

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

Many people with dengue can be cared for at home with adequate rest and hydration. But, if you experience any warning signs, go immediately to the nearest medical centre.

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

A drop in body temperature accompanied by any of the following symptoms:

- Increased and continuous bleeding from gums
- Disorientation
- Persistent vomiting
- Severe stomach pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Blistering skin, rashes, or skin sores
- Redness in eyes

If you have any of these symptoms, go to the nearest medical centre IMMEDIATELY.

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Global community must isolate, expose nations harbouring Terrorists...: PM at SCO Summit

AGENCIES
ASTANA [KAZAKHSTAN], JULY 4

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that terrorism in any form or manifestation cannot be justified and called on the international community to isolate and expose the countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar delivered these remarks on behalf of PM Modi at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation being held under Kazakhstan's Presidency in Astana.

Calling SCO a principle-based organization whose consensus drives the approach of its member states, PM Modi stated, "At this time, it is particularly noteworthy that we are reiterating mutual respect for sovereignty,



independence, territorial integrity, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force as a basis for our foreign policies. We have also agreed not to take any measures contrary to the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The Indian Prime Minister called for giving priority to combating terrorism, which he termed as one of the original goals of the SCO.

PM Modi stressed that terrorism if left unchecked can become a major threat to regional and global peace. He asserted that cross-border terrorism requires a decisive response and terrorism financing and recruitment must be resolutely countered.

Calling on action by the global community to combat terrorism, PM Modi said, "While doing so, priority must natu-

rally be given to combating terrorism, one of the original goals of the SCO. Many of us have had our experiences, often originating beyond our borders. Let us be clear that if left unchecked, it can become a major threat to regional and global peace. Terrorism in any form or manifestation cannot be justified or condoned."

"International community must isolate and expose those countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism. Cross-border terrorism requires a decisive response and terrorism financing and recruitment must be resolutely countered. We should also take proactive steps to prevent the spread of radicalization among our youth. The Joint Statement issued during India's

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Gap in rural and urban facilities should be bridged on priority: LG Sinha

JINNEWSERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

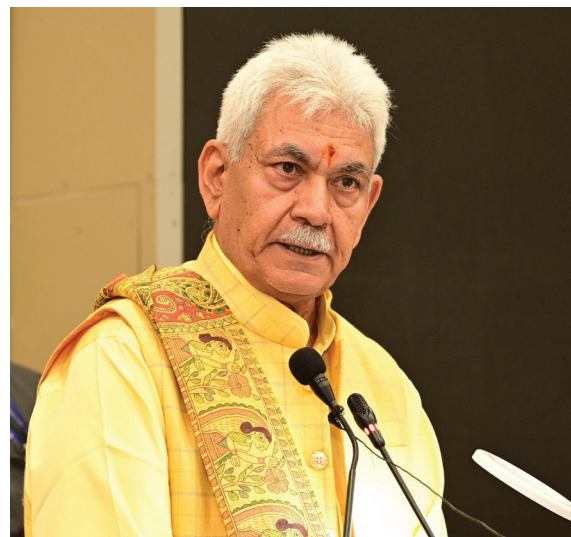
Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha addressed the Srinagar Conclave of High-Level Committee on Urban Planning of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

In his keynote address, the Lt Governor extended his felicitations to the members of the High-Level Committee and all the experts.

He said the two-day long deliberations with all the states and Urban Planners and recommendations will help in formulating final report of the Committee on reform in Urban Planning in the country.

The Lt Governor called upon the Town Planners, Urban Designers and Experts to focus on building future-ready cities. Given the extreme weather events, impact of climate change and unpredictable weather patterns, it is imperative to focus on resilient urban planning for future-proof cities, he said.

The Lt Governor reiterated UT administration's resolve on urban transformation and building sus-



urban planning. The Lt Governor also emphasised on the need for sustainable urbanism and comprehensive, all-inclusive urban development, urban resilience and future readiness.

He impressed upon stakeholders and community to take dedicated measures to unlock urban potential and bridging the gap in rural and urban facilities on priority. In this regard, the Lt Governor called for giving fresh impetus to the economic activities and quality of life in satellite cities and rural areas, with increased physical and digital connectivity.

The ecological potential of cities will become the basis of their economic potential in future. Public amenities and spaces should be accessible and inclusive with focus on developing commercial hub to create employment and business opportunities, he said.

The Lt Governor suggested for inclusion of citizens' feedback and unpredictable weather patterns in urban planning and development policy, besides

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tainable, inclusive, resilient, and safe cities which serve the needs of people and able to effectively tackle economic, social and climate challenges.

"Our cities are growth engines of the country and also playing the key role in fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of the citizens. Increasing urbanization reflects the growing aspiration. Urban planning should be able to build sustainable infrastructure and enable residents to prosper," the Lt Governor said.

Highlighting the urban reforms introduced under the guidance of Hon'ble

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor said the key initiatives such as Urban Rejuvenation and Smart Cities campaign, urban planners are discovering a more holistic development of cities to enhance quality of life.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor made some valuable suggestions focusing on addressing the challenges of urbanism and ensuring quality living for all citizens.

He urged the High-Level Committee to create balance between modern facilities and natural heritage and focus on quality living space in future

Amid heavy rains, 5600 more pilgrims begin Amarnath Yatra



JINNEWSERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 4

Despite heavy rains, a contingent of over 5,600 pilgrims set off from Jammu towards the twin basecamps, Baltal and Palagam, of the Amarnath cave shrine on Thursday, officials said.

More than 30,000 devotees offered prayers to the naturally formed ice lingam on Wednesday alone, bringing the total number of pilgrims to over

one lakh, they said.

The seventh batch of pilgrims included 4,487 men, 1,011 women, 10 children and 188 'sadhvis' and 'sadhvis' who departed at 3.13 am in 219 vehicles, under the escort of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp, the officials said.

Of these, 3,668 pilgrims opted for the traditional 48 km Pahalgam route, while 2,028 chose the shorter but steeper 14 km

Baltal route, they said. Since June 28, when Lt Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the first batch, a total of 37,522 pilgrims have left the Jammu base camp for the yatra.

The 52-day yatra officially commenced on June 29 from the twin basecamps in Kashmir and will conclude on August 19. Last year, more than 4.5 lakh pilgrims offered prayers at the cave shrine, located at an elevation of 3,880 metres.

Amarnath Yatra 2024 Jammu cyber police sounds alert on fake online sale of Helicopter Tickets

AGENCIES
JAMMU, JULY 4

In view of fake online sale of helicopter tickets to the pilgrims of Shri Amarnath Yatra and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, the Jammu Cyber Police on Thursday has sounded alert for the general public to this effect.

In an advisory circulated by the Jammu Cyber Cell Police on the social media platform, it has been informed to the general public that the fraudsters are offering fake online helicopter tickets on different websites for

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Birmah Bridge reconstruction project approved

AGENCIES
UDHAMPUR, JULY 4

The project for reconstructing the Birmah Bridge in Udhampur city has been approved, said Saloni Rai, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur.

The district administration said that the project cost is approximately Rs. 15 crores. The work is expected to be completed by December 2024.

"The Birmah Bridge, which was damaged in 2020, has been approved for new construction. The work is currently in progress. The estimated project cost is approximately Rs. 15 crores. We expect that the construction will

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No blind wall from Kunjwani to Narwal Expressway: Jugal

JINNEWSERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 4

Jugal Kishore Sharma, MP (Lok Sabha), shared that the RE blind wall between Kunjwani and Narwal, as part of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway will not be built as per the expectations of the people.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, accompanied by former MLA Devender Singh Rana, former MLC Choudhary Vikram Randhawa, Media Incharge BJP Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Convenor BJP Trader Cell Sham Langar and Kulbeer Charak was addressing a Press Conference at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Representatives of the residential area and the market also accompanied BJP leaders in the Press



Conference.

"We are thankful to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari for agreeing to the demand of Jammu people not to raise the Blind Wall in the construction of highway", said Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Jugal also thanked BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, and

party President Ravinder Raina for their active role in resolving the issue.

Jugal Kishore Sharma said that the BJP is committed to the construction of smart and modernized Jammu and doing the development at every corner of Jammu. Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has ensured that there is no

dearth of funds to bring all the important projects to the region. He said that during the construction and the development process, the BJP is also committed to ensuring the beautification of the region and the party has ensured that this development process does not divide the city into two different areas with construction.

Jugal shared that all the senior leaders, on the request of local people and the market associations raised the issue with the National Highway Authority of India and the Union Minister and were stationed in Delhi to ensure that the genuine demand of the people is met.

Devender Singh Rana briefed about the

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Form of war rapidly transforming, will have to be ready to accept change: CDS Chauhan



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JUL 4

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan on Thursday said the form of war is transforming rapidly due to technological advancements and the country's armed forces will have to be ready to accept this change.

