

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Jammu LS records 71.91 percent polling in second phase of Lok Sabha elections

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26:

People in huge numbers came out to vote in the second phase of parliamentary elections for Jammu Lok Sabha seat and enthusiasm was seen among all the age groups as the constituency recorded 71.91 percent of voting all across.

Be it centenarians, retirees, newly married or young, everyone came out to cast his or her vote.

According to the news agency, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Assembly segment of district Reasi topped



the list with over 79.91 percent polling whereas Bahu Assembly segment of Jammu district recorded the lowest turnout at 62.34 percent.

People of Jammu, Samba and Reasi districts made sure that they come out in large numbers and cast their vote in favour of their candidate who they

want to represent them in the Lok Sabha for the next five years. Long queues were seen all across both men and women and even in posh colonies like Gandhinagar and Trikuta Nagar, people were seen standing in long queues to wait for their turn to vote. They tried to brush aside the tag of sitting in air condition rooms and not voting during summer heat.

Jammu Lok Sabha seat comprises 18 Assembly segments including 11 Assembly segments of Jammu district

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Jammu LS Seat polls: Silent borders force voters of all ages to cast votes in Jammu

Agnevair, ceasefire dominates voting trends in villages close to LoC, people vote for lasting peace, unemployment redressal

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26:

First time in over a decade, the border residents of Jammu region thronged to the polling stations without any fear of being trapped in Pakistan's shelling and casted their votes to decide the fate of 22 candidates contesting from the Jammu Lok Sabha constituency on Friday.

As per news agency, on the International Border (IB) and Line of Control



(LoC), the elections are not less than a festival or fair. Far from the city's hustle

and bustle, the calmness prevailed in rural belts, where people started

assembling in groups at designated polling booths in the morning to exercise their franchise.

Out of the 18 Assembly segments of Jammu constituency, 10 segments namely Ramgarh, Vijaypur and Samba of Samba district, Bishnah, Suchetgarh, Ranbir Singh Pura, Marh, Akhnour and Chamb of Jammu and Sunderbani-Kalakote Assembly of Rajouri district have votes in border areas. The mixed population of

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2 terrorists killed in overnight encounter in Sopore

One slain identified as Pakistani national: Encounter after 22 months in Sopore; arms, ammo recovered: IGP Kashmir; says police committed to providing safe, secure environment for LS polls

JNEWS SERVICE
SOPORE, APR 26:

Two terrorists were killed in an overnight encounter at Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, with the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir confirming one among them is a Pakistani national, while the identity of the other is being ascertained.

Talking to reporters, the IGP Kashmir V K Bhiridi, as per news agency, said that two terrorists were killed in the Nowpora encounter. "As per the documents recovered from the slain,



one terrorist has been identified as Saifullah," he said, adding that the identity of the second one is being ascertained.

He said the successful operation reflects the alertness of security forces ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in Kashmir.

"We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for Lok Sabha polls," he said, adding that arms, ammunition and incriminating material have been recovered from the slain terrorists.

Earlier on Thursday evening, officials said that a joint team of Army's 22 RR, CRPF and Jammu and Kashmir Police laid a cordon and search operation in Check Nowpora village of Sopore after having credible inputs about the presence of some

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With no stakes in Jammu LS seat, offices of all local political parties remain closed on polling day

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26:

As Jammu was voting today for the second phase of Parliamentary elections today, almost all the local parties of Jammu and Kashmir were missing from the political scene of Jammu and their offices were closed on the polling day.

Be it Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), J&K Apni Party, Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) or others, nobody was there as neither of them is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Jammu parliamentary seat.

According to the news

agency, not even the National Conference (NC) office was active in Jammu today but few of their leaders were seen getting people out to vote for Congress party candidate Raman Bhalla.

Two of the major local parties PDP and Apni Party have offices in Gandhinagar area where their gates were locked and nobody was around. The reason for local parties missing from the poll scene and their offices giving a deserted look is that they don't have any stake in Jammu and wanted to focus on the areas in Kashmir valley.

Going by the statistics available, NC had won two Assembly constituencies during 2014 Assembly elections, which fall in present Jammu Lok Sabha constituency, including Nagrota and Bishnah, when the Modi wave had engulfed entire Jammu region but this time they are nowhere.

For PDP, many influential leaders of Jammu were part of this party during Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's time and when PDP joined hands with BJP in 2014 to form the coalition government in J&K, their reach was increasing. But after snapping ties with BJP, many leaders have left the party

in Jammu. There are few leaders who arrange protest demonstration or press conferences on various issues, but those were also missing during these elections and especially on the polling day. Some of these leaders are busy in campaigning for their party president Mehbooba Mufti in Rajouri and Poonch districts, who are contesting from Anantnag Lok Sabha seat.

J&K Apni Party which was formed by former PDP leader Altaf Bukhari has many leaders from Jammu associated with it but as the party is not contesting Jammu seat,

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GMC Rajouri awarded National Bronze certification by NQA under AB-PMJAY

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 26:

In a remarkable achievement, Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri has been awarded the prestigious Bronze Quality Certificate, underscoring its dedication to delivering top-notch healthcare services to the community.

As per the details obtained by the news agency, Government Medical College Rajouri is the 1st GMC of JK UT to be awarded National Bronze quality certification by the National Quality Council of INDIA under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan

Arogya Yojana

An official of the GMC Rajouri said this recognition is a testament to the unwavering commitment and tireless efforts of the hospital's staff in upholding the highest standards of care. GMC Rajouri, known for its commitment to excellence in healthcare, has once again proven its mettle by receiving the Bronze Quality Certificate, he said.

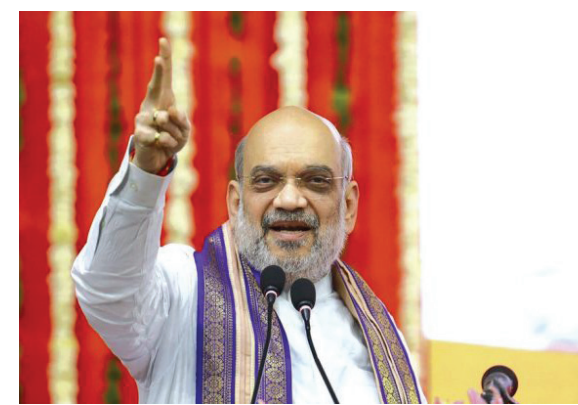
"This esteemed recognition, bestowed upon the hospital by the Quality Council of India, signifies adherence to stringent quality standards and continuous efforts towards

improvement," the official remarked. "It also marks a pivotal milestone for GMC Rajouri as it becomes the first GMC in Jammu and Kashmir to receive the prestigious Bronze Certificate, signifying excellence in healthcare quality and service delivery."

The rigorous certification process spanned over the course of one year, involving meticulous desktop assessment and comprehensive onsite evaluation.

The dedication and hard work invested in the quality certification process underscore the

Implementation of uniform civil code in country is PM Guarantee: Amit Shah



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 26

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the BJP-led government

at the Centre will implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the country as it is a guarantee of Prime Minister Narendra

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Ramban Road Sinking: 50 houses damaged, families being shifted to safer places: DC

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 26:

At least 50 houses got damaged in at Pernote area of Ramban district last evening, officials said on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ramban, Baseer-ul-Haq told the news agency that 30 residential houses got damaged in the initial stage and 20 more got affected.

"We are shifting the affected families to safer places and the administration is making arrangements for food and other related stuff for the affected families," he said.



He further stated that the work on the restoration of essential services will be ensured soon and that losses are being assessed. DC Ramban also

said that a team of geologists will assess the situation and the measures to prevent huge losses will be taken accordingly.

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Govt initiates process to dismiss CRPF DIG accused of sexual harassment

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 26

The Union Government has initiated the process of dismissing a DIG ranked former chief sports officer of the CRPF on charges of sexual harassment levelled against him by some women working in the paramilitary force, official sources said Friday.

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A notice for dismissal has been issued against Deputy Inspector General Khajan Singh after the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) accepted the recommendation of the

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), they said.

The final orders will be issued after taking into consideration the reply received from the accused officer within 15 days, the sources said.

Khajan Singh did not respond to PTT's query on the matter.

The notice for dismissal against the officer, currently posted in Mumbai, was issued recently after a probe conducted by the CRPF found him "guilty" on sexual harassment charges.

The CRPF headquarters accepted the probe report prepared by the internal

committee and forwarded it to the UPSC and the MHA for taking appropriate disciplinary action. The UPSC and the MHA have hence issued orders for dismissal against Khajan Singh, the sources said.

The officer is facing at least two such charges and the notice for dismissal has been issued in one case. The other case too is in progress, the sources said.

Khajan Singh served as the chief sports officer of the Central Reserve Police Force, the country's largest paramilitary force. He won a silver medal at the 1986 Seoul Asian Games in

the 200m butterfly event which was India's first medal in swimming at the event since 1951.

He had earlier denied the allegations and said that the allegations of sexual harassment were "absolutely false" and made to "spoil his image".

The CRPF, which has about 3.25 lakh personnel, first inducted women in combat ranks in 1986. It has six all-female battalions at present with an overall strength of about 8,000 personnel in them.

It also has women personnel in sports and other administrative wings. (Agencies)

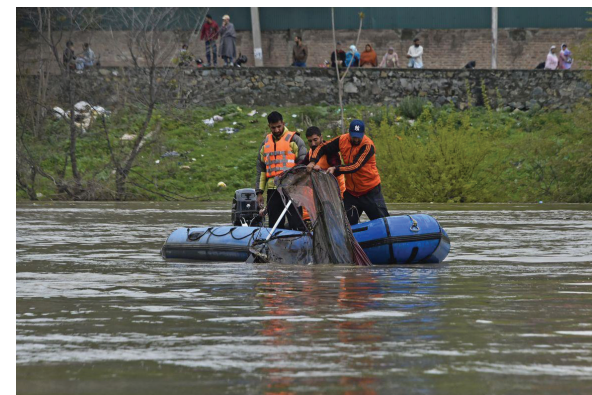
Srinagar Boat Tragedy: Body of missing minor boy fished out from Jehlum after 11 days; toll mounts to 7

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 26:

Finally, prayers of Kashmiri people got answered on Friday after the body of 11-year-old boy Haziq Ahmed Sheikh of Gandbal, Srinagar was retrieved from river Jehlum after a gap of 11-days on Friday.

With the recovery of Haziq's body, the death toll in the Gandbal boat capsized has reached to seven while as the father-son duo continue to remain missing.

Locals of Gandbal area of Srinagar told news agency, the body of Haziq was seen at Zero-bridge and was retrieved as well



without any delay. Later, the body was identified as Haziq Ahmed Sheikh, 11, of Gandbal, who had drowned along with six others in river Jehlum and was missing since April 16. Since then, reli-

gious scholars of different school of thoughts visited Gandbal to share the pain and grief of bereaved families. They also prayed for the recovery of untraced bodies. Emotional duas were made by the religious

preachers for the recovery of those untraced. Locals at Gandbal said they are hopeful that the bodies of father-son duo will also float and they would have their last glimpse as well.

A pall of gloom descended over the entire Gandbal area of Srinagar yet again as the news of recovery of Haziq's body reached the area.

An eyewitness told the news agency, that as the body of Haziq reached his native area Gandbal, people irrespective of age and colour flooded the little boy's residence amid shrieks and cries while as women were seen

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DLSA conducts OSC Bemina, DHEW Mission Shakti Srinagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 26

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority and as per the plan of action for the month of April 2024, visited One Stop Centre (OSC) Bemina and District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) Mission Shakti Srinagar, today under the guidance of Jawad Ahmed, Chairman (PDJ) DLSA Srinagar.

Jahangir Ahmed Bakshi, Secretary DLSA Srinagar along with Mukhtar Ahmed, District Social Welfare Srinagar, visited One Stop Centre (OSC) Bemina and District Hub for Empowerment of Women Mission Shakti Srinagar to assess the functioning and effectiveness of these facilities.

During the inspection, Adv. Asiya Farooq, Incharge OSC, Ruqaya, District Mission Coordinator of District Hub for Empowerment of Women Mission Shakti Srinagar, Adv. Zainab Amin Para Legal Lawyer, Rubina Shafi and Sabira Bashir, Case workers, Sehar Qureshi, counselor and other staff of OSC and



other staff were present. During the inspection, the team reviewed the functioning of the One Stop Centre and District Hub for Empowerment of Women Mission Shakti Srinagar. It also assessed the facilities and services provided by them and ensured compliance with legal provisions and standards and identified areas for improvement.

During the inspection, it was revealed that from December 2022 to April 2024, the OSC and DHEW have provided various services and facilities to 324 women who have been Survivors of violence in collaboration with District

Legal Services Authority, Srinagar. These services include counseling, legal aid, medical assistance, Self help, etc.

In addition, to this the availability of the National Helpline number 181 for women, which provides 24/7 support to women in distress and NALSA Helpline number 15100, which also offers assistance to women in need.

The inspection highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts to combat violence against women and the need to create a safe and supportive environment for them to access justice and rehabilitation.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

Celebration of Democracy: Border villages come alive with enthusiastic voters

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RS PURA/SUCHETGARH/ARNIA/
VIJAYPUR, APRIL 26

In the sprawling wheat fields of RS Pura and Suchetgarh villages, nestled along the International Border, a vibrant celebration of democracy unfolded. These remote communities, despite enduring challenging weather conditions, ensured an unprecedented voter turnout, emerging as beacons of participation.

The journey to polling booths wasn't just a physical one; it was a testament to the unwavering spirit of democracy that runs deep within these communities. First time voter Manish Kumar from Jajowal village of Chakroi in Suchetgarh Assembly Segment, couldn't contain his enthusiasm. "I'm thrilled to cast my first vote," he said while waiting in the queue at the Panchayat Ghar Jajowal polling station. "It empowers us to choose our representative for progress. I've been eagerly waiting for this day!" His excitement echoed the sentiment of many young voters who traveled all the way from Punjab to exercise their franchise in their native villages.

For these villagers, voting transcends civic



duty. It's a commitment towards shaping their nation's future. Decades of enduring cross-border shelling haven't dampened their spirits. Their resolve to vote stems from a deep-seated belief in the power of their ballots.

Beyond the impressive numbers lies a powerful narrative of hope and determination. Each ballot cast is a declaration of resilience, a reaffirmation of faith in the democratic process. These villages, standing tall in the face of adversity, exemplify the indomitable spirit

of the Indian electorate. Their overwhelming turnout sends a resounding message: democracy is not just a privilege, but a responsibility they wholeheartedly embrace.

Bipin Singh, another first time voter from Sai Kalan village, Suchetgarh, echoed this sentiment. "I'm honored to cast my first vote," he said, standing patiently in a long queue. "It's my power, and I'll use it for my area's development." His message resonated with many young voters, urging them to participate and



strengthen the nation's democratic fabric.

At polling station 97-Nakowal, situated along the border village of the same name, Presiding Officer Sahil Rattan and his dedicated team ensured a smooth voting experience. Similarly, nonagenarian Munshi Ram, assisted by his family, cast his vote at 99-Sai Khurd polling station in RS Pura. "Voting makes me happy," he said after exercising his franchise. "It gives me inner peace, irrespective of the winner. I'm content knowing I fulfilled my duty."

Meanwhile, located near the renowned Border Out Post Octroi in RS Pura, polling station 61-Abdal reported a significant turnout with over 50% of registered voters casting their ballots by 3 pm. Interestingly, BOP Octroi itself is attracting visitors from various regions of the country and highlights the growing popularity of border tourism.

The enthusiastic participation of RS Pura and Suchetgarh villages serves as an inspiration for all: a powerful reminder that democracy thrives when its citizens actively engage in the process.

Unemployment, development attract first-time voters to cast ballots in Jammu PC

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26

The first time voters of Jammu parliamentary segment, which has registered over 71 per cent turnout on Friday, saw brimming with excitement and optimism for a better future.

From city to rural belts, the first time voters are among the most excited lot, who have been in the queues outside the polling stations since morning to cast their ballots.

Accompanied by elders of the family or friends, the first voters curiously inquired about the formalities from the officials and then followed the process of voting.

According to official figures out of 86.9 lakh electorate, a total of 3.4 lakh are first-time voters in Jammu and Kashmir.

Interacting with the news agency, Shruti Arora, who exercised her franchise for the first time at Gandhi Nagar, said that she has voted today to elect the repre-

sentative, who can work on real issues like high inflation, unemployment, infrastructure development and environmental conservation instead of distracting voters with emotional slogans.

Among the first-time voters is Marcus, who said, "I am very excited from the day BLO delivered my voting slip at home. I am among the first few voters, who arrived even before 7.00 am to cast my vote."

"My first vote is for a representative, who stands by the youth. We suffered a lot due to paper leak scams and growing unemployment. We missed our representative on such occasions but this time, we hoped that the representative we choose, stand by us and raise such issues at appropriate platforms."

Mana Khokher, another first time voter said the vote is a chance to shape the future of youth. "The pressing issues are unemployment, lack of infrastructure, and the

ever-present specter of violence. I hope my vote could contribute to the resolution of these issues," she said.

Ridhima Jain from Kacchi Chowani, said, "I would be experiencing something new, but I also had a responsibility to choose the best candidate. Everyone in the society should cast vote as it's the time to express."

Karan, a young voter from Samba said, "During election season, leaders entice voters with false promises, but they seldom pay attention to voter complaints after the election. I want to support the candidate, who is approachable and sympathetic to our situation".

Tania Raina, a passionate advocate for environmental conservation, preparing to vote for the first time says she has seen firsthand the devastating effects of climate change on the region and was determined to elect leaders, who would prioritize sustainability and conservation efforts.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

SVEEP programs held at Govt institutions in several Pulwama villages

J1 NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, APRIL 26

The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiatives were today conducted with great enthusiasm and participation at two venues viz. HSS Panzgam and HSS Chakura, here. The programs showcased a diverse array of activities aimed at fostering voter education and participation. Highlights included captivating cultural performances, energetic rallies, enchanting Kashmiri Chakri performances by girl groups, and comprehensive voter awareness sessions.

The programmes witnessed participation of all stakeholders like local bodies, BLO, Aasha workers, lumberdars, Young



voters, PWDs and Senior Citizens.

