchise paid Rs 13.25 crore to acquire his services.

Brook had also pulled out of England's recent five-Test series in India after being part of the pre-tour training camp in the UAE.

Candidates: Pragg breaks Gujrathi's resolve, sister Vaishali too gets first win

TORONTO, Apr 8 (Agencies): Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa came up with a spectacular game to down compatriot Vidit Gujrathi in the third round of the Candidates Chess tournament here. It turned out to be a satisfying day for the only sibling duo to make it to the Candidates ever as R Vaishali also scored her first victory in the event at the expense of Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria in what was also the lone decisive game in the women's section.

In the men's section, D Gukesh tried to make some headway but could not really dent the solid defences of Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, while Frenchman Firouzja Alireza's extra pawn came to a naught against top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States. USA's Hikaru Nakamura had no difficulty in getting an easy draw as black against Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan.

In the women's section, Koneru Humpy played out an easy draw with white against Zhongyi Tan. Tinjie Lei of China signed peace with Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia, while Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine split the point with Rus-



sia's Kateryna Lagno.

With 11 rounds still to come, Caruana, Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi share the lead on two points apiece in the men's section. They are followed by Gujrathi and Praggnanandhaa on 1.5 points each. Nakamura, Alireza and Abasov complete the line-up another half-point behind.

In the women's event, Zhongyi Tan (2.5 points) remained a half-point clear of nearest rival Goryachkina, with Humpy, Vaishali and Lagno on their toes with 1.5 points each. Lei, Muzychuk and Salimova share the sixth spot with one point each in their kitty.

Another surprise

Praggnanandhaa chose an accelerated Schielmann defence out of a Ruy Lopez that is seldom seen in top GM games. Praggnanandhaa is known to spring surprises and Gujrathi realised this very early in the opening. "I was not too sure in the opening as I could not remember the preparation, but I think black was fine," Praggnanandhaa said.

After a brilliant start to the tournament, Gujrathi very early figured out he was in for a grinding contest in his first game as white as he spent a lot of time in the opening. The game fluctuated in

the early middle game between an equal position and sometimes favouring Gujrathi but it was not easy to find all the best moves every time he was posed a question.

In the end, Gujrathi was left to play 11 moves in about five minutes with the position not favouring him and as is often the case the clock took its toll on the Indian.

Praggnanandhaa quickly landed himself with a winning rook and pawns endgame and there was no hope left soon for Gujrathi. The game lasted 45 moves.

"I saw that I could make a draw through perpetual checks on move 11 but believed my position to be better," Gujrathi said.

Gukesh was caught a bit off-guard in a queen pawn game playing white. It was a symmetrical structure in the ensuing middle game after the queens got traded early and Nepomniachtchi kept the balance despite being on the defensive. In the end, Gukesh had two bishops but black was simply too solid to make a decisive headway.

Chennai Super Kings seek turn of tide at home against Kolkata Knight Riders

CHENNAI, Apr 8 (Agencies): Another high octane clash is on the cards as Chennai Super Kings take on Kolkata Knight Riders at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday. Defending champions Chennai are coming into the game after suffering back-to-back defeats while KKR are unbeaten in the tournament.

CSK, in the last game against Hyderabad, were outplayed in all the departments. First, they did not put enough runs on the board, then they had a bad power play with the ball. What did not help their cause is the absence of Mustafizur Rahman and Matheesha Pathirana.

However, the good news for them is Rahman, who had headed to Bangladesh to sort out some visa issues, is expected to land in Chennai on Sunday night and will be available for selection on Monday. Pathirana, meanwhile, is still being assessed. "Obviously, it's a long tournament and we wanted to be conservative about our decision making around him.

So whether he'll play the next game (KKR) or not will be determined by the physios. He's not overly concerned. It's more a



case of it's a long tournament," said Eric Simons, bowling consultant of CSK on Sunday.

The bigger concern, meanwhile, would be the way CSK batted in the powerplay in their last two games.

Head coach Stephen Fleming admitted as much after the loss against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday. "The first five or six overs were the best to bat, and the aggressive way in which they played showed that. So, being able to get a wicket first over and maybe shut down the second, it could have been a competitive score, but maybe

15 short," he explained.