He made the remarks

while addressing a gathering of Army officers, junior commissioned officers (JCOs) and soldiers drawn from 18 Grenadiers to mark 25 years of the battles of Tololing and Tiger Hill fought during the Kargil war in 1999.

Tiger Hill top was captured by the Indian Army on July 4, 1999.

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GOC Bhalla visits forward areas of Ladakh



JINNEWSERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Army's Leh based Fire and Fury Corps Lieutenant General Hitesh Bhalla on Thursday visited the forward areas of Ladakh to assess the operational

preparedness of troops deployed at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"GOC Fire and Fury Corps visited the forward areas of Forever in Operations Division", firefurycorp posted on X (formerly twitter). The GOC appreciated

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Climate change a prominent concern, India working towards committed reduction: Jaishankar at SCO Summit

AGENCIES
ASTANA, JUL 4

Climate change is a prominent concern before the world today and India is working towards achieving committed reduction in emissions and building climate-resilient infrastructure, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday. Jaishankar was delivering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit here in the Kazakh capital.

"Delivered India's statement at the Summit of SCO Council of Heads of States on behalf of PM Shri @narendramodi ji. Thank the leaders present for conveying their best wishes to Prime Min-



ister @narendramodi on his re-election for a third successive term," Jaishankar posted on X along with photos.

"We are working towards achieving a committed reduction in emissions, including transition to alternate fuels, adoption of electric vehicles, and building climate-

resilient infrastructure," he said.

"In this context, during India's SCO presidency, a Joint Statement on emerging fuels, and a Concept Paper on de-carbonization in the transportation sector were approved," Jaishankar added. During last year's annual

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DLSA Ganderbal and CUK jointly organize Legal Awareness Programs in Legal Literacy Clubs

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JULY 4

The District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal in collaboration with the Department of Law, School of Legal Studies, Central University of Kashmir has organized legal awareness programs in Legal Literacy Clubs of DLSA Ganderbal established in various Government Schools across the district.

The objective of these programs was to educate students about their legal rights and responsibilities, to promote general legal literacy, and foster a culture of respect for the laws of the land.

The programs covered a range of topics, including basic legal rights and duties, consumer rights, women and child rights, POCSO Act, Legal Aid Services, NALSA Schemes, and Cyber Crimes and Cyber Law.

Thirty Nine number of law students participated in the said awareness programs who in five groups went to said legal literacy clubs and imparted legal awareness among almost 1500 school students of District Ganderbal. These programs aim to empower the young minds with legal awareness and equip them with the knowledge to exercise their rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.

The enthusiastic law students also conducted an interactive session, educating the young minds on vital legal aspects that affect their daily lives. The initiative aimed to empower the school students with knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities, enabling them to become aware and responsible citizens.

The event was a resounding success, with the school students

showing keen interest and enthusiasm.

This initiative is a testament to the power of legal awareness and education. By imparting knowledge on legal rights and responsibilities, we can shape a better future for our society. The school students got greatly benefited by these awareness programs as was evident keeping in view their enthusiasm & urge to learn the things.

This initiative of DLSA Ganderbal has been widely appreciated by the school authorities, teachers, and students, and it is definitely expected to have a positive impact on the community at large.

DLSA Ganderbal also acknowledged the efforts of Chief Education officer Ganderbal and Principals/heads of Concerned schools for their full cooperation in the successful conduction of these programs.

DC Kulgam Chairs Monthly NCORD Meeting

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 4

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to discuss various measures aimed at curbing drug abuse and narcotic trade in the district.

The meeting reviewed the implementation of decisions and directives passed in previous sessions.

A thorough discussion was held on several issues related to drug addiction, areas of concern, hotspots of drug use, and the actions taken by the concerned departments to combat the menace of drugs.

The meeting also focused on the efforts of enforcement agencies in addressing drug abuse and narcotic trafficking within the district.



It was reported that 16 Panchayats comprised of 27 villages in the district have been declared drug-free to date.

It was also shared that during the current month, 08 drug peddlers were arrested, and 08 FIRs were registered.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned officials to convene regular meetings of Tehsil and Gram Panchayat level committees.

The Assistant Drug Controller reported that they have conducted 58

inspections suspended 06 Licenses and 17 samples were also lifted and sent for analysis to ascertain the quality parameters in the current month.

It was also shared that the district achieved a 100% target in the installation of CCTV cameras, and efforts are underway to achieve a 100% target in CBS.

The meeting was attended by DPO, Abdul Rasheed, ACP, GM DIC, DSP HQ, and other officers from the police and civil administration.

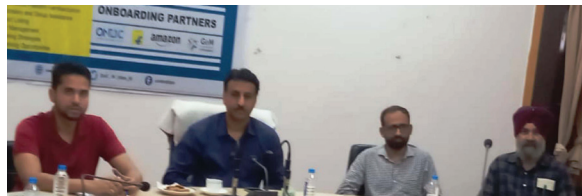
JKTPO organises e-commerce on-boarding drive at Rajouri

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 4

To empower potential sellers from District Rajouri with a digital platform, an e-commerce on-boarding event was conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO) of the Industries & Commerce Department, J&K here today in the conference hall of the Dak Bungalow.

The event was organized on the directives of Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce and under the guidance of Khalid Jahangir, Managing Director JKTPO, in collaboration with the District Administration Rajouri.

The initiative focused on onboarding local sellers, artisans, retailers, small merchants, FPOs, NRLM SHG members, and traders onto the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) Network and Government e Marketplace (GeM). In partnership with ONDC Seller Partner MyStore and GeM, the goal was to provide access to a wide-ranging digital marketplace.



Over 130 local entrepreneurs, artisans, retailers, small merchants, FPOs, and traders from Rajouri participated in the event. JKTPO plans to host similar events across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir, providing ODOP and DEH entrepreneurs with opportunities to register on e-commerce platforms. This initiative aims to empower them to showcase and sell their products globally.

The onboarding drive marked a significant step in JKTPO's ongoing efforts to boost economic growth and enhance digital commerce in Jammu and Kashmir. These workshops raised awareness about the advantages of using e-commerce platforms such as ONDC/GeM, enabling businesses to extend their reach beyond conventional limits.

Earlier, Banu Partap Singh, Vice President of

Sales at MyStore, along with Prafull, Manager at MyStore, conducted virtual training sessions for our sellers. During the session, Javed Seikh, business facilitator GeM, emphasized the numerous advantages of joining e-commerce platforms and provided a detailed explanation of the entire onboarding process.

Fareed Ahmed Kohli, General Manager of District Industries Centre (DIC) Rajouri, chaired the meeting and addressed the gathering. He emphasized on the significance of e-commerce in empowering sellers to enhance their businesses. He also mentioned that the dedicated efforts of the Government are to enhance the local economy, urging sellers to actively utilise the available benefits. The workshop was also attended by officials from various departments of the district.

DECC Ramban organises Job Fair

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 4

The District Employment and Counselling Centre (DECC) cum Model Career Centre Ramban held a highly successful job fair today, drawing hundreds of eager job seekers to its premises.

The event was inaugurated in the presence of General Manager District Industries Centre (DIC) Ravinder Kumar; Assistant Director Employment Amit Kumar and Director Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Harwinder Singh.

After the inauguration, Amit Kumar highlighted the crucial role of the Employment Department in addressing unemployment issues. He reiterated the department's commitment to supporting unemployed youth by providing them a platform to connect with potential employers.

He also urged the participating companies to maxi-



mize youth engagement, thereby offering a plethora of career opportunities.

In addition to job placements, the event featured a comprehensive Counselling and Guidance session. Amit Kumar emphasized the department's efforts in linking job seekers with employers.

Aamir Hassan, Career Counseling Officer, discussed the JK Employment Portal and introduced various self-employment schemes like Mumkin and Tejaswani. Lovepreet Singh, Young Professional, elaborated on the National Career Service under the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, detailing the processes for job registration, job fairs, and

spot appointment letter. Additionally, 200 candidates were registered with the employment department during the event.

Various departments, including the Rural Self Employment Institute, District Industries Centre Ramban and the Handloom and Handicrafts Department, also conducted on-the-spot awareness and registration drives for government schemes.

The DECC Ramban aims to continually provide a robust platform for the youth of District Ramban, enhancing their employability skills and offering a variety of services through both online and offline modes. The overwhelming response to this job fair underscores the vital role of DECC Ramban in empowering the youth and connecting them with valuable career opportunities.

DDC Kulgam Reviews Performance Under District Good Governance Index for FY 2023-24
J1 NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 4

A meeting of officers was conducted under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan wherein performance under District Good Governance Index was assessed for FY 2023-24. The sectors which came under review included agriculture, horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Health, Education, Rural Development, Industries & Financial Inclusion.