A painting competition and plantation drive were also carried out under the banners of SVEEP.

These events exem-

plify the District Administration's commitment to empowering citizens with the knowledge and resources necessary to exercise their democratic rights effectively.

DC Bandipora chairs Road Safety meeting



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, APRIL 26

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman on Friday convened a meeting of District Road Safety Committee at Mini Secretariat Bandipora to discuss various pressing concerns of road safety in the district.

The meeting deliberated upon various points, including raising awareness about road safety, black spot identification and rectification, erection of crash barriers, road widening, etc.

Executive Engineer R&B, Bandipora, who is also Member Secretary, District Road Safety Committee, apprised the meeting about different projects undertaken.

Speaking on the occasion, DC emphasized awareness initiatives to promote safe driving practices among all road users. He stressed

on the Motor Vehicle Department, Police and Urban Local Bodies to ensure joint and collaborative efforts for effective implementation of road safety initiatives in the district.

To avoid traffic congestion in the main market, DC asked ARTO Bandipora, Traffic Police and other concerned people to devise a plan for one-way traffic in the main market and take proactive measures to avoid road side parking.

He also instructed the concerned officers to install crash barriers, signages, and traffic signals to address road safety concerns comprehensively.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ADC Umar Shafi Pandit, ARTO Anees Ahmad, Ex. Engineer R&B Asadullah Najar, Ex. Engineer PMGSY Mohammad Husain, DySP Ahmad Shaafi and other concerned.

Delegate Session of AIRF Centenary year concludes today

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APR 26

The representative session of the historic "Centenary Conference" of All India Railwaymen's Federation, the largest, oldest and most militant organization of railway employees, was organized today on 25th April 2024 at Tal Katora Indoor Stadium, New Delhi, in which all corners of Indian Railways -More than 1500 representatives from the corner and more than 3000 active and dedicated workers of other organizations participated.

A.I.R.F. All the officials of the ITF along with the zonal secretaries, and Strategic Planner of Inland Transport Railway Section and AIRF, Chairperson of Women's Wing, Mrs. Jaya Aggarwal, Convener Mrs. Praveena Singh, and H.M.S. Ms.



Champa Verma, leader of the Asia-Pacific wing, will be present on the stage.

In the historic 'Centenary Conference', there was a serious and detailed discussion on the challenges faced by the railway employees, organized by the Joint Forum for Restoration of Old Pension Scheme (JFROPS) formed in view of the shortcomings of the "National Pension System" (NPS) on the initiative of All India Railwaymen's Federation. In compliance with the unanimous decision taken, the proposed indefinite nationwide general strike from May 1, 2024 is an initiative of the Government of India and assurances given by the high level committee constituted

on this by calling the employee side for talks and the time of 2 months was postponed in view of finalizing its recommendations. In this Centenary Convention, after serious consultation, it was unanimously decided that if the benefits and facilities provided in defined and guaranteed pension for young railway workers and other government employees are not restored, then the countrywide indefinite general strike will not be avoided. Other 8 proposals presented in the representative session of the Centenary Convention were also passed after detailed discussion and also the membership of AIRF for the next 3 years was passed. The election of office bearers, zonal secretaries and national working committee was also completed unanimously.

GDC Thannamandi celebrates World Intellectual Property cum World Book Day

JNEWS SERVICE
THANNAMANDI, APR 26

The Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) in collaboration with NSS and Department of Library under the aegis of IQAC of GDC Thannamandi celebrated World Intellectual Property cum World Book Day as part of Viksit Bharat@47 Sankalp here today.

On this occasion an extension lecture on the theme "IP and the SDGs: Building our common future with innovation and creativity with special reference to Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) & IP management for Start-ups" hosted under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Farooq Ahmed, Principal of the College in which Dr. Ashaq Malik, IQAC Coordinator and Head, Department of Botany was resource person.



While speaking on the occasion Prof. Farooq Ahmed emphasized upon the need of awareness about IPRs for personal and professional growth and capacity building, and taking our nation and world at large to the next level through creativity, innovation and start-ups hence address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Students and youth can play pivotal role to bridge the gaps through start-up schemes, he said. He also underlined the declining culture of book reading which again needs innovations to bring it back on the track. Dr.

Farooq appreciated the organizing team for taking initiative to celebrate these less known but very important days; World IP Day and World Book Day which are marked on April 26th and 23rd respectively.

Dr. Ashaq Malik, IQAC Coordinator and Head, Department of Botany, through PowerPoint presentation detailed the audience about history, relevance and different types of Intellectual Properties Rights including Patents, Trademark, Industrial Design, Geographical Indication, Copyright, Trade Secret etc. He dem-

onstrated with examples, how IP is contributing in overcoming the most pressing issues of our world and helping in transforming it.

The linkage and integration of IPRs in the start-ups programs is of paramount importance to address SDGs especially SDG 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15. He explained various acts, provisions and opportunities related to IPRs at national and international level under the umbrella of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Earlier, Anuj Bali, Librarian and Vice President of IIC of GDC Thannamandi introduced the audience about the programme and gave a brief account of World Book Day which is celebrated

since 2000 to mark death anniversary great luminaries including William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega who all died on this day (April 23).

Dr Ather Aziz Raina, Head Department of Mathematics conducted the proceedings of the programme whereas Prof. Asif Aijaz, Head Department of Physics and NSS Coordinator presented formal vote of thanks. Prominent among others present on the occasion were Dr. Nazakat Hussain, Dr. Abdul Haque Naimi, Dr. Nazam Ul Islam, Dr. Goher Iqbal, Dr. Junaid Ahmed, Dr. Shiraz Ahmed, Prof. Fatima Parveen, Dr. Ather Aziz Raina, Prof Romy Dar, Prof. Rizwana, Dr. Nagina, Dr. Sarfaraz Mirza, Dr. Arshad Khan, Dr. Nisar Bhat, Dr. Mohd Javaid, Dr. Nusrat Farooq and Dr. Wahid Ahmed Qazi.

JKBS members congratulated Havildar Om Parkash Nandan on his farewell

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 26:

The Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha members today congratulated Havildar Om Parkash Nandan on his farewell accorded to him by his most respected Unit Commandant.

Havildar Om Parkash Nandan mentioned to JKBS members that he is emotional as he worked his final days here. He is so grateful for the relationship he had developed over the years.

Adding further he said, he after serving the Indian Army for twenty years, joined CRPF in 2001 and now is going to be retired from it on April 30, 2024.

SC verdict on VVPAT big blow to those who wanted to loot ballot boxes: PM Modi

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 26



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that the Supreme Court judgment on cross-verification of votes was a huge setback for opposition INDIA bloc. Addressing an election rally in Bihar, the Prime Minister accused the opposition of sowing doubts about the reliability of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the minds of the people.

"Today, when the whole world is praising India's democracy, the country's election process, and the use of technology in elections, these people were busy defaming EVM for their personal interests," PM Modi said.

"Look at the power of the country's democracy and Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Constitution, today the Supreme Court has

given such a severe blow to those who wanted to loot the ballot boxes that all their dreams have been shattered. Today the Supreme Court has clearly said that the old era of ballot paper will not return," he added. Prime Minister drew a contrast between the objectives of the NDA and the INDIA bloc, asserting that while the NDA aims to empower the people, the INDIA bloc seeks to exploit the nation and its citizens for their own benefit.

Earlier today, the Supreme Court rejected

all petitions seeking 100% cross-verification of votes cast using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.

The order was passed by a bench comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, who emphasized that democracy thrives on harmony and trust among its various institutions. The Supreme Court has granted an option to candidates to get the microcontroller program of EVMs to be checked by a team of engineers after the declaration

of results, such a request is to be made by the candidate within seven days after the declaration of results.

Congress will continue with campaign on greater use of VVPATs: Jairam Ramesh

The Congress will continue with its political campaign on greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process, the party said. The Congress was not a party, directly or indirectly, to the petition on VVPATs rejected by the Supreme Court today, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh said.

"We have taken note of the verdict of the 2-judge bench and our political campaign on the greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process will continue," Ramesh said in a post on X.

Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation Extends Gratitude to Adv Priya Sharma for Completing PhD



her unwavering dedication to excellence. Her scholarly endeavors have not only enriched her personal and professional growth but also elevated the standards of our foundation. As Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation remains steadfast in its mission of environmental stewardship, Advocate Priya Sharma's academic accomplishments further reinforce our collective commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering sustainable practices. We are immensely proud to have her as an integral part of our team.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to Advocate Priya Sharma for her outstanding achievement and unwavering dedication," said Dr Sonia Verma Director of Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation. "Her academic success serves as a testament to her passion for environmental advocacy and strengthens our resolve to continue our efforts towards a greener and more sustainable future."

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26

Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation proudly announces and extends heartfelt congratulations to Advocate Priya Sharma, our esteemed Legal Advisor and General Secretary, on the successful completion of her PhD from IEC University, Himachal Pradesh. Advocate Priya Sharma's dedication, perseverance, and scholarly achievements serve as an inspiration to us all.

Advocate Priya Sharma has exemplified remarkable commitment and passion in her pursuit of knowledge, and her accomplishment reflects

KVK Kishtwar holds Training for Extension Personnel



JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 26

Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kishtwar SKUAST Jammu organized one day training programme on Insect Pest Management in maize crop for the extension personnel of Department of Agriculture and Farmers welfare Kishtwar under the guidance of Dr Amrish Vaid, Director Extension SKUAST Jammu. 30 officers and extension personnel of the department from the district attended the training programme.

Dr Narinder Paul, Head KVK Kishtwar organized the programme. Amjad Hussain Malik Chief Agriculture Officer Kishtwar, Khalid Zargar, Jamshed Hussain SMS DL, Manzor Ahmad Zargar SDAO Marwah, Agriculture extension officers of dif-

ferent zones of the District also participated in the programme.

During the programme, Dr Narinder Paul deliberated upon the scenario of maize production in the UT of J&K with special emphasis on Kishtwar. He highlighted that productivity of crop is quite low in the district owing to several factors of which the incidence of insect pests is major threat to the crop. Identification, nature of damage and management of different types of maize prevalent in the district were deliberated upon during the programme. Maize cut worm, stem borer, Fall Army worm and several other insects posing threat to the maize crop were discussed. The participants were also trained about different management

practices including cultural, chemical, biological and use of pheromone traps/lures for further extending the knowhow and do how to the farmers level. Komal Sharma deliberated in detail on the stem borer and fall armyworms. Amjad Hussain Malik CAO Kishtwar while speaking on the occasion, pinned hope that the training programme would be of immense help to the field extension functionaries in further educating the farmers about management of these pests and thereby saving the crop from their attack. At the end of the technical programme an interactive session was held in which the queries of the participants were discussed. Programme ended with vote of thanks by Khalid Bashir Zargar, SMD DL

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Unveils "T GLOSS": A Comprehensive Car Detailing Solution

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 26

In line with its 'customer-first' philosophy, Toyota Kirloskar Motor Pvt. Ltd. (TKM) today announced the launch of its revolutionary car care brand, "T GLOSS", marking the brand's foray into the world of car detailing. In response to the rapidly increasing demand for high quality and reliable car detailing services among customers in India, TKM is set to redefine the car care industry with its comprehensive range of solutions tailored specifically for Toyota vehicles.

Starting May 1, 2024, "T GLOSS" treatments will be offered at every authorised Toyota dealership in India. This provides customers with convenient access to quality car care solutions delivered in a highly professional manner, ensuring a delightful ownership experience. As an industry first by any car maker, under the "T GLOSS" brand, TKM will offer a wide array of services curated to enhance a vehicle's appearance, both inside and out. This includes ceramic coating, underbody coating, silencer coating, and internal panel protection. These treatments are not only aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of vehicles but also offers certain degree of protection against environmental elements.

Customers can also

avail comprehensive services such as interior enrichment and exterior beautification services that breathe new life into the car, revitalizing its aesthetic appeal and ensuring it looks as good as new. Additionally, for the well-being of the passengers, "T GLOSS" services go beyond the surface with AC duct cleaning and evaporator cleaning, contributing to an immaculate ambiance, promoting a healthier driving environment. All the services are meticulously designed to rejuvenate the interiors and exteriors of vehicles, providing a renewed sense of pride and satisfaction to Toyota owners.

Speaking on the initiative, Mr. Sabari Manohar - Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business, Toyota Kirloskar Motor said, "We are thrilled to unveil "T GLOSS", an innovative and industry first venture that underscores Toyota Kirloskar Motor's unwavering commitment to 'customer-first' philosophy. We are witnessing growing trend among car owners who prioritize quality vehicle maintenance, and "T GLOSS" is designed to meet their needs by helping them keep their cars in excellent condition aesthetically.

"T GLOSS" is a one-stop-shop solution aimed at offering customers high quality car care solutions that are tailored specifically for Toyota vehicles to

ensure safety and upkeep of vehicles ultimately designed to offer a peaceful ownership experience. This launch marks a significant another critical milestone in our journey of delivering Toyota owners an all-encompassing car care solution that seamlessly aligns with our core values of quality, durability, and reliability (QDR)"

In addition to its extensive service offerings, "T GLOSS" will place strong emphasis on customization and flexibility to accommodate the diverse needs of customers. The services will be undertaken by highly skilled and trained professional to ensure integration of not only usage of high-quality material but also ensure the services are rendered in the most professional manner ensuring longevity of the vehicle's aesthetics, including exteriors as well as interiors.

Over the years, TKM has strived to consistently improve customer experiences throughout the entire purchase and ownership cycle by implementing timely and relevant initiatives through value-added services that include the newly introduced "Awesome New Car Delivery Solution", 5-Years of Complimentary Roadside Assistance Program and specialized schemes, aimed to make the dream of owning a Toyota vehicle a reality, ensuring a joyful ownership experience for our existing customers.

IMD predicts severe heatwave conditions over East, South Peninsular India for next 5 days

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 25

As the scorching heatwave grips various parts of East and South Peninsular India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued warnings for continued severe heatwave conditions over the next five days. The IMD's forecast also includes a mix of rainfall, thunderstorms, and gusty winds across different regions.

"A spell of rainfall accompanied by isolated thunderstorms/lightning and heavy rainfall is likely over Northeast India from 28-30 April," it said.

In its latest statement, the IMD highlighted the persistence of heatwave conditions in several areas, including Gangetic West Bengal, parts of Odisha, and isolated pockets in Sub-Himalayan West Bengal. Additionally, the forecast warns of heatwave conditions in Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, and other regions, underscoring the widespread impact of the ongoing heatwave.

"Heatwave conditions in isolated pockets over Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Rayalaseema, Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, East Uttar Pradesh during the next 5 days; Kerala & Mahe during 26th-28th; Konkan during 27th-29th and West Uttar Pradesh, Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during 28th-30th April 2024," IMD said in a statement. However, amidst the sweltering temperatures, relief may be in sight for some regions. The IMD predicts a spell of rainfall

accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning over Northeast India from April 28th to 30th, offering a reprieve from the oppressive heat.

Furthermore, the IMD anticipates fresh spells of rainfall and thunderstorms over the Western Himalayan region, Northwest India, and adjoining Central India. These weather patterns, expected from April 26th to 29th, could bring much-needed moisture to the parched regions, albeit with the possibility of hailstorms in certain areas.

"Western Disturbance as a cyclonic circulation lies over south Iran & adjoining south Pakistan in lower & middle levels. An induced cyclonic circulation lies over West Rajasthan in lower tropospheric levels. Under their influence: Fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall/snowfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning very likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and isolated rainfall over Uttarakhand during 26th-29th April 2024, with the possibility of hailstorm over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad on 26th and Himachal Pradesh during 26th-28th and Uttarakhand on 28th and 29th April 2024," it said in a statement.

"Isolated Heavy rainfall also likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad during 27th-29th April and over Himachal Pradesh on 29th April 2024," IMD said, adding

that isolated to scattered rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm, lightning & gusty winds (40-50 kmph) very likely over Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi during 26th-28th and over Rajasthan & West Uttar Pradesh on 26th April, 2024.

The weather agency also warns of a dust storm over West Rajasthan, adding to the atmospheric instability prevalent in the region.

As the nation grapples with contrasting weather phenomena, the IMD urges residents to stay informed and take necessary precautions to mitigate the impact of extreme weather conditions. With heatwave conditions persisting in several states and sporadic rainfall offering temporary relief in others, India's diverse climate continues to challenge both meteorologists and residents alike.

IMD further said that fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall/snowfall accompanied by isolated thunderstorms & lightning & gusty winds (40-50 kmph) is very likely over Arunachal Pradesh and scattered to fairly widespread rainfall over Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura during 26th-30th April 2024.

It added that isolated light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms & lightning is very likely over Sikkim on April 28, 2024. It added that heavy rainfall is likely over Arunachal Pradesh and Assam & Meghalaya on April 28 & 30, 2024.

KU hosts inter-dept T20 cricket tournament

Varsity committed to culture of excellence both on and off the field: VC



JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 26

The Kashmir University (KU) kick-started the much anticipated 'Inter-Department T20 Cricket Tournament' in which a total of 45 teams are participating with the inaugural match between the Department of Management Studies and the Department of Mathematics held Thursday here on the university grounds.

The Department of Management Studies won the toss and opted to field first, setting the stage for an intense battle on the pitch, an official statement issued here read.

"The Department of Mathematics set a competitive target of 121 runs in 16 overs, led by Danish's impressive performance with 28 runs. Shakir from

the Department of Management Studies bowled exceptionally well, claiming three crucial wickets to stem the opposition's momentum," a spokesperson said in the statement.

The Department of Management Studies, achieved the target and courtesy Aaqib's outstanding batting who scored 41 runs the team could pitch a tough battle.

Aqeel and Nadeem from the Department of Mathematics displayed remarkable bowling skills, securing two wickets each.

As the scores tied, the match proceeded to a nail-biting super over, where the Department of Management Studies displayed exceptional team spirit and emerged victorious. Aaqib was declared the 'Player of the Match'.

In her message, KU Vice

Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan extended her good wishes to the players and said that the tournament exemplifies the varsity's commitment to encourage holistic development and a culture of excellence both on and off the field.

"We are committed to providing world-class facilities and the required platform to our students who have the talent and skills so that they gain training and expertise in their respective traits that we can promote on a bigger stage," Prof Khan said, adding that student-participation in such activities empowers them to refine their skills and boost their confidence.

