

JINDRAH IMAGES



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‘Shehzade’ insulted Maharajas, but silent on atrocities by Nawabs: PM’s attack on Rahul Gandhi

AGENCIES
BELAGAVI, APR 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of insulting India’s Rajas and Maharajas, but remaining silent on the atrocities committed by Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans and Badshahs for the sake of appeasement politics.

Addressing a mega public meeting here, he said, “Congress has ensured the writings of our history and our freedom struggle with an eye on appeasement and vote bank. Even today, the Congress’ shehzade (prince) is carrying for-



ward that sin. You might have heard Congress’ shehzade’s recent statement – he says Bharath’s Rajas and Maharajas were atyachari (oppressive),” Modi said.

“He (Gandhi) has accused them (Rajas and

Maharajas) of usurping the lands and properties of people and poor... Congress’ shehzade has insulted great personalities like Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Kittur Rani Channamma whose administration

and patriotism inspires us even today,” the prime minister said.

Recalling the contribution of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family for which they are respected across the country even today, the PM said, “the Congress’ shehzade statements were intentional, aimed at vote bank politics and appeasement.” “Shahzade spoke ill about Raja, Maharajas, but the shahzade’s mouth was locked regarding the ‘atyachar’ that Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans and Badshahs committed in India’s history. His mouth was shut on them, but on Raja, Maharajas he speaks ill and insults

them,” he said.

Noting that Gandhi cannot remember Mughal emperor Aurangzeb’s oppressions, Modi said, “he (Aurangzeb) impured a number of our temples and destroyed them. Congress is happily making alliances with parties that praise Aurangzeb...they don’t remember people who destroyed our religious places, indulged in killing, killing of cows. They don’t remember the Nawab, who played a role in the partition of India.” He further recalled the contributions of the Raja of Banaras in setting up Banaras Hindu

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Village Defence Guard killed in gunfight with terrorists in Udhampur

ADGP Jain says freshly infiltrated groups involved; terrorists flee into forest area, massive CASO launched

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

A Village Defence Guard (VDG) member was killed in a gunfight with terrorists in a remote village in Udhampur district early Sunday, officials said.

“The exchange of fire occurred when a patrolling party of police and VDGs encountered suspected terrorists around 7:45 am. Sadly, VDG member Mohd Sharief, a resident of Khaned, sustained critical injuries during the firing and later succumbed to his injuries,” an official informed the news agency.

Later the wreath of slain VGD was laid at Basantgarh, Udhampur where senior police and paramilitary forces paid respect to the deceased.

Speaking to media persons, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu, Anand Jain said police received specific inputs regarding the movement of suspicious individuals late Saturday evening and accordingly activated the security grid



in Basantgarh police station limits.

“We received information about the movement of two or more groups of terrorists who were probably freshly infiltrated. The police picket Sang carrying along with them VDG members proceeded towards Chochru Gala heights as part of area domination where a face-off ensued with a group of hiding terrorists,” the AGDP said.

Following an initial exchange of fire that lasted over half an hour, the terrorists fled deep into the forest area and were being chased by the security forces, he said, adding that the entire area has been cordoned off for sanitation purposes,

with three terrorists spotted in the area and another group seen in nearby areas.

Meanwhile, a police spokesperson said a massive search operation is underway to flush out the terrorists, who are believed to have recently infiltrated from Pakistan.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Army helicopters have been pressed into service to trace down terrorists, while the Army’s Special Forces, Central paramilitary forces and Special Operations Group of police were rushed to the area to strengthen the cordon and neutralise the terrorists, the spokesperson added.

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J&K Police solved firing incident cases reported at Mira Sahib, RS Pura in Jammu district, within hours

Three main accused arrested, Desi katta along with live cartridge recovered

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 28.04.2024

On 27.4.24 in the evening hours local miscreants (criminals) had fired upon Khajuria food Mall, Miran Sahib and had also asked for ransom amount. After this incident, miscreants repeated the episode in Chohalla, RS Pura.

In this regard, the cognizance was taken by the police and a Case FIR No. 44/307/336 34 IPC, & 3/25, 3/27 Arms Act was registered in PS Miran Sahib & A Case FIR No 74/2024 U/S 452/307/34, IPC & 3/25, 3/27 Arms Act was registered in PS RS Pura & investigation started instantly begin. Thereafter police teams were



formed which raided at various places in the jurisdiction of Police Station Miran Sahib and RS Pura based upon the developed human intelligence and technical surveillance, which was kept on these miscreants.

CCTV footages from the place of occurrence and adjacent areas were

also collected and analysed and the police teams succeeded in identifying & finally apprehending the 03 main accused who had fired on the Khajuria Food Mall and in Chohalla, RS Pura and Desi Katta along with live with cartridge were recovered. During preliminary

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BRO rescues people stuck in Razdan pass after snowfall

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 28

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Sunday rescued dozens of passengers whose vehicles got stuck in snowfall on Bandipora-Gurez Road in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said here.

The BRO personnel swung into action as soon as they got the information about 35 vehicles that had been stuck on storm-hit Razdan Pass, the officials said.

They said the BRO team first ensured the safety of the passengers and drivers before taking out

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Pakistani man who inadvertently entered Indian territory handed over to Pakistan rangers

J1 NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, APR 28

A Pakistani man who was apprehended after inadvertently entering Indian territory was handed over to the Pakistan Rangers on humanitarian grounds, a BSF spokesperson said on Sunday. Border Security Force (BSF) troops apprehended the Pakistani national near the border fence in Punjab’s Fazilka district on Saturday, the spokesperson said.

During questioning, it was learnt that he was unaware of the international border’s alignment and had inadvertently crossed into Indian territory, the official said.

Nothing objectionable was found on the man during his search, the spokesperson added.

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Talks with China going on smoothly, India will never bow down: Rajnath Singh

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, APR 28

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said talks between India and China are going smoothly and in a good environment, and India will never bow down.

Singh, who is in Ahmedabad to campaign for BJP candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections, said India has become a powerful country from a military standpoint and wants to maintain good relations with its neighbours.

“India is no longer a weak India. India has also become a powerful coun-



try from a military point of view. We want to maintain good relations with our neighbouring countries,” the minister said when asked about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s

accusation against the Narendra Modi government over Chinese aggression.

Talks between India and China are going on smoothly and in a

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StartUps in India grew 300 times in 10 years: Dr Jitendra Singh

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APR 28

“From just about 350 StartUps in the year 2014, StartUps in India grew over 300 times in the last ten years after Narendra Modi took over as Prime Minister”.

Stating this in an exclusive interview to a national news agency here today, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said, India today has the 3rd largest StartUp ecosystem globally and is home to the fastest-growing unicorns. For the first time in the history of independent India, Modi as PM made a painstaking and conscious effort to educate the youth of this country that employment is not confined only to a government job and he has promoted new avenues of livelihood which



may be more lucrative than a government job, he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, PM Modi unleashed India’s Space research by opening up the hitherto conservative and secluded sector. India has literally reached for the moon and beyond with the twin feats of Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya L1 solar mission in the last year alone.

Note only this, the number of Space StartUps

has gone up from a single digit to three digits in just about four years since the Space sector was opened up to the private sector, the Minister informed.

PM Modi’s out-of-the-box decisions have given a push to different sectors including Space, Railways, Roads, Infrastructure and Electronics-Communication, and which has posted India’s

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4 killed, 2 missing in road accident in Ganderbal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 28

Four persons died while two others were missing after a passenger vehicle rolled down into Nallah Sindh in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, an official said here.

A passenger vehicle with nine persons on board skidded off the road and fell into the fast-moving stream at Gagangir in Sonamarg area of Ganderbal, the official said.

He said a rescue operation was launched by the SDRF and police.

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Just 8% of Women candidates in first two phases of Lok Sabha polls

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APR 28

Women constituted only eight per cent of the total 2,823 candidates in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections, with political activists saying it reflects a deeper issue of gender bias and that talk of women’s empowerment rings hollow.

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There were 135 women candidates in the first phase of the elections and 100 in the second phase, bringing the combined total for the first two phases to 235.

In the first phase of the elections on April 19, there total number of candidates in the fray was 1,625. In the second phase held on April 26, 1,198 candidates contested the elec-

tion. Of the 135 women candidates in the first phase, Tamil Nadu had the highest share at 76. However, that figure accounted for just 8 per cent of the total candidates in the state.

Kerala had the maximum number of women candidates at 24 in the second phase.

Partywise, the Congress fielded 44 women in the two phases and the BJP 69. This significant gender imbalance has sparked criticism from political analysts and activists, who asked why parties are waiting for the Women Reservation Act to be implemented instead of proactively fielding women.

Dr Sushila Ramaswamy, an associate professor at Delhi University’s Jesus and Mary College, said political parties should

take concrete steps to promote women’s candidacy.

“Political parties should have been more proactive and fielded more women candidates,” she underscored, citing the effectiveness of seat reservations for women within party structures, as seen in the UK’s Labour Party.

With women constituting nearly half of India’s electorate, their under representation in the candidate pool raises broader questions about the barriers hindering women’s full participation in the political sphere, said Dr Iftekhar Ahmad Ansari, an associate professor at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

Beyond the symbolic gestures and promises, he stressed the importance of structural reforms

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More rain in Kashmir till April 30: MeT

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 28

Rainy weather continued on Sunday in the Kashmir Valley as some of the higher reaches received light snowfall amid a fresh forecast by the Meteorological Department Srinagar of widespread moderate precipitation during the next 48 hours till Tuesday.

Srinagar and other parts of the valley received widespread moderate rainfall inundating several low lying areas besides bringing down the temperatures and disrupting normal life.

The MeT data showed Srinagar received 30 mm of rainfall, Qazigund 23mm, Pahalgam 18.6mm, Kupwara 30.8mm,

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Ravinder Raina reaches out to boat tragedy families in Srinagar

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 28

Ravinder Raina, President, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir visited the Gandal-Batwara area of Srinagar to extend heartfelt condolences and support to the families affected by the recent tragic boat incident.

Recognizing the immense loss and pain experienced by the bereaved families, Raina assured them of the party's unwavering commitment to providing all necessary assistance and support during this challenging period. Accompanying Raina were esteemed party members, including District President Srinagar Ashok Bhat, Party Spokesperson Altaf Thakur, Media Incharge Adv Sajid Yousuf Shah, Social Media Incharge Sahil Bashir Bhat, and respected Senior



Leaders Ali Mohammad Mir and Showkat Gayoor. Their collective presence underscored the solidar-

ity and compassion of the BJP leadership towards the affected community in their time of grief.

Ajaz Jan urges maximum participation in LS Polls to safeguard our distinctive identity

J I NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, APRIL 28

Ajaz Jan, Provincial President JKNC Youth and former MLA, stressed the importance of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in safeguarding the distinctive identity of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The senior NC leader was speaking while addressing a public meeting held at Kusalian in district Poonch, in support of NC Lok Sabha candidate for Rajouri-Poonch-Anantnag constituency, Mian Altaf Ahmed. This meeting was organised by Mohd Sadiq, Ex Sarpanch Gulpur Kusalian.

In his address, Ajaz Jan strongly criticized the BJP Government at the Centre for its failure to prioritize the development of rural areas in the region. He spoke about the deplorable condition of road



connectivity, the issue of inflated and double power bills burdening the people, the lack of availability of government ration, and the scarcity of drinking water supply.

These challenges have had a detrimental impact on the lives of the local population.

Jan emphasized that the forthcoming Lok Sabha election is not just an ordi-

nary political event, but a critical opportunity to safeguard the distinct identity of Jammu and Kashmir. He called upon the people to unite and extend their support by ensuring maximum participation and voting for the National Conference candidate, Mian Altaf Ahmed to uphold the interests and aspirations of the local people.

Mohd Sadiq, ex Sarpanch, echoed Ajaz Jan's sentiments on the importance of preserving the region's identity during the Lok Sabha elections. He emphasized the need for unity and collective action to address the pressing issues facing rural areas.

Ch Maxood in their address,, reiterated the

urgency of supporting the National Conference candidate, Mian Altaf Ahmed, emphasizing his track record of advocating for the welfare of the region.

Mohd Afsal Sheikh, Abdul Razak and Ishaq Khan urged voters to make an informed choice to ensure effective representation in the parliament.

The public meeting witnessed the active participation of several prominent individuals, including Ch Masood Sheikh, Mohd Afsal, Vice President, Isahiq Khan, Ch Sadiq Sarpanch, Mohd Sadiq Sarpanch Kosalian, Molvi, Rashid Qadere, Mohd Rafiq Badana, Mohd Altaf, Sahafait Shah, Qazi Saleem, Parvinder Singh, Isahiq Sheikh, Kh Abdul Razak Sarpanch, Mukhtar Rathoor, Shoket, Ch Shabir, Ch Gani, Noor Khan, Raiz Khan, and many others.

H&UDD, J&K hosts training cum interactive session on water bodies rejuvenation

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 27

Today, a one-day training cum interactive session was held at the conference hall of the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) under the Guidance of Ms. Mandeep Kaur, IAS Commissioner/Secretary, H&UDD, J&K. The session was conducted by Mr. Anand Malligavad, a Water Bodies Rejuvenation Expert from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). To make our cities more live able, sustainable and water secure in the long run, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, has included rejuvenation of water bodies and creation of green spaces as one of major project component of the flagship scheme of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)-2.0 covering.



The training program, attended by engineering staff from JMC and other urban local bodies (ULBs) Jammu including Kathua, Rajouri, Samba, and Udhampur, focused on the crucial task of rejuvenating water bodies across the region. Mr. Malligavad, drawing from his expertise and experience, provided insights into the complete process of lake rejuvenation, ranging from the identification of lakes requiring rejuvenation to the execution of revitalization strategies.

During the session, Mr.

Malligavad shared valuable experiences from various states, highlighting successful case studies such as the rejuvenation of lakes in Bengaluru. Attendees had the opportunity to learn firsthand from these experiences and apply best practices to their respective areas, followed by visit of Tawi River front and pilot project of pond rejuvenation of ward No. 55.

Among the distinguished attendees were the Mr. Narinder Khajuria, Mission Director (AMRUT)-2.0, Mr. Puneet Sharma,

(JKAS) Director of Urban Local Bodies Jammu, Mr. Abdul Star, (JKAS) Joint Commissioner (Health and Sanitation) of JMC, Officers of different department like UEED, PHE, Flood control etc., Executive Officers of concerned ULBs, and all engineering staff from the respective ULBs. Their active participation demonstrated a collective commitment to enhancing water conservation and environmental sustainability efforts in the region.

The H&UDD, J&K remains steadfast in its mission to promote responsible environmental stewardship and sustainable urban development. Such training initiatives serve as vital platforms for capacity-building and knowledge-sharing, ultimately contributing to the betterment of communities and the preservation of natural resources.

Suvan Sharma DySP probationer of J&K Police who also cleared UPSC 2023 with AIR -412, interacts with IAS/JKAS Aspirants at SR College of competitions

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

The SR College of Competitions (SRCC) organised an interaction-cum-workshop for the aspirants in the college premises at Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The session was taken by Suvan Sharma who has qualified the UPSC examination 2023.

While interacting with the aspirants Suvan shared his journey right from the beginning when the idea of civil services struck to his mind and he started preparing for the same during his college days. He shared in detail his strategy for the competitive examinations, the problems he faced and the solutions attempted to overcome those problems.

He discussed in detail the syllabus, various papers of General Studies,



Optionals and the Essay Papers. All the aspects including the scheme and pattern of the exam, approach for Prelims and Mains, sources of study material and the books required, use of online sources, need for coaching and the relevance of newspaper reading in preparing for the current affairs and writing test series for both prelims and mains were covered comprehensively to the satisfaction of the aspirants. He discussed the entire syllabus, the focus

areas and the kind of questions asked in the previous year's papers were also taken up. Aspirants were also guided about the CSAT and Essay papers.

Further, aspirants clarified their confusions about the ethics, integrity and aptitude paper and the approach to handle the theory and the case studies part. Aspirants were suggested to at least attend one or two comprehensive test series for both prelim and mains examinations. He also motivated the students about

answer writing practice on regular basis. He also shared the details of his UPSC interview/ personality test. The response to the workshop was overwhelming and the attendees appreciated the initiative taken by the SR College of Competitions. The attendees included the aspirants preparing for IAS 2024 & 25 & JKAS 2024 and JKAS 2025 and also undergraduates who will be eligible in a couple of years.

"Such interactions encourage, motivate and inculcate a sense of confidence in the aspirants that if he can do it why cant we " told Parveen Sharma, Director of SR College. SR College keeps on organising such online and offline workshops, seminars, webinars and interactions with the IAS officers, KAS toppers and various subject experts.

All sections voted for BJP, for peace, and development: Dr. Manyal

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

All sections of the society voted for the BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to strengthen it. People across the Jammu region, voted for peace, and for progress, by voting enmass for BJP's Lok Sabha candidates in first 2 phases of Parliament elections, stated Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal.

J&K BJP General Secretary & former Minister Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, who is also the state convener of the state election management committee for BJP Jammu & Kashmir, stated that the Bharatiya Janata Party expresses gratitude to the voters of Jammu-Reasi Parliamentary Constituency, who voted for the party in large numbers.

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal noted that there was massive enthusiasm among the masses to cast their vote from the very early morning itself, which resulted in a handsome amount of voter turnout.

Dr. Manyal pointed out that PM Modi has been working dedicatedly to strengthen Democracy at



the grass root level and that can only be achieved by the massive participation of the people in this festival of democracy.

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal appreciated the efforts of the BJP activists and the officials engaged in the whole process of polling and especially lauded the role of security forces who ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the first two phases of Parliament election 2024.

"The festival of democracy cannot be celebrated without the active participation of the voter, and the party expresses gratitude to all the voters who participated in this festival

for a healthy democracy. The party also expresses itself to be deeply indebted to all the voters from all the sections, sects, beliefs from different areas, who voted enmass in favour of Modi government thus realizing the 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' mission of Modi government", said Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal.

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal condemned the parties like Congress for making and propagating forged videos of Union Home Minister, Amit Shah and other stalwarts.

"BJP never said that it will stop the quota of SCs, STs, and OBCs. BJP never believed in taking away the rights of these communities, rather it worked for their empowerment by granting ST status to Paharis, political reservation to STs, increased quota of OBCs, granting rights to SCs, Valmikis in Jammu & Kashmir".

"BJP gave rights and representations to all the sections and communities of society after 2014, ending their oppression and the grave injustice done by Congress, and its allies for decades together", said Dr. Manyal.

JKNC Student Wing convenes meeting, advocates for youth empowerment

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

A meeting of the J&K National Conference Student Wing convened at Sher-E-Kashmir Bhawan under the chairmanship of Harshvardhan Singh, President of the JKNC Student Wing for Jammu Province.

