

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, TUESDAY, APRIL 09, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

### Earthquake of magnitude 3.7 strikes Kishtwar

JAMMU, Apr 9 (Agencies): An earthquake of magnitude 3.7 struck the Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) said.

According to the National Centre for Seismology, the earthquake occurred at 4:44 pm at a depth of 10 km.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 3.7, Occurred on 09-04-2024, 16:44:04 IST, Lat: 33.31 & Long: 76.72, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir," National Centre for Seismology posted on X.

Kishtwar recently witnessed an earthquake on April 7. The magnitude of the earthquake was 3.5.

### 2 killed as truck hits motorcycles in Udhampur

JAMMU, Apr 9 (Agencies): Two people were killed and as many were injured on Tuesday when a speeding truck hit their motorcycles on Dhar road in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, police said.

The victims, aged between 24 and 26 years, were heading for Sukrala Mata temple on two motorcycles to pay their obeisance on the start of 'Chaitra Navratri' when they were hit by the Kashmir-bound truck near Dhudar Nallah, a police official said.

Rohit Singh and Shubham Samotra, residents of Udhampur, died on the spot, while the other two, Ajay Kumar and Sunil Kumar were injured and shifted to hospital, he said.

The erring driver was arrested and a case was registered against him, he added.

### Distt Magistrate Leh withdraws restrictions effective U/S 144

LEH, Apr 9 (Agencies): District Magistrate Leh has withdrawn restrictions effective under Section 144 in the district.

"Whereas certain restrictions were imposed under Section 144 of CrPC to prevent any breach of peace and disturbance to public tranquility vide this office Order; and whereas the Senior Superintendent of Police Leh has reported in a letter that there is no imminent apprehension of breach of peace and public order and has recommended that the restrictions imposed under Section 144 of the CrPC may be withdrawn," reads an order, a copy of which lies with news agency Kashmir Scroll.

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## Chief Justice expresses concern over High Courts' prolonged judgment reservations: Report

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud raised concerns about the trend of High Courts holding judgments reserved for prolonged periods, citing potential repercussions for litigants. This observation came during a hearing on a case related to arbitration proceedings, with a bench also comprising Justices JB Pardi-



wala and Manoj Misra, as reported by Bar and Bench.

"What is a matter of concern is judges reserving matters for over 10 months without judg-

ment. I wrote to all the High Courts. After the letter, I see many judges just de-reserving matters and listing them as part-heard. Honestly, after that long, the oral arguments do not matter and judges forget," remarked CJI Chandrachud.

The bench subsequently directed the concerned High Court to expedite the disposal of the matter. Expressing hope that this isn't a widespread trend

across other High Courts, the Supreme Court emphasized the importance of timely resolution to alleviate the burden on litigants.

"We hope this is not a trend at more High Courts of the country. We are of the view that releasing a matter at this stage after it has been heard for a substantial period compounds the delay and plight and legal fees of litigants..."

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### Minor dies, another injured after falling from house in Bandipora

SRINAGAR, Apr 9 (Agencies): A minor lost her life while her cousin was injured after they fell from a two storey house in North Kashmir Bandipora District Monday late night.

An official told news agency Kashmir Scroll

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## Over 2 Lakh Expected to Gather for PM's Rally in JK on April 12, Claims BJP

SRINAGAR, Apr 9 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir Unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is expecting a turnout of over two lakh attendees for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally slated to take place in Udhampur on April 12, this year. This will be the Prime Minister's 3rd public rally this year alone.

Sources said that the much-anticipated meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, initially slated for April 9 in Jammu, has been postponed. However, political engagements continue as a gathering in Basohli, Kathua, has been arranged for April 15, focusing on discussions pertinent to the Udhampur parliamentary constituency, represent-

ed by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh. Adding to the political fervor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a rally in Udhampur on April 12.

State party president Ravindra Raina told reporters that there is an expected turnout of over two lakh attendees for the

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## Article 370 takes centre stage in 3-way fight in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur

SRINAGAR, Apr 9 (Agencies): JAMMU, Apr 9: Four years after being revoked, Article 370 has taken centre stage in the poll campaign in Jammu and Kashmir, more so in the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency where Union Minister Jitendra Singh is seeking reelection.

The seat is seeing a triangular fight with the Congress fielding Choudhary Lal Singh and the Democratic Progressive

Azad Party (DPAP) pitting three-time ex-MLA G M Saroori against the BJP's Jitendra Singh who is vying for a hat-trick of victory in the constituency.

Polling in Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency will be held in the first of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections on April 19.

Lal Singh has been seeking the support of the electorate by accus-

ing the BJP of snatching Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and special constitutional provisions, while Union Minister Singh has been demanding that the main opposition party clears its stand on Article 370.

Canvassing for Saroori, DPAP chairman and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad held a series of public rallies and said

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## Ex-Cop wanted in triple murder, drug trafficking arrested

JAMMU, Apr 9 (Agencies): A former police constable wanted in a triple murder and drug trafficking here has been arrested, officials said on Monday.

According to police, Sadeeq Ali, who is involved in serious crimes in various areas of Jammu region, had

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## Delhi HC dismisses Kejriwal's plea: 'ED in possession of sufficient materials for arrest'

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The Delhi Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging his arrest in a money laundering case. The Court said that the Enforcement Directorate had sufficient materials to arrest the Aam Aadmi Party leader.

Hearing a plea challenging his arrest by ED in a money laundering case registered in connection with the alleged liquor policy scam, Justice



Swarana Kanta Sharma upheld Kejriwal's arrest as valid and dismissed his petition. The Court

observed the agency was in possession of enough material which led to his

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## ED nabs Delhi cyber fraudster at IGI in Rs 4,978 Crore Scam

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Delhi-based cyber fraudster Puneet Kumar for his role as an important kingpin within a syndicate responsible for orchestrating a series of cybercrimes and online gaming schemes across India between 2020 and 2024, amounting to huge illicit gains of Rs

4,978 crore, all of which have been siphoned off abroad.

Also known as Puneet Maheshwari, the cyber fraudster, who is a resident of Delhi's Moti Nagar, was arrested on April 3 at the arrival hall of Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital while travelling from

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## LS Polls: CRPF, BSF personnel leave Manipur for West Bengal

WEST BENGAL, Apr 9 (Agencies): Nearly five thousand central armed police personnel of CRPF and BSF will finally exit Manipur after months of deployment during the unabated violence that began in May. They will now be on poll duty in

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## What if we rename parts of China: Rajnath on Beijing changing names of Arunachal areas

NAMSAL, Apr 9 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday criticised China for renaming several places in Arunachal Pradesh, and wondered whether a similar attempt by India will result in those areas of the neighbouring country becoming "parts of our territory".

Addressing an election rally at Namsal in Arunachal Pradesh East Constituency, Singh said China's move to change



names of 30 places in the northeastern state will not change the ground reality.

Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India, he asserted. "I want to ask China if we change the names of various states of the neighbouring country, will those be parts of our territory? Because of such activities, the relation between India and China will deteriorate," Singh said.

"We want to maintain good relations with all our neighbours."

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## Thousands Throng Vaishno Devi Shrine On First Day Of Chaitra Navratri

KATRA, Apr 9 (Agencies): Thousands of devotees from across the country thronged the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir as the nine-day long 'Chaitra Navratri' commenced on Tuesday.

'Shat Chandi Maha Yagya', a special havan organised by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), was performed at the holy cave amidst the serene aura besides other rituals on the auspicious occasion, a spokesperson of the board said.

He said the sacred rituals at the shrine, located atop Trikuta hills, spanning across the Navratri are being performed to foster harmony, abundance and good health for all.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, along with other board members

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## Adv Ankur Sharma addresses public meetings in Samba

### Top News Report

SAMBA, Apr 9: Ekam Sanatan Party's National President and MP Candidate for Jammu Lok Sabha, Advocate Ankur Sharma, along with his team members, conducted a series of public meetings in several villages including Tappal, Nichala, Rattanpur Surala, Odh, Gurara Jattan, Gaghwal, and Raghu Chak.

During these gatherings, Advocate Ankur Sharma emphasized the significance of the party's election symbol, the Bansuri (Flute), urging the electorate to associate it with the promise of empowerment and

honor for Jammu Province. He reiterated his commitment to breaking the longstanding understanding between Delhi and Kashmiri political classes, which has often marginalized Jammu as a secondary entity.

Addressing the enthusiastic crowds, Advocate Ankur Sharma recounted his relentless efforts towards the betterment of Jammu Province, highlighting significant milestones such as his role in exposing the Rs 25,000 crore Land Scam and advocating for a CBI investigation, his legal and political endeavours in the Rassana Case, and his advocacy for minority rights in J&K.

Advocate Ankur Sharma urged the people of Jammu Lok Sabha constituency, particularly in Samba, to vote for him by pressing the "Bansuri" button on the EVM. He emphasized that every vote cast in his favor would contribute to Jammu's empowerment and signify a commitment to addressing the fundamental questions of survival and existence faced by Jammu and Dogras.

The public, showing great enthusiasm and confidence in Advocate Ankur Sharma's leadership, expressed their support for his vision of a stronger and more empowered Jammu Province.

They acknowledged his dedication to various causes, including his efforts against Article 370/35-A, his advocacy for the protection of Hindu religious institutions, and his unwavering commitment to cow protection and combating Hindu genocide.

Advocate Ankur Sharma concluded by urging the electorate to consider the upcoming election as an opportunity to vote for Jammu's political empowerment and a catalyst for meaningful change. He emphasized that by electing him, the people would be choosing a path towards a brighter future for Jammu and its people.



Devotees throng to pay obeisance at Bawe Wali Mata Temple on First Navratri in Jammu on Tuesday.  
Pic by AMAN SHARMA

## Saroori slams NC, Congress for Splitting Secular Votes, calls for unity

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: G.M. Saroori DPAP candidate for Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat on Tuesday while addressing a public meeting Bunjwan, slammed the Congress and National Conference (NC) for allegedly dividing secular votes to favour the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Saroori criticized their focus on attacking Chairman DPAP, Ghulam Nabi Azad and their party instead of addressing the BJP and its candidate.

He expressed dismay over the divisive tactics employed by the Congress and NC, emphasizing the need for unity among secular forces to counter the BJP's divisive agenda effectively.

"Why don't they speak against the BJP and its candidate? They seem to be solely focused on attacking Ghulam Nabi Azad," he stated. Saroori also promised to fight for the restoration of statehood and the protection of land and job rights for the people of the region. Understanding the significance of statehood, Saroori pledges to advocate tirelessly for the reinstatement of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and respected in the corridors of power.

Moreover, he has vowed to be a staunch advocate for the protection of land and job rights, which are crucial for the socio-economic development of the region. He slammed regional parties for deceiving the

people with false issues.

Saroori said, Ghulam Nabi Azad was the sole leader in Parliament who ardently fought for Article 370 and statehood. I promise to uphold his legacy and continue fighting for the people with the same fervor.

He emphasized the need to transcend voting along religious lines and prioritize progress, peace, and development. Amidst prevailing hardships, he stressed the importance of uplifting all, irrespective of religion or caste, for the collective welfare of society.

He said, "This is a time for unity and uplifting our people, not religious politics. We have suffered enough." DDC Member Amina Choudhary was also present in the meeting.

## BVP Trikuta Nagar Branch organizes 'Joy Giving' event

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Bharat Vikas Parishad (BVP) Trikuta Nagar branch organized the event 'Joy of Giving'.

During the event, Branch members distributed Jackets and cardigans to over 52 needy girls of Naveen Shiksha Kendra High School Channi Himmat.

Branch team thanked



the principal Rajni Bala and her staff for their cooperation.

The BVP members present at the event were Rahul Kohli, Vanita Kohli,

Neetu Bandarl, Meena Rohmetra and Kalpana Chopra.

## DEO Ramban ensures free, fair, transparent LS elections 2024 across district

### Urges voters to vote for future prosperity of nation

### Top News Report

RAMBAN, Apr 9: District Administrator all set to conduct smooth and fair General Election of Lok Sabha, 2024 (GELS, 2024) in both the assembly segments, AC-54 Ramban, AC-55 Banihal of the district; it was stated by District Election Officer, (Deputy Commissioner) Ramban, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, while addressing the media persons at District Election Control Room here today.

Extending warm wishes to the public on festive occasions, Chaudhary urged citizens to actively participate in the world's largest festival of democracy, GELS 2024, by exercising their voting rights on the polling day scheduled for April 19, 2024 in Parliamentary Constituency 04-Udhampur. Emphasizing the significance of voter participation, he highlighted the District Administration's efforts, including Special Voter's Enrollment and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) activities aimed at sensitizing first-time

voters, women, persons with disabilities (PwD), and elderly voters about their voting rights.

Briefing about SVEEP activities being organized by the District Administration targeting all 2,19,000 registered voters of the district, especially First Time, Women, PwD and Elderly voters to sensitize them about their Right to Vote by a dedicated team across the district, the DEO said that the Administration is focusing the polling station which have experienced low turnout in previous elections, to enhance the polling turnout in the district during ensuing elections.

The DEO urged all political parties contesting candidates, Media persons and all other stakeholders to go through with Model Code of Conduct guidelines issued by the Election Commissioner of India while campaigning in the district.

The DEO said that to ensure free, fair, transparent and level playing field during the elections, all 28 activities including implementation of Model

Code of Conduct, functioning of 24x7 Election Control Room having toll free number 1950 and landline numbers 01998-295500, 266790, Statistical Surveillance Teams, Video Viewing Teams, Paid News Cell, Expenditure Monitoring Cell, Flying Squad Teams, Postal Ballot Cell, Video Surveillance Teams, Accounting Teams, Media Certification and Monitoring Committee and Grievances Cell etc are effectively managed by the dedicated teams headed by the respective Nodal Officers.

The DEO said that out of total 348 polling booths 12 polling stations are Model Polling Stations which include polling stations managed by PwDs, Women, and Youth. Green Polling Stations are also created as Model Polling Stations.

He informed that special arrangements like ramps, wheelchairs and transport arrangements have been made for People with Disabilities to facilitate them to exercise their right to franchise conveniently.