Dean, Students Welfare, Prof Shamim A Shah, witnessed the inaugural match and later congratulated the winning team

and wished the runners up team luck for the upcoming matches.

"Today's match not only showcases the spirit of sportsmanship but also underscores the talent and dedication within our academic community," he added.

Director, Directorate of Physical Education and Sports (DPES), KU, Dr Mandeep Singh, while extending a warm welcome to the participating teams, outlined the essence of organising the tournament.

"Our focus has been our talented youth. Providing them with the right exposure and opportunities to display their talent could prove life-changing in shaping their professional cricketing careers in the T20 format," Dr Mandeep reiterated.

Police books 3 notorious drug smugglers under PIT NDPS Act in Baramulla

JNEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, APR 27

Acting tough against drug peddlers and to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police booked 3 notorious drug smugglers under PIT NDPS Act in Baramulla after obtaining formal detention orders from competent authority. The notorious drug smugglers namely Shahid Hussain Dar son of

Ghulam Hassan resident of Sultanpora Pattan, Mohd Saleem Sheikh @ Mass son of Abdul Rashid resident of Malikbagh Pattan & Nazaar Ahmad Bhatti son of Bawar Ali resident of Madiyan Kamalkote Uri have been booked under PIT-NDPS Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent Authority. The booked drug smugglers have been detained and subsequently lodged

in Central Jail Kot-Balwal Jammu.

Pertinent to mention here that many cases are registered against these drug smugglers and were involved in promoting drug abuse trade by supplying drugs to local youth.

General public of Baramulla appreciated the role of Police for their action against drug peddlers. Police' consistent actions against the drug peddlers should reassure the community members that police is making all efforts to keep our society free from drug abuse.

Police arrests drug peddler in Shopian; Contraband substance recovered

JNEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, APR 27

Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police arrested a drug peddler in Shopian and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

A police party of Police Station Imamsahib under the supervision of SSP Shopian Ms Tanushree IPS at a checkpoint established at Hillow crossing, intercepted a suspicious person who on seeing the police party tried to flee from the spot but was apprehended tactfully. During search, 265 grams of contraband Brown sugar like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Javaid Ahmad



Bhat son of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat resident of Arwani Bijbehara. He was shifted to Police Station where he remains in custody.

Accordingly, a case FIR No. 19/2024 under sections of law was registered in Police Station Imamsahib and investigation was taken up.

Community members are requested to come forward with any information regarding drug peddlers in their neighbourhood. Persons found indulging in drug peddling will be dealt as per law. Our consistent actions against drug peddlers should reassure the community members that we are making efforts to keep our society free from the scourge of drug menace.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Jammu LS records...

including Bishnah, Suchetgarh, Ranbir Singh Pura (Jammu-south), Bahu, Jammu East, Nagrota, Jammu West, Jammu North, Marh, Akhnoor and Chhamb, three Assembly segments of Samba district including Ramgarh, Samba and Vijaypur, three Assembly segments of Reasi district including Gulabgarh, Reasi and Shri Mata Vashino Devi and one Assembly segment of Rajouri district Kalakote-Sunderbani.

There were over 17.80 lakh electorates eligible to vote in Jammu PC including 921,095 male, 859,712 female and 28 third gender voters. The chief electoral office had established 2,416 polling stations and over 15000 polling staff were deputed to conduct the elections in a fair and transparent manner.

A total of 22 candidates are in the fray for this seat whereas the contest is mainly between Bharatiya Janta Party's (BJP) Jugal Kishore Sharma and Congress party's Raman Bhalla.

According to the data provided by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) J&K, Akhnoor recorded 78.27 percent votes, Bahhu 62.34 percent, Bishnah 76.54 percent, Chhamb 75.76 percent, Gulabgarh 71.47 percent, Jammu East 66.11 percent, Jammu north 67.29 percent, Jammu West 62.82 percent, Kalakote-Sunderbani 69.10 percent, March 79.31 percent, Nagrota 75.63 percent, R S Pura 68.11 percent, Ramgarh 75.27 percent, Reasi 74.19 percent, Samba 69.23 percent, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi 79.43 percent, Suchetgarh 75.94 percent and Vijaypur recorded 75.67 percent.

The day began with the enthusiasm among people who turned up at polling stations early so that they don't have to stay in long queues during the day when the sun comes out with all its might. For the first half of the day, most of the people had casted their votes which was evident with the fact that by 1 pm, over 42 percent polling was recorded across the 18 segments of Jammu Parliamentary constituency.

This constituency is important as nine out of 18 Assembly segments have voters near the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) and in a couple of Assembly segments in Reasi district people are scattered in hills where commuting is difficult.

People in all the 18 Assembly were enthusiastic about casting their vote as few were not interested in who the candidates are but they were voting for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and to elect him as the PM for the third consecutive time. The polarization factor was also there as the recent attack of PM Modi on Congress party's manifesto also echoed here. But there were people who were more interested in voting on local issues which haven't been addressed. Few traders said that they casted their vote to improve the business which has suffered a lot for the last many years. KNO

Jammu LS Seat polls...

the border belt consists of Gujjars, Jats, Scheduled Caste, West Pakistani Refugees, Chamb Refugees and Sikh, which mainly depend upon farming and jobs in defence forces for their livelihood.

In Jammu's R S Pura belt, which is internationally acclaimed for its quality Rice cultivation, the residents at Zero line Chandu Chak voted in large numbers for a scene of security due to fresh ceasefire agreement while barely three kilometers away from the border the issues changed to Agniveer and unemployment.

Garu Chand of Abdulian village, who casted his vote

early in the morning, said that shelling from across the border has remained a major concern for the border residents and the administration alike but this time the elections are taking place in a peaceful atmosphere owing to a renewed ceasefire between the two countries on February 25, 2021.

"Earlier, we were living under the looming threat of firing and shelling from across the border but the situation has changed for good ever since the ceasefire came into effect and we are carrying out our daily chores," he said adding, "Due to peace residence are able to carry farming activity near zero line, which is great relief".

However the resident also anguished over poor performance and non availability of sitting Member parliament but hoped that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi things have been changed and border dwellers are happy.

Haqumat Singh, a young voter from Baspur Bangla of R S Pura said that border residents have suffered a lot in the last couple of years for some anti youth and anti farmers decisions.

"Most of the border residents are average in studies and keep the dream of joining the army, every house has at least two people in belt forces but the government's Agniveer shattered many such dreams and people with full potential sitting idle at homes".

Singh further added that after the army the other major dependency on farming.

"A farmer gets Rs 3500 for per quintal of rice grains on government rates but rice available in the market above Rs 200 per kilogram. The difference of amount goes to middlemen because of the government's policy to encourage corporate firms and discourage farmers," he said.

The border dwellers also expressed concern over inflation and demanded that the government should focus on lowering the prices of domestic gas and essential and daily use items to provide relief to the people.

While a significant number of voters admitted that many areas saw a rise in drug abuse which also linked with growing unemployment.

"Unemployment is on the rise as a result of which the youth are falling prey to narcotic smugglers. Drug abuse is on the rise and there is a need to engage the youth in positive activities by generating employment for them," Kamlesh Kumar, a middle-aged voter said. He also said that government should seriously think over unemployment and drugs and close all wine shops in the rural belts while launch a major drive against drug abuse to save the young generation.

Mohita Khajuria, a first-time voter from village Satrian in the R S Pura sector said she wanted the government to focus on employment generation.

"I am happy to have exercised my democratic right and I am looking forward to a government which can address people's issues and generate enough employment opportunities," Khajuria said.

The enthusiasm among the voters was also visible in the Ramgarh sector of the Samba district, where the voters also talked about the growing menace of drug abuse among youngsters and inflation. They also said that elections need to be held regularly and people at helm need to be change of not perform well.

"I am disturbed to see that people think that they are electing the Prime Minister. Even the campaign of ruling party's candidate also focused on this as he sought votes on name of Modi, which is ethically wrong as a voter of Jammu parliamentary, my duty is to cast a vote for

candidate which I think is capable of raising the issue of Jammu in the parliament," he said Sham Sunder Sharma, a scholar, adding, "We also want assembly elections so that the popular government is restored. People are for change".

Officials said various polling stations were set up in buildings having underground bunkers including Nanga, Abdal, Sarthia Kalan, Rajpur, Chalyari and adjoining areas.

The Jammu parliamentary constituency recorded 67.22 per cent polling, while its border segments registered more than 70 per cent polling, till 5 pm. It is likely to maintain its history of high voter turnout as in the last parliamentary elections, the constituency registered about 74 per cent polling. KNO

2 terrorists killed...

terrorists in the area. As the joint team approached the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired upon forces triggering an encounter.

During the operation, two soldiers and a civilian received bullet injuries. The injured are doing well after receiving immediate medical treatment, they said.

Meanwhile, in response to the gunfight in Sopore town, authorities took the precautionary measure of suspending classwork in the area on Friday.

"All government and private educational institutions, including colleges falling within Sopore tehsil's jurisdiction, will remain closed today," an administrative official told KNO in the morning.

Pertinently, Sopore witnessed the gunfight after 22 months. In 2022, two local terrorists identified as Zahid Ahmad Chopan, a resident of Tengwani Shopian and Mohd Youns Gul, a resident of Washbugh Pulwama of Lashkar e Toiba outfit were killed in the Tulibal area on June 21. KNO

With no stakes in...

there office was also closed for today and their leaders are busy in campaigning in Rajouri and Poonch districts for party's candidate Zafar Manhas.

DPAP, the newest of them all, was formed by former Congress stalwart and union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad with a motive to give alternative to the people of Jammu and Kashmir all over but the party didn't field any candidate from Jammu seat due to which it is also nowhere in sight. KNO

GMC Rajouri awarded...

commitment of healthcare professionals towards ensuring the highest standards of patient care, the official said.

He said that GMC Rajouri aims to build upon this success and further enhance its services to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the community. "With a steadfast commitment to excellence and a team of dedicated professionals, the hospital is poised to continue making a positive impact on the lives of patients and their families," he added. KNO

Implementation of...

Modi, and accused the Congress of advocating personal laws.

Shah was addressing a rally in Piprai area of Ashoknagar district under Guna Lok Sabha seat in Madhya Pradesh, from where Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is contesting as a BJP candidate.

Targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Shah said, "Rahul Baba, you can do whatever you want for appeasement. As long as BJP is there, it will not allow personal laws. It is our promise and a guarantee of Modi that we will implement UCC in the entire country as we have done in Uttarakhand."

He also said the Modi government has ended Naxalism and terrorism in the country.

"In 2019, the Modi government abrogated Article 370 in just one stroke. Rahul Baba got afraid and said that rivers of blood will flow...But Rahul Baba, this is not a Congress government...It's Modi government. They don't even have the courage to hurl a single stone, let alone talk about rivers of blood," Shah said.

"The government has freed the country from terrorism and Naxalism and also liberated Madhya Pradesh from it," he added. (Agencies)

Ramban Road Sinking...

Sources told KNO that four towers of a 400 KV transmission line, one receiving station, and a 33 KV transmission line also got damaged.

"Alternate road via Sumber-Digdoal has been made operational for connectivity and essential services supply. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) team is likely to visit the site within a couple of days to ascertain the facts that led to sinking in the area," they said.

Deep Kumar, Tehsildar of Ramban, told KNO that the land has been identified and "we have set up a rehabilitation camp with a capacity of 200-300 people where free medical aid, food, and other necessities are being provided through the district administration."

He said NDRF, district administration, among others, are on the spot and continuously monitoring the situation. He further said sinking has occurred due to heavy rains. KNO

Srinagar Boat Tragedy...

wailing. The Gandbal locality of city has been in a state of mourning since past 11 days, owing to the tragic boat capsizing incident that claimed seven lives including little Haziq. The father-son duo continue to remain missing under waters.

Regarding the retrieval of Haziq's body, a local, who was part of the sand extraction team at Zero Bridge, Rajbagh, said that they saw the body on the top of the water floating near Rajbagh area on Friday afternoon. "Soon, I along with other men rushed towards the body and handed it to the police, who then took it to the hospital, where medical formalities were done after which the body was handed over to the boy's family," he said.

The two bodies of father-son duo Showkat Ahmed and Farhan Parray continue to remain untraced. Meanwhile, hundreds of people attended the funeral of Haziq at Gandbal and bid his last goodbye. The family members of Haziq including his grandmother, father and mother also had last glimpse of little Haziq before his burial bath. People from various parts of Srinagar had reached Gandbal to participate in the funeral of little boy. KNO

Bombay HC: PSBs had become Judge and executioner at once; the LOCs their strong-arm tactic to bypass law courts

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, APR 26

In having look out circulars (LOCs) issued against its defaulters, public sector banks had become judges and executioners at once, held the Bombay high court while quashing the LOCs and the enabling powers that the Centre gave to such banks, ostensibly in the larger public interest. The fundamental rights under Art 21 of personal liberty and the right to travel abroad cannot be abrogated in this fashion, by an executive action held by the HC division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Madhav Jamdar, in its reasoned judgment of the April 23 pronouncement.

The power given to the PSB through its top brass is also manifestly arbitrary as it creates an invalid classification and thus violates the fundamental right to equality too, the HC held, and hence every LOCs so issued is invalid.

The PSBs' case was that, the HC said, "(perhaps because PSBs seem to be more liberal (or less cautious) in lending)" their problem was "more acute in terms of volumes, and consequently a trammelling of Article 21 rights of PSB borrowers may be perfectly all right." The HC said, "that borders on the absurd."

When asked, how many such financial fugitives there are abroad. The PSBs said, "There are five".

"That is all. Exactly five: Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, Jatin Mehta and "Sandesara (Sterling Biotech)" (sic; presumably Nitin Sandesara and family). This, we are asked to believe, is such a monumental problem that every single bor-

rower from a PSB, with no regard at all to a degree, must be lumped in the class," wrote Justice Patel, authoring the judgment. Justice Patel retired on April 25. The HC said the banks were silent on the next question. "Is it to be assumed by a court that just because a borrower is travelling abroad, therefore, he is bound to settle abroad and flee the country?"

Rejecting the Centre's argument of bank-triggered LOCs being in, exceptional cases and public interest, the HC said, "no one denies that economic offenders must be brought to book, but clearly, "no amount of 'public interest' can substitute for a 'procedure established by law', -- by a statute, statutory rule or statutory regulation in the matter of deprivation of the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India."

The public sector banks (PSBs) flouted two fundamental legal canons. No person may be judged in his own cause and the principles of natural justice--there was no prior hearing at all in the issuance of the LOCs by the public sector banks. Both sides must be heard--audi alteram partem--is a principle so ancient, its presence is there in every sacred text somewhere, said the Judges, referring to the Bible, New King James version. The HC said, "The fact that the public sector bank is directly concerned with the recovery of debt and is yet armed with this unilateral power only makes matters worse."

"There is, therefore, a complete and direct violation of both rules of natural justice, and a resultant bias,"

the court concluded. A large batch of petitions challenged the constitutionality of these LOCs issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) at the instance of various public sector banks, through their top brass.

The HC also said "Not once have we been shown that preventing anyone travelling abroad has even remotely addressed the issue -- that debt has been recovered because the person has been denied permission to travel." The HC said, "...there is no reason on this logic why a person should simply be prevented from travelling overseas" adding but even if some reason was shown it would still not bring it within the ambit of reasonable restriction of Art 21--right to life and personal liberty.

"If the fundamental right to personal liberty is to be compromised like this, we might as well have actual detention," said the Judges and, "The LOCs boil down to nothing but a strong-arm tactic to bypass or leapfrog what PSBs clearly see as inconveniences and irritants -- the courts of law."

The Centre defended its 2010 office memorandum (OM) and all subsequent communications that empowered the Banks Chairman, MD, CEOs to opt for the LOCs as an arsenal against defaulting borrowers. "The economic interests of India" and "larger public interest" was the Centre's mantra. The Centre's contention that the OMs confer only a 'limited power to be exercised in exceptional cases' does not commend itself, held the HC. The raft of LOCs disapproved the 'exceptional

power" argument, said the HC and "Curtailling a fundamental right under Article 21 is not a 'limited power'" it noted.

"Every single case is being treated as 'exceptional'," the HC observed, noting that there was no discernible or disclosed basis on which the LOCs are in fact being issued against any borrower.

The argument of a 'wider public interest' is simply contrary to settled law, the HC stated.

"If a fundamental right under, say Article 19 is to be constrained, the restriction must fit exactly within Articles 19(2) to 19(6). Restrictions are narrow and limited; freedoms are not. They are, indeed, infinitely elastic, and nothing demonstrates this better than the steady expansion of the ambit of Article 21 over the last six or seven decades," the judges held.

The centre said the OM was framed because of a legislative vacuum. The HC said the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 to deter economic offenders from evading Indian courts, has precisely the avowed objective of these PSB-driven LOCs and can be invoked by the Banks. It is a more long drawn process and an FEO is an individual against whom an arrest warrant has been issued by a court.

That part of OM which empowers the CMDs, CEOs of PSBs was struck down by the HC for being arbitrary, unreasonable, improper and on grounds of uncanonised and excessive power.

A plea was made by the Centre's counsel for a stay for a few weeks a part of the order. The HC rejected such a plea.

Weeklong SERB Sponsored workshop on 'Fracture and Fatigue Study' concludes at NIT Srinagar

JINNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, APR 26

A weeklong day workshop on 'Fracture and Fatigue Study Using Experimental and Numerical Modelling Techniques,' under the Karyashala scheme concluded at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar.

The workshop, held from 19th to 25th April, 2024, aimed to enhance participants' understanding of fracture and fatigue phenomena in materials.

Students from various parts of India participated in the workshop, which featured lectures delivered by esteemed faculties from renowned institutions such as IITs and NITs. The workshop also included hands-on laboratory sessions to provide participants with practical experience.

The valediction ceremony, held on Thursday marked the conclusion of the workshop. Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, Director NIT Srinagar was the chief patron of the organizing committee.

Prof. (HAG) G A Harmain, Dean Faculty Welfare, Prof. (HAG) M F Wani,



Prof Atikur Rahman Registrar NIT Srinagar were the patrons and Prof Adnan Qayoum was the chairman of the organizing committee.