The meeting, attended by senior functionaries including Ajay Sadhotra, Additional General Secretary of JKNC and former minister, Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Provincial Secretary of JKNC, Ayub Malik Provincial Secretary, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell and others, addressed pressing concerns faced by the youth of Jammu region due to the present government's anti-youth policies.

Harshvardhan Singh opened the session by highlighting the challenges encountered by Jammu's youth, emphasizing the detrimental effects of the government's policies on their future prospects.

Addressing the gathering, Ajay Sadhotra lamented the scarcity of job opportunities and rampant recruitment scams, asserting that the incumbent government has plunged Jammu and Kashmir's youth into uncertainty



and despair. He accused the incumbent government of failing in bringing a job policy and said the initiatives taken during the previous Government led by Omar Abdullah have been negated. He underscored the persistent issue of unemployment in the industrially underdeveloped state, urging the authorities to acknowledge and address this critical issue.

Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, in his address, said that the issue of youths grappling with uncertainty as the government lacks a concrete policy to ensure a secure career path for this demographic. He emphasized that under the current administration's incapability, the future of these educated unemployed youths is at risk of deterioration. He highlighted that over 7 lakh deserving unemployed youth in J&K

are eagerly seeking job opportunities, yet the government has failed to fulfill the recruitment process.

The Provincial President reiterated the National Conference's longstanding commitment to harnessing youth potential for constructive purposes and creating opportunities for their engagement in the political sphere. He underscored the importance of "Today's workers becoming tomorrow's leaders", encouraging youth to follow the example of prominent party leaders who have made significant sacrifices to foster unity among different segments of society, particularly during challenging periods.

Furthermore, he urged them to work hard for their forthcoming future and contribute actively to nation-building endeavors.

In the meeting the senior leaders of National

attributing their disillusionment to the administration's nepotistic practices and anti-youth policies. He asked them to remain in students and work for addressing and highlighting their issues from time to time.

Following the deliberations, numerous youths, inspired by the principles and vision of the National Conference, joined the party fold, including Usman Malik, Sajad Ali, Waris Wani, Sahil Malik, and many others, along with their supporters.

Those who were present in the meeting include: Som Raj Tarooh, Ajay Kumar, Manohar Khajuria, Dr Gazala Noor, Arunpal Singh, Sakib kichloo, Deera Sharma, Vishal Thakur, Massarat Malik, Adress Ch, Varun and others.

NOTICE

I, Anish Chouhan S/o Jagdish Kumar R/o Sohal Paddar of District Kishtwar applied for the registration of ATO under the name M/S The Tundrar Touch at the office of AD Tourism Batote. If anyone has any objection he/she may contact the concerned office.

NOTICE

I, Jeevan Singh S/o Tilak Raj R/o Machail Paddar of District Kishtwar applied for the registration of ATO under the name M/S Asikini Adventures and Homestays at the office of AD Tourism Batote. If anyone has any objection he/she may contact the concerned office.

Lal Singh, Fairoz Khan advocate for immediate relief for pernote village land subsidence victims

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, APR 28

Choudhary Lal Singh, Former Member of Parliament and contesting candidate of the Congress party, accompanied by Fairoz Khan, State Youth Working President of Jammu and Kashmir and Former National President of NSUI, visited Pernote Village to assess the aftermath of the devastating land subsidence that has affected more than 50-55 families, with all houses in the 2km radius damaged to varying degrees.

Expressing profound concern over the situation, Choudhary Lal Singh highlighted the pivotal role played by prompt action and the assistance of the local public, NGOs like Team Umeed, QRT, SDRF and local volunteers in rescuing the affected families. He emphasized the significant impact on



agriculture, horticulture, and allied activities caused by the disaster and land has become useless for reuse.

During the visit, it became evident that the makeshift shelters, due to continuous rains, have become uninhabitable, exacerbating the challenges faced by the affected families. Choudhary Lal Singh and Fairoz Khan urged the concerned departments to conduct a comprehensive study of the causes of the disaster, emphasizing their belief

that it is a result of man-made activities caused by dumping of muck into river beds of Chenab and river changed direction and also because no culvert was there in Gool Sangaldan road.

Choudhary Lal Singh reiterated their demand for immediate relief of 10 lakh rupees to each affected family, land equivalent to the amount lost, and one employment govt job or in companies and opportunity for each family whose house has been destroyed. They

assured the affected families of their unwavering support and pledged to champion their cause to ensure that they receive the necessary assistance and support to rebuild their lives.

Fairoz Khan expressed gratitude to Choudhary Lal Singh for his visit and for raising the voice for immediate relief. He hoped that the authorities would announce relief measures promptly to alleviate the suffering of the affected families. They also stressed the early restoration of the Gool-Sangaldan road.

Choudhary Lal Singh and Fairoz Khan assured the affected families that the Congress party is steadfast in its commitment to standing with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in times of crisis and working tirelessly for their welfare and upliftment.

ADGP Armed J&K interacts with JKP MRT

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 5

Vijay Kumar-IPS ADGP Armed/ Law & Order J&K interacted with the Mountain Rescue Team of J&K Police and NDRF personnel who are presently undergoing training at Nud Samba. During his visit, the ADGP Armed/ Law & Order had thorough discussion with core members of JKP MRT in view of the forthcoming Shri Amarnathji Yatra-2024 and highlighted various issues and stressed for meticulous planning to make the JKP MRT more vibrant and effective. Pertinent to mention here that JKP MRT under the guidance of Inspr. Ram Singh Incharge JKP MRT is



presently imparting training to NDRF personnel in various aspects including Mountain climbing, Rescue/ Search operations alongwith live demonstra-

tions, Rescue of civilians trapped in avalanches and other calamities. Among others the function was also attended by Ms. Rashmi Wazir-IPS, CO

IRP-12th Bn.; Shri Shahzad Ahmad Salaria-JKPS, SSP APCR Jammu; Shri Vinay Kumar-JKPS, SSP Samba and Shri Kuldeep Handoo-Dy.SP (Sports) APHQ J&K.

NC, PDP betrayed Kashmiris, killed innocent people for power: DPAP



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 28

Today, the Democratic Progressive Azad Party orchestrated a powerful public gathering at the Idgah area of Srinagar, amplifying the voices of hope and change for the people of Kashmir. The meeting, featuring DPAP candidate Amir Bhat, Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami, Gen Secretary Province Shafiq Shabnam, and Ghulam Nabi Palpuri, showcased a unified call for a better future. Nizami rallied the crowd, urging voters to throw their support behind DPAP candidate Amir Bhat in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. With fervor, Nizami denounced the oppressive tactics employed by

the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), including the use of pellets and the Public Safety Act (PSA) against Kashmiris. He lambasted their alliances with the BJP, citing betrayal of Kashmiri interests. He said, 'Both the NC and PDP were complicit in alliances with the BJP, perpetuating oppression against Kashmiris. Accusations of being a 'B or C team' ring hollow in the face of their own history. It was they who wielded the instruments of brutality - pellets, bullets, and draconian laws like PSA, POTA, STF, and Task Force. In Parliament, Ghulam Nabi Azad stood as a stalwart defender of Kashmiri rights, steadfastly opposing moves like the revocation of Article 370

and 35A." Amir Bhatt, the DPAP candidate, took the stage with a solemn pledge to champion the concerns of Kashmiris in the highest echelons of power. Drawing inspiration from the esteemed legacy of Chairman DPAP Ghulam Nabi Azad, Bhatt vowed to advocate tirelessly for justice, equality, and prosperity for all Kashmiris. Amir reiterated his vow to the youth of Kashmir, emphasizing his determination to tackle unemployment by creating job opportunities and to secure the release of those unjustly detained under the NC and PDP. He condemned the imprisonment of innocent individuals on fabricated charges and affirmed DPAP's commitment to advocating for their rights in Parliament.

Police seizes 5 tractors, arrests 5 drivers for illegal mining in Baramulla

JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, APR 28

Cracking a whip on illegal mining of minerals at Kreeri & Khasipora Baramulla, Police have seized five tractors and arrested their drivers.

Police parties under the supervision of SDPO Pattan and SDPO Kreeri assisted by SHO PS Kreeri & IC PP Kungamdara, seized 5 tractors & arrested 5 drivers identified as Yaseen Ahmad Malik son of Habibullah resident of Chak Dargam Pattan, Tawseef Ahmad Hajam son of Mohd Ramzan resident of Ussan Pattan, Adnan Ahmad Bhat son of Showkat Ahmad resident of Palpora, Tanveer Ahmad Bhat son of Gh Mohd resident of Hurandpora Pattan & Yasir Ali Dar son of Mohsin Dar resident of Kripalpora Payeen Singhpora.

They were involved in illegal extraction/ transportation of minerals and accordingly cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in Police Station Kreeri & Pattan and investigations have been initiated.

BJP exploited public sentiments: Javed Rana



JI NEWS SERVICE
MENDHAR, APR 28

The BJP led government at the Centre has miserably failed to live up to the expectations of people of Jammu and Kashmir. There is a strong resentment among people against the government as the BJP leadership has failed to fulfil its promises that were made at the time of both parliamentary and the assembly elections.

This was stated by senior NC leader and President Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Pirpanjal Zone, Javed Ahmed Rana while addressing party

workers meeting at Dharana in Mendhar.

Javed Ahmed Rana said that there is anger among people. The BJP has played with the sentiments of people who voted them to power. People are not happy with their policies, he said. "Growing public disenchantment is a reflection of dismal performance of the central dispensation on all fronts. BJP exploited public sentiment, not only by whipping up passions on religion and region but also by making hollow promises about development," he said.

Referring to the unprecedented price rise and record unemployment,

especially in Jammu and Kashmir, the senior NC leader said the Modi Government has failed to bring prices under control. "The common man is suffering due to unprecedented price rise of all essential commodities and unreasonable taxes," he said.

Javed Rana asserted that the impetus generated during the successive National Conference governments in the erstwhile state is totally missing. He said that the Party believes in an inclusive and prosperous J&K that does not discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, class, language, region or creed. He further said

the principles envisaged by Sher-e-Kashmir helped us unite as a people.

"The party can only advance its cause determinately if it works as a whole unitedly. The road ahead of us is rough. We have to keep up with our fight for the restoration of our infringed rights and on another front we have to ensure the well-being of our people. Ours is the party that defines the soul of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

The former Legislator urged the people of Rajouri Poonch districts to support and vote in favour of NC candidate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

BJP Govt failed to fulfill the promises made with KP migrants: Rattan Lal Gupta

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, has asserted that BJP govt failed to fulfill the promises made with KP's migrants whether it was dignified rehabilitation special package for employment to the youths or enhancement of monthly cash assistance.

The senior NC leader was speaking while interacting with a delegation of Kashmiri camps and non camps migrants headed by Bushan Lal Bhat, Chairman of J&K NC Minority Cell and Ex MLC, at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan Jammu.

Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC said that most of the Kashmiri migrant community residing in Jagti, Purkhoo, Muthi, Buta Nagar, Nagrota, Camps, and non-camp migrants settled in Jammu, Kathua, and Udhampur districts, have extended whole heartedly full support to all three Parliamentary Constituencies of the Kashmir Province as there is no option for them to vote and support other candidates except National Conference candidates in valley.

Expressing gratitude towards the migrants



community, Rattan Lal Gupta has asserted that National Conference has always stood for the cause of Kashmiri Migrants and shall continue the same for all times to come while Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has only exploited them to the hilt by making hollow promises. He said that the BJP Govt had made promises to rehabilitate the KP migrants in the Valley but these proved to be a cruel joke as no steps were taken in this direction since 2014. He dared the BJP Govt to reveal what steps have been taken by it for employment of KP unemployed youth including those who are now barred due to their being over aged.

Mr Gupta said that it is really unfortunate that despite increased cost of living amid sky rocketing prices and peak inflation the cash assistance being

paid to the Kashmiri Migrants has not been enhanced for the past so many years. He said that the Kashmiri migrants are unable to meet their ends with the meager cash assistance and these people are out on roads protesting for relief enhancement and other issues. He promised that a reasonable hike in the cash assistance shall be announced as soon as India alliance voted in power.

During the regime of Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, several mini-townships for Kashmiri migrant community were constructed and established at Jagti and other areas adjoining the Jammu city. He also enumerated the measures taken by the National Conference during its various spells of governance for addressing the concerns and issues of the displaced

community.

Rattan Lal Gupta said that if India alliance voted in power appropriate one time settlement compensation shall be given to the over aged Kashmiri Pandit youth. He also reiterated that the National Conference has always stood for the cause of Kashmiri migrants and shall continue its fight for their cause for ever.

The senior NC leader appealed to the migrant community to strengthen the hands of Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah by supporting to all the three candidates of National Conference from Kashmir valley Mr Mian Altaf Ahmed from Anantnag- Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency, Aga Syed Rahullah from Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency and Mr Omar Abdullah from Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency in the ensuing Lok Sabha polls in Kashmir as there is no other option with KP migrants to support and vote whole heartedly to National Conference candidates in Kashmir Valley.

The delegation comprised: Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu, Jatin Bhat, Ashok Koul, Shreya Handoo, Kaka Ji Bhan, Ravinder Ji and others.

Dramatic Presentation of Munshi Prem Chand's 'Kafan': A Timeless Satire on Human Values

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

Natrang staged a dramatic presentation of Munshi Prem Chand's famous short story, 'Kafan' here today at Natrang Studio Theatre in its Sunday Theatre Series. The play was directed by Neeraj Kant. Though written many years ago by country's most celebrated and visionary writer, the story appears timeless and still has a lot to convey to the present generation and even generations to come and it is a very precise satire on the degradation of human values. The play revolves around a father and his son who work as laborers in a village. The son's wife is near the end of her pregnancy and is in need of medical attention, which the family certainly cannot afford. The poor lady cries in pain as 'Ghisu' and his son 'Madhav' watch helplessly. She eventually dies during childbirth, adding to the problems of the father and son. Driven to extreme poverty and despair, they have no money or means to perform the last rites for the unfortunate woman. They cannot ignore the dead body lying in their hut, and set out to ask the



villagers for some monetary assistance which they get after some effort but when it comes to the purchase the shroud for her, they change their mind and rather buy liquor out of that charity money, giving consolation to their sinful souls that what would a dead woman do with that piece of cloth, she does not need anything but blessings. The play very emotionally exposes the monster of

alcoholism and the story seems to be so relevant and close to the contemporary times. The play shows that people ruin their life and lives of their dependents in lust of alcohol and those who are captured in its trap may have nothing to eat and feed their family but will go out of ways to muster resources for the acquisition of liquor. Kafan which translates to a shroud in English describes the

degradation of human beings to the lowest level possible. Natrang young actors who performed in the play included Sanket Bhagat, Vishal Sharma, Chaitanya Shekhar, Kushal Bhat, Aadesh Dhar and Payal Khanna. Lights of the play were designed and executed by Neeraj Kant whereas Kananpreet Kaur rendered the music of the play. The show was coordinated by Brijesh Avtar Sharma.

BJP bloodthirsty of poor farmers across the country: Tony

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

Taranjit Singh Tony, General Secretary J&K Pradesh Congress Committee and DDC Suchetgarh, strongly criticized the BJP Government at the Centre for its ill treatment of poor farmers, labeling them as "blood-thirsty" in their pursuit of land acquisition without due compensation and other farmers demands.

Tony's remarks came during his participation in a protest organized by impoverished farmers in the Miran Sahib area, situated on the outskirts of Jammu City. Arif Mohd. President Tractor Union was also present.

Expressing solidarity with the aggrieved farmers, Tony lambasted the government for forcibly encroaching upon the lands cultivated by these farmers for over seven decades. He highlighted that these lands were originally



allocated to them during the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh and have now fallen victim to the government's acquisition.

Despite the land already being utilized for Ring Road projects, Tony pointed out that the promised compensation remains pending, leaving the farmers in a state of distress.

Tony raised concerns over the disparities in compensation between regions, noting that farmers in Srinagar were receiving significantly higher compensation compared to those in Miran Sahib. He also criticized the collusion between authorities and contractors who take advantage of the vulnerable situation of the farmers.

Expressing dismay over the lack of engagement from the Jammu and Kashmir Administration, Tony highlighted that the ongoing protest has persisted for 63 days without any meaningful dialogue or assurances from the authorities. He condemned the arrest of protesting farmers by the Miran Sahib Police Station, emphasizing that dissent against the government's actions should not be met with suppression.

The Congress leader named specific instances of farmers whose lands have been forcibly acquired, including Kuldeep Kumar, Amarnath, Jeetraj, and Gayan Chand of village Bansultan.

Tony lamented the

tragic death of a farmer from Nandpur on the 48th day of the protest, attributing it to the prolonged struggle against unjust government actions. He condemned the BJP for what he termed as its "blood-thirsty" attitude towards the welfare of farmers, citing over 750 farmer deaths as evidence of the party's disregard for agricultural communities.

While emphasizing the importance of development, Tony stressed that it should not come at the expense of the livelihoods of poor farmers. He called upon the Lieutenant Governor to intervene and direct the administration to refrain from implementing draconian measures against the farmers.

He issued a stern warning to the administration, asserting that Congress will not tolerate the usurpation of farmers' lands without proper compensation or alternative arrangements.

Shiv Sena and AAP support the Dharna against orders to vacate decades old lands



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 29

Shiv Sena (UBT) and Jammu Kashmir unit of Aam Aadmi Party joined the Dharna-Demonstration going on in Meera Sahib for the last 62 days to save their lands and to give compensation for the lands occupied in the under construction ring road and extended their support to their demands.

Shiv Sena State Chief Manish Sahni, AAP's senior leader Safir Chaudhary and spokesperson Nirmal Mahana said in their address that injustice is being done to the

residents of village Bal Sultan of Block Meera Sahib. The administration is forcibly evacuating the lands occupied by them for decades and making them homeless. Along with this, they are not being given compensation for the occupation of their lands under the under construction ring road. Sahni said that the local residents of the village have been occupied these lands for decades since the time of kings and Maharajas. These people are building their small houses on these pieces of land and are taking care of their families by farming.

How can the government make them homeless in one go. Sahni said that the Prime Minister promises to give houses to everyone but the administration of Jammu and Kashmir is busy taking decades old land of common and poor people under government occupation. At the same time, Safir Chaudhary of Aam Aadmi Party has termed the order declaring decades old occupation of land as illegal as a dictatorial step. At the same time, Nirmal Mahana said that the government is issuing such orders almost every month which directly affects the

life of the common man. He said that the government should issue orders to protect the life and interests of the poor man and small farmer. He said that action should be taken against the big land mafias instead of common and poor people. On this occasion, local residents Mohammad Arif, Kuldeep Kumar, Comrade Kishore, Om Prakash, Shiv Sena General Secretary Vikas Bakshi, President Kamgar Raj Singh, from AAP sr leader Doctor Rajindra Thapa, Aftab Hussain, Sarfaraz Shah, Om Prakash Khajuria were present.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

'Shehzade' insulted...