Therefore, skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and Rachin Ravindra will have to up their game in the powerplay. Gaikwad is striking at 118.91, and the team will need a lot more from him. CSK's leading run-scorer Shivam Dube, who has tallied 148 runs, has an impressive strike rate of 160.86. So if Sameer Rizvi, Moeen Ali get into the groove, CSK can post a good total.

Their bowling attack is likely to be the same as the last match. Shardul Thakur could be drafted into the playing XI in place of Mukesh Choudhary, but the

likes of Deepak Chahar, Tushar Deshpande, Moeen, Ravindra Jadeja will have their task cut out to contain Sunil Narine and Co.

KKR, along with Rajasthan Royals, remain unbeaten in the tournament. They have played as a unit and have excelled in all the departments. But CSK is a different team when they play at home. This should be a cause of concern for Shreyas Iyer and Co. "Well, I think we like to believe so (have the bowling to contain CSK).

I think every team in this competition, if you ask them this question, they're going to say they have the best attack and we believe the same. I feel every cricketer or every player who's part of this IPL ecosystem is a cricketer who accomplished something in their career and has the skill and potential. So I feel our team definitely has the potential. I think on any given day, against any opposition, whether that be CSK or anyone, I think it is about how you can realise that potential. So I think we have an experienced attack," said Abhishek Nayar, assistant coach of KKR.

IPL 2024: Rohit Sharma gives inspirational speech after MI's 1st win of the season



MUMBAI, Apr 8 (Agencies): Mumbai batter Rohit Sharma gave an inspirational speech in the dressing room following their first win of the IPL 2024 season. MI beat DC by 29 runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai to post their first points of the new season. Rohit was one of MI's star-performers on the night, scoring a 27-ball 49 to get his side off to a flying start. His effort helped MI post their third-highest total in the history of the Indian Premier League. Rohit stepped down from his role as MI captain following the historic trade move of Hardik Pandya from GT.

In a video posted by MI on social media platform 'X', Rohit is given a medal by former MI all-rounder turned batting coach Keiron Pollard before giving a rousing speech in the dressing room, hailing the team's batting performance. Rohit missed out on a

well-deserved half-century, being dismissed after scoring 49 runs off 27 balls, smashing six boundaries and three sixes against Delhi.

"It was a wonderful batting performance. It's something that we've all been striving for from game one. It goes to show that individual performances don't matter if the whole batting group can stand up put their hand up and take a look at the team's goal, we can achieve that kind of total," said Rohit.

"So I think that is something that we have been talking about for a long time. It's something that the batting coach (Pollard), Mark (Boucher), and the captain (Pandya) want. So it is wonderful to see and long may it continue," Rohit added.

With his knock on Sunday, Rohit became just the second batter after RCB's Virat Kohli to score 1000 runs against DC. He also became just the third batter after Kohli (vs DC), and David Warner (vs PBKS and DC) to hit 1000 or more runs against a single franchise in the IPL.

The former MI skipper also became the fourth player to take 100 or more catches as a fielder in the IPL, following in the footsteps of Kohli (110), Suresh Raina (109) and Pollard (103).

Following their win over DC, the five-time IPL champions will turn their focus towards RCB, with the two sides set to lock horns at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday, April 11.

Shiv Sena demands to keep Panchhi Heli Service (Jammu-Himkoti) limited, not to spoil nature of Yatra

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Shiv Sena UBT Jammu-Kashmir unit has welcomed the announcement of starting Panchhi Heli Service from Jammu Airport to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan from the first Holy Chaitra Navratri (April 9) and has demanded to keep it limited. Along with this, it has raised the demand for providing registration facility for Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra at Jammu Railway Station and promotion and restoration of the mythological form of the Yatra.

In a press conference held today at the party's state office, state chief Manish Sahni said that Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is engaged in providing every possible facility to the devotees.

Recently, the construction of skywalk in the holy court of Maa and Durga Bhawan for



the rest of the devotees near the Bhawan and facilities like health ATM for the health checkup of the devotees are commendable steps.

On the first Holy Navratri starting from 9th April, Panchhi helicopter service from Jammu airport to Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan is also a welcome step but it should be kept limited. Sahni said that the form of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra should not be spoiled in the race of facilities.