The event was presided over by Prof. G A Harmain, Dean Faculty Welfare, who graced the ceremony as the Chief Guest.

In his message, Prof. Harmain, who has also worked extensively in the area of fracture and fatigue, commended the coordinators for their efforts in organizing a highly informative and engaging workshop.

Prof. Adnan Qayoum, HOD Mechanical Engineering Department, expressed his appreciation for the active participation of all attendees and emphasized the workshop's importance in fostering collaboration

and knowledge exchange.

Prof. A Ravinder Nath, Director of NIT Srinagar, congratulated the organizing team and Dr. Ved Prakash for the successful completion of the workshop, underscoring the institute's commitment to promoting excellence in engineering education and research.

Registrar NIT Srinagar, Prof. Atikur Rahman congratulated the organizing team for the successful completion of the workshop. He highlighted the workshop's significance in advancing research and education in the field of fracture and fatigue, he said.

Certificates were distributed to participants in recognition of their active participation and engagement.

NIA arrests UK resident for 2023 London high commission attack

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 26

National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a key accused involved in last year's violent attack on Indian high commission in London. The suspect -- identified as Inderpal Singh Gaba, a resident of Hounslow in the United Kingdom -- was arrested upon arrival in Delhi on the basis of a look-out circular issued against him earlier.

The development is significant given the agency, in a first, has arrested a British resident for a crime that happened under the UK's jurisdiction.

"While the move affirms the growing coordination between law enforcement agencies of both countries, it is also being considered a major deterrent that will ensure there is no repeat of such breach of security, disrespect to the Indian flag or any threat to Indian interests abroad," said a senior officer.

NIA's investigation in the case so far has revealed that the incidents in London on March 19 and 22, 2023, were parts of a larger conspiracy to unleash vicious attacks on Indian missions and its officials. The attacks were found to be in retaliation to the action taken by Punjab Police against pro-Khalistan separatist Amritpal Singh, who was arrested in March last year. Govt had taken strong objection to the developments and summoned the senior-most diplomat in UK high commission in London and demanded an explanation on the absence of security.

The high commission was attacked by a group of 50 persons, who committed criminal trespass, disrespected the Indian flag, damaged public property and caused injuries to officials at the high commission.

The attack was allegedly organised by Gurcharan Singh, Dal Khalsa, UK; Avtar Singh Khanda of KLF, Jasvir Singh and their associates, both Indian and foreign nationals, who were identified during the probe.

An NIA team visited the UK in May 2023 to probe the attack. Subsequently, a crowdsourcing of information was also carried out to identify and collect information about the UK-based entities and individuals involved in the incident, based on which the agency identified many of the attackers. Around a dozen lookout circulars were issued, and a manhunt was initiated.

DPS Kathua celebrates World Book Week with a week-long Literary Journey



JINNEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, APR 26

Delhi Public School Kathua embarked on a week-long celebration of literature and reading, starting on April 23rd, in honor of World Book Day.

The theme for this year's celebration, "Reading Opens Doors to Other Worlds," resonated with the profound words of Cicero, "Books give soul to the universe, wings to the imagination, and life to everything." In line with this sentiment, DPS Kathua organized a series of activities aimed at fostering a deep appreciation for books and reading among both teachers and students.

The highlight of the

week was the implementation of the *DEAR (Drop Everything And Read)* program. Teachers and students enthusiastically participated, setting aside dedicated time for reading and emphasizing the importance of literature in everyday life.

Throughout the week, engaging programs were conducted to enhance reading skills and promote a deeper understanding of various literary works. These activities not only enriched the students' knowledge but also sparked their imagination and creativity.

Principal Mr. Vivek Arora expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "At DPS Kathua, we believe in the transformative power of books.

World Book Week provides a wonderful opportunity for our students to delve into the vast world of literature and develop a lifelong love for reading."

As World Book Week draws to a close, DPS Kathua reaffirms its commitment to nurturing young minds and inspiring a generation of avid readers.

Principal appreciates senior coordinator Mrs. Tajinder Kaur Maughal for organizing and hosting the literature events. Additionally, Mr. Vikram Singh Slathia, school coordinator for CBSE, HOD IT, and Social Media Incharge, is acknowledged for maintaining the digital presence of the school and enhancing the IT and Cyber skills of students.

Urgent reforms imperative to make UN reflective of current geopolitical realities: India

AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS, APR 26

India has said that the revitalisation of the UN General Assembly must be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, ensuring that it reflects the current geopolitical realities and can meet increasingly complex challenges.

"India has always been of the view that the General Assembly can be revitalised only when its position as the primary deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations is respected in letter and spirit," Minister at India's Permanent Mission to the UN, Pratik Mathur said.

Addressing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalisation of the Work of the General Assembly on Thursday, Mathur said that the revitalisation of the 193-member General Assembly must also be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the UN.

"It is our firm belief that the urgent and comprehensive UN reform, including of the Security Council, is imperative to make it reflective of current geopolitical realities and enhance its capability to meet increasingly complex challenges of our time," he said. The UN's success rests on the effec-



tiveness of the General Assembly in carrying out its role as its chief deliberative and policy-making body as envisaged in the UN Charter, Mathur said.

India gave a clarion call to make this reform of global governance architecture -- that is fit for purpose for the 21st century -- a reality in the 'Pact of the Future' that Member States are currently negotiating ahead of the Summit of the Future to be held in September, during the high-level UN General Assembly session.

Mathur said that with the proliferation of the agenda of the General Assembly, the Annual General Debate is gradually turning out to be one of the several high-level events that take place at the start of each new session of the General Assembly.

"The Annual General Debate has a special place in the annual agenda of the UN, and we should not let it be equated with various high-level events which do not enjoy the participation of all member states," he said.

Mathur said that India believes that for the revitalisation of the General Assembly, the sanctity of the Annual General Debate and its associated elements must be restored.

He further noted that the essence of the General Assembly is in its intergovernmental nature.

"It is the closest thing to a global parliament. The success of multilateralism depends on the success and effectiveness of the General Assembly to address the growing number of challenges facing the world, which cut across national boundaries and regions," he said.

India stressed that deliberations in the General Assembly should be inclusive, allowing every member state to participate equally.

"At the same time, the member states should engage in substantive deliberations in the six main committees that could result in setting new norms without being bogged down by procedural issues," Mathur said. Noting that the agenda

of the General Assembly has expanded exponentially over the years, Mathur said it is important that the UNGA agenda is made more manageable so that the discussions become more informed and effective.

"However, any streamlining of the agenda of the General Assembly, including that of biennialization, triennialisation or elimination of agenda items, should be with the consent of the co-sponsoring State or States," he said.

Mathur highlighted that the General Assembly revitalisation process has yielded fruitful results in recent years, improving how elections are held at the UN.

However, he said there is room for further improvement as elections in the UN body, which spread over multiple rounds, take several hours and become tedious.

"Modern technologies can help us save the precious time of the General Assembly," he said.

Mathur said it would be useful to task the UN Secretariat to conduct a time-bound analysis of the current electoral practices, identify gaps and problems, explore other solutions, including technologically advanced electronic voting systems and recommend specific suggestions for improvements.

CRRID Organised 3rd Chandigarh Green Award-2024 Ceremony Function In Srinagar

JINNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, APR 26

CRRID Chandigarh organized a special event at Hotel Kashmir Mahal Resorts, Srinagar, to honor Mr. Manzoor Wangnoo, Chairman of the Nigeen Lake Conservation Organisation (NLCO), with the prestigious 3rd Green Chandigarh Award, acknowledging his exceptional contributions to environmental conservation. The event, organized as a follow-up initiative by CRRID Chandigarh, saw the participation of esteemed members including Conference Coordinator Dr. Manoj Teotia, representatives



from travel and trade associations, former bureaucrats, academicians, and dedicated volunteers. Notable attendees included Dr. G N Qasba, Former SMC Commissioner; Farooq Gillani, IFS Retd., Former Chief Conservator Forests; G N Var, President Private Schools Association; Dr. Rafi Ahmad,

Former Director Board of School Education; Er. Aijaz Naqshbandi, Urban and Regional Planner; Tariq Ghani, President CCIK; Farooq Kuthoo, Executive Committee Member KCC&I; Prof. M A Shah, HoD Physics NIT Srinagar; Dr. Tauseef, Executive Committee Member KCC&I, and Rizvi Amjad,

Environment Enthusiast.

Participants expressed their appreciation for Mr. Wangnoo's significant efforts in environmental conservation and conveyed gratitude to CRRID for the prestigious recognition. Discussions during the event highlighted the importance of environmental preservation and emphasized collective responsibility in safeguarding natural resources. Special acknowledgement was given to the administration, particularly the LC&MA, for their proactive measures in improving the environment, notably in keeping Dal and Nigeen lakes cleaner.

EDITORIAL**Wasteful expenditure or mismanagement?**

It's an old saying that the grandeur of infrastructure often belies the pragmatism of its planning and execution. Such is the case with the Jammu Development Authority's bus stand-cum-multi-level car parking-cum-commercial complex, a project boasting a hefty price tag of Rs 213 crore. While on paper it promised to be a beacon of modernization and convenience, its reality paints a starkly different picture. Inaugurated with much fanfare on February 11, 2021, the complex was hailed as a pivotal step towards catering to the needs of both business elites and ordinary citizens. With provisions for a bus stand, ample parking, numerous commercial spaces, and even a food court, it seemed poised for success. However, the subsequent years have revealed a tale of gross mismanagement and oversight. The heart of the issue lies in the fundamental failure to align rates with market realities. The exorbitant pricing of commercial spaces deterred potential occupants, leaving a significant portion of the complex vacant. Despite repeated pleas from businessmen to reconsider these rates, their concerns fell on deaf ears. Consequently, over 100 shops remain unoccupied, rendering the complex a ghost town of missed opportunities. Furthermore, the outsourcing of the parking complex proved to be a misguided venture, with revenues falling far short of covering maintenance and security costs. This dismal financial situation speaks volumes about the lack of foresight in contractual agreements and financial planning. It's evident that the project's architects failed to grasp the basic principle that revenue generation should match or exceed operational expenses. The acknowledgment of these shortcomings by an anonymous officer within the Jammu Development Authority underscores the severity of the situation. Admitting that revisions are necessary to salvage the project's financial viability, it's a damning indictment of the lack of accountability and proactive measures within the authority. While efforts are purportedly underway to rectify the situation, the delayed decision-making process only exacerbates the problem. The engagement of a Transaction Advisor may offer a glimmer of hope, but it's imperative that concrete action follows swiftly. The fate of the multilevel complex should serve as a cautionary tale for future endeavors undertaken by the Jammu Development Authority. Ultimately, the complex stands not as a symbol of progress, but rather as a monument to mismanagement. It's a stark reminder that grand ambitions must be tempered with practicality and fiscal responsibility. The Jammu Development Authority owes it to the citizens and taxpayers to rectify these mistakes and ensure that such colossal blunders are not repeated. Also, the citizens need to contribute a bit by seeking questions from authorities concerned as to why the project has failed to find a priority in the power corridors.

Neglect spurs industry exodus in Punjab

ASHWANI MAHAJAN

After independence till the year 2011-12, Punjab was considered to be one of the rich and prosperous States of India. In the year 2000-01, the per capita income of Punjab was not only the highest in the country, but it was also 9 per cent more than the second richest State, namely, Haryana. But in the year 2012-13, the per capita income of Punjab slipped to the second position and today Punjab has reached the 10th position in terms of per capita income among the States with a population of more than 1 crore and the 19th position among all the States, and has now become the second slowest growing States in the country. In the year 2011-12, when Punjab's per capita income was the highest in the country, the share of agriculture was 24 per cent, that of industries 28.4 per cent and that of services 47.6 per cent. But by the year 2022-23, the share of agriculture had increased to 28.94 per cent, while the share of industries and services was reduced to 25.51 per cent and 45.91 per cent respectively. It can be assumed that the industry and service sector have shrunk in Punjab. While talking about its neighbouring State Haryana, the share of industries in GDP in Haryana has increased from 25.90 per cent to 28 per cent between the years 2011-12 and 2021-22. The share of industries in Gujarat has increased from 36 per cent to 43 per cent during the same period, and in Tamil Nadu from 27.9 per cent to 33 per cent.

It can be understood that during this period, deindustrialisation has taken place in Punjab. Although Punjab is famous in the world for its population migrating to different

parts of the world, since the beginning, after independence, a large number of Punjabi people migrated to the USA, Canada, Europe and many other countries. Punjab benefited a lot from these migrant Punjabis. The money sent to Punjab by the migrant Punjabis from abroad was greatly beneficial for the development of agriculture and industries. A wave of industrial development was seen in Punjab for a long time. But for quite some time now it has been observed that not only has the industrial development of Punjab come to a halt, but a large number of industries have now started migrating out of Punjab. Industries of Punjab have now started shifting to its neighbouring States like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan etc. as well as to distant States like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat etc. Punjab was especially known for its engineering industry, but many engineering companies have now shifted to the user States of their products. On the other hand, Jalandhar was considered a big centre for sports products, and many sports industries there, have now shifted to Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. It is being observed that textile and garment industries have shifted to Madhya Pradesh, the bicycle industry to Chennai and China, knitwear industry to Africa, Southeast Asia and Madhya Pradesh.

Anti-industry policies of Punjab Government

The agriculture sector in Punjab has been considered very important from an economic point of view. It is worth noting that although only 28.94 per cent of the total GDP in Punjab comes from agriculture,

more than 65 per cent of its population depends directly on agriculture. A sad part of Indian democracy is its populist policies. In Punjab, these populist policies have worked to adversely affect the economic development of Punjab. Punjab, that is, the region of five rivers, has been very rich in terms of water. However in Punjab, due to the ease of groundwater extraction, a large number of tube wells were installed. To please farmers, the Punjab Government started the scheme of giving free electricity for agriculture. In such a situation, excessive exploitation of water started. Due to this, many districts of Punjab have now become dark zones, that is, where the availability of groundwater has depleted excessively. However, the Punjab Government's policy of giving free electricity to agriculture has not only affected the availability of groundwater but has also affected the industries there. The Punjab Government has put most of the burden of free electricity for agriculture on industries and businesses. Due to this electricity has become very expensive for industries, causing a huge disadvantage to the Punjab industry vis a vis their counterparts elsewhere. This has seriously affected the viability of industries. They have no option left but to move out of Punjab to other States and even to foreign countries. Environmental laws in Punjab are such that it is almost impossible to comply with them. In such a situation, industries have no choice but to shut down their units or move to other States. Not only this, industries and businesses in Punjab also have to pay high water cess, due to which industries have to face losses.

Conditions becoming difficult

One of the reasons for rapid industrial and economic development in States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc. is infrastructure development and other facilities, which leads to a reduction in their logistics cost. It is well known that Punjabis are good entrepreneurs, which made Punjab excel in industrial and commercial development. But today Punjab is lagging behind in competition with those States where logistics cost is low and where there has been significant progress in infrastructure. It is worth noting that the condition of infrastructure in Punjab has become much worse in recent years. Not only this, the implementation of the GST system has also affected the industries of Punjab. Earlier, indirect taxes were levied at a low rate by the Punjab Government, but after the implementation of the GST system, the possibility of State-specific fiscal incentives is very limited, due to which the competitive power of the industries of Punjab has now become much lower than other States.

Obstacles for new and old industries

If someone wants to set up a new industry in Punjab, then not only environmental but also other types of clearances are highly difficult. Not only this, allotment of land for industries is also very difficult and is also plagued by corruption. The financial sector in Punjab has also been seriously affected, because most of the agricultural loans of Punjab have turned bad and due to this, NPAs in Punjab are also very high. Not only this, the continuously

deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab is wreaking havoc on the industries.

Half-hearted efforts

The distance from the sea and the high logistics cost of exports are also one of the reasons why Punjab's industries have to send goods through a long route. Earlier, goods could be sent through Pakistan, but now since that route is closed, goods can be sent overseas only through Mumbai port. To deal with this situation, an air cargo facility was started in Amritsar, but there was a lack of complementary efforts. Due to the lack of backward linkages of air cargo with industries, only 20 per cent of the air cargo facility is being used presently. While other State Governments are offering various incentives to attract industries, the Punjab Government has not only lacked an industrial policy for a long time but there has been a continuous deterioration in the infrastructure required for industries. There is also a lack of research and development activities. Due to the lack of industrial development, Punjab is continuously lagging behind economically, but the biggest concern is that the Punjab administration has no thought or policy initiatives on this subject. In such a situation, if this trend is not stopped, Punjab can lag far behind in economic development, which will be neither good for Punjab nor for the country.

(The writer is a professor at PGDAV College, University of Delhi, views are personal)

It's time Israel put hostages over revenge in Gaza

MARC CHAMPION

Over 200 days into Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu needs to decide what matters more: extracting ultimate revenge on Hamas, and in the process all other Palestinians in Gaza, or getting hostages back alive.

Israel has made it clear that a major assault on Rafah, the Gaza border town in which four Hamas battalions and more than 1 million civilians have taken refuge, is now imminent. In a last-ditch attempt to forestall the attack, the US and 17 other countries with citizens held in Gaza made a joint plea on Thursday for Hamas to release them.

Let's be clear — this is a Hail Mary pass aimed at forestalling the further expansion of a war that's destabilizing the Middle East, isolating Israel, boosting antisemitism worldwide, damaging President Joe Biden's reelection prospects and threatening support for the Jewish state in its most important ally, the US.

At the same time as they prepare for a move on Rafah, the Israel Defense Forces are also changing up the nature of their operations to the north. Rather than just respond to attacks by Hezbollah from Leb-

non, on Wednesday, they for the first time launched a preemptive strike on multiple targets aimed at pushing the Iran-backed Shiite militia away from Israel's border.

Two videos released this week have convinced me that Netanyahu is now at a critical juncture. The first is a statement to camera, made under duress, by the US-Israeli hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin. The 23-year-old lost his hand from a grenade blast during Hamas' murderous attack on the Tribe of Nova music festival, on Oct. 7, and was last seen that day as he was loaded onto a pickup truck for abduction to Gaza.