## MIER College organises health camp

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: To commemorate World Health Day, the Extension Unit of MIER College of Education (Autonomous) organized a free health camp and a sensitization lecture for its students and villagers of the adopted village at Purkhoo, Domana.

Medical professionals from the Directorate of Ayush, Govt. Ayurvedic Hospital, Jammu, led by Dr. Vimal Sharma and Dr. Manju Bhat, conducted the camp, assisted by supervisor Vijay Kumar Bhatt. Around 25 students from the School of Education at MIER College attended the camp.

Snobor, a student of B.Ed. Semester III, welcomed the medical team, local officials, students, and villagers.

Dr. Vimal Sharma provided insights on common health issues, ayurvedic treatments,

and immunity boosters.

During the general medical check-up of the residents, 142 inhabitants were diagnosed with ailments like anemia, hypertension, diabetes, and gastric issues. Free medicines and immunity kits were distributed among the villagers. Shalini, a student of Semester III, extended a formal vote of thanks.

Both students and villagers actively engaged in the health camp and sensitization session.

Suman Devi, In-charge Extension Unit, expressed her gratitude to the resource persons and the participants for their support in the successful organization of the event.

Prof. Adit Gupta, Principal of MIER College, appreciated the efforts of the unit and thanked the doctors and their medical team's contribution to the event's success.

## Congress will win Jammu, Udhampur seats with huge margins: Vijay Sharma

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Congress Seva Dal President Vijay Sharma Babbi has said that in the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Raman Bhalla from Jammu seat and Chaudhary Lal Singh from Udhampur Kathua seat will win with a big margin.

He said that this time the BJP is certainly making claims of 400 but it has also realized the ground reality that the people of the country are not going to repeat the mistake they have made twice.

Frustrated with the opposition unity, the BJP is now targeting the leaders of the opposition parties and is also trying to mislead the people.

He said that the people of the country have now come to know that the government has given the companies the freedom to do whatever they want by taking election donations and this was the reason why inflation has increased manifold in the last 10 years.

In Jammu and Kashmir, senior Congress leaders are contesting elections from Jammu and Kathua seats. Wherever Congress leaders are going, they are getting immense support.



It has become clear that people will now ignore BJP candidates and join hands with Congress.

During the 10 years of BJP rule, people have now come to know that in reality BJP had formed the government only to expand the business of rich industrialists.

Under BJP rule, the poor kept getting poorer and the wealth of the rich increased manifold. Now the time has come for the people to throw out this dictatorial government from power and bring Congress to power for the future of themselves and their children.

## CEO Ladakh chairs meeting with SVEEP Icons

### Top News Report

LEH, Apr 9: In view of the General Election to Lok Sabha 2024, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), UT Ladakh, Yatendra M Maralkar chaired a meeting with State SVEEP Icon, Phunchok Ladakhi, and SVEEP Icons of both the districts in the conference hall of the CEO, Ladakh.

CEO, UT Ladakh impressed upon State

SVEEP Nodal Officer and District SVEEP Nodal Officers to maximize the SVEEP awareness programme through State Icon and district icons.

Highlighting the importance of State SVEEP Icon and district SVEEP icons in spreading SVEEP awareness campaign in different parts of Ladakh, CEO UT Ladakh stressed on maximization of the SVEEP awareness campaign by engag-

ing State SVEEP Icon and district icons in the SVEEP awareness activities in Ladakh.

He further said that posters and banners of the SVEEP Icons and the awareness messages should be highlighted at designated places. He also added that the awareness campaign should also be done through short videos of the SVEEP Icons on different social media plat-

forms.

Joint CEO, Sonam Chosjor, Additional Secretary Election, Assistant CEO, State SVEEP Nodal Officer, District SVEEP Nodal Officer, State SVEEP Icon and District SVEEP Icons were present in the meeting. District SVEEP Nodal Officer, Kargil, and district SVEEP icon Kargil joined the meeting through video conferencing.

## Vaishakh Sankranti on April 13: Mahant Rohit Shastri

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Vaishakh Sankranti holds special significance in the ancient scriptures.

According to the scriptures, this Sankranti is known for atonement of various sins.

Mahant Rohit Shastri, President (Jyotishacharya) of Shri Kailash Jyotish avim Vedic Sansthan

Trust, explained about Vaishakh Sankranti this year, stating that in the year 2024, the Sun will enter the Aries sign at 9:04 PM on Saturday, 13th April.

The auspicious time for Vaishakh Sankranti will begin at 2:40 PM on Saturday, 13th April. Therefore, performing prayers, meditation, bathing, and charity after 2:40 PM on

13th April will be auspicious.

In Punjab, the Vaishakh Sankranti is called Baisakhi, while in Assam it is known as Bihu, in Kerala as Vishu, and in West Bengal as Pohela Boishakh. On Vaishakh Sankranti, charity holds great importance. Donating pure ghee, sesame seeds, mustard oil, and blankets brings liberation.

Bathing in the Ganges, rivers, lakes, and donating on the banks of the Ganges is considered highly auspicious. On this occasion, bathing in pilgrimage sites like Prayagraj and Ganga Sagar is termed as Maha Snan.

If for any reason, you cannot bathe in holy rivers, then bathing at home with Ganga water is equally beneficial.

## EDITORIAL

CHILD  
TRAFFICKING

Presently child trafficking has emerged as a terrible problem. This continues on a large scale in almost all the developing countries of the world including India. Every day we see news of school going children being kidnapped and missing on social media. This is a gruesome and terrible form of child trafficking, making children below 18 years of age, who are minors, work in illegal ways, sexual exploitation, child labour, making them work in homes, industries etc. comes under child trafficking that are illegal. According to government data released by the International Labor Organization, approximately 20 lakh children are trafficked every year through coercion, kidnapping, luring the parents, etc., children are made to do hard labour, labour, removing organs and selling them, begging etc. Girls are the victims of most cases of child trafficking. Human traffickers raise them and sell them further or force them into prostitution. Due to illegal child trafficking, children are removed from their families and home environment. They are deprived of the love of their parents and family, educational opportunities are taken away from them.

In this way their golden childhood ends before it even begins. Child traffickers make children their prey because they easily succumb to greed and temptation.

They neither understand their rights nor are they able to raise their voice against exploitation. This business of buying and selling children like commodities, taking advantage of their mental immaturity, continues day after day. Generally, victims of trafficking are illiterate, poor and belong to tribal families. Their involvement with school and education is limited due to circumstances. They are lured by luring them with wages or money. On the pretext of work, they are sent from one state to another and even to other countries and exploited in any way they want. There are 200 incidents of kidnapping of children every day in India, behind which child traffickers are involved in some way or the other. The life of children who are victims of trafficking becomes hellish, no attention is given to their health, food, education etc., they are subjected to physical, mental abuse, torture and beating, they are even used as drug cells. In the organ trade business, priceless organs of children are removed and sold abroad. Girls are sexually exploited and forced into prostitution for the rest of their lives. Horrible and inhuman facts have come to light in many cases in which child traffickers paralyze children by pouring acid in their eyes to make them beg or mutilate their body parts to make them capable of begging so that they attract people's sympathy. Child trafficking has become a terrible problem across the world today. The lives of the children who become victims of this are ruined at the hands of the oppressors. Not only are they cut off from their original life, but the voice of their heart becomes silent and they make themselves accustomed to a life full of daily pain where there is no relationship or connection with anyone. Efforts are made to employ them more and more by resorting to drugs and alcohol just to achieve their selfish ends. Some children, fed up with such an unjust cycle, either succeed in running away or free themselves from it by committing suicide.

Child trafficking can be limited by joint efforts by the government and society. To stop this problem, the government should make strict laws and strict punishment should be given to the people involved in this work. Also, there is a need to spread awareness among the people at the society level. Non-governmental organizations working for the prevention of child abuse can play an important role in the rehabilitation of these victims and the provision of love and care from the community.

Child Trafficking Law:-

Till now there is no major effective law towards prevention of child trafficking in India. Although some laws have been made in this area, they are inadequate because they are not stringent. Various provisions are made from time to time by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to prevent child trafficking. It is noteworthy that organ trafficking, sexual exploitation and child labor/child trafficking is done for. Child Trafficking Prevention Act and POCSO Act are effective in India. Human trafficking was made completely illegal in India in the year 1956. According to Article 23A of the Constitution, ethical trading is illegal. In the year 2018, the Human Trafficking Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha by the Central Government, but due to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, it did not go to the Upper House.

Child Trafficking in India:-

Illiteracy and poverty are the major reasons for child trafficking in India, due to which it is carried out on a large scale. The situation of child trafficking in India is very frightening and the statistics released in this regard are frightening. The incidents of smuggling are increasing day by day and are not giving any good sign for the society. In our country, every 8 minutes a child goes missing, of which 80 percent are girls. West Bengal has the highest number of complaints of child trafficking and missing persons in the country. In the year 2011, a total of more than 11 thousand children went missing in the state, that year this figure in India was 35 thousand.

According to a United Nations report, 45 thousand children go missing in the country every year. These missing children are sold into organ trafficking or begging. How high the actual incidents of child trafficking in India can be estimated from the fact that only 30 percent of the missing incidents are reported.

Causes of child trafficking: Poverty is a major and important reason for child trafficking happening on a large scale in the country. Due to the country's economic inequality, more than half the population is a victim of poverty. Due to poverty and unemployment, children are forced to struggle for livelihood without going to school. Some fraudsters trap them in their clutches by luring them with good work.

## Army inquiry in Rajouri deaths: Upholding justice, winning hearts

By: Syed Ata Hasnain

*“Credible investigation on alleged atrocities by Army is crucial at a time when there are indications of removing AFSPA from J&K”*

Among the many types of operations that the Indian Army has conducted in Jammu and Kashmir over the years, the most difficult are rarely those at the LoC and the LAC. There, the context is clear and the rules of engagement do not pose many restrictions on Indian soldiers or place them at a disadvantage. Military craft, a high degree of physicality, passion, energy, leadership and, of course, sometimes, negotiation skills, make the difference. Not so much in the case of hinterland operations which are of a hybrid nature and internal security and proxy war conditions place severe restrictions on troops and their manner of conduct. Restrictions also stem from political, social and demographic considerations. The context here is the incident of December 21, 2023, on Mughal Road near Bafliaz town in Poonch district.

What happened in Rajouri?

In this area, a number of encounters between the Army and terrorist groups have taken place in the past 18 months or so. The troops have suffered numerous casualties without sufficient compensatory gains. The last incident allegedly became a trigger for some officers and other soldiers to interrogate a few local villagers who they suspected of giving support to terrorists. Three civilians from Top Pir village in nearby Rajouri district died, allegedly due to tor-

ture, while several others suffered injuries. The Raksha Mantri visited the area and told the troops, “You are the country's protectors. But I want to request that besides ensuring the country's security, you also have the responsibility to win the hearts of the people. There should be no mistake that hurts an Indian,” he said. It was a fine statement and timed appropriately. He also asked the Army to inquire into the matter transparently. That inquiry has concluded with reports of serious lapses by seven to eight personnel, including some officers. The inquiry will no doubt go through all the due processes.

Death of 3 civilians in Poonch has echo in Valley: ‘Is this Naya Kashmir?’

Accountability, support and investigation – in equal measure – the public must be aware of three things: First, countering proxy war operations demands a high sense of balance on the part of security forces at every stage. There will be several successes to celebrate but there will also be setbacks involving casualties and other losses. The operating environment demands a very high level of decentralisation, going down to tactical and sub-tactical levels because quick decisions are required on actionable intelligence. At the operational level, all the support is provided – technology, higher intelligence analyses, information warfare, programmes to win hearts and minds.

But the sub-tactical level is the cutting edge of operations. There may be hundreds of operations going on at a time, especially when the strength of terrorists

is high. For instance, as a senior operations staff officer 25 years ago, I had to coordinate 11-12 operations a day simultaneously in just South Kashmir. Soldiers will make genuine mistakes from time to time – only a thorough investigation will establish or negate culpability. An act of indiscretion amounting to a wilful breach of orders laid down for the conduct of operations will always invite the strongest response from the Army. The Indian Army is extremely careful of its reputation for fair play and human rights.

Of 3 civilians killed in Poonch, wives of 2 are pregnant; 2 men worked for security forces in the past

The second thing for public knowledge is the fact that the Army will always be vulnerable to its reputation being targeted – this is done to undermine its ability to keep the people of the region on its side. People are the “centre of gravity” in such operations. Terrorists and separatists would always try to tarnish the image of the Army and compromise its relationship with the people. Their intent is to reduce intelligence flow and garner public backing and logistics for the terrorists.

Festive offer

The third imperative in this environment is that allegations against the Army's probity must be correctly judged at the highest levels. Investigating every allegation levelled by vested interests will demoralise soldiers. However, those considered serious enough must be probed within an appropriate time-frame and the process of justice taken to its logical conclusion in a fair manner. Several cases continue to be invoked for

the purposes of propaganda by indiscreet elements, even though these cases have long been solved. Yet, nothing can be above the law. Investigation and prosecution must follow all due processes.

Evaluating the need for AFSPA – The findings in the Rajouri case, the well-timed visit of the Raksha Mantri and his appropriate statements clearly indicate that the current establishment – like its predecessors – will uphold the processes of justice because the people remain the centre of gravity.

‘This is the prize for working for the nation’: BSF man, brother of civilian killed in Poonch

The investigation on the Rajouri case is taking place at a very critical juncture. There are indications of a possible removal of AFSPA from all or some segments of J&K. It's early to speculate on such an important issue. One of the major provisions of AFSPA is the protection it affords to Army personnel from prosecution without the Centre's sanction, for an act committed on duty. However, when the Army and the establishment continue to demonstrate a high level of transparency in investigation and prosecution of all cases, the need for AFSPA-like protection will itself be diluted. That is how we need to view due processes in such cases of alleged misdemeanour while countering terror operations in a challenging environment.

*(The writer is a former corps commander of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps)*

## Why rush to war zones? Jobs at home declining

By: Sunanda K Datta Ray

Electoral eve is the time for brave assertions. No Indian leader might boast like Nguyen Co Thach, Vietnam's foreign minister for over a decade: “We are not without accomplishment. We have managed to distribute poverty equally.” But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim to have lifted 25 crore Indians out of poverty in nine years may come a close second. What matters in the numbers game isn't how many crores of people have escaped grinding poverty, but how many are still wallowing in it.