He said that he has no objection to devel-

opment and facilities. Already, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra has been made incomplete (Aadhi Adhuri) due to the expansion of road and rail routes.

The first darshan of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi "Kaul Kandoli" and the second darshan "Deva Mai" have been separated from the travel route due to the expansion of road and rail.

The existing form of this Holy Yatra is being changed by the direct helicopter service from Jammu to Himkoti (near Bhawan).

The devotees will be

deprived of the privilege of visiting the historical temples of Jammu including Kol Kandoli (first darshan), Deva Mai (second darshan), Katra's historical Bhumika temple, Holy Banganga, Charan Paduka, Ardhkumwari.

Along with this, the economy of Jammu, which is largely dependent on the devotees visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, is almost certain to be affected. People associated with the hotel and taxi business are afraid of being affected the most.

Sahni said that Shri

Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department should take some concrete steps to promote and restore the mythological form of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra and it should not be spoiled in the guise of facilities.

Along with this, Sahni has demanded the facility of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra registration at Jammu Railway Station. Sahni said that a written request has been made to grant time to meet the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (who is also the Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board) regarding the above-mentioned demands.

On this occasion Women Wing President Meenakshi Chhibber, General Secretary Vikas Bakshi, Kamghar Wing President Raj Singh and Secretary Rakesh Handa were present.

BJP should promise in its manifesto to teach all Vedas, Puranas to school children: Chandel

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: National Chairman of the National Valmiki Sena, Raju Chandel wrote a letter to the esteemed Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and the distinguished Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, urging that Hindustan is a country of Hindus, and there is no need for a Waqf Board. He stated that all the lands in the country have been illegally occupied in the name of the Waqf Board, and in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the BJP is set to achieve a historic victory. All Hindu families desire that their school-going children should be taught historical texts such as the "Vedas, Purana Ramayana, and Mahabharata" in school curriculums as declared in this year's election manifesto.

Chandel questioned why the scriptures of Sanatan Dharma are not



taught in schools across our undivided India, from Islamic countries to India. He emphasized that our Sanatani Indian children should be taught the sacred scriptures and ancient texts of Sanatan Dharma in schools and colleges across the country. Children in schools should be educated about

the history of India. Chandel also stated that it should also be stated in the manifesto that all the government taxes collected from all temples should also be collected from all mosques and churches, otherwise no tax should be levied on temples. Equality should be given to everyone.

AAP Jammu stages hunger strike against Kejriwal's arrest

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: AAP, Jammu held a massive hunger strike at Green Belt Park Road, Gandhi Nagar Jammu against Kejriwal's arrest.

The AAP activists who participated in the hunger strike include, Nirmal Mahna, Agya Kour, Santosh Labroo, Laxmi Devi, S. Deep Singh, Farooq Ahmed Bandy, Om Parkash Khajuria, Surinder Singh Shingari, Ravi Shashtri, Mohinder Pal Singh, Amit Langer, Dr. Rajinder Thapa, Mahesh Sudan, Partap Jamwal, S. Harbhan Singh, Raj Kumar Nischal, N.P.Singh, S. Amrik Singh Sasan, Ram Pal Khajuria, Asif Gill, Mehar Singh, Naresh Kesar, Manohar Lal Sharma, Sham Lal Thakur, Sandey, Ch. Gulzar Hussan, Sandeep Singh Parihar, Veer Ji Kachroo, Talvinder Singh, Rahul Labroo, Kuldeep Kumar Rao & others.

The AAP leaders on the occasion said that the main agenda of BJP is to stop the growth of AAP in India. It is indulging in undemocratic method of arresting the popularly elected AAP leaders on filthy grounds. The main agenda of undemocratic BJP government is to tarnish the image of AAP leaders & to stop them from election campaigning in general elections, 2024. The AAP leaders said that almost all media houses of India & the International Media have reported that the arrest of a popular Chief Minister having the backing of two crore people and the CM of the Capital of Nation is the darkest event and chapter in the history of