This was a Hamas propaganda video. Goldberg-Polin appeared to read from a script as he called shame on Netanyahu for not caring more about the hostages. Chillingly, he also said that 70 of the remaining 133 hostages had already been killed by IDF fire. The attribution of all those alleged deaths to Israeli forces should be roundly disregarded, but the figure itself — almost twice the estimate of hostage fatalities made by Israel's intelligence agencies — certainly came from Goldberg-Polin's captors. They may be lying, or they could also be resetting expectations for the number that return alive in any

eventual hostage release.

The second video is of a TV interview with a demobilized IDF soldier by the UK's Channel 4. The ex-soldier, who served in Gaza, isn't identified. Yet his story is compelling all the same, because it simply underscores evidence — including footage of Palestinians, and indeed of Israeli hostages, being gunned down while carrying white flags — that this is a professional army so goaded by extremists in the Israeli cabinet, that it's ignoring its own rules of combat.

The soldier said many of his comrades fighting in Gaza saw little difference between Hamas and civilians there, after watching ordinary Palestinians whoop and cheer when militants brought hostages — as well as the corpse of a half-naked girl — back across the border after their Oct. 7 raid. "I think the thing here is that they (Palestinians) need to prove they are not the enemy," the soldier told Sky. "The ground assumption is that they are Hamas, and then if you go this way you are bound to kill people that are not."

His belief that he'll carry the weight of responsibility for what he did in Gaza, and what's now done in his name, for the rest of his life is haunting. It's also a warn-

ing Israel should heed about the lasting price it may have to pay for the way this war was conducted. If Netanyahu cuts a deal to end the fighting and return the hostages now, even one that falls short of the surrender he believes he needs, he can still make Hamas' remaining leaders and fighters pay, over time. It's even conceivable that Gaza's Palestinians would do the job for him, once left alone with the men who brought this catastrophe on them.

"It feels like our government and their government, Hamas, they are on the same team, they essentially want this land to be soaked with blood," the IDF soldier told his interviewer. So long as even some Israelis think that's the case, there can be no victory over Hamas, only a cycle of killing and hate.

In the meantime, it's refreshing to see a multinational demand that for once is leveled directly at Hamas, which took the hostages in the first place and in whose hands the decision to release them and end the bloodletting ultimately resides. It's too often forgotten that this is a war Hamas began with savage intent. Thursday's joint statement did include some incentive for Hamas

to bargain, including an "immediate and prolonged ceasefire," and an assurance that Israel would accept the free return of Palestinians to northern Gaza as part of any hostage release agreement.

Netanyahu should lean into this opportunity, despite the backlash that would come from extremists in his cabinet. He maintains that chasing Hamas to the ground and defeating it is the only way to get the hostages freed, but that's an assertion I suspect not even he believes, because it hasn't worked to date. Since an early, negotiated prisoner exchange and ceasefire secured the release of 105 hostages, the IDF has killed at least as many as the three it has freed through military operations.

In fact, it may well be that the only way for Netanyahu to validate his claim would be to get the hostages released in a deal now. He could then reasonably argue it was the threat of imminent annihilation that forced Hamas to bend. Once cornered in Rafah's tunnels, though, Hamas' leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, is as likely to order the remaining hostages killed as to give up their up. That's a burden Israel's prime minister would have to carry.

The Essence of Consciousness

RAVI VALLURI

We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves. What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow, the Enlightened One, Buddha was to say.

In our lexicon today subjects and topics like physics, metaphysics, an elevated State, consciousness, life coaches and mind, apart from iconic names of Stephen Hawking, Jim Holt, and Carl Sagan among others are all bandied quite recklessly without deep study. This is perhaps done under pressure to keep up with Jones or to display our awareness about certain issues of topical interests without proper research. Recently my jaw

dropped when confronted with some basic facts and facets of our universe. Through my elementary study of physics and geography, I was aware that we live on Planet Earth, which is an integral part of a Solar System; though I was in the dark and not fully aware that each star in the galaxy has its own solar systems like ours. I was certainly an ignoramus on these riveting concepts. Apparently, several of these stars and their respective solar systems do not exist anymore and have disappeared forever in the sands of time or are perhaps gravitating towards a black hole. It dawned on me as to how ignorant I was despite my readings on the subject.

So how does this lead us to the quintessential term of consciousness?

Simply put consciousness is a State when humans are aware of and responsive to their envi-



coloured the mind and Sisyphus thought process engulfed his persona.

This was when Lord Krishna unleashed his Vishwarup Darshan and rendered the song celestial Bhagavad Gita which revealed his true self and raised the consciousness in Arjuna who took up the cudgels once again.

King Janaka the father of Sita was a Jnani Purush. He was a highly knowledgeable and enlightened person and was referred to as a Raj Rishi. One day in his court he fell asleep and dreamt that Mithila his kingdom was stricken by severe and dreaded drought conditions.

The suzerain visualised an eagle swooping down and plucking a piece of bread/chappati from the hands of an impoverished peasant. This shocked the king and he woke up from a State of slumber to receive sage Ashtavakra who was to reveal the

gospel of truth, which is popularly referred to as Ashtavakra Gita. Janaka then realised his true self and the consciousness was ignited. Buddha for years continued with his spiritual practices and was perennially haunted by Mara (evil/ fiendish forces) while cogitating, until on one full moon night pristine truth dawned on him and he went into deep silence.

Consciousness in Buddhism refers to life force, mind and discernment.

Consciousness is the State when the human mind is verily awakened and assumes the form of a pure and pristine child brimming with enthusiasm, joy and curiosity. This is an experiential State of mind and consciousness.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living, views are personal)

GLUCOSE VS FRUCTOSE: DIFFERENCES AND EFFECTS



LIENNA MAY

Sugar is one of the most vital ingredients in your daily meals. Many people start their day with a cup of tea or coffee containing sugar and end the day with a delicious dessert, which makes sugar an integral part of your day-to-day routine. Sugar is not just an additive that adds sweetness to the dishes, it's a complex compound that comprises several units/monomers of monosaccharides. Usually, sucrose is the prime type of sugar everyone consumes. Sugar is a natural compound found in plant tissues. Honey, fruits, and sugarcane are the prime sources of raw sugar. People consume white sugar, specifically from the sugarcane plant. Sugars can get divided into simple and complex sugars. For example, sucrose is a type of compound sugar. It is a disaccharide containing two monosaccharides, glucose, and fructose.

On entering the human body, glucose and fructose react differently. Studies indicate that these sugar units have an enormous impact on the blood glucose level and insulin. In addition, the rise in their level in the body can lead to several chronic diseases. Thus, it is vital to check your blood glucose level often, as even a single spoon of a sweet dish can negatively affect your body.

Why is it Essential to Measure Blood Glucose Levels?

Glucose is an instant source of energy in the body. Insulin acts in coordination with glucose, and helps the glucose present in the blood to reach the organs so that the metabolism remains active.

Diabetes is the most common disorder faced by people with either insulin resistance or reduced insulin production. But it is a misconception that blood glucose level is only related to diabetes. Several other factors can affect the blood glucose level. Several glucose-related diseases and factors fall under hyperglycemic and hypoglycemic disorders. Hyperglycemia is the increase in blood glucose levels,

and hypoglycemia is the fall in the blood glucose level.

Additionally, glucose or sugar affects the (BMR) basal metabolic rate and the level of calories in your body. Therefore, excess consumption may lead to obesity. Thus, measuring blood glucose levels from time to time is important.

The old-school method of measuring glucose is through a glucometer by pricking the index finger of your left hand to get a few drops and then placing it on the test strip. But this method requires time and will not always show an accurate reading. It is here where HealthifyPro 2.0 stands apart. HealthifyPro 2.0 grants you the power of 5. The package includes a constant glucose monitor (CGM), the help of several qualified coaches, a calorie monitor, a smart scale, and a metabolic panel that compares around 80 metabolic parameters.

The constant glucose monitor is stuck to your arm and constantly tracks your glucose levels. The personal coach assigned to you also keeps a tab on your glucose levels and provides dietary and lifestyle advice. The smart weighing scale displays the state of your body under 12 different parameters. It syncs with your phone and records the data giving you real-time analysis. Finally, the metabolic panel provides you with an instant report of every metabolic activity in your body, including the levels of fluids. Thus, HealthifyMe Pro 2.0 is a complete package to improve your lifestyle.

Mechanism of Glucose and Fructose Entering the Body

Hydrolysis, or the breakdown of sucrose (sugar) entering your body, results in glucose and fructose formation. The sugarcane liquid is further extracted and crystallized to form sugar, chemically known as sucrose.

The disaccharide sucrose is composed of the monosaccharides glucose and fructose. However, even though both are monosaccharides, their metabolic pathways differ in the human body. Sucrose is a non-

reducing sugar that on entering the body, splits into aldose (glucose) and ketose (fructose) sugars through the enzyme sucrase, which then enters the bloodstream.

Note

Fructose and glucose (monosaccharides) are both components of sucrose (disaccharide). Both enter the bloodstream during the consumption of sugar (carbohydrate). Although these belong to the same class, they differ in metabolism, absorption, and utilisation in the body.

What is Glucose?

Glucose is a simple sugar (carbohydrate) that is the most abundant monosaccharide. It is the most crucial energy source for all living organisms. It is stored in plants as starch and in animals as glycogen. Glucose is in a free state in plants and fruits. The glycogen stored in the liver is broken down into glucose for energy through glycogenolysis.

Around 300g of glucose is produced daily through food intake and metabolites. When you consume food, the sweet receptors on the tongue respond to glucose, and the food consumed forms a bolus. This bolus during chewing and swallowing starts breaking down through the enzyme amylase in the saliva, where glucose metabolism starts.

The food particle gets broken down entirely in the gut, and glycogen gets stored in the liver for further use. The stored glycogen is broken down into glucose through several enzymes whenever there is a requirement for energy. The produced glucose on the other hand gets transported to the cell membrane through several transport proteins. A set of hormones constantly regulates glucose metabolism in your body.

Factors Affecting Blood Glucose Level

The glucose level in the bloodstream can be affected even by minute stimuli in the body. It is best to note that artificial sweet-

eners do not affect blood glucose levels. The significant factors that can affect the above level are as follows.

Hormones that Increase the Glucose Level

Glucagon
Adrenaline
Thyroxine
Glucocorticoids

Food Intake

Excessive food intake, especially high carbohydrates (sugars, rice), can increase the blood sugar level.

An inactive lifestyle, even after regular food consumption, will increase the blood sugar level.

Dehydration may also lead to a rise in blood glucose levels.

Insulin

Not enough insulin can increase blood glucose levels as insulin resists excess glucose production.

Physical Factors

Stress
Injury or short-term pain
Sunburn

Menstruation

Period cycles in women lead to the release of several hormones, increasing blood sugar levels.

Illness or Infection

Whenever a pathogen enters the body, the body undergoes several mechanisms to fight it, releasing several hormones. These hormones can increase the blood glucose level.

What is Fructose?

Fructose is also a simple sugar that occurs naturally in plants. It is a dietary monosaccharide that gets directly absorbed into the bloodstream. Out of all the sugars, fructose is water-soluble. You can find it in trees, vines, honey, and most root vegetables. We can commercially extract fructose through sugarcane, maize, and sugar beet.

The maximum amount of fructose is absorbed only with equal quantities of glucose. Few studies show that fructose is not fully

absorbed in the small intestine. To test this, the patient needs to undergo a hydrogen breath test. Just as glucose production and supply involve the process of glycolysis and the enzyme glucokinase, fructose gets produced, absorbed, and supplied by the fructolysis and the enzyme fructokinase. Fructose may cause absorption-based disorders, such as malabsorption and fructose intolerance.

Fructose in natural products may not pose a significant issue for your digestive system, but a high fructose concentration containing food products can be harmful to your system. For example, you can find high fructose corn syrup in food products like soda, ice cream, energy drinks, ketchup, and snack bars. Such a high intake of fructose-rich food items can affect the absorption level. Hence, fructose may remain undigested and unabsorbed.

Difference Between Glucose and Fructose

Even though fructose and glucose are both simple sugars or monosaccharides, they differ in various characteristics. A few of them are as follows.

Fructose does not fluctuate like glucose. The average level of fructose is 315 mg/ dl.

Increased glucose levels immediately impact the insulin level in the body because insulin is the major glucose transporter. In contrast, fructose intake does not directly affect insulin levels, as fructose gets partially digested in the liver.

The human body can digest and absorb glucose, which does not affect the absorption mechanism of the body. A large quantity of fructose affects the body's absorption mechanism.

Glucose is the preferred energy source for the body, especially the brain and muscles, whereas fructose is not the most preferred energy source.

Glucose is less fat-producing as compared to fructose.

Glucose metabolism in the body is much slower than fructose.

Benefits of Liquid Diet

The goal of a liquid diet is to remove toxins from your body. As a result, it might help lose weight and, in some cases, improve overall health. However, the benefits lack scientific backing.

Below are some of the advantages of a liquid diet.

Helps Lose Weight

The primary reason people adapt to a liquid diet is its immediate effect on body weight. A liquid diet generally includes protein shakes, smoothies, and juices that reduce calorie intake by 50%. As a result, the body is in a calorie deficit, leading to weight loss. Some forms of liquid diet may also burn more calories and fat, eventually leading to weight loss.

Short-Term Benefits to the Digestive System

Another key benefit of a liquid diet is that it goes easy on your digestive system. However, the benefits are in the short term. Consuming foods in liquid form will prevent various digestive issues like bowel obstruction and inflammation, allowing the bowel to rest for some time and easing the weight loss journey.

Boosts Metabolism

A liquid diet will train your body to be more active even when it is low on calories, which means it can improve your metabolic rate in the short term to promote weight loss.

Easy Cleansing

A liquid diet with juices, smoothies, and broths is rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. It means it will help your body to cleanse the organs through detoxification. In addition, some studies show the benefits of fruit and vegetable juices on antioxidant concentration and anti-inflammatory mechanisms in the human body.

Convenient to Follow

Like other diets, you don't have to be a chef or scroll through recipes online to prepare the meals. Instead, simply toss the ingredients in a blender, and your diet meal for the day is ready. Such convenience will prevent you from skipping meals or ordering unhealthy foods, positively influencing weight loss.

A Sample One Day Liquid Diet Plan

Thanks to social media platforms and endorsements, liquid diets are becoming more popular among fitness enthusiasts. However, you should be aware of every nook and cranny of any diet plan to predict whether the diet suits your lifestyle and specific needs.

With expert nutritionist advice, you can formulate your diet plan based on how your body reacts to the changes. Below is a reference liquid diet plan.

Breakfast

A cup of strained fruit cereal
A glass of water or coffee
A cup of fruit juice
Mid-day Snacks
Cup of pureed fruit
A cup of tea

Lunch

A cup of pureed vegetables
A glass of plain milk or soy milk
A cup of broth
Evening Snack
A cup of ice cream
A glass of plain water

Dinner

A cup of pureed fruit
A cup of creamed soup
A glass of fruit juice/ water/ or soy milk
Night Time Snack
1 cup of yoghurt
1 cup of fruit juice
A glass of water

Disorders of Increased or Decreased Levels of Fructose and Glucose

Fructose and glucose both entering the body benefit the body in several ways, but fructose is certainly more harmful than glucose on excessive consumption. The significant disorders that both fructose and glucose can induce are obesity and diabetes. An overview of a few of these disorders is as follows.

Disorders Related to Fructose Increased Level of Fructose

Fructose level increases majorly because of the consumption of packaged foods, as these foods contain high fructose levels. Natural products like fruits and honey would not increase your body's average level of fructose. However, increased fructose levels may cause the following disorders.

Fatty Acid Synthesis in the Liver

Fructose is released directly into the bloodstream. Hence the liver readily takes up the fructose present in the bloodstream. The function of the liver is fatty acid synthesis. If fructose consumption increases, then there is no regulatory mechanism like glucose to decrease the level. Hence, the liver takes all the fructose for fatty acid synthesis, irrespective of the quantity. This causes the fatty acids to get excessively syn-

thesised, which harms the organ. Such a condition is called fatty liver. Fatty liver further affects insulin levels and glucose tolerance.

Increase in Appetite

Increased fructose levels decrease the insulin and leptin levels in the body. Leptin increases appetite, causing irregular hunger pangs. You can observe it when you have increased consumption of packaged foods. Therefore, it might urge you to have more than most of these packaged foods containing fructose as the main ingredient.

Obesity

Studies have shown that increased fructose consumption will lead to fat accumulation in several parts of the body. As mentioned earlier, fructose increases appetite and induced binge eating. This further makes it difficult to lose weight.

Disorders Related to Glucose Increased Levels of Glucose

The prime and well-known disorder due to increased glucose levels is diabetes and obesity.

Hyperglycemia Associated with Diabetes

Hyperglycemia is the increase in the blood sugar levels in the



bloodstream (120-180 mg/ dl). It is due to low levels of insulin or insulin resistance or excess glucose consumption. It is mainly associated with diabetes, precisely type 2 diabetes, and can be genetic or because of external factors. Sudden weight gain and polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) are the other factors inducing hyperglycemia.

In people with type 1 diabetes, hyperglycemia, if detected, should be immediately treated as it may lead to an increase in the production of toxic ketone

bodies in the body, which may lead to death or coma. Insulin is the only way to conquer hyperglycemia in people with type 1 diabetes, whereas for type 2 diabetes patients, oral medications are the primary treatment, followed by insulin administration.

Symptoms of hyperglycemia-

Dehydration
Frequent micturition/ urination
Headache
Fatigue
Skin Infections

Weight Loss
Vomiting
Confusion
Hyperventilation
Rapid Heartbeat

You can avoid hyperglycemia by regulating the daily intake of glucose levels and maintaining an active lifestyle.

Obesity

Sugar, or glucose, belongs to the class of carbohydrates. Carbohydrates increase body weight. Excessive carbohydrate consumption will cause obesity. Hence sugar, being a carbohydrate, if exceeding the consumption level, will cause obesity or an increase in cholesterol.

Obesity gets directly linked to diabetes often. Once the glucose level increases through food intake, the pancreas starts insulin production in excess quantities. The insulin's job is to transport the glucose from the bloodstream to the liver, where it will get stored for further use. However, if you've diabetes, insulin function gets disoriented, and the fat present all over the body, especially in the liver area, resists the entry of glucose into the liver. Thus, there is excess glucose present in the bloodstream. As a result, the pancreas produces more insulin, and eventually, the organ gets tired, leading to organ

failure.

