

TOP NEWS OF J&K



JAMMU, MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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BRIEFLY

DPAP announces candidate from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat



SRINAGAR, Apr 22 (Agencies): Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) on Monday announced its candidate from Srinagar parliamentary constituency.

As per the press statement issued here, Amir Ahmed Bhat, District President of DPAP has been announced as the party candidate from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat.

The decision was taken in a meeting headed by Party's President Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Jammu-Srinagar National Highway blocked for traffic after landslide at Gangroo

JAMMU, Apr 22 (Agencies): Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was blocked for traffic after a landslide at Gangroo area in the Ramban district of Jammu division on Monday morning.

"Traffic update at 0800 hrs Landslide occurred at Gangroo on Jammu-Srinagar NHW. Commuters are advised not to undertake journey without confirmation from TCUs," Jammu and Kashmir Traffic Police posted on its official X handle.

The 270-km highway is the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country.

The highway has been witnessing frequent disruptions over the past five days due to heavy rain-induced landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones from the hillocks at several places, including Mehad, Gangroo, Kishtwari Pather, and Dalwas between Nashri and Banihal Tunnels.

Election commission holds meeting to discuss measures to mitigate risks due to heatwave

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): Following forecast of above-normal temperatures and heat waves in parts of the country, the Election Commission held a meeting on Monday with different stakeholders, including officials of the Met department.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu chaired the meeting.

The meeting discussed measures to mitigate risk occurring out of



heatwaves during the Lok Sabha polls. Six more phases of the seven phased exercise are yet to be held in the country.

Officers of the Indian Meteorological Department, National Disaster Management Authority

and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare attended the meeting.

Director General of Meteorology of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said, "IMD is in continuous touch with the Election Com-

mission of India. Along with seasonal forecasts, we are doing monthly, week-wise and everyday forecasts and giving them forecasts about heat waves, and humidity levels. We are providing the ECI, inputs and forecasts about the places where elections are going to be held in different phases."

Previously, on April 11, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had chaired a meeting to review preparedness for the ensuing heat wave season.

The Prime Minister

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President of India confirms 24 officers of AGMUT cadre in IPS

NEW DELHI, Apr 22: As many as 24 officers have been confirmed to the Indian Police Service borne on the cadre of AGMUT.

These officers include Devesh Chandra Srivastava (1995 batch); Narendra Singh Bunde-la (1998 batch); Uttam Chand (2002 batch); Atul Kumar Goel, (2004 batch); Bhim Sen Tuti, (2004 batch); Sunil Gupta (2007 batch); Vivek Gupta (2007 batch); Devinder Arya (2008 batch); Tejinder Singh (2008 batch); Abdul Jabbar (2008

batch); Udaya Bhaskar Billa (2008 batch); Imtiaz Ismail Parray (2009 batch); Mishra Shailendra Kumar Rajesh, (2009 batch); Rahul Malik, (2009 batch); Priyanka (2009 batch); Ms Sargun (2012 batch); Sandeep (2012 batch); Gurinderpal Singh (2013 batch); Amritpal Singh (2014 batch); G V Sundeeep Chakravarthy (2014 batch); Sheema Nabi Qasba (2016 batch); P D Nitya (2016 batch); Anurag Dwivedi (2020 batch) and Manish (2020batch).

Assembly polls in J&K to take place soon: Union Minister Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): Union minister Jitendra Singh on Monday said that Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir will be held soon and the people of the Union Territory are enthusiastic about participating in the electoral process to support the BJP's development agenda.

Speaking to news agency, he asserted that normalcy has been restored in J-K but the opposition parties were involved in a "wrong" portrayal of the ground situation after the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 which gave a special status to the erstwhile state.

"Opposition parties are engaged in a wrong portrayal of the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Normalcy has been restored in Jammu and Kashmir after scrapping Article 370. Elections in Jammu and Kashmir will happen soon, as stated by Prime Minister Modi in a recent rally in Udhampur. It has to happen and it will happen soon," the BJP leader said.

There is no elected government in Jammu and Kashmir since the BJP withdrew from its coalition with the PDP in 2018. It has been under the Centre's rule, which also saw the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and J-K being divided into two Union territories. The Supreme Court had in December last upheld the government's decision to abrogate Article 370 and said steps should be taken to conduct the election to the Union territory's Assembly by September 30, 2024.

On the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, Singh said the people are upbeat in Jammu and Kashmir about the development carried out in the region and are supporting the BJP.

"There is special enthusiasm among people. A common person in J-K is very enthusiastic to vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pro-people policies. They are especially motivated to help Modi win over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls."

"Nari Shakti' or women are participating in large numbers and they are exceptionally motivated to vote for the BJP due to Modi's welfare schemes meant for them," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Singh is the BJP candidate from J-K's Udhampur constituency, where

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LG Sinha visits Gandbal, Expresses condolences to boat tragedy families



SRINAGAR, Apr 22 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday visited the Gandbal area of Srinagar to express condolences to the families who lost their kin in a boat capsized tragedy recently.

Six people died and three others including a

father-son duo remain missing after a boat carrying nearly two dozen people, including school children, from Gandbal to Batwara, capsized in the Jhelum river here on April 16. A 35-year-old woman and her two school-going twins were among the dead. The search to trace the trio feared dead is still going

on.

"Met the family members of the victims who lost their lives in the heartbreaking boat tragedy on April 16 and expressed my deep condolences", LG posted on X.

The Lieutenant Governor also assured all help and support to the bereaved families. "The

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NIA Raids on in Srinagar in terror-related case

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted searches at nine locations in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, in a case linked to terror activities.

The ongoing raids, initiated early Monday, are being conducted in collaboration with security forces at various sites associated with individuals linked to terrorism as part of a case registered by the agency in 2022.

Acting on specific information received regarding certain suspects residing in Srinagar, the anti-terror agency launched the searches.

The search operation was conducted almost a month after the NIA chargesheeted two



accused in the Kokernag (Jammu and Kashmir) encounter case.

The suspects in the case are linked to The Resistant Front (TRF), an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), sources said.

Both LeT and TRF are proscribed organisations and have been involved in the continuous instigation and motivation of Kashmiri youth to join the terror outfits in the

name of 'Jihad'.

The two outfits are operating on social media platforms like Twitter, Telegram and Youtube channels to promote their cause and lure unemployed youth to carry out terror activities.

LeT is the largest terrorist group formed in the early 1990s and is actively engaged in reviving the

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MBA MOTORS

MERCEDES - BMW - AUDI



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

📍 NAGROTA, JAMMU (J&K)

☎ +91-9086207123

10TH DAY

IT IS INFORMED WITH DEEP SORROW AND PROFOUND GRIEF THAT **SH. SOM NATH KOUL** S/O LT. MAHESHWAR NATH KOUL ORIGINALLY RESIDENT OF LOK BHAWAN ANANTNAG KASHMIR. PRESENTLY AT POUNI CHACK NEAR PLAY WAY HR. SEC. SCHOOL.

10TH DAY WILL BE PERFORMED MUTHI GHAT JAMMU AT 8 A.M ON 28/04/2024.

GRIEF STRICKEN:
SMT. DURA KOUL (WIFE)
SATISH KOUL & KRISHNA KOUL (SON & DAUGHTER IN LAW)
SHUBAN JI RAINA & BANTI RAINA (SON-IN-LAW & DAUGHTER)
RAKESH PANDITA & VITTY PANDITA (DO)
GRAND CHILDREN: ISHAN, AYUSH, SIMRAN, SHAGUN & HRITHIK
CONTACT NO. 9796447461, 9103282656



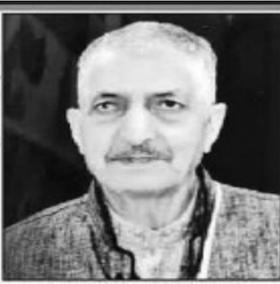
SH. SOM NATH KOUL

10TH DAY

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Sri Kanth Bhat** S/O Lt. Sudershan Bhat R/o Ullersoo Ananinag Kashmir, at present H.No. 340, Lane- N, Sector- 2, Durga Nagar, Jammu on 16-04-2024.

Tenth Day will be performed on 25th April 2024 (Thursday) at 8:30 AM at Muthi Ghat Near Directorate of School Education Muthi Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Vijay Kumar Bhat - Son
Son & Daughter-in-law
Ajay Kumar Bhat & Smt. Babeta Bhat
Daughters-in-law
Smt. Veena Ji Bhat W/o Lt. P.N. Bhat
Smt. Sarla Ji Bhat W/o Lt. Sh. K.L. Bhat
Sons & Daughters-in-law
Ramesh Ji Bhat & Smt. Rekha Ji Bhat
Ashok Kumar Bhat & Smt. Deepa Bhat
C.L. Bhat & Smt. Renu Bhat
Sha Ji Bhat & Smt. Babli Bhat
Smt. Rajni Pandita & Sh. Ramesh Kumar Pandita - Daughter & Son-in-law
Smt. Neenu Bhat & Sh. Ashwani Kumar Bhat - Daughter & Son-in-law
Grand Children - Karik Bhat, Sanvi Bhat, Vicky Pandita, Rahul Pandita, Ayushi Bhat & Hemanshu Bhat
Contact No. : 9419087413, 9419224852, 7006347241



Sh. Sri Kanth Bhat

TENTH DAY KRIYA (Dahim Dooh)

10th Day Kriya of Late Arjan Nath Bhat S/o Late Shamal Bhat and Late Shamrani Bhat originally from Haal, Pulwama will be held on 24.04.2024. He was an enchanting man, remembered for his generosity, fearless spirit, unshakable faith in God and lived a life destined only for a handful.

Kriya will be held at Chota Haridwar, Muradnagar, UP at 7 am on 24.4.2024.

Assemble at 11:00 am at New Club House (Gate No. 3), Great Value Sharanam Sector 107, Noida.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Jaya Bhat (Wife)
Mohini Koul and M.K.Koul (Sister and Brother-in-law)
Neeraj Bhat and Puja Bhat (Son and Daughter-in-law)
Archana Bhat and Susheel Bhat (Daughter and Son-in-law)
Grand Children: Divit Bhat, Ojasvi Bhat, Bhavik Bhat
And all near and dear ones
Contact 8920477196, 9810788073



Late Arjan Nath Bhat

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief & sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Ex Sub Sh Girdhari Lal Chib (Satriyan)** S/o Lt Sh Milap Singh Chib on 11 April, 2024 R/o Toph Sher Khania Mehra Mohalla Ward No 39, Jammu.

Tenth Day will be performed on 20 April 2024 (Saturday) at our residence 10: 00 am **Kriya** will be performed on 23 April 2024 (Tuesday) at our residence 12: 30 onwards.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-
(Sons & Daughters-in-law)
Sh Rajesh Singh Chib & Smt Neelam Chib
Sh Nanak Singh Chib & Smt Anjali Chib
Sh Gulshan Singh Chib & Smt Anita Chib
Daughter & Son-in-Law
Smt Neelam Manhas & Lt Sh Ajay Singh Manhas (Paloura)
Grand Children: Bharu Chib, Shallu Chib, Meenakshi, Bhavo, Yuvraj Chib & Jeevika Chib
Mb : 9797373698, 7051200679, 9999073193



Ex Sub Sh Girdhari Lal Chib (Satriyan)

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Mother **Smt. Kaushalya Koul** W/o Late Somnath Koul, originally from Lal Nagar, Chanapora, Srinagar on 14th April 2024.

10th Day Kriya will be performed at 8:30 AM on 23rd April 2024, at SHREE GAURI SHANKAR MANDIR TRUST, T-Block, Phase-I, Sector - 109, New Palam Vihar, Gurugram, India, 122017.

IN GRIEF
Son and Daughter-in-law
Veer Ji Koul & Jeeta Koul
Daughters and Son-in-laws
Anjali Raina & Shuban Lal Raina
Pinky Raina & Sanjeev Raina
Lovely Wali & Sanjay Wali
Mobile No's : +919419001013, +919711944610, +919266382721



Smt. Kaushalya Koul

10TH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Krishna Devi** W/o Lt. Sh. Dwarika Nath Bhat, originally from Wachi, Shopian Presently residing at TRT CAMP BLOCK 'D' NAGROTA Jammu on 15.04.2024.

10th DAY KRIYA will be performed on 24.04.2024 at 11.00 AM at Nagrota Ghat near TRT CAMP NAGROTA.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Samast Bhat Parivar (7889510740)
Daughter in law & Son
Sh. Sushil Bhat & Lt. Shama Bhat (9330680005)
Sh. Vinod Kumar & Radhni Dutt
Sh. Davinder Kumar & Jyoti
Sh. Koushik Bhat & Geeta Bhat (990613189)
Daughter and Son in law
Manu Pandita & Avtar Krishan Pandita (7780859289)



SMT. KRISHNA DEVI

TENTH DAY / KRIYA / UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Poonam Gupta** W/o Sh. Anil Gupta (Jyoti) on Saturday, 13th April 2024.

TENTH DAY shall be performed on Monday, 22nd April 2024 from 10 AM to 11 AM at Ram Mandir, Shastri Nagar, Jammu.

KRIYA shall be performed on Thursday, 25th April 2024 at 12 PM at residence, H. No. 1/7 Narwal Pain, Satwari, Jammu

UTHALA shall be performed on Friday, 26th April 2024 from 4 PM to 5 PM at Aap Shambu Mandir, Narwal Pain, Airport Road Satwari, Jammu

Grief Stricken:
Mahajan Family
Mob: 9419141564, 9419157784, 9858110492



Smt. POONAM GUPTA W/o Sh. ANIL GUPTA (JYOTI)

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt Koushalya Devi** W/o Lt Sh Mohan Lal Parihar (Retd Chief Prosecuting officer) R/o Palmar Kishtwar A/P 96 Sec 1A Channi Himmat Jammu on 13th April 2024.

Tenth Day Kriya will take place at 10 AM on Monday, 22nd April 2024 at Jia Pota Ghat Akhnoor.

13th Day Havan and Gow Puja followed by Lunch shall take place at our residence at Channi Himmat Jammu on Thursday 25th April 2024 at 12:30 Hours.

Grief Stricken
All near and dear ones.
9419205550, 9419124899



SMT KOUSHALYA DEVI

10TH DAY/KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform that our beloved **Sh. Rajinder Tickoo** S/o Late Sh. Shamboo Nath Tickoo original resident of Bijbehara, Anantnag present address: H.No. 22 Sidhvinayak Vihar Pouni Chak Police Force Jammu passed away on 17-04-2024.

TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed at Muthi Ghat, Jammu on Friday April 26 at 9:00 am.

In Grief:
Smt. Kiran Tickoo- Wife
Paras Tickoo- Son
Upasna Tickoo- Daughter
Brothers & Sisters-in-Law
Mr. Parey Lal Tickoo & Mrs. Renu Tickoo
Mr. Ravinder Tickoo & Mrs. Sweetie Tickoo
Mr. Deepak Tickoo & Mrs. Archana Tickoo
Sisters & Brothers-in-Law
Smt. Soni Pandita & Sh. Chuni Lal Pandita
Smt. Shama Dhar & Sh. Manmohan Dhar
Smt. Sunita Mahajan & Mr. Naresh Mahajan
All Kids of Tickoo, Dhar, Pandita & Mahajan Families
Contact No.: 7889333638, 6006577176



Sh. Rajinder Tickoo

SHANTI PAATH

With profound grief & sorrow, we regret to inform the untimely and sad demise of **Major General Pran Koul**, S/o Late Smt Lajwanti and Late Sh. Nandlal Koul, R/o G 02 Tower-1 Unitech Heights Sector Chi -3 Greater Noida (Originally from Sopore), who left for heavenly abode on Saturday 20th April, 2024.

Last prayers, **Shanti Paath** will be performed on Wednesday 24th April, 2024 from 11 AM to 1 PM at Community Centre GVCC Near Gate No 2 AWHO Gurinder Vihar Sector Chi-1 Greater Noida.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Kunti Koul (Wife)
Smt. Tosha Koul (Aunt)
Rishi and Navin (Daughter-in-law & Son)
Smriti Kaul (Daughter)
Atab (Grand Son)
And Samast Koul Parivar and Raina Parivar



Major General Pran Koul (23-06-1951 to 20-04-2024)

BHOG & ANTIM ARDAS

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **S. Gurcharan Singh Kala Ji (Retd. Chief Manager J&K Bank)** R/o New Post Aap Vihar Colony, Near Shastri International School, Sialbana, Jammu, who left for heavenly abode on 18-04-2024.

Programme
Arambh Sri Akhand Path Sahib:- 22-04-2024 (Monday) at 9:00 am at our residence (Sialbana)
Bhog of Sri Akhand Path Sahib:- 24-04-2024 (Wednesday) at 9:00 am at our residence.

Shabad Kiran & Antim Ardas will be performed at Gurcharan Singh Kala Ji's residence, New Post Aap Vihar Colony, Near Shastri International School, Sialbana, Jammu, on 11:00 am to 12:30 pm.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-
Smt. Avtar Kaur (Wife)
Smt. S. Gurcharan Singh Kala (Brother)
Smt. S. Nirmal Singh Bhatt (Brother-in-law)
Sons
Smt. S. Swarn Singh, JKAS
Smt. S. Hathagan Singh - Advocate
Smt. S. Surinder Singh
Smt. S. Gurneet Singh
Smt. S. Jagjeet Singh
Daughter & Son in law
Late Smt. Parmjeet Kaur & S. Davinder Singh
Mobile No. 9419198195, 9419197344



S. Gurcharan Singh Kala Ji (Retd. Chief Manager J&K Bank)

TENTH DAY / KRIYA

I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun, of happy memories that I leave when life is done...