our great Democracy. In spite of the stiff competition from opposition parties Kejriwal managed 67 out of 70 seats & BJP managed only 3 seats in 2015 in Delhi Assembly election & AAP managed 62 seats out of 70 & BJP managed only 8 seats in 2019 in Delhi Assembly Election and also formed the government in Punjab after getting 92 seats out of 117 seats, which is the leading state of Indian Union. Thrice AAP managed a crushing defeat to opposition Parties including BJP in Delhi Assembly elections from time to time. The Party is spreading its ideology to other parts of the Nation. It has become a National Party for excellence in the shortest period of time. In India 99% of the people are living a measurable life & fall in AAAM AADMI category. The wealth has accumulated in a few hands -1% . The 99% of people in India are with APP and want justice at every level for common man-Aam Aadmi. The AAP Democratic model in India is the latest & the greatest democratic model at National & International level.

Majority of the opposition Parties including BJP are not able to digest the fast growth of Aam Aadmi Party, which is headed

by Competent & intellectual class of honest & dedicated leaders of the masses at National & International level. This new experiment in Indian Politics synchronizes with the best Democratic model - French form of governance 1804, which is the greatest democratic model in the World till date. In order to check the growing popularity of AAP at National & International level BJP is using un-ethical politics of Vendetta and misusing the power through impartial investigating agencies - ED, CBI, In-Come Tax, NIA etc. BJP is using pick & Choose policy to remain in power by appointing top Posts in violation of Model Code of Conduct, which is enforce even today. All most all the policies of BJP government are undemocratic & needs to be re-studied by veterans & constitutional experts. All the guaranties given by the BJP headed by the most incompetent PM of India till date are fake & for from reality The word Guarantee has been stolen from the vocabulary of Mr. Arvind Kejriwal a highly Educated, dynamic, Honest versatile & most scientific & successful leader of the masses & CM of the Capital of the largest democracy of the World.

JKBS' plea to GoI, LG

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: The Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha (JKBS) held its general body meeting at Shahzadpur which was attended by a large number of Batwal community members.

The meeting discussed the present scenario of Batwal community putting up in hilly, rural and urban areas and said that despite being a huge segment of population no representation had ever been to it in the government forums and also no benefit of reservation had ever gone to its educated youths in the past due to lack of political hand behind them.

The community leaders revealed that in 1994, the Central Planning Commission at the behest of the then Prime Minister Narsimha Rao, undertook the ethnographic study of J&K Batwal community with an object to uplift it from the state of utter degradation it had been living

in, but even after lapse of thirty years, nothing has been done by the government to improve its living standard which is very disheartening to see.

The meeting further stated that the Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha submitted a memorandum to present Lieutenant Governor Manoj Kumar Sinha in July 2022 but till date action has also not been taken to consider any demand enshrined therein.

The meeting as such urged the Government of India to kindly refer to the survey report of Batwal community's ethnographic study lying with the Registrar General India, New Delhi and sanction 'economic cum employment package' in order that rearmost Batwal community could live a dignified life like other evolved products of the society. The meeting also urged the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Kumar Sinha to consider community's other demands sympathetically.

Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust to organize "Maa Chandi Paath", "Shree Ramayan Paath" at Haridwar

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: The "Chaitra-Vasant Navratri Parav-2024" is set to begin from Pratipada Tithi of Shukla Paksha in the Chaitra Month, starting on Tuesday, the 9th April, 2024, and concluding on Wednesday, the 17th April, 2024.

These nine days are dedicated to the worship of the Nine Forms of Maa Durga Ji: Maa Shailputri, Maa Brahmacharini, Maa Chandraghanta, Maa Kushmanda, Maa Skandamata, Maa Katyayani, Maa Kalaratri, Maa Mahagauri, and Maa Siddhidatri.

Each day of the festival is devoted to the worship of these avatars.

The Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust is organizing the event, with Pawan Kumar Shastri, President of the Trust, briefing about its importance.

He said the Trust will organize "Maa Chandi Paath" and "Shree Ramayan Paath" at its Haridwar Bhawan, commencing from Tuesday, 9th April, 2024, and culminating on Wednesday, the 17th April, 2024. These events will include chanting of Vedic Hymns and other Hindu religious rituals for the welfare and prosperity of families associated with the Trust and the general public.