If you lose weight during diabetes, your doctor may recommend fewer medications to get the pancreas active. Therefore diabetic patients are advised not to consume sugar; to decrease fat deposition and glucose levels in the bloodstream.

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia is usually less severe than hyperglycemia. The condition occurs when the glucose level falls below 70 mg/ dl. But it is vital to detect hypoglycemia in the early stages, as it may lead to pancreatic tumours in severe cases.

Symptoms of Hypoglycemia-

Sweating
Headache
Nausea
Fatigue
Nightmares
Seizures

You can immediately treat sudden hypoglycemia with a drink full of sugar. However, it is wise to treat it with medications in severe cases. It is also best to avoid alcohol and smoking as it affects glucose levels and liver function.

Note

In contrast to fructose, which is not the body's primary energy source, glucose is preferred by

the body, particularly the brain and muscles. When ingested in moderation, the naturally occurring sugars fructose and glucose are good for your health. To maintain normal levels of glucose in the body, a continuous glucose monitor is essential. If you experience any hyperglycemic or hypoglycemia symptoms, get medical attention.

Conclusion

Fructose and glucose are naturally occurring substances beneficial for your health if consumed in moderation. However, an increase in the average sugar intake harms the body. If consumed in quantities, glucose is the primary energy source for body organs. In contrast, fructose enhances glucose metabolism and is the principal constituent of semen that provides nutrition and energy to the sperm. If fructose levels are low, it may affect the androgen and testosterone levels in males.

Fructose does not possess much nutritional value like glucose, yet an increase in its level is harmful. Hence, it is vital to maintain normal levels through a constant glucose monitor. Consult a doctor if you are experiencing any hyperglycemic or hypoglycemic symptoms.

SOURCE: HEALTHIFYME

Myntra India's Trend Index report captures nation's tryst with latest fashions

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, APRIL 26

Myntra, India's favourite fashion, beauty, and lifestyle destination, on Friday launched the very first edition of the 'Myntra Trend Index', a report summarising some of the most outstanding fashion trends observed in the country, as exhibited by Myntra's base of millions of customers in FY24.

With industry-defining insights, it dives into the heart of India's fashion, beauty, and lifestyle preferences, shining a spotlight on the ever-evolving trends that shape the closets.

The report puts a spotlight on how customers are showering love on Myntra.

About 75 million trend seekers (users) joined the Myntra family in the last 12 months, and 65 per cent of them are from non-metros, proving that fashion fever knows no bounds!

"Myntra Trend Index", throws light on some of the most noteworthy consumer trends across fashion, beauty, personal care, and lifestyle segments in India. The findings of the report strongly suggest that the country is on the journey of premiumisation and there is a marked rise in adoption of trends across cohorts," said Sharon Pais, Chief Business Officer at Myntra.

"When it comes to fashion, the country has become experimental in its choices while also adopting self-care and personal grooming in a big way. These trends mirror India's lifestyle choices and underscore our role as an enabler to make the latest from the world of fashion and beauty available to millions of our customers, on the back of cutting-edge technology and differentiated service," Sharon added.

Monthly active users on the platform also touched an amazing 60 million mark at peak, with 6 million customers making 30 visits to the platform each month on average.

The report showed that men loved shades like white, grey, teal, and olive while women shoppers have been gravitating towards the ethereal allure of pastel hues such as beige, peach, and lavender.

Meanwhile, the timeless classics, black and blue, continued to maintain



their steadfast reign across various cohorts, standing the test of time with their enduring appeal.

The top colour choices of GenZ men ranged from charcoal black, ash grey, peach, and rusty orange to lilac, and the favourite colour palette for GenZ women comprises metallic silver pink, red, lavender, and hues of lavender and neutral tones.

Premium offerings on the platform continue to soar with Indian wear on runway icons witnessing the doubling of demand, while the premium luggage category grew at 55 per cent year-on-year.

The demand for luxe selection registered an impressive 150 per cent year-on-year increase, indicative of a growing appetite for luxury items.

The premium home section also is sprucing things up with a 50 per cent YoY growth in February 2024.

GenZ is influencing the fashion scene like never before with varsity jackets, bling dresses, and oversized blazers.

Women's traditional attire got a modern makeover, with monochromatic lehengas and metallic sarees stealing the spotlight.

Bollywood-inspired looks have added a pop of colour to wardrobes everywhere, with a whopping 12X surge in demand for ombre sarees during the festive season.

Accessories with vintage and snake pattern watches, coupled with monogram bags, served as the perfect finishing touch to elevate these captivating ensembles.

Women enthusiastically embraced a multitude of new trends, spanning from co-ord sets to corsets and crop tops.

Meanwhile, high-waisted bottoms and ruffled dresses made a triumphant return to the forefront of fashion.

And let's not overlook the 'Barbiecore' phenomenon! Around the time of the release of the film, searches for 'Hot Pink' and 'Barbie' surged and how!

Men are enthusiastically immersing themselves in trend-first fashion, with crochet shirts exuding summer vibes to bold graphic tees commanding attention.

Comfort continues to reign supreme with a notable three-fold increase in the demand for men's oversized t-shirts and baggy cargos.

Additionally, nostalgic favourites such as parachute pants, bootcut denim, and knitted trousers are also making an impressive comeback to the forefront of fashion, highlighting the harmonious blend of style and comfort.

The beauty and grooming landscape in India is getting a serious glow-up with the entrance of

science-backed skincare and meticulous post-wash hair care routines, with increased demand from non-metro regions.

Each city also showcased its unique style! Delhi made waves in the denim realm, rightfully earning the esteemed title of the 'Jeans Capital of India', while Kolkata asserted its dominance as 'the Kurta Capital'.

Pune made quite an impression with its notable penchant for T-shirts, surpassing Chennai's purchases by a significant margin!

As for the 'Dress Capital', Bengaluru emerged as the hands-down winner, with its streets transforming into potential captivating catwalks.

Bengaluru's fashion prowess extends beyond dresses, as evidenced by its substantial shirt purchases, outstripping Mumbai, Chennai, and Ahmedabad combined.

Meanwhile, in Hyderabad, the demand for T-shirts surged, surpassing Chennai and Gurugram and the city was ahead by a wide margin in kurta sets compared to Chennai.

Further, the Trend Index showed that Millennials are ready to embrace smart polos and fusion co-ords as the new go-to wardrobe essentials, while Gen-Zs are poised to make waves with hypergraphic oversized T-shirts and denim corsets.

Several killed and injured after junta airstrikes in Myanmar

AGENCIES
BANGKOK, APRIL 26

Several civilians were killed and many more injured in a heavy airstrike by the military in Myanmar on a rebel-controlled region on the border with India.

The bombs hit a hospital in the town of Mindat in the state of Chin in the west of the crisis-torn country on Thursday evening, eyewitnesses and local media reported on Friday.

At least four people died at Wanma Thu District Hospital, and 15 others were seriously injured, a man who helped rescue the victims and spoke on condition of anonymity told dpa.

In the region, rebels began resisting the junta shortly after the military coup in February 2021.



As recently as Wednesday, the Chinland Defence Force celebrated the third anniversary of its founding to fight the junta. The group now controls various areas in the region.

A plane flew two attacks during the night and dropped a total of six bombs over and around the hospital, the eyewitness said.

Since their overthrow and the ouster of former

prime minister Aung San Suu Kyi, the generals have ruled Myanmar with an iron fist and great brutality.

However, they have come under increasing pressure in recent months. Rebel organisations have partially taken control in various towns on the borders with India, China and Thailand. The army repeatedly responds to this with airstrikes.

S. Korea to miss Olympics 1st time in 40 years after U23 Asian Cup quarters elimination

AGENCIES
DOHA, APRIL 26

Indonesia triumphed over South Korea in a dramatic 12-round penalty shootout after the match ended 2-2 in regular time, during the U23 AFC Asian Cup quarter-final.

This tournament also serves as a qualification event for the Paris Olympics. The top three teams from the U23 Asian Cup will automatically qualify for the Olympics, while the team finishing fourth will engage in a play-off against Guinea for the final Olympic spot.

In its debut appearance at the tournament on Thursday, the Indonesian team advanced to the semifinals. The loss for South Korea means they will miss the Olympics for the first time in 40 years, a significant departure from their usual strong performances.

Indonesia took an early lead with Rafael Struick scoring in the 15th minute. However, the lead was short-lived as an own goal by Komang Teguh leveled the score just before half-time. Struick then added his second goal during stoppage time at the end of the first half.

South Korea managed to equalize in the 84th minute through Jeong Sang-bin, despite being a man down after Lee Young-jun received a red card in the 70th minute.

The penalty shootout extended to a grueling 12 rounds, where Lee Kang-hee's miss for South Korea set the stage for Pratama Arhan to score the decisive penalty for Indonesia.

On the same day, Japan secured their semifinal spot by defeating host nation Qatar 4-2.

Markets slump on worries over Q4 earnings

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

The BSE Sensex fell more than 600 points on Friday amid worries over high valuations and lackluster Q4 earnings. While the Sensex fell by 609.28 points to end at 73,730.16, the Nifty also declined 150.40 points to close at 22,419.95 on Friday.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said the unexpected surge of the US core PCE price index, accompanied by weaker-than-forecast GDP growth and Treasury yield spikes, impacted market sentiments.

Investors are concerned about the possibility of a looming recession in the US, he said.

Experts say that high market valuations and earnings disappointment are looming over the market.

"The Indian market lagged behind its Asian and European peers due to worries over lofty valuations and lackluster Q4 earnings, fuelling expectations of downward revisions for FY25 earnings," Nair said.

The Nifty move may indicate a bearish reversal. Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities, said the Nifty remained under selling pressure throughout the session on Friday as the index failed to sustain above the crucial level of 22,500. On the daily chart, a dark cloud cover pattern is observed, indicating a potential bearish reversal.

Former UK minister warns against frozen conflict in Ukraine

AGENCIES
LONDON, APRIL 26

Former UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has warned against suggestions that the conflict in Ukraine should be frozen, during an interview that addressed the outlook in the war with Russia. The idea of "freezing" the war in Ukraine was put forward recently by a senior member of Germany's governing Social Democrats.

"In 2014 they froze the conflict, and Ukraine had 18,000 soldiers murdered on the front line between 2014 and the invasion," Wallace said in an interview with dpa on Thursday.

"Russia would re-arm, re-equip and do what it did after 2014. And it would come back later," he added.



the freeze is, you'd have to guarantee it," Wallace said. But he noted that Ukraine would not be persuaded either, as Britain, the US, Germany and France had all tried to give their guarantees to keep helping Kyiv in the past.

"So, if you're Ukrainian, would you really trust our guarantee at the moment? And what would you give Ukraine to persuade them to freeze?" he questioned, adding: "They might say, Give us membership of NATO. Right, draw a new line, wherever the line is, but what's left: NATO."

Asked to speculate as to whether Ukraine might be willing to accept NATO membership in exchange for stopping fighting for territory occupied by Russia, Wallace refused to be drawn.

"France and Germany will never go for that," he said. "I don't like to get to the speculation of what the deal should be. It's for Ukraine to decide, they are the ones who've lost thousands of people. And they're the ones fighting for us right now. We're not fighting."

"I don't think Russia would go for it either," Wallace added. "I mean, Russia would say no, but ultimately, we'd have to get Russia in a position where it knows it's got something to lose."

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

India's forex reserves contracted by \$2.83 billion to \$640.33 billion as of April 19, the latest data released by the RBI on Friday showed.

The country's forex kitty had declined by \$5.4 billion to \$643.16 billion in the preceding week that ended on April 12 for the first time after rising steadily for eight weeks to a lifetime high.

The latest figures show that Foreign currency assets (FCAs) contracted by \$3.79 billion to \$560.86 billion while the gold reserves which also form part of the forex kitty went up by increased by \$1.01 billion to \$56.81 billion, whereas SDRs were down by \$43 million to \$18.03 billion.

Market analysts attri-

India's forex reserves dip by \$2.83 billion to \$640.3 billion



bute the decline in foreign currency assets to the RBI actively releasing dollars in the market to curb the volatility in the rupee.

The Indian currency has tended to weaken as oil prices have been on the rise, which has triggered an increase in the demand for dollars to finance costlier imports.

The fall in the foreign

that growth through the T20 World Cup," he said.

"India's clash against Pakistan in New York is going to be one of the biggest sporting fixtures in the world this year, so it's a privilege to be a part of and to witness the best players in the world playing in a new stadium," Yuvraj added.

Claire Furlong, ICC General Manager - Marketing & Communications, said, "It's an honour to have Yuvraj as an ICC Men's T20 World Cup Ambassador. His name is synonymous with the T20 World Cup, owning one of the event's most iconic moments when he became the first player to hit six sixes in a T20 International. He joins Chris Gayle and Usain Bolt as

the first ambassadors to be announced, who will each add to the excitement of what will be the biggest T20 World Cup ever."

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup will be played from June 1-29 with co-hosts USA taking on Canada in the opening fixture at Grand Prairie Stadium in Texas. A total of 55 matches will be played by 20 teams across 9 venues, culminating in the final on 29 June in Barbados. The historic first match at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium will be played on June 3 between 2014 champions Sri Lanka and South Africa with 10 teams to feature across eight matches in New York.

the first ambassadors to be announced, who will each add to the excitement of what will be the biggest T20 World Cup ever."

"It is our prime focus to build a strong buffer in the form of a substantial quantum of forex reserves which will help when the cycle turns or when it rains heavily," he remarked while unveiling the first monetary policy review of the current financial year that began on April 1.

India's forex reserves, including the central bank's forward holdings, can now cover around 11 months of imports, which is a two-year-high.

New Zealand takes 2-1 lead against Pakistan in T20I cricket series

AGENCIES
LAHORE, APRIL 26

New Zealand claimed a crucial 2-1 lead in the five-match Twenty20 International (T20I) cricket series, edging past Pakistan by a mere four runs in a nail-biting encounter at the Gaddafi Stadium in the host's eastern city of Lahore on Thursday night.

With the series finely poised, both teams gear up for the decisive fifth match, slated for April 27, after one match could not be decisive due to heavy rain.

Earlier in the evening, Pakistan won the toss and elected to field first. Later New Zealand's innings was propelled by a fiery start from openers Tim Robinson and Tom Blundell, who stitched a solid 56-run partnership.



Despite Pakistan's shaky start, losing skipper Babar Azam for only five runs early in the innings. Young batters Saim Ayub and Usman Khan tried to inject momentum, but quick dismissals halted their progress.

Fakhar Zaman held firm at one end, forming a crucial partnership with Iftikhar Ahmed, adding 61 runs but a quick fall of wickets couldn't avert the pressure on the hosts and Pakistan finished at 174, falling short of the target.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam said the target could be chased easily if not for the batting collapse, losing three wickets in the powerplay. The skipper explained that they have been testing different combinations by including young players to finalize the team that would play the World Cup.

Zealand skipper Michael Bracewell helped visitors post a competitive total of 178 runs. Pakistan's pursuit of a challenging 179-run target got off to a

late surge by New Zealand skipper Michael Bracewell helped visitors post a competitive total of 178 runs. Pakistan's pursuit of a challenging 179-run target got off to a

Govt working on setting up Maritime Development Fund akin to Power Finance Corp, REC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) is actively working on establishing a dedicated Maritime Development Fund akin to established sectoral financial institutions such as Power Finance Corporation, REC and IRFC, a senior ministry official has confirmed.

R. Lakshmanan, Joint Secretary, MoPSW said that the fund will cater to the unique and substantial funding requirements of the maritime sector, enabling the implementation of specific initiatives such as shipbuilding, decarbonisation, green energy adoption, technology innovation, and manpower training and development.

The proposed fund is considered an important step forward as India's shipping sector does not have sufficient access to finance sources such as bank credit and foreign investment, despite its crucial role to support the



country's projected trade and economic expansion.

The Government of India, along with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) and Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) organised a two-day conference in Kochi this week (April 23-24) on 'Challenges and Prospective Solutions in Inland Waterways and Shipbuilding.' These challenges include the non-availability of long-term funding, which is crucial for sustainable growth, along with lower interest rates.

Lakshmanan on Friday

Kaal Vision 2047."

MoPSW is making decarbonisation efforts in the Inland Waterways sector being spearheaded by IWAI and CSL by the deployment of Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Inland Vessels, aligning with the ministry's Harit Nauka Guidelines. Varanasi has been selected as the pilot location for immediate deployment on NW-1, with expansion plans informed by pilot learnings. Discussions are going on with potential players for facilities such as bunkering.

Methanol is also considered as one of the key green fuels for EXIM Vessels globally as seen in the recent case of Maersk's deployment of Methanol Powered Ships. Going forward, it was suggested to explore mechanisms of developing indigenous development of methanol marine engines in the country as a progressive step towards the green transition of inland vessels.

3 dead after mini car falls into paddy field in Japan



AGENCIES
TOKYO, APRIL 26

Three teenagers died after a mini car fell into a paddy field in the western Japanese prefecture of Tokushima, local authorities reported on Friday.

Around 10.30 p.m. local time on Thursday, a report was made to emergency services that a mini car fell from prefectural road Route 24 in the town of Chosei in Anan City, Xinhua news agency reported. Four teenagers, all aged 18, were in the car and were rushed to

the hospital, with three of them later confirmed dead, according to local police. The survivor suffered minor injuries.

The car was found with the driver's side down, and police suspect that the light car, travelling southbound on the prefectural road, for some reason veered off into the nearby paddy field.

The exact cause of the accident is under investigation, but local authorities have said the possibility of drunk driving or driving without a license is low.

Three Palestinians killed in Israeli attack on ICRC facility in Gaza



AGENCIES
GAZA, APRIL 26

At least three people were killed during an Israeli attack targeting a facility belonging to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza City, Palestinian medical sources said on Friday.

The medical sources told Xinhua news agency that "at least three bodies of people were transferred to a local hospital as an Israeli warplane

attacked them while they were in a refugee facility belonging to the ICRC."

So far, the ICRC has not commented on the incident, Xinhua news agency reported.

Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage.