Even the official admission of unemployment increasing from 6.8 to eight per cent in February can't disclose the full extent of distress lurking beneath what Thomas Piketty calls “The Billionaire Raj”. Indians would not otherwise have courted death trying to smuggle into the United States, fighting as Russia's under-equipped mercenaries in Ukraine or replacing 90,000 Palestinians whose work permits were revoked after the conflict with Hamas erupted.

In fact, news of the first batch of more than 60 construction workers going to Israel under the bilateral agreement that the Narendra Modi government signed with Israel on November 3, 2023 might inspire some wit with a cruel sense of humour to adapt Marx and Engels and foist the NDA establishment with the slogan “Coolies of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your lives!” I am not surprised that several labour unions, including the Centre of Indian Trade Unions and the All-India Trade Union Congress, as well as rights groups, question the wisdom of sending workers without adequate guarantees for their safety. Disregarding the external affairs min-

istry's somewhat pathetic plea to the Israelis “to do their best to take care of their safety and well-being” which are “important” to India, the unions point out that an advisory issued by India's embassy in Tel Aviv on March 5 asked Indian nationals in regions affected by the Israel-Hamas conflict to move to safer areas. The advisory was issued when an Indian was killed by a missile allegedly fired by Hezbollah's Iranian terrorists at an Israeli agricultural community in Galilee.

No Indian worker would have risked their lives if they had jobs at home.

They do so only because our governments, whether colonial or Hindu nationalist, are equally callous. It wasn't patriotism that prompted over a million Indians to enlist under the British in the First World War, and 2.5 million in the Second World War. There wasn't a Rupert Brooke among the 60,000 Indians who died in the First Great War and 87,000 in the second to burble: “If I should die, think only this of me:/That there's some corner of a foreign field/That is for ever England...”

Like the 18,000 Indians, mainly caregivers, meaning nannies, maids and other help, slaving away in Israel today, they needed a soldier's wages to survive.

Hunger also prompted the sad-looking unshaven and anonymous Indian whose picture hangs in Cambodia's grim Choeung Ek memorial and whose skull is probably among the more than 5,000 relics of victims of the pitiless Khmer Rouge regime, to seek a livelihood in distant killing fields.

The bilateral agreement on “facilitation of temporary employment of Indian workers” in construction and home-based care-giving must be a feather in the cap of Israel's ambassador in New Delhi. It's a far cry from Israel's consul-general in Bombay

(long before it became Mumbai) being ordered to cancel his planned national day reception in the capital for which cards had gone out already. Or young radicals being mobilised in Calcutta (before it became Kolkata) to demonstrate against Israel's then 77-year-old President, Zalman Shazar, on his way to pay a state visit to King Mahendra of Nepal in Kathmandu.

About 5,000 Mizos, recognised as Bnei Menashe Jews, are already working in Israel. So are some so-called “Black Jews” from Kerala who, when I saw them near Beersheva, spoke mainly Malayali. Israel is recruiting tens of thousands of other low-cost Asian workers to replace cheap Palestinian labour.

So great is the need that during a telephone conversation with Mr Modi in December, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for “advancing the arrival” of workers from India.

The National Skill Development Corporation's posters tempt hundreds of workers from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh with the slogan “to land your dream job overseas”. The NSDC is a public limited company that the finance ministry set up under the public-private partnership model and which provides skill development and vocational training to workers who have been tested for jobs in masonry, carpentry, tiling and bar-bending in Israel's construction sector. Its website mentions vacancies for 3,000 framework workers and bar-benders, and 2,000 for tiling and plastering at monthly salaries of Rs 137,000, although another pamphlet warns that successful applicants will have to pay for travel and relocation costs, taxes, social security and health insurance.

“So what?” a desperate applicant might retort. Hasn't Israel's ambassador, Naor Gilon, assured them that even humble construction workers will

bask in the glory of being “ambassadors” of the great people-to-people relations between the two countries? Even without that allurements, Indian labourers in Singapore are often glad to pay a commission to recruiting agents.

The ambassador is only doing his job. The NSDC can't be blamed either. But not even the customary rhetoric of canvassing for votes can justify gross misrepresentation of India's bleak reality where favoured billionaires appear to prosper most. Despite all the hype about engineers walking into prized jobs abroad, 36 per cent of the prestigious Bombay IIT's graduates are unemployed.

With the India Employment Report claiming that 29 per cent of Indian graduates need jobs, graduates of Lucknow's IIM and Pili's Birla Institute of Technology and Science reportedly also face difficulties.

India has indeed made significant economic progress in many sectors.

The stock market is booming. Property prices are soaring. But investment in human resources is relatively feeble, although one quarter of the population languishes below the official poverty threshold of Rs 32 per day. The World Food Programme reckons that 21.25 per cent of Indians live on less than \$1.90 daily. It also says that India is home to a quarter of the world's undernourished people.

Yet, the number of billionaires rose from 169 to 200 while their collective wealth jumped 41 per cent to \$954 billion between 2022 and 2023. No wonder the Credit Suisse Research Institute's Global Wealth Report calls India the world's second most unequal country, with the top one per cent of the population owning 58 per cent of its total wealth. Money being the modern manifestation of caste, “India Shining” remains as much a slogan in 2024 as it was in 2004.

**'Winds of change visible in Kashmir'**

# Cong, NC, PDP kept J&K in dark, stagnated youth's growth: Dr Varinder

**Top News Report**

JAMMU, Apr 9: "Having kept Jammu and Kashmir in dark for years and failed to curb militancy, political outfits like National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) joined by Congress played with the career of lakhs of youth and pushed them towards violence and unrest. Instead of addressing concerns of youth, developing J&K or creating opportunities for them, leaders of these parties ever since independence continued to look towards a failed state like Pakistan which is why we were unable

to see the kind of development that is visible today".

This was stated by Dr Varinder Sharma, Co-convenor Professional Cell Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) who added that sick of anti-people policies of these leaders and their inability to develop Jammu and Kashmir at par with any other state or Union Territory in India, people of Jammu and Kashmir have realised that voting for Congress, NC or PDP is nothing but a waste of vote, time and effort. People, he said, will vote for any party but not these outfits as strong winds of change have started to blow in

Kashmir.

Dr Varinder Sharma said two former Congress ministers who were known for their corrupt practices and loud mouth or disrespecting doctors are in fray from Jammu region but their credibility is well known to people. Seeking votes for Dr Jatinder Singh and Jugal Kishore Sharma, Dr Varinder said that a vote in their favour will be a vote to strengthen democracy and strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He urged upon people to exercise their right to franchise ably and vote BJP to power.

The BJP leader said Congress, PDP and NC

had always been advocating talks with Pakistan and not the people of Jammu and Kashmir. For them Kashmir, Jammu or Ladakh was not on priority list but Pakistan, which is a failed state. Had these families of Congress, Mufti's or Abdullah's taken care of people, lakhs of youth would not have fallen prey to bullets or joined militancy. Since these leaders failed to create opportunities for people, J&K remained a neglected state.

Today the BJP government has completely transformed J&K and brought in sea change in the lives of people in

just ten years. People of Ladakh got rid off the dominance of one region, Jammu got IIM and IIT and AIIMS, Kashmir got AIIMS and other premier institutions besides G20 meeting changed the way the world used to look at Kashmir with many withdrawing their negative advisories. Today Kashmir is developing and providing people with ample opportunities, especially youth who are scripting history in all fields with their startups and by cracking competitive examinations. They know that Congress, PDP and NC are not going to do any good for them.

# EHSAAS Trust Unit Bhadarwah distributes free Ration among needy people

**Top News Report**

BHADARWAH, Apr 9: In keeping with the Holy month of Ramadhan and to reach out to the poor and needy in this month of fasting, EHSAAS Trust-an NGO (Bhadarwah Unit) distributed ration kits among the poor people here on Tuesday.

The initiative was launched in order to support those who are fasting and observing this religious tradition.

These ration kits typically contain essential food items such as rice, oil, sugar, Dals and other basic necessities that are needed to prepare meals during the fasting period.

"By distributing these kits, organization's aim is to alleviate hunger and provide relief to those who are less fortunate," said Zaffar Hussain Wani District President of the Trust adding, "This initiative not only helps individuals in need but also promotes a sense of community and solidarity among people from all walks of life. Additionally, it showcases the spirit of giving and



compassion that is an integral part of Ramadan observance for Muslims around the world".

Poor and destitute families from areas Nai Basti, Chakka, Gatha, Vasakdera, Chinar Mohalla, Chinote, Halyan etc were identified for providing assistance of essential commodities.

"In future also, such programs shall be organised by the Trust to come to assist the needy in hour of their crisis and every effort would be in the direction of ameliorating the abysmal lot of destitute and hapless,"

informed Wani.

The drive was conducted under the direct guidance of Chairman of the Trust for Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Shohab Ul Haq Butt and it was supervised by Zaffar Hussain Wani District Present EHSAAS.

Prominent among those who took part in it included Shahid Malik (District Secretary), Umar Tak (Core Committee Member), Mohammad Atif Khan, Mehraj Uddin Zargar, Kiran Pandit, Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Salim Butt and others.

# NHM employees of Block Mandi express sympathy with Bhatt family

**Top News Report**

Mandi, Apr 9: National Health Mission (NHM) block Mandi employees on Tuesday expressed sorrow over the sad demise of Lal Din, father of Yasar Arafat Bhatt, X-ray Technician SDH Mandi who expired on Tuesday at his house Surankote.

A senior representative of nhm block mandi Raza Ganai conveyed his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family members and prayed to the Almighty Allah for eternal peace to the

departed soul beside a place for him in heaven. Meanwhile district president NHM Poonch Sajjad Malik prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed solidarity with the entire bhatt family. He also prayed to Almighty Allah to give strength to the bereaved family members of the deceased to bear this irreparable loss.

All the NHM employees of Block Mandi, Dr Sakinder, Dr Ramit Pal Singh, Dr Saqib, Dr Ejajahat, Dr Zahida, Dr Muzafar, Dr Ali Mohd, Dr

Manoj Bali, Dr Arshad, Dr Jhangir, Dr Rahul, Dr S Misri, Mehraj U Din (Raju), Shabir Ahmed, Riyazat Ali, Shamim Malik, Amardeep Singh, Navneet Paul Singh, Lucky, Harmeet Kour, Gurpreet Singh, Ch Anayat Hussain, Nahid Gul, Ch Liaquat, Richa Sharma, Tasneem Hamdani, Riyaz Ahmed, also expressed their solidarity with the bereaved family and collectively prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed full sympathy to Yasar Arafat Bhatt.

# Kotwal visits Chirala area to meet Disabled Persons



**Top News Report**

BHADARWAH, Apr 9: Ajit Singh Kotwal, Vice President J&K Saksham (A National Organization For Specially Abled Persons) visited on Tuesday different remote areas under Panchayat Puneja of teshil Chiralla to aware Divyangjan about the power of their vote.

Jammu and Kashmir Saksham Vice President Ajit Singh Kotwal said that many of Specially abled persons are still unregistered.

"How can they cast their vote as per the guidelines of the Election commissioner of India from home," he said. "BLO's should be deputed to physically contact each

and every disable person to fill their forms so that they can also cast their vote through democratic way.

Kotwal particularly raised the issue of the need for increased awareness among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) regarding their rights and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha Election and to ensure PWD's may vote in person comfortably. Additionally, it proposed that Booth Level Officers (BLO's) be instructed to assist those PWD electors who wish to vote from home by filling out Form 12 B, thereby ensuring that no voter is left behind due to mobility issues or lack of access.

# Army organises Badminton Competition at BVM School Bhatta

**Top News Report**

KISHTWAR, Apr 9: Continuing the effort of nurturing sporting talent of local youth and encouraging the young minds to participate in constructive activities, Indian Army organised Badminton Competition at Bhartiya Vidya Mandir (BVM) School, Bhatta, Khalaini, District Kishtwar.

The Civil populace of Malar region witnessed the Badminton Competition and lauded the initiative, and expressed that



these initiatives by Indian Army will aid in developing sportsmanship spirit amongst the youth and engage them in construc-

tive and nation building activities.

Two teachers and 20 students attended the Sports Activity.

# Army conducts Debate Competition at Gool

**Top News Report**

RAMBAN, Apr 9: Indian Army organized an Inter-School debate competition for students at Gool in Ramban District.

A total of 20 local students including six girls participated in the event and shared their views on various current issues/topics impacting the society with special emphasis on their positive and negative outcome on students.

The debate competition was held to spread awareness amongst



youth and also to harness positive implications/uses of social media to improve education and well being of society at large.

All winners were felicitated by the organisers

and participating students along with audience who took a pledge to minimize the use of social media and focusing on studies for a better future.

# Vanshika Gusain of KCPS Wins Bronze in Khelo India Swimming Series 2023

**Top News Report**

JAMMU, Apr 9: KC Public School (KCPS) student Vanshika Gusain participated in the prestigious Khelo India Junior Women's Swimming series held at Bahadurgarh, Haryana, recently.

She demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication, showcasing her skills and commitment to the sport and clinched a Bronze medal.

Competing among some of the best swimmers in the country, she represented the UT of

J&K and earned recognition and admiration from both her peers and mentors.

The event was organized by the Swimming Federation of India (SFI).

Chairman Raju Chowdhary, Vice Chairman Arjun Chowdhary, MD Arti Chowdhary, Principal Amarendra Kumar Mishra and Vice Principal Sanjay Pandey expressed their delight at Vanshika's achievement and wished her greater success in her future endeavours in the field of swimming.

# All arrangements are in place for Eid festival: Darakhshan

**Top News Report**

SRINAGAR, Apr 9: Chairperson of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi on Tuesday visited Janab Sahib at Soura, Aali Masjid at Eidgaah and the shrine of Khwaja Zaindar Sahib at Tankipora in Srinagar to take stock of the Eid-al-Fitr arrangements.

Dr Andrabi was accompanied by Waqf Board Officers and the local public representatives.