In Loving memory of our beloved Father **Professor Dr. Mohan Lal Sharma** Cardio Thoracic Vascular Surgeon July 26, 1938 - April 13, 2024

Prayer Meetings
Tenth Day - April 22 / 10 am at residence.
Kriya - April 23 / 10 am at residence.
Shradhanjali - April 24 / 2 pm at Club, The Resort Sector 75, Faridabad, Haryana.
Fondly Remembered By:- Wife - Menzie / Son - Dipen / Daughters - Mona, Leena, Sons-in-law - Mathew, Sanjay / Daughter-in-law - Samvedna / Grand Children - Megha, Siddhant, Nayana, Samarth, Gaurav, Madhav / Grand Son-in-law - Christopher
Residence - R 101 The Resort, Sector 75, Faridabad, Haryana.
(M): 9717007448 Dipen Sharma, 9811259110 Leena Sharma



Professor Dr. Mohan Lal Sharma

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Onkar Singh Charak (Retd AC)** resident of House No 145 street No 6 Shakti Nagar Jammu who left for heavenly abode on 11-04-2024.

TENTH DAY at our residence H.No. 145B, Shakti Nagar, Jammu on 20 April 2024 Saturday at 10:30 AM

KRIYA will be performed at our residence H.No. 145B, Shakti Nagar on 23 April 2024 Tuesday at 12:30 PM.

RASAM PAGRI will be performed on 28 April 2024 Wednesday at 2:30 PM. at our residence.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Son & Daughter in Law
Veeram Jeet Singh Charak & Bharti Charak
Brothers & Bhabhis
Late Avtar Singh Charak & Anita Charak
Kulbir Singh Charak & Lalita Charak
Pavitar Singh Charak & Rita Charak
Yudhvir Singh Charak, Bindu Charak
Sister & Brother-in-law
Chander Pratha W/o Late Sh. Bharat Dogra
Daughter & Son in Law
Vivay Jarnwal W/o Pritham Singh Jarnwal
Anu Radha & Ranjeet



Sh. Onkar Singh Charak (Retd AC)

Manisha & Kirpal Singh
Anjaveer Singh Charak - Grand Son
Akhila Singh Charak - Grand Daughter
Mobile No: 9419194290

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved father **Lt. Sh. Rajinder Kumar Pandita (Raja Ji)** S/o Lt. Aka Lal Pandita of Qazi Mohalla Anantnag Kashmir at present Flat No. 15, Block No. 50, Lane No. 9, Jagli Colony Nagrota Jammu on 18-04-2024.

The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on 27th April 2024 (Saturday) at 8:00 am near Directorate of School Education Muthi Ghat Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Reena Pandita - Wife
Smt. Binla Ji - Bhabi
Sh. Rahul Pandita - Son
Sh. Ratish Pandita - Son
Miss Nishu Pandita - Daughter
Smt. Anu & Anil Ji - Daughter & Son-in-law
Smt. Savita & Prafull Ji - Daughter & Son-in-law
Mobile No: 9622338515, 7006240902



Lt. Sh. Rajinder Kumar Pandita (Raja Ji)

MOURNING FROM MALUIN SIDE TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Surinder Krishan Kuchroo** S/o Late Sh. Maheshwar Nath Kuchroo R/o Dewan Bagh, Baramulla Kashmir at present Kamdhenu Homz Flat No. C-404, Toph Sherkhania, Jammu on 18th April 2024.

The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on 27th April 2024 (Saturday) at 8.30 AM near Directorate of School Education Muthi Ghat, Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Sushma Kuchroo (Wife)
Sh. P.N. Dhar (Father)
Sh. Krishan Kumar Dhar (Brother)
Smt. Veena Koul (Sister)
Smt. Rajni Bali (Sister)
Smt. Dimpay Dhar (Sister)
Contact No.: 9868062748, 9070810144



Sh. Surinder Krishan Kuchroo

MOURNING FROM MALUIN SIDE

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform that our beloved sister **Smt Ratni Raina** W/o Late Sh. Chuni Lal Raina of Razdan Mohalla, Handwara attained Nirvana on 19-04-2024.

The Mourning from the maluin side shall be observed at House No. 100, Sector-3, EWS Colony, Lower Roop Nagar, Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-
Sh. Omkar Nath Pandita (Brother)
Smt Veena Pandita (Bhabi)
Smt. Mohini Bhat (Sister)
& **Samasth Pandita Parivar** (Ganesh, Mohalla, Handwara, Kashmir)
Contact 9958611887, 9958638887



SMT. RATNI RAINA

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“Siachen is India’s capital of valour and bravery”: Rajnath Singh



SIACHEN (Ladakh), Apr 22 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday visited the Siachen base camp and called it India’s capital of valour and bravery. Rajnath Singh also interacted with the Armed Forces personnel deployed at Kumar post of Siachen Glacier in Ladakh. He also exchanged sweets with them. On the occasion, Rajnath Singh said, “I congratulate you for the way you protect the country at the world’s highest battlefield, Siachen Glacier. The land of Siachen

is not an ordinary land. It is a symbol of the country’s sovereignty and perseverance. It represents our national determination. Our national capital is Delhi, Mumbai is our economic capital, and our technological capital is Bengaluru. Siachen is India’s capital of valour and bravery.” Rajnath Singh also laid a wreath at the war memorial in Siachen base camp as he paid tribute to the bravehearts. Army Chief Manoj Pandey also accompanied Defence Minister on the occasion. On the occasion, the

chants of ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ resonated in the air at Kumar’s post at Siachen Glacier in Ladakh as jawans raised slogans after interacting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Rajnath Singh was scheduled to visit Siachen on March 24 to celebrate Holi with troops, but due to ‘inclement weather’, the programme was changed to Leh, where the Defence Minister celebrated the occasion with armed forces at Leh Military station.

The Siachen Glacier is located in the eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayas and is often considered the world’s highest battlefield.

Earlier on April 13, the Indian Air Force celebrated the 40th anniversary of the famous ‘Operation Meghdoot’ which was carried out by the Indian forces to gain control of the Siachen glacier by thwarting Pakistan’s efforts to capture it.

The operation by the Indian Army and Indian Air Force was carried out on April 13, 1984, in what was one of the biggest operations carried out by the Indian forces.

J&K needs robust voice in Parliament: Mehbooba Mufti



SRINAGAR, Apr 22 (Agencies): Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti Monday said that Jammu & Kashmir needs a robust voice that will stand up against “ill-designs” of New Delhi.

She said the ongoing contest for Lok Sabha is not a fight limited to PDP or NC, rather it is a fight to raise voice of Jammu and Kashmir to convince New Delhi that decisions taken after August 05, 2019 were “illegal” and “unconstitutional” which need to be reversed.

Addressing a public rally in Anantnag’s Bijbehara, Mehbooba said that her existence is not limited to one place. “I am not confined to one place. Bijbehara is my home town and Sirhama is my home. The people here have raised me.” Mehbooba Mufti said.

She said every contest remains tough for a candidate, but the love and

affection she saw and received from Anantnag to Pir Pachaal are heartwarming. “I am getting reports that people have understood that they need a robust voice who will stand up to the powers in New Delhi and talk about the issues of Kashmir,” she said.

She also said that “atrocities” committed after 2019 and the way Article 370 was “illegally” and “unconstitutionally” taken away is unacceptable to people of Jammu and Kashmir. “New Delhi will have to reverse it,” she said.

While responding to a query, she said that the ongoing Lok Sabha election contest is not fight of Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, rather “This is the fight to take voice of Jammu and Kashmir to New Delhi.”

“People of Jammu & Kashmir will decide rightly while casting vote,” Mehbooba added.

PM Modi expressed proud on nationalism of tribals, worked for welfare of all: Khatana

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: While the Congress always portrayed Indian Muslims in bad light to defame the community for political reasons and this malpractice also victimised the patriotic Gujjars-Bakerwals of J&K, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who ensured life with dignity for the community and established that nationalist Gujjars-Bakerwals of J&K are diehard Indians who have many times sacrificed their lives for their nation like others in the country.

This was stated by senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Gulam Ali Khatana while addressing public meetings at Bathindi-Sunjan areas of Jammu on Monday, while continuing his election campaign in favour of Jugal Kishore Sharma, BJP candidate for Jammu-Samba-Reasi Lok Sabha Constituency.

Khatana said that it was the only PM Modi who embraced Gujjars-Bakerwals of Jammu and other Muslims of the country without any discrimination.

“Now the community wants to return the honour to their PM which they will do by heavily voting in favour of Jugal Kishore Sharma from Jammu-Reasi-Samba Parliamentary Constituency,” the MP continued triggering pro-India, pro-Modi, pro-BJP and pro-Khatana sloganeering from among the

mammoth gathering. He said that BJP has done a lot for J&K under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“During the last ten years of government led by BJP, the country has seen remarkable achievements. Soft landing on the surface of moon, safe return of Indian students trapped in war torn Ukraine, abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A, start-up scheme, housing for all and many more public friendly schemes have changed the life of common people,” Khatana said.

He further said that in the third term PM Modi will accomplish the remaining works to take the country along with Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory to newer heights of progress and prosperity.

“While Congress considered the minority Muslims as only votes and paid no heed towards their plights, BJP led government under the PM Modi recognised importance of all the communities living in India and due care and welfare of all the communities was done in the last 10 years under the leadership of Modi as Prime Minister,” the senior BJP leader maintained adding: “Any vote to INDI alliance will be suicidal for the voter and it will mean axing own foot while vote to BJP will lead to more welfare measures and ease of living.”

Khatana said that

before voting a prudent voter will compare the rule of only 10 years of PM Modi with the long tenure of Congress after which he will get to know that the long era of miseries, corruption, loot and bloodshed under the Congress culminated after Modi took reigns of the nation in his own hands.

BJP candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma for Samba-Jammu-Reasi LS Constituency also spoke on the occasion and ensured that voting in favour of BJP will pave way for more welfare measure and life with dignity for all the communities.

Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy CM said that strengthening the hands of PM Modi will take our nation to newer heights and J&K will also see more developments and employment avenues.

Former JMC Mayor Rajinder Sharma said that PM Modi is another name for equality, progress and developments and strengthening him will only be true service for the nation.

Senior BJP leaders—Balwant Singh Mankotia, Vinay Gupta and others along with prominent local leaders of the area including Ex-Sarpanch Noor Alam, Mohd. Alam and Bashir Ahmed Khatana were also present in the meeting which was organised by Razaq Butto, Advocate Mohd. Rayaz Khatana, Wasim Choudhary and Ashraf Choudhary.

PM Modi is a man of his words, fulfills all promises: Rohiin Chandan

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) District Secretary and Prabhari Yuva Mocha Jammu South Rohiin Chandan stated that the BJP’s manifesto focused on the poor, youth, farmers, and women, exuding confidence over the outcome of the Jammu Lok Sabha seat. The BJP candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma surely wins Jammu Reasi with a record majority parliamentary seat, and we believe that our big seats will triumph with a record-breaking majority, and among these seats, the Jammu-Reasi parliamentary seat will win with more than 4 lakh votes. Rohiin Chandan said Jugal Kishore Ji is surely 101 percent winning the election from his constituency for the third straight consecutive term. Rohiin asserted that people will surely vote for PM Modi’s ideology and hard-working, visionary, competent leader, BJP Jammu Poonch Lok Sabha candidate Jugal Kishore

Sharma. Rohiin emphasized that we are celebrating the festival of democracy. Everyone should vote; this is our fundamental right as well as our duty. You can vote for everyone, and casting your vote is important. Highlights from Rohiin Chandan the prime minister, Narendra Modi, has a particular place in his heart for union territory of J&K. He has put an end to terrorism and stone-pelting in the state by repealing articles 370 and 35A. Incidents linked to terrorism have decreased by 75%. All of this is made possible by the robust central government and the dynamic leadership of the PM Modi-led administration. Rohiin stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s assertion that he is committed to “24x7 for 2047” is not just a slogan but what he really puts into practice. He said Modi Sarkar’s performance in terms of the implementation of projects was remarkable only because of the personal interest with which Prime Minister

Modi ensures the execution of every project.

Rohiin elaborates that PM Modi is a man of his word, fulfills all promises, and delivers good governance remarkably well. Modi Ki Guarantee is a game changer for all segments of society. He said to empower the neo-middle class by supporting them with affordable, quality housing and healthcare, access to quality education, and ample employment opportunities.

According to Rohiin Chandan, the BJP has pledged, as part of its “Modi Ki Guarantee,” to increase the standard of living for all families, including OBC, SC, and ST, by doubling the MUDRA loan limit to ₹20 lakh and expanding other programs like PM Svanidhi and PM Vishwakarma Yojana, among others. Rohiin continued, “Everyone in the country is covered by his assurance because no other parties are capable of doing the work that Modi ji has accomplished.”

It is Official, Apni Party is Supporting Sajad Lone

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Apr 22 (Agencies): A few days after JK Peoples Conference (JKPC) Chief Sajad Gani Lone reached out to the Apni Party to unite against the National Conference in north Kashmir, party president Altaf Bukhari has now thrown his support behind the PC chief.

Bukhari, while addressing the media in Srinagar, said that Apni Party won’t field its candidate from the North and will back Sajad Lone.

Altaf Bukhari said that he is supporting Sajad Lone as he represents a new era in politics, with a fresh vision. He suggested that older politicians should consider retiring from politics to allow this new vision to take root.

He further stated that their fight is for the restoration of statehood and the reinstatement of job and land rights. Bukhari expressed concern over the plight of children languishing in jails, noting that while some have been freed, approximately 1400 remain incarcerated, and they will endeavour to secure their release.

Lone, who is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from north Kashmir’s Baramulla seat, claimed that the National Conference benefits from the fragmentation of votes.

“I appeal to (Apni Party chief) Altaf Bukhari, let us stop the division of votes in north Kashmir and let them support us there,” Lone said at a press conference on Saturday.

Yuva Jatt Sabha demands NIA investigation in attack on its team

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Yuva Jatt Sabha, a non-political organization with a strong presence in Jatt youth in Jammu Kashmir, has demanded urgent action following a vicious attack on their team originating from Marh Block.

The organization was deeply troubled by the lack of response from authorities despite multiple complaints and an FIR filed well in advance warning of the impending attack.

Amandeep Singh Boparai, President of Yuva Jatt Sabha, has called for a high-level inquiry into the failure of the SHO Gandhi Nagar to act on the warnings provided by the organization.

Despite four complaints and one FIR clearly indicating an imminent attack on the Yuva Jatt Sabha team and their rally, no preventive measures were taken, leading to the violent incident, he said.

Yuva Jatt Sabha has



highlighted the involvement of anti-social elements in the attack, who not only showed blatant disrespect towards the Indian Tricolour hoisted on YJS vehicles but also desecrated it by placing it under their foot. The attackers also vandalized vehicles belonging to the organization, causing significant damage, he said.

In a distressing turn of events, President Amandeep Singh Boparai was attacked when he attempted to defuse the situation in the presence of SP (Rural), SDPO Domana, and SHOs.

Despite receiving death threats from Pakistani and foreign numbers since November 2023, government agencies failed to act timely in this matter.

Yuva Jatt Sabha emphasized that if any harm comes to President Amandeep Singh Boparai, the administration will be held accountable. As the leader of the strongest organization of Jat youth with emotional ties across Kathua to Naushera and being the sole Jatt leader with a significant following in the Jat community of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and

Western UP, his safety is paramount.

The organization called for the immediate attachment of SHO Gandhi Nagar in the police lines and a thorough investigation into why preventive actions were not taken despite clear warnings. SHO Gandhi Nagar not only failed to understand the gravity of situation and he has failed to inform higher authorities timely Yuva Jatt Sabha also urges authorities to identify and apprehend those responsible for the reprehensible attack on its members.

Furthermore, Yuva Jatt Sabha demanded compensation for the damaged vehicles as their safety was the responsibility of the J&K administration.

The organization warns that if the government fails to take appropriate action, its members will boycott elections, potentially impacting the current government.

BJP miserably failed to address ground realities in J&K: Javed Rana

INDI alliance sole solution to address myriad challenges facing the region



Top News Report

RAJOURI, Apr 22: Javed Ahmed Rana, President JKNC Pir Panjal Zone, and former Legislator, has sharply criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for its apparent disconnect from the ground realities of the Jammu region, highlighting BJP’s failure to address genuine issues faced by the people and its neglect of basic necessities such as water, power, healthcare, and education.

Addressing a public meeting in Doongi area of Rajouri, Javed Rana emphasized the dire situation faced by the public in the absence of an elected government, where day-to-day problems remain unaddressed. “It is most unfortunate that common people have no medium to raise their voice for their basic necessities due to the neglect of the BJP government,” he remarked. He lamented the lack of avenues for the populace to express

their concerns, leading to frustration and agitation. “The people are left with no option but to come onto the streets to express their anger and seek redressal of their genuine grievances,” he added.

Furthermore, the senior NC leader underscored the BJP’s failure to fulfill its mandate in the Jammu region since 2014. He pointed out that the BJP had not effectively carried forward projects initiated by previous governments, both at the state and central levels. As a result, infrastructure upgrades and essential supply schemes have either stalled or progressed at a snail’s pace, exacerbating hardships for the people of Jammu, he added.

Javed Rana emphasized the significance of the INDI alliance as the sole solution to address the myriad challenges facing the region.

“Today, more than ever, we need a cohesive approach to overcome the challenges that con-

front us. The INDI alliance represents the collective strength and resolve of parties committed to the welfare and progress of Jammu & Kashmir,” he added.

The former Legislator urged the people of the region to throw their support behind the NC candidate in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. “By supporting the NC candidate, we can ensure that our voices are heard and our interests are represented in the highest echelons of governance,” he added.

Javed Rana called upon the people of Pir Panjal to unite under the banner of the INDI alliance and to cast their vote in favor of the NC candidate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Today’s meeting was organised by NC Leader Mian Mahrooz Ahmed in which District President Rajouri Shafait Khan, Shafakat Mir, Riyaz Choudhary, Nazir Husain, Mian Sheraz Azhari also spoke on the occasion.

EDITORIAL

Dynamics of Elections

Elections in India have always been a cornerstone of its democratic framework, reflecting the diverse voices and aspirations of its populace. With each passing election cycle, the dynamics surrounding the electoral process undergo significant transformations, influenced by societal, technological, and political developments. In recent years, one notable evolution has been the increasing emphasis on digital campaigning and voter engagement initiatives, reshaping the landscape of Indian democracy.

Digital campaigning has emerged as a potent tool for political parties and candidates to connect with voters across geographical boundaries. The proliferation of social media platforms and digital communication channels has facilitated direct interaction between political stakeholders and citizens, enabling real-time dissemination of information, policy agendas, and campaign messages. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become integral components of election strategies, allowing candidates to engage with voters, address concerns, and mobilize support with unprecedented reach and immediacy.