Overall Performance under 58 indicators was discussed threadbare and the sectoral officers were impressed upon to improve their performance with people centric initiatives and saturation of schemes. The meeting was attended by JDP, Zahid Sajjad, DPO, Abdul Rasheed, ACP, GM DIC, DSEO and other officers.

Empowering Youth through Sports – Social Welfare Department Ramban tees off strategic Initiative



J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 4

Social Welfare Department Ramban has launched a series of sports activities aimed to promote sports culture among the local youth and steer them away from the perils of drug abuse. The initiative is a key component of the district's comprehensive anti-drug campaign.

Spearheaded by the Deputy Commissioner, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary and executed by District

Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Rahul Gupta, the initiative has made a significant positive impact on young lives.

The sports activities, meticulously organized, engage youth in constructive pursuits, promoting teamwork, discipline, and resilience—attributes that deter substance abuse. The DSWO's hands-on approach and keen oversight have ensured the activities are well-organized and accessible to all youth across the district.

On the field, the initiative is led by Shahrukh Naik from the One Stop Centre (OSC) Sakhi Ramban. His leadership has inspired widespread participation and fostered a sense of community spirit.

The sports programs include volleyball, cricket, and athletics competitions engaging hundreds of young individuals to showcase their talent. The enthusiasm and energy at these events highlight the success of the initiative in engaging the district's youth.

GDC Dharmari organises plantation drive



J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 4

National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit of the Government Degree College, Dharmari organized a plantation drive in collaboration with Divisional Forest Office, Mahore as a part of Van Mahotsav Week-observed from 1st July to 7th July every year.

As many as 25 NSS volunteers along with the officials of Forest Department and staff of the College planted various trees on the newly constructed campus of the college. The Theme of the drive was 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'

which is a campaign of the central government launched by the Prime Minister on the occasion of World Environment Day 2024 during Mann Ki Baat.

Prof. Ajay Kumar, NSS program Officer of the Unit made the volunteers aware about the importance of planting trees especially during Van Mahotsav and also said that the campaign will continue till the end of this monsoon. All the faculty members also remained present on the occasion including Dr. Shabeer Ahmad Taing, Dr. Saleem Ahmed, Prof. Mohinder Singh etc.

Commissioner Secretary GAD convenes Public Darbar at Ganderbal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JULY 4

As part ambitious public outreach programme launched by the J&K Government, Commissioner Secretary, General Administrative Department (GAD), Sanjeev Verma, today convened a mega public darbar at Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal.

The event witnessed overwhelming participation from the public and other stakeholders, who raised various issues concerning welfare and development of their respective areas. Delegations apprised the Commissioner Secretary of several issues and demands which inter alia included the dearth of staff at Trauma Hospital Kangan, playground at Safapora, power supply to newly constructed Water supply Scheme Wakura, additional infrastructure for Government High School Hayan, lift irrigation facility in Lar area, CT Scan facility at DH, completion of Guzhama bridge, relocation of several utilities from footpaths of town, fencing of power canal in Kangan area, among other public concerns.

Present in the programme were Additional District Development Commissioner, Mushtaq



Ahmad Simnani; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gulzar Ahmad; DDC members, ACD, Chief Planning Officer, SE PDD, GM DIC, Assistant Labour Commissioner Ganderbal, Executive Engineers of various engineering wings and other senior officers from various line departments.

Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner Secretary underscored the importance of continued collaboration between the public and the government to achieve exemplary governance. He affirmed that these public interaction initiatives are crucial for understanding and addressing the developmental needs and issues of the public.

He assured the delegations that the present administration is working tirelessly towards betterment of the common masses, emphasizing the

UT administration's commitment to transparency and accountability at all levels of the government.

Responding to public demands, the Commissioner Secretary instructed the district administration to resolve grievances at the district level wherever possible besides forwarding the issues requiring financial inclusion to the concerned authorities after feasibility checks for proper planning.

Interacting with the officers, the Commissioner Secretary instructed them to conduct regular field visits to get firsthand appraisal of local issues so that genuine grievances would be addressed timely and feasibly.

Later, the Commissioner Secretary distributed authority letters among various beneficiaries under HADP, Tejaswani and Mumkin scheme.

Joint Director Information releases music album "Gaadee Chalee Kashmeera"



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 4

Joint Director Information Jammu, Atul Gupta released a music album "Gaadee Chalee Kashmeera", here today.

Deputy Director Information PR, Ankush Hans, DIO Udhampur Rajinder Digma, Singer Bishan Dass, Actress Sonia Verma, Neeraj Sharma, Sanjay Budkulia were also present on the occasion. The music video is directed by ARJ Productions, while the song is written by Ganesh Singh Salal.

The team associated with the music album apprised the Joint Director that it is the first music album in which all the artists, technicians and supporting staff are locals.

They also informed that the shooting of the album was done in scenic and beautiful locations like Dudu Valley and Daggan Top in Udhampur, Chenab river and Baradari Bridge in Reasi District. The album showcases the unexplored culture and beauty of Jammu division. It is available on YouTube and other social media platforms.

NOTICE

I, Babusha Jamwal D/o Sh. Kishor Singh W/o Sh. Chanchal Singh R/o JMC-585 Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu have Changed my Name which has been wrongly written as Babusha Rani instead of Babusha Jamwal in PNB MetLife Insurance Co. bearing Policy No: 20131844. My correct name is Babusha Jamwal. Now, I am applying for the correction of the same. Objection if any may be conveyed to PNB MetLife Insurance Company Limited within 7 (Seven) Days.

Public Outreach Program at Handwara

JI NEWS SERVICE
HANDWARA, JULY 4

Principal Secretary Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta, emphasized the importance of bridging communication gaps among the officers and the departments to resolve public issues effectively.

The Principal Secretary, while addressing a public outreach programme in Handwara, Kupwara of Kupwara district, said that a strong coordination among all stakeholders is key towards achieving the goal of empowering every single individual of the Union Territory socially, economical and politically.

Interacting with a diverse group of delegations, individuals and representatives of various associations, Suresh Gupta maintained that inadequate information



flow often creates communication barriers, hindering the resolution of community issues. These public darbars provide an apt platform for the citizens to voice their concerns and seek prompt redressal, he added.

Key issues raised by the public and the delegations included concerns about drinking water supply, drainage and sanitation, challenges faced by the tribal population, need for enhanced power infrastructure, road widening, improved connectivity, internet connectivity, need for embankments on nallas and streams

and establishment of new industries in the district. The Principal Secretary assured all the attendees that their genuine issues and concerns would be prioritized for an early redressal. He specifically mentioned that issues related to Jal Jeevan Mission would be taken into account for expedited resolution.

Suresh Gupta encouraged the public to avail benefit of both the Central and J&K Government schemes, urging officers to ensure that information about these schemes reaches the deserving populations effectively.

Present on the occasion were Chairman DDC Kupwara, Irfan Sultan Panditpora, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, Director of Libraries Mohammad Rafi, ADC Handwara Aziz Ahmad and other concerned officers and officials.

On the occasion, the Principal Secretary e-inaugurated two significant projects including "construction of a foot-bridge at Putwari Nallah in Dangerwari block Magam under MGNREGA and construction of an Anganwadi center at Cachri B in Khanoo Babagund.

DC Udhampur discusses formulation of plan for construction of Revenue buildings

JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 4

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai chaired a meeting with officers and field functionaries of the Revenue Department to discuss plans for the construction of proposed Revenue buildings across various sub-divisions in the district.

The meeting was attended by ACR Dr. Umesh Shan, ACD Dr. Ranjit Singh Kotwal, CPO Mohammad Iqbal, SDMs, Tehsildars and XEN PWD from Chenani, Ramnagar and Udhampur.

At the onset, ACR Udhampur apprised the chair about the plan formulated for the construction of Revenue buildings in vari-



ous sub-divisions. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for maximum utilization of resources and directed the XENs to coordinate closely with the SDMs to understand

their specific requirements. XENs were instructed to prepare and submit Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and estimates for the proposed buildings at the earliest.

She stressed the importance of having ready land parcels and directed the SDMs to ensure that the necessary land is available for the construction of the projects.

District Admin Ramban launches NITI AAYOG's 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' in ABP Block Khari

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 4

In a significant step towards accelerating holistic development in the region, the District Administration Ramban, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, today launched the Sampoornata Abhiyan under the Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) in Block Khari. The programme aims to improve the performance of areas lagging on various development parameters and convergence of resources to aid inclusive development.