University, and Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar in the reconstruction of temples.

"It was the Maharaja of Baroda who had identified the talent of Ambedkar...the Congress's shehzade doesn't remember the contributions of Rajas and Maharajas. For vote bank they show the guts of speaking against Rajas and Maharajas, but don't have strength to speak against Nawabs, sultans and Badshahs," he said adding that Congress' appeasement mindset has come out in the open before the country, and the same reflects in their manifesto.

Veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa, party's candidate from Belgaum (Belagavi) and former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and Chikkodi candidate Annasaheb Shankar Jolle, were among those present.

Since the time Congress came to power in Karnataka, law and order situation in the entire state has worsened, Modi alleged, recalling the atrocity against an adivasi woman in Belagavi and killing of a Jain monk in Chikkodi. These incidents were shameful and degraded Karnataka's pride.

Citing the recent murder of a Hubballi student, Neha Hiremath, at her college premises that created "sensation" in the country, he said, the family sought action, but Congress government gave priority to appeasement. "For them, the lives of daughters like Neha have no value, they think only about their vote bank." Even when there was a bomb blast in a Bengaluru's cafe, the Congress government did not take it seriously initially; they even termed it a cylinder blast. "Why are you - Congress - lying to the people of the country, if you can't, leave and go home." The Congress for the sake of votes is taking support of banned PFI - the anti national organisation that supported terrorism. "To win one seat in Wayanad, are you surrendering to them? BJP has banned PFI and has put its leaders behind bars." Modi said. (Agencies)

Village Defence...

According to official sources, there was information about the movement of two separate groups of terrorists, who infiltrated recently, from Kathua to Basantgarh. One of the groups with five members was confronted, while there was no trace of the other group which has four members and whose movement was last reported in the Machedi top area bordering Kathua, they said.

They said terrorists are believed to have infiltrated from the International Border in Kathua district and are heading to Kashmir via Chenab valley, taking advantage of the dense forest.

The Army airdropped special forces in the forest area and a massive search operation is underway to track and neutralise the terrorists, they said, adding that there was no fresh contact with the terrorists-(KNO)

J&K Police solved...

questioning accused confessed regarding their involvement in the firing incident, demanding ransom and committing the crime.

The details of the accused persons are as follows 1 @Guga 2. @Krrish both residents of RS Pura area & 3. Kulbir Bhagat @Rinku S/o Bhushan Lal R/o Langotiyan, RS Pura.

It is pertinent to mention here that following 04 FIR's are already registered against the first accused @Guga 1. FIR no. 72/2023 U/s 458/207/323/147/148 IPC 4/25 Arms Act PS RS Pura

2. FIR no. 64/2023 U/s 458/323/504/506/34 IPC 4/25 Arms Act PS RS Pura

3. FIR no. 06/2023 U/s 307 /341/324/506 IPC 4/25 Arms Act PS RS Pura

4. FIR NO 98/2023 U/s 307,341,323,34,201 IPC 4/25 Arms act PS Arnia.

The 3rd accused namely Kulbir Bhagat @Rinku is also involved in a rape case of Police Station Bishna.

The police was also successful in making recovery of the motorcycle & Scooty used in the commission of offence.

The police is also investigating the role of people who have provided logistic support to these criminals. Moreover police is also investigating the role of notorious criminal namely Arun Choudhary @Abu Jatt, who

is currently lodged at District Jail Kathua and role of his associates & also those people who are in touch with him. Besides police is also investigating the authenticity of few Social media updates including Instagram posts.

BRO rescues people...

their vehicles to safety. The road has been closed temporarily due to fresh spell of snowfall in Gurez valley and along the mountainous areas of Bandipora district. (Agencies)

Pakistani man who...

A flag meeting was conducted with the Pakistan Rangers to express concern over its failure to restrict unauthorised movement of the Pakistani national, he said.

The man was handed over to the Pakistan Rangers on humanitarian grounds and as a goodwill gesture, the spokesperson said. (Agencies)

Talks with China...

good environment over whatever issues there are, he said.

"I understand that we should wait for the outcome of the talks. But I want to assure the countrymen that India has not bowed down anywhere, nor will it ever bow down," he said.

Singh also expressed confidence that India's defence exports, which crossed the Rs 21,000 crore mark in the financial 2023-24, will increase going forward.

"In 2014, we exported Rs 600 crore defence items, but now the figure has crossed Rs 21,000 crore, and I can say that it is going to increase," he said.

The minister said the Modi government is committed to ensuring that defence items, whether missiles and other weapons, bombs or tanks, should be made in India and by Indians. "Today, we have achieved defence production worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore," he said. (Agencies)

StartUps in India grew...

economy from 11th rank to 5th largest economy and is now on the verge of occupying 3rd rank, the Union Minister said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, in 2014, when PM Modi took over, India stood as the world's tenth largest economy. In less than ten years, we jumped to 5th position. Hopefully this year it will emerge as the 4th largest economy and during PM Modi's 3rd term, India will be the world's 3rd largest economy, marching on to become the No.1 economy by 2047," he said.

During Financial Year 2023-24, Indian economy grew at 6 percent plus for the third successive year even as the global economy struggles to grow at around 3 percent. We are the third-largest fintech economy in the world after the USA and the UK, he said.

"India of 2024 is ready to take a giant leap, backed by its scientific acumen and technological prowess," said Dr Jitendra Singh.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, this is the age of innovation and ideas. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is providing every kind of technical as well as financial support for ideas and innovations to grow and sustain. As a result, India has emerged as a leading StartUp ecosystem in the world and the time has come to strategise sustainability, he added.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, youth is the centre of focus of the Modi Government through empowerment of the Amrit-Peedhi.

"The common citizen believes that India can become the world's leading economy under the leadership of PM Modi because of the outreach he commands across the world and the common people also feel confident under the Government headed by Narendra Modi," he said.

Just 8% of Women...

to ensure equal opportunities for women in politics. He also highlighted the critical role of party leadership in promoting gender diversity.

"Political parties must prioritise gender inclusion in

candidate selection and provide adequate support to women aspirants," he emphasised.

Farhat Jahan, a retired faculty member at AMU's Abdullah Women's College, said the issue of women's political representation extends beyond numerical quotas to encompass systemic changes in party dynamics and electoral processes.

She also emphasised the need for gender-sensitive policies that address challenges faced by women in politics.

"The upcoming phases of the elections present an opportunity for political parties to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality through concrete actions. Initiatives such as mentorship programmes, capacity-building workshops and awareness campaigns can empower women to actively participate in the electoral process and pursue leadership roles," she added.

Prof Mohammad Aftab Alam from the political science department at AMU pointed out the challenges women often face in forming independent political opinions amid societal influences.

"Even the ones elected are often relegated to symbolic roles," he remarked, highlighting broader issues of token representation.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is the only party that, as a policy, provides 33 per cent tickets to women.

Meera Parida, state vice-president of the BJD's Biju Mahila Dal, stressed the need for substantive action in women's empowerment and praised her party's initiative of reserving 33 per cent of seats for women.

"Reserving seats alone is not enough. We need a cultural shift where women are seen as leaders and decision-makers," she emphasised, advocating for comprehensive reforms.

Both major parties - the BJP and the Congress - have listed women-centric initiatives in their manifestos.

The BJP's manifesto promises to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act) to honour and empower women, integrate women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) into the service sector to enhance their economic participation and expand health services.

The Congress has pledged legislative reforms for women's empowerment, including the immediate enactment of the Women's Reservation Act.

However, these commitments are yet to translate into substantial numbers of women contesting the elections. Alka Lamba, chief of the Congress' women's wing, highlighted the party's commitment to gender equality across sectors.

"The Congress has extended political, economic and social rights to women," Lamba asserted, outlining ambitious targets for women's representation in leadership roles.

As the Lok Sabha elections progress, the spotlight is on political parties to address these concerns and demonstrate tangible commitment towards fostering women's participation and representation in governance.

The upcoming poll phases will be closely monitored to assess whether there is a meaningful shift towards greater gender inclusivity in the political landscape especially after the hype over passage of the Women's Reservation Act, Aftab said.

Ramaswamy noted, "While parties are vocal about empowering women, the lack of women candidates reflects a deeper issue of gender bias within political systems."

The Lok Sabha polls are being held in seven phases beginning from April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4.

The second phase was held on April 26 while the other phases are scheduled for May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. (PTI)

More rain in Kashmir...

Kokernag 16.4mm and Gulmarg 20.6mm during the past 24 hours.

Some upper reaches including Kongdori in Gulmarg, Sinthan pass, Mughal Road and Razdan pass received light snowfall during the period.

The MeT office forecast generally cloudy weather on Sunday with light to moderate rain, snow (light snow over higher reaches) at most places with thunder, light-

ning. Hailstorm and gusty winds at few places with possibility of heavy rain over isolated places of Jammu & Kashmir division particularly during the next two days was forecast.

There is a possibility of light rain with thunder at many places on April 30. The weather will generally remain dry from May 1 to 5, it said.

Kashmir weather, an independent forecaster said that "due to the impact of back-to-back active Western Disturbances as cyclonic circulations, Jammu and Kashmir is going to receive moderate to heavy rainfall during the next 48 hrs".

"The main intensity of this weather system will be from April 29 and will continue till late night of April 30," it said.

Farmers have been advised to suspend farm operations till April 30. There is also possibility of disruption of traffic over higher reaches of Zojila, Sinthan Pass, Mughal Road and Razdan pass.

The inclement weather may cause water logging in low lying areas besides there is a possibility of landslides and shooting stones on upper reaches. Due to rainfall there is also possibility of temporary increases in water level in river Jehlum and tributaries and other local streams and nullas.

The maximum temperatures dropped by 5-13 degrees in Kashmir valley on the previous day. Srinagar had a maximum of 11.5 degree Celsius and it was 11.3 degrees below normal on Saturday forcing people and tourists to wear warm clothes.

The MeT office said the minimum temperature recorded during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday in Srinagar at 8.5 degree Celsius and it was 0.8 degree below normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir during this period of the season.

Pahalgam had a low of 6.4 degrees Celsius and Gulmarg 1.5 degrees Celsius recorded on Sunday, the MeT office said.

4 killed, 2 missing...

"Three persons were rescued and shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment," the official said and added that four bodies have been retrieved while search is on for the remaining two persons.

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR SUPPLY OF BOOKS TO LIBRARY GDC SIDHRA

Sub:- Expression of Interest for supplying books to Govt. Degree College Sidhra

Govt. Degree College Sidhra invites sealed Expression of Interest (EOI) from local vendor(s)/Supplier(s)/distributor(s) who are registered with the Book Seller's Federation (National/UT) for supplying books to the library for the year 2024-25.

Interested vendor(s)/Supplier(s)/distributor(s) may submit "Expression of Interest" in a sealed envelope clearly superscripted as "Expression of Interest" (EOI) with relevant supporting documents to the college for supplying books within 10 working days of publication of this notice. Any corrigendum / addendum shall only be published separately.

For detailed instructions, eligibility criteria, general terms and conditions visit college website www.gdcsidhra.in or contact the office of the undersigned/college librarian/in all working days from 9 am to 3 pm.

**Sd/-
PRINCIPAL
GDC SIDHRA**

**DIP/J-263/24
Date: 27-4-24**

Chuni makes fervent appeals for unity among PoJK DPs; rues govt indifference towards implementation of 2014 financial package

JINNEWS SERVICE
DALOGRA (RAJOURI), APRIL 28

In order to give a fresh momentum to their ongoing struggle, S.O.S International—the only registered organization of Pakistan-occupied Jammu Kashmir (PoJK) displaced persons—on Sunday announced that it would compile fresh data on all the families displaced from PoJK in 1947 to determine the exact numbers of voters and non-voters in the community.

The organization said the process will be completed before the conduct of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir—first after the abrogation of Article 370—to ensure that the community plays a decisive role in the electoral exercise to get fair and better treatment from power corridors.

“We have decided to compile fresh data on all the families displaced from PoJK in 1947 to know as to how these families have grown and multiplied over the years. The people have been asked to bring their data vis-à-vis the number of family members, children, and elders they have in their families to determine the exact number of voters and non-voters among the community,” said Rajiv Chuni, Chairman SOS International while addressing a largely attending meeting of PoJK community members in Dalogra area of Rajouri district.

The senior refugee

leader said the collected information, to be received from different channels, would be computerized and shared with the Government of India, including the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister shortly.

“The sole motive of the exercise is to chalk out future strategies for the community. Our demands are still being projected on the basis of the families that got displaced from PoJK in 1947. Consequently, the displaced families which have multiplied over the years remain deprived of their due benefits. This data will help us in strategizing about the community’s future, leveraging insights from the data to articulate fresh demands to the new central government,” Mr Chuni said.

He also announced the formation of committees at the village level to strengthen their ongoing movement. “These committees aim to unite displaced families, fostering awareness and participation at the grassroots level,” he said.

Mr Chuni outlined a hierarchical structure—from village to district level—ensuring effective coordination and amplification of the community’s voice before the Assembly polls.

“The village committees will bring all displaced families on a single platform and report to the block-level committees which will coordinate at the village level to create



proper awareness among the displaced families and make them part of this ongoing movement. The block-level committees will be supervised by Zila committees at every district level for better coordination. The Zila committees will report to our central office at Bakshi Nagar. The whole exercise will be completed before the conduct of Assembly polls so that we will be able to raise our voice with full force in the coming electoral battle,” Mr Chuni said.

The refugee leader lamented that the community, despite having a presence across different parts of J&K and other parts of the country, is suffering due to a lack of unity among displaced families and urged community members to set aside differences and stand united in their advocacy efforts. “Our community members need to set aside their differences, if any, based on caste, creed and religion. They

should come forward on a single platform and unitedly raise their voice. It will yield good results if the displaced persons get united,” he said.

The refugee leader regretted that no political party has cleared its stand on the demands being raised by the displaced PoJK families despite the fact that elections on Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat are scheduled to be held now.

“All political parties, including BJP, have maintained a criminal silence on our demands. The political parties and their candidates should not forget that they are under scrutiny of the displaced families of PoJK. It is high time for them to publicly announce their full support to all major demands of PoJK displaced persons if they are serious about getting our votes in Rajouri and Poonch districts,” he said.

Mr Chuni, who was authorized to devise a strategy over the role of

party leaders. We demand that the Government of India should religiously and in principle fulfill the package and implement it without any further delay,” Mr Chuni said, “all political parties including BJP have maintained an indifferent attitude to the implementation of this package. The BJP despite having a double engine government at the Centre and in J&K failed to implement the package in letter and spirit”.

Mr Chuni said, “It is the Lieutenant Governor-led administration’s indifference that has badly affected the implementation of this package. The BJP government claims that it is working on the ‘Sabka Saath Sabha Vikas’ formula but we are yet to see the ‘Vikas’ (development) of our community. It is the Kashmiri displaced persons who have benefited most in the BJP regime but our community has been ignored and overlooked for reasons better known to the BJP people at the Centre”.

Others who addressed the gathering are Kewal Ram, V K Datta, Ved Raj Bali, Capt Ravinder Raina, Sharda Devi, Rajinder Sharma, Jyoti Swaroop, Adv. Anil Salgotra, Ashok Sharma, Jagjit Singh, Daleep Singh Chib, Pritam Sharma, Ex Sarpanch Dheeraj Sharma, Pt. Satish Sharma, Satinder Dev Gupta, Akash Sharma, Er. Vishal Sharma, Dr. Daleep Choudhary, Advocate Rajesh Sharma Raju presented vote of thanks.

Anti-Pakistan protest led by Sunil Dimple demands surgical strikes and war, vows support to Indian army for POK Liberation



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 28

Amid escalating tensions following recent terrorist encounters and attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood, spearheaded a robust anti-Pakistan protest rally in Jammu. Dimple, alongside other prominent leaders including Vijay Viridi, Arun Verma, and Kewal Kumar, condemned the killing of a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member and the ongoing militant infiltrations in various regions, including Jammu, Kathua, Ramgarh, and Dudu Basant Garh.

During the rally, Dimple vehemently denounced Pakistan’s role in fostering terrorism in the region, burning effigies of key figures such as ISI operatives, Hafeez Saeed, and Azhar Masood. He demanded decisive action from the Indian government, urging Prime Minister to initiate surgical strikes and declare war against Pakistan. Additionally, Dimple advocated for the integration of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK), Gilgit, and Baltistan into the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the need to reclaim these regions from Pakistan’s control.

Addressing a fervent crowd, Dimple pledged unwavering support to

the Indian armed forces in their efforts to combat terrorism and secure the liberation of POK. He called upon the Indian Army Chief to execute surgical strikes and military operations aimed at eliminating ISI modules operating within Jammu and Kashmir.

“Dimple warned ISI, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Pakistan that Jammu and Kashmir has been, is, and will forever remain an integral part of India,” stated one of the attendees, echoing Dimple’s sentiments.

Furthermore, Dimple stressed that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, numbering over one crore thirty lakh, would not tolerate any compromise on national security or sovereignty. He urged the Director General of J&K Police and security forces to intensify efforts in dismantling ISI networks within the region.

The rally concluded with a resounding call for unity and action, with Dimple reaffirming his commitment to safeguarding the interests of Jammu and Kashmir and its people. As tensions continue to simmer in the region, the demands put forth by Dimple and his supporters underscore the urgency of addressing cross-border terrorism and securing India’s territorial integrity.

Cardiovascular health in developing world - Multifactorial and intersectoral determinants: Dr Sushil Sharma

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 28

While spearheading his drive to educate and screen masses for cardiovascular and related ailments Head Department of Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr Sushil Sharma held a day long Cardiac awareness cum Health Check camp at Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir, Dhammi Nagrota, Jammu with main focus on promotion of cardiac friendly lifestyle in developing countries to overcome major socioeconomic burden alongwith achieving affordable and equitable healthcare.

While interacting with the People Dr Sushil Stated that Cardiovascular disease (CVD) and related chronic diseases are now recognized as the leading causes of death worldwide. Cardiovascular disease risk factors have also increased globally. In addition to the disease burden, global CVD imposes a substantial economic burden on LMICs at both population and household levels. The accelerating rates of unrecognized and inadequately addressed CVD and related chronic diseases in LMICs are cause for immediate action. Despite several recent calls for action to translate epidemiological data into strategies and policy frameworks, a profound mismatch remains between the compelling evidence documenting the health and economic



burden of CVD and the lack of concrete steps to increase investment and implement CVD prevention and disease management efforts in LMICs. The determinants of the global CVD epidemic are multifactorial and intersectoral, involving inter-related influences that stem from multiple sectors of society, extending beyond the direct domain of the health sector. The proximate risk factors for CVD are genomic, biological (hypertension, dyslipidemia, diabetes mellitus), and behavioral (diet, physical activity, tobacco). These risk factors are influenced by more upstream and structural factors, such as demographic change, economic development, sociopolitical determinants, social inequality, education, cultural norms, and globalization.