Moreover, the advent of data analytics and targeted advertising has revolutionized campaign strategies, enabling parties to segment and micro-target specific voter demographics based on socio-economic, geographic, and psychographic factors. By harnessing big data and predictive analytics, political actors can tailor their messages and outreach efforts to resonate with the diverse electorate, maximizing the effectiveness of their campaigns and optimizing resource allocation.

In addition to digital campaigning, there has been a concerted effort to enhance voter engagement through innovative initiatives and outreach programs. Recognizing the importance of active citizen participation in the democratic process, electoral authorities, civil society organizations, and grassroots activists have launched various initiatives to promote voter registration, education, and turnout.

One such initiative is the Voter Awareness Forums (VAFs), established by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to engage with stakeholders at the grassroots level and promote voter awareness through community mobilization, outreach events, and educational programs. These forums serve as platforms for dialogue and collaboration between election officials, civil society organizations, media outlets, and local communities, fostering a culture of electoral literacy and civic engagement.

Furthermore, technological innovations such as mobile applications, online voter registration portals, and voter helplines have simplified the electoral process, making it more accessible and inclusive for citizens. Digital initiatives like the National Voters' Service Portal (NVSP) enable voters to verify their registration status, locate polling stations, and access electoral information with ease, empowering them to participate actively in the electoral process.

The emphasis on digital campaigning and voter engagement initiatives reflects a broader shift towards a more inclusive, transparent, and participatory democracy in India. By harnessing the power of technology and innovation, political actors and electoral authorities are striving to bridge the gap between citizens and the political process, empowering individuals to make informed choices and hold their representatives accountable.

However, amidst the rapid digitization of elections, it is essential to address the challenges of digital divide, misinformation, and data privacy to ensure the integrity and fairness of the electoral process. Efforts must be made to mitigate the spread of fake news and disinformation on digital platforms, safeguarding the democratic discourse from manipulation and distortion.

In conclusion, the evolving dynamics of elections in India underscore the transformative potential of digital technologies in shaping the future of democracy. By embracing digital campaigning and voter engagement initiatives, India is poised to usher in a new era of participatory governance, where the voices of all citizens are heard, and the electoral process is truly inclusive and accessible to all.

Electoral battle of the three fronts in Kerala

By: Dr G Gopa Kumar

Coalition politics has been the lifeline of Kerala since Independence as it began prior to modern Kerala, with Travancore-Cochin politics as the forerunner. Barring two governments out of 23, all the governments since 1956 were a coalition of like-minded parties. Therefore, Kerala became the cradle of coalition politics in India. Over the years, coalition politics has matured into a sharp bipolar politics providing little room for a third coalition or party to win seats or form a government in Kerala. Unlike in other states, winning party candidates need a higher share of votes in the peculiar bi-polar electoral battle. Nevertheless, ideology took a backfoot and pragmatism prevailed in the formation and running of coalition governments. Curiously, Kerala voters behaved contrastingly in assembly and Lok Sabha polls in most cases. Further, it has resisted the national trend on a number of occasions.

Three fronts and the puzzle
The 2024 general elections bring contrasting challenges to all three fronts in Kerala—the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). This paradox is also found in building a strong narrative. In this context, the primary dilemma of the BJP, to open its account under the first past the post system of elections, is how to gain partners in its coalition structure with a substantial mass base. Otherwise, it has to emerge itself with critical mass as a strong rival to the traditional coalitions, the UDF and LDF. This is an unlikely aspect due to the social and political history, demography and unique developments in the state.

Unlike in other parts of India, the

Hindutva ideology has severe limitations in the plural setting of the state. Formulating a credible narrative for the BJP is certainly problematic in this situation. It has to face two formidable rivals, viz the ideologically strong Communists, and the electorally astute Congress and its Muslim League combination. No wonder the NDA never polled more than 15 percent of votes in Kerala. At the same time, the RSS has a strong base with an organisational network functioning throughout Kerala.

With the 18th Lok Sabha elections close on its heels, Kerala is poised for a triangular fight in all 20 constituencies, although the BJP is offering stiff fights only in seven seats that confuses the traditional major rivals led by the Congress and the CPI(M). Added to this bewilderment is the fact that the UDF and LDF are also fraught with structural and ideological challenges.

Let us enter into this interesting scenario. Firstly, the Congress is not in power either in Kerala or in India and saves itself from any anti-incumbency factor. But it is organisationally weak, with leadership struggles at the state level and suffers from a dearth of funds. However, the presence of its national leader Rahul Gandhi vying for the Wayanad seat emboldens them like in 2019. But except the Muslim League, the Congress does not have a strong partner in the coalition.

Further, a few of its ranks deserted and joined the BJP recently. Consequently, it suffered from the criticism that the party is playing a 'B' Team for the BJP. Secondly, it has two rivals to beat in electoral politics, the mighty LDF that has been in power in Kerala for the last eight years, and the emerging BJP in most of the constituencies.

It is an irony that both the Con-

gress and the CPI(M) are part of the INDI Alliance but are traditional rivals in Kerala. Except the 'ideological' unity to fight the BJP, to save secularism in the country, there is nothing in common between the Congress and CPI(M) as evinced in the complex politics of Kerala. Given these contradictions, crafting a substantive narrative for the UDF and the Congress is a basic dilemma.

Perhaps its strong point is that unlike the CPI(M), which is a weak force in national politics, the Congress continues as the major opposition party to the BJP and probably can lead the anti-BJP coalition either in power or in opposition soon after the polls.

Whereas the challenges before the LDF piloted by the CPI(M) are numerous. The CPI and the CPI(M) are contesting 90 percent of the seats in Lok Sabha, allowing limited roles for the smaller parties in the coalition (structurally, the LDF has more strength due to the presence of a number of smaller parties).

But the most challenging factor before them is how to build a strong narrative that is focused on attacking both the Congress and BJP. The former is a partner of the non-BJP alliance while the latter is an ideological rival. To win more seats, it has to appeal for support not only from party ranks but also build credibility and confidence among the Muslim and Christian communities, who together constitute more than 45 percent of the state population.

Secondly, it has to overcome the anti-incumbency against its own government that has been in power since 2016. This is not an easy task because of a host of current factors—a plummeting economy, increasing unemployment, price rise, corruption charges against the chief minister and

few party leaders, increasing violence in the campuses for which its student arm, the Students Federation of India, has been targeted, stand-off with the governor over the extreme politicisation of the academic sector, tacit support from an extremist Muslim organisation, the SDPI etc.

Therefore, creating a credible narrative to address the Kerala electorate is more problematic for the LDF. Its attack on the BJP relating to the issues of secularism is equally competed by the UDF since the Congress is also apprehensive of the BJP on the topic of CAA, anti-minority policies, issue of Article 370, violation of the federal and secular spirit in the Constitution, etc.

In its over-enthusiasm to attack the BJP, the LDF lost its sheen to project the inherent problems of the major rival, the UDF. While the Congress could easily highlight the fact that it is much stronger at the national level to take on the challenges brought by the BJP, a similar assertion cannot be made by the LDF.

Therefore, the crisis before the Left is much deeper than its rival in the national poll. Its electoral strength is limited at the national level and except in Kerala, it has not emerged as a major force to reckon with. On the whole, the LDF suffers from two counts—the anti-incumbency factor and the limited appeal restricted to the state in a hotly contested general election. On the whole, the coalition puzzle is inescapable for all the three fronts in Kerala.

(Senior political scientist and former Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Kerala)

Why we must see red

By: Geetha Ravichandran

There was a recent report of a prominent classical dancer declaring that a male colleague should not be dancing, as he was black as a crow. This, according to her, was not aesthetically pleasing. The fact that she belonged to a region where the natural tone of the skin is in the darker shades made her comment even more outrageous. Another tragic report was that of a father in Vijayawada poisoning his 18-month-old daughter as she was dark-skinned.

There is a deep-rooted prejudice in our country against dark skin. This has given rise to a flourishing and exploitative cosmetic industry. From infamous chemical bleaches and fairness creams to the glutathione promise, there is an endeavour to sell an illusory standard of beauty as being light-skinned. I am struck by the irony that the cosmetic industry is making its profits by changing dark to light when it's skin, and white to black when it's hair. It thrives on people unhappy with their appearance.

A look at matrimonial ads, the lack of acceptance of dark-skinned models in the fashion industry or as female leads in the film industry shows the extent of bias. This is surprising in a country where we worship the dark-skinned Krishna and Draupadi, the dusky wife of the Pandavas, is celebrated for her beauty and valour.

The history of colourism in India is often linked to caste. There is a theory that the light-

skinned Aryan invaders subjugated the dark-skinned indigenous population and introduced the Varna or caste system based on colour. Caste is considered India's version of racism, a weapon to oppress certain socio-economic groups. Those who worked long hours under the sun emerged with darker skin. However, the intermingling of the races over the centuries has created a blended palette in our country. Variations in skin colour are often seen within the same family.

The global prevalence of colourism among non-white races points to colonialism as a major cause for this malaise. Colonialism projected the image of a white-skinned master lording over dark-skinned natives, with the attendant prejudice and social discrimination gaining traction. Stereotypes and caricatures deepened the social divide. The British boasted of their racial superiority and 'the white man's burden'. Exclusive access to institutions and clubs, and the emergence of white towns excluding locals underlined this sense of privilege. In post-independence India, the white skin became something of an aspirational symbol.

Skin whitening products are big business worldwide. A WHO study has estimated the size of the global skin-whitening industry at \$31.2 billion in 2024. In India, 50 percent of the skin care industry comprises skin-lightening products, which is around \$500 million annually. For many users, chiefly women,

turning light-skinned is touted as a passport to privilege.

However, the ingredients in these products have come under scrutiny for potential adverse effects. Mercury can cause damage to the kidneys and hydroquinone is identified as a carcinogen. Many skin whiteners contain melanin blockers, which is advertised as if it's a natural and wholesome solution. Cosmetic companies indulge in gaslighting customers by referring to sun exposure as a disaster for the skin. The need for spending adequate time in the sun for producing vitamin D and kickstarting metabolism is overlooked.

The rebranding of a face cream by a multinational by a name change is an outstanding example of marketing duplicity. This was a response to the protest that the brand was perpetrating unhealthy biases. The ingredients in the tube have not changed and exploitation of vulnerabilities to increase profits still continues to be the game.

There is, thankfully, a growing awareness against colourism both in India and other countries. Counter-movements like Dark is Beautiful are beginning to have an impact. But the fact is colourism is deeply embedded in India's social fabric. This discrimination is evident when jobs involve visibility, like in entertainment and advertising. However, the growing awareness that success is no longer linked to skin colour, unlike what it was in the colonial past, is a positive change.

It is necessary to educate children at homes and schools against colourism, bullying and body shaming. There is an interesting story worth retelling in this context. Sage Ashtavakra was born with eight deformities. Once when he entered the court of King Janaka, his contorted appearance was greeted with derisive laughter. Ashtavakra joined in and laughed the loudest. A stunned Janaka asked him why. Ashtavakra replied that while he came expecting to meet learned men, he realised he was in the midst of those who could not see beyond the skin. Janaka and his courtiers at once bowed in respect to the sage. The courage of Ashtavakra holds a valuable lesson.

To be bound by appearances and the opinions of others is a folly. There are sufficient red flags on the damage that perverse societal attitudes can inflict. It is important for us to teach children that standards of beauty may change, but basic human values like respect and acceptance of others will never go out of fashion. It is essential that everyone learns to be comfortable in their own skin.

(Former bureaucrat and author, most recently of The Spell of the Rain Tree)

Kidney transplant was successfully performed at Max Hospital, Mohali

MOHALI, Apr 22 (Agencies): A green corridor was created on Sunday between Fortis Hospital and Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mohali to transport a kidney harvested from a brain-dead man. The harvested kidney was successfully transplanted by a team of doctors at Max Super Specialty Hospital in 50 years patient, who was suffering from kidney failure. The Punjab police were roped in to create green corridors by clearing traffic for an ambulance to swiftly transport a kidney.

Dr. Pinak Moudgil-Senior Vice President, Hospital Operations, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mohali, said, "The Donor was declared brain dead during treatment, and after his family agreed to donate his organs, his kidneys were harvested on Sunday at Fortis Hospital. "It took only 10 minutes to transport the kidney to Max Hospital due to the green corridor created by Punjab Police.



For this we appreciate and thank Punjab Police for creating the corridor for taking harvested kidney quickly to needy patients, said Dr. Pinak Moudgil.

He further added that we at Max Super Specialty Hospital always strive to offer the best medical treatment to our patients and today's Cadaver Kidney Transplant was another step in this direction to save precious life.

Dr Jagdish Sethi-

Associate Director, Kidney Transplant, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mohali said that the recipient was suffering from kidney failure from the past 2 years. He was in dire need to get a transplant. The transplant has gone well and the recipient patient's condition is stable as of now. In a few days he will be discharged from hospital to lead a normal life.

Dr Sethi further said, "That awareness of

organ donation is a must. Many precious lives can be saved with organ transplantations. Ironically India is struggling with acute shortage of organs for transplantation. It is estimated that more than a million people suffer with end stage organ failure, but only a handful of 3,500 transplants are performed annually. At least 15 patients die every day waiting for organs and every 10 minutes a new name is

added to this waiting list (<https://www.organindia.org/overviews/donation-program/>). Undoubtedly, the demand far outstrips the availability of organs. And no one can escape the harsh reality, he informed.

SP Traffic Harjinder Singh Maan said, at Mohali Police, we take pride in our role in a critical, multi-state lifesaving initiative such as organ transplantation. We salute the courageous family who, despite their profound loss, chose to donate their loved one's organs, offering a new beginning to the recipient. Our wishes are with the 50-yr-old recipient, now recuperating at Max Hospital Mohali and wish him a speedy recovery.

Mohali Police will remain committed to facilitate green corridors for the secure and fast transport of organs. We encourage community members to spread awareness about organ donation, which has the potential to save countless lives."

Unlocking Fortune: The Power of "Hard Work Beyond Criticism"

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: In fact, we live in a society in which, for instance, when Virat Kohli and Pat Cummins are batting, people sit in front of the Television sets extending coaching comments as to dictate them about playing the game. The same people also offer their services to Ronaldo and Messi. Such individuals are termed "armchair quarterbacks," embodying a reality where confidence exceeds competence. You should never fall into this trap. Your competence must go hand in hand with your confidence and both confidence and competence stem from experience, skills and knowledge.

Never take stress in life about how much you know. No matter how skilled you are, your focus should be on what you do not know. Always be curious.

Educational institutions and exceptional teachers should promote "lifelong learning." Instead of dull lectures and slideshows, children should engage in "active learning."

Teachers need to cultivate curiosity, clear



doubts and encourage the courage to question. Only by doing this will we produce individuals who are thoughtful and progressive.

The key to success in the 21st century lies in skills that enable you to learn and relearn quickly.

It is often said that one should be firm like a mountain, but a person should rather be like a river, which carves its path towards its destination.

In the modern world's knowledge economy, only those who are always ready to learn something new and challenge their opinions and viewpoints succeed.

The purpose of being a scientist is not merely to master physics, chemistry and biology. Essen-

tially, it involves living in continuous learning mode, refusing to let ideas become ideologies. These individuals anchor their lives in research, struggle, doubt and curiosity. So, the big lesson for us is not to be driven by dogmas and ideologies. Learn to observe, reflect and then form your own opinions.

There are four types of people in the world: First, the Prosecutors, who are numerous and whose thinking stagnates. Second, the Preachers, who offer good advice and seek change in the world, yet change eludes them because they abandon logic for dogma's and pretense. Third, the Politicians, who are power hungry and use cunning tactics over skills, knowledge and wisdom to attain positions. Fourth, the Scientists, who discard ideology, dogmas and pre established social norms. Their sole guiding force is logic. These individuals believe in experimentation, observation and research. They find joy in disproving their own hypotheses during research as failure too is a learning experience for them.

KDP Wing of DPAP conducts door to door election campaign



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: The Kashmiri Displaced People (KDP) wing of Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) Leaders launched door to door campaign requesting the Kashmiri displaced people to vote for their DPAP party candidate Advocate Mohd Saleem Paray who is well wisher for our displaced people.

The KDP Wing leaders who participated in election campaigning were led by Sanjay Dhar President, Piaray Lal Pandita Chairman, Roop Krishen Koul Vice President, Raj Kumar Ticku General Secretary, Gawhar Wani Spokesperson, Ravinder Singh Secretary, Renu Razdan Mahila Vice President, Charanjeet Singh Publicity Secretary, Naveen Gosani Youth President, Rahul Raina Youth Vice President, Avtar Krishen Ladhoo unit

support in favour of DPAP candidate.

Kashmiri pandits particularly from Anantnag -Rajouri constituency were requested to Vote and support Advocate Mohd Saleem Paray who is well wisher for our displaced people.

The KDP Wing leaders who participated in election campaigning were led by Sanjay Dhar President, Piaray Lal Pandita Chairman, Roop Krishen Koul Vice President, Raj Kumar Ticku General Secretary, Gawhar Wani Spokesperson, Ravinder Singh Secretary, Renu Razdan Mahila Vice President, Charanjeet Singh Publicity Secretary, Naveen Gosani Youth President, Rahul Raina Youth Vice President, Avtar Krishen Ladhoo unit

President Jagti and other workers participants.

The Leaders of KDP Wing DPAP after visiting all Camps and other migrant residential areas of Jammu District have expressed their satisfaction over the response received from all Kashmiri Displaced People and hope that this year the voting percentage of Kashmiri Displaced People will get a good result in comparison to previous elections, as this year the Election Authorities have fully eased out the voting procedures for Kashmiri Displaced People, for which all migrant Voters have thanked the Authorities due to which the voting interest has risen and all are eager to cast their votes to the right candidate.

K.C. College of Education observes Earth Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Environmental Club of K.C. College of Education observed 'Earth Day', which is celebrated annually on April 22nd. It serves as a reminder of the importance of environmental protection and sustainability.

The members of the club planned and organized a poster making activity for the students of Arya Girls High School, Jammu.