Speaking to media, Dr Darakhshan said that all arrangements have been put in place for special Eid congregations. "With public cooperation, Waqf Board is ready for special Eid prayers at all locations throughout J&K. We have completed the fresh furnishings at all major shrines under the Board's control. For the first time we did it out of the resources of the Board. Our development initiatives will continue in the days to come too", said Dr Darakhshan.

# World Health Day conducted at Kaindora & Gulabgarh

**Top News Report**

REASI, Apr 9: On the occasion of World Health Day Indian Army conducted medical patrol to reach out to people residing in far flung and inaccessible areas of Kaindora / Gulabgarh in Reasi district.

It is often observed that, people especially elderly, women and children residing in higher reaches are deprived of basic health care facility.

Hence, the aim of medical patrol was to attend to such people and provide medical assistance at their doorsteps.

A total of 106 persons ( 25 Male, 39 Female and 42 Children) of all ages got benefitted from the initiative. The medical patrol team provided the much needed medicines and medical advice to the villagers. The initiative would not only ensure good health but also strengthen the connect with public.

# JD(U) leaders extend Navratri greetings to people

**Top News Report**

SRINAGAR, Apr 9: Janata Dal (United) State President G M Shaheen, State General Secretary Vivek Bali, Chairman Sikh community Dilawar Singh, State Organiser Qazi Faheem and District President Baramulla Ayaz Darwi extended greetings to people on the auspicious occasion of the Navratri.

In his felicitation message, G M Shaheen said, "I extend my warm greetings to people, especially Hindu brethren on the occasion of Navratri, which is one of the most revered Hindu festivals. May this festival bring happiness and prosperity in the lives of J&K people."

Vivek Bali said urged devotees to pray for peace in Jammu and Kashmir. He said, "On



the occasion of this auspicious festival, I request the worshipers to pray for the peace and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir and the well-being of its people."

JD(U) Leaders said may the high spirits of the auspicious occasion of Navratri fill into your life the hope and courage you deserve. Wishing you and your family a cheerful and blessed Navratri!

## In Chandigarh, Nawazuddin Siddiqui talks about the experience of playing Manto on screen

"I cannot do goody goody roles in movies," says Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who is known for making lead roles look closer to reality. At the fourth edition of the Chandigarh Music and Film Festival, being held at the Chandigarh University, Gharuan, he says one doesn't need muscles or good looks to be in the performing art business.

No, not that he isn't good looking, but the characters that he has portrayed on screen aren't. Remembered more for roles of Faizal Khan (Gangs of Wasseypur), Liak (Badlapur), Ramanna (Raman Raghav 2.0) and Ganesh Gaitonde (Sacred Games), he accepts that since childhood it was ingrained in his psyche that he did not have the looks. He shares, "I remember in our village, original Fair & Lovely cream wasn't available, but something similar was there. I used to apply it daily in order to become fair. Due to this complex or whatever you would like to call it, I was sure that I had to focus more on my craft."

All about perception

The actor is not attracted to scripts that show the lead character in just good light. He explains, "Sahi galat acha aur bura sab perception hai (what's right or wrong, and good or bad is a perception). I can't play a hero's character who does not have a single flaw. The best lead character I have played is that of Jatil Yadav in Raat Akeli Hai. I



remember asking the director to highlight some character flaw or issue with him. In short, mujhe pasand hai shameless aur bad-naam kism ke characters."

On being typecast in the industry, Nawaz has a different viewpoint altogether. He explains, "After Gangs of Wasseypur, when Anurag offered me Gaitonde's role in Sacred Games, I wasn't interested to play a gangster yet again. But he explained how it was different and I couldn't refuse. While doing the series, I found out for myself how different the character was from my earlier one. So, I have come to the conclusion that there's no such thing as typecast if you are versatile. By versatility I do not mean doing different kind of genres or roles, but the ability to do same kind of roles differently each

time." It simply reminds one of Nawaz's portrayal of a cop in films, including Kahaani, Raees and Raat Akeli Hai, which left an impression each time.

Changing times

Nawaz shares how the struggle to become an actor changes every decade or so. "During our times, it was our job to find work, walking from one film studio to another, distributing portfolios or giving auditions. I recall how there was the same coat that every struggling actor would wear from a popular photo studio. Even filmmakers would know which studio those pictures were taken in," he quips. Social media and internet have made things easier for actors, as talent can't be hidden anymore. But I am sure they have their own share of struggles to make it through the journey."

Favourite list

Calling the character of Raman Raghav 2.0 his favourite, Nawaz shares, "People might find it horrible or violent, but I relate to his thought process — that if he is wrong, then so are those who kill in the name of religion, national security and what not." The actor relates to this belief in real life as well and thinks that it's the perception that makes one crime small or big in someone's eyes. "Maybe that's why today, when war is happening, it doesn't awaken people's conscience that it's as wrong to kill 10 people as it is to kill 1,000 in revenge."

It immediately reminded him of his on screen portrayal of Manto in the biopic by the same name. "I read Manto and performed on his play during NSD days. But I feel lucky to portray his life on screen. His views are relevant till date and will remain so for future generations. Interestingly, I was doing another biopic, Thackeray, around the same time, for which I was heavily criticised too. But it didn't affect me at all; sometimes to play a character that seems challenging is important for you as an artiste."

As for the future, the actor expresses his wish to work with a Punjabi director someday, as he awaits the release of the film Section 108 and a biopic on Customs officer Costao Fernandez.

## Drake offers to pay for female fan's divorce proceedings at concert



Rapper Drake helped a female fan at his 'It's All a Blur' Tour who needed help paying legal fees for her divorce.

"I'm going to get you a good lawyer, and we're gonna pay for your divorce tonight," Drake said in a viral clip of the moment that circulated on X, formerly called Twitter.

"You gonna be single and ready to mingle."

The rapper added: "While you're at it, you

need to find you somebody to take you out on a date, too. I'll pay for the date, too, don't worry about it."

This is not the first time the rapper has given out a gift. In March, he halted a gig in Missouri to pledge to pay off the mortgage of a fan's late mother, reports people.com.

During another stop in his hometown of Toronto, the 'One Dance' hit-maker gave away a Mer-

cedes-Benz G-Class car to an audience.

Rather than personally selecting a fan in the audience to go home with the luxury prize, he picked someone at random, according to footage captured by the audience.

"So, this is what I'm going to do: I'm going to pick the winning ticket out of this drum right here," he said, as members of his crew brought a raffle drum up to the stage.

"I want everybody to be super quiet. I want to hear the winner scream."

He then spotted the fan who was taking home the new vehicle and added: "They got 'em? They up top? You better bring your ass down here. We're going to send somebody up there to check that ticket."

Since July, Drake, during his tour, has given out \$50,000 to a fan going through a break-up, gifted a luxe Birkin bag and offered to help out a fan who was holding a sign saying she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

## FireHouse musician CJ Snare passes away

Hard rock band FireHouse frontman CJ Snare is no more. Snare passed away last week. He was 64. Snare's daughter said her father died after a lengthy battle with cancer, with the official cause of death listed as cardiac arrest. The band also shared the news of Snare's death in a statement on the official Firehouse Facebook page.

"Today is a sad day for Rock N Roll. It is with great sorrow we are letting the world know we have lost our brother: CJ Snare, the rock and roll warrior, lead vocalist, and a founding member of Firehouse," the statement read. FireHouse had seven singles chart on the Billboard Hot 100, most notably Love of a Lifetime, which reached No. 5 in 1991, and When I Look Into Your Eyes, which hit No. 8 in 1992.

The group's other chart hits include Don't Treat Me Bad (#19), All She Wrote (58) Reach For The Sky (83), Sleeping With You (78) and I Live My Life For You (26). Snare was the founder of FireHouse in 1987, and stayed with the band for nearly 40 years until



his death. He sang in all seven albums the group released, including its double platinum, self-titled debut album, which sold more than two million copies.

## Ankita Lokhande on 'Laa Pila De Sharaab': Working with your husband is an amazing experience

Ankita Lokhande and Vicky Jain treated fans to their first music video 'Laa Pila De Sharaab', and the song has been appreciated by everyone. The actress revealed that it was an amazing experience to work with her husband.

Ankita and Vicky were seen shooting for Rohit Verma's new collection 'Indradhanush', in Mumbai. Ankita spoke about working with Rohit, doing a song with Vicky and getting appreciation for her role in Veer Savarkar.

Talking about her experience shooting 'Laa Pila De Sharaab', Ankita said, "I feel Vishal has sung the song really well. His voice is amazing. Saurabh is a bril-



liant actor. You learn so much from him. We really enjoyed working with T-Series. It was an amazing experience shooting the song. Working with your husband is always different and unique."

About the appreciation Ankita has been getting for her role in

Veer Savarkar, she said, "An actor works really hard to reach the silver screen, I started my journey from television and now to see myself on the big screens and get so much appreciation, I feel grateful. I have always said that I am what I am today because of my audience and the media.

They have always supported me unconditionally. To play the role where I had to portray the life journey from 16 years to 60 years, as a performer I was very happy that I got to play that role. Not many actors get a chance to play a role like this. So I got this role and played

it with full dedication."

Talking about Rohit's new collection Indradhanush, the 'Pavitra Rishta' actress said, "I have known Rohit for years and all his collections always have a concept, a storyline and a message. When Rohit approached us for this collection, I was very excited to be its part because 'Indradhanush' has seven colours and these seven colours together form white, my favourite colour. Rohit is trying to give a message of gender equality through this. Vicky and I wanted to be a part of a project which spreads awareness amongst the audience. So we are very happy to be a part of this."

## Bigg Boss OTT 2 fame Jiya Shankar makes an appeal to fans as her mom gets hospitalised

Jiya Shankar, known for her work in films and web shows is currently dealing with a personal crisis. The actor's mother Surekha Gavli has been hospitalised. Jiya informed her fans about the same and requested them to pray for her mom's speedy recovery.

The former Bigg Boss OTT 2 contestant took to her Twitter handle and captioned her post as, "Hi fam hope y'all are doing well. My mom's really sick and has been hospitalised. We've been put in a tough situation again. I believe prayers can make miracles. Please keep my mom in your prayers. It'd mean a lot to me at this point. Thank you, God bless

y'all. Stay healthy." When she was asked about the same during an interview. Now the actor told, "I am not in a state to talk about it right now." A user commented, "Prayers are with you and aunty she will get well soon (heart emoji)." Another fan wrote, "A lot of prayer's for your mom from MKJW. Allah unhen sehat ata kre Ameen. And be strong."

In one of the episodes of Bigg Boss OTT 2, Jiya bared her heart out to Elvish Yadav. She confessed that her father had abandoned her and her mother and Shankar is not her Dad's name. The actor's parents got divorced when she was 13-years-old. In the Bigg Boss house she shared



a close bond with Manisha Rani and Abhishek Malhan.

Jiya has acted in television shows such as Laal Ishq, Kaatelal & Sons, and Pishachini. She was also a part of movies such as Kanavu

Variyam, Hyderabad Love Story and Riteish Deshmukh-Genelia D'Souza starrer Ved. Apart from the web show Virgin Bhaaskar 2, the actor featured in the music videos - Judaiyaan and Meri Zindagi.

## Ranjeet says there's a lot of vulgarity in movies and web series today: 'I am ashamed'

Veteran Bollywood actor Ranjeet has expressed his concern over the increasing trend of "vulgarity and inappropriate" content in films and web series on OTT platforms. In a recent interview, Ranjeet revealed that despite being in the entertainment industry, he has watched only a handful of web series during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"And during COVID times, will you believe me if I say I have only seen two to three web series? Two were English historical and one Indian. I didn't watch other projects," he remarked.

The Laawaris actor went on to critique the prevalent use of explicit language and scenes in movies, stating that it often leads to discomfort in front of family



members and staff. "Nowadays, there is vulgarity and inappropriate language used in the movies that make you embarrassed in front of your staff and family members," he

expressed. He also expressed dismay at the prevalence of molestation scenes and item numbers sandwiched between shots in contemporary films. "What is all happening

in the ads as well in this country, they are showing gambling in the ads. I am ashamed," he said.

The 82-year-old veteran star contrasted this with the item numbers of the bygone era, particularly the '80s, where veteran actors like Waheeda Rehman, Helen, and Bindu performed with grace and artistry.

"Earlier during the '80s, there were item numbers in which Waheeda Rehman ji, Helen ji, and Bindu ji used to perform and they had grace in what they did. They were all trained in whatever they did and it was an art. Their dresses were also not revealing," he recalled nostalgically.

Recently, Ranjeet portrayed supporting roles in Housefull 4 (2019) and Welcome Back (2015).

## India Showing World Nothing Is Impossible, Says PM Modi At UP Rally

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that "no matter how difficult the goal is, if India is determined to achieve it, it will definitely achieve."**

PILIBHIT, Apr 9 (Agencies): Amid the various difficulties being faced by the world now, India is showing that there is nothing impossible for it to achieve, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

He said this has been possible due to every single vote of the people.

"No matter how difficult the goal is, if India is determined to achieve it, it will definitely achieve. Today, with this inspiration and energy, we are working towards the resolution of a developed India," he said at a poll rally here.

"Amidst the difficulties of the entire world, India is showing that there is nothing impossible



for it," he said.

The prime minister noted there was a time when the Congress government used to ask for help from the world, but during the

Covid pandemic, medicines were made available to the whole world from India.

"When India became the world's fastest growing eco-

nomical power, were you (people) proud of it or not? When our Chandrayaan hoisted the tricolour on the moon, were you proud or not? The grand G20 summit held in India was praised all over the world," he added.

"When the country becomes strong, the world listens to it," PM Modi said.

Eight parliamentary constituencies in Uttar Pradesh will vote in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls on April 19. These are Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina (SC), Moradabad, Rampur and Pilibhit.

The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

## 7 Nepalese nationals among 8 killed after vehicle falls in 150-ft-deep gorge in Uttarakhand's Nainital



DEHRADUN, Apr 9 (Agencies): Eight people, including seven Nepalese nationals, died when their vehicle fell into a 150-foot-deep gorge in Nainital district of Uttarakhand on Tuesday, police said.

Two Nepalese nationals were injured in the accident that occurred near Betalghat, they said.

After receiving information about the accident, a State Disaster Response Team

(SDRF) team rushed to the spot.

The SDRF team along with locals and police personnel retrieved eight bodies. The injured were rushed to the hospital, police said.