He elaborated that An emerging body of evidence suggests that rapid dietary changes associated

with nutritional transition, along with a decrease in levels of physical activity in many rapidly urbanizing societies, also may play a particularly important role in the rise of CVD observed in developing countries. The nutritional transition currently occurring in many low and middle income countries has created a new phenomenon in which it is not uncommon to see both undernutrition and obesity coexist in the same populations. The exponential growth in the use of tropical oils (specifically palm oil) and partially hydrogenated soybean oil in low and middle income countries is troubling because both these oils contain high levels of fatty acids that are atherogenic and linked to an increased risk of myocardial infarction. Dr Sushil Sharma while highlighting the measures needed to promote cardiovascular health in developing countries told that we should

include a set of specific actions targeted to specific stakeholders, which are intended to encourage a sufficient shift in the global health and development agenda to facilitate critical next steps that will build toward the eventual goal of widespread dissemination and implementation of evidence-based programs, policies, and other tools to address CVD and related chronic diseases in LMICs. The individual-level actions needed to prevent and treat CVD appear straightforward: eat a healthy diet, remain physically active throughout life, do not use tobacco, and seek health care regularly, he said

Management Committee of the Mandir Sanjay Gandotra, Vikas Singh Jamwal, Davinder Singh, Vikram Bhasin, Jung Bahadur and Balwan Singh appreciated the efforts of Dr Sushil Sharma and his team for conducting cardiac awareness cum health check up camp and shows their heartfelt gratitude.

Others who were part of this humane effort included Dr Yashwant Sharma, Dr. Dhanshwar Kapoor, Dr Shubham Pandoh, Dr Harsh Chauhan, Aditya Chaubey and Dr Abhishek Mahajan. Paramedics and Volunteers who were part of the team included Kamal Sharma, Rohit Nayyar, Rahul Sharma, Amish Jamwal, Mukesh Kumar, Rajinder Singh, Rahul Vaid, Jatin Bhasin, Paramveer Singh, Gourav Sharma and Vikas Kumar.

Rare and Endemic Raaj Harar Plant Thrives in Pune, Thanks to SGWF's Dedication and Dr. Verma's Vision

JINNEWSERVICE
JAMMU, APR 25

A monumental achievement in botanical conservation has been celebrated with the thriving presence of the rare and invaluable Raaj Harar plant in Pune, all thanks to the tireless dedication of Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation (SGWF) and the visionary leadership of Dr. Sonia Verma, Director of SGWF.

Dr. Verma highlighted the remarkable efforts of SGWF’s research officer, who worked tirelessly and selflessly to achieve this success. Inspired by the challenge set forth by Dr. C. M. Seth IFS during Dr. Verma’s tenure as an MSc Forestry student, the research officer embarked on a journey to preserve the genotype of the Raaj Harar plant. Dr. Verma emphasized the pivotal role played by this challenge in igniting a passion for conservation and botanical research within SGWF’s ranks.

“Through unwavering commitment and inspired by Dr. Seth’s challenge, our research officer devoted himself to the preservation of the Raaj Harar plant,” stated Dr. Verma. “His dedication is a testament to the spirit of SGWF and our mission to safeguard biodiversity.”

Since then, Dr. Verma and her team have tirelessly worked on preserving the genetic legacy of the Raaj Harar plant. To date, approximately 4000



grafted plants have been raised, with several reaching the fruiting stage. This remarkable achievement signifies a significant step forward in ensuring the continued existence and propagation of this rare species.

The Raaj Harar plant, revered for its remarkable medicinal properties, faced the imminent threat of extinction due to its old age and non-germinative capacity by seed at village Mathwar of District Jammu. Over the course of 25 years, numerous experiments were conducted to propagate it both by seed and vegetative means. However, it was Dr. Rakesh Verma’s pioneering work that ultimately prevailed, ensuring the perpetuation of its genetic heritage through meticulous grafting techniques conducted

at a specific time of year. “This achievement stands as a testament to the resilience of scientific inquiry and collaborative effort in the face of biodiversity loss,” remarked Advocate (Dr) Priya Sharma, General Secretary of SGWF. “Through decades of tireless research and experimentation, we have not only preserved the Raaj Harar plant but also unlocked new avenues for its sustainable cultivation and utilization.”

Dr. Suryawanshi, from Pune is instrumental in facilitating the transfer and a visionary in holistic healing practices, expressed profound appreciation for the significance of this milestone. “In establishing our Ayurvedic village in Pune, we are committed to fostering biodiversity

and preserving traditional medicinal knowledge. The addition of the Raaj Harar plant to our sanctuary reaffirms our dedication to these principles.” Dr Arvind Kadus a renowned conservationist also appreciated the efforts of Dr Rakesh Verma, he said that very soon a team of researchers will visit Dr Verma and learn how he worked to save this genotype.

The successful transplantation of the Raaj Harar plant to Pune represents a beacon of hope for the conservation of endangered species worldwide. It underscores the critical importance of long-term research, collaboration, and innovation in safeguarding the planet’s natural diversity for future generations.

Dr. Verma expressed her gratitude to Dr. Seth for his inspiration and mentorship, as well as to the entire SGWF team for their unwavering dedication and hard work. She also extended her appreciation to Dr. Rakesh Verma for his pioneering research and vision in the field of botanical conservation.

The success of SGWF in raising grafted Raaj Harar plants underscores the power of collaboration, dedication, and a shared commitment to preserving our planet’s natural heritage. It serves as a beacon of hope for the future of biodiversity conservation and traditional medicinal knowledge preservation.

EDITORIAL

Weathering the electoral storm!

THE forthcoming elections in the Anantnag-Poonch-Rajouri (APR) Parliamentary constituency have been cast under a shadow of uncertainty due to the unpredictable weather conditions and accessibility challenges. With polling scheduled for the third phase on May 7, the Election Commission of India (ECI) finds itself at a crossroads, deliberating whether to maintain the current schedule or to heed calls for a postponement. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) PK Pole have diligently compiled a comprehensive report, detailing the ground realities concerning weather and road conditions in the APR constituency. Their efforts to gather information from various concerned authorities, including insights on the crucial Mughal Road connecting Anantnag with Rajouri and Poonch districts, are commendable. This meticulous approach ensures that any decision made by the Election Commission is well-informed and considers the welfare of all stakeholders. The complexity of the situation was further highlighted by the recent meeting convened by Returning Officer Syed Fakhrudin, where candidates and their representatives provided their perspectives on the matter. It is heartening to see democratic principles in action, with diverse viewpoints being heard and duly considered. However, amidst differing opinions, the overarching concern remains the safety and fairness of the electoral process. The voices advocating for the continuation of the current schedule, citing incurred campaign expenditures, are understandable. Yet, they must be balanced against the practical challenges posed by adverse weather conditions, particularly the closure of the Mughal Road due to snowfall and rains. The inability of candidates from Rajouri and Poonch to file their nomination papers due to these circumstances underscores the severity of the situation. Prominent candidates in fray from Anantnag include PDP chief and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, former Minister Mian Altaf (National Conference), Zaffar Manhas (Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party) and Advocate Mohammad Parray (DPAP). The BJP hasn't fielded any candidate in Anantnag constituency though UT chief of the party Ravinder Raina was stated to be frontrunner for the seat. Name of an IAS officer was also under consideration of the BJP high command. It is imperative for the Election Commission to weigh these factors carefully and prioritize the integrity of the electoral process above all else. While the rescheduling of elections may entail logistical complications and additional costs, ensuring equal participation and access to the democratic process is paramount. Any decision made must reflect a commitment to fairness, transparency, and the well-being of all citizens involved. As the Election Commission deliberates on the fate of the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency elections, it must remain guided by principles of equity and prudence. The interests of democracy demand nothing less. In the face of adversity, it is the resilience and adaptability of our electoral institutions that will ultimately safeguard the democratic ideals we hold dear.

KALYANI SHANKAR

Artificial Intelligence, a game-changer in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has revolutionised traditional campaign strategies. The era of candidates personally visiting voters' homes and engaging in conversations over tea, even after a five-year hiatus, has given way to a more technologically advanced approach. Social media played a pivotal role in the 2014 election. However, the advent of AI and the potential use of deepfake videos in India's 2024 elections could be game-changers. These videos, capable of blurring the lines between truth and falsehood, have the potential to significantly impact the trust and integrity of the electoral process. Political parties and candidates have understood the power of AI in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. They use AI to analyse voter data, enabling them to develop effective campaign strategies. Additionally, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants have been deployed to engage with voters on social media, providing real-time responses to their queries and concerns.

The use of AI technology can help with election processes in several ways: AI can predict election outcomes.

AI chatbots and virtual assistants can communicate with virtual media. AI can prevent election fraud and regulate political advertising campaign finance violations.

Political parties can now customise their calls to individual voters, potentially harming their opponents' reputations. In India, more than 50% of the population uses the internet, which may increase to 900 million by 2025. The upcoming election in India is expected to generate a market worth Rs 500 crore.

Political parties are using AI to reach voters via social media. Congress and BJP used AI in last year's State elections, the first time false videos and parodies were used in political campaigning. Parties like BJP, Congress, AAP, DMK and AIADMK use AI technology to engage with their supporters. For example, the BJP uses AI to translate PM Modi's speeches into eight regional languages. However, some campaigners misuse AI-generated videos, including deepfakes, to spread misin-

Role of AI in Lok Sabha elections



formation. These videos are targeted at the 18-25 age group and are being shared on platforms like WhatsApp.

Parties in India use various tools to influence voters. They share fake images and videos on social media platforms. For example, the Congress party shared a phoney photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the same time, the BJP posted a false video of Rahul Gandhi on Instagram. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK and AIADMK parties used recordings of their deceased leaders for voter support in this election. The Communist parties have also employed AI technology in their campaigns. One

video shows Asaduddin Owaisi, the leader of the AIMIM party, singing Hindu devotional songs. Regional leaders like Akhilesh Yadav, Naveen Patnaik and Mamata Banerjee also applied similar tools to influence voters.

The use of AI for malicious purposes is a significant concern. With advanced AI, it has become possible to impersonate anyone, including voters or candidates, which can lead to identity theft and manipulation of the electoral process. This underscores the need for clear regulations to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process, making the audience more aware of the potential risks and the importance of addressing

them, fostering a sense of vigilance.

The use of AI in political campaigns raises valid concerns about privacy and the potential for unfair competition and misinformation. Therefore, it's imperative that clear regulations are implemented to ensure a transparent electoral process. Governments must take the lead in regulating AI use to promote fairness.

The IT Minister has already issued warnings to social media companies, instilling confidence in the audience about the security and integrity of the electoral process. The Election Commission must issue clear guidelines to regulate AI-generated information for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. These guidelines should address ethical AI use in campaigns and voter data analysis. Strict rules are necessary to maintain the integrity of the electoral process, protect voters' rights and ensure fairness and transparency. Without these regulations, there could be doubts about the legitimacy of the election results.

While there are valid concerns about AI, it's crucial to recognise its potential for positive change. Certain AI-generated tech-

nologies have the power to revolutionise how we conduct free and fair elections. As these technologies gain wider acceptance, they could pave the way for e-elections, a future where elections are conducted online, ensuring a more transparent and accountable electoral process. This potential for positive change should inspire optimism and hope, reassuring the audience about the future of elections. During the Bihar elections, the Election Commission used an AI-powered system to ensure transparency and prevent manipulation. The system detected and flagged misinformation and hate speech cases, expediting the counting process and curbing hate speech during the election. This demonstrates how AI can be used effectively and instils confidence in the electorate. Presidents, prime ministers, or legislators could win or lose based mainly on the success or failure of their AI campaign. Gullible voters can be fooled easily. Technological advancements can bring about significant changes and AI is no exception.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

Work with allies for semiconductors

KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

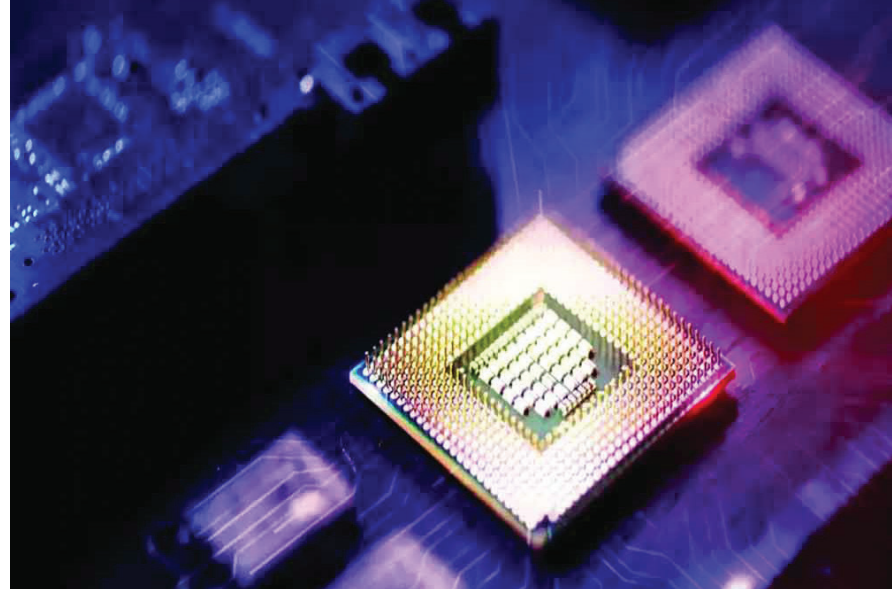
One of the most common reasons cited by foreign investors, against investing in India is too complex regulatory processes and multiplicity of overlapping compliances. The latest to join the bandwagon is Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. The minister was responding to questions from a journalist on the reason for Taiwanese companies not warming up to India's constant welcome mat for attracting investments in the new age technology, building block and semiconductors space.

To be sure Taiwan is home to the largest chip manufacturing facilities in the world, a key component of the digital economy, ranging from mobile phones to satellites. Wu during his interaction with the journalist quoted "India is cumbersome in its administrative structure and it would require for Indian Government to look at that too, to streamline all kinds of laws and regulations to help semi-

conductor investors coming to the country". He has further in the same interview talked about the lack of skilled engineers to work in the chip-making factories, even though India doesn't fall short of chip-designing talent.

What Mr Wu highlighted, isn't something new, as it is a similar caution from many other potential investors interested in India. This author spoke with several high-ranking officials in several new and emerging technology manufacturing companies, who complained about complex time-consuming administrative processes in India and echoed that, when compared to competing economies such as Singapore, Vietnam etc.

A new department called Invest India (a public-private joint venture) was created, early on in the current Government's regime, to assist potential investors through the difficult, regulatory regime. Even for semiconductors, where, India is the preferred potential partner, a dedicated business divi-



sion has been created in the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, in the form of India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).

The recent trade policy agenda 2024 released by the Biden administration highlighted "Since announcing the negotiating mandate in August 2022, the two sides have pursued an ambitious schedule of meetings to make progress as quickly as possible. In June 2023,

AIT and TECRO signed the first agreement under the Initiative. This agreement includes high-standard commitments and economically meaningful outcomes in a number of trade areas, including customs administration and trade facilitation, good regulatory practices, services domestic regulation, anticorruption and small and medium-sized enterprises", underscoring the importance of the part-

nership between the two countries.

The US supports India's ambitions to develop into a significant player in semiconductor design and manufacturing space, as an alternative to China. India US trade relationship, which has been in limbo has been energised in the last two years after a formal Trade policy forum came into existence, which has had regular meetings on several bilateral issues.

In the 2024 trade policy agenda document, US mentions, "We committed to pursue enhanced engagement leading to mutually beneficial outcomes in several areas, with a view to deepening the trade relationship for the benefit of working people. We identified certain areas, including critical minerals, customs and trade facilitation, supply chains and trade in high technology products, in which our Governments intend to develop an ambitious and forward-looking roadmap for enhanced cooperation in order to achieve economically meaningful outcomes."

Given the convergence of interests and the willingness of like-minded partners and allies to invest and support India in the race of semiconductors, the next Government could do well to include removing regulatory bottlenecks in its 100-day agenda. It would be a good start towards a Stated Vikist Bharat target.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

The U-turns and contradictions in Antony's political journey

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The year was 1993. The Kerala Press Academy (since renamed as Kerala Media Academy) under the ownership of the Kerala Government was having the Mathai Manjooran Memorial Day. Mathai Manjooran was a socialist party leader and was a member of the EMS Namboodiripad-led coalition Government during the 1967-69. He was also a trade union leader who never hesitated to speak his mind. It is unfortunate that he passed away in 1970 at the age of 58.

A K Antony, the quintessential Congress leader was the speaker who delivered the Manjooran Memorial speech and as a journalist, I was there to cover the event. The country was yet to come out of the impact of the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya and the entire secularist forces were up

in arms against the Hindus for the "barbaric" act. Not a single day passed in Kerala without communal harmony meetings and all speakers were vying with one another in blaming the Sanatanis for the heinous act and praising Islam as the religion of peace.

But Antony chose a different approach in his 45 minutes. He warned the minority communities (read Christians and Muslims) from attacking the Hindus and reminded the two communities that they should be grateful to the Sanatanis for their magnanimity in offering the minorities more than what the Hindus themselves enjoyed. "The minorities have been given more rights and privileges to run their own educational institutions and hospitals while the Hindus were denied the same. We should always bear in mind the truth that the minorities in India enjoy unique rights and

privileges that the Hindus do not have and we should be grateful to them for their broad-mindedness," said Antony, which made the next day's headlines.

Antony became the chief minister of Kerala for the third time in 2001 but he quit in 2004 for reasons best known to him, the then Congress president Sonia Gandhi and the then Muslim League boss Mohammed Shihab Ali Thangal. Eight Hindu fishermen were butchered by members of a Muslim extremist organisation at Maradu in Kozhikode district in May 2003 and there was a demand for a CBI probe into the massacre. A prominent Muslim League leader, who later on became a Union Minister in the Manmohan Singh Government played a significant role in offering shelter in a mosque to the assassins.