The Programme was presided over by Chairperson DDC Ramban, Dr Shamshad Shan along with Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary and Senior Scientist from NITI AAYOG Jagdish Kumar. The program witnessed the presence of DDC Councillors, Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Malik, DPO ICDS Jahangir Hashmi, CPO Ramban Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, ACP Ashfaq Khanji, other District and Sectoral officers, and a huge gathering of locals, staff were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson



DDC said that "Sampoornata Abhiyan is a significant step towards bridging the gap in development and ensuring inclusive growth in the Aspirational Blocks.

"This initiative will converge resources, improve infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for our citizens", she said and urged stakeholder departments to work together to create a prosperous and vibrant society where no one is left behind.

The Deputy Commissioner advocated "Education is the key to unlocking the potential of our

women and girls. Let us empower them to read, write, and lead. Female literacy is the catalyst for a prosperous and equitable society. Let us join hands to make every woman and girl a literate and independent citizen." The Senior Scientist from NITI AAYOG explained in detail the aims and objectives of the Sampoornata Abhiyan and informed that Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was launched by the PM in 2023 and aims for the saturation of essential government services in the Aspirational Blocks in multiple domains such as

health, nutrition, education, drinking water and sanitation, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, and basic infrastructure.

The NITI Aayog has launched 'Sampoornata Abhiyan', a 3-month campaign from 4th July - 30th September 2024, to undertake a sustained effort to achieve saturation of 6 key indicators in Aspirational Blocks across the country. Sampoornata Abhiyan will focus on the following 6 identified KPIs across all Aspirational Blocks; Percentage of pregnant women registered for Antenatal

Care (ANC) within the first trimester, Percentage of persons screened for Diabetes against the targeted population in the Block, Percentage of persons screened for Hypertension against the targeted population in the Block, Percentage of pregnant women taking Supplementary Nutrition under the ICDS Programme regularly, Percentage of Soil Health Cards generated against the soil sample collection target, and Percentage of SHGs that have received a Revolving Fund against the total SHGs in the block.

The District Administration Ramban is committed to raising the living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth for all. During the launch, various activities such as Painting, Quiz, and Debate competitions were held on the theme. A list of activities in the block Khari has been finalized as part of the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan. Additionally, all the departments have been encouraged to regularly conduct outreach activities to maintain the campaign's momentum and foster ongoing participation to ensure saturation of key indicators in the Block.

JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA JULY 4

Sampoornata Abhiyan, a three-month long campaign, launched by NITI Aayog today to achieve saturation of six key indicators in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks across the country was kickstarted in Baramulla district amidst huge public enthusiasm and fervor.

The main event was held at Dak Bunglow Baramulla, presided over by District Development Commissioner Minga Sherpa and attended by key officials including Additional District Development Commissioner Syed Qamar Sajad, Chief Planning Officer Javaid Ahmad, representatives from NITI Aayog J&K, education and other departments. Similar such events were held across the district Baramulla.

At the outset, the Chief Planning Officer welcomed all the officers and officials to the launch event and briefed the attendees about the Sampoornata Campaign by NITI Aayog, which aims for the saturation



of Six key indicators under the Aspirational District Programme and Aspirational Block Programme.

The CPO informed that the district has achieved remarkable success under ADP and ABP in recent years, reaching 100% saturation in most of the indicators envisioned by the Sampoornata Campaign.

During the event, the DC administered a pledge to all the officials present, as well as to those joining from the panchayats of all 26 blocks, to work diligently towards achieving the key indicators by September 30th this year.

Speaking at the event, the DC emphasized the

significance of saturation of the key indicators under the Sampoornata Abhiyan for the comprehensive development of the region.

Minga Sherpa further urged all the officers and officials to work in close coordination over the coming months to achieve and maintain 100% saturation of the program's targets. Earlier, the DC inspected the stalls set up by various departments, including health, education, RDD, ICDS, and others, which showcased the beneficiary schemes they operate for public welfare.

JKEDI inks MoU with Central University Jammu

Two Institutions to work together for curriculum design, teaching-training

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 4

Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) and Central University of Jammu on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for entrepreneurship development and Start-up related services.

Under the guidance and mentorship of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Jammu and Rajinder Kumar Sharma, Director JKEDI, the collaboration aims to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region by leveraging the expertise of both the institutions.

The MoU is expected to pave the way for joint initiatives to strengthen the entrepreneurship and start-up climate among the student community. Training, capacity building, mentoring, incubating novel ideas and handholding to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit



among the student community are part of the MoU. Combining the expertise of JKEDI and Central University of Jammu, this partnership looks forward to fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial culture.

The MoU was signed in a formal ceremony held at JKEDI, Bari Brahmana Campus and attended by key officials from both the institutions. The signatories were Rajinder Kumar Sharma, Director JKEDI and Prof. Yashwant Singh, Registrar, Central University of Jammu in presence of Prof. Jaya Bhasin, Dean, School of

Business Studies, Dr. Shahid Mushtaq, Assistant Professor, School of Business Studies, Zahid Ali Dar, I/c CIIBM, JKEDI and Dr. Vinod Kumar, Teaching Associate/In-charge CBD, JKEDI.

The purpose of the MoU between the two institutions is to work together for curriculum design by way of providing valuable inputs in teaching-training methodology and suitably customizes the curriculum so that the students fit in the entrepreneurial scenario meaningfully, followed by industrial training and visits, Internship for the

students, Research and Development, skill development programs and guest lectures. The environment and the discussion echoed a strong resolve to achieve the mandate.

On this occasion, Rajinder Kumar Sharma, Director JKEDI said, "We at JKEDI are committed to train and empower different sections of society on the premise of entrepreneurship which is the future of the nation." He said JKEDI shall extend support for internships to students of the Central University of Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Yashwant Singh, Registrar Central University of Jammu Jammu, said this partnership is a significant stride to help the student community benefit by enhancing their skills and knowledge with regard to entrepreneurship, innovation and startups. He further informed that Central University of Jammu has established a Section 8 company CUJ SITE COUNCIL to

provide incubation support to learners.

Prof. Jaya Bhasin and Dr Shahid Mushtaq shared valuable inputs about vocationalisation and skilling ecosystem being promoted by Central University of Jammu in project mode.

Apart from this an action plan was discussed for execution of activities on the trajectory that could be adopted to enhance the entrepreneurship quotient among learners. This MoU is aimed at offering the students enhanced opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills and contribute to the region's economic growth. Both institutions will collaborate on faculty development programs, including workshops, seminars, and training sessions to enhance teaching methodologies and subject expertise besides enabling small businesses with the right skill sets and training as well as creating networking forums for them to learn from like-minded individuals and industry experts.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT
PHE MECHANICAL DIVISION SOUTH JAMMU
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT PHEJMS/41 of 2024-25 Dated 01-07-2024

Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu, on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from registered/reputed firms.

| Name of the Work | Name of the Division | Cost of Tender Document/Tender Fee(In Rs) | Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) | Validity of Rates |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Providing, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Submersible Pumping unit of Capacity of 16,000 GPH X 100 mtr head along with allied works at T/well Sec - F ERA Sainik Colony | PHE Mech. Division South Jammu | Rs. 200.00 (Non-Refundable) In the shape of e-challan/single window challan of JMC pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu/tender fee receipt through online payment through the JMC link http://www.jmciammu.org/online-payment.html | @ 2% of estimated cost tender value In the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu | Bid shall be valid for 180 days |

- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 02-07-2024 (10:00 AM) and uploaded from 04-07-2024 (10:00 AM) to 15-07-2024 (3:00 PM). The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktenders.gov.in>.
- Pre-Bid meeting shall be held in the Office of the undersigned on 03-07-2024 at 12:00 P.M.
- Bids must be accompanied by EMD and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 3 & 4 of the table.
- The bid shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of bids. If any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the tenderer shall be debarred from participating in tendering process for a period of 1 year.
- The Technical Bids of the tender document received shall be opened online in the office of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu on 16-07-2024 at 3:00 P.M. or any other day convenient to the Ex. Engineer in the Office chambers of Executive Engineer, PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu.
- The Financial Bids of the tender document of the qualified bidders shall also be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu during office hours and shall be communicated separately.
- Cost of bidding document in shape of e-challan/single window challan of JMC pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu/tender fee receipt through online payment through the JMC link <http://www.jmciammu.org/online-payment.html>
- The original instruments in respect of cost of document, EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR and other relevant document of L1 bidder will be required to be submitted to the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu within 05 days after opening of financial bids on line. No separate information about opening of financial bids will be sent by this office / by the tender opening authority. In case the original documents are not submitted by the L1 bidder within 05 days after opening of financial bid, the tender will be cancelled and the bidder will not be allowed to participate in any further / future tendering process in the division for a period of one year.
- Other details can be seen inside the detailed tender document.

No: PHEJMS/1359-63
Dated:- 01-07-2024

A.E.E
Sub Div-II
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Mech. Division South
Jammu

DIP/J-2338/24
Date: 4-7-24

EDITORIAL

Paying the cost of ignoring history!