The vehicle was carrying nine Nepalese nationals, all residents of Mahendranagar. They were headed home when the accident took place.

The driver, Rajendra Kumar, who was among those killed, was a resident of Betalghat, they said.

## Delhi court extends BRS leader K Kavitha's judicial custody till April 23 in excise policy case

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): A Delhi court on Tuesday extended the judicial custody of Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha by 14 days in the money laundering case related to the now-scrapped Delhi liquor excise policy.

Kavitha, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 15, was produced before the court.

ED submitted that she is highly influential and if released on bail, she can influence the evidence and witnesses, and hamper the probe.

The court had earlier reserved its order on interim bail of Kavitha for April 9.



The primary allegation against Kavitha revolves around her alleged involvement with the "South Group" that reportedly paid kickbacks worth 100 crore to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders in exchange for preferential treatment in securing retail zones under the excise policy 2021-22.

## ED raids multiple locations in TN in drugs money laundering case against ex-DMK functionary

**Sadiq, 36, was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) last month for his alleged involvement in the smuggling of about 3,500 kg of pseudoephedrine with a street value of more than Rs 2,000 crore**

CHENNAI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out raids in multiple cities in Tamil Nadu as part of a drugs trafficking-linked money laundering investigation against former DMK functionary Jaffer Sadiq and others, officials said.

As many as 25 premises in the state capital Chennai, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli are being searched by ED officials, accompanied by an escort of central paramilitary forces,



under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering

Act (PMLA), they said.

The premises of Sadiq, who is also a producer of Tamil films, film director Ameer and some others are being covered, they said.

Sadiq, 36, was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) last month for his alleged involvement in the smuggling of about 3,500 kg of pseudoephedrine with a street value of more than Rs 2,000 crore.

The ED took cognisance of this NCB case and some other

FIRs to file the money laundering case against Sadiq and others.

The NCB has said that Sadiq's links with Tamil and Hindi film financiers, some "high-profile" people and some instances of "political funding" were under its scanner.

Sadiq was expelled by the ruling DMK in February after his name and purported links to the drugs network were mentioned by the NCB.

## Maharashtra Opposition's Lok Sabha deal sealed: Uddhav Thackeray gets major chunk of 21 seats

MUMBAI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi on Tuesday announced its seat-sharing formula for the Lok Sabha polls with the Shiv Sena (UBT) getting the major chunk of 21 seats, while the Congress will contest 17 seats and the NCP (SP) 10.

The Congress gave up its claim on the contentious Sangli and Bhiwandi seats, which will now be contested by the Sena (UBT) and the NCP (SP), respectively.

While the Sena (UBT) said the goal of the alliance was to defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Congress said it has decided to be "large-hearted" to achieve this objective.

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray and state Congress president Nana Patole announced the poll pact for the 48 parliamentary seats in the state after weeks of hectic negotiations.

Addressing a press conference at 'Shivalaya', the Shiv Sena (UBT) office in south Mumbai, party head and former state chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said the seat-sharing



deal has been reached and in an alliance, winning is important and defeating the BJP is the goal.

"When victory against the BJP is the larger goal, we have to set aside certain differences," he said when asked about the Shiv Sena (UBT) refusing to give Sangli seat to the Congress.

Thackeray said there was a strange coincidence of "surya graham" (solar eclipse), "Amavasya" (new moon) and the BJP rally on the same day (Monday).

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech yesterday was not that of a prime minister. When we respond, please don't take it as an insult of the prime minister. Our criticism will be about a leader of a cor-

rupt party," Thackeray said to a query on Modi referring to his party as "fake Shiv Sena".

"It is not right for a leader of the party of extortionists to call us fake," he said. The BJP is a "party of extortionists" and this was seen after the electoral bonds "scam" was exposed, Thackeray claimed.

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said his party has decided to be "large-hearted" to achieve the final goal of defeating PM Modi and the BJP.

The Congress workers will fight the BJP and ensure victory of the MVA candidates in Sangli and Bhiwandi, he said.

"Our workers will never forget how the BJP ill-treated our leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi," he said.

Patole said the parties of Thackeray and Sharad Pawar were "hijacked" by rebels. "Leaders of both the original parties are with us and Modi calls the Uddhav Thackeray-led party as fake Shiv Sena," he said.

As part of the deal, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has got Jalgaon, Parbhani, Nashik, Palghar, Kalyan, Thane, Raigad, Maval, Osmanabad, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Buldhana, Hathkanangkale, Aurangabad, Shirdi, Sangli, Hingoli, Yavatmal-Washim, Mumbai South, Mumbai South Central, Mumbai North West and Mumbai North East seats.

The Congress has got Nandurbar, Dhule, Akola, Amravati, Nagpur, Bhandara-Gondia, Gadchiroli-Chimur, Chandrapur, Nanded, Jalna, Mumbai North Central, Mumbai North, Pune, Latur, Solapur, Kolhapur and Ramtek seats.

The NCP(SP) will contest Baramati, Shirur, Satara, Bhiwandi, Dindori, Madha, Raver, Wardhan, Ahmednagar South and Beed seats.

The Lok Sabha polls will be held in the state in five phases from April 19 to May 20.

## Supreme Court allows Abbas Ansari to attend his father Mukhtar Ansari's 'fatiha' tomorrow



NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed UP MLA Abbas Ansari's plea to attend his father and gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari's 'fatiha' ritual scheduled on April 10.

"The petitioner has specifically averred that 'Fatiha' is scheduled for tomorrow. We see no reason to deny him attendance of the ritual," a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant said.

It directed that Abbas Ansari be taken from Kasganj jail by 5 pm today under police custody with adequate

security to take part in his father's 'fatiha' at their ancestral place in Ghazipur.

The Bench also allowed his plea to meet his family members for two days between April 11 and April 12 before being brought back to Kasganj Jail on April 13.

It directed the police authorities to frisk visitors and ensure that no weapons were carried.

At the request of Uttar Pradesh Additional Advocate General Garima Prasad, the Bench ordered that accused Abbas Ansari -- currently in judicial custody in Kasganj Jail

in an arms license case -- shall not talk to the electronic media or the print media.

Convicted in several criminal cases, Mukhtar Ansari died on March 28 following a cardiac arrest while undergoing life imprisonment.

The order came after senior counsel Kapil Sibal requested the Bench to give Abbas four days to meet his family members.

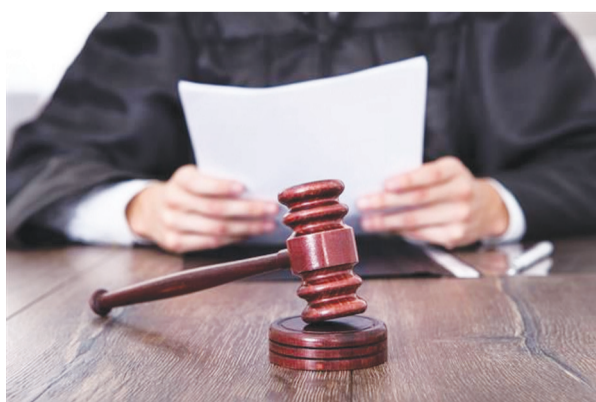
Prasad opposed Abbas Ansari's plea, saying there were 11 cases, including heinous crime, pending against him and that his only intention was to be out on bail.

The accused would threaten witnesses once he was out of jail, she submitted. Alleging that Abbas created a new gang in Chittrakoot Jail and had to be shifted to Kasganj Jail, Prasad said, "He does not deserve this court's leniency."

## NIA moves Calcutta High Court for quashing of FIR against its officials in Bhupatinagar case

KOLKATA, Apr 9 (Agencies): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday moved the Calcutta High Court, seeking the quashing of an FIR against its officials who went to West Bengal's Bhupatinagar for a raid in connection with the agency's probe into a blast case.

Justice Jay Sengupta granted permission to file the application and move his court in the post-recess session of the day, NIA counsel Arun Kumar Mohanty



said.

The petition also seeks interim protection from any coercive action by the state police against

the NIA officials.

One of the officials was injured in an attack by a mob when they were returning from Bhupati-

nagar in East Midnapore district on Saturday, after arresting two persons in connection with its investigation into a blast there in December, 2022 in which three persons died.

While an FIR was lodged on the basis of a complaint by the NIA officials at Bhupatinagar, a case was initiated against the central agency officials on a complaint by some villagers, accusing them of theft and outraging the modesty of women.

## Constable seriously injured in miscreants attack in police camp at Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA, Apr 9 (Agencies): A constable was seriously injured after he was attacked by unidentified miscreants at a police camp in Sandeshkhali area of West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district in the early hours of Tuesday, an officer said.

The injured police constable, identified as Sandip Saha, is undergoing treatment at a city-based hospital, and his condition is "very critical", he said.

"Saha has grievous injuries in his head and his condition is very critical at the moment," the police officer said.

Three persons, known in the locality as Trinamool Congress leaders, were arrested for their alleged involvement in the attack on Saha at Sitalia police camp, he said, adding that police have lodged a suo moto case in this connection.

Two other policemen, present in the camp,

were also beaten up but their injuries were not serious, the officer said.

Initial probe revealed that Saha had a tiff with the trio a few weeks back, he said.

"This could be the reason for the attack. We are talking to the arrested three. There were two other policemen on duty at the camp. We are also talking to them," the officer said.

Sandeshkhali has been in the news follow-

ing a team of Enforcement Directorate officers being assaulted by villagers when they went there to conduct a raid at the residence of suspended TMC leader Shajahan Shiekh in connection with the ration distribution scam in West Bengal.

Allegations of sexual atrocities on women and land grabs were levelled against local leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress at Sandeshkhali recently.

## 3 killed, 20 injured in two bomb blasts in Pakistan: Police

Initial reports suggested both blasts were committed through IED planted motorbikes

KARACHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): At least three people, including a policeman, were killed and 20 others injured in two separate bomb blasts in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, police said on Tuesday.

In the first incident, a policeman was killed and 15 others were injured when a blast occurred at a mosque in the Kuchlak area of the province's Quetta district on Monday.

"People were offering Maghrib prayers when the explosion took place at the mosque," a police official said.

In another incident, two people were killed and five others were injured in a bomb blast in a marketplace near Umar Farooq Chowk in Khuzdar town on Monday.

A senior police official said the blast took place when there was a crowd, including women and children in the market for Eid shopping.

"Two people have been



killed and five others injured in the explosion," the senior officer said, adding that police and other law enforcement forces rushed to the explosion site and shifted the bodies and injured to Khuzdar Teaching Hospital.

Bomb Disposal Squad officials were busy investigating both sites and initial reports suggested both blasts were committed through improvised explosive devices (IED) planted motorbikes and parked near the Umar Farooq Chowk and the mosque.

"It seems, the motorbike IEDs were detonated with a remote

control," the official said.

No banned outfit has claimed responsibility for the blasts so far, but in the recent weeks this year, there has been a surge in terror attacks by banned outfits and terrorists in the province in which security forces and installations have also been brazenly targeted.

The banned Balochistan Liberation Army has laid claim to having carried out three major terror strikes in the province in recent weeks in Mach town, Gwadar port and a naval base in Turbat in which security forces killed some 17 militants.

## Social media supercharges South Korea's 'politics of hatred'

SEOUL, Apr 9 (Agencies): Online disinformation and hate speech are poisoning politics the world over, but in South Korea there have also been real-life acts of violence in a deeply polarised electorate before polls on Wednesday.

Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung was stabbed in the neck in January in a dramatic demonstration of the political atmosphere in the run-up to Wednesday's legislative election. Lee survived but analysts fear the supercharged political atmosphere and the weight of "incitement to hatred" online could lead others to step out from behind their keyboards.

Wednesday's parliamentary poll will decide whether the opposition Democratic Party (DP) can grow its majority and further weaken conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and his People Power Party (PPP).

The nation of 51 million people has a host of urgent problems, such as crippling doctors' strikes, a weak economy, a shrinking population and

testy relations with nuclear-armed North Korea. But online rhetoric has focused more on the personalities of the main candidates and the outlandish dangers that, if some of the thousands of social media posts are to be believed, the parties supposedly represent.

"If we don't win a majority,

Lee Jae-myung will surrender our nation to Red China and destroy the Korea-US alliance," reads one typical message on Facebook. Doctored images and videos have also proliferated, according to AFP factchecks, such as one showing Lee bowing to a statue of Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong. Relations with China are a touchy subject in South Korea. Other images were altered to show him being attacked with a chopstick or just lightly wounded. In reality, Lee was stabbed with a hunting knife in the attack in the port city of Busan and needed emergency surgery.

Ex-presidents in jail  
Politics is famously adversarial in South Korea, where two of the past three presidents have ended up in jail on corruption charges. Yoon defeated Lee by the smallest margin in South Korean political history to become president in 2022 and the divisions have deepened since then.

PPP leader Han Dong-hoon dubbed Lee and Cho Kuk of the Rebuilding Korea Party "criminals" at one rally, a reference to allegations made against by the two men.

Yoon has used epithets for his opponents such as "anti-state forces" and "gang-like cartels". Lee Jae-kook, media and communications professor at

Sungkyunkwan University, said social media has supercharged the political polarisation.

"What previously was absorbed through the consumer's voluntary participation is now subliminally propagated as users unwittingly access the web or browse YouTube videos, making such messages ever more dangerous," Lee Jae-kook told agency.

'Traitors'  
The online history of Lee Jae-myung's attacker, a 67-year-old real estate agent who was disguised as a supporter at a campaign event, was revealing.

"The only way for South Korea to renew itself is by arresting and executing Lee Jae-myung, Moon Jae-in and all their fellow Communist traitors," he wrote in one post months before, referring to Yoon's predecessor.

"Only then can President Yoon Suk Yeol be freed up to save this country."  
Lee Jae-han, a political scientist at Incheon University, told agency the incident showed how the current climate meant that a politician "can at once be the target of zealous hatred as well as near-religious adoration". Weeks after Lee Jae-myung's stabbing, a 15-year-old boy repeatedly hit ruling party lawmaker Bae Hyun-jin on the back of the head with a rock in Seoul's upscale Gangnam district. Bae's inju-

ries were not serious but Yoon described the attack on her as an act of "terrorism".