When the issue of the CBI probe came for con-

sideration in the liaison committee meeting of the UDF, the Muslim League leaders warned Antony who was the then Chief Minister against an investigation by the Central agency. The UDF had won 99 out of the 140 seats at stake and was in a comfortable position. The Muslim League ultimatum against the CBI probe angered Antony and he announced in a public meeting the next day that political parties, especially the caste and community-based outfits, should not make the Government dance to their tunes with organised bargaining power. That turned out to be the nemesis for Antony as the Gods in Malappuram asked Sonia Gandhi to remove him from the post of chief minister. Despite Antony tendering an apology, the chieftains of the Muslim League, controlling Kerala politics from the Kudappanakkal castle in Panakkad, were not

humoured and they insisted on the former's ouster. That was how Antony resigned as the Chief Minister and shifted camp to Delhi. The Sulthans of Malappuram had the last laugh.

Antony knows very well that his shirt and dhoti should be more secular than that of the CPI(M) and other outfits to stay in the reckoning. That is why the person who wanted the minority communities to be grateful to the Hindus wants the Sanatan Dharma to be demolished. There is nothing surprising in Antony's stance as he was always against the Hindus even as the president of Kerala Students Union, the feeder organisation of the Congress. The group in the Congress party in Kerala has its roots in Antony's grievances over the status enjoyed by Hindu leaders like K Karunakaran and their clout in the High Command. The group in Congress has nothing to do

with ideology and Antony's hatred towards Hindus is reflected in his cursing his son Anil Antony joining the BJP. What Antony should have done is to give freedom to 38-year-old Anil to select the party of his choice and wish him all success. Instead of that what Antony has done is to demand the Nehru-Gandhi clan to field candidates for the Lok Saba election from Amethi and Rae Bareilly. He also declared that the Congress party cannot exist without the Nehru-Gandhi family. Isn't this another way of telling that India is Indira and Indira is India?

Remember, this is the same Antony who ridiculed Indira Gandhi cast his lot with the CPI(M) in 1980 and formed a Government with the Marxists during 1980-1982.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Why young men must be aware of testicular cancer

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

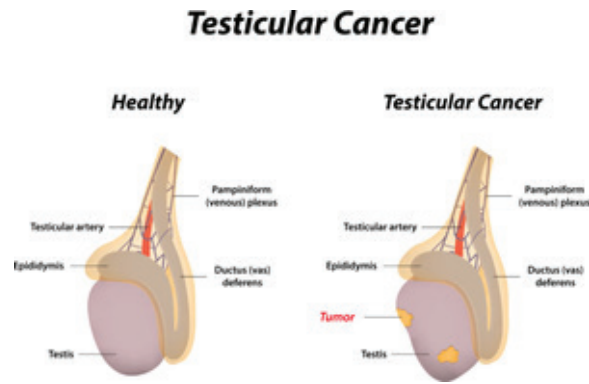
Although rare and curable, young men must be aware of testicular cancer, which can severely impact their reproductive health, say experts.

Testicular cancer is not only rare worldwide, but also in India. The country has one of the lowest incidences of testicular cancer with less than 1 man per 100,000 population affected by this condition. However, it is the most common cancer in young men aged 15 to 35 years, and can significantly affect their fertility levels.

"Testicular cancer has a direct impact on the organs that produce sperm, which may interfere with the ability to reproduce," Dr Pallavi Prasad, Fertility Consultant, Nova IVF Fertility, Basaveshwara Nagar, Bengaluru, told IANS.

"Surgery is frequently used as the primary therapy for testicular cancer, which involves removing the cancerous testicle. While this surgery tries to eliminate malignant cells, it may influence sperm production. Even if the remaining testicle is healthy, sperm production might be temporarily or permanently impaired," she added.

In addition, chemotherapy and radiation therapy, used to target cancer cells throughout the body, can also cause collateral harm to sperm cells, reducing



sperm production and quality. The doctor suggested fertility preservation methods, like sperm banking to save sperm samples before cancer treatment.

"Men can maintain the prospect of biological parenting by storing sperm before treatment, even if cancer therapy influences fertility. However, it is important to note that fertility preservation methods may not be available to all men, and the decision to explore such treatments might be difficult. Treatment urgency, financial factors, and personal preferences may all impact people's fertility preservation decisions," Dr Prasad said.

Although precise reasons behind testicular cancer are not yet understood, risk factors include early exposure to oestrogens via hormone therapy, and congenital conditions like small testes, or undescended testes (cryptorchidism), among others.

Dr Shalabh Agrawal, Consultant, Urology, C.K. Birla Hospital, Gurugram, told IANS that the most

common symptom of testicular cancer is a painless enlargement in one of the testicles.

"This is in contrast to a sudden, painful enlargement, which is more likely to be due to an infection rather than cancer. If a patient is being treated for a long-standing testicular infection but the enlargement persists, they should be screened for the possibility of testicular cancer," he added.

Yet, "testicular cancer is considered a highly treatable form of cancer, with a 10-year survival rate exceeding 90 per cent," Dr Agrawal said, stressing the need for early detection via self-examination.

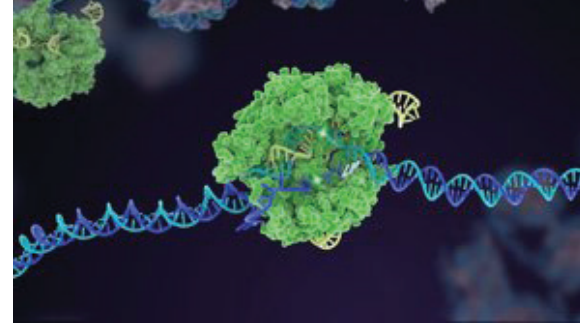
"The self-examination should be performed daily, after showering, by gently palpating both testicles to check for any abnormalities in size, position, or the presence of lumps or swelling. If any such changes are detected, it is essential to promptly report them to a healthcare provider for further evaluation and appropriate management," he added.

Can CRISPR-Cas gene editing tech fight antimicrobial resistance?

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

CRISPR-Cas, the Nobel Prize-winning gene-editing technology, has the potential to target resistance genes and make bacteria sensitive to first-line antibiotics again, according to a study.

CRISPR-Cas, which functions like molecular "scissors", allows for precise alterations to the genomes of living organisms. This revolutionary technique, which brought its inventors, Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020, can cut the DNA at designated spots -- deleting unwanted genes or introducing new genetic material into an organism's cells, paving the way for



advanced therapies.

Even as antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is continuing to increase globally, researchers from the University of Copenhagen noted that CRISPR/Cas systems can also be employed for developing antimicrobial agents. It can effectively and selectively kill target bacterial populations, they noted in the study, presented at the ongoing ESCMID Global Congress

in Barcelona.

Dr Rodrigo Ibarra-Chavez, Department of Biology, University of Copenhagen, said that CRISPR-Cas systems (a bacterial immunity system) work by inducing "bacterial cell death or interfering with antibiotic resistance expression".

However, bacteria have ways to fight back as they also possess built-in anti-CRISPR systems that can

repair any damage caused by CRISPR-Cas systems. Their research proposes creating guided systems against AMR genes that could treat infections and prevent the dissemination of resistance genes via mobile genetic elements (MGEs).

MGEs are parts of the bacterial genome that can move to other host cells or also transfer to another species.

Dr Ibarra-Chavez noted that repurposing MGEs and choosing the delivery mechanism involved in the antimicrobial strategy is important for reaching the target bacterium. The method removes bacteria's resistance power and makes "them vulnerable again to first-line antibiotics", the study said.

Global measles cases see 88pc jump in 2023 from 2022: WHO

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

The number of measles cases worldwide has witnessed a significant increase of 88 per cent in 2023 from 2022, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday.

From 171,153 measles cases in 2022, it nearly doubled to 3,21,582 in 2023, said Patrick O'Connor of the WHO, who presented the research at the ongoing ESCMID Global Congress in Barcelona. The report blamed the lack of vaccinations during the Covid-19 pandemic behind the significant increases in measles worldwide.

"Over the last decade there has been significant progress towards measles and rubella elimination -- the Regional Verification Commissions for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVCEs) from all of the WHO Regions will review all national measles and rubella 2023 reports in 2024," O'Connor said.

"The measles virus is extremely infectious and any gaps in immunisation coverage are potential risks for the outbreak. So, coverage needs to be high but also uniform and equitable," he added.

2024 is likely to see a further increase in measles cases as some 94,481 cases have been reported up to early April. While 45 per cent of these cases have been in the WHO European Region, Yemen, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan are the countries with the highest reported measles incidence in the world, the report said.

"Worryingly, the number of countries suffering large or disruptive measles outbreaks (defined as 20 cases/million population continuously over a 12-month period) has tripled from 17 to 51," the report said.

Meanwhile, the report showed that vaccination against measles averted an estimated 57 million deaths globally from 2000 to 2022. Of these, 1.5 million are in the European region where there has been a 98 per cent reduction in annual measles deaths from 3,584 in 2000 to 70 in 2022.

"Over the last 20 years, there has been significant progress toward achieving measles and rubella elimination -- in order to solidify and maintain those gains, we need to ensure high, uniform and equitable routine immunisation coverage; and robust outreach and rapid outbreak response," O'Connor said.

27 pc spike in anti-vaccine posts on X after Covid jabs were available: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

There has been a 27 per cent spike in anti-vaccine posts on X.com (formerly Twitter) after Covid-19 shots were introduced, according to a new study.

Using open-source software (the Snsraper library in Python), researchers from Stanford University in the US downloaded 567,915 posts with the hashtag "vaccine" from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2022.

The analysis via machine learning algorithm showed that 458,045 were negative and 109,870 were positive. Posts that were negative in sentiment were predominant both before and after vaccines became available.

However, after Covid vaccines were introduced in December 2020, there was a marked increase in the number of posts about vaccines, with 10,201 more vaccine-related tweets per month, on average, than would be expected if vaccination hadn't started.

"There was also a



marked increase in negativity. There were 310,508 posts (approx. 12,420 a month on average) with negative sentiment after December 11, 2020. This is 27 per cent more than the 244,635 (9,785 a month) that would be expected if Covid vaccination hadn't started," revealed the study, presented at the ongoing ESCMID Global Congress in Barcelona.

"Social media has the power to exponentially amplify health messages, both beneficial and harmful, and is an arena in which political figures, actors, singers, personalities and other 'influencers' outnumber healthcare voices," said lead

researcher Dr Guillermo Rodriguez-Nava, of Stanford University School of Medicine.

"Unfortunately, in some countries, negative sentiments toward vaccines are not only health-related but also religious and political. This is a complex issue, with no easy solution, but we do need to change our approach because it is clearly not working," Rodriguez-Nava said.

The researcher proposed "avoiding derogatory terms such as 'anti-vaxxers', and perhaps even 'misinformation,' and approaching these individuals in a more respectful and understanding manner".

Early detection of 'osteoarthritis' may allow therapy that improves joint health: Researchers

AGENCIES
SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL 27

Researchers have said that early detection of "knee osteoarthritis" could provide an opportunity to arrest the disease process and restore joint health.

This comes after a team of researchers from the US-based Duke University Medical Centre successfully predicted knee osteoarthritis via a blood test at least eight years before tell-tale signs of

the disease appeared on X-rays.

In a study published in the journal Science Advances, the researchers validated the accuracy of the blood test that identifies key biomarkers of osteoarthritis.

They showed that it predicted the development of the disease, as well as its progression.

As per the study's senior author Virginia Byers Kraus, a professor at Duke University School of

Medicine, the blood test shows that "it's possible to detect this disease much earlier than our current diagnostics permit".

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis, affecting an estimated 35 million adults in the US.

While there is currently no cure, the potential new therapies may solve it by identifying it early and slowing its progression before it becomes too late, the study mentioned.

Study confirms air pollution increases risk of Alzheimer's disease

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

A small study of brain autopsies has provided evidence that prolonged exposure to air pollution may raise the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

While ambient air pollution is known to affect respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, its effect on neurodegenerative disorders has limited evidence.

The study by researchers from the University of Antwerp in Belgium and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands screened different regions of biobank brains of 4 individuals from Belgium with neuropathologically

confirmed Alzheimer's disease for the presence of black carbon particles.

The findings showed a significantly higher

smell), and the hippocampus (that plays a significant role in learning and memory).

In the paper published in JAMA Network Open, the researchers provided "evidence that ambient air pollution particles can translocate to the human brain and accumulate in multiple brain regions involved in cognitive functioning".

They said that the phenomenon may be behind "the onset and development of neurodegenerative disorders but also stressed the need for further studies to confirm their observations. A previous study on predisposed laboratory mice showed that particulate matter in polluted air can drive changes in the brain areas and speed up the onset of Alzheimer's.



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The analysis via machine learning algorithm showed that 458,045 were negative and 109,870 were positive. Posts that were negative in sentiment were predominant both before and after vac-

cines became available.

However, after Covid vaccines were introduced in December 2020, there was a marked increase in the number of posts about vaccines, with 10,201 more vaccine-related tweets per month, on average, than would be expected if vaccination hadn't started.

"There was also a marked increase in negativity. There were 310,508 posts (approx. 12,420 a month on average) with negative sentiment after December 11, 2020. This is 27 per cent more than the 244,635 (9,785 a month) that would be expected if Covid vaccination hadn't started," revealed the study, presented at the ongoing ESCMID Global Congress in Barcelona.

PM Modi has already scored a century in first two phases of LS polls: Amit Shah

AGENCIES
MAINPURI (UTTAR PRADESH),
APRIL 28

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already scored a century of seats in the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls.

Polling in the first two of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections was held on April 19 and April 26.

Addressing a rally in Mainpuri, HM Shah said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will win all 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

"The accounts of both the princes have not been opened. It is a choice to develop and prosper the country. Ram Mandir was constructed in five years. The Congress, Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party delayed Ram temple," he said.

HM Shah said that Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple Yadav did not go to Ram temple due to fear of the vote bank.

"This election is between those who opened fire on Ram devotees and those who built Ram temple," the Union Minister said.

"Article 370 was



removed from Jammu and Kashmir even though the Congress said that it would not allow Article 370 to be removed. We gave a befitting reply to Pakistan with a surgical strike," HM Shah, addressing the rally, said.

"Tell me whether Kashmir is a part of India or not. When we removed Article 370, 'Rahul Baba' said that rivers of blood would flow but not even a pebble was moved during PM Modi's rule. Earlier there used to be terrorist attacks. PM Modi gave a befitting reply by carrying out surgical and air strikes."

The Home Minister said that "we are in support of reservation, and no one can remove reservation".

"We will not allow anyone to remove the

reservation. The Opposition has opened a factory of lies. There was migration during the Samajwadi Party rule. PM Modi ended nepotism. Also, the 80 crore people of this country will continue to get free ration," HM Shah said while appealing to the people to defeat nepotism and make PM Modi win.

The former BJP president also said that PM Modi has brought 25 crore people out of the poverty line.

"They talk about backward people but when Kalyan Singh died, these people did not go to pay him respects. But they drove to Mukhtar Ansari's house. Will they respect the people of backward communities?" HM Shah wondered.

Constituency watch: Underdogs like AISF, SUCI determining factors in five-cornered contest at Bengal's Jaynagar

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, APRIL 28

Jaynagar Lok Sabha constituency in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal is poised for a five-cornered contest in the Lok Sabha elections, with representatives from two smaller parties emerging as potential game-changers for the three heavyweight candidates.

Two-time Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Pratima Mondal, BJP candidate Ashok Kandari, and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) candidate Samarendra Nath Mandal are the key contenders in the race.

However, the spotlight is also on Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) candidate Niranjan Naskar and All India Secular Front (AISF) candidate Meghnath Halder, who could disrupt the electoral dynamics and will be successful in being the 'mood-spoiler' for the three



heavyweight candidates from this constituency.

Jaynagar stands out among the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies as the one where SUCI(C) has considerable influence, particularly in Kuntali and Jaynagar Assembly constituencies.

In the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, SUCI(C) leader Tarun Mondal was able to bag victory in this erstwhile RSP stronghold for the first time, though it was achieved because of the seat-sharing agreement with TMC.

Similarly, AISF's presence could also challenge TMC in Assembly con-

stituencies under this Lok Sabha seat, including Canning-Paschim, Canning-Purba, and Magrahat-Purba, which have significant minority populations.

Political analysts suggest that SUCI(C) and AISF might erode the traditional vote banks of TMC and RSP, more than doing the same with the devoted BJP voters.

First, RSP and SUCI(C), both being Leftist parties, there is always a possibility of a split among the left-inclined voters in the constituency between these two forces.

Secondly, the common factor between TMC and

AISF is that minority voters are assets for both, and in that case, any division in the vote bank can prove to be advantageous for BJP.

Meanwhile, this time, BJP's Ashok Kandari is banking upon the combination of two factors, the first being consolidation of Hindu votes and the second being division in the anti-incumbency and the Opposition's support base.

Going by past poll statistics, Jaynagar is supposedly a safe bastion for the ruling TMC. In 2019, even amid a strong BJP wave in West Bengal, TMC's Pratima Mondal won by a margin of around 2.2 lakh votes.

Again, in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls, TMC candidates got elected from all seven Assembly constituencies under the Jaynagar Lok Sabha constituency.

This constituency had been a traditional strong-

hold for RSP, with the party candidate Santa Kumar Mondal getting elected for eight consecutive terms from 1980 to 2004.

The pattern changed for the first time in 2009, with SUCI(C) candidate Tarun Mondal, with the backing of TMC, getting elected from Jaynagar. Thereafter, Pratima Mondal was elected for two consecutive terms in 2014 and 2019.

Jaynagar is nationally acclaimed as the production hub of 'Moa', a typical Bengali sweetmeat prepared out of a mixture of toasted rice, jaggery and condensed milk.

'Jaynagar-er Moa' was given a Geographical Indication Tag in 2015, which enables the product to be protected from unauthorised uses and piracy.

Jaynagar's cultural significance is matched by its political importance, with over 15.40 lakh eligible voters shaping the fate of the candidates.

Mamata expresses apprehension of division of anti-BJP votes in Bengal

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, APRIL 28

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday expressed apprehension at the BJP benefitting from the division of the votes against it in the state.

"Always remember that only Trinamool Congress is putting up the real fight in West Bengal against BJP. Do you want me to surrender in front of the CPI-M?

In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress does not have any understanding with any other party. But elsewhere, we are supporting the Congress. We are taking a lead role in ensuring the victory of the INDIA bloc. So a division in anti-BJP votes in West Bengal is undesirable. If the BJP benefits from the division in the opposition votes here, then it will be a disaster for West Bengal," she said while addressing



an election rally in the state's Malda.

Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool supremo, claimed that she tried to persuade the Congress leadership not to come to any kind of understanding with the CPI-M.

"I was also willing to forgo two seats in favour of Congress. But the Congress leadership did not listen to me. I have always tried to help out Congress, although they do not have

any representation in the state assembly. But the Congress leadership here preferred to hold the CPI-M's hand," she said.

She said that it was the Trinamool MPs who were the most vocal against the BJP on the floor of the Parliament.

Banerjee also claimed that BJP's projection of crossing the 400 mark will never be a reality this time. "First let them cross 200," she said.