The Hathras stampede, which claimed 121 lives and left many critically injured, is a devastating reminder of our failure to learn from past disasters. It is a tragedy compounded by the predictable nature of its cause: gross negligence in crowd management and a blatant disregard for safety protocols. Once again, we are left to grapple with the consequences of waiting for disaster to strike before taking action. On July 2, in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, around 2.5 lakh people were crammed into a venue with a capacity of only 80,000, to attend a 'satsang' led by a self-styled godman, Narayan Sakar Hari, also known as Bhole Baba. The organisers had secured permission by falsely claiming a much smaller number of attendees. Moreover, they refused to cooperate with the police in managing the crowd and even attempted to conceal evidence after the incident. In the aftermath, Bhole Baba deflected responsibility, blaming 'anti-social elements' for the stampede, while a preliminary probe by a sub-divisional magistrate pointed to the godman's security pushing devotees and a "slippery slope" as causes of the tragedy. India, a country where religious gatherings are a daily occurrence, has a poor track record in crowd management. This is particularly disheartening given the guidelines provided a decade ago by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). These guidelines emphasized the need for proactive planning, flawless execution, and the involvement of well-trained personnel to prevent man-made tragedies like stampedes. Yet, the events at Hathras starkly illustrate how these recommendations have been ignored. The practice of providing misleading estimates about crowd sizes to secure administrative approval is alarmingly common. Sometimes, corruption plays a role in these permissions being granted without proper scrutiny. However, the blame does not rest solely on the organisers. Authorities must exercise due diligence, ensuring that permissions are granted based on accurate information and that safety measures are thoroughly inspected and enforced. To prevent such tragedies, there must be a commitment to accountability. This involves exemplary action against those whose negligence or greed endangers lives. Authorities must adopt and rigorously enforce the NDMA's guidelines, conduct regular inspections, and ensure that organisers adhere to safety protocols. They should exercise due diligence in granting permission while spot inspections should be made mandatory to ascertain whether adequate safety arrangements have been made for even the worst-case scenario. Only through such measures can we hope to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. The Hathras stampede should serve as a wake-up call. It is imperative that we learn from history and take decisive steps to ensure the safety of the public at mass gatherings. Lives depend on it. No complacency should be adopted while granting permissions to such events.

India's 'weedy and unwieldy' growth

JAGDISH RATTANANI

One way to make sense of the shocking roof collapse at Terminal 1 of New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, or the monsoon flooding and road cave-ins in and around areas of the hastily-inaugurated Ram temple in Ayodhya, is to inquire into the idea of development that has taken root in India, broadly since liberalisation in 1991, and particularly over the last 10 years that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been in power at the Centre.

Given the political investments in the temple project, or the high visibility of the airport, and the class of people who get hurt or inconvenienced, events like these hit the headlines. They bring attention to shoddy and hastily-designed development plans, which is good. But they equally distract attention from a host of development-led disasters that have been unfolding, slowly and quite unspectacularly, delivering disastrous changes in slow motion. These changes mostly go unnoticed because they appear so routine, so disconnected from each other, and come across as so unspectacular.

For example, in Mumbai,

the rush of gated community constructions has inevitably brought flooding in areas surrounding the new and high-priced apartments in these complexes, many built by influential and well-connected builder groups. The flood waters inevitably bring discomfort if not harm to those who have not moved out of their humbler dwellings, usually families with lesser means, so that there is a slow change in the character of bustling neighbourhoods, bringing with it growing and uneven suffering, changing aspirations, and rising social inequities and tensions. The drama unfolds in bits and pieces. Some people die as pedestrians or motorists when trees fall on people or cars. Others die as tree-cutters because they work without helmets or harnesses. This is standard protocol; the picture can be seen on the streets every day.

In Bengaluru, once noted as India's 'garden city' and now the IT services hub powering India's global business presence, water leakage was reported at Terminal 2 of the Kempegowda International Airport after unusually heavy rains in May, a day that also saw water-logging across the city, and a spate of tree col-

lapses that also endanger life. Delhi has its own disasters seen in the flooding on its main roads, in the Gurgaon development belt, and in the most recent incident, the flooding of the Pragati Maidan underpass.

The overall thrust of development is to get it done and to move ahead in a nation that is supposed to be racing on the path to growth amid an economic boom and supposed global dominance. Scale and speed are the favoured words, but in the absence of an understanding of and consensus on development, and what kind of development India ought to have, we have fancy airports and failing bus services sitting side-by-side, or gleaming malls where lakhs are spent in a day and garbage dumps where workers have no protective gear or health insurance.

Worker protection in factories, haphazard construction in hilly terrains or sensitive ecological zones, fancier cars on logjammed roads, and the story of rising NPAs and slacking banking services for ordinary customers while 'wealthy' customers get special attention are all reflections of a growth story that isn't going well, and cannot end well for India in the long term.

Mahatma Gandhi called this "weedy and unwieldy growth", and he had warned against it long before the dangers were visible to anyone when India became Independent. In remarks dated January 27, 1948, three days before he was assassinated, Gandhi noted that the nation "has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom." Political freedom was easy, he argued - it was right in front as a goal to be achieved. But other freedoms "are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular," and so the hard work in building India was all waiting to be done. He raised then what remains the burning question of today: "How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?" The Father of the Nation had warned that this would be a "difficult ascent to democracy... leading to corruption and the creation of institutions, (which were) popular and democratic only in name."

That is the precise picture unfolding in the India of today.

As the world turns more careful and looks to build with caution and care, the

Indian State is going berserk in multiple directions to show its strength outside India while Indians are getting the rough end. In this light, the mishaps in Delhi and Ayodhya represent the smashing of the showcase and they signal the coming collapse of the story of growth. The pain and destruction that follow will have to be faced by ordinary people.

This debate on the kind and quality of development is critical in India today. On the one hand, is economic development seen mostly in a number, like the GDP growth of a nation, desperately seeking development as an objective concept to drive people to higher standards of living - a notion long challenged and since dismissed globally. On the other is a broader idea of development (the well-being dimension of growth) that includes health, education, environmental protection, worker safety nets, and also material consumption. This broader approach gives us the UN's Human Development Index, by which standards India sits at rank 134 out of 193 countries, below countries such as Bangladesh, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

Similarly, India's NFHS

draws attention to development indices, like measuring how many children are anaemic, which would be an indication of poor health and the tendency to a higher Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) number. Just seven states (Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal) report less than 50% of children under the age of five years as anaemic. India cannot have sustainable growth with this kind of NFHS statistics.

In the classic 'Freedom as Development', Amartya Sen noted: "Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states. Despite unprecedented increases in overall opulence, the contemporary world denies elementary freedoms to vast numbers - perhaps even the majority - of people." This wisdom is well-studied and age-old by now. India will do well to heed it.

(The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPIJMR. Views are personal) (Syndicate: The Billion Press)

Wake-up call against rising plastic pollution

SRIRAJ KOTA

The International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on Jul 3 every year. The awareness created due to observance of this day helps put focus on the threat of the silently growing footprint of plastic pollution. This is essential given the fact that plastic pollution, especially of Single Use Plastics (SUP) has now permeated all aspects of the environment. Today SUP and plastic microfibre pollution can be found from the highest point to the deepest part of the earth. The influx of 45,000 trekkers per year to Mt. Everest has unfortunately ensured that microplastic pollution can now be found in snow samples close to the peak of the world's highest mountain. Similarly, relentless marine traffic and indiscriminate disposal of garbage into the oceans has resulted in high microplastic pollution across the seas including in The Mariana Trench, Earth's deepest point in the Pacific Ocean, more than 11 km deep from mean sea level.

As humanity achieves

this dubious distinction of spreading litter to virtually all corners of the planet, India unfortunately is firmly at the forefront of plastic pollution spree. The figures speak for themselves. According to the Plastic Overshoot Day report by Swiss non-profit EA, Earth Action states that global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021. The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. India is not far behind. India ranks 3rd globally contributing 5.5 KT of SUP and ranked ninety-fourth with per capita single-use plastic waste of 4 kg per year.

The much-publicised SUP ban in India addresses only 11 per cent of the entire gamut of SUP plastic waste. India is among the twelve countries responsible for 60 per cent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste. With a population of more than 1.44 billion, India generates 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day. This is the equivalent of approxi-

mately 26,000 small cars.

Unfortunately, only 8 per cent of this plastic is recycled. The Swiss report also states that India is poised to release 391,879 tonnes of microplastic into water bodies by the end of 2024. Second only to China. With abysmal conditions such as these, India's grip on plastic pollution can at best be described as feeble. The efforts to rein in the runaway plastic pollution have to begin at the grassroots level.