Fabricated video  
Police said on Monday they had arrested a man who allegedly created a fabricated video uploaded to Instagram, Facebook and TikTok of Yoon apologising for corruption and incompetence.

Facebook and other social media platforms have taken some posts down but the sheer volume is overwhelming.

Both major parties have called for an end to what opposition leader Lee called the "politics of hatred" but experts say the hostility hasn't diminished, and nor is it likely to because of social media.

Research by Sungkyunkwan University's Lee Jae-kook found that of 30 million comments left on news reports of the 2022 presidential election, half contained some form of hate expression.

"Most of these verged on typical insults and put-downs, but a significant portion resembled incitement to hatred, where users called for acts of violence against certain figures or groups," Lee Jae-kook said.

"We've seen this kind of trend before when Trumpism took hold of a polarised America", he said.

"South Korea may be its closest cousin."

## Myanmar junta slams UN's 'one-sided' human rights claims

YANGON, Apr 9 (Agencies): Myanmar's junta on Tuesday slammed the UN's "one-sided allegations" about its human rights record and said it had received no official communication regarding the recent appointment of a new UN special envoy to the conflict-torn country.

The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military seized power in February 2021, ending a brief democratic experiment and sparking clashes with ethnic rebel groups and anti-coup fighters.

The junta has reacted with fury to attempts by the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc to establish dialogue between it and its opponents, whom it has vowed to "annihilate".

Last week the UN's rights council adopted a resolution slamming "horrific and systematic human rights violations" in Myanmar.

It also criticised the junta's "stranglehold" on humanitarian



assistance, which it said was exacerbating a crisis that has displaced more than 2.5 million people.

That resolution "included unfounded and one-sided allegations," the junta's foreign affairs ministry said in a statement published in the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper.

"Therefore, Myanmar categorically rejects the resolution."

The statement also said

the UN had made "no official communication to Myanmar" regarding last week's appointment of a new UN special envoy to the country.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed former Australian foreign minister Julie Bishop to the post, which has been vacant since the departure in June 2023 of Noleen Heyzer.

The Singaporean sociologist was tasked with urging the

military to engage in political dialogue with opposing groups and end a bloody crackdown it launched after toppling the government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

She visited the Southeast Asian nation in 2022 and met junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and other top military officials in a move criticised by rights groups as lending legitimacy to the generals.

But she was denied a meeting with detained democracy figurehead Suu Kyi and later irked junta officials who accused her of issuing a "one-sided statement" of what had been discussed.

She later vowed not to visit the country again unless she was allowed to meet Suu Kyi, who is currently serving a 27-year jail sentence handed down by a closed-door junta court.

Myanmar's UN envoy Kyaw Moe Tun was appointed by Suu Kyi's government and has refused to leave his post despite the junta's insistence that he no longer represents the country.

## X employees facing arrest in Brazil: Elon Musk



SAN FRANCISCO, Apr 9 (Agencies): Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on Tuesday alleged that employees of his X social media platform in Brazil are facing arrest amid his ongoing stand-off with the judiciary over blocking some X accounts.

The tech billionaire said that X needs to get employees in Brazil to a safe place and then "we will do a full data dump".

"They have been told they will be arrested," he posted on X.

Neither Musk nor the Brazilian government revealed which accounts were ordered by Supreme Court judge, Alexandre de Moraes, to be blocked, which started the tussle between Musk and the government.

Amid reports that the Brazilian government will also suspend all

Starlink contracts in their ongoing battle with Musk, the X owner said that Starlink will provide free Internet for schools in Brazil "if the government won't honour their contract."

"When did de Moraes become the dictator of Brazil?" said Musk.

"He (de Moraes) demanded that X suspend accounts of people who raised corruption concerns while insisting that X pretend the suspension was for violating our terms of service," Musk alleged.

"We obey the laws of countries even if we disagree with them, but this requires violating the laws of Brazil."

The tech billionaire earlier said that he would lift "all the restrictions" even if the company had to close their office in the country.

## Imran Khan's jail security measures cost Rs 1.2 million monthly: Report

ISLAMABAD, Apr 9 (Agencies): Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's jail security measures at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi are costing a hefty monthly bill of over Rs 1.2 million (12 lakh), according to prison authorities.

According to the report submitted by the jail superintendent to the Lahore High Court (LHC), the specialised facilities provided to Khan, 71, within the prison premises include a separate CCTV camera system installed for Rs 500,000, distinct from the system overseeing the 7,000 other prisoners.

Khan's meals are prepared in a dedicated kitchen under the watchful eye of the assistant superintendent and are subject to inspection by a medical officer or



deputy superintendent before being served, agency reported.

A team of over six doctors from Holy Family Hospital is stationed to provide medical care to the former prime minister, with additional specialist teams conducting regular check-ups.

Khan occupies two of the seven special cells available, while the remaining five are kept closed for security

reasons. Typically, 35 prisoners are accommodated in these cells.

Access to Khan's cell is tightly restricted, requiring permission for entry, and professionally trained personnel are assigned to ensure the security of his ward.

While Adiala Jail typically assigns one personnel for every ten prisoners, Khan's security detail comprises 15 personnel, including

two security officers and three dedicated to his personal security.

Moreover, a designated area within the jail premises is allocated for Imran Khan's recreational walks, equipped with exercise machines and other amenities.

Strict regulations are enforced for visitors, and comprehensive security protocols are implemented during court proceedings.

The report reveals the collaborative efforts of jail police, Rangers, and district police in ensuring the security of Adiala Jail, including regular search operations and mock drills.

Additional police forces, Rangers, and elite personnel are deployed both within and around Adiala Jail to maintain a secure environment for Imran Khan and all inmates.

## US, China, Australia Among Hotspots For Toxic "Forever Chemicals": Study



SYDNEY, Apr 9 (Agencies): Dangerous concentrations of long-living "forever chemicals" have been found in surface and groundwater worldwide, according to a study released Tuesday that showed Australia, the United States and Europe as hotspots.

A paper published in the journal Nature Geoscience analysed data from 45,000 water samples globally and found a "substantial fraction" had levels of PFAS --

per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances -- above recommended levels.

Found in everyday products such as non-stick frying pans, food packaging and waterproof clothing, the substances have been linked to serious health conditions including cancer and birth defects.

They have been found everywhere from turtle eggs to Antarctic snow, but the latest study showed they were prevalent in surface water

and groundwater used by humans for drinking.

"Many of our source waters are above PFAS regulatory limits," said Denis O'Carroll, one of the study's authors and a professor at the University of New South Wales in Australia.

O'Carroll said it was already known that the thousands of types of forever chemicals were "pervasive in the environment" but he expressed shock at how much higher the sampled levels were versus compared with recommended levels.

"We're talking above five percent, and it goes over 50 percent in some cases."

The research found that 69 percent of groundwater samples from around the world surpassed Canada's minimum standards and six percent of samples

surpassed the EU's standard.

Australia, China, the United States and parts of Europe were shown to be global hotspots of high concentrations of PFAS.

However, the study acknowledged that these locations were also areas with the highest level of testing, and with more research, comparable results could be found across the globe.

PFAS is considered to be spread across the globe, but the extent of contamination on the earth's surface and in waterways and drinking supplies is not known.

Canada, the United States, the European Union and Australia have begun restricting the use of PFAS amid health and environmental concerns.





## IPO alert: Swiggy converts itself into public limited company ahead of listing

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (Agencies): Food aggregator Swiggy, which was a private limited firm, has converted itself into a public limited company ahead of its possible IPO listing this year, the company stated in its filing to the Registrar of Companies.

Swiggy Private Limited is now Swiggy Limited, as per the filing, reported Entracker, the first outlet to report the development. This makes the food-delivery and quick-commerce platform the latest in the long list of new-age companies going the IPO way, including the likes of Ola Electric, FirstCry and Awfis.

Swiggy is expected to seek a valuation of \$12-15



million and raise a sum of \$1 billion. Baron, a US-based fund manager, had revised the value of its stake in Swiggy to \$87.2



million in March, thereby hinting a valuation of \$12.16 billion for the holding company of the food-delivery platform.

The latest change in the Swiggy's registration comes two months after the company changed its name from Bundl Tech-

nology Private Limited to Swiggy Private Limited, in a bid to bolster its brand identity. The company also appointed Suparna Mitra as independent director to its board to fill the position left vacant by Mallika Srinivasan who stepped down in February.

In a bid to improve its financials ahead of the IPO, the company has been on a drive to cut costs to achieve profitability. The company had laid off 350-400 staff, accounting to 6 per cent of its total workforce, as part of these measures.

Though Swiggy's revenue surged 45 per cent to Rs 8,625 crore in FY23, its net loss increased to Rs 4,179 crore.

## Relief for Byju's employees as payout of pending March salaries begins

MUMBAI, Apr 9 (Agencies): In a relief to Byju's employees, the crisis-hit edtech major began paying pending salaries for March on Monday.

The payout process, which was delayed due to an ongoing liquidity crunch in the company, is likely to be completed by April 18, said reports.

In an email to the staff, Byju's stated that it will be able to pay salaries on time through an alternate line of credits, according to The Economic Times.

"We are pleased to inform you that salary disbursement has commenced today and will be completed over the next 10 days. However, we have arranged an alternative line of credit to



ensure timely payments. We sincerely appreciate your patience and understanding throughout this period," the email stated, as cited by the daily. Byju's is yet to get nod to access proceeds from its rights issue funds after the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) ordered the firm to keep the money in an escrow account, which

led to delay in salary payouts.

The tribunal order came after four of Byju's investors -- Prosus NV, Peak XV Partners, General Atlantic and Sofina SA -- filed a petition challenging the edtech firm's move to raise \$200 million at a post-money valuation of \$225 million.

The next hearing on the case is on April 23.

## ABVP CU Jammu unit pays tribute to Martyr Chanderkant Sharma

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) Central University Jammu (CUJ) unit on Tuesday paid floral tribute to Martyr Chanderkant Sharma on the occasion of his Balidan Diwas.

Chandrakant Sharma was among the founding members of ABVP in district Kishtwar when terrorism was at its peak during the 90's period.

He had a special contribution in increasing the work of ABVP and play great role to awaken nationalism among the youth. Chandrakant later became the Prant Seh-Seva Pramukh of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.



On this day in the year 2019, terrorists attacked Chandrakant ji in the premises of District Hospital Kishtwar, in which he and his bodyguard were martyred.

On this occasion, Kuljeet Shan highlighted his biography, he told that

Chandrakant ji's role in maintaining the morale of the society during the terrorism is unforgettable.

In the 90s, when Hindus were migrating from Kishtwar due to terrorism, he played an important role in stopping the migration as well as

in keeping the society together and maintaining their morale.

He said that we all should take inspiration from him and always work keeping the nation first, and he also said that even today the patriotic society of Kishtwar

is united against terrorism and will never let the plans of anti-nationals be fulfilled.

On this occasion, all the workers of the unit including the unit president, unit secretary, other students and research scholars were remain present.

## Samsung to launch new range of AI TVs in India on April 17

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, is gearing up to launch its new range of Artificial Intelligence-powered televisions on April 17, 2024.

The upcoming launch of AI televisions comes on the back of Samsung's big AI-related announcements earlier this year. Samsung launched Galaxy AI for its smartphones with Galaxy S24 series in January, and Bespoke AI for its home appliances earlier this

week. Samsung's Neo QLED 8K series, Neo QLED 4K series and the OLED series are all likely to be powered by AI this year.

Samsung has also started taking early orders from consumers interested in buying its new range of AI TVs in India. Consumers can pre-order Samsung's new AI TVs by paying INR 5000 on Samsung.com and the Samsung shop App. Customers who pre-order Samsung's new AI-powered TVs will be eligible for early access special

offers on their purchase.

Consumers pre-ordering Neo QLED 8K Series (75 inches and above) can avail benefits worth Rs 15000 on their purchase, while consumers pre-ordering Neo QLED 4K & OLED Series will get benefits worth Rs 10000 on their purchase.

Samsung's new Neo QLED 8K TV delivers a premium viewing experience, personalised experiences, energy savings and innovative features with ultra-immersive audio and powerful audio features.

## Hernia symposium held at Paras Health



### Top News Report

CHANDIGARH, Apr 9: Surgeons from Yamunanagar attended a hernia symposium at Paras Health, Panchkula. The symposium focused on the emergency surgical management of patients with complex hernias.

During symposium hernia cases with extended total extra peritoneal approach were demonstrated by Dr. Amit Bansal, Senior Consultant General & Minimal Access Surgery at Paras Health Panchkula.

One case with supra umbilical hernia and another bilateral inguinal hernia were also demonstrated.

Addressing symposium, Dr. Amit Bansal said that in this technique we enter behind the rectus muscle and mesh is placed behind both the rectus muscle thus preventing it from being in contact with the bowel.

Single layer mesh (prolene) is used in this repair and we need it to fix the mesh, informed Dr. Amit Bansal

Dr Amit further said that

though hernia is a serious medical condition earlier, innovative medical procedures especially laparoscopy/ endoscopy have been boon for hernia operations.

A hernia occurs when an organ pushes through an opening in the muscle or tissue that holds it in place. There have been many innovations in technology used for the surgery of hernia, including laparoscopy.

Many new products, implants, meshes have also been introduced recently, added Dr. Amit Bansal.

## Raman Bhalla roared in Samba, appealing to the voters to vote for the party

### Top News Report

SAMBA, Apr 9: BJP snatched away the rights of the people within 10 years. The status of the historical state of Jammu and Kashmir was snatched away. The future of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir has been ruined. The youth are being pushed towards drugs under the scheme. At present people are facing important problems like electricity, water and roads. Congress candidate from Jammu Reasi Lok Sabha seat Raman Bhalla said these things while addressing the people during a huge public meeting organized in Nud of district Samba. Appealing to the people, he said that in this era of bureaucratic governance, the systems have derailed. He alleged that there has been no democracy in Jammu and Kashmir for the last six years. Meanwhile, former minister Kundal said that arbitrary rules are being imposed on people by bureaucrats. Due to which people are facing huge problems. Appealing to the youth, he said that they should vote in the interest of the Congress Party and if the Congress Party government is formed in the country, then Agni Veer will be eliminated. Addressing the public, District President Sanjeev Sharma said that inflation, corruption and unemployment are at their peak in the country. The government has nothing to do with these important issues. The work of dividing people is being done only in the name of religion. Sanjeev Sharma demanded from the youth of Samba that they should ask questions to the BJP leaders as to why they destroyed the future of the youth by giving contract to the Army. Sanjeev Sharma appealed to the people present at the meeting to vote in favor of Congress to restore democracy and protect the right to land and jobs like the people of Ladakh and to restore regular service recruitment for the youth. A large number of senior Congress leaders and workers were present on this occasion.