The main aim of the activity was to spread the awareness about the importance of sustainable development. Convener of the Club, Dr. Puja Sharma along with the members of the club educated the students on issues of environmental

concern.

A good number of students of Arya Girls High School participated in the poster making activity organized by the club and showcased their talents and creativity through the beautiful drawings made by them on the theme "Planet vs Plastic".

The activity was convened by Dr. Puja Sharma and Rita Jamwal. Club convener applauded the efforts of the club and participation of the students in the activity and mentioned that the club will continue doing such activity involving the locals so that the club can achieve the aim of spreading awareness among the masses about environment protection, preservation and conservation.

Teli seeks vote in favour of INDI Alliance candidate Raman Bhalla



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell JKNC, addressed a series of election campaign meetings at Bathindi Nowabad and Vikram Chowk.

While addressing the meeting Teli appealed to the workers to vote in

favour of INDI Alliance candidate Jammu Reasi Parliament Constituency Raman Bhalla in larger interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. To save Dogra culture, employment and land for the future generation, he added. Large number of workers participated in the meeting.

Those who were present in the meeting included:-

Sham Din Ex Panch, D.D Mehra, Shashi Kumar, Ch. Aslam, Sunil, Deepak, Kuldeep, Muzamil Malik, Karan Singh, Ravi Kumar, Kuldeep Raj, Sita Ram, Pratap Singh, Satosh Kumar, Jagmohan and others.

GDC Thannamandi celebrates Earth Day

Top News Report

THANNAMANDI, Apr 22: The Department of Botany in collaboration with Department of Geography and Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) under the aegis of IQAC of GDC Thannamandi celebrated Earth Day as part of Viksit Bharat@47 Sankalp here today.

On this occasion a brief but impressive program on this year's Earth Day Theme "Planet vs Plastic" organized under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Farooq Ahmed, Principal of the college in which Prof. Saleem Ayaz Rather, Head Department of Zoology, Govt. PG College Rajouri was special guest. The program was followed by an Earth Day pledge and cleanliness drive on campus.

Farooq Ahmed emphasized upon the need of collective and comprehensive efforts from

all stakeholders to fight menace of plastic which is harmful for the health of human beings as well as the planet at large.

He said that planting more trees, applying three Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), Clean-up campaigns and greater awareness are some of ways we can opt towards a healthier and more resilient planet worth living for everyone everywhere.

He expressed hopes that students and youth may take a lead to spread awareness in their locality and would serve as agents of change towards promoting sustainability. He appreciated the organizing team for taking this initiative.

Dr. Ashaq Malik, IQAC Coordinator and Head, Department of Botany welcomed and introduced the audience about the Earth day which is celebrated across the globe since 1970. The ambitious goal to reduce use

of Plastic to 60 percent by 2040 and phasing out single use plastic by 2030 can only be fulfilled by glocal initiatives and innovative actions.

Adnan Aqib, student of B.Sc 6th Semester read out the earth day pledge. Dr. Gulshan Rashid Bhat, Head Department of Geography and Anuj Bali, Librarian and Vice President, IIC in College coordinated the cleanliness drive.

Prof. Asif Aijaz Lone, Head Department of Physics and NSS Coordinator presented the formal vote of thanks. Prominent among others present on the occasion were Dr. Nazakat Hussain, Dr. Abdul Haq Naimi, Dr. Nazir Ul Islam, Prof. Altaf Hussain, Dr. Junaid Ahmed, Dr. Shiraz Ahmed, Prof. Fatima Parveen, Dr. Ather Aziz Raina, Prof. Rummy Dar, Prof. Rizwana, Dr. Nagina, Dr. Sarfaraz Mirza, and Dr. Arshad Khan.

GDC Kishtwar organizes cleanliness drive, pledge event on World Earth Day

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Apr 22: In commemoration of World Earth Day, the Department of Environmental Sciences (Eco Club Unit) and NSS Unit of GDC Kishtwar jointly organized a Campus Cleanliness Drive under the theme "Planet vs. Plastics" to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of Plastic Pollution.

The event aimed to inspire students towards a Plastic-free society, promoting sustainability and environmental consciousness.



ness.

Under the esteemed patronage of Prof. Basharat Iqbal, Principal of GDC Kishtwar, and the guidance of Dr. Sehrish Gazal, (HOD), and Prof. Esarul Ayub, NSS Pro-

gramme Officer, the event witnessed active participation from faculty members including Dr. Yasar Ahmed, Prof. Prithvi Raj, Dr. Tabassum, Prof. Ajeet Kumar, Dr. Bilal, and Dr. Waheed Hurra.

Approximately 60 students enthusiastically engaged in the cleanliness drive, diligently clearing the campus of plastic waste.

The participants fervently took the pledge to

combat plastic usage with passion and commitment.

Dr. Sehrish Gazal addressed the gathering, urging students to advocate against single-use plastics, emphasizing the crucial message of the harmful impacts of plastic pollution on our planet.

The initiative underscored the collective responsibility towards preserving the environment and fostering a sustainable future, reinforcing the significance of individual actions in mitigating plastic pollution and safeguarding the Earth.

GDC Marheen celebrates Earth Day

Top News Report

MARHEEN, Apr 22: The Eco Club and Department of Environmental Science of GDC Marheen celebrated Earth Day by organizing an awareness lecture on the theme "Importance of Earth Day" and an open house discussion on the topic How to conserve Mother Earth in the College premises.

The programme was organized under the patronage of Principal of the College Prof. (Dr.) Anupama Gupta. In her address, she highlighted that we all work together to save Earth, ease sufferings and lessen the shattering economic and social consequences. Moreover, we must protect our planet from all the threats of climate disruption.

The event was organized under the supervision of Dr. Barneet Kour, HOD, Department of EVS.

A large number of Volunteers participated in the event. The staff members presented during the series of events were Dr. Arun Dev Singh, Prof. Sandeep, Dr. Balwinder, Prof. Anoop, Dr. Munisha, Dr. Shallu, Dr. Reemi, Dr. Rajni, Prof. Nitika, Prof. Sonia, Prof. Tripti and Prof. Monika.

GDC Marh celebrates Earth Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Eco Club of Govt. Degree College Marh celebrated Earth Day in the college campus under the dynamic leadership of worthy Principal Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul on Monday. The theme for World Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet v/s Plastics', addresses one of the most pressing environmental issues, that is, plastic pollution.

Principal, in his address, stressed that

this day is dedicated to educating and mobilizing individuals and communities on the importance of the environment; the necessity of its preservation and restoration. The theme of this year specially focuses on reducing plastic pollution and a commitment in making sustainable choices that will ensure a livable future for all.

Students of 4th and 2nd semester namely Ayush, Navpreet, Raveena, Sonia, Palak, Roshni prepared beauti-

ful decorative items out of plastic waste like pen holder, pots, flowers, etc.

The activity was coordinated by Dr. Shakun Sharma (HOD Sociology), Prof. Anjana Chib (HOD EVS) and Mohit Kalotra. The occasion was graced by Prof. Madhvi Parasher (HOD Botany) and Kahkeshan Shahnaz. It is pertinent to mention here that college has already taken initiative to process plastic waste by having MOU with RUDA.

On World Earth Day, celebrities talk about how they contribute towards a better future of the blue planet

Small steps
Ankit Bathla
For me, making sure the Earth stays happy isn't just about doing major stuff, but small actions that really count. Things like remembering to turn off the tap, planting trees and looking after the ones already growing. These might seem small steps, but they add up and make a big difference in keeping our planet healthy.

Kitchen waste
Varsha Hegde
I really don't like using plastic bags. Instead, I opt for cloth bags whenever I go shopping. Plus, I've found a great way to handle kitchen waste — I use it as fertiliser for plants. This helps us avoid harmful pesticides and gives the plants valuable nutrients.

Conserve water
Simple Kaul
There's a lot of gratitude that I have for Mother Earth. Recycling water is a great idea. We should not be wasting too much water and rather conserve it. I don't use plastic bags as well.



Ban plastic
Anupama Solanki
I have five-six used phones that are not working and am going to recycle them. In our housing society, wet and dry waste is collected separately, which is a good idea. However, plastic is a problem. I think the government should ban plastic and create some other options, so we can keep the environment safe. Also, I always try to use

less electricity.
Plant a future
Gulfam Khan Husaain
I love plants, I propagate them and if I find a plant someone has discarded because it has wilted, I get it home and try to revive it. I feel if you consume oxygen, you need to learn ways to conserve and help create more of it. I'm very conscious about wet and dry garbage segregation, avoid plastic bags as much as I

can and recycle too. It's also important to use food waste as fertiliser by making compost out of it. Being a plant lover is not sufficient; you need to propagate in society and teach children.
Education is the key
Manjari Mishra
On a daily basis, I focus on conserving water by using recycled water whenever possible. I separate wet and dry garbage for proper dis-

posal. I also make sure to avoid single-use plastic bags and containers, while opting for reusable alternatives. Additionally, I keep plants at home to improve indoor air quality and contribute to a greener environment. To further preserve Mother Earth, I believe promoting renewable energy sources, reducing carbon emissions and advocating for sustainable practices in industries are crucial steps. Education and awareness about environmental issues are also essential.

Eco-friendly approach
Megha Sharma
I don't use plastic at all. Even if I have a party at my place, I use disposable cups and plates, which are eco-friendly. You get garbage bags that are for wet and dry waste. I keep doing certain things. Anything that is easily disposable, I plant it. While grocery shopping, I use only my cloth bag. Also, I believe there should be a total ban on plastic items. We should rather use bamboo bags.

Victoria Beckham celebrates 50th birthday



Victoria Beckham, renowned fashion designer and former Spice Girl, marked her 50th birthday in grand style despite her recent foot injury. The grand celebration took place at the prestigious private members' club Oswald's, located in London's upscale Mayfair district, on Saturday

evening. Arriving at the event with her trademark poise, Victoria made a statement as she gracefully navigated her way in on crutches, showcasing resilience and elegance. Her choice of attire, a semi-sheer mint green gown adorned with delicate ruffles, garnered attention and

admiration. Paired with sparkling bracelets and styled hair, Victoria exuded timeless glamour despite her injury.

Accompanying Victoria on her milestone birthday were her beloved family members, including husband David Beckham and their children Brooklyn, Romeo, Cruz, and Harper. The family radiated sophistication, with the men donning sharp suits and Harper looking angelic in a white satin dress.

However, the absence of Brooklyn's wife, Nicola Peltz, from the festivities was notable. Peltz, who expressed her love for her mother-in-law via Instagram, was spending time with her grandmother during the celebration.

Among the esteemed guests were Victoria's former Spice Girl bandmates Emma Bunton, Mel C, Mel B, and Geri Horner, alongside celebrities such as Eva Longoria, Gordon Ramsay and Tom Cruise, making it a truly star-studded affair.

Tara Sutaria says she feels 'cheeky' as she drops her new picture

Tara Sutaria, who marked her Bollywood debut with 'Student of the Year 2', dropped a mesmerising picture of herself, leaving fans in awe of her beauty.

Taking to Instagram, Tara shared an unseen close-up picture of herself adorned in a black ensemble.

Donning a glossy makeup look and fringe hairstyle, she gazes directly into the camera lens. The snap is captioned, 'cheeky'.

Fans showered praises in the comments section, with one admirer remarking, 'So cute', while another said, 'stunning'.

On the professional front, Tara was last seen in the 2023 survival thriller 'Aurva', alongside Rajpal Yadav and



Abhishek Banerjee. Previously, she has appeared in films like

'Ek Villain Returns', 'Tadap', and 'Heropanti 2'.

An artiste's journey is complex: Abhilash Thapliyal

Actor, radio jockey and TV host Abhilash Thapliyal is a man who dons many hats. Known for his roles in Aspirants, Kennedy, TVF Inmates, Faadu - A Love Story, Blurr and Raksha Bandhan, among others, he is now seen as a commentator in the sports biopic Maidaan, starring Ajay Devgn. He talks about the film and his journey till now.

"My experience of being a radio jockey came in very handy for this role. Diction, voice modulation, command over language and confidence helped a lot to enact a commentator in Maidaan. Not many know that for one time I was the official commentator for the Formula 1 racing event that was held in India," he begins.

Coming from the Army background, he chose the profession of a radio jockey and then an



actor, so what inspired him to enter the world of acting? "I never wanted to be an actor. In fact, when I came to Mumbai first I wanted to explore The Kapil Sharma Show. As luck would have it, years later, I was on the show for the promotions of one of my films. It was largely due to the insistence of director Amit Sharma and actor Manoj Bajpayee that I tried my hand at acting, and the

rest, as they say, is history."

In fact, the director of Maidaan, Amit Sharma, had called him in 2018 and asked him to start learning football. He trained for a month, but couldn't crack the audition. "Later, I bagged the role of commentator Dave Matthews in 2022. I think for the first time, commentary has been made such an integral part of the storytelling."

Working with big stars like Ajay Devgn must be challenging, right? "Although I don't have a single scene with him in this film, I have worked with him before. He is an exceptional actor and his eyes speak volumes. He is a chilled-out person with no airs."

It was his role as SK in Aspirants that Abhilash believes gave him wide acclaim. "The role in Aspirants gave my career a real fillip. It made people see me in a different light and quality projects came my way. My roles in Faadu and Blurr were complex too."

As for the medium — OTT, television or films, Abhilash has no preferences, "I don't care about the medium as long the story is compelling and my role makes a difference to it. Also, the director at the helm is important for me." Talking about his

upcoming projects, he says, "Desperately waiting for Indian audiences to see Kennedy. I had a great time working with Anurag Kashyap sir, he is an absolute master and a great human being, who gives you all the freedom to enact your part. I also just finished a beautiful short film for festivals. I will speak about a couple of more very interesting projects when the time comes."

So, where does he see himself in 10 years from now? "I live by the day, but I do have plans. An artiste's journey is complex, it is never linear. Keeping my fingers crossed."

For the future aspirants in the acting field, his advice is clear, "Stop thinking and planning a lot. Just go about doing stuff. Doers will be winners, so you need to keep doing."

Ananya Panday teases exciting project



Ananya Panday remains highly engaged on social media and frequently updates her fans about her life. She recently shared a selfie while providing an update on her latest project. Ananya revealed that she's currently involved in shooting something enjoy-

able and thrilling. The photo quickly gained traction across social media platforms.

On her Instagram stories, Ananya posted a picture of herself posing for the camera, accompanied by the caption, "Back to the Bay and shooting something really fun and exciting."

Recently the Kho Gaye Hum Kahan actress shared a glimpse of a lovely gift sent by her close friend Shraddha.

Taking to her Instagram stories, Ananya posted a video showcasing a delicate gold necklace adorned with star charms. Sharing the clip, the actress wrote, "Thank you @shraddhakapoor. I feel like a star." The Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar actress was quick to respond to her post with "You beauty!"

Meanwhile, on the work front, Ananya has some exciting projects lined up. She'll be starring in the TV series Cal Me Bae with Varun Dhawan and Vir Das. Ananya is also working on projects like Control, Battle Thy Seeds, Darbadar, Shankara, The Untold Story of C Sankaran Nair and Run For Young.

Sunny Leone begins shooting for her Malayalam film



Sunny Leone is super excited to be part of a Malayalam film. On Friday, she shared a glimpse of the muhurat ceremony on the sets. Taking to Instagram, Sunny posted a video featuring herself and team of the film. Sharing the video, she wrote, "I'm so excited to be part of this amazing #Malayalam film that I ended up burning my hands. Director: @pampally."

Sunny Leone has left an indelible mark in Bollywood with her roles in various movies including Jism 2, Jackpot, Shootout at Wadala and Ragini MMS 2 among others. Most recently, she graced the screen in Kennedy, directed by Kashyap, alongside Rahul Bhat and Abhilash Thapliyal.

Kirsten Dunst is so busy being a mom that she barely gets time to shower

Seems like actress Kirsten Dunst is overwhelmingly occupied with her mommy duties to the extent that she has to carve out time just to take a shower.

The 41-year-old actress has revealed that she is so busy juggling her career with caring for her two sons, Ennis, five, and two-year-old James — whom she shares with her 36-year-old actor husband Jesse Plemons — that she spends whatever little alone time she can manage watching trashy TV shows!

Kirsten, currently portraying a conflict photographer in Civil War on the big screen, said, "When everyone is asleep, I can watch the shows I want, like The Bachelor. But, honestly, not even a shower is sacred at this point. Nothing is." Describing her last 'perfect' day off



when asked, Kirsten said, "When you have two kids, you never have a day off. Right now it's being on a plane with no wi-fi. And people bring you food. That feels like a spa day for a mom." Kirsten also illustrated the hectic nature of her life by mentioning that

she tends to fall asleep if she tries to stay up late. Reflecting on the last late night she stayed up past her usual bedtime, she shared, "Last night again because it was my husband's birthday and the premiere. I couldn't tell you until what time. I just passed out."

Congress plans to redistribute people's property: PM Modi at Aligarh rally

Modi accuses the Grand Old Party of following a policy of appeasement

ALIGARH (UP), Apr 22 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Congress of planning to redistribute people's property if it is voted to power.

Echoing the remarks made a day earlier in Rajasthan, Modi said at a poll rally here that the Congress planned to conduct a survey people's possessions and redistribute them.

He said the people of Aligarh had put a 'lock' on dynastic politics, corruption and "appeasement" practised by the two "shahezaade", or princes. He was



referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, who are fighting the Lok Sabha elections as allies.

Modi accused the Congress of following a policy of appeasement, and yet doing nothing to uplift the social and economic condition of Muslims.

He cited the enactment of a law against instant triple talaq during the term of his government as a move that helped Muslim women. He also mentioned the increase in the Haj quota for Indian pilgrims.

PM Modi has new tactics for diverting attention from real issues: Rahul Gandhi



NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): The Congress on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of speaking in a "poisonous language" and said that he has several new tactics for diverting attention from real issues but the end of "business of lies" is near.

The Congress on Sunday night had also hit back at Prime Minister Modi over his "redistribution of wealth" remarks targeting the party, saying after facing "disappointment" in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, the PM has now resorted to "lies" and "hate speech" to divert people from the real issues.