The International Plastic Bag Free Day focuses on the same by increasing awareness about the harmful impact of plastic bag usage and pollution. Additionally, stress is also laid on encouraging individuals, businesses, and organisations to adopt sustainable alternatives for SUP products. The special day urges governments across the world to step up policy changes and introduce radical systemic solutions to reduce plastic use and waste.

The current statistics of plastic pollution in India demand serious and innovative solutions that look

beyond the traditional answers such as simple unsorted recycling of plastic, landfilling or co-processing.

The need of the hour is ultra-innovative remedies that deliver scalable and sustainable results in record time. While India continues to construct a circular economy that reduces plastic waste, the focus must now be firmly shifted to handling the plastic pollution problem on large scale basis. As a part of this India must set up large-scale waste sorting facilities that can use artificial intelligence-based algorithms to automatically sift through various types of plastic waste and identify the same.

This as compared to traditional recycling methods can speed up the process of recycling and therefore increase the quantum of plastic recycled at the facility in one shift. This in turn can ensure that the facility can sort and recycle an entire district's monthly plastic waste within a week. An example in this regard is Sweden's plastic waste sorting facility called Site Zero which

can handle up to 200,000 tonnes of plastic packaging every year, more than any other facility in the world, and enough to deal with the whole country's household plastic packaging waste. Similarly, microplastic pollution in water is a major concern.

The various water bodies in the country and the seas are rife with microplastic contamination. In this regard, India can take a leaf out of the innovative initiative taken by Germany. Wasser 3.0 in Germany has perfected the process of not only removing microplastics but also micro-pollutants from water—that too without any filters.

The process followed is called "Agglomeration Fixation" which clumps microplastics together on the surface of the water after which they are simply skimmed off. The process is simple, scalable with no side effects and can be applied to a variety of water bodies be it freshwater, seawater or even wastewater. Furthermore, the science of biochemical research can be leveraged to access plastic-degrading

enzymes that can degrade and consume plastic waste in record time. This can go a long way in accelerating a year's plastic waste recycling activity to a few months.

With the aid of science, and artificial intelligence (AI) software the possibilities of innovative plastic pollution combat options are endless. AI aided by satellite support for instance can help India clean up its seas on a large-scale manner, special software-driven clean-up technologies can dredge up decades of plastic and other pollutants thereby providing a chance of survival for the delicate marine life. Plastic is in our everyday life and diet as well.

A World Wildlife Fund study has revealed that an average human being ingests 5 gm of plastic every week. It is time to cut the growing footprint of this harmful substance to size in the interests of mankind and the environment. So next time we reach for that plastic bag, let us not.

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

Understanding the Divine Hand

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We don't give credit to God, because we take it for granted that Creation will go on. How about a business? We are all aware that it has limited longevity, however long it may run. But Creation, which is God's business runs and runs. Why? Because God keeps it going. Just picture this. There are many nuclear-armed countries; some of whom have crazy leaders. How does God prevent an all-out nuclear war? Simple; God has access to our hearts. He knows what we are thinking. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 13.2) And He knows how to mould it if His Creation is at risk. God is fully alert all the time; there is no chance of a slip-up. And we may be thinking that God is sitting somewhere or even sleeping. If this task undertaken by the Lord was not too much,

just imagine being available to all eight billion of us all the time. You pray and God has to respond appropriately, if at all warranted. Why? Because most of the prayers are ridiculous like a student, having not studied all year, who prays for passing.

How does God achieve this task? Lord Krishna explains, "Having limbs on all sides; having eyes, head and mouth on all sides; having ears on all sides, God is situated in this world pervading all. (13.13) God does it in His unmanifest form. (9.4) He doesn't have to be doing it in gross form like we perceive someone to do. God is different from us, very different. If this task is not onerous enough, God ensures that we are justly rewarded and yes, punished also. Justice is always done, and no one is rewarded at the expense of another. Imagine two teams playing and their



supporters fervently praying for victory. Who wins? The team with the right karmaphalas of course, i.e. what was destined. We don't know how it was arrived at but be sure that this was the right result.

Yes, God responds to prayers, but only to those who deserve it. And He knows who deserves it; more praying is not sufficient. One must pray and also qualify for a favour-

able result. If we wish to know what is required to qualify for God's kripa (favour), God has given detailed instructions in bonafide scriptures like the Bhagavad-Geeta. Additionally, God is very keen to guide, us if we pray sincerely for it. Picture our requesting for guidance from a local if lost. What does the local do? He does his best to help us. God is not different; He helps.

God is very much in the picture to safeguard good people from demons, as there is always a tussle going on between divine and demonic forces. God sides with the divine forces without infringing dharma, as was done in the Mahabharata War and during Lord Ramachandra's incarnation; the Lord killed Ravana among many other demons. Not only big killing, God takes care of all big tasks as Karta (doer) for His devotees.

How do you think Arjuna was able to kill/maim big warriors? Because God controls all the relevant five factors for success; nobody else has this control; we can control only ourselves. The place of action is determined by circumstances. Similarly, the instruments at our disposal are limited, for example, a doctor is hampered if all the right medicines are not readily available. Our efforts are

also limited because we are limited by our health, etc. And the providence is surely not in our control. (18.14) God has no such infirmities.

God is always very busy. Not only engaged, but God is very carefully engaged in action. Why? Because men follow His lead, God is the most superior entity. As pointed out earlier, God has taken upon Himself many tasks; I have pointed out only a few. What is the message of this article? That we should become aware of God's enormous contribution to our well-being if we choose to take His shelter and follow His instructions, especially dharma. What does God want in return from us? That we should work actively towards our progress and help and serve others so that they do likewise. God wants us to be useful just as God is.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Diabetes, BP patients must aim for bad cholesterol levels below 70 mg/dL: CSI

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

People in the general population or those with low-risk must maintain LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, often called the "bad" cholesterol, levels below 100 mg/dL, while those with diabetes or hypertension should aim for LDL-C below 70 mg/dL, according to the first-ever Indian guidelines for dyslipidemia management released by the Cardiological Society of India (CSI) on Thursday.

Dyslipidemia, characterised by high total cholesterol, elevated LDL-cholesterol, high triglycerides, and low HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol), is a critical risk factor for cardiovascular

diseases (CVD) such as heart attacks, strokes, and peripheral artery disease. People in the very high-risk category, with extreme risk for CVDs, must aim for LDL-C levels below 55 mg/dL, noted the guidelines which come as the prevalence of dyslipidemia in India is getting alarmingly high, and the resulting CVDs are also surging, especially among the young adults.

New guidelines also recommend non-fasting lipid measurements for risk estimation and treatment, shifting from traditional fasting measurements. Increased LDL-C remains the primary target, but for patients with high triglycerides (more than 150 mg/dL), non-HDL cholesterol is the focus.

Non-HDL includes all



the bad types of cholesterol.

"The general population and low-risk individuals should maintain LDL-C levels below 100 mg/dL and non-HDL-C levels below 130 mg/dL. High-risk individuals, such as those with diabetes or hypertension, should aim for LDL-C below 70 mg/dL and non-HDL below 100 mg/dL," as per the guidelines.

"Aggressive targets are suggested for very high-risk patients, including those with a history of heart attacks, angina, stroke, or chronic kidney disease. These patients should aim for LDL-C levels below 55 mg/dL

regular exercise, quitting alcohol and tobacco, and reducing sugar and carbohydrate intake. "High LDL-C and non-HDL-C can be controlled with a combination of statins and oral non-statin drugs. If goals are not achieved, injectable lipid-lowering drugs like PCSK9 inhibitors or Inclisiran are recommended," noted Dr. S. Ramakrishnan, Professor of Cardiology at AIIMS, New Delhi, & Co-Author of the Lipid Guidelines.

The guidelines stated that for patients with high triglycerides (more than 150 mg/dL) and non-HDL cholesterol is the target. Furthermore, the guidelines recommend evaluating lipoprotein (a) levels at least once, as elevated levels (more than 50 mg/dL) are associated with cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of elevated lipoprotein (a) is higher in India (25 per cent) compared to the Western world (15-20 per cent).

It also called for lifestyle changes, such as

non-HDL levels below 85 mg/dL," explained Dr. J. P. S. Sawhney, Chairman of the Department of Cardiology at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, & Chairman of the Lipid Guidelines.

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It also called for lifestyle changes, such as

Mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus detected in several parts of Israel

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM, JULY 4

Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection and Ministry of Health revealed on Wednesday that it has detected, during a monitoring operation, mosquitoes that were later found to be infected with the West Nile virus.

Mosquitoes carrying the West Nile virus were captured in Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Kiryat Ono, Petah Tikva, the Lev Hasharon Regional Council, Central District, as well as in Eilat and the Aylot Regional Council in the south of the country. In accordance with the results of the monitoring, the ministries asked the public to protect themselves against mosquitoes by following the issued guidelines to help the national effort

to reduce the mosquito hazard.