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: BMW Group India has posted strong business performance in the first quarter of 2024 (January - March). BMW Group India delivered 3,680 cars (BMW and MINI) and 1,810 motorcycles (BMW Motorrad). BMW sold 3,510 units and MINI 170 units.

BMW Group India recorded +51% growth in car sales in Q1 (BMW + MINI), riding on high demand for its Sports Activity Vehicles, Luxury Class and Electric Vehicles. Models like the BMW X7, BMW X3, BMW X1 and BMW

3 Series were sold-out.

Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "BMW Group India has posted strong performance in the first quarter of the year. Breaking earlier records, Q1 car sales achieved new heights with successful growth of +51%! Our firm leadership in the luxury electric car market remains undisputed thanks to the most diverse range of products. The exclusive BMW Luxury Class has also assumed a segment-leading position. Our key car models are at the top of their game and with significant new launches in the pipeline, we will raise the heat in

luxury market."

BMW Group Electric Vehicles carried forward their unabated leadership in the luxury segment in to Q1 2024 by delivering 211 units (+26%). BMW i7 claimed prime position as the largest selling EV, reflecting the growing allure of sustainable mobility in flagship segment. The most elaborate range of luxury EVs on offer - BMW i7, BMW iX, BMW i4, BMW iX1 and MINI SE - fuelled greater demand among customers. The much-awaited BMW i5 will be launched soon and will further augment the EV portfolio.

## Empowering Cultural Identity: Bani youth advocate for Phari ST Status

### Top News Report

BANI, Apr 9: The youth of Bani have spoken resoundingly on the fundamental issue of Pahari Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, aligning their demand with the cultural and linguistic heritage shared by the community. In the wake of the recent declaration of ST status to Rajouri and Poonch based on their Pahadi identity, the people of Bani have fervently called for similar recognition, citing their cultural affinity and linguistic ties to the Phadi

language.

The intensifying momentum surrounding the issue underscores the growing sentiment among the populace, particularly in Bani, where the demand for Pahadi ST status has gained significant traction. Residents are dismayed by government reports suggesting an absence of Phadi-speaking population in Kathua district, perceiving it as a grave injustice that neglects their cultural identity and heritage.

In light of this, the community has issued a fervent appeal to

the administration, urging them to acknowledge the Phadi language and culture as integral components of their identity. Furthermore, they have called upon all political parties and their leaders to heed their plea, emphasizing that their support will be contingent upon a firm commitment to securing ST status for the Phadi-speaking populace.

"The youth of Bani stand united in our demand for recognition of our cultural and linguistic heritage," stated a spokesperson for the community. "We implore

the administration to rectify the oversight regarding the Phadi-speaking population in Kathua district and extend the rightful acknowledgment to our community."

The sentiment resonating among the youth of Bani reflects a broader aspiration for equitable representation and recognition of cultural diversity within the region. Their unwavering resolve underscores the imperative for inclusive policies that uphold the rights and dignity of all communities.

## Vote for me for a better future: Ganesh Chaudhary

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Hindustan Shakti Sena leader and Lok Sabha candidate Ganesh Choudhary addressed several meetings today, in which party workers and people from every district participated.

Chaudhary promised everyone present that once he comes to power, he will fight on all the genuine issues of the people in the Parliament.

He further said that he will work to curb inflation and unemployment. He said that he will improve the livelihood of the weaker section of the society by bringing many schemes for the public.

Along with giving priority to the demands of the farmers, we will work day

and night for the weaker section of the society, because the party's only goal is to serve the public.

Chaudhary said that we will ensure implementation of the principle at the ground level to help the deprived sections overcome their difficulties and poverty.

He sought wholehearted support from the people in the Lok Sabha elections to realize the unfulfilled dreams of the people in the shortest possible time.

He said that we will fulfill all our promises made before the elections, so now the time has come for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen our party by giving positive response so that the demands of the people

are fulfilled. On this occasion, Samba District Head Nek Ram, Badi Brahmana President Sanjeet Kumar, Arnia Deputy Head Bharat Bhushan, Bishnah Block Head Shankar Singh, Bishnah Block Deputy Head Mohan Lal, Arnia Block Secretary Kamal Kumar, Village Pindi Head Rakesh Kumar, Bishnah Women Wing Head Neelam Kumari, Bishnah General Secretary Tripta Devi, Jammu District Head Sonia Chaudhary, Meeran Saheb Block Head Santosh Devi, Arnia Block Head Geeta Devi, Arnia Block Deputy Head Sheela Devi, Badi Brahman President Madhubala, Bari Brahmana Deputy President Rahul Kumar, Arnia Block Suman Devi were present.

## IPL 2024: Was told about leading CSK in 2022, just want to keep the team culture going, says Ruturaj Gaikwad

The team's earlier leadership experiment with Jadeja did not work but CSK think-tank has been bullish about Gaikwad's long-term reign

CHENNAI, Apr 9 (Agencies): The charismatic Mahendra Singh Dhoni told Ruturaj Gaikwad to be prepared for Chennai Super Kings captaincy back in 2022 and he has been ready ever since even though there were no "deep conversations" between the two on how to lead one of the most successful IPL units.

Gaikwad, who led from the front in the win against Kolkata Knight Riders on Monday night, was stunningly appointed CSK captain a day before the IPL opener on March 22.

The team's earlier leadership experiment with Ravindra Jadeja did not work but the CSK think-tank has been bullish about Gaikwad's long-term reign.

Dhoni is known for his no-nonsense approach and that is how he discussed the transition with Gaikwad.

"To be honest, not really deep conversations. I feel it was in a very chilled state. Just one conversation I would say. Just we were practicing and he came and told me all this stuff," Gaikwad said in the post-match press conference after the seven-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders here on Monday.

"Obviously, everyone, others on the outside, would think they are big shoes to fill, but I feel I would always be myself and I would like to continue the culture that has been going on.



"I remember in 2022 when he told me, 'Probably not next year, but after that, you might get a chance to lead, so be ready for it'. So, obviously after that, I was always ready for it," said the opener.

A franchise like CSK is quite meticulous with its planning and that is why head coach Stephen Fleming was discussing field and bowling changes with Gaikwad last year.

"It was nothing new to me or a surprise or a shock. I know how to control the game. I know how the game progresses, which change (to make), and what to do when, as I was doing for the state team (Maharashtra) as

well. "Even last year, Fleming and I used to discuss captaincy after every game, about how I felt, what changes, bowling changes what I felt we needed to do, this or that. Every game, we had one-on-one conversations so that really helped."

When asked what change had he brought in as skipper, Gaikwad asserted that he believes in continuity.

"Captainship-wise, I don't want to be a specific kind of character. Just let things flow and keep the culture of CSK going. The success that we had and the things we have been doing, I don't want to change a single

bit of it.

"I just want to come here, make my own decisions and just give as much freedom as possible because that's what has been happening from when I joined CSK. Nothing really changes and I'm enjoying a lot."

"Captainship, while batting, is a totally different approach"

Gaikwad's batting as the skipper this season has not been at his usual best but he made an unbeaten 67 against KKR.

When asked if captaincy had compelled him to make some changes to his batting, he said, "Sometimes there are phases where you get good balls. Sometimes there are phases where you are slightly unlucky. Sometimes there are phases where things don't really fall in shape.

"So, you don't really need to think on that. I always felt I was in good shape, starting really well, good headspace, so I wasn't really worried.

"And captaincy, while batting, is a totally different approach. Even when I was playing my first game, or the first fifty I scored for CSK, I think (it was a) similar kind of situation.

"We were chasing 140 and I always wanted to stay till the end and make sure I finish the innings so pretty much same. Nothing really changes even though I am captain or not," he said referring to the 138-run target set by KKR.

## IPL 2024: Jonny Bairstow ready to 'put best foot forward' against former side SRH



MULLANPUR, Apr 9 (Agencies): PBKS wicket-keeping batter Jonny Bairstow will be going up against his former side SRH, and is ready to put his best foot forward when the two teams clash at the newly-built Yadavindra International Stadium in Mullanpur. Both Punjab and Hyderabad have won two and lost two matches this season and find themselves placed fifth and sixth in the IPL 2024 points table. Bairstow, who played for SRH for three seasons before joining PBKS in 2022, will be looking to fire against his former side. Speaking in a video

released by PBKS on social media platform 'X', Bairstow said he has some amazing memories with SRH, while insisting that he will be looking to put his best foot forward against them. Bairstow scored 1138 runs for SRH in three seasons. He was at his best in 2019 when he amassed 445 runs in 10 matches, averaging 55.62 while striking at 157.24 as he formed a deadly opening partnership with David Warner. "I have some amazing memories with SunRisers Hyderabad. It was a special time, it was my first time in the IPL with them. So, playing against them is always

an opportunity. Times move on and you play for new franchises. I'll be looking to put my best foot forward. I'm with Punjab Kings now but it's always good to see some old friends," said Bairstow.

He went on to hail the PBKS fans urging them to come out in numbers for their match against Hyderabad. PBKS will be hoping to continue their winning run at their new stadium, having defeated DC by 4 wickets in their IPL 2024 opener in Mullanpur.

"We obviously had the first game of the competition for us where we got a win against Delhi. Hopefully, we'll be able to build on that. We then played three away games, we've won two and lost two. We had fantastic support on Game 1. You were brilliant and came out in numbers and we hope to see you in numbers again for our next four games at home. Your support means a lot to us. We'll make sure we try our best for you," Bairstow added.

Both sides will have a chance to move into the top-four in the IPL 2024 points table with a win on Tuesday.

## Azhar Mahmood likely to be named Pakistan assistant coach across formats

LAHORE, Apr 9 (Agencies): Former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood is likely to be named assistant coach of the national team across formats.

Mahmood was on Monday named the interim head coach for the home series against New Zealand beginning April 18 as the board is yet to announce finalise long-term deals with foreign coaches Australian Jason Gillespie and South African Gary Kirsten.

While Gillespie has been picked to be head coach for the red-ball format, Kirsten will be head coach for the white-ball formats.

Indications are that Mahmood will be assistant coach to both of



them in all three formats. Mahmood, who has worked as bowling coach with the Pakistan team, is based in the United Kingdom and is a certified coach with English and Wales Cricket Board.

Besides Mahmood, the board has also named Muhammad Yousuf, who is also a national selector, as batting coach for the New

Zealand series. And interestingly it has named two managers for the five-match series with a special post of senior team manager created for another selector, Wahab Riaz, while the long-serving Mansoor Rana will be the team manager. Saeed Ajmal will be spin bowling coach for the five-match series against New Zealand.

## Candidates chess tournament: D Gukesh plays his cards well, Vidit Gujrathi suffers another blow

TORONTO, Apr 9 (Agencies): Grandmaster D Gukesh did well to hold top-seeded American Fabiano Caruana to a draw but Vidit Gujrathi suffered another defeat at the hands of Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the fourth round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

On a day when R Praggnanandhaa played out an uneventful draw with Hikaru Nakamura of the United States, Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan fought hard to split the point with Firouzja Alireza of France to stay in contention in the eight-player double round-robin event that decides the challenger for the next World Championship.

Nepomniachtchi became the first sole leader in the event on three points following his second victory with white pieces and is now followed by Caruana and Gukesh on 2.5 points apiece. Praggnanandhaa is not far behind, holding the fourth spot on two points, while Gujrathi, Abasov, Alireza and Nakamura have 1.5 points each.

In the women's section, R



Vaishali made sure her streak matches with that of younger sibling Praggnanandhaa and played out a draw with rating favourite Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia but Koneru Humpy succumbed to her first defeat at the hands of lowest seed and youngest participant Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria. Zhongyi Tan maintained her sole lead on three points following a draw with Kateryna Lagno of Russia, while Tingjie Lei of China signed peace with Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine.

With Tan in front, Goryachkina remains on her heels on 2.5 points and another half-a-

point adrift is the trio of Vaishali, Salimova and Lagno. Humpy slipped to joint sixth spot on 1.5 points along with Muzychuk and Lei.

Alert Gukesh Gukesh faced the in-vogue Italian opening as black against Caruana and the players battled it out in the main variation. Gukesh was under some pressure in the middle game but came up with a fine pawn sacrifice leading to trade of many pieces.

The ensuing endgame with queens and pawns on board still gave Caruana some chances, but the Indian remained on his

toes for 72 moves to ensure the draw.

Praggnanandhaa has been drawing praise and earning respect of his opponent with each passing round. Nakamura was no exception as he went for a safe version in another Italian opening of the day. The players reached a balanced middle game, where the American was happy to make a draw as white in just 24 moves.

Gujrathi had won his second-round game using the Berlin defence against Nakamura, so his choice of opening was quite predictable against Nepomniachtchi too.

The Russian, a veteran of two World Championship matches having won the last two Candidates tournaments, however, had some ideas in the topical endgame which gave a small advantage.

Gujrathi should have equalised but consistent pressure and a previous round loss against Praggnanandhaa probably took its toll as he slowly got outplayed in the endgame.

## After skipping IPL 2024, Harry Brook smashes rapid hundred for Yorkshire

LONDON, Apr 9 (Agencies): England batter Harry Brook made a comeback to the cricket field and smashed a brilliant hundred for Yorkshire in the Second Division County Championship. Brook, who opted to skip the 2024 season of the Indian Premier League, scored his 12th first-class century against Leicestershire at Headingley. His knock helped Yorkshire reach 246 for 6 before rain played spoilsport and forced the game to be called off, with the match ending as a draw. The star batter from England had opted out of IPL 2024 following the passing of his grandmother.