Sharing the Congress' latest advertisement that focuses on rising prices and unemployment and inflation are at their peak in the country and Narendra Modi says 'everything is fine'."

"He (Modi) has several new techniques to 'divert from the issues', But the end of the business of lies is near," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also stepped up his attack on the prime minister.

"The Prime Minister speaks in a poisonous language on a whole lot of issues. He should

also answer a simple question - Since 1951, census has been conducted every ten years. This reveals the actual data of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. This should have been done in 2021 but has not been done till date. Why is the Prime Minister silent on this?" Ramesh said.

This is a conspiracy to destroy the Constitution of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Ramesh alleged.

The Congress stepped up its attack on the prime minister after he suggested that if the Congress comes to power, it would redistribute wealth of people to Muslims and cited former PM Manmohan Singh's remark that the minority community had the first claim on the country's resources.

Addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara, Modi alleged the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children".

Calcutta High Court order on Bengal school jobs 'illegal', will challenge it: Mamata Banerjee

RAIGANJ, Apr 22 (Agencies): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday termed as "illegal" the Calcutta High Court order cancelling all appointments made through a 2016 teacher recruitment test, and said her government will challenge the verdict.

Banerjee, while

addressing an election rally at Raiganj in North Bengal, also accused BJP leaders of influencing a section of the judiciary and judgments.

"The court verdict cancelling all recruitments is illegal. We stand by those who lost jobs. We will ensure you get justice, and challenge the order in a higher court,"

she said.

The Calcutta High Court on Monday ordered the cancellation of all appointments made through the recruitment process of the State Level Selection Test-2016 (SLST) in West Bengal government-sponsored and aided schools, declaring it "null and void".



Uttar Pradesh minister Sanjay Nishad roughed up at wedding in Sant Kabir Nagar

SANT KABIR NAGAR (UP), Apr 22 (Agencies): Uttar Pradesh minister Sanjay Nishad was allegedly attacked by some people when he was visiting a village in the Khalilabad Kotwali Police Station area to attend a wedding, police said on Monday.

A complaint was filed in the matter by the minister's personal secretary Vinod Kumar. Circle Officer Brijesh Singh, citing the complaint, said Sanjay Nishad was injured in an attack by some people in Mohammadpur Kathar village.

The incident happened late on Sunday night, when Sanjay Nishad reached the wedding venue at Jagannath Nishad's place and some people started an argument with him, he said.

During the argument, some of them attacked the minister which resulted in him bleeding from the nose. He was taken to a hospital, where he was given first aid, the CO said.

After the incident, Sanjay Nishad, who is the president of NISHAD party, a constituent of the ruling NDA, held a protest in the premises of the district hospital in Sant Kabir Nagar.

He called off the agitation only after

Superintendent of Police Satyajit Gupta heard his complaint at the hospital and assured him of action.

The CO said the police have registered an FIR against six people of the village under sections 147 (rioting), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code. Four of them - Raghavendra Yadav, Jai Prakash Yadav, Digvijay Yadav and Abhishek Yadav - have been detained, he said.

Gupta said that the police are investigating the matter and law and order is under control.

Sanjay Nishad's son Praveen Nishad is the Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Sant Kabir Nagar and he has been fielded again by the ruling party.

According to the locals, when the minister reached the village Sunday night, he was confronted by some villagers with complaints about his MP son's absence from his constituency.

The confrontation led to a clash between the villagers and the minister and his supporters. Nishad was brought to safety by a security guard, who took him to the hospital.

'Arvind Kejriwal asking for insulin daily': AAP sources cite Delhi CM's letter to Tihar superintendent

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): AAP sources said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote to Tihar jail superintendent on Monday claiming he has been asking for insulin daily amid spike in sugar levels.

He also rejected the jail authorities' claim that AIIMS doctors have said there was no reason to worry about the chief minister's health condition, they said.

In the letter written to the superintendent on Monday, he accused the jail administration of "lying" under "political pressure", the sources said.

There was no immediate reaction from Tihar jail authorities.

In a statement on Sunday, the Tihar administration had said they had arranged a



video conference of Kejriwal on April 20 with senior specialists from AIIMS during which neither "the issue of insulin was raised by Kejriwal, nor was it suggested by the doctors".

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has accused the Tihar administration of denying insulin to Kejriwal, who suffers from diabetes. The party has also alleged a "conspiracy" to "kill" him.

"Kejriwal wrote to Tihar jail superintendent

had not said that there was no cause of worry. "The doctors had said that they will assess the situation based on the history and data of Kejriwal's condition," added the source.

The Tihar administration, in the statement on Sunday, said appropriate senior specialists from AIIMS provided consultation to Kejriwal during the video call on April 20.

"After a 40-minute detailed consultation, Kejriwal was assured that there was no serious concern and was advised to continue with the prescribed medicines, which will be evaluated and reviewed regularly," a jail official had said.

The video conference was organised by the Tihar Jail administration

on a request by the chief minister's wife Sunita Kejriwal. Apart from a senior specialist from the hospital, medical officers of the Tihar jail were also on the call.

The AIIMS specialist was provided with a complete record of CGM (Glucose Monitoring Sensor) and the details of diet and medicines being taken by Kejriwal, the official said.

"Neither the issue of insulin was raised by Kejriwal, nor was it suggested by the doctors," the official added.

Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money-laundering case linked to the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy. He is lodged in Tihar jail since April 1.

Karnataka unit of BJP holds state-wide protests over Hubballi murder

BENGALURU, Apr 22 (Agencies): The Karnataka unit of BJP on Monday staged state-wide protests against the alleged brutal murder of a young woman in Hubballi.

Neha Hiremath (23), daughter of Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation Niranjana Hiremath, was allegedly stabbed to death on the campus of BVB College in Dharwad on April 18 sparking statewide outrage.

Neha was a first year student of Master of Computer Applications and the accused in the case, Fayaz, was earlier her classmate. Fayaz has been arrested by the police.

The party decided to stage statewide protests accusing that the Congress government's alleged "appeasement politics" was responsible for the incident.

The party also highlighted a series of incidents such as the bomb blast in Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru, attack on youths for chanting Jai Sri Ram, and reciting Hanuman Chalisa.

The BJP State President B Y Vijayendra led the protests in Mysuru, while the Leader of



Opposition R Ashoka and former Chief Minister and Haveri BJP candidate Basavaraj Bommai spearheaded the agitation in Tumakuru and Haveri.

Former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar led the protests in Belagavi where he is fighting the election on a BJP ticket.

Ballari BJP candidate B Sriramulu took part in the agitation in Ballari city.

Murugesh Nirani in Bagalkote and Basanagouda Patil Yatnal in Kalaburagi led the agitation in their cities respectively.

In Hubballi and Dharwad,

BJP MLAs Arvind Bellad and Mahesh Tenginkai conducted the protests.

Protesters took out a march, raised slogans 'Long Live Neha Hiremath' and staged sit-in demonstrations holding placards and Neha Hiremath's photograph. They burnt tyres in the middle of the road to express their anger.

The Anjuman-e-Islam, Dharwad observed a bandh for half-a-day from 10 am to 3 pm to condole Neha's murder and express its solidarity towards the bereaved family.

Muslim shop owners put up banners saying, 'Justice for Neha'.

BJP national president J P Nadda met the Hiremath family on Sunday. He demanded a CBI probe into the incident.

He said the BJP will cooperate if the investigation of the case needs to be handed over to CBI so that the victim gets justice.

Nadda expressed his apprehension that the ruling Congress would "influence and dilute" the probe.

Reacting to the agitation, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said the BJP had to resort to it because its "double engine" government had failed. "The big engine will also fail," he said.

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara alleged that this incident is being used for political gains.

"I saw some posts on 'X' and Facebook which said 'Vote for Neha Hiremath. It means that this is being used for politics," Parameshwara told reporters in Bengaluru.

He said the state government will initiate action as per law.

Fayaz stabbed Neha 14 times in 30 seconds, reveals post-mortem report

The report said that the accused Fayaz had stabbed her chest and neck.



HUBBALLI (KARNATAKA), Apr 22 (Agencies): The post-mortem report of Neha Hiremath has revealed that she was stabbed 14 times in just 30 seconds, police sources confirmed on Monday.

The report said that the accused Fayaz had stabbed her chest and

neck. "Neha was stabbed in the neck many times and as a result, her blood veins were cut resulting in severe bleeding, following which Neha succumbed," Police sources, quoting the post-mortem report, told agency.

Sources said that the accused first attacked Neha on the chest and abdomen but as she collapsed, he started stabbing her continuously all over her body. The accused had also attempted to slit her throat.

Neha Hiremath was studying MCA in BVB College in Hubballi. She was murdered by the jilted lover Fayaz Kondikoppa. Both studied together in BCA and were friends. Fayaz had discontinued his studies after BCA.

Neha's father, the Congress corporator, said that the accused wanted to convert his daughter forcefully for years. "When she rejected his moves, he planned, with a gang, and brutally stabbed her to death," he claimed.

Europe is fastest-warming continent, at nearly twice the average global rate: Report

NAPLES (ITALY), Apr 22 (Agencies): Europe is the fastest-warming continent and its temperatures are rising at roughly twice the global average, two top climate monitoring organisations reported Monday, warning of the consequences for human health, glacier melt and economic activity.

The UN's World Meteorological Organisation and the European Union's climate agency, Copernicus, said in a joint report that the continent has the opportunity to develop targeted strategies to speed up the transition to renewable resources like wind, solar and hydroelectric power in response to the effects of climate change.

The continent generated 43% of its electricity from renewable resources last year, up from 36% the year before, the agencies say in their European State of the Climate report for last year. More energy in Europe was generated from renewables than from fossil fuels for the second year running.

The latest five-year averages show that temperatures in Europe are now running 2.3 degrees Celsius (4.1 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial



al levels, compared to 1.3 degrees Celsius higher globally, the report says — just shy of the targets under the 2015 Paris climate accord to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

"Europe saw yet another year of increasing temperatures and intensifying climate extremes — including heat stress with record temperatures, wildfires, heat waves, glacier ice loss and lack of snowfall," said Elisabeth Hamdouch, the deputy head of unit for Copernicus at the EU's executive commission.

The report serves up a continental complement for WMO's flagship state of the global cli-

mate report, which has been published annually for three decades, and this year came with a "red alert" warning that the world isn't doing enough to fight the consequences of global warming.

Copernicus has reported that March marked the 10th straight month of record monthly temperatures. The average sea-surface temperature for the ocean across Europe hit its highest annual level in 2023, the Europe report said.

The European report focuses this year on the impact of high temperatures on human health, noting that deaths related to heat have risen across the

continent. It said more than 150 lives were lost directly last year in connection with storms, floods and wildfires.

The cost of weather- and climate-related economic losses in 2023 were estimated at more than 13.4 billion euros (about \$14.3 billion).

"Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by extreme climate events in 2023, which have been responsible for large losses at continental level, estimated to be at least in the tens of billions of euros," said Copernicus director Carlo Buontempo. "Unfortunately, these figures are unlikely and likely to get smaller, at least in the near future." Extreme weather fanned heat waves, wildfires, droughts and flooding, the report said. High temperatures have contributed to a loss of glacier ice on the continent, including in the Alps — which have lost about 10% of their remaining glacier ice over the last two years.

Still, the report's authors pointed to some exceptions, such as how temperatures were below average in Scandinavia and Iceland even if the mercury was higher than average across much of the continent as a whole.

Maldivian President Muizzu's pro-China party secures 'super majority' in parliamentary polls



MALE, Apr 22 (Agencies): Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's political party won 70 seats and secured a "super majority" in parliamentary elections, seen as a strong endorsement of his pro-Beijing foreign policy, as both India and China closely watched the polls amid regional power dynamics in the archipelago nation, preliminary results suggested on Monday.

Muizzu-led People's National Congress (PNC) won 70 out of 93 seats in the People's Majlis in Sunday's polls and its coalition partners Maldives National Party (MNP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) won one and two seats, respectively, in the 20th People's Majlis with the power to amend the Constitution.

The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), led by former president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who is seen as a pro-India leader, held 65 seats in the previous parliament but won only 15 seats this time, Mihaaru, a news website, reported.

Muizzu, 45, known for his pro-China leanings, has said that he wants to reduce India's influence in his country.

Local media described the PNC's landslide win in Sunday's election as a "super majority".

In the 2019 elections, the then-ruling MDP won a super majority in Parliament, with 64 seats while the then-opposition PPM-PNC coalition won just eight.

The PNC won a high number of seats in Male, Addu, Fuvahmulah and Kulhudhuffushi.

The Democrats, as well as Adhaalath Party, failed to win any seats at all.

Official results for the parliamentary election in Maldives, which has a strategic location in the Indian Ocean, are expected later this week.

A total of 368 candidates were in the fray, including 130 independent candidates, 10 candidates from Jumhoori Party (JP), 39 from The Democrats, Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) 4,

Adhaalath Party (AP) 4, and Maldives National Party (MNP) 2 nominees.

About 40 in numbers -- 10.76 per cent -- of the candidates were women.

Provisional results have shown that only three women candidates secured seats out of the 93 constituencies of the 20th People's Majlis.

Fathimath Saudha from the ruling PNC won the Faafu Nilandhoo constituency, Asma Rasheed from the PNC won the Maafannu Medhu constituency, and Anara Naeem, an independent candidate, won the Kaafu Huraa constituency.

Saudha is a family member of Muizzu. Asma and Anara have previously served as MPs in the 18th People's Majlis.

With about 75 per cent of the eligible voters casting their ballots, Sunday's election saw a record-low voter turnout, provisional results suggested.

A total of 284,663 people were eligible to vote, but only 215,860 exercised their right.

The turnout was 81.32 per cent in the 2019 parliamentary elections, with 215,053 out of 264,446 eligible voters coming to vote.

Fayyaz Ismail, the opposition MDP Chairperson, congratulated the PNC for Sunday's success in parliamentary elections in a post on X: "Whilst today's result is disappointing this is a moment to reaffirm our commitment and work even closer with our communities." "MDP's MPs will be ready to work with the government for the betterment of our democratic values and to hold it accountable as a responsible opposition," the former economic minister said.

MDP President and former foreign minister Abdulla Shahid said the party's MPs "will uphold the responsibility entrusted to you with utmost determination".

"We may not win every time. But today we can hold our heads high, and be proud of the work we did,"

Shahid added.

A total of 602 ballot boxes were set up in the Maldives and three other countries for the parliamentary election.

Polling stations were also open in 34 resorts, prisons, and other industrial islands.

The countries in which ballot boxes were placed for voting are Thiruvananthapuram in India, Colombo in Sri Lanka and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

The election is crucial for Muizzu, seen as a pro-China politician, as just a few days ahead of the polls, the opposition parties demanded a probe and impeachment of the president following a leaked report of his alleged corruption from 2018, a charge dismissed by him.

Besides, since Muizzu came to office, lawmakers have blocked three of his nominees to the cabinet.

The election in the Maldives also came amidst deteriorating ties between the archipelago nation and India since Muizzu, 45, assumed power in November last year. During last year's presidential election, he had maintained a strident anti-India stand.

While India was forced to withdraw most of its military personnel manning three aviation platforms in the country, Muizzu travelled to China in January and met top Chinese leaders, including President Xi Jinping.

China and the Maldives also signed a defence cooperation agreement and several other infrastructure development projects.

The Maldives, India's key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), occupies a special place in its initiatives like 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and the 'Neighbourhood First Policy' of the Indian government.

On the other hand, China is expanding its footprints in IOR through its 'debt trap' diplomacy and 'String of Pearls' approach, a strategic initiative to create a network of military and commercial establishments in countries falling on the Indian Ocean.

In 2013, Maldives joined China's 'Belt and Road' initiative to build ports and highways to expand trade — and China's influence — across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Pakistan's ruling PML-N win majority of seats in by-elections for national and provincial Assemblies

ISLAMABAD, Apr 22 (Agencies): The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) got the lion's share in the key by-elections by winning at least two National and 10 provincial assembly seats, according to the unofficial results on Monday.

By-elections were held on Sunday on 21 National and provincial Assembly seats amidst tight security and suspension of cellular and Internet services in specific districts of Punjab and Balochistan to maintain law and order.

Two seats each of the National Assembly in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and one seat in Sindh, while twelve seats of the Punjab Assembly and two each of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan assemblies were up for grabs.

Major political parties including the PML-N, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and the Pakistan

Peoples Party (PPP) participated in the by-polls. However, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl of Maulana Fazlur Rehman boycotted the polls.

The Election Committee of Pakistan (ECP) has yet to issue the final results but private media channels shared the outcome based on the results of individual polling stations.

According to the Dunya News channel, the PML-N won two National Assembly seats while one each was grabbed by PPP, SIC and an independent candidate.

The preliminary result showed that PML-N won 10 out of 16 seats in the provincial assemblies, including nine from Punjab and one from Balochistan. One seat each was won by the PPP, the SIC, the Istehkam Pakistan Party, the Pakistan Muslim League, the Balochistan National Party and an independent candidate. Cases of sporadic vio-

lence were reported and in one case, a supporter of the PML-N was killed after a clash with PTI voters in the Narowal area of Punjab. However, overall law and order was kept under control.

Earlier, the general elections were held across the country on February 8 to elect representatives for the National Assembly and four provincial assemblies. But polls were cancelled for one National Assembly, two Punjab Assembly and one seat of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Assembly respectively.

In Punjab, NA-132 (Kasur) and NA-119 (Lahore) were vacated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, while Shehbaz also gave up two of his provincial assembly seats in Lahore. He, however, retained his NA-123 seat in the National Assembly.

Apart from these leaders, candidates who had won more than one seat



opted for a chosen seat after the elections, leaving the Election Commission of Pakistan to organise by-elections on 21 seats, including five National and 16 provincial assembly seats.

A day earlier, the federal government announced that cellular services would remain temporarily suspended in specific districts of Punjab and Balochistan during the by-elections. The request for the suspension was made by the ECP.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) issued a statement, saying that the decision has been taken to safeguard the integrity and security of the

electoral process.

Elaborate security measures have been taken by the authorities to control the law and order situation, with the deployment of regular army troops to maintain peace during the day-long process of by-elections.