Ex UK minister says Germany's Scholz should send missiles to Kyiv

AGENCIES
LONDON, APRIL 26

Former UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has called on German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to agree to send Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine, as he continues to resist this step despite repeated pleas from Kyiv.

"I think the reason is you can't incrementally help Ukraine, you know, a bit of this and a bit of that. Do we want Ukraine to win? Or do we want them to lose?" Wallace said.

While he understands Scholz's reasons for concern regarding a possible escalation of the conflict, these are unfounded, Wallace said. "We've seen throughout this whole process, that Russia's red lines are like chalk, they just brush off the chalkboard," he said.

"Ukraine will abide by any restrictions you put on them. So you could give them Taurus. And you could add all sorts of restrictions about where you want it used or not used," said Wallace of the missiles Kyiv has been requesting for months.

He also dismissed comments made by Scholz that suggested British and French troops are in Ukraine, programming cruise missiles.

"He was wrong," said Wallace. "I can't tell you how Storm Shadows and Scalps are programmed. But it doesn't involve people standing around in an airport in Ukraine, it doesn't need to do that."

While applauding Germany for ramping up its support for Ukraine, the former minister reiterated his harsh criticism of Scholz's leadership.

"I think he's not a leader for conflict at the moment. And there is conflict on our shores. And I think he, you know, the point he doesn't understand deterrence, he doesn't understand ambiguity, he doesn't seem to understand that in the process we face in dealing with Russia, looking either indecisive, or flip-flopping on certain decisions, or seeming to be out of step with your allies, only aids Putin."

Furthermore, poor communication is undermining Germany's support for Kyiv, Wallace said: "There are countries who have done less than Germany. But their communication has been better. And their use of deterrence and ambiguity has meant that people think they've done more than Germany."

IPL: Skipper Du Plessis' toss decision puts RCB on track for morale-boosting win

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have bounced back in their IPL 2024 campaign with a morale-boosting win in the last match, with captain Faf du Plessis' initiative to bat first putting the opponents on the back-foot right from the start.

Addressing the team in the dressing room after the win, assistant coach Malolan Rangarajan lauded the skipper's proactive decision at the toss.

"Faf, well done on taking the call of batting first. It might have been a little bit too obvious but saying that you want to bat first and make the opponent do something different, brilliant! And to follow that up with the start both of you (Du Plessis and Virat Kohli) gave was brilliant," Malolan said. After a firm start from the openers, RCB took further control with a sparkling 50 off just 20 balls from Rajat Patidar, followed by all-round efforts from Cameron Green and Swapnil Singh, as well as incisive bowling from Karn Sharma. Skipper Du Plessis appreciated the fighting abilities of his boys over the last couple of matches, which had culminated in this convincing win.

"We have worked really hard for the last two games to get to this point. We have scratched, we have fought, everyone can say that they feel like they have given everything, so we deserve this feeling, we are all sitting here feeling we are proud of our work, but there is a lot left in the tank," Du Plessis said.

Malolan praised Patidar's innings, which contained as many as five sixes amid a remarkable hitting display against spin. "Rajat, high quality innings. It felt like the pitch was spinning a bit, keeping a bit low, but you made it look like we were playing on a concrete pitch," Malolan said.

ICC Asia looking forward to an action-packed Asia Cricket Week

AGENCIES
DUBAI, APRIL 26

ICC Asia on Friday announced the launch of its Asia Cricket Week, to take place from April 28 to May 5.

The Week is a celebration of the various forms of our sport in the region. Activities range from a women's trainer workshop in Kuala Lumpur, cricket clinics and workshops in Nepal, community outreach programmes in Singapore to foundation coaching courses to school Physical Education teachers in Uzbekistan and the UAE's hosting of a men's U19 inter-Emirates event.

It is a particularly exciting week for women's cricket in the region, where in Iran, a women's tournament kicks off in Tehran, Qatar, along with Malaysia's Women's Super League getting off the ground featuring five teams that will play 14 matches and can be watched live on ICC.tv.

For the first time ever, Kuwait will host Bahrain in the "Yalla Shabab" (Le's Go Guys) series, from April 25 to 27 at Sulaibiya Cricket Ground. The three-match,



100% indigenous Arab T20 series is designed to encourage local support ahead of the 2030 and 2034 Asian Games in Doha and Riyadh respectively, an ICC media release said.

In Hong Kong, the hosts and China will deliver their men's and women's Premier League Finals Day on May 5. Both Games will be broadcast live locally, promoting the sport and encouraging fan support for both the men's and women's game in the region. The ICC's Criiio training and education programme will be live in Bahrain, Mongolia, Qatar and Tajikistan, while junior cricket and schools' events will be hosted in Cambodia, China, the Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Thailand. This special week of cricket coincides with the United Nations' observance of April 6 as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. This initiative aims to strengthen the

spirit of cricket throughout the region, symbolizing sportsmanship and unity. With this in mind, ICC Asia invited its members to engage by organizing cricket-related events and meetings during this time. Aminul Islam, Regional Manager of ICC Asia said, "The enthusiastic response has been truly overwhelming, and we are thrilled with the buy-in from our members."

"The unique combination of broad reach, the power to overcome barriers, and the capability for low-cost, high-impact engagement makes Asia Cricket Week an effective tool in achieving our development goals," he said.

"We are deeply impressed by the depth and breadth of each program designed by our members. Their genuine interest and dedicated efforts fill us with optimism for the future," Aminul added.

India exemplifies how digital revolution can become accessible to millions: UNGA President

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 26

India exemplifies how the digital revolution can be made accessible to millions and become "a fundamental driver of social transformation and progress", according to UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis.

"Models like the Citizen Stack (of India) should be embraced and replicated across countries in the Global South - supporting and empowering people, particularly the most vulnerable in our communities, in the true spirit of leaving no one behind," he said on Thursday.

Speaking at a conference on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) hosted by India's UN mission, he recalled his visit to India in January, when, he said, he saw the rapid expansion of digital public infrastructure that has removed many barriers and "enabled millions to achieve financial independence and prosperity".

"In just seven years, India's digital public infrastructure model has achieved over 80 per cent financial inclusion for its



citizens, and now accounts for more than 60 per cent of all digital transactions worldwide," he said.

At the conference, India showcased its Citizen Stack, the pioneering DPI, that provides seamless interoperability between various functions, from identity (for example, Aadhar) and payments (like UPI and Walmart's PhonePe) to health (Sanjeevani) and public services delivery.

India's Electronics Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in a video message said, "India believes in the ethos of 'One World, One Family, One Future' (and) consistent with our ethos, we offer our Citizen Stack to the world."

"The G20 summit in

New Delhi last year recognised the transformative power of DPI and following this, India took the initiative to establish a global repository for DPIs currently housing over 55 DPIs from 16 countries," he said.

"India has pledged \$200 million to a social impact fund that will accelerate DPI adoption globally, especially in the developing countries," he added.

In the digital universe, India's DPI is unique because unlike the commerce-driven systems predominating the West or the closed government-controlled model in China, India's DPI provides an open digital infrastructure with guardrails that the private and public sectors

can use.

India's Permanent Representative Ruchira Kamboj said, "India's journey offers powerful lessons for other nations embarking on digital transformations emphasising a design approach focused on shared building blocks to spur innovation across ecosystems."

"We invite you to engage with us, let's stack up the benefits worldwide, and help millions more," she said, "achieve their dreams".

To evangelise the DPI model, India's UN Mission is holding one-on-one sessions on Friday for countries that are interested in adopting it.

Amitabh Kant, who was India's Sherpa for the G20 Summit, said that India was offering a "modular open source identity platform" that can be adopted by any country's needs.

"Do not replicate what India has done," he said. "If you want to transform the lives of citizens like India, you can use the model based on your own country's ethos in a manner so that you can transform the lives of your citizens."

Germany, France sign deal in Paris on developing future weapons system

AGENCIES
PARIS, APRIL 26

The French and German defence ministers signed an agreement in Paris on Friday for a joint Franco-German-led armaments project worth billions of euros, which includes the development of a next-generation main battle tank.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius and his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu signed the memorandum of understanding in an effort to jointly develop the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS), which aims at replacing the countries' current main battle tanks.

Both ministers confirmed signing the agreement after the meeting.

The MGCS project is conceived around not just a new main battle tank design, but also a series of systems and vehicles built off that platform that will connect battle tanks in a data network with support



weapons such as drones and other unmanned systems. Interconnecting the weapons systems will enable a technological leap in military technology, according to supporters of the project.

The MGCS project is expected to replace Germany's Leopard 2 and France's Leclerc main battle tanks.

Germany is to play a lead role in developing the MGCS, which is a counterpart to the joint Future Combat Air System (FCAS) project being led by France, which includes the development of a next-generation fighter jet, as well as drones and other systems.

According to reports, the ministers also reached an agreement on the contested distribution of tasks and contracts for the project along eight pillars, of which Germany and France each have the lead in two. The other four pillars are to be coordinated jointly.

Like other joint European defence projects, the effort has been delayed by tensions between participating countries over how to distribute industrial contracts and other spending among firms.

In May 2021, Germany, France and Spain reached an agreement in principle on the FCAS, which is worth billions, following

a lengthy struggle over industrial policy.

Lecornu had said in Berlin in March that the main battle tank system would be a "generational leap."

Pistorius described the agreement in principle as "historic" and added: "We have agreed on the distribution of all tasks for this major project."

However, the details have not yet been publicly released.

There is intense interest among observers about the particulars of the deal, including how individual development tasks will be divided and whether the weapons system will be standardized to allow for shared jointly produced ammunition and other parts.

In the past, there have also been repeated difficulties with joint armaments projects because individual nations have insisted on special technical requirements, resulting in delays and cost increases.

RBI issues FAQs on default loss guarantee in digital lending

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday issued frequently asked questions (FAQs) to provide more clarity on its guidelines for default loss guarantee (DLG) in digital lending, which were first issued in June 2023. DLG is an agreement between the bank and an entity under which the latter guarantees to provide compensation to the bank for losses due to default up to a certain percentage of the loan portfolio of the bank.

While issuing the guidelines in June 2023, the RBI had said that banks must ensure that the total amount of DLG cover on any outstand-



ing portfolio -- which is specified upfront -- shall not exceed five per cent of the amount of that loan portfolio.

In its list of FAQs, the RBI said the portfolio for which DLG can be offered needs to consist of identifiable and mea-

surable loan assets.

This portfolio will remain fixed for the purpose of DLG cover and is not meant to be dynamic.

The 5 per cent cap is applicable on the total amount disbursed out of the DLG set at any given

time, the RBI said.

It also stated that the DLG amount once invoked by the RE cannot be reinstated, including through loan recovery.

While the guidelines mandate the banks accepting DLG cover to have a Board-approved policy in place, the banks acting as DLG providers shall also put in place Board-approved policy as a prudent measure, the RBI added. The RBI has also clarified that DLG is not permitted on loans arranged on NBFC-P2P platforms. Similarly, DLG arrangements are also not allowed for credit cards. The RBI has on its website explained the FAQs with illustrative examples for easier understanding.

Nifty snaps five-day rally driven by weak global cues

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

The domestic markets snapped their five-day rally on Friday, with the Nifty declining 150.40 points to close at 22,419.95, and the Sensex falling by 609.28 points to end at 73,730.16.

The domestic equity benchmarks halted their five-day winning streak driven by weak global cues, said Hrishikesh Yedve, AVP, Technical and Derivatives Research, Asit C Mehta Investment Intermediates.

The Nifty opened on a



positive note on the first day of the May series but could not sustain at higher levels before closing the day on a negative note at 22,420 levels.

The broader market outperformed the bench-

marks, with the midcap and smallcap indices registering fresh lifetime highs, he said.

Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said that cash market volumes on the

NSE fell to Rs 1.22 lakh crore on Friday. The broad market indices ended in the positive even as the advanced-decline ratio remained firm. Global equities were mostly higher on Friday despite worries about the economic outlook and inflation in the US and the rest of the world. The Bank of Japan kept interest rates around zero on Friday, as expected, while removing a reference to the amount of government bonds it has roughly committed to buying each month, Jasani said.

AGENCIES
SEOUL, APRIL 26

South Korea and Japan could consider adopting a simplified entry procedure for people travelling between the two countries, as an effort to keep the momentum going in the dramatic improvement in bilateral relations, a Seoul official said Friday.

The official suggested as one of the possibilities that the two neighbours could explore, likening the idea to the Schengen Agreement in Europe that allows nationals of the signatory countries and eligible members to travel freely without border checks, Yonhap news agency reported.

Next year could serve as an occasion for such discussions, as Seoul and Tokyo are to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, the official said in a session with reporters.

"The 60th anniversary can be another very important momentum. We should institutionalise the overall exchanges, and economic cooperation in a way that they won't be damaged, while we continue to sternly address the historical issues," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

"Simplifying the entry procedure is among those, and there is a considerable shared understanding in Japan (about this). I believe we need to make various efforts to find the



common ground between South Korea and Japan," the official said.

However, the foreign ministry said that no discussions are underway at the government level regarding a potential easing of entry procedures.

The official noted that South Korea and Japan now share strategic interests in many areas, such as the Indo-Pacific region and advanced technologies, highlighting the need for follow-up steps

to move the relationship forward.

The official expected that the bilateral partnership fund, established between the countries' two largest business lobbies, should see a significant increase in contributions from Japanese companies.

The Federation of Korean Industries and the Japan Business Federation launched the fund in May last year to promote private exchanges, as a follow-up to the leaders' March summit that came after Seoul's announcement that it would compensate the Korean victims of Japan's wartime forced labour on its own without involving Japanese firms.

The decision by the Yoon Suk Yeol government has led to a dramatic warming of bilateral relations, resuming the "shuttle diplomacy" between leaders and the removal of Japan's export controls on South Korean industries.

'3 spinners, 3 fast bowlers' but no Yuzvendra Chahal in India T20 World Cup XI for this former batter

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 25

The joint highest wicket-taker this season - 13 - and the first bowler to breach the 200-wicket mark in the history of the Indian Premier League, leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has once again been on-song but his non-inclusion in Team India squad for T20 World Cup, even in predicted XIs of former play-

ers, continues to remain a mystery. Former India cricketer and middle-order batter Mohammed Kaif on Friday excluded the leggie in his predicted India XI despite having three spinners and three pacers in it.

For Kaif, India should go in with Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel as three spinners while in the pace department Jasprit Bumrah will

be spearheading the attack and will have the support of Arshdeep Singh and all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

For Kaif the inclusion of Jadeja, Axar and Hardik -- the spin-bowling all-rounders -- will provide batting strength to the Indian team at the cricketing extravaganza. For the other 4 members of the 15-man squad, Kaif had Sandeep Sharma, Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh and KL

Rahul. With the T20 World Cup scheduled to take place in US and the Caribbean, Kaif also suggested that India should also have three reserve players and Chahal featured in that list alongside Avesh Khan and Sanju Samson.

Chahal has been in prolific touch in the IPL this season and is the joint-highest wicket-taker alongside Bumrah.

No Virat Kohli, no Hardik Pandya: Sanjay Manjrekar makes bold India squad picks for T20 World Cup

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 26

Former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar made surprising additions and omissions in his 15-member India squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Americas. Amidst heightened anticipation surrounding the squad announcement, Manjrekar's choices have sparked intense debate among fans and experts.

Manjrekar raised eyebrows by excluding talismanic India batter Virat Kohli from his squad, opting instead for Lucknow Super Giants all-rounder Krunal Pandya.

The unexpected move has added an element of unpredictability to India's potential lineup for the prestigious tournament. Manjrekar opted for the dynamic duo of Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal as openers, supported by the inclusion of Sanju Samson and Suryakumar Yadav in the top four. The squad featured three wicket-keepers, with Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, and Samson all securing spots. In the all-rounder department, Manjrekar chose Ravindra Jadeja and Krunal Pandya,

omitting pace-bowling all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube from the lineup. The spin bowling contingent comprises Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, both hailed for their match-winning capabilities. Meanwhile, the pace attack is led by stalwarts Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, showcasing Manjrekar's confidence in their ability to deliver under pressure.

"This is perhaps Kuldeep Yadav at his peak with regards to his skills, his confidence. You can see now he's out there like a Bumrah or Chahal at his peak. He is commanding that kind of respect. He looks comfortable with the responsibility and champions, you know, those breaks and those moments that you are seeking at the right time," Manjrekar said.

Sanjay Manjrekar's India squad for T20 World Cup: Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sanju Samson, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Avesh Khan, Harshit Rana, Mayank Yadav, Krunal Pandya,

With a new partner in tow, Ashwini Ponnappa hopes to shine at her third Olympics

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 26

Ashwini Ponnappa has been the flagbearer of Indian badminton in women's doubles for over a decade. Having forged a world-class partnership with now-retired Jwala Gutta, where the doubles duo won historic medals at the Commonwealth Games and World Championships, Ashwini, now 34, is gearing up for her third Olympics in Paris with a partner 15 years younger to her - Tanisha Crasto.

After representing India with Jwala at two successive Olympics in London and Rio, Ashwini missed the bus for the Tokyo Games in 2020. But after pairing up with Tanisha in January last year, not only she found an able ally but managed to secure a prized Olympics spot after going through a gruelling qualification pathway. The duo is currently the highest-ranked Indian women's doubles pair in the BWF chart.

"It's been an ongoing partnership with Tanisha and we have put in a lot of effort to get to a point to have the opportunity to represent at the Olympic Games. We have grown quite a bit over the past one year since we started playing together.

For us, our goal has been to perform and look at opportunities as and when they present themselves. It has been a constant effort for us," Ashwini told TOI in an interview.

"I believe our chemistry on-the-court is going great. We both are open to learning on the go. That understanding makes it work for both of us and helps us gain confidence," she added. Before Tanisha, Ashwini had N Sikki Reddy as her doubles partner after the two came together in 2018. They tasted relatively decent success on the tour, having won bronze at the 2018 Gold Coast CWG. However, injury setbacks, coupled with bouts of illness, led to some forgettable performances in 2019 and the duo failed to qualify for Tokyo.

After taking a brief break from the court, Ashwini began the partnership with Tanisha and the duo had some success at a couple of Super 100 Series and Challenger meets before securing their berth for Paris. "I have enjoyed both my partnerships and the style of both the players. The energy levels are different and now playing with an upcoming athlete is a new learning curve for me and I enjoy this phase too.