He invited devotees to participate in the "Maa Chandi Paath" and "Shree Ramayan Paath" at Haridwar Bhawan. Devotees can seek blessings of Maa Durga Ji by attending the event physically or by participating remotely.

A special program will also be organized at Haridwar Bhawan on 17th April, 2024, to celebrate "Ramnavmi Parav" with grandeur, he said adding that devotees

who are unable to physically attend the event in Haridwar due to unavoidable circumstances can participate remotely by becoming Yajmaans.

They can fill out a prescribed form to become a part of the event, and on the culmination of "Maa Chandi Paath" on 17th April, 2024, Navratri Parshad will be sent to their home addresses, Pawan Shastri said

He added that the Trust has arranged for live telecast of the program on their Facebook page, enabling devotees to watch the "Navratri Poojan" at Haridwar from anywhere.

For detailed information and inquiries, interested individuals can contact the provided helpline numbers 94191-93645, 94196-62100, 99063-97638, 95969-55663, Helpline No. 70511-22990 (Jammu), 98971-28391 (Haridwar).

Joint Secretary of NITI Aayog delivers Expert Talk at SMVDU

Top News Report

KATRA, Apr 8: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University Katra organized an expert talk on Mission Lifestyle for Environment. The talk was delivered by Shri Yugal Joshi Joint secretary, NITI AYOJ and Director Mission LIFE. The talk was enlightening and inspiring, shedding light on how each one of us can make a difference in preserving our planet through mindful lifestyle choices. He specifically highlighted examples of



sustainable living practices and emphasized individual responsibility towards the environment that sparked a significant interest among the students. The chief guest of the event was the Vice

Chancellor, Prof. Pragati Kumar.

The expert talk was coordinated by Professor of Practice, Uma Devi in the University.

The event was organized in collaboration

with the NSS unit of the University. Following the expert talk there was a wonderful display of talent by NSS volunteers celebrating their 2nd Foundation day. Songs, poems and classical dance were the highlight of the cultural program.

NSS student coordinator Sadhvi Sharma presented a brief presentation of various activities organized by the NSS unit during the last two years.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Pragati Kumar felicitated Shri Yugal Joshi

and thanked him for the efforts in finalizing a subject based on Mission LIFE.

They also appreciated the efforts of NSS volunteers for their exemplary work in the last two years.

NSS volunteers Sadhvi Sharma and Abhishek Kumar Sharma were also awarded for their extraordinary and selfless contribution in the NSS team during the last two years.

NSS Programme Coordinator, Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Co-coordinator, Dr. Kamaldeep were also present during the event.

Sahil Mahajan releases devotional album "Maa Tawia De Paar Basdi"

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 8: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sanskriti, Art and Culture Cell Co-Convener, Sahil Mahajan released the Devotional Album "Maa Tawia De Paar Basdi" at near Shiv Mandir Kabir Colony, Jammu. Social Activists Jyoti

Parkash, Raj Kumar Singer Sanjeev, Rahul Sharma Omkar, Vikrant and Lovish Sharma were also present.

The programme was organized by Bachna Lal and Sunita Devi.

The song "Maa Tawia De Paar Basdi" has been sung by singer Master Shammi, and Music com-

posed by Bunty Shah. The video has been prepared by Neeraj Kumar, Lyrics by Komal Sharma under Special thnx Sanjana Sanjwal.

The Album has been released on YouTube and Master Shammi Records Channel simultaneously.

Sahil Mahajan appreciated the BJP Sanskriti Art & Culture Cell J&K for



encouraging the young talent. He said that we as a societal family must endeavour to support and nurture young talent which will bring laurels to the whole of Jammu & Kashmir.

Sahil Mahajan while speaking lauded the young talent of Jammu & Kashmir in bringing out melodious

devotional albums.

He said that "Maa Tawia De Paar Basdi" is revered by one and all in the whole region. He praised the whole production team, especially the Singers and Sahil Mahajan for their efforts in making the release of the album. Mahajan also said that new opportuni-

ties are being opened up everywhere today for the innovative mind setup.

He said that "Bharat Bhoomi" has a vast and rich cultural heritage and these devotees of fine arts ensure that the mind of our creative youth is directed towards nurturing their skills with a positive mind setup.