The Punjab government had also asked the federal government to suspend mobile internet services in the province's 13 districts and tehsils on April 21 to maintain law and order.

The move came despite severe criticism by media and political leaders of a similar step on February 8 when mobile services were suspended.

North Korea fires ballistic missile: Seoul's military

SEOUL, Apr 22 (Agencies): North Korea has fired an unidentified ballistic missile into the sea off South Korea's east coast, Seoul's military said on Monday, the latest in an apparent volley of tests by Pyongyang this year.

"North Korea has fired an unidentified missile into the East Sea," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

Tokyo also confirmed the launch, with the Japanese defence ministry saying "a suspected ballistic missile was launched from North Korea" in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Japan's coast guard, citing the defence ministry, said shortly after the initial announcement that the missile appeared to have already fallen.

Japanese media including public broadcaster NHK reported



that the suspected missile fell outside Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, citing unnamed government sources.

Seoul-based specialist site NK News said that the "brief flight time, likely under ten minutes, points to the launch involving a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) or 600mm multiple launch rocket system (MLRS)."

The latest launch comes after UN sanctions monitoring against the nuclear-armed nation was upended last month by Russia.

Pyongyang's ally

Moscow in March used its United Nations Security Council veto to effectively end UN monitoring of violations of the raft of sanctions on Kim Jong Un's government for its nuclear and weapons programme.

"Super-large warhead" On Friday, North Korea tested a "super-large warhead" designed for a strategic cruise missile, state media said, with Seoul's military confirming it had detected cruise missile launches around the same time.

Unlike their ballistic counterparts, the testing of cruise missiles is not

banned under current UN sanctions on North Korea.

Cruise missiles tend to be jet-propelled and fly at a lower altitude than more sophisticated ballistic missiles, making them harder to detect and intercept.

Analysts have warned that North Korea could be testing cruise missiles ahead of sending them to Russia for use in Ukraine, with Washington and Seoul claiming Kim has shipped weapons to Moscow, despite UN sanctions banning any such moves.

Seoul claims Pyongyang has sent around 7,000 containers of weapons to Moscow for use in Ukraine.

The largely isolated country has recently bolstered military ties with Moscow, and this month it thanked Russia for its veto blocking the renewal of a panel of UN experts that monitored international sanctions against it.

Airport near volcano reopens as Indonesia lowers eruption alert level

MANADO, Apr 22 (Agencies): Indonesian authorities reopened an international airport near a volcano that erupted last week as they lowered a warning level on Monday.

Sam Ratulangi airport has been closed since Thursday due to eruptions at nearby Mount Ruang.

Indonesia's Disaster Management Agency lowered the volcano's alert level from four, the second-highest level, to three, but said residents were still ordered

to remain at least 4 kilometers (2.7 miles) away from the mountain.

More than 3,000 residents have been evacuated since Thursday due to dangers including ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and fears of a tsunami. A joint team from the local authorities combed the villages surrounding the volcano and evacuated residents by boat.

Danger continued with the possibility of small-scale eruptions, which could cause rock slides and other damage in the

immediate area of the volcano.

Officials opened the airport after satellite imagery showed that rains had washed away volcanic ash covering the tarmac.

Indonesia, an archipelago of 270 million people, has 120 active volcanoes. It is prone to volcanic activity because it sits along the "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the Pacific Ocean.

World Earth Day-2024 celebrated at SKUAST-K

Top News Report

SOPORE, Apr 22: The Earth Day was organized by Faculty of Agriculture in collaboration with Association of Agrometeorologists, Anand Kashmir Chapter and sponsored by Ministry of Earth Science, Govt. of India on April 22, 2024 at Faculty of Agriculture Wadura Campus, SKUAST-K.

The Earth Day-2024 theme is "Planet vs. Plastics", which aims to increase public awareness of the detrimental effects that plastic pollution has on both human & environmental health. "Planet vs. Plastics" unites students, parents, businesses, governments, unions, individuals, and NGOs in an unwavering commitment to call for the end of plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60 per cent reduction in the production of plastics by 2040 and an ultimate goal of building a plastic-free future for generations to come.

To achieve a 60 per cent reduction by 2040, the goals are: promoting widespread public awareness of the damage done by plastic to human, animal, and all biodiversity's health and demanding more research be conducted on its health implications, including



the release of any and all information regarding its effects to the public; rapidly phasing out all single-use plastics by 2030 and achieving this phase out commitment in the United Nations Treaty on Plastic Pollution in 2024; demanding policies ending the scourge of fast fashion and the vast amount of plastic it produces and uses; and investing in innovative technologies and materials to build a plastic-free world. The programme started with a welcome address by Prof. Raihana H. Kanth, Dean Faculty of Agriculture.

She highlighted the theme of the programme and aims to reduce plastic dependency and make the earth plastic-free. Prof. Rafiq A. Shahardar, Dean Students Officer, SKUAST-K, who was the

Guest of Honour, said that plastic is everywhere in our lives.

There is plastics in the food we eat, the water we drink, and even the air we breathe. But this needs to be change, and we can all be part of the solution by reducing our own plastic footprint, we can contribute to a cleaner & healthier world, the power is in our hands.

The Chief Guest of this programme was Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K who while interacting with the students and scientists said that tackling the plastic waste crisis is a key environmental challenge of our time.

Nowadays, plastics are inevitable in the agriculture sector.

They are used for mulching, irrigation pipes,

silage covering, crop protection, post-harvesting operations, packaging materials for seed and fertilizers, etc.

A large amount of plastic is used for nets and coverings to protect crops from adversative weather conditions, insects, and animals.

It is high time to tackle the mismanaged plastics rather than them being tangled in the environment and, at the same time, ensure possible waste to energy and waste to products conversion.

Vice Chancellor precisely describes major initiatives undertaken by the government to combat plastic pollution include, a ban on single-use plastics, plastic waste management rules, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and the promotion of alternatives.

He also added that the plastic we have released into our environment is not going away.

And while recent studies of plastic-eating enzymes and bacteria offer some hope for the future of plastic waste management, the best way to address our environmental stressors is through reduction.

The event was celebrated by organizing a plantation drive, cleanliness drive, elocation and painting and photography competitions.

The winners of the competitions conducted during the event were felicitated by the Chief Guest with certificates and prizes.

The Chief Guest also felicitated the students with certificates for publishing their research work in high impact factor international Journals. The programme was attended by Prof. Haroon R. Naik, Director Research, SKUAST-K, Prof. Junaid N. Khan, Estates Officer, SKUAST-K, Prof. K..A. Sahaf, Assoc. Dean CoTS, SKUAST-K, heads of various divisions, faculty members and more than 500 UG/PG students of the faculty & students & teachers of nearby schools. The Programme ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Aijaz A. Qureshi, Students Welfare Officer.

BGSBU celebrates Earth Day

Top News Report

RAJOURI, Apr 22: World Earth Day was celebrated by the Environmental Sciences, Centre for Biodiversity Studies, BGSBU University, Rajouri.

A Brainstorming session on this year's theme Planet VS Plastics was organized to celebrate the event in which the staff, scholars, and students of Environmental Sciences participated.

Prof. Akbar Masood, Vice Chancellor BGSBU in his message emphasized that the Earth Day 2024 theme is Planet VS Plastics which calls for adoption or to shift towards sustainable practices for our future. Prof. Akbar further added that this theme emphasizes the need for collective action to repair and heal the planet's ecosystems, combat climate

change, and preserve biodiversity for posterity.

Prof. Akbar mentioned that a number of campaigns, drives and events are organized to motivate people to come together and help find solutions to problems plaguing our planet.

Dr. A. A. Shah, Associate Dean, School of Biosciences and Biotechnology while addressing the participants deliberated that the Earth Day was a unified response to an environment in crisis as the first Earth Day is credited with launching of the modern environmental movement and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event.

He further added that the Earth Day continues to hold major international significance and to propagate the concept of living in harmony with nature.

Dr. Shreekar Pant,

Coordinator, Centre for Biodiversity Studies in his address stressed that every year on April 22, we celebrate our mother earth with 'World Earth Day, which marks the anniversary of the Modern Environmental Movement, which started in 1970 and is a reminder for mankind to protect and safeguard our earth and its species, to make Earth a better place for the coming generations and this April 22, 2024, marks 54 years of Earth Day.

Faculty, students and research scholars from Environmental Sciences, Centre for Biodiversity Studies participated in the Brainstorming session.

The proceeding of the program and a formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr Rifat Azam, Assistant Professor of Environmental Sciences.

Fire & Fury Air Defence Warriors celebrate World Earth Day with school children



Top News Report

LEH, Apr 22: Air Defence Warriors of Fire and Fury Corps celebrated the 'World Earth Day' on Monday at Sangam, Leh alongwith 60 young minds of Mahabodhi Residential School and Delhi Public School, Leh.

The initiative was undertaken in an effort

to engage students in a series of impactful activities aimed towards raising awareness about environment conservation and sustainability, including skits, showcasing the effect of plastic and pollution on 'Mother Earth' and highlighting the importance of preserving our natural resources, reducing plas-

tic pollution and combating climate change. As part of a joint commitment towards the environment, Air Defence Warriors and the school children also conducted a cleanliness drive at Sangam, planting flower samplings and undertaking a symbiotic one km walk, encouraging 'Walking Instead of Driving'.

YRS condemned Statement given by Pursotam Rupala, Raises voice against Reservation



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Even after the controversial statement given by Former union minister and BJP M.P candidate Pursotam Rupala against Rajput community in Gujarat, Team Yuva Rajput Sabha (YRS) strongly condemned the Statement and held a massive protest against the Statement given by Pursotam Rupala in Jammu at Near Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Statue near Bikram Chowk Bridge.

While during the protest, Team YRS led by President YRS Vikram Singh Vicky along with Former president Rajan Singh Happy and all stakeholders and active members, Vikram strongly condemned that why this type of Statements are given again

and again by Leader of political parties against Rajput community. Vikram also expressed their anger and said that Rajput Community always believes in brotherhood and their contributions for our country are unforgettable as our country is ruled by various Rajput Maharaja's and our community donates their States, Lands, properties and all financial help to make of Independent County, Rajput Warriors always also sacrificed with their life's to protect the nation, but some political leaders try to disturb the peaceful climate of our country and this type of Statements are totally against the welfare of nation.

Vikram also puts the question that why the political parties and their

leaders are silent at that time and if BJP doesn't took the action against these type of leaders, Rajput Community decided to boycott their political party in upcoming time.

Meanwhile Rajan Singh Happy also raised their voice against the reservation system in India and he said that this system is used only for political benefits and he also expressed that why administration doesn't recommended the reservation system on the needy basis and reservation is given to those families who are belongs to BPL and this is very important for the welfare of needy families.

All members who are present in this protest appeals all people to come in support for this important issue.

GDC Nagrota celebrates Earth Day 2024

Top News Report

NAGROTA, Apr 22: Earth Day 2024 was celebrated enthusiastically at the GDC Nagrota campus on Monday with the theme Planet Vs. Plastics.

This theme emphasizes the need for collective action to repair and heal planet's ecosystems, combat climate change and preserve biodiversity.

Earth Day is an annual event observed across the globe to demonstrate support for environmental protection.

This day reminds citizens of the world the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability, encouraging us to come together and take action for a healthier planet and bright future.

Taking this baton forward this year GDC Nagrota organized a demonstration on Recycling of Plastics.

This demonstration was given by Prof. Aanchal Sharma, Convenor Eco club. She elaborated on plastic segregation as per number codes.

This segregation at the user end acts instrumental in recycling of the plastic. She also explained various ways in which students can avoid use of single use plastics on the campus as well as at home.

Principal of the College Prof. Anjali Mahajan also emphasized on the importance of avoiding single use of plastic and its proper recycling. In her address to students she urged them to use steel bottles for carrying water instead of plastic ones in summer.

MHAC School NagbanI athletes felicitated on Samarpan Diwas

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Samarpan Divas was celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Hansraj at DAV Public School, Thermal Colony Panipat.

It was organized by DAV CMC New Delhi to pay tribute to the founder of DAV.

On this occasion, the sportspersons who had won gold medals in the DAV National Sports 2023-24 were honoured. MHAC School Nagbani bagged eight gold medals in Roller Skating and Judo. It was a proud and moments occasion for MHAC School Nagbani to be honoured on the aforesaid occasion. The Gold medalists were also given a cash prize of Rs.5100/ each.

The students who got laurels to the school were Rajveer & Lakshveer - 2 Gold medals in 300m & 500m Rink race (Quads, Inline) Sarthak, Alisha & Sumukhi - Gold medals in 1000 m Rink race (Inline, Quads) and Daksh - Gold medal in Judo (60-65 kg weight category).

DPS Jammu girls shines in District Basketball Championship



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: The girls basketball team of Delhi Public School Jammu brought laurels to the school and their parents by winning 3rd position and silver medals in District Basketball Championship organized by Jammu District Basketball Association held from 20-21 April, 2024 at M.A Stadium, Jammu. In the final match, DPS Jammu

girls team beat Heritage school with a score of 16-0. The team was comprised of: Gunshen Kour (X-G), Vibhuti Mahajan (X-I), Kritika Charak (XI-F), Keeraz Desai (X-B), Sarish Sharma (X-I), Priyanshi Gupta (X-D), Aditi Kikloo (IX-C), Geetanshi (XI-H), Shresha Sharma (X-I), Niharka Sharma (X-D), Mandeep Kour (IX-D) and Sanghvi Singh (XI-H).

The esteemed Man-

agement DPS Jammu, Hon'ble President-RCT, Sh. M.K Ajatshatru Singh Ji, Distinguished PVC, Kuwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Ji, Hon'ble Director, Sh. S.S Sodhi Ji along with Principal-DPS Jammu, Ms. Ruchi Chabra and staff congratulated the entire team members and their coach, Mr. Shaktish Kumar Chopra. Further, they also extended their best wishes to them for all their future endeavours.

FROM PAGE 1

Election commission holds meeting to discuss measures to mitigate risks due to heatwave

was briefed about the temperature outlook for the period from April to June 2024 including the forecasts for the upcoming hot weather season (April to June), the likelihood of above-normal maximum temperatures over most parts of the country, especially with high probability over Central India and western peninsular India.

Preparedness in the health sector was reviewed in terms of essential medicines, intravenous fluids, ice packs, ORS and drinking water.

IMD had issued an updated Seasonal Outlook for the hot weather season (April to June) 2024, in which it said, above

Normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, especially with high probability over central India and western peninsular India.

Addressing reporters, Mohapatra, DG, IMD said, "Normal to below normal maximum temperatures are likely over some parts of western Himalayan region, NE states and north Odisha during this hot weather season".

Talking about the impact of heatwaves, the IMD Director General said that during heatwaves elevated temperatures pose significant risks, especially for vulnerable populations like the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing health conditions, who are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

"Prolonged periods of extreme heat can lead to dehydration and strain infrastructure such as power grids and transporta-

tion systems. To address these challenges, authorities must take proactive measures like providing access to cooling centres, issuing heat advisories, and implementing strategies to alleviate urban heat island effects in affected areas. Efforts are also needed for safeguarding public health and minimizing the adverse impacts of heat waves," he said.

Voting for the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections concluded on Friday which saw a 60 per cent voter turnout across 21 States and Union Territories.

The second phase will be held on April 26 and the remaining phases will be May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1 accordingly. The last general elections in 2019 were also held in seven phases.

Assembly polls in J&K to take place soon: Union

Minister Jitendra Singh

polling was held on April 19. He is a two-term sitting Lok Sabha member from the constituency.

"The main agenda of this Lok Sabha polls and in Jammu and Kashmir especially is development. The Centre is always committed to further development of the Union territory and ensuring jobs for youths," he said.

Singh said Prime Minister Modi ended the politics of discrimination in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Previous governments discriminated against regions of the erstwhile state due to vote bank politics. But, the BJP-led central government has ensured that the benefits of central schemes reach every eligible beneficiary in Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of caste, community or gender," he said.

LG Sinha visits Gandbal, Expresses condolences to boat tragedy families

administration stands shoulder to shoulder with the families", he said.

"Met the family members of the victims who lost their lives in the heartbreaking boat tragedy on April 16 and expressed my deep condolences. Assured all help and support. UT Administration stands shoulder to shoulder with the families", the Office of LG said on X.

NIA Raids on in Srinagar in terror-related case

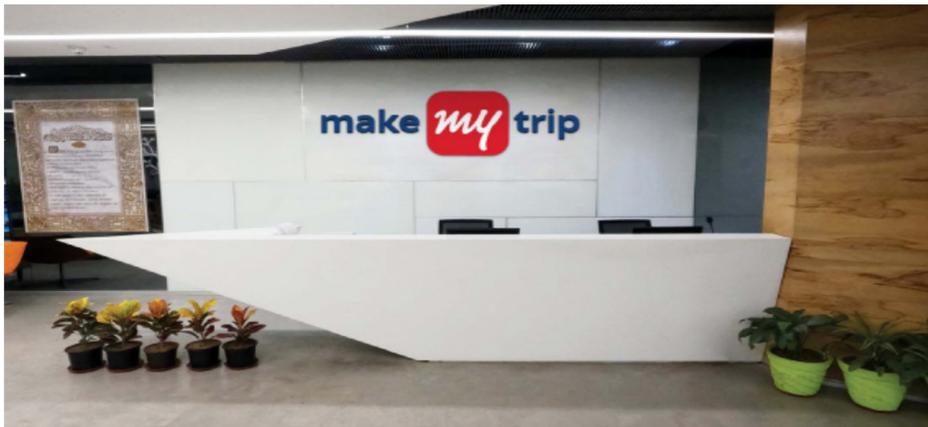
network in the Anantnag area. It is working through various offshoots in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

MakeMyTrip Report Reveals Where, How, When and With Whom India Travels

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: From Backpackers to Bon-Vivants – and everything in between – Indian travellers are not just reshaping the realm of domestic tourism but also commanding an increasingly important role in the ambit of international travel, leaving no corner of the globe too out of reach. Taking insights from travel searches by its 100M+ annual active users, MakeMyTrip has put together some of the top behaviours of Indian travellers in the first edition of its India Travel Trends Report. Insights include where, when and how India travels, top trends from millions of journeys – both from a national and a region-wise perspective.