Nadal progresses in Madrid to set up De Minaur rematch in Madrid Open

AGENCIES
MADRID, APRIL 26

Spain's Rafael Nadal had an easy opening match in what will be his last appearance at the Mutua Madrid Open tennis tournament, defeating American Darwin Blanch 6-1, 6-0, in just 63 minutes.

The 16-year-old looked slightly overwhelmed at the partizan atmosphere in the Manolo Santana center court in Madrid on Thursday and Nadal, who has been training all week in the Spanish capital, enjoyed a comfortable workout.

Speaking to Spanish TV after his win, Nadal said he was "trying to enjoy every moment."

"I'll train again tomorrow (Friday) and be back here the day after and that is great," he added.

Nadal will play Alex de Minaur in the second



round after the Australian ended his comeback from injury last week, 7-5, 6-1 in the second round of the Barcelona 'El Godo' Open.

"Last week it wasn't to be and I'm sure this week will be difficult as well. I want to continue improving in everything and I'll do everything that is in my hands," Nadal said.

On Wednesday, Shang Juncheng won a thrilling match 6-7 (9), 6-2, 7-6 (10) against Corentin Moutet,

with everything decided in a marathon third-set tiebreak.

Zhang Zhizhen was unable to follow his countryman into the second round as he lost 6-3, 6-3 in straight sets to Miomir Kecmanovic, who gave the world ranked number 49 few options on his serve.

In the women's round of 64, the top seed Iga Swiatek started her Madrid campaign with a comfortable win over China's

Wang Xiyu, blowing her rival off-court 6-1 in the first set.

Wang fought back in the second, but the Polish star dug in to take the set 6-4 to progress into the round of 32.

Number 9 seed Jelena Ostapenko overcame a few early problems on her serve to beat Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-3, 6-1.

Fifth seed Maria Sakkari comfortably defeated Donna Vekic 6-3, 6-2, and former winner Victoria Azarenka had a comfortable 6-3, 6-1 triumph against Tatjana Maria.

Naomi Osaka was unable to progress past the second round after losing 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 to 15th seed Liudmila Samsonova, and 16th seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina also went out of the tournament after a 6-3, 7-5 defeat to Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo.

Nora Fatehi says feminism has "f****d up our society" leading to men losing their masculine energy

NORA Fatehi is one of the most popular Bollywood celebs currently. The Canadian dancer and actress enjoys a huge fan following on social media thanks to her looks and dance moves. However, right now Nora is in the news for her opinion on feminism.

During an interview with Ranveer Allahabadi, Nora Fatehi shared her thoughts on feminism and said, "This idea of I don't need anybody. Feminism. I don't believe in this s***. In fact, I think, feminism f****d up our society completely. The idea of being inherently completely independent and not having to get married and have kids and not having the male and female dynamics at home where the man is the provider, a breadwinner and the woman is the nurturer. I don't believe in people who think that's not true. I think women are nurturers, yes, they should go to work and have their own life and be independent but to a certain extent."

Nora also talked about her idea of the 'right man' and said that men these days need to tap into their masculine energy because the current 'environment has led to men losing their masculine energy which is a problem for us women who are looking for men with masculine energy. Talking about the importance of being physically, emotionally, and mentally fit for men, she said, "You have to be ready to be a provider, a supporter, ready to take a protective role in society. A lot of men don't want to do it anymore. A lot of men now have also been brainwashed by feminism era...if a man can work on being more of a provider, and protector, the women can then focus on being more of the nurturer. Everyone brings something to the table. If you are bringing to the table money, food, shelter, I need to bring to the table kids, being a mother, taking care of the house, cooking, etc. If we are bringing the same thing to the table, then who's going to bring the other stuff?"

Nora Fatehi shares her thoughts on the concept of feminism and tells what is the definition of 'right man' according to her. Read for more details.

Secret behind Raashii Khanna's perfect look



Actress Raashii Khanna, who is awaiting the release of her Tamil film 'Aranmanai 4', has shared how she achieved her look in the 'Achacho' song from the film.

The actress shared that she banked on weight training, a healthy sleep cycle and perfect nutrition to get the perfectly toned frame for the song. She emphasised that there is no 'shortcut' to fitness and that she made some changes in her routine and sleep cycle.

Raashii said: "I work hard and I won't take that away from me. Even on a 12 to 16-hour shoot day, I take out time for my workouts. I wake up early, I sleep early. I put in the work. And I have been at it for many years now. For the song, I went on to do a lot of weight training with split routines and circuits, making it intense but not too long. The idea was to tone up."

She further mentioned that a week prior to the shoot, she opted for an egg white and spinach diet though she wouldn't recommend it because it is not healthy in the long run.

She said: "Nutrition plays a very important role when you are trying to look a certain way. For the song, I did go on an egg white and spinach diet for a week prior (the shoot). But I wouldn't recommend it because it is not healthy in the long run."

She further stated that during the normal shoot days, she maintains a very healthy diet with "cheat meals on Sundays". The actress, who is set to tickle funny bones in horror-comedy 'Aranmanai 4', also has 'The Sabarmati Report' in the pipeline, where she will be seen sharing the screen with Vikrant Massey.

The film, which sees both actors play the role of reporters, will hit the theatres on August 2, 2024. Raashii is also looking forward to the release of a Hindi film 'TME' and a Telugu film 'Telusu Kada'.

New mommy Anushka Sharma REACTS after street dogs RESCUE boy from pit bull attack while locals turn spectators

ANUSHKA Sharma is often seen advocating for animal rights and against cruelty. Recently, the actress took to social media and re-shared a striking video of a small kid getting attacked by a pit bull dog with no help from local people. Anushka requested her fans and followers to consider the other side of the story as well.

Anushka Sharma took to Instagram Stories and reshared a video from an Instagram account named Daranimals. At first glance, it seems like a pit bull dog is attacking a small kid, and the kid is trying to get away. The local people of the area are seen standing and watching the small kid struggle, however, what happens next will surely make you stop and watch. A group of street dogs attacks the pit bull and saves the kid from the pet dog.

Anushka Sharma is currently on a break as she and Virat Kohli recently announced the arrival of their second baby. The duo took to social media and shared the news, in their note, they revealed that the actress gave birth to her son on February 15 and that they have named him Akaay. Although the newest parents in town decided to keep their location under wraps.

When Big B went without a break and 'lunched in car' during a 'non-stop schedule'

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan shared that he had a packed schedule, which began at nine in the morning, worked without a "traditional break" and had his lunch in the car.

Amitabh was busy shooting for the upcoming new season of the quiz-based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati'. He shared several pictures from the set on his blog and wrote: "Khel hone jaa raha hai naye season ka; sneh pyaar bana rahe EF pariwar ka." The thespian then spoke about how busy his schedule was.

"A non-stop schedule beginning at 9... and worked till 5 without the traditional break .. done it driven off, and lunched in car .. that rolled appropriate eat and that consumption drink," Big B wrote on his blog. He then shared that he



watched the IPL match. "And back in the love of the game at IPL .. as exciting as all the others that are unfolding before us this season .. and unexpectedly in the Fortress of Chepauk a most stunning hard-fought result .. almost the same as the

day before when the last ball decided the one run victory!!" "It be looked forward to this game and the work schedules adjusted accordingly .. interest never waning .. from that 'John Jaany Janardhan' song shoot at Filmistan

the walls of the College grounds at University .. err 1956-58 approx .. and now a million alternatives in immediacy available . BUT .. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury the experience of a Stadium is simply incomparable .." he wrote.

KJo takes to photography with Ananya Panday as his Muse

Bollywood director-producer Karan Johar, who last directed 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani', recently explored his photography skills by capturing his muse, Ananya Panday.

Taking to Instagram stories on Tuesday, KJo shared a picture of the 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan' actress, which he clicked himself.

Karan captioned the picture: "My attempt at photography! @ananyapanday as a worthy muse!"

In the picture, Ananya stands beside a set of balloons, dressed in a cedar-coloured outfit.

The actress gazes sideways into the camera lens, her shoulder aligned with the camera axis.

Ananya also re-shared it on her Instagram story and wrote: "@karanjohar hehe love you," followed by a red heart emoji.



KJo has been actively sharing shayaris and random musings on his social media lately.

The director-producer often shares words of wisdom infused with

satire. Meanwhile, on the professional front, Karan has partnered with the makers of the upcoming film 'Devara', starring NTR Jr. in the lead role.

The director of the film Koratala Siva and NTR Jr. have joined forces with KJo and AA Films of Anil Thadani for the North India theatrical distribution of 'Devara: Part 1'.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

Scrutiny of nomination papers completed for O2-Srinagar PC

Candidature of 29 candidates found valid, 10 nominations rejected

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 26

In accordance with the election schedule issued by Election Commission of India (ECI) for the conduct of Lok Sabha Elections-2024, the scrutiny of nomination papers for Srinagar Lok Sabha seat was held today (April, 26, 2024 Friday) in the office of the Returning Officer O2-Srinagar Parliamentary constituency (DC Office Complex Srinagar).

During the scrutiny of all 39 nomination papers received, 29 nominations were found valid as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India.

The candidates whose nominations were found valid and accordingly accepted include Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi from Jammu Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), Mohammad Ashraf Mir from J&K Apni Party, Waheed



ur Rehman Para from Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party, Amir Ahmad Bhat from Democratic Progressive Azad Party, Younis Ahmad Mir from Bharat Jodo Party, Rubina Akhtar from National Lok Tantrik Party, Ashiq Hussain Bhat from Rashtriya Jan Kranti Party, Hakikat Singh from

National Panthers Party (Bhim) and Mohammad Yousuf Bhat from Gana Suraksha Party.

Similarly, the nomination papers of the independent candidates namely Sheeban Ashahi, Nissar Ahmad Ahangar, Mirza Sajad Hussain Beigh, Jibrar Dar, Shahnaz Hussain Shah, Amin



Dar, Riyaz Ahmad Bhat, Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, Sayim Mustafa, Waseem Hassan Sheikh, Ghulam Mohammad Wani, Hilal Ahmad Dar, Wahida Tabasum, Dr. Qazi Ashraf, Qaiser Sultan Ganai, Abdul Hamid Rather, Javaid Ahmad Wani, Jehangir Ahmad Sheikh, Sajad Ahmad Dar and Sauqib

Makhdoomi were also found valid and accordingly accepted by the Returning Officer O2-Srinagar Parliamentary constituency.

On the occasion, the candidature of Salman Sagar from Jammu Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) becomes null and void due to formal con-

sideration/ approval of the candidature of the main Candidate of JKNC as he was the covering candidate from the same party. Likewise, nominations of 10 candidates stood rejected as their nomination papers were found invalid during the scrutiny as per ECI norms. The scrutiny was held in presence of General Observer for O2-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Mukul Kumar, contesting candidates and their proposers.

As per the Election notification, the candidates can withdraw their nomination by April 29, 2024 (Monday) before 03:00 pm in the office of Returning Officer O2-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

The O2-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency is scheduled for Elections on May 13, 2024 under phase 4th of General Lok Sabha Elections-2024.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

Empowering Democracy: YSS Ganderbal inspires Youth engagement through cycle race under SVEEP

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, APRIL 26

The Youth Services and Sports department Ganderbal under the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program 2024 orchestrated a zonal level cycle race for boys AAG in Zone Tullamulla of the district.

The race commenced at Baroosa Crossing, winding through the Central University of

Kashmir road, culminating at GHSS Tullamulla amid applause and jubilation.

The event, aimed at fostering voter awareness among the youth, reiterated the motto, 'No Voter is to be left behind,' emphasizing the crucial role of every vote in the democratic fabric of the nation.

Over 150 enthusiastic students participated, exuding zeal and fervor throughout.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

DEO Gbl inspects arrangements at DCRC, visits several polling stations of Ganderbal AC

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, APRIL 26

In preparation for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, the District Election Officer (DEO) Ganderbal, Shyambir made a comprehensive field visit today to assess the readiness of the polling infrastructure within the Ganderbal Assembly Constituency (AC).

The inspection covered the Dispatch cum Receipt Centre (DCRC) at Government Degree College Ganderbal as well as several other polling stations across the constituency.

The DEO's visit focused on ensuring that all polling stations are equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) to ensure a smooth and accessible voting process for all electorate members.

He inspected the key facilities including the availability of ramps for wheelchair access, adequate drinking water facilities, proper electricity, toilet facility, and special-



ized facilities to Persons with Disabilities (PwD).

Shyambir emphasized the need for meticulous preparations to facilitate a transparent and hassle-free voting experience.

The DEO stated that our focus is to ensure that every voter has a fair and equitable voting experience. He gave necessary instructions and exhorted close coordination among concerned officials to

ensure that facilities at all polling stations meet the highest standards of accessibility and efficiency.

He thoroughly reviewed the arrangements at the Dispatch cum Receipt Centre, which plays a crucial role as the hub for dispatching poll parties and election materials to the polling stations within the 18-Ganderbal Assembly Segment.

The visit was part of a broader initiative to safeguard the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process.

The DEO was accompanied by SSP Ganderbal, Sandeep Gupta, ACR/ARO of Ganderbal Assembly Constituency, Chief Education Officer and other officials, ensuring a coordinated approach towards a successful electoral exercise.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024

Nomination filing process commences for Baramulla PC

JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, APRIL 26

In accordance with the Election schedule announced by Election Commission of India (ECI) for the conduct of Lok Sabha Elections-2024, the Returning Officer (RO), O1-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency, Minga Sherpa today issued Election Notification for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections-2024 in the Baramulla Constituency.

The RO, O1-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency held a press conference in this regard at his office chamber, here.

During the briefing, the RO said that the Form-1 has been issued from the RO Office Baramulla and all the interested candidates who want to contest Lok Sabha Election from O1-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency can file the nomination papers at the Deputy Commissioner's Office Baramulla.

Minga Sherpa informed that the nomination filing



period for Parliamentary Constituency commenced at 11:00 AM on April 26th and the window will remain open until 3:00 PM on 3rd May, allowing interested candidates to submit their nomination papers to contest the Lok Sabha Election.

He said that the nomination forms would be scrutinized on 4th May here at the Office of the RO Baramulla, while the last date for the withdrawal of the nomination is set for 6th of May upto 3 pm. The Constituency is slated to go to the polls on 20th of May.

Providing information on Parliamentary Constituency, the RO stated that it comprises 2103 polling

stations spread across 16 assembly constituencies of Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora districts and two assembly segments within Budgam District.

Minga Sherpa reassured that the administration has implemented comprehensive measures and followed guidelines of Election Commission of India at every step to ensure the conduct of elections in a free, fair, and transparent manner.

RO further said that arrangements have been meticulously put in place to ensure the availability of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) at all the polling stations with special provisions for the voters with physical disabilities.

3 notorious drug smugglers booked in Baramulla: Police

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 26:

Acting tough against drug peddlers and to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said to have booked three notorious drug smugglers under PIT NDPS Act in Baramulla after obtaining formal detention orders from competent authority.

The notorious drug smugglers namely Shahid Hussain Dar son of Ghulam Hassan resident of Sultanpore Pattan, Mohd Saleem Sheikh @ Mass son of Abdul Rashid resident of Malikbagh Pattan & Nazaar Ahmad Bhatti son of Bawar Ali resident of Madiyan Kamalkote Uri have been booked under PIT-NDPS Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent Authority. The booked drug smugglers have been detained and subsequently lodged in Central Jail Kot-Balwal Jammu, a statement issued to the news agency.

Lok Sabha Elections Phase II: ECI establishes 109 special polling stations in Jammu PC

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 26

In a first of its kind move towards inclusivity and environmental consciousness, the Election Commission of India (ECI) established 109 remarkable polling stations of different categories for voters in Jammu Parliamentary Constituency (PC) which went for polling today in the second phase of General Elections to Lok Sabha 2024.

These innovative polling stations viz; women manned, youth manned, PwD manned, Green Polling Stations, Border Polling Stations and Unique Polling Stations were designed to cater specifically to women, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), promote eco-friendly practices and cater to voters of different kind in the region.



The polling stations were established under specific themes in all four districts of Jammu Parliamentary Constituency.

In Jammu district, three Women manned, three PwD manned, two youth manned, four green, fifty border and three unique polling stations were established. Similarly, three women manned, three PwD manned, three youth

border and two unique polling stations were established for ease of voters in Samba district.

Likewise, in Reasi district, three women manned, three PwD manned, three youth manned, four green and one unique polling station was established. In Rajouri (Sunderbani-Kalakote) district, one Women manned, one PwD manned, one youth

manned and one green polling station was established.

The newly established polling stations aim to revolutionize the electoral process by ensuring accessibility and representation for all segments of society. With a special focus on women, youth, and PwD, these stations had been equipped with amenities tailored to meet their unique needs, fostering an environment conducive to active participation in the democratic process.

Furthermore, the ECI's commitment towards environmental sustainability is showcased through the implementation of green practices at these polling stations. Every aspect is meticulously designed to minimize environmental impact and promote a greener future.

DC Ramban visits land sinking site in village Parnote to assess damage

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, APRIL 26

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary today visited Village Parnote to assess damage to houses due to sinking of land there. He interacted with the affected families and inquired about their needs. He assured them every possible help from district administration.

The DC was accompanied by ADC, Varunjeet Singh Charak, Tehsildar, Deep Kumar, Tehsildar S. Harvir Singh and various concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Tehsildar to process relief cases under SDRF and provide assistance to affected families for the damaged houses.

It was informed that of 50 houses in affected area,



30 suffered damage and the affected families were shifted to safer places.

The displaced people were given tents, blankets, utensils and other essen-

tial items as instant relief.

The DC assured locals that a team of experts from the Geological Survey would soon visit the site to ascertain the reasons

behind the sinking of land.

The Deputy Commissioner said that restoration of essential services and road connectivity, besides ensuring immediate temporary provision of accommodation and ration to affected families is the priority of District Administration.

Responding swiftly to blockade on Ramban-Gool road at Parnote, the District Administration has opened the Sumber-Digdoal link road for light vehicles. This initiative would ensure continued road connectivity with NH-44 and essential/emergency supply to Sub Division, Gool.