Oren Ashet Kathabi, Director of the Department of Zoonotic Diseases in the Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health, explained that West Nile Fever is a disease that originates from animals and is also transmitted to humans.

It is caused by a virus found mainly in poultry, and is transmitted to humans and animals through mosquitoes that feed on infected birds. In most cases, it is a mild flu-like illness that goes away on its own. The disease is often characterised by fever, headache, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis, and sometimes nausea and diarrhoea. Rare complications are possible or meningitis, and rarely the disease ends in death.

India backs global standards for spices, vegetable oils at international food trade meet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

India has backed global standards for spices and vegetable oils at the 86th session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) said on Wednesday.

The CCEXEC, ongoing at Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome from July 1-5, plays a critical role in reviewing proposals for new work and monitoring the progress of standards development.

The CAC, an international body established by the FAO and the World Health Organisation (WHO), aims to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.



During the session, India, represented by G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, CEO of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), strongly supported the advancement of standards development for various spices, including small cardamom, turmeric, and vanilla, the ministry said.

"This initiative is particularly significant for India, being a major pro-

ducer and exporter of these spices, as it would facilitate smoother international trade," it added.

India also "backed the progression of standards for named vegetable oils, guidelines for the control of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*".

It also called for the safe use and reuse of water in food production and processing and championed

the proposal for developing Codex guidance on food safety considerations related to the use of recycled materials in food packaging.

It is "crucial in addressing global challenges such as climate change, environmental protection, and sustainability," the ministry said.

Further, at the session, India shared its experience with the FSSAI guidelines on recycling post-consumer PET for food contact applications.

"India's participation, as a member, in the High-level Executive Committee (CCEXEC) underscores its dedication to establishing robust food safety standards and promoting fair practices in the global food trade, reflecting its pivotal role in the international food industry," the ministry noted.

Nipah monoclonal antibody to undergo human trials in India, Bangladesh in 2025

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

A novel monoclonal antibody against the Nipah virus is set to undergo human clinical trials in India, and Bangladesh -- two countries that suffer Nipah outbreaks almost every year -- in 2025, according to a report on Thursday.

Nipah virus, a zoonotic disease of the Paramyxovirus family, kills up to 75 per cent of the people it infects. The lethal disease also has a high transmission rate. To date, there are no approved treatments or vaccines against it.

The trial aims to assess the safety and tolerability of Nipah monoclonal antibody (mAb) MBPIF5 -- developed by the US-based Mapp Biopharma-



"A monoclonal antibody capable of offering immediate protection for caregivers and others at risk of infection would be an important addition to our armamentarium against the Nipah virus," said Richard Hatchett, CEO of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

The new Nipah mAb can bind to the Nipah virus F protein -- preventing the virus from entering a host cell and causing infection in people.

This mechanism can offer protection against both known strains of Nipah virus (Bangladesh and Malaysia) and its closely related viral cousin, Hendra virus, for at least six months -- enough time for vaccine immunity to build, according to the company researchers.

MBPIF5 in healthy adults at multiple clinical trial sites in India and Bangladesh.

The funding will also support preclinical studies seeking to expand the use of the mAb from pre-exposure prophylaxis (before someone is exposed to a virus) to post-exposure prophylaxis, that is, for people shortly after infection with the virus.

Here's how Zika virus can impact pregnancy, cause newborn complications

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

Pregnant women are severely at risk of Zika virus that can lead to severe complications, harming the baby in the womb, said doctors on Thursday as Zika cases rise to 8 in Maharashtra.

Zika is an Aedes mosquito-borne viral disease like Dengue and Chikungunya. Although it is a non-fatal disease, when contracted during pregnancy, Zika can cause devastating effects on the developing foetus.

Microcephaly is one of the most alarming out-

comes, where babies are born with abnormally small heads and underdeveloped brains.

"This condition can result in long-term physical and intellectual disabilities. It is important to note that not all babies born to women who have Zika virus infection during pregnancy will have birth defects. However, the risk is significant enough that pregnant women must take steps to avoid Zika virus infection," Dr. Manish Machave, consulting obstetrician, and gynaecological endoscopic surgeon, Ruby Hall Clinic, Pune, told IANS.

According to the doctor, an infection in the first trimester appears to be the most risky.

In addition, Zika infection can cause other serious conditions collectively known as congenital Zika syndrome, Dr. Manish said.

"These include eye defects like damage to the retina and optic nerves, leading to vision problems; hearing impairments with structural and functional issues in the ear; growth restrictions both in the womb and after birth, leading to low birth weight and stunted growth; and joint defor-



mities with limited range of motion in some joints, giving rise to arthrogryposis," he noted.

Zika virus gets transmitted to a person through the bite of an infected

mosquito. When bitten, the first signs are typically mild and can include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. Currently, eight cases of Zika virus infection have been reported from Maha-

rastra: Pune (6), Kolhapur (1) and Sangamner (1). Of these, two cases are in pregnant women.

Besides affecting current pregnancy, the deadly virus can also affect her future pregnancies, according to experts, making it a significant public health concern.

"If a woman is infected with Zika, it must be cleared from her system before she can conceive because the virus will still bring harm to the baby if one becomes pregnant while infected," Dr. Kavitha Kovi, Head of Department - Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Aster Women and

Children Hospital, in Bengaluru, told IANS.

"If a pregnant woman thinks she might be experiencing symptoms of the Zika virus, she should seek medical attention right away. She should tell her healthcare provider about recent travel to an area with Zika and if she may have had mosquito bites. The healthcare provider may suggest testing for the presence of the virus," the doctor added.

She called on pregnant women to monitor for symptoms like fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes -- symptoms of the Zika virus -- and to seek medical

attention right away.

"Following medical advice, including measures to prevent further mosquito bites, is essential to minimise risk. Regular check-ups and discussions with healthcare providers about pregnancy management and potential risks to the baby are also recommended for optimal care and monitoring," Dr. Kavitha said.

Dr. Manish asked pregnant women to take extra precautions to avoid exposure, such as avoiding travel to Zika-affected areas and protecting themselves from mosquito bites.

Over 7 per cent of daily deaths in 10 Indian cities linked to PM2.5 pollution: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

On average, 7.2 per cent of all daily deaths in 10 of the largest and most polluted cities in India, including Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai, were linked to PM2.5 levels higher than World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for safe exposure, according to a study published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal.

Delhi was found to have the largest fraction of daily and yearly deaths attributable to PM2.5 air pollution, caused by particles sized 2.5 micrometres or less in diameter.

Sources of such pollu-

tion include vehicular and industrial emissions.

Researchers said that daily exposure to PM2.5 pollution in Indian cities is linked with a higher risk of death, and locally created pollution could be possibly causing these deaths.

The international team included researchers from Varanasi's Banaras Hindu University and the Centre for Chronic Disease Control, New Delhi.

They found that an increase of 10 micrograms per cubic metre in the average of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution measured over two days (short-term exposure) was related to 1.4 per cent higher daily mortality.



The death risk was found to be doubled (2.7 per cent) per a 10 microgram per cubic metre increase, when the researchers restricted

their analysis to observations below Indian standards of air quality, less stringent than WHO guidelines for safe exposure, which prescribe 15 micro-

grams per cubic metre of PM2.5 over a 24-hour period.

Indian air quality standards prescribe 60 micrograms per cubic metre of PM2.5 over a 24-hour period.

City-wise, the authors found a 0.31 per cent rise in daily mortality per a 10 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5 in Delhi, while in Bengaluru, the rise was 3.06 per cent.

The links between daily exposure to PM2.5 pollution and locally created pollutants were found to be stronger in models which the researchers used to explore cause-and-effect relationships.

Therefore, it was pos-

sible that the locally generated pollutants were causing these excess deaths, the authors said.

"The causal effects were especially strong in cities with lower concentrations of air pollution, such as (Bengaluru), Chennai, and Shimla," the authors wrote.

The study, "the first multi-city, time series analysis of short-term exposure to PM2.5 and daily mortality in India," looked at roughly 36 lakh daily deaths across ten Indian cities between 2008 and 2019. Other cities included in the analysis were Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, Shimla and Varanasi.

New medical college to start in Mumbai: Minister Hasan Mushrif

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JUNE 4

A new state-run medical college on the premises of Gokuldas Tejpal (GT) Hospital in south Mumbai will start from the academic year 2024-25, Maharashtra Medical Education Minister Hasan Mushrif told the legislative assembly on Thursday.

He said the medical college will be affiliated with GT, and Cama and Albbess hospitals.

The decision to start the medical college was taken on January 31, 2012. The Indian Council of Medical Research has given the permission to start the facility, he said.