Rajesh Magow, Co-founder and Group CEO, MakeMyTrip said, "Understanding the evolving travel behaviours of Indian travellers is essential to help shape the future of tourism, both domesti-



cally and globally. MakeMyTrip's India Travel Trends Report highlights some of the latest essential trends. As India emerges as a formidable force in the tourism sector, these insights can help bridge the demand and supply gaps in the travel and hospitality space. This means crafting policies, identifying destinations, and creating experiences that resonate with the traveller's unique travel

preferences and aspirations. Recognizing and catering to each traveller's diverse behaviour will not only enhance travel experiences but also contribute significantly to the growth and development of the tourism industry."

Number of people taking more than 3 trips per year has grown by 25% in 2023 as compared to 2019. Tier-2 and tier-3 cities are embrac-

ing spiritual journeys, with searches for destinations with or around religious spots growing 97% in the last two years. Searches for Ayodhya grew by 585%, Ujjain by 359% and Badrinath by 343% in 2023 as compared to 2022. Weekend getaways continue to curry favour with Indian travellers – Searches for Jim Corbett grew by 131% in 2023 as compared to 2022; Ooty and

Munnar are other favourites in this context. 30% all international travel searches from India are for Dubai, Bangkok and Singapore while London, Toronto and New York are the most searched long-haul destinations. Searches for emerging international destinations grew by multi-fold in 2023 – hot favourites include Hong Kong, Almaty, Paro, Baku, Da Nang and Tbilisi

Airtel unveils affordable Int'l Roaming packs for customers travelling across the world

Top News Report

Jammu, April 22, 2024: Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), one of India's leading telecommunications service providers, today, unveiled affordable international roaming packs for customers travelling abroad. The new packs include access to 184 countries and the tariffs start at as low as Rs. 133/day, making them an affordable option even when compared to local sims. In addition, they offer enhanced data benefits, in-flight connectivity and 24x7 contact centre support.

To make things as convenient as possible, Airtel has also ensured that customers travelling to these 184 countries no longer need subscribe to multiple packs for various travel destinations and have the convenience to simply choose the duration of travel and



enjoy seamless connectivity anywhere in the world through one single pack; and do this in the most affordable manner.

Amit Tripathi – Director – Customer Experience and Marketing, Bharti Airtel, said, "At Airtel, our mission is to solve customer problems and offer greater convenience. We are happy to launch affordable and simplified international roaming

packs that will enable seamless roaming access to customers travelling anywhere in the world. The packs offer greater value with enhanced benefits that are economical when compared to local in-country sims across many countries. The new pack truly redefines our value proposition for customers and gives them the freedom to use data and voice at an affordable tariff."

Surging peak demand: As temperature soars, efforts underway to bring in idle capacity

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): In anticipation of a hot summer, which is set to push peak demand to a record 260 GW, the Ministry of Power instructed fifteen imported coal-based and all gas-based thermal plants to be operational during the coming months to avoid power outages.

India's reliance on coal and gas to meet peak demand is more pronounced given the absence of an adequate energy storage infrastructure in the country, which can help store excess energy generated by solar and wind plants during non-peak hours and release it during peak

hours. While India's peak demand deficit has fallen considerably in recent years, insufficient energy storage infrastructure and rising temperatures could widen the gap moving forward, especially in the summer months.

Even though India added a record renewable capacity of over 18 GW in FY24, the variability in renewable energy generation is putting pressure on base load capacity, including thermal, especially during evening hours of low sunlight and high demand.

On April 12, the power ministry invoked Section 11 of the Electricity Act, 2003 to instruct fifteen

imported coal-based thermal power plants to operate at full capacity till October 15. "The government may specify that a generating company shall, in extraordinary circumstances, operate and maintain any generating station in accordance with the directions of the government," Section 11 of the Act states.

The ministry had earlier invoked the section in March, 2023 in an effort to avoid load shedding in case of a sudden rise in demand. The instruction was extended multiple times, including in October, 2023, when the ministry asked thermal plants to remain fully operational

until June 30, 2024. The latest move extends the timeline by another three and a half months.

Under the same section, the ministry has also instructed idling gas-based thermal plants to operate from May till the end of June, indicating its cautious approach towards avoiding power outages as the country braces for record-breaking heat waves. As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), above-normal number of heatwave days is likely over most parts of the country till May, especially in states like Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and parts of

Maharashtra and Odisha.

Even as the share of installed capacity of renewables like solar and wind has increased to nearly 29 per cent of total capacity in FY24, compared to 20 per cent in FY20, these sources of power do not have high capacity utilisation as they are variable in nature. The capacity utilisation factor (CUF) of a renewable energy plant indicates average output against installed capacity in a given time period. CUF depends on natural factors like irradiation and wind speeds, and also on the efficiencies used to harness solar and wind energy.

Sensex climbs over 560 points; Nifty tops 22,300-level

MUMBAI, Apr 22 (Agencies): Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty climbed nearly 1 per cent each on Monday amid a rally in Asian and European markets, decline in Brent crude oil prices and buying by foreign investors.

Extending its previous day's rebound, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 560.29 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at 73,648.62. During the day, it advanced 679.47 points or 0.92 per cent to 73,767.80.

The NSE Nifty went up by 189.40 points or 0.86 per cent to 22,336.40.

From the Sensex basket, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank,

State Bank of India, Ultra-Tech Cement, Wipro, ICICI Bank, Infosys, HCL Technologies and Asian Paints were the major gainers.

NTPC, JSW Steel and HDFC Bank were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Shanghai ended lower.

European markets were trading with gains. Wall Street ended on a mixed note on Friday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.80 per cent to \$86.59 a barrel.

"The Indian market extended last Friday's relief rally as Middle East tension saw some

respite, though the situation remains fluid. The recovery was broad-based across sectors, with renewed interest in mid and smallcaps," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Oil prices showed some relief but are still at elevated levels, he added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday and they bought equities worth Rs 129.39 crore, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark climbed 599.34 points or 0.83 per cent to settle at 73,088.33 on Friday. The NSE Nifty jumped 151.15 points or 0.69 per cent to 22,147.

HDFC Bank: Analysts see deposits outpacing loan growth; margin to recover gradually

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): HDFC Bank reported fairly strong quarterly results over the weekend, but shares of the country's largest private sector lender declined over 1 per cent on Monday afternoon. This even as the broader BSE Sensex was up 0.5 per cent.

Effective July 1, 2023, HDFC Bank completed the merger of its parent HDFC Limited, which was the country's largest mortgage lender, with itself. The merger had been first announced on April 4, 2022. Over the past two years, the lender's shares have been a laggard on the Dalal Street. As of Friday's close, the stock was down 4.7 per cent, when compared with its stock price on April 5, 2022. In the same period, the BSE Bankex has gained near 22 per cent and the Sensex is up over 20 per cent.

With the merger clearly in the rearview as it now looks ahead to the future, how do analysts view HDFC Bank?

In the January-March quarter, the lender reported a standalone net profit of Rs 16,511.85 crore, up 37 per cent from a year ago profit of Rs 12,047.45 crore. Net interest income for the fourth quarter rose 24.5

per cent to Rs 29,080 crore.

Accounting for the loans that came in after the merger of HDFC Limited, HDFC Bank saw a loan growth of more than 17 per cent on a normalised basis for FY24. Across the banking sector, loan growth, led by retail loans, has been strong, while deposit growth has lagged.

Param Subramanian of Nomura pointed out that the loan-to-deposit ratio came down sharply to 104 per cent, compared with 110 per cent in the third quarter, as deposits outpaced loans significantly in a seasonally strong fourth quarter. He added that the bank's management had categorically called out that it would be prioritising profits over growth, which was reflected in the slight uptick in its net interest margins.

This, said Subramanian, set the stage for continued moderation in the loan-to-deposit ratio. He sees loans at HDFC Bank growing at 12-13 per cent over financial years 2025-26, while deposits are expected to grow at 17 per cent compounded annual growth over 2024-26.

Subramanian said this was in the right direc-

tion, but the process was going to be "very gradual." Net interest margin is also expected to only improve gradually.

"We expect HDFC Bank to deliver 14-15 per cent return on equity over FY2025-26, which coupled with softer loan growth versus peers, does not make upside compelling," he said, cutting earnings per share estimates on the lender by 3 per cent for 2025-26.

Manish Agarwalla, research analyst at Phillip Capital, opined that the bank was "well poised" to gain market share in the long run, but loan growth could be moderate in the intermittent period.

"As the merger benefits accrue over a period, the intermittent period will see focus on balance sheet management leading to moderate growth," he noted.

Dnyanada Vaidya, research analyst at Axis Securities, also expects HDFC Bank's loan-to-deposit ratio to improve over the medium-term, with deposit growth likely to outpace credit growth.

"While the bank witnessed improved deposit growth as it exited FY24, credit growth was slower as focus shifted towards deposit accretion. Here on, continued momen-

tum on deposit mobilisation and improvement in trajectory of net interest margins/ return on assets would be key re-rating levers for the stock," said Vaidya.

The Axis analyst has also trimmed HDFC Bank's net interest income and earnings estimates by 3-4 per cent and 4-5 per cent respectively, to factor in lower credit growth and a slower-than-expected margin recovery.

HDFC Bank's balance sheet realignment "remains an arduous task," said Sameer Bhise, research analyst at JM Financial Institutional Securities. But, it remains capable of delivering strong deposit growth even in a difficult environment, while also delivering healthy growth at scale, he added, pointing that valuations were also attractive.

"HDFC Bank's core performance is gradually on the mend, with improving deposit growth even as net interest margins remained steady. We believe HDFC Bank remains well-placed to navigate the difficult deposit environment. The second half of FY25 should see meaningful improvement in core performance and should drive valuation re-rating for HDFC Bank," Bhise said.

Why did Hong Kong, Singapore ban sale of Everest and MDH masala products?



NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): Days after a Singapore food regulator banned spice mixes sold by Everest Food Products over alleged excessive content of cancer-causing pesticide ethylene oxide, Hong Kong has also cracked down on MDH and Everest products.

Food regulators in both Hong Kong and Singapore have directed vendors to remove the banned products from shelves. Ethylene oxide is used to fumigate agricultural products to prevent microbial contamination, according to Singapore Food Agency (SFA).

Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety (CFS) stated

that it found ethylene oxide in Everest's Fish Curry Masala as well as MDH products, including Madras Curry Powder, Mixed Masala Powder and Sambhar Masala.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned samples from three retail outlets in Tsim Sha Tsui respectively for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the samples contained a pesticide, ethylene oxide. The CFS has informed the vendors concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected products," stated

the authorities in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

"The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified ethylene oxide as a Group 1 carcinogen. According to the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM), a food for human consumption containing pesticide residue may only be sold if consumption of the food is not dangerous or prejudicial to health. An offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction," it added.

After clamping down on Everest, the Singapore's

SFA stated, "Those who have consumed the implicated products and have concerns about their health should seek medical advice."

In June 2023, the US Food and Drug Authority had ordered recall of Everest's sambhar masala and garam masala as well as Nestle's Maggi Masala-aemagic from 11 states after the products tested positive for Salmonella, a bacteria that can cause diarrhoea and nausea. In September 2019, the FDA had asked MDH to recall its sambhar masala distributed in northern California over salmonella contamination.

D Gukesh creates history, becomes youngest Indian to win Candidates Chess tournament in Canada

Gukesh also won a cash award of 88,500 Euros (approx Rs 78.5 lakh)

TORONTO, Apr 22 (Agencies): India's 17-year-old Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament here to become the youngest ever challenger to the world title, bettering a record created by the legendary Garry Kasparov 40 years ago.

Gukesh played out an easy draw with American Hikaru Nakamura in the 14th and final round to finish with nine out of a possible 14 points in the tournament that is held to decide the challenger to the world champion.

The triumph entitles Gukesh a clash against reigning world champion Ding Liren of China in the last quarter of the year.

The Chennai-based teen bettered Kasparov's record by quite a distance as the Russian great was 22 when he qualified in 1984 to clash with compatriot Anatoly Karpov.

"So relieved and so happy. I was following this crazy game (between Fabio Caruana and Ian Nepomniachtchi), and then I went for a walk with my second (Gregorz Gajewski), I think that helped," Gukesh said after winning.

Gukesh also won a cash award of 88,500 Euros (approx Rs 78.5 lakh). The total prize fund of the Candidates was 5,00,000 Euros.

He became only the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the prestigious tournament. Five-time world champion Anand's triumph came in 2014.

"Congratulations to @DGukesh for becoming the youngest challenger. The @WacaChess family is so proud of what you have done. I'm personally very



proud of how you played and handled tough situations. Enjoy the moment," Anand posted on 'X' to congratulate the youngster, who like him, also hails from Chennai.

Needing at least a draw, Gukesh gave nothing away to Nakamura, a clear signal that the teenager is ready for the big stage and is going to be the next biggest star in the chess world.

The black pieces did not matter much as Nakamura was at sea in the Queen's Gambit Accepted and did not find any ways to pursue playing for an advantage.

Gukesh won a pawn and Nakamura had to find the path to equality in the ensuing rook and opposite coloured Bishops endgame. The game lasted till move 71 but the result was never in doubt.

With Gukesh ending on 9 points, all eyes were on the match between American Caruana and Russia's Nepomniachtchi.

"...those 15 minutes were probably the most stressful of

this entire tournament, I was watching the commentary for sometime and then me and Gajewski (his trainer) went for a walk and then my father came running," Gukesh revealed.

"Obviously the support system is huge, coming to my team I would not like to take their names but they know how grateful I am to them," he said.

The American outplayed Nepomniachtchi right from the opening and enjoyed a nearly winning position for several moves.

However, the clock did the talking here as Caruana blundered on 39th move to allow a playable position.

Things were far from over though, Caruana built his position all over again and was close to winning a second time when again his clock deceived him and he failed to find the correct continuation.

The resulting position was a drawn queen and pawns endgame where Caruana kept pressing to no avail.

Had any of these two play-

ers won, the tournament would have needed a tie-break as Gukesh and the winner would have ended up in joint lead.

Caruana, Nepomniachtchi and Nakamura all ended on an identical 8.5 points for the shared second place while Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa ended fifth on seven points defeating Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan.

Vidit Gujrathi played out a quick draw with Firouzja Alireza of France in the final round to end on the sixth spot with six points in all.

Alireza finished seventh on five points while Abasov ended last on 3.5 points in all.

Gukesh has been making waves for a while now after becoming the third youngest in chess history to earn the Grandmaster title at the age of 12.

Last year, he won a silver medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The dates and venue for the world championship are yet to be finalised.

"I haven't really thought about it a lot I just got to know the result, the main strategy will be to play good moves. Really look forward to all the preparation and being there," Gukesh said.

Results final round (Indians unless specified):

Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 8.5) drew with D Gukesh (9); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 8.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE, 8.5); Nijat Abasov (Aze, 3.5) lost to R Praggnanandhaa (7); Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 5) drew with Vidit Gujrathi (6). Final standings: 1. D Gukesh 2-4: Nakamura, Nepomniachtchi, Caruana 5. Praggnanandhaa 6. Gujrathi 7. Alireza 8. Abasov.

IPL 2024: Harbhajan Singh gives his take on Virat Kohli's dismissal against KKR



KOLKATA, Apr 22 (Agencies): Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh backed the umpire's decision on Virat Kohli's dismissal against the Kolkata Knight Riders in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024.

Kohli was in blistering form as he smacked two towering sixes in his knock of 18 off 7 balls during RCB's chase of 223. He was caught and bowled following a full toss from Harshit Rana which initially appeared to be a beamer.

Not amused after being given out by the on-field umpires, RCB's marquee batter referred the decision to the third umpire.

After going over the replays, the third umpire upheld the on-field decision, giving him out. Furious at being adjudged out, Virat was seen remonstrating on the field and started walking off in anger as the Knights rejoiced.

Harbhajan backed

the umpire's decision while stating that Kohli was out of the popping crease and since Harshit bowled a slower delivery it would have fallen below the waistline if Kohli had stayed in the crease.

"When Virat Kohli got out the ball was high, it was a slower delivery and there was a lot of debate about whether it should be deemed as no-ball because the ball was above the waistline. Virat was standing outside the crease and when you are that far hawk-eye measures the waistline from the popping crease (the white line). This year BCCI has measured the height of each player and if the ball passes above the waistline then it is given a no-ball if not then the decision is not given," Harbhajan said on his YouTube channel.

"If Kohli was inside the crease then the ball was close to 0.92m which is less than Kohli's waist-

line (1.04). When we saw it from the naked eye the ball seemed quite high but Kohli was well outside the crease. The ball was going to dip because it was a slower one, if the ball was bowled with pace it could have been a no-ball. He was given out according to the rule. I believe that the ball would have dipped if he had stayed in the crease," Harbhajan added.

Before walking back in a huff, Virat was seen arguing with one of the on-field umpires and contesting his dismissal. As he stormed back to the pavilion, the batter was seen smashing his willow on the ground and hitting a trash can with his gloves, causing it to tumble.

After falling short in the chase by one run, RCB skipper Faf du Plessis gave his take on the umpire's decision which raised a lot of controversy.

"Obviously, the rules are the rules. Virat and myself at that stage thought that possibly the ball was higher than his waist. I guess they measure it on the popping crease," RCB captain du Plessis said after the game "In those situations, you'll always have one team that's happy and one team that doesn't feel like it's quite the right decision. But that's just how the game works," he added.

Du Plessis, Sam Curran fined for IPL Code of Conduct breaches

NEW DELHI, Apr 22 (Agencies): Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Faf du Plessis has copped a Rs 12 lakh fine, while Punjab Kings captain has been penalised 50 per cent of his match fees for their respective offences, the IPL announced on Monday.

Du Plessis was fined for maintaining a slow over rate during RCB's thrilling one-run loss, their seventh of the ongoing season, to Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens on Sunday.

"Mr Faf du Plessis, Captain, Royal Challengers Bengaluru has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match 36 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL)



2024 against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata on April 21, 2024," an IPL statement read.

It was RCB's first over-rate offence of the season.

Sam Curran, on the other hand, was fined half of his match fees for a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct which refers to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision" during PBKS' three-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans in Mul-

lanpur on Sunday. "Curran committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct. He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," an IPL media release stated.