Rahul slams BJD-BJP in Odisha rally, says both in collusion to benefit few corporates

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, stepping up the party's campaign in Odisha on Sunday lashed out at the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government and the opposition BJP while accusing them of having 'married' each other for personal gains and befouling the public.

Rahul claimed that the ruling BJD has got into a secret partnership with the main opposition party BJP and both have one shared goal, to 'benefit the select few corporates'.

Addressing a huge public gathering at Salepur in Cuttack, Rahul alleged that the Naveen Patnaik government was running a nexus with the rival BJP and facilitating the loot of the state's resources in various fields including plantation and mining.

He also declared if Congress came to power in the state, the looted money would be returned to the residents.

"Your money was stolen by them (BJD and BJP) through the mining scam



worth Rs 9 lakh crore, farmers' land grab worth Rs 20,000 crore and plantation scam worth Rs 15,000 crore. I am giving these numbers because when the Congress party comes to power here in Odisha and in Delhi, we will start returning the money they have looted from you," roared Rahul at the rally, drawing applause from the crowd.

Gandhi said that Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik was running the government for a 'select few' while Prime Minister Narendra Modi was running a government for the billionaires.

He also said that though Naveen Patnaik was the Chief Minister, the state government was being run

by his aide VK Pandian.

"Uncleji of Delhi (referring to PM Modi) and Naveen Patnaik offered people of Odisha PAANN (Pandian, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi and Naveen Patnaik)," Gandhi said in a sharp jibe at Odisha CM.

Rahul also promised the crowd that if Congress came to power in the state, Rs 2000 each per month would be deposited in the bank account of women, Rs 3000 would be deposited in the account of unemployed youths and free electricity up to 200 units, kitchen gas cylinder at Rs 500 will be given to the public.

He also elaborated on the several Nyay Yojanas of the Congress party and

explained how these will benefit the common citizens if the party is voted to power.

"PM Modi has given Rs 16 lakh crore to 22 billionaires. If Cong comes to power, we will make a list of all the poor families and select one woman member from each family and will transfer Rs 1 lakh annually in her account," Gandhi added.

He also boasted about Cong's one-year apprenticeship programme for unemployed youth and made a slew of poll promises including enhancing wages under the MNREGA scheme, doubling the salary of Anganwadi and Asha workers, farm loan waiver for farmers and an MSP guarantee law for farmers.

Notably, Odisha will vote in simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha polls in four phases starting May 13. The results will be declared on June 4.

Naveen Patnaik-led BJD has been in power in the state since 2000 while BJP emerged as the principal Opposition party in the state, after the 2019 polls.

Political parties in Bihar redraw strategy after sluggish voting in first two phases

AGENCIES
PATNA, APRIL 28

A low turnout of voters in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections has forced the political parties in Bihar to redraw their strategy and revisit the schedule of rallies that will be addressed by their star campaigners.

While the polling percentage was 48.23 per cent in the first phase in comparison to 53.47 per cent registered in 2019, the second phase witnessed 58.58 per cent voting which too was four per cent less than the 2019 figure.

The third phase of the Lok Sabha elections will be held in Bihar's Jharkhand, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura and Khagaria Lok Sabha constituencies on May 7.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who has appealed to the voters to reach polling centres and take part in

the electoral process, will stay in Madhepura for the next three days to address rallies and road shows. He will also address two rallies in the other four constituencies where elections will be held on May 7.

Since the election campaign started in Bihar, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahani have been addressing four to five rallies every day and they have the same programme scheduled for the five constituencies in the third phase as well.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address two rallies in Jharkhand and Begusarai on April 29. The polling in Begusarai will take place in the fourth phase.

After the low turnout of voters in the first two phases, HR Srinivasa, the chief electoral officer of Bihar, has instructed DMs

and SPs to take additional initiatives so that voters can come to the polling centres.

"At many places, we have seen people boycotting the elections. The officers have been asked to resolve the issues, if any. Keeping in view of the hot weather, we have also asked them to make adequate arrangements at the polling stations," said Srinivasa.

In the third phase, three candidates of JD-U, one candidate from LJP(R) and one candidate from BJP are in the fray on the five seats.

In Jharkhand, JD-U candidate Rampreet Mandal will contest against Suman Kumar Mahaseth of VIP. Dillishwar Kamat of JD-U will contest against Chandras Chaulpal of RJD in Supaul. Dinesh Chandra Yadav of JD-U will contest against Kumar Chandradeep of RJD for the Madhepura Lok Sabha seat.

AGENCIES
BUDAUN (UP), APRIL 28

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday that the Samajwadi Party (SP) has become a joke of the Lok Sabha elections by changing its candidates again and again which proves that they have accepted defeat even before the battle is over.

He said that those who challenge the power of God are certain to fall.

He said that Congress is working on a hidden agenda against the country.

Yogi Adityanath was addressing a huge public meeting for Bharatiya Janata Party candidate and regional president Durvijay Shakya in Bilsa on Sunday.

"The previous Prime Minister used to hesitate in going to Ayodhya. Modi ji is the first Prime Minister who visited Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya and also installed Ram Lalla in the grand temple after 500



years," he said.

The chief minister started his address by paying homage to the great sage Kashyapa of Saptarishi tradition, and Budaun, the holy place of Vedas and the holy place of Maharaj Bhagiratha.

Taking a jibe at SP, he said, "Even the uncle (Shivpal) thought it best to flee from here and the nephew's (Aditya Yadav) legs had already been

uprooted. SP has done the same thing in Shahjahanpur, Rampur and Meerut also. But the public is saying that there will be no benefit from this, they will calculate on the basis of all the past exploits of SP."

The chief minister said that previous governments played with the faith and sentiments of people.

"Congress people used to say that Ram and Krishna never existed. Many

people will come to mislead us, we should not be misled by anyone. We will give respect to great men and faith in every district. We have started from Kashi and Ayodhya, Brij Bhoomi and after that, the number of Budaun is also going to come," he stated.

The chief minister warned people to beware of Congress, SP and BSP.

"They have a hidden agenda against India. They are going to break into the reservation of Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes. They are preparing to survey the property and levy inheritance tax on your property. Unfortunately, if Congress comes, your property will be taken over by Congress and SP," he reiterated.

He further said that the Samajwadi Party did not utter a word of condolence on the death of former chief minister Kalyan Singh but on the death of a mafia, the SP president went to his house.

Despite having a woman CM, females in West Bengal most unsafe: JP Nadda

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, APRIL 28

BJP national president J. P. Nadda on Sunday launched a blistering attack on the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, saying that despite having a woman chief minister, females in the state are most unsafe.

Addressing a rally in Behrampur, he said, "Trinamool Congress came to power in West Bengal by promising to be the voice of the common people. But after that, the party snatched the land of the poor people. The women in West Bengal are unsafe and this is despite the fact that the chief minister of the state is a woman."

"Only Trinamool Congress is responsible for the bad name that the state is getting in the present context. Once it was said that what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow. And because of the misrule of Trinamool Congress, the state's image is getting maligned. The Mamata Banerjee government is resorting to appeasement politics. They are even compromising with the terrorists. They are sympathising with the anti-social elements," the BJP president said.

He claimed that during the last 10 years of the BJP regime in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "If Pakistan tried to cast an evil eye on India, our forces conducted surgical strikes. Previously, the mobile phones available in the country were either 'Made in China' or 'Made in Taiwan'. But now all are 'Made in India'. This is the progress that the country has achieved during the last 10 years."

However, throughout his speech, he did not utter a single word about the Congress candidate from Baharampur and the state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Russia claims to have shot down 17 Ukrainian drones

AGENCIES
KIEV, APRIL 28

Russian forces shot down 17 Ukrainian drones over its territory on Sunday, the Russian Defence Ministry claimed as quoted by media reports.

According to the Ministry, Russian air defence shot down two drones over the Belgorod region, three over Kursk region, three over Kaluga region, and nine over Bryansk region. The Kyiv Independent reported.

Vladislav Shapsha, Governor of Kaluga region in Russia, claimed that three drones "fell down" near an oil depot in the town of Lyudinovo. No casualties or damages were reported.



Ukrainian officials did not comment on these claims, which cannot be verified independently.

In recent weeks, Ukrainian forces have launched a series of drone strikes aimed at damaging Russia's oil industry, which is crucial to sustain Moscow's war efforts.

One of the oil refineries was targeted in Kaluga region in mid-March in an attack reportedly carried out by Ukraine's military intelligence agency.

In one of the latest strikes, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) struck with drones two oil refineries and a military

airfield in Russia's Krasnodar region on April 27, hitting "key technological objects," according to the Kyiv Independent's source in the security and defence forces.

Strikes against Russian energy targets have prompted criticism from US officials, who have made it clear that Washington does not support Ukraine's campaign against oil refineries, citing fears that it could threaten the global energy market.

In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Kiev has the right to use its own weapons with retaliatory strikes on Russian oil refineries.

Sri Lanka signals shift in interest as Indian firm to jointly manage China-built airport close to strategic Hambantota port

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, APRIL 28

An Indian firm jointly taking over the management of China-built country's second biggest airport in Hambantota - one of the hotspots of China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Sri Lanka - sends a strong signal of Colombo's growing power shift to New Delhi from Beijing.

On Friday, the Sri Lankan Cabinet of Ministers gave the green light to hand over the management of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) to Shaurya Aeronautics (Pvt.) Ltd of India and Airports of Regions Management Company of Russia for a period of 30 years.

"The Cabinet of Ministers expressed their consent to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to entrust M/s Shaurya Aeronautics (Pvt.) Ltd of India and Airports of Regions Management Company of Russia with the management of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport for 30 years," the Department of Government Information announced.

"A total of five institutions submitted their proposals and two companies were selected," Cabinet Co-Spokesman and Minister Bandula Gunawardena

told media announcing the decision to hand over the management of the airport branded as one of the "emptiest" airports in the world.

Built at a cost of \$209 million Chinese commercial loan, out of which \$190 million was taken on a high-interest from the Exim Bank of China, the airport has been plagued with problems since its inauguration in 2013 with hardly any flights operating from it considering its 230 km access from capital Colombo.

Due to the mounting losses, Sri Lanka has been looking for commercial partners to manage the airport since 2016.

The National Audit Office (NAO) revealed that over the period 2017-2022, the MRIA has accumulated losses of over Rs 42.81 billion. The decision to shift the management of the airport also takes place while Sri Lanka is in talks with China's EXIM Bank to reorganise the airport loan, which is a part of the \$4.2 billion borrowed for various infrastructure projects.

The airport closer to the southern tip of the island in the Indian Ocean is presently being used for handling chartered tourist flights from Russia and some countries from Central Asia.

The airport is in close proximity to the China-

run harbour in Hambantota - one of the Chinese government's major infrastructure projects under its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), just like Gwadar in Pakistan and Djibouti in East Africa.

Unable to repay a huge Chinese loan of about \$1.263 billion, Sri Lanka was forced to hand over the port on a 99-year lease to China Merchants Port Holdings which turned out to be a classic example of 'debt trap diplomacy' which focused on cornering countries with loans and seizing strategic assets after they cannot repay.

Since the debt swap, China has attempted to use the port for vessels carrying controversial operations. In April 2021, Sri Lanka asked a China-bound cargo ship to leave the strategic Hambantota port after it was found to be carrying radioactive uranium without declaring it to the Lankan authorities.

In August 2022, both India and the US expressed strong protest against the entry of the controversial Chinese navy vessel 'Yuan Wang 5' into Hambantota Port.

Amidst continuous protest against China's attempts to bring down research vessels to Lankan waters, the Ranil Wickremesinghe govern-

ment temporarily banned allowing research vessels citing "security threats" to the Indian Ocean region.

Suffered by continuous perilous impacts on its economy which includes the Easter Sunday attacks, the Covid-19 pandemic and the international financial crisis, Sri Lanka in May 2022 became the first Asian lower-middle-income country to default on its sovereign debt in two decades.

The island nation declared a debt default on over USD 51 billion in foreign loans out of which 52 per cent is owed to China, the largest lender.

Amidst the unprecedented financial crisis faced since 1948 independence, India came to the rescue of its southern neighbour with Lines of Credit worth over USD 4 billion in different sectors, including the supply of essentials such as petroleum, fertilisers, medicine, development of railways, infrastructure, defence sector and renewable energy.

India also took the initiative with other bilateral creditors like Japan and the Paris Club to speed up the debt restructuring process, the action which helped the country to secure an International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditional bailout package of nearly \$3 billion for three years.

Five killed as tornado hits China

AGENCIES
BEIJING, APRIL 28

Five people were killed in a tornado in the southern Chinese metropolis of Guangzhou.

The Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday that a further 33 people were injured in the storm.

According to official figures, the storm damaged 141 factory buildings, but no residential buildings collapsed.

According to Xinhua, the rescue work has already been largely completed. In the wake of the tornado, a weather station in the Baiyun district of Guangzhou registered wind speeds of over 20 metres per second.

Just a week ago, Guangzhou and the surrounding province of Guangdong were hit by torrential rainfall, killing at least four people and forcing the evacuation of over 100,000 residents.

Zelensky decries Russian attacks on gas infrastructure

AGENCIES
KIV, APRIL 28

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has decried Russian attacks on the country's gas transit system.

Zelensky said in his evening video message broadcast in Kyiv on Saturday that the infrastructure through which gas is channelled through Ukraine to the European Union has been attacked.

Despite the Russian invasion, which has been going on for more than two years, Russian gas continues to flow through the country - albeit in much smaller quantities.

The state-owned gas company Naftogaz had also previously complained of Russian attacks on the pipeline network, without giving details.

The company recently announced that it would

no longer be transporting Russian gas to the West from 2025 onwards - the current contracts with the Russian state-owned company Gazprom expire at the end of the year. The main recipients are countries without access to the sea that are unable to switch to liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Russia once again hit Ukraine with missile attacks in the early hours of Saturday, targeting energy facilities in particular. Four thermal power plants were damaged, according to the energy company DTEK.

Following the air strikes, Zelensky once again called on the West to provide more air defence support. In his video address, he explained that Russia had expanded the radius with its massive attacks, which was now making

the work of Ukrainian air defence even more difficult.

Ukraine needs more US Patriot air defence systems.

Workers in Ukraine are in the process of repairing the damage caused by the new Russian attacks, said Zelensky.

Moscow had previously excused the massive new shelling of energy facilities in Ukraine by saying that Kyiv was also attacking Russian infrastructure with drones.

During one such attack, a fire broke out at an oil processing plant in the Krasnodar region on Saturday. However, the damage caused by Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory is minuscule compared to the massive destruction caused by Moscow's missile strikes against Ukrainian facilities.

Iraq passes legislation criminalising homosexuality

AGENCIES
BAGHDAD, APRIL 28

The Iraqi Parliament has passed a law criminalising same-sex relations and vowing tough penalties against them in a decision that rights advocates decried as discriminating against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

The legislature on Saturday voted for an amendment to a 1988 anti-prostitution law, penalising homosexuality by 10 to 15 years in prison, and which bans promoting prostitution and same-sex relationships in "any way" in Iraq, making it punishable by at least seven years in jail. An initial draft proposed the death penalty



for same-sex relations, the Iraqi independent portal Alsumaria News reported.

The acting head of the Iraqi Parliament, Mohsen al-Mandalawi, defended the bill.

"It is an essential step to protect the value structure of society and a supreme interest to protect our children against calls of moral depravity and homosexuality," he said in a press statement.

However, the legislation triggered an outcry and

condemnations.

"Absolutely horrific developments in law for Iraq today (Saturday) as it codifies discrimination against the LGBT community," said Raz Salayi, an Iraq researcher at the rights group Amnesty International.

The US, an ally of Iraq, said it was "deeply concerned" about the Iraqi move.

"This amendment threatens those most at risk in Iraq's society and weakens Iraq's ability to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a post on X.

Previously, homosexuality was not explicitly criminalised in Iraq.

German Minister urges universities to weigh China ties after spy case

AGENCIES
BERLIN, APRIL 28

Germany's Minister of Education and Research, Bettina Stark-Watzinger, has called on universities to scrutinise any joint projects with China in the light of recent arrests over spying allegations.

"The arrest of three Germans for suspected espionage once again makes it abundantly clear that we must not be naive in our dealings with China," the liberal politician told German news magazine Wirtschaftswoche.

"We need to weigh up the risks and benefits of cooperation even more carefully, especially in science and in universities. This includes reviewing existing cooperative relationships."

A week ago, a married couple and another man were arrested in the western German cities of Dusseldorf and Bad Homburg on suspicion of having procured information on military technology in order to pass it on to the Chinese secret service.

According to the federal prosecutor's office, they were in negotiations about research projects that could be useful for expanding China's naval combat power.

Stark-Watzinger said that support would only be given to projects "that have a clear added value for Germany and Europe".

At the same time, she said that Berlin would "continue to support the expansion of independent China expertise".

2 Ukrainian nationals killed in Germany, Russian suspect detained

AGENCIES
BERLIN, APRIL 28

A Russian man is suspected of killing two Ukrainians who were stabbed in the town of Murnau in Germany, German local police reported as quoted by media reports.

Two men, aged 23 and 36, were found with stab wounds in the territory of a shopping centre, according to the statement.

One of them reportedly died on the scene from severe injuries and the other in the hospital on Saturday evening, The Kyiv Independent reported. Details and motives of the murder are being investigated.

The suspect, a 57-year-old Russian citizen, was detained at his home, the police said. Prosecutors requested to keep the sus-



pect under arrest for the time of the investigation.

A court is supposed to make a decision on the pre-trial restriction on Sunday.

The German police reported in February about the street knife attack on two Ukrainian basketball players in Germany.

Seventeen-year-old Volodymyr Yermakov and

18-year-old Artem Kozachenko died in hospital due to injuries. The suspects were reportedly detained.

According to the Kyiv Basketball Federation (FBK), the attackers may have been motivated by hatred toward Ukraine.

However, the German police reportedly do not believe the attack had a political motive, t-online reported.

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UK PM Sunak again refuses to rule out July general election

AGENCIES
LONDON, APRIL 28

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has again refused to rule out a July general election, amid speculation that a disastrous set of local election results for the Tories could force his hand.

Sunak said he would not "say anything more than I've already said", which is that the national poll is likely to be in the second half of the year.

Most Westminster analysts take this as meaning October or November, although it could technically also mean July.

However, a drubbing in mayoral and council elections on May 2 could either lead to a challenge to his leadership or persuade him that an earlier polling day could be a better solution than limping on with a divided party.

The defection of a Conservative ex-health minister to Labour could further spook already restive Tory MPs and increase the pressure on the Prime Minister.

Dan Poulter on Saturday announced he was quitting the Tory Party, which he accused of no longer prioritising the overstretched NHS.