Brook scored a 69-ball century to put his side in a decent position before rain came pouring down on Monday, April 8. He scored an unbeaten 100 off 69 balls, smashing 14 boundaries and two sixes against Leicestershire. His opening batter Adam Lyth's centuries helped Yorkshire declare at 246 for 6 in their first innings. Leicestershire then went on to score 26 for no loss before the game had to be called off due to rain.

This was the first time that Brook stepped on the cricket field since England's tour of the West Indies in December 2023. He pulled out of their Test series against India, citing



health concerns for his grandmother and eventually skipping the IPL following her passing. Brook was roped in by Delhi in the IPL 2024 mini-auction held in Dubai last year. DC shelled out Rs 4 crore

for the England batter, after he was released by SRH after an under-par IPL 2023, where Brook scored 190 runs in 11 innings, while also smashing a century. However, Brook could not join his new team-

mates in Delhi as he pulled out of IPL 2024.

The Delhi-based franchise recently announced South Africa fast-bowler Lizzad Williams as Brook's replacement for IPL 2024 for his base price of Rs 40 lakh. Since making his international debut in 2021, Williams has represented South Africa in two Tests, four ODIs and 11 T20 Internationals.

Brook has amassed 1,181 runs in 12 Test matches at an average of 62.15 and a top-score of 186. In 15 ODIs, Brook has scored 407 runs, while hitting three half-centuries. He's also played 29 T20s for England, scoring 544 runs at a strike-rate of 144.68.

## Sumit Nagal going strong on clay, stuns higher-ranked Matteo Arnaldi



MONTE CARLO, Apr 9 (Agencies): Sumit Nagal became the first Indian player to win a singles main draw match at an ATP Masters event on clay when he shocked world No. 38 Matteo Arnaldi in a gruelling three-set contest here. Nagal, who entered the ATP Masters 1000 event via qualifying route, erased a one-set deficit to turn the tables on his Italian opponent for a memorable 5-7-6-2-6-4 win in the first round. He will

next take on world No. 7 Holger Rune from Denmark.

This is Nagal's third victory over a top-50 player and second time this season.

Nagal, who made the main draw with wins over higher-ranked players, has ensured himself a career-high ranking of 80.

The first set was on an even keel with both players breaking each other once. Serving to stay in the set, Nagal lost his serve in the 12th game with Arnaldi attacking the Indian's first serve.

However, Nagal remained unperturbed and broke his rival twice in the second set for a comfortable 4-1 lead. His serve came under pressure in Game 6 but he held and closed the set to force a decider.

After trading a break with Arnaldi, Nagal broke his rival's serve for the second time in the seventh game of the third set to take a 4-3 lead and that proved to be decisive in the final outcome of the match. He consolidated the lead by pocketing the eighth game and served out the match in the 10th game.

## Shat Chandi Yagya sets tone for Navratra celebrations at Vaishno Devi Shrine

### Top News Report

KATRA, Apr 9: Shat Chandi Maha Yagya organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board embarked upon at the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji amidst the serene aura of spirituality and devotion besides, performance of other religious ceremonies on the auspicious occasion of 'Chaitra Navratra'.

This sacred ritual performed at the Holy Cave Shrine spanning across the nine-day long 'Chaitra Navratra' marking a significant milestone in the spiritual calendar of devotees worldwide and is being performed to foster harmony, abundance and good health for all of humanity.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; K. K. Sharma, Member, SMVDSB; Vikas Anand, SDM Bhawan; other officers and staff of the Shrine Board,



besides a large number of pilgrims were present on the occasion. The Yagya ceremony is being telecasted live on MH1 Shradha from 12 Noon to 1 PM daily during Navratras.

The intricate floral arrangements, coupled with traditional motifs and embellishments, have been enhancing the divine ambience of the shrine while evoking a sense of reverence and joy among the visiting devotees.

The Shrine Board has

also made elaborate arrangements as per directions of Manoj Sinha, (Lt. Governor JK-UT), Chairman SMVDSB for facilitating a large number of pilgrims who are expected to pay their obeisance at the Sanctum Sanctorum during Navratras. These arrangements include round the clock water and power supply all along the tracks leading to the Shrine, sanitation, medicare and availability of special "fast related" food at the Board's

Bhojanalayas. Besides, all the routes leading to the Holy Cave Shrine are fully maintained for smooth movement of pilgrims.

The illumination of the Bhawan area with attractive and colourful lights has also been done. For the ease and comfort of pilgrims, facilities like the accommodation, battery operated vehicles, passenger ropeway and helicopter services are operating smoothly. The Shrine Board has

also made arrangements for free food for the pilgrims at Tarakote Marg, Prasad Kendra at Sanjichatt, besides free Langar Sewa at Bhairon Ji.

To facilitate the smooth pilgrimage of Divyang pilgrims, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is also providing free pony and battery car services to ensure their journey to holy shrine without hindrance.

Other special features of arrangements during these Navratra are bhajan and bhaint performances during morning and evening Atka Aarti by the renowned artists.

CEO Shrine Board constantly reviewing and monitoring the regulation of Yatra along with other arrangements all along the track and in the Bhawan Area and interacting with the pilgrims enquiring about the facilities made by the Shrine Board for their facilitation.

## 'INDI Alliance to face historic debacle'

## BJP to cross 400 mark in LS elections, PM Modi to get third term: Khatana

### Top News Report

RAMNAGAR, Apr 9: Senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament Rajya Sabha, Gulam Ali Khatana has said that INDI Alliance will face historic debacle and the BJP will win all the five Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir and the one in Ladakh Union Territories in the upcoming General Elections in the country.

Addressing a public gathering in Ramnagar area on Tuesday Khatana said that people have welcomed historic developments in J&K and the welfare measures and schemes launched by the PM Modi led government have changed the lives of people here.

"Better roads, good hospitals, medical colleges in almost all the districts, AIIMS, NIT, IIM, IIT and many more institutions are busy making

the youth of J&K properly qualified at par with their counterparts in other States of the country," he said.

The BJP leader said that at present poor people have nothing to worry regarding his health as the revolutionary step of Ayushman Cards is providing treatment upto Rs. 5 lakh free of cost to all.

"Free ration, vaccination during COVID-19 pandemic, free ration, depositing money direct into the accounts of beneficiaries are among other big steps Modi government took for the welfare of our public," he further said.

Taking a dig at Congress, National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Khatana said that these political parties remained busy in accumulating wealth and did nothing for the common masses. "All these Abdullahs,

Gandhis and Muftis were mothers of terrorism in J&K which inflicted incurable wounds on the very soul of our people as many innocent children were rendered orphans, young brides were made widows and the land of paradise on earth was made mass graveyard by the wrong policies of Congress, NC and PDP," the firebrand BJP leader maintained adding, "Public of J&K will never forget the atrocities meted out to them by the blood thirsty Congress, NC and PDP."

The RS MP said that Congress is at the verge of total collapse and will be completely wiped out Indian politics in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the country starting from April 19 and BJP will easily cross the mark of 400 seats ushering easy way for PM Modi to have a third term in office.

## Kawa Institute launches online test & learn platform



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Kawa Group, a renowned name in the field of education and IT for the last more than two and half decades added one more feather in its cap by launching an online practice test and learning platform for more than 1600 exams conducted country wide by various organization for recruitment as well as higher studies.

Launching of this portal will facilitate not only to the urban youth but would also be very beneficial for the youths of remote part of Jammu and Kashmir. It was further told that the portal is designed keep-

ing in mind the requirement of students to practice and learn as per the latest requirements of the examining bodies.

The examination mainly focused are CUET / NEET / BANKING / RAILWAYS / SSC / SSB / DEFENCE even the examinations such as CTET / B.Sc Nursing / Pharmacy and various other Nursing & Paramedical Degree examinations with an on spot result facility, showing complete analysis of the examination that are covered to provide a wide range of practice question papers to compete the examinations efficiently.

The school level exami-

nations are also opted widely by the students which not only includes practice test but also have facilities of recording sessions and live lectures.

It was further added that the students who are interested to opt for any of the competitive examination can login to www. kawatests.com where large number of tests are available at a very reasonable price.

The was informed by M S Katoch (Chairman, Kawa Group) in presence of Abhimanyu Katoch (MD, Kawa Group), Ayush Katoch (Director), Heena Jamwal (Director, RGIP) and Dilbagh Singh (Web Developer).

## Ganesh appointed Jury Member by National Artist Association

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Well known eminent senior contemporary artist Ganesh Kumar Sharma has been appointed as Jury Member by "National Artist Association" (An organization dedicated to Indian Art and Culture) for its national level painting competition - 2024.

The Online National Level Painting Competition is going to be held in the month of May in different categories from UKG class to 12th class and have invited art works from across the country.

Senior Artist Dr. Rakesh Jer, National President, National Artist Association congratulated Ganesh Kumar Sharma. Other jury members appointed by National Presi-



dent are Senior artist Dr. Atul Padia, Gujarat, Dr. Anuradha Malik Bangalore, Dr. Bivas Sinha, Jharkhand, Sr artist Avijeet Mukherjee, West Bengal, Artist Roshni Malviya and artist Anushree Gupta from Uttar Pradesh.

It is to mention here that Ganesh Kumar Sharma Eminent Senior Sculptor of Jammu and Kashmir UT is working and promoting the art and culture from more than four decades.

## Mahesh Gupta elected Chairman ABMBS

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: A meeting of All India Maglooria Mahajan (AIMM) Biradari was held at Jammu Club to interact and honour Mahesh Gupta, the 1st newly unopposed elected Chairman of Akhil Bhartya Mahajan Biradari Sangh (ABMBS) created and established to bring all Mahajan Biradaris of India under one umbrella for amity and social activities.

In the meeting over 40 members of Maglooria Biradari participated and were introduced to Mahesh Gupta. Dr Lalit Kumar Gupta, President of All India Maglooria Mahajan Biradari extended welcome to Mahesh Gupta and to the distinguished members present in the honouring ceremony. The proceedings were conducted by the General Secretary of the Biradari Kuldeep Gupta. A memento and shawl was presented to Mahesh Gupta by the Chairman of AIMMB Harinder Gupta along with the President and

the office bears of the biradari namely S C Gupta, Rajesh Gupta and Sudesh Gupta.

In his address to the gathering Mahesh Gupta explained in detail the democratic and innovative structure, aims & objectives of ABMBS.

He urged the one & all members of the biradaris step forward to come under the umbrella of ABMBS to take the Mahajan Biradari to new heights.

The chairman of Maglooria Biradari, Harinder Gupta a well known philanthropist n a prominent social worker assured on behalf of his biradari full co operation to the new organization n wished them good luck to full fill their destined goals including setting up of a world class school at Jammu region.

## Shagun, Misbah, Kashish shine in Symposium contest



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: A symposium competition was organized by Navya Srijan Sewa Sansthan at Jammu University for the upcoming 18th Lok Sabha elections across the country. EnVision 2024 - Your Vote in 2024 determines Nation @ 2024 was the topic of symposium in which dozen of students participated to present their views on the topic.

The program began with lighting of lamp followed by brief introduction on the theme of program which was given by Deepak Gupta Volunteer of the NGO. Dr. Ganesh Malhotra and Sh. Shashikant Lakhnawal were the Judges of the competition. Retd. IAS Pramod Jain,

Famous RJ Shwetima Jamwal and Sr. Journalist Syed Junaid Hashmi were the Chief Guest, Guest of Honor and Program President respectively. While addressing the gathering of dozens of students and scholars Jain highlighted the opportunities that were available in pretext of J&K in next 5 years for boosting development of J&K by developing educational tourism, Development of Entrepreneurship opportunities in J&K for the sectors for which Raw Material and required infrastructure was already available in J&K.

Junaid said that it is only due to the visionary leaders of our country we have managed to come so far after 75 years

of independence even when the britishers had left nothing for this nation but still we are the fastest growing economy today and due to the visionary leadership the country so far has been successful in coming together even stronger after numerous wars after independence. Shwetima highlighted on why it is important to vote and how to educate the general masses on the importance of voting for giving more strength to our democracy.

The program was coordinated by Pratham Thappa, Managed by Akarshit Sharma and Manav Seth, the stage proceedings were done by Anjali Sharma and a formal vote of thanks was given by Ranneek Sharma.

## Mahant Rajesh Bittu releases Bhajan Bawe Wali Maa Di Hundi Jai Jai Kar



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: On the auspicious occasion of Navratra, the Bhajan Bawe Wali Maa Di Hundi Jai Jai Kar song by Kuldeep Jasrotia was released at the Press Club. The lyricist of this Bhajan is also written by Kuldeep Jasrotia, while the music director is Kumar Gaurav and the director of photography is Shubham Singh. This video has been made by Bhupendra Production.

Mahant Rajesh Bittu, Chairman Religious Tourism and Heritage Cultural Trust released the poster of the Bhajan and congratulated the artists associated with it.

He said that this Bhajan has the whole story of how King Jambu Lochan Raja Bahu brought Maa from Kolkata.

On this occasion, while singer Kuldeep Singh Jasrotia hummed the lyrics of his bhajan, BJP vice president Manav

Gupta, Karan Singh also expressed their views and said that one gets the blessings of Maa Bhagwati by listening to such bhajans.

All people should listen to the bhajans of gods and goddesses like Maa Bawe Wali, Maa Bhagwati etc. and make their lives successful. In the organized program, the director of photography of the bhajan Shubham Singh, Bhupinder Singh were also present.

## Chandel performs Shakti Sadhana at Kolkata Kalighat temple for return of Modi Govt

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 9: Hinduwadi Sanatani leader Raju Chandel on Tuesday visited Kali Ghat in West Bengal Kolkata and worshipped the power of Maa Kali.

He claimed that in 2047 the Modi government would return and win with a thumping majority Chandel, after doing Shakti Sadhana, said that the country's glorious Prime Minister Narendra Modi will emerge as the most popular

leader of the country and soon he will be awarded the world's biggest Nobel Prize by the blessings of Goddess Kali.

Chandel said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has taken up the task of establishing peace in the whole world, along with bringing the entire world fraternity on one platform, is giving the basic mantra of peace. He has emerged as the most peace-loving leader of the world, not only this, by the grace of Maa Shakti Bhagwati and



with his understanding, he has made India safe and strong by making his army the fourth largest army in the world, Chandel said.