The loss against GT was Punjab's fourth on the trot, they are now languishing on the ninth place in the points table.

Candidates: Koneru Humpy runner-up, Vaishali finishes 4th after terrific run

TORONTO, Apr 22 (Agencies): Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy delivered the goods when it mattered, defeating erstwhile joint leader Tingjie Lei of China to finish second on a superior tiebreak in the women's candidates tournament in Toronto.

Zhongyi Tan of China expectedly topped the tables after settling for a draw with Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine.

The real story of the day was R Vaishali who scored her fifth victory on the trot at the expense of Kateryna Lagno of Russia to tie for the second spot before finishing fourth on tiebreak.

Tan finished with 9 points in all, 1.5 points clear of the nearest rivals Humpy, Lei and



Vaishali who all finished second to fourth respectively.

Aleksandra Goryachkina finished fifth on seven points, a full point ahead of Lagno, while Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria and Muzychuk ended in the last two spots in the eight-player double

round-robin contest. LATE COMEBACKS FOR HUMPY, VAISHALI At the halfway stage, Humpy was languishing at 2.5 points out of seven games but came up with a splendid effort to score five points from the last seven games – a score matched by

Vaishali who was even worse at 2.5 out of nine.

Playing black against Lei, Humpy got a complicated middle game out of a Nimzo Indian defense and Lei came up with a spectacular queen sacrifice that needed perfect follow-up.

Humpy cashed in when the Chinese erred in her calculation and reached a winning endgame with her two rooks against white's rook and Bishop.

The complexities were far from over but on this day Humpy could do no wrong and squeezed out a victory after 62 hard-fought moves.

Vaishali faced the Ruy Lopez as black against Lagno who sacrificed a piece early in the middle game to initiate an attack

against the black king. The Indian was however up to the task in defense and returned the extra material back to maintain the dynamics.

Lagno blundered on her 31st turn, handing the initiative to Vaishali who did not look back thereafter and coasted home after 45 moves.

Results final round (Indians unless stated): Tingjie Lei (Chn, 7.5) lost to Koneru Humpy (7.5); Kateryna Lagno (Fid, 6) lost to R Vaishali (7.5); Aleksandra Goryachkina (Fid, 7) drew with Nurgul Salimova (5.5); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 5.5) drew with Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 9).

Final standings: 1. Tan; 2-4: Humpy, Lei, Vaishali; 5. Goryachkina; 6. Lagno; 7-8: Salimova, Muzychuk.

Today's IPL Match, RR vs MI: Stiff test for Hardik's Mumbai in Jaipur

JAIPUR, Apr 22 (Agencies): Rajasthan return to Jaipur, which has been their fortress in IPL 2024, after having won 2 close games on the road. High on confidence, Sanju Samson's men take on Mumbai, who are reeling at the bottom half of the points table after having played 7 games. It will be a big battle on Monday at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium as two power-packed batting units go up against each other.

For 5-time champions MI, time is running out. Hardik Pandya's men have won only one on the trot and they will be looking to stitch a winning run and join the mid-table middle. On the other hand, Rajasthan will go one step closer to the playoffs as the hosts are sitting pretty on top of the IPL 2024 points table with 6 wins in 7 matches.

Rajasthan will have the mental edge when they head into the

big contest at home as they had hammered MI at the Wankhede Stadium earlier in the season. In what was MI's first home game of the season, the 5-time champions were dismantled as they were restricted to 125 for 9 in 20 overs before Rajasthan chased the target in just 15.3 overs. It was also the contest that saw the home crowd boo their captain, Hardik Pandya, for the first time in the season.

MI have improved since then and they will be hoping to ride on their batting firepower in Jaipur. Rohit Sharma has been in belligerent form this season, having already scored 297 runs in 7 matches at a staggering strike rate of 164. Ishan Kishan has been hit a miss while Suryakumar Yadav is slowly, but surely warming back into peak form. MI also have their finishers firing as the likes of Tim David, Tilak Varma and Romario Shep-

herd have been in good form. However, MI will need more from Hardik Pandya, who has managed just 141 runs in 7 matches.

MI's bowling has been a big concern despite Jasprit Bumrah's sensational form. Hardik hasn't been able to be economical while the likes of Akash Madhwal, Romario Shepherd and Shreyas Gopal have been ordinary. Gerald Coetzee showed some spunk with 3 wickets against Punjab in their nervy defence of 192 in Mullanpur last week.

RR vs MI: IPL Head-to-Head record

Rajasthan and Mumbai have met 29 times in IPL and there's not much to separate them in terms of head-to-head record. MI have won 15 games while RR have managed 13 victories in their meetings.

RR have managed only 2 wins out of their last 6 meetings against

MI. However, their good home record (3-1) this season will put them ahead.

RR vs MI: TEAM NEWS

Home team Rajasthan have not had the services of Nandre Burger and Sandeep Sharma for more than a week and the good news is the two pacers are fit and ready to go. In fact, it was Boult and Burger who ran through MI at the Wankhede and RR might be tempted to play their left-arm pacers together. Sandeep also has a good record against MI and he will be keen on making a mark on his return to action.

Jos Buttler, who is high on confidence after his sensational hundred against KKR, might come into the XI after having played as an Impact Player at the Eden Gardens.

On the other hand, MI need to bolster their bowling and make

use of their resources, especially Mohammad Nabi, batter. It remains to be seen if MI will bring in their Sri Lankan slinger Nuwan Thushara for the big game.

RR vs MI: JAIPUR PITCH CONDITIONS AND WEATHER

No team has managed to score 200 so far at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, which has offered a little bit for everyone so far. Rajasthan have defended 180-plus scores twice and also chased a 184 against RCB. However, in their last game at home, RR saw Gujarat chasing down 197.

The pitch at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium has been sporting and both pacers and spinners have had success. Dew wasn't a major factor in the first 4 games and thus the toss hasn't been a decisive factor.

It's expected to be clear weather

for Monday's evening match in Jaipur.

RR vs MI: PREDICTED XIS AND IMPACT SUBS

RR: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jos Buttler, Sanju Samson (c & wk), Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Shimron Hetmyer, Ravichandran Ashwin, Trent Boult, Avesh Khan, Sandeep Sharma, Yuzvendra Chahal.

Impact Sub: Nandre Burger. MI: Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya (c), Tim David, Mohammad Nabi, Gerald Coetzee, Shreyas Gopal, Jasprit Bumrah, Nuwan Thushara.

Impact Sub: Akash Madhwal.

RR vs MI Prediction Who Will Win? RR have the home advantage, but considering the desperate situation for MI, expect Hardik Pandya's men to give it their all and collect 2 points in Jaipur.

BLSKS celebrates World Health day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: To celebrate the "World Earth Day 2024" and to promote the traditional culture of J&K, Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan (BLSKS) performed 418th Regular Series Dogri Musical Play "Meri Mati Mera Desh" in collaboration with Sangam Tru Art Production, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, Social Welfare Deptt. J&K Govt. at Heaven Kingdom High School- Heaven Angels 'a Play Way School', Janki Vihar, Janipur Jammu.

The musical play was written and Directed by Dr. M.L.Dogra, renowned Writer and Director.

A pledge was also administered by Usha Raina, Troupe Leader to more than 250 students / teachers and the certificate by the Ministry of Social Justice was presented to the Principal of the Host School.

The program was inaugurated by Chief Guest Renu Sachdev, Principal, Heaven Kingdom High School, Janki Vihar, Janipur Jammu. Among the Guest of Honors were Radhika Wali, Vinay



Gupta, Rajni Sharma, Anupama, Senior Teachers of host school.

The music of the play was composed by renowned music teacher Raju Bajgal. The Chief Guest Renu highlighted each year, Earth Day has a specific theme to focus global attention on pressing environmental issues.

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics."

This theme emphasizes the need for collective action to repair and heal the planet's ecosystems, combat climate change, and preserve biodiversity we all us celebrated annually on April 22, this significant day engages around one billion people world-

wide in activities aimed at addressing the climate crisis and fostering behavioral change to protect the environment and also said in his speech the Nasha Mukat Bharat Abhiyan was launched by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment which is the Nodal Ministry for Drug Demand Reduction has formulated and identified as most vulnerable in terms of usage of drugs in the country.

These vulnerable districts were identified on the basis of findings from the Comprehensive National Survey and the inputs provided by the Narcotics Control Bureau and appreciate the efforts of the BLSKS, organiz-

ers in making such awareness programmes colorful and effective on the theme. The program was also recorded & uploaded online on Social Media for benefit of the peoples.

Welcome speech was given by Dr. M.L.Dogra, Chairman, Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan said drugs withdrawal symptoms are a combination of physical and mental side effects a person experiences while trying to either stop or reduce the use of the substance they have been using or are addicted to. These are usually unpleasant experiences which make it difficult to reduce or quit the substance. Some of the common withdrawal

symptoms are nausea, vomiting, restlessness, tremors, disturbance in mood (irritability, depression, anxiety), lack of sleep, body pains, craving for the substance, running nose etc. Withdrawal symptoms can vary from person to person. The intensity and duration of the withdrawal symptoms depends on many factors like the genetic/biological makeup of the person, the type and time of drug abused, the age and psychological characteristics of the person.

Mahesh Chander Kotwal, General Secty BLSKS talked about the importance of Earth and said Blsks presenting more than 200 cultural programe every year for promotion of the Dogras culture.

The singers, musician, actors and students of music and computer institute who performed in the musical play were Usha Raina, Raju Bajgal, Bindia Okheda, Chahat Chadha, Vandana Gupta, Rahul Kumar and others presented the enthralling performance. Deepak Kumar presented vote of thanks for successful conduction of the program.

Dr. Vikas urges youth to vote and support INDIA bloc candidate



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Dr Vikas Sharma, Zonal Secretary and Coordinator Jammu District (Urban) JKNC have urged the youth studying in different colleges and Universities to vote and support INDIA bloc candidates in the ongoing Parliamentary elections for much needed change in the system and overall benefit of the society.

Dr Sharma visited several colleges and University, and met with the students and sought support for the INDIA bloc candidate Raman Bhalla who is contesting from Jammu-Reasi

Parliamentary. He said unemployment was on its peak during the rule of the BJP government in the Centre and it's high time to get rid of such an incapable government. He asked them to wholeheartedly vote and support INDIA bloc candidates on the Parliamentary seats which were going to elections within a period of next one month.

He said, "Youth are the agents of change in the society. And, now it is your responsibility to lead the change by ensuring vote and support to INDIA bloc candidates. If you want to get rid of unemployment, corruption, gross

mismangement and other related problems there is only one option i.e. voting to power INDI alliance and ouster of BJP from Centre."

Dr Vikas also visited University hostel and met with the students belonging to Rajouri, Poonch and asked them to garner support for INDIA bloc candidates contesting from their Parliamentary seat.

The NC leader also had an interaction with several faculty members and urged them to launch campaigns in support of INDIA bloc candidates so as to ensure their victory and installation of a new government in Centre.

Shiv Public School commemorates World Earth Day



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: In honour of World Earth Day, Shiv Public Hr. Sec. School Sari Rakwalan Gho Manhasan Jammu celebrated the occasion with fervour and enthusiasm.

The event saw active participation from both students and staff, highlighting the school's commitment to environmental awareness and sustainability. Under the guidance of Principal Mehak Manhas, students were enlightened about the paramount importance of safeguarding our environment and utilizing resources judiciously.

Mehak Manhas emphasized the pivotal role each individual plays in preserving the Earth for future generations, urging

students to adopt eco-friendly practices in their daily lives.

The event also witnessed the esteemed presence of the school's Managing Director, Balbir Singh Salaria, who extended his wholehearted support to the cause.

In his address, Shri Salaria underscored the significance of collective efforts in combating environmental challenges and stressed the need for concerted action towards a greener and healthier planet.

Activities organized during the event included tree planting, awareness sessions on recycling and waste management, and interactive discussions on sustainable living practices.

Through these initiatives, Shiv Public Hr. Sec.

School aimed to instill a sense of responsibility and environmental consciousness among its students, empowering them to become stewards of the Earth.

As an institution dedicated to holistic education, Shiv Public Hr. Sec. School remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering environmental stewardship and nurturing a generation of environmentally conscious citizens. Shiv Public Hr. Sec. School is a renowned educational institution located in Jammu, India. Committed to excellence in education and holistic development, the school strives to impart knowledge, instill values, and nurture the potential of every student, preparing them to excel in a global environment.

Farewell Party organized at GDC Sidhra

Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: The Principal, Staff and Students of fourth Semester of GDC Sidhra organized a farewell for outgoing students of 6th semester in a colourful program on Monday.

The day was a fiesta devoted to the years spent together with friends and teachers.

To reminisce joyous moments the students of fourth semester organized various cultural activities and games for the outgoing batch.

Senior students of sixth semester were invited on the stage one by one to share their views and to showcase their talents. To conclude the program, Tushar Safaya of B.Com Sem 6 and Ritika

Sharma of B.A sem 6 were declared Mr and Ms GDC Sidhra respectively.

The Program ended with an address by the Principal of the college, Dr. G.S Rakwal in which he spoke encouraging words of wisdom for the outgoing students. He motivated the students to work hard and achieve success in life. He wished the students a happy and healthy future. He also lauded the efforts of students and staff for successful organisation of the event.

The Program concluded with refreshment for the students. The students left the college with fond memories and a sense of accomplishment, ready to embark on the next chapter of their lives.

GDC Ramgarh hosts series of activities to celebrate Earth Day

Top News Report

RAMGARH, Apr 22: Government Degree College Ramgarh organized an awareness programme and poster making competition on the theme 'Planet vs. Plastic' to celebrate the Earth Day.

The event was organized under the able guidance and supervision of Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra, Principal of the College. Speaking on the occasion, she highlighted the urgent need to address plastic pollution and its impact on our planet. She emphasized on the scientific conservation of natural resources for future generations.

She further said it is the responsibility of each individual to make every effort possible to make this world a desirable place to live.

The event was coordinated by Dr. Shivali Panjgotra, HOD, Environmental Sciences. In the awareness programme, an informative video was

screened to the students to educate them about the detrimental effects of plastic pollution on the environment and living organisms.

An appeal was made to adopt the eco friendly practices, use dustbins for throwing waste material instead of littering waste material here and there, and reducing our reliance on single use plastics. In the poster making competition, students showcased their creativity and commitment to environmental advocacy.

They highlighted the various initiatives which humans can take to save the planet Earth. The 1st prize was bagged by Gurmeet Kour while the 2nd and 3rd prize was won by Chahat Tadyal and Komal Devi respectively.

The competition was judged by the jury members Prof. Snobar, Prof. Sandeep Kumari and Prof. Brham Dutt. All the students and faculty members attended the event.

Hotel Association of India appeals to vote, says opportune time to outline national priorities

Top News Report

JAMMU, April 22: As India goes to the mode of celebration of great dance of democracy, the nation looks at the vision both short term and long term.

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) considers that it is an opportune time to outline the national priorities by all participants of India's polity and therefore a time to restate the key importance of tourism and hospitality in any future development vision for the country.

KB Kachru, the newly elected President of HAI puts the perspective clearly, "The time has come for India" he says, "to achieve its true development potential and to become the third largest country in the world by GDP. It is now recognized globally that tourism and hospitality can

play a very pivotal role in driving such growth. The Vision 2047 report by HAI indicates that contribution of hospitality sector could reach US \$ Trillion by 2047".

Kachru further stated that India's population dividend can go awry if employment opportunities are not created. Tourism and hospitality as the largest employer, fill that role. It has been indicated, he said, that properly nurtured, this sector could generate 50 million jobs. "We would be happy if all the stakeholders recognize the great employment and growth potential of tourism and hospitality and make it a part of their commitment", Mr Kachru said.

Elaborating further, HAI Secretary General Mr. Bezbaruah said, "it would be pertinent and in national interest that

the two focus issues— infrastructure status at the Centre and industry status in the states find place in the government's agenda." The vision of the government to reach US \$3 trillion tourism economy and 100million visitors requires corresponding creation of accommodation and destination development.

"While such incentives are given to other industries, if extended to this sector they would have a multiplier effect in investment thereby creating corresponding employment opportunities which will be spread over all corners of the country pushing inclusive growth.

No development strategy of the country can ignore such pivotal role of the sector or can ignore only at the risk of compromising its vision 47", Mr. Bezbaruah said.

GDC R S Pura celebrates Earth Day



Top News Report

JAMMU, Apr 22: Department of Environmental Science, GDC R.S. Pura celebrated Earth Day 2024.

The theme of Earth Day 2024 is Planet Vs Plastic.

A poster making competition was organized in which students

showcased their talent. Five best posters were selected.

The best posters were made by Malvi Sharma, Amit Singh, Komal and Madhav Sharma of semester 2nd and Lakshmi Narayan of semester 6th.

A documentary on Plastic Pollution in India

was also screened for students. The students were greatly benefitted by the documentary.

The programme was organized by faculty members of the department Prof. Priya Darshni, Dr. Sudesh Kumar and Prof. Zenab Khan under the patronship of Principal Dr. Rajni Bhagat.

SPPND GDC Samba organizes Voters' Awareness Programme, Earth Day celebrations



Top News Report

SAMBA, Apr 22: NSS Unit Maitri and Department of Geography in collaboration with Pravaad Electoral Literacy Club of SPPND Govt. Degree College, Samba organized Voters' Awareness Programme along with Earth Day Celebrations in Village Panchayat Taloor.

The events were organized under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Twinkle Suri,

Principal of the college. The Pravaad team visited Brahm Dev temple and areas of the panchayat Taloor to create awareness regarding the importance of vote in upcoming Lok Sabha Elections. In a unique effort, the students conducted door to door visits and took promises from the residents that they will vote for sure in this election.

Furthermore, NSS Volunteers organized

a cleanliness drive at a local park of the panchayat and interacted with general public about nurturing Mother Earth for sustainable future to mark Earth Day - 2024.

To conclude the day, both the teams visited the polling station no. 70/64 - Taloor - A at Govt. Hr. Secondary School, Taloor wherein an interactive session was conducted with the staff and students to motivate them for voting.