Sunak was asked on Sunday Morning with Trevor Phillips, recorded before Poulter's shock defection, whether the latter half of 2024 could mean July.

The Prime Minister



file regional mayors face difficult contests.

Some analysts believe defeat for West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen could lead to the Prime Minister facing a no-confidence vote, with 52 Tory MPs needed to trigger one.

Rumours were swirling in Westminster on Friday that Sunak could fire the starting gun on an election campaign as soon as Monday in a bid to thwart a possible challenge from restive MPs, though Downing Street brushed them off.

The latest possible date he could hold the election is January 28, 2025.

Sunak sought to bolster his premiership this week with a flurry of announcements, including the passing of Rwanda asylum legislation and a pledge to spend 2.5 per cent of the gross domestic product on defence by 2030.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps urged colleagues considering ousting Sunak before the general election to "let him get on with the job."

"Now is not the time or place" to try to put in place yet another Conservative leader, he told The Times.

But a BMG survey for the i paper suggested that voters who backed the Conservatives in 2019, but have since deserted the party, would be more likely to vote Tory under a different leader.

With April series having expired, expect markets to turn volatile

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

Markets have a mind of their own and the five trading sessions last week were of a different kind. How markets change colour almost every day, just beats me.

On Monday and Tuesday, markets opened with an upside gap and closed upwards but the difference between the opening and the closing was very small.

Effectively, volatility saw intraday movement drop many notches. Wednesday was a quiet day. Thursday was April futures expiry day. It began like any other day of the previous week, on a quiet day and then saw very sharp upward movement in the last hour of the day. NIFTY on Thursday gained 168 points on a net basis and 265 points from the low of the day.

Friday was the complete opposite, where markets lost through the day and were down 151 points on a net basis and were down 235 points from the high of the day to the close.

At the end of five different days of the week, BSESENSEX gained on four of the five trading sessions and lost on one. BSESENSEX was up 641.83 points or 0.88 per cent to close at 73,790.16 points, while NIFTY gained 272.95 points or 1.23 per cent to close at 22,419.95 points.

The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 gain 1.53 per cent,



1.85 per cent and 2.10 per cent respectively. BSEMI-DCAP was up 3.96 per cent while BSESMALLCAP was up 3.97 per cent.

The India Rupee gained 13 paise or 0.016 per cent to close at 83.34 to the US Dollar. Dow Jones gained on three of the five sessions and lost on two. At the end of the week, Dow was up 253.26 points or 0.67 per cent to close at 39,239.66 points.

The 18,000 crore follow-on offer from Vodafone Idea Limited was well received by investors and was oversubscribed. The QIB portion was subscribed 19.31 times, the HNI portion was subscribed 4.54 times and the Retail portion was subscribed 1.01 times.

Overall, the issue was subscribed 6.56 times. Shares issued through the FPO listed on Thursday, April 25. The previous day's close (Wednesday) was Rs 13.09. The discovered price was Rs 12 and the closing price was Rs 13.89 on listing day. The share gained Rs 2.89 from

the issue price or 26.27 per cent. The share gained a tad on Friday and closed at Rs 14.01, up 3.01 or 27.36 per cent.

There is a roadshow of Indegene Limited which will tap the capital markets with its fresh issue for Rs 760 crore and an offer for sale of 3,62,91,497 shares as per DRHP. The price band, date of issue opening and closing and the size of the OFS would be announced through a newspaper advertisement. The roadshow will be held in Mumbai on Monday, April 29. Results season is on and we have not had spectacular results from the few that have declared results so far. One is waiting for it to happen so that leads can be taken and investors look at opportunities that exist in the marketplace. Two of the seven rounds of voting for the general elections have been completed. The third round will be held on May 7. Results will be declared on June 4.

Levels of 75,124 points, which was the previous tops and 22,775 would be very strong resistances. On the support side, lows made last week at 71,816 points and 21,777 points would act as strong supports. If these are violated, then one could see markets slipping to 71,100 and 21,550 points respectively.

The trading strategy for the week ahead would be to trade on the long side with extreme caution on account of the mid-week holiday. Buy on strong dip and sell on any strong rallies would be the order of the day. Markets are yet trying to establish a comfortable trading zone for themselves. Trade cautiously.

April futures expired on Thursday, April 25

on a very buoyant and positive note. The NIFTY April series gained 243.45 points or 1.09 per cent to close at 21,570.35 points.

To put things in perspective, the gains on Thursday, which was expiry day, were at 167 points. The first day of the new series of May, saw NIFTY lose 151 points on the very first day. Call it by any name, the Bulls won the war and the series on Thursday and lost it on Friday. Coming to the markets in the week ahead, we have a trading holiday on Wednesday, May 1. There would be a holiday in most of the global markets as well. However, the week would be divided into two equal halves of two days duration each, making markets that much more volatile.

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Elon Musk visits China, likely to promote Tesla's driverless tech: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has made an "unannounced and surprising" visit to Beijing, according to a media report on Sunday.

Musk's visit has raised hopes for bringing Tesla's autopilot and supervised full self-driving (FSD) technology to China, known to be the electric vehicle maker's second-biggest market, the South China Morning Post reported.

This comes as China



looks to increase the adoption of advanced driver-assistance systems and higher levels of autonomous driving functions in

mass-produced cars. Musk had in a recent post on X.com noted that Tesla will make FSD available to customers in China "very soon".

Tesla rolled out FSD, the most autonomous version of its Autopilot software, four years ago but the technology is yet to be available in China.

Musk's latest visit also coincides with the ongoing 2024 Beijing Auto Show, the report said.

Musk was earlier, this month, expected to visit

India, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, the tech billionaire scrapped the plan amid crucial Tesla quarterly results and will possibly visit the country later this year to announce his investment plans. In a post on X, the billionaire said that unfortunately, "very heavy Tesla obligations require that the visit to India be delayed."

"But I do very much look forward to visiting later this year," Musk added.

AdaniConneX establishes India's largest sustainability linked financing to raise up to \$1.44 billion

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 28

In a bid to accelerate digital infrastructure growth in India, AdaniConneX, a JV between Adani Enterprises and EdgeConneX, on Sunday said it has established the country's largest sustainability-linked financing to raise up to \$1.44 billion.

The transaction elevates AdaniConneX's construction financing pool to \$1.65 billion, building on the maiden construction facility of \$213 million executed in June last year.

"This successful exercise is a testament to the collective resolve of the parties to meet the challenges of establishing sustainable and robust digital infrastructure, thereby pushing norms and set-



ting new industry benchmarks," said Jeyakumar Janakaraj, CEO of AdaniConneX.

The upcoming data centre facilities will employ state-of-the-art technologies and renewable energy solutions to minimise the ecological footprint while optimising operational efficiency.

The new financing has an initial commitment

of \$875 million, with an accordion feature to extend commitment up to \$1.44 billion.

"Construction financing is a core element of the AdaniConneX capital management plan, enabling us to deliver a data centre solution firmly rooted in sustainability and environmental stewardship," Janakaraj added.

According to the com-

pany, a key feature of the data centre facility is the innovative solution of a syndicated guarantee-backed assurance programme in sync with the projects' procurement strategy.

The agreements have been executed with eight international lenders - ING Bank N.V., Intesa Sanpaolo, KfW IPEX, MUFG Bank Ltd., Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, Societe Generale and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, informed the company. AdaniConneX aims to build an environmentally and socially conscious IGW data centre infrastructure platform by leveraging the complementary capacity of the Adani Group and EdgeConneX, one of the largest private data centre operators.

Hyundai, Kia join China's Baidu to develop connected cars

AGENCIES
SEOUL, APRIL 28

South Korea's top car-maker Hyundai Motor and its affiliate Kia said on Sunday that they have inked an agreement with China's tech giant Baidu to develop technologies for connected cars.

Under the memorandum of understanding signed in Beijing last week, the two South Korean car-makers and Baidu will join hands in a wide array of areas, including connectivity and self-driving technologies.

Hyundai and Kia will



also utilise Baidu's smart cloud computing technology to address Beijing's enhancing data regulations, reports Yonhap news agency.

The South Korean companies will seek to find

new business models harnessing artificial intelligence technologies with the Chinese counterpart as well, they added.

"Through the strategic collaboration with Baidu, we will make efforts to

establish the ecosystem for connected cars in the Chinese market," Hyundai and Kia said in a press release.

The agreement came amid the growing market for connected cars in China. The annual sales of connected cars in China are anticipated to reach 17 million units this year, marking a sharp rise from 7.2 million units tallied in 2019, Hyundai said, citing Chinese data. Hyundai and Kia have been working closely with Baidu since 2014, including the development of voice recognition technology.

Innovation & inspiration unveiled at Elysian and Synesthesia summit

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

Creative minds converged at the University School of Design and Innovation (USDI) and the University School of Automation and Robotics (USAR) for a transformative three-day summit, encapsulating the essence of traditional and technical knowledge.

Hosted at the GGSIPU East campus, the event marked the annual festival with a fervour of exploration and discovery.

Under the theme "Beyond Universe: Unlocking Creativity," the 1st Design Summit of USDI, known as Synesthesia, and the 2nd Elysian Summit of USAR showcased a symphony of innovation and creativity. Dr. Kamal Pathak, registrar, emphasised the fusion of technical prowess with creative vision, highlighting the roles of students



in design, architecture, automation, and robotics.

Prof. Arvinder Kaur, Dean, highlighted the overnight hackathon, where enthusiasts delved into themed challenges such as open innovation, robotics, Gen AI, Web 3.0, and cyber security. Twenty-five teams were shortlisted, showcasing their passion and determination for building creative applications.

Synesthesia activities ranged from Designathon

to Terracotta and Bamboo Workshops, Virtual Gauntlet, Photography Workshop, Sustainable Styling Workshop, and a Panel Discussion.

Meanwhile, Elysian, derived from the Greek word for "blissful life," symbolised the aspiration for a harmonious existence, while synesthesia, meaning "synthesising knowledge," embodied the spirit of inquiry and enlightenment.

Prof. P.C. Sharma, Director, extended a warm wel-

come to guests, including Prof. Amit Mookerjee from DTU, who emphasised the vision of "Viksit Bharat" as a dream shared by many Indian youths.

Dr. Rahul Johari provided an overview of the programme, while Dr. Nanda, an industrialist in toy manufacturing, shared valuable insights from his experiences. Dr. Bindoo Ranjan concluded the event with a vote of thanks, acknowledging the collaborative effort that made the summit a beacon of inspiration.

The summit was not just about functionality but also about infusing joy, excitement, and beauty into people's lives, echoing the words of design luminary Don Norman. It stood as a testament to the power of innovation and the boundless potential of human creativity to shape a brighter future.

Bajaj Allianz general insurance unveils privé - A one-of-a-kind program that provides unparalleled coverage and service excellence

AGENCIES
PUNE, APR 28

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, one of the leading private general insurers in India, today announced the launch of Privé, an exclusive customer experience program offering access to elevated and unmatched customer service excellence. Traditionally, in India, the thrive to increase insurance penetration over the last few years has largely been focused on tapping the customer base across the tier 2/tier 3 locations and rural markets, predominantly covering middle, upper middle class, and rural customers. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, in addition to its strong focus on increasing insurance penetration across all the above-mentioned customer segments, will now also cater to a special segment of customers typically requiring insurance solutions with enhanced coverage limits. Recognizing the multifaceted requirements and comprehensive protection that align with such discerning customers' financial and lifestyle preferences, Privé goes beyond the traditional insurance offerings. By being part of Privé, the customers gain access to an array of exclusive and prioritized insurance services, ensuring their requirements are met with precision.

To become a part of Privé, the customers have the flexibility to select from a range of products

across health, home, motor, personal accident, and cyber insurance as per their specific needs. Insurance products currently include the My Health Care Plan, offering customizable health insurance coverage, with a minimum sum insured of INR 1 crore as the eligibility criteria; the Global Health Care offers coverage like overseas medical treatment, and planned and emergency treatments both international and domestic, and the customers can choose any of the sum insured options for eligibility. In addition, a motor product along with V-Pay add-on cover will be offered. This add-on cover consolidates the benefits of an array of fragmented motor insurance add-ons under one offering, requiring a minimum Insured Declared Value (IDV) of INR 25 lakhs or more for a motor vehicle. The My Home Insurance All Risk Policy ensures comprehensive insurance coverage for both home structure and valuable contents in the home. The eligibility criteria here would be a minimum sum insured of INR 3 crores for structure, INR 30 lakhs for non-portable contents, and INR 6 lakhs for portable items. Moreover, in conjunction with the above products, customers can also opt for a higher range of sum insured for advanced products like the Global Personal Guard Policy that extends worldwide personal accident cover-

age with a range of additional add-ons, and the Cyber Care plan, to protect against losses resulting from cyber-attacks owing to the ever-evolving digital space.

Privé is committed to elevating the service experience through experts focused on expediting claims processing and assistance. Such customers would also have access to 'Privé Connect,' a dedicated team available to swiftly address all insurance queries and requirements for catering to any service request or claims. In case of health claims, additional services like hassle-free discharge and pre-policy check-ups at home by professionals are also provided. Furthermore, the service is complemented by 'Care Angels,' who are trained professionals offering personalized assistance and support throughout the hospitalization journey. For the motor insurance add-on product V-Pay, the claim process is streamlined to provide rapid responses, including surveyor deployment on a priority basis. Non-motor insurance claims, such as home insurance claims, will be similarly handled efficiently, with a claim handler reaching out to the customers within turnaround times, which is amongst the best in the market today. Privé offers a seamless claim experience that will enhance the entire lifecycle of the insurance journey, setting a new standard in customer ser-

vice excellence.

Privé, being a unique first-of-its-kind program, was launched in Pune. Mr. Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Ltd., also graced the event. At the launch event, renowned Indian music composer duo Vishal Shekar enthralled the attendees with an electrifying musical performance. Fashion designer Rocky S also added glamour to the event by showcasing his unique collection. Mr. Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, along with a few select partners also graced the ramp in the designer's curated ensembles.

Speaking on the launch, Mr. Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, said, "At our core, we're dedicated to pioneering insurance solutions that cater to the diverse needs of every individual across our nation. With Privé, we're reaffirming our commitment to continuously innovate and address the unique requirements of discerning individuals. We understand that their sophisticated asset portfolios, astute financial planning, and distinct lifestyles demand insurance offerings that transcend conventional norms. Privé stands out with its best-in-class products and services tailored to the discerning preferences of this exclusive clientele, accessible at their fingertips for unmatched convenience."

IPL 2024: Will Jacks, Virat Kohli power RCB to comfortable win over Gujarat Titans



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 28

Will Jacks delivered a sensational hundred, while Virat Kohli showcased improved form in the middle overs as Royal Challengers Bengaluru secured a convincing nine-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans in an IPL match in Ahmedabad.

Kohli, scoring an unbeaten 70 off 44 balls, notably utilized the sweep shot against spinners to assert himself after facing criticism in the previous match.

Meanwhile, Jacks' explosive innings of 100 not out from just 41 deliveries saw him finish the chase of 201 runs with a remarkable 24 balls to spare.

Jacks unleashed a stunning assault in the final over, smashing four sixes and four boundaries off Rashid Khan to swiftly conclude the match. His innings was highlighted by

a total of 10 sixes, showcasing an exceptional display of power-hitting.

After being put in to bat, Shikhar Dhawan (58 off 30) capitalized on his promotion in the batting order, while Sai Sudharsan (84 not out off 49) anchored the innings till the conclusion, guiding Gujarat Titans to a total of 200 for three runs on the board.

Titans introduced spin very early and Kohli was up to the task, collecting back to back sixes off left-arm spinner Ravi Sai Kishore to make his intent crystal clear.

He was particularly harsh towards another Afghan spinner Noor Ahmed, sweeping him at will before bringing up his fifty off 32 balls.

Thereafter, Kohli did not need to do much as Jacks put the Titans bowlers to sword.

RCB, who are enduring another tough season, picked up their third win

in 10 games while Titans suffered their sixth loss in 10 matches. The Faf du Plessis-led team seemed to have finally found some momentum, having picked a back to back win on Sunday.

Earlier, batting at number four, Shikhar Dhawan teamed up with Sudharsan to give Gujarat Titans a much needed push after a tepid start. The duo shared an 86-run stand off 45 balls.

RCB came out to bat in the scorching Ahmedabad heat with Glenn Maxwell returning to their playing eleven from a "mental and physical health" break.

Wriddhiman Saha (5 off 4) was dismissed early as the first over bowled by left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh. The former India wicketkeeper tried to make room for an aerial hit over extra cover but ended up mistiming to Karn Sharma at third man.

Skipper Shubman Gill

(16) was undone by the on-field brilliance from Cameron Green who ran towards his left to take a stunning catch at long-on off Maxwell.

With Sudharan at the other end, Titans decided to do something different and sent Shikhar Dhawan ahead of the likes of Azmatullah Omarzai and David Miller.

The move worked as Shikhar Dhawan milked the spinners mainly in the cow corner region, hammering five sixes and three fours. He completed the half-century with a maximum over long-on off Green before Mohammed Siraj cleaned him up with a sharp yorker.

Miller (26 not out off 19) joined Sudharsan in the middle and two shared an unbeaten 69 run stand off 36 balls to push the team to a par score.

Sudharan's second straight fifty plus score comprised eight fours and four sixes.

Jadumani Singh, Akash Gorkha enter quarters of ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing

AGENCIES
ASTANA (KAZAKHISTAN), APRIL 28

Mandengbam Jadumani Singh (51kg) and Akash Gorkha (60kg) registered victories to enter the U-22 quarterfinals as Indian boxers continued their winning run on Day Two of the ongoing ASBC Asian U22 & Youth Boxing Championships 2024 here on Sunday. Jadumani Singh outperformed Aldarkhishig Battulga of Mongolia, winning the bout with an RSC (Referee Stop Contest) decision in Round 2. Akash, on the other hand, faced a tough challenge against another Mongolian, Ganbaatar Gan Erdene but made a remarkable comeback after losing the first round to win the bout 4-1.



Both the boxers will play their quarterfinal bouts on Tuesday. Ajay Kumar (63.5kg) and Ankush (71kg) will begin their campaign in the U-22 category later on Sunday.

Late on Saturday, Jatin (57kg), Sagar Jakhar (60kg) and Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg) also entered the

next round. Jatin and Yashwardhan won their bouts with an identical 5-0 win while Sagar received a walkover from his opponent Leong Brandon of Singapore.

On Monday, 11 Indian boxers will be in action in their respective youth categories with Laxmi (50kg),

Tamanna (54kg), Yatri Patel (57kg) and Shrusthi Sathe (63kg) in the women's category, while Brijesh Tamta (48kg), Jitesh (54kg), Sagar Jakhar (69kg), Sumit (67kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Hemant Sangwan (86kg) and Lakshay Rathi (+92kg) in men's category.

The Boxing Federation of India has fielded a 50-member squad to represent India in the ongoing prestigious tournament, which has been witnessing high-voltage action with the presence of 390-plus boxers from more than 24 countries, fighting for the medals across 25 weight categories.

The finals of the youth and U-22 categories will be played on May 6 and 7, respectively.

Lilian Kasait, Peter Mwaniki reign supreme in World 10K Bengaluru 2024; Kiran Matre best among Indians at fifth

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, APRIL 28

In yet another case of a resounding victory for Kenyan runners, Peter Mwaniki clinched the men's title while Lilian Kasait bagged the women's title in the 16th edition of the World 10K Bengaluru on Sunday.

Kiran Matre ruled in the Indian elite section and ran a gritty race to clinch the first position and break the event record with a timing of 29:32.

In a testament to the run's aggressive nature, all the top four runners finished ahead of the meet record of 29:49 which was previously held by Suresh Kumar created in 2015. Meanwhile, Sanjivani dominated the Indian women's lineup to set herself up for a comfortable first-place finish.

As winners of the prestigious USD 210,000 World Athletics Gold Label Road Race, Peter Mwaniki and Lilian Kasait took home an equal prize cheque of USD 26,000 each.

In the Indian elite category, Kiran Matre and Sanjivani Jadhav bagged the grand cash purse of INR 2,75,000 each. Additionally, Kiran Matre also secured a bonus of INR 1,00,000 for breaking the event record.

Mwaniki, who came into the race as a hot favourite, got off to a conservative start. At the 7.5km mark, he was level pegging with his Kenyan



peer Hillary Chepkwony. However, Mwaniki surged forward in the final stretch to finish comfortably with a timing of 28:15, while Hillary Chepkwony (28:33) finished behind him. Also logging a resounding performance was 17-year-old debutant Hagos Eyob who clocked an impressive 28:39 to finish third.

The international elite women's race took shape early as the world's second fastest 10K runner, Emmaculate Achol looked to lead the pack from the get-go. Following the 7.1 Km mark, Lilian Kasait seized the opportunity to power ahead of Achol, with Irene Chaptai's event record of (30:35) in danger.

However, Lilian Kasait finished her run just short of the event record, clocking 30:56. Meanwhile, Emmaculate Achol (31:17) and Lemlem Hailu (31:23) finished second and third respectively.

Speaking of her triumph, Lilian Kasait said, "It was a very aggressive race, we were fast from the beginning. Emmacu-

late was really pushing us all, I just tried to keep up with her. At the 7km mark, I felt I could push myself and decided to go for it."

Kasait, however, lamented narrowly missing the event record. She said, "I feel I could have broken the course record today. At the end of the race, I felt I still had a lot of energy in me." The race for the Indian elite men saw the top four positions finish ahead of the previous course record. In an evenly-fought contest, Kiran Matre crossed the finish line while clocking his personal best of 29:32. In close pursuit were Ranjeet Kumar Patel (29:35) and Dharmendra (29:45) who completed the podium.

The trio of Kiran Matre, Ranjeet Kumar Patel and Dharmendra showed tremendous improvement in their timings from the previous edition of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru where they had finished 12th, 9th and 10th respectively.

Following the win, Kiran Matre opined, "Between

the 4th and 8th kilometre, I found the run quite challenging, so I'm very pleased with the result. Last year I finished 12th, so this victory is very satisfying. I hope to use this momentum to prepare for the Paris Olympics and try to break the 28-minute mark."

Meanwhile, event record holder Sanjivani dominated the lineup in the women's category to complete her third victory at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru. Much like the international women's contest, the Indian women's run saw an early push in by Sonam (36:27). Sanjivani eventually broke through in pursuit of another event record, though she fell short with a timing of 34:03. She was closely followed by Lilli Das (34:13) who finished second while Preenu Yadav finished third at 34:24.

Reflecting on her victory, Sanjivani Jadhav remarked, "I am very happy with the victory, this is my hat trick! I started the race keeping the record in mind. I looked to push early on and even tried keeping up with the international elite athletes and did so for almost 2km." She further added, "I have been training very hard and my expectation was to break the record, so I am a little disappointed I didn't manage to do that. I think the final stretch was uphill and along with the heat, it made the finish a challenging one."

Olympic glory is ultimate; Shanghai success reflects India's mental preparation: Jyothi Surekha Vennam

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APRIL 28

Star compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam, who won three gold medals in the Shanghai World Cup, stressed that compound archery should be in the Olympics, expressing that winning a medal at the quadrennial mega event will add further glory to her career.

Jyothi won a hat-trick of gold medals in Shanghai on Saturday in the women's compound team, mixed team and individual categories. Such a feat was earlier achieved by Indian archery ace Deepika Kumari in 2021 at the (recurve) Archery World Cup Stage 3 Paris.

"I'm happy to win three golds. Not only for me but for the entire compound team who bagged four gold and one silver. We are extremely happy as a team," Jyothi told SAI Media. "We all feel compound archery should be in the Olympics because we have a big chance. We waited with bated breath last year when it was being discussed whether to get it included in the 2028 Olympics. Unfortunately, it didn't happen."

"For me personally, at the back of my head I know that the Olympics is the biggest thing in the world of sports and win-



ning a medal there will add further glory to my career. But I would say that I'm content to have won medals in all international competitions possible in compound archery," said Jyothi.

Vennam hopes that the recurve archery team will end India's medal drought in Archery at the Paris Olympics and backed ace recurve archer Deepika Kumari to qualify for her fourth Olympics.

So far, only Dhiraj Bommadevara secured the Paris 2024 Olympics quota in archery, which he earned at the Asian Continental Qualifier Tournament in Bangkok, Thailand last year.

"I'm really hoping the recurve archers get the

medal this time at the Olympics. So far, we have got only one quota (bagged by Dhiraj Bommadevara in men's recurve event) but there are more qualifiers coming up for Paris 2024," said the 27-year-old archer.

Discussing Deepika, her senior counterpart and a three-time Olympian, who on a comeback trail won the individual silver in Shanghai after taking a break in 2023 to embrace motherhood, Jyothi added, "Deepika di has always been a good archer and has a lot of achievements. To be back in the team representing India and reaching the top 4 in the ongoing World Cup is really great. I'm sure she will do really well as long

as she keeps playing the sport," Jyothi said.

India finished its Archery World Cup Stage 1 campaign with five gold, two silver and a bronze. The Shanghai performance has reflected India's mental conditioning and preparation for global events. In top events like the Olympics, Indians have been prone to mental frailties in pressure situations.

"When you perform well and get the results, confidence build up happens naturally and mentally you become stronger. It reflects the way you are. And we are in this state now. We are putting consistent hard work even beyond winning medals," said Jyothi.

Archery WC: Ace archer Deepika pockets silver in Shanghai; India finish campaign with 8 medals

AGENCIES
SHANGHAI, APRIL 28

Ace Indian archer Deepika Kumari bagged a silver medal in the women's individual recurve event at the 2024 Archery World Cup Stage 1 after losing to world no 2 Korean Lim Sih-yeon in the summit clash, here on Sunday.

The former world number one Indian suffered a 0-6 (26-27, 27-29, 27-28) loss against top seed Lim to take the second spot on the podium.

Deepika battled up from the 30th seed, upsetting number six qualifier Jeon Hunyoung Jeon in the quarterfinals to make a final four. She defeated the Korean debutant Nam Suhyeon in the semifinal to

set up a final with Lim.

The 29-year-old missed the Indian team in 2023 after becoming a mother in late 2022. Her early impact on this return to the international arena this week was minimal, with an underwhelming qualifying and the team taking an early exit. However, she excelled in the individual event and took second place on the podium.

With Deepika's silver, India finished its campaign with five gold, two silver and a bronze in the tournament.

Earlier in the day, the Indian men's recurve team of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav achieved a remarkable victory by stunning the reigning Olympic

champion South Korea to clinch a gold medal.

India registered a 5-1 (57-57, 57-55, 55-53) win without dropping a set against the Koran rivals to clinch the top spot on the podium in the season opener.

Later, the recurve mixed team of Ankita Bhakat and Bommadevara pocketed a bronze medal after beating Mexico 6-0 in the third-place playoff.

With Deepika's silver, India finished the campaign with five gold, two silver and a bronze.

On Saturday, Indian compound archers were all guns blazing as they swept the team events, winning gold in men's, women's and mixed-team events.

Meanwhile, Jyothi Surekha Vennam won the

gold medal in the women's individual compound category after beating Andrea Becerra 146(9*)-146(9) of Mexico to win her third gold at World Archery.

The win also saw Jyothi Surekha Vennam qualified for the Archery World Cup Final scheduled in Tlaxcala, Mexico in October.

Moreover, Priyansh lost to former World Champion Nico Wiener 147-150 in his debut World Cup final and bagged a silver medal in the men's individual compound event.

In another Sunday's action, former world number one and ace Indian recurve archer Deepika Kumari will play her women's recurve individual semifinal against Korean Nam Suhyeon.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Expenditure Observer Baramulla PC reviews preparations in Budgam

J I NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, APRIL 28

Expenditure Observer for Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency, Sita Ram Meena today reviewed preparations for the ensuing Lok Sabha Elections in Budgam.

In this regard, the Election Expenditure Observer chaired a meeting of officers at Conference Hall, Budgam. District Election Officer (DEO), Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Akshay Labroo and SSP Budgam, Nikhil Borkar were also present in the meeting.

At the outset, the Election Expenditure Observer held interaction with the District Expenditure Monitoring Team, all AROs and Nodal Officers.

He emphasized that all accounts be monitored strictly and ensure only valid expenditures are made and no illegal means are used to influence or induce voters by any contesting candidate or the party.

The Bankers were advised to ensure ECI guidelines are adhered to



strictly and proper monitoring and seizures are carried out against suspicious transactions or movement of cash.

The Election Expenditure Observer called for proper maintaining of expenditure records, truthful accounts, facilitation of candidates, legal expenditure within the permissible limit and expenditure booking by the contesting candidates as per the ECI guidelines.

While briefing the chair, the DEO Budgam deliberated upon the overall preparations to ensure

level playing field for all stakeholders to ensure free, fair and smooth conduct of elections in the district.

He said that all ECI guidelines shall be implemented in letter and spirit in the district and all efforts are made to ensure high voter turnout in the district.

The DEO also briefed the Expenditure Observer about the functioning of MCMC, monitoring all media platforms in double shift in the district, deployment of SST, FST, VVT and teams, arrangements for

senior citizens, PWDs, minority and Migrant voters in the district.

SSP Budgam, briefed the chair on overall security arrangements being put up for smooth conduct of elections in the district.

Nodal Officer Election Expenditure Monitoring, Budgam, Showkat Ali Rather through a power point presentation, presented district profile and deliberated on overall preparations.

All AROs, Nodal Officers and other concerned officers also attended the meeting.

SMC conducts cleanliness drive in Srinagar's Zone East

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 28

Following the directions of Commissioner Dr. Owais Ahmed, the SMC officials, along with the Chief Sanitation Officer and Zonal Sanitation Officer, spearheaded a successful cleanliness drive focused in Central Jail and its surrounding areas.

The initiative aimed to elevate cleanliness standards and promote hygiene practices by implementing efficient waste collection and disposal methods, along with clearing out unwanted vegetation and grass. By involving the local community in these efforts, the SMC seeks to instill a sense of civic duty among residents while advocating for sustainable and



hygienic behaviors.

The primary goal of this initiative is to create a cleaner and healthier environment for all residents. Through collaborative efforts and com-

munity engagement, the SMC strives to cultivate a culture of responsibility towards maintaining cleanliness and fostering a sustainable living environment.

Pulwama property attached under UAPA

J I NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, APR 28

In a significant move to counter terrorism, Police in Pulwama have seized a property worth lacs, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The property in question, a single-storey residential house located in Monghama Pulwama which has been used by terrorists for their shelter and other logistic support, provided by the house owner Mohammad Lateef Kar son of Gh Ahmad Kar to the terrorism and also having links to terrorist activities.

The property is now under official seizure, prohibiting any transfer, lease, disposal, or alteration without prior permission from the designated authority.

This seizure is pursuant to FIR No. 315/2023 U/S 16, 18, 19 20, 38 and 39 U(A/P) Act of Police Station Pulwama.

Grid-connectivity to Gurez restored fully; DC Bandipora Commends the team

J I NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, APRIL 28

The grid-connected electricity supply to Gurez has been successfully restored today, with the 33KV line now charged up to Dawar Gurez after disruptions caused by recent heavy snowfall in the Razdan and Zadkhushi areas.

The restoration of the 33KV Bandipora-Gurez line, completed up to Dawar, comes after severe weather conditions affected electricity supply through the grid in the area. During the disruption period, Gurez received electricity through diesel generators.

Despite facing significant challenges due to heavy snowfall and adverse weather conditions, a dedicated team of 20 personnel from KPDC and STD Ganderbal/Bandipora undertook the task of retrieving the submerged line, buried under approximately 10 feet of snow at Razdan, and successfully re-erected and replaced 15 damaged HT poles in the tough stretch from Zadkhushi to Koragbal. This concerted effort led to the swift restoration of grid-connected electricity to Gurez.

Executive Engineer STD Ganderbal, Lenin Kumar, informed that the 33KV Gurez-Bandipora line has been successfully charged up to Dawar today, following recent disruptions due



to heavy snowfall.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman, commended the efforts of KPDC and STD Ganderbal/Bandipora, highlighting the untiring efforts of field teams and coordinated teamwork despite facing harsh weather conditions.

It is noteworthy that District Administration, Bandipora took up the issue on a mission mode, conducting several meetings with concerned stakeholders and assigning

senior officers including ADDC, ADC & SDM Gurez to monitor and assist field efforts on a daily basis to ensure the earliest restoration of electricity to Gurez.

The successful restoration within the stipulated timeline marks a significant milestone, considering the challenging terrain that the transmission line traverses through, including the Razdan Pass, situated at an altitude of 12,672 feet above sea level, and the treacherous Zad-

khushi stretch on the Bandipora-Gurez Road.

The grid-connected electricity to Gurez has fulfilled a long-awaited demand of the local population and provides a significant relief to residents, hoteliers, restaurants, etc. It shall go a long way to further boost tourism-related activities in the border region, where electricity was previously provided through diesel generators with limited load capacity for only 5-7 hours during the night.

Intramural Badminton Championship for men 2024 organised at GDC Sumbal

J I NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, APRIL 28

As part of Drug Awareness Campaign, Physical Education Department, Government Degree College Sumbal today organised an intramural badminton championship.

The championship inaugurated by principal GDC Sumbal Shabeena Iqbal Shawl served as a platform to promote healthy living while emphasizing the importance of combating drug abuse.

While interacting with students the principal urged them to participate in games



and emphasized the importance of sports to stay away from the curse of drugs.

Fourteen players with each team based on two

players divided into seven teams participated in the tournament. The players were enthusiastic to show their skills and techniques.

Avalanche warning in 4 districts of Kashmir

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 28

Amid inclement weather, Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) on Sunday issued an avalanche warning in the higher reaches of four districts of Kashmir valley during the next 24 hours, officials said.

An avalanche with "medium danger" level is likely to occur above 3,000 metres above the sea level in north Kashmir districts of Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara besides central Kashmir's Ganderbal district in the next 24 hours.

District Administration Budgam bids warm farewell to outgoing SSP Al Tahir Gillani

J I NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, APRIL 28

The District Administration Budgam today organized a Farewell function for the outgoing SSP Budgam, Al-Tahir Gillani on his transfer and welcomed Nikhil Borkar for assuming the charge as new SSP Budgam.

In this regard a farewell function was held at Dak Bungalow, here, where Deputy Commissioner (DC), Budgam, Akshay Labroo appreciated outgoing SSP for his cooperation and coordination in maintaining peaceful law and order situation in Budgam.

The DC praised him for his excellent work in all areas and appreciated him for his remarkable contribution towards the civil-police coordination in the district.

The DC further said that



he will always remember outgoing SSP for his wise counsel on various important matters of the district.

ADC Budgam, Mehraj-ud-Din Shah, ASP Budgam, Ragav S were among other officers who extended their best wishes to both new and outgoing SSPs for their new assignments.

The officers from both civil and police administration also spoke on the occasion and appreciated that outgoing SSP shall be remembered for his humility and employee and public friendly approach during his tenure as SSP Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, new SSP Budgam, Nikhil Borkar said that he would give his best to deliver up to the expectations of the general public.

Addressing the gathering, outgoing SSP Budgam thanked the DC Budgam and all senior officers of both civil and police administration for their support through out his tenure.

He emphasized that coordination between civil and police administration has been a key factor in maintaining peaceful situation in the district.

CPO Budgam, ACR, SDMs, SDPOs and other concerned were also present on the occasion.

HKM Degree College B'pora Bids Farewell to Outgoing Batch

J I NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, APRIL 28

The Student Council HKM Degree College Bandipora under the guidance of Seminar and Debates Committee organised a farewell programme bidding adieu to the outgoing batch of students.

On the occasion, Prof. Sajad Manzoor, Convener of the Seminar and Debates Committee, expressed his strong rapport with the students and offered sincere wishes for their success in their academic endeavours.

Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Masood Ahmad Malik also extended his best wishes to the outgoing students.

He appreciated 4th-semester students for orchestrating the programme smoothly.

He also emphasized the need to revive Bandipora's reputation for knowledge and highlighted the importance of developing reading habits, stating that they contribute to person-



al perfection. The event was marked by various performances and presentations, including the singing of College Tarana and a traditional Kashmiri Roun by a group of girls, adorned in captivating traditional Kashmiri attire.

Additionally, powerful speeches expressing gratitude and well wishes were delivered, accompanied by musical renditions ranging from inspiring tunes to nostalgic melo-

dies, and even regional language performances with live instrumental accompaniments. Dance performances were also a highlight, captivating the audience and adding a vibrant touch to the proceedings. Among others who spoke at the occasion were, Prof. G. M. Khan, from the Faculty of English and Dr. Mohammad Sheikh-ul-Ashraf, senior Faculty in the Department of Botany.

Police arrest drug peddler in Baramulla; Contraband substance & cash recovered

J I NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, APR 28

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

A Police party of Police Station Uri headed by SHO PS Uri at a checkpoint established at Nambla Uri, intercepted a person identified as Mohd Sha-reef Sheikh son of Baba Sheikh resident of Nambla Uri. During search, 4.20 Kgs of Cannabis Powder & cash 2000 (Proceeds of narcotics) were recovered from his possession. He has been arrested and shifted to PS Uri where he remains in custody.

Accordingly, a case under relevant sections of law have been registered at Police Station Uri and



investigation has been initiated.

We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact nearest police establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law.