Death toll from Israeli strikes on Gaza strip tops 38,000

AGENCIES

GAZA, JULY 4

The death toll from Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip since October 7 has risen to 38,011, with 87,445 people injured, the enclave's health ministry said on Thursday.

"The number of victims of the Israeli aggression since last October 7 has reached 38,011, with 87,445 injured," the ministry said in a statement.

In the past 24 hours, 58 dead and 179 injured were admitted to Gaza hospitals, the statement added.

2 injured, 1 missing in explosion at defence weapons plant in U.S. Arkansas

AGENCIES

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 4

At least two people were injured and one went missing on Wednesday in an explosion at a defence weapons plant in the southern U.S. state of Arkansas, the plant's operator said.

The explosion happened at the General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems' plant in Camden, about 86 miles (138 km) south of Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, a company spokesperson said.

The company confirmed the explosion after initially calling it an "incident involving pyrotechnics."

"At this time, we are working with first responders and can confirm the incident resulted in at least two injuries and one missing individual," General Dynamics said in a statement, adding that it's cooperating with the authorities in the investigation.

Australian man arrested for randomly pushing woman onto rail tracks

AGENCIES

SYDNEY, JULY 4

Australian police said on Thursday that a local man has been arrested in Melbourne after he pushed a female off the platform at one of the city's most bustling train stations.

According to a statement by Victoria Police, the incident took place at around 3:50 p.m. local time on Wednesday at Richmond Railway Station.

A 64-year-old woman was pushed onto the train tracks, sustaining non-life-threatening injuries.

On Thursday morning, police arrested the 54-year-old male Werribee offender in Southbank, who is now assisting officers with inquiries.

Earlier, police confirmed to local media that the man fled the scene after the incident occurred, while the related parties are not known to each other.

Richmond Railway Station stands close to Melbourne's central business district, serving as a major transit hub for commuters connecting various lines.

The incident caused delays for passengers at Richmond and neighboring stations during the peak hours of Wednesday evening.

The chaos was further exacerbated at 5:00 p.m. local time, when local service provider Metro Trains reported that all lines across Melbourne were delayed up to 25 minutes after police removed a trespasser from the Flinders Street area.

The delays were cleared approximately two hours later.

Putin's visit to Ulaanbaatar possible in 2024: Kremlin Spokesman

AGENCIES

MOSCOW, JULY 4

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Ulaanbaatar is possible in 2024, it will take place after it is agreed upon, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Sputnik on Thursday.

"When it is agreed upon... It is possible this year, yes," Peskov said when asked about the date of Putin's visit to Ulaanbaatar.

Last October, Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, at a meeting with Putin in China, invited the Russian leader to visit the country in 2024. On Wednesday, during talks on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, the Mongolian president expressed hope that the Russian leader would be able to visit Ulaanbaatar this year.

The SCO summit is taking place in Astana on July 3-4. The event is attended by the heads of state and government of Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, China, Mongolia, the UAE, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The summit will also be attended by SCO Secretary General Zhang Ming and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Thousands evacuate as wildfires spread amid heatwaves in California

AGENCIES

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 4

Wildfires spread in Northern California amid heatwaves, causing thousands to evacuate, officials have said.

About 70 miles (113km) north of California's capital Sacramento, crews have been battling a wildfire in Butte County, Xinhua news agency reported. Approximately 28,000 residents were under the evacuation order near Oroville on Wednesday due to the fast-moving fire, according to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection of California (CAL FIRE).

'Vote for.. or to vote at all': Iran Presidential run-off presents stark choices beyond reformist vs hardliner

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 4

He may have finished last in Iran's Presidential race but cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi made waves as the deemed conservative candidate not only displayed a rather progressive view but identified the underlying issue the regime is grappling with - and not very successfully - as reformist Masoud Pezeshkian and ultra-conservative Saeed Jalili clash in the run-off on Friday.

Pourmohammadi, in a public message after his first-round exit, hailed those who had cast their ballot but also expressed "respect" to all those who "did not believe us and did not come".

Turnout in the polls was just 40 per cent - the lowest since 1979.

"Your presence and absence are full of messages that I hope will be heard. Your message is clear and unambiguous," the cleric said on social media.

As both Pezeshkian and Jalili wrapped up their television debates on Monday and Tuesday in which they presented their courses of action

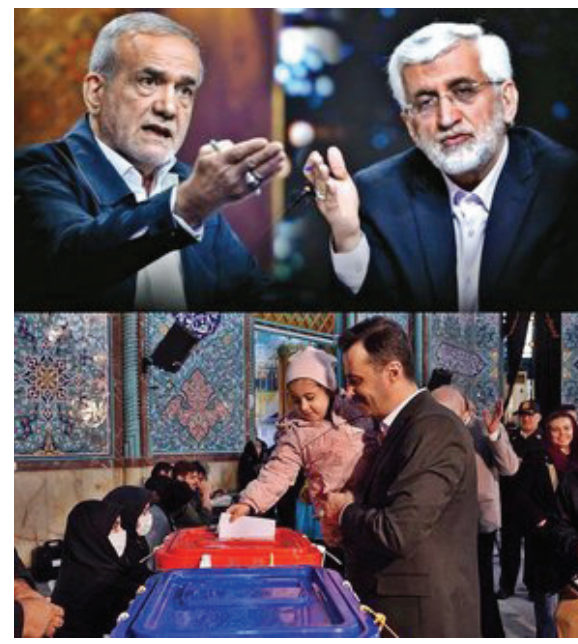
and clashed vigorously on approaches and mindsets on social, economic and diplomatic matters, the overriding issue in Friday's elections is not just whether the reformist or the hardliner will prevail.

It actually is whether this question even concerns the great mass of the (absent) voters.

In more general terms, will the 60 per cent, who stayed away from polling booths on last Friday, shed their apathy to their participation in elections - restricted or imperfect as they may be - and keep faith in the exercise as a means of political and social change?

Turnout in elections - both presidential and parliamentary - has long been deemed as a sign of legitimacy of the Iranian system. However, these hopes have been belied in the present snap elections, as well as the parliamentary elections earlier this year (41 per cent) and the previous presidential elections (2021) - won by Ebrahim Raisi - at 48.8 per cent.

An impassioned appeal by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei before the June 28 elections seeking a "maximum" voter



turnout as a message to the country's "enemies", seemed to have failed to sway the voters. It is to be seen what effect his fresh appeal ahead of the run-off will have - and the establishment will have to face up to the legacy issue sooner or later.

The turnout figured prominently in the debates between Pezeshkian and Jalili.

While Jalili called for examining why there is a "decrease in people's participation" in elections", Pezeshkian was

more strident, terming it "unacceptable that 60 per cent of the people did not come to the polls".

The reformist candidate also linked it to wider social and political issues like the internet curbs and the hijab issue, saying it also is due to women or some ethnic groups "that are not engaged by us".

"When we ignore people's rights and do not want to listen to their voices, expecting them to come to the polls is not a reasonable expectation. When 60 per cent of the

Nepal PM Dahal's govt reduced to minority after UML quits coalition, RSP ministers to resign

AGENCIES

KATHMANDU, JULY 4

The government of Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was on the brink, with all four ministers of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), including party Chairman Rabi Lamichhane, deciding to quit the government on Thursday.

The decision of the RSP comes hours after the CPN-UML withdrew support to the government on Wednesday evening.

However, Prime Minister Dahal has steadfastly refused to quit to pave the way for the formation of a new government by the UML and Nepali Congress.

Among those who are resigning today are RSP Chairman Rabi Lamichhane, who serves as the Deputy Prime Minister



and Home Minister; Dol Prasad Aryal, Minister of Labor and Employment; Sumana Shrestha, Minister of Education, and Birajbhakta Shrestha, Minister of Youth and Sports.

Acting Spokesperson of RSP, Manish Jha, said "All four of our ministers will resign today."

The resignation of CPN-UML ministers on Wednesday evening triggered significant political changes in Nepal.

UML's decision to forge a power-sharing deal with the Nepali Congress, ending its alliance with the

Maoist Center, has shifted the political dynamics in Nepal.

As a result, PM Dahal's government now holds a minority status

On Wednesday evening, all ministers representing the UML reached the Official Residence of the Prime Minister in Baluwatar to inform Prime Minister Dahal about their party's decision to withdraw support.

The development comes after Prime Minister Dahal rejected calls from both the Nepali Congress (NC) and the UML to step down to facilitate the formation of a new "national consensus" government.

In a sudden twist in national politics, the UML severed its alliance with the Maoist Center and forged a new alliance with

the NC on Monday at midnight. The new alliance left Prime Minister Dahal in the minority.

Earlier, a Secretariat meeting of the UML had decided to withdraw support to the government after Prime Minister Dahal snubbed their call to step down and pave the way for the formation of a new government.

As per Article 100 (2), the Prime Minister is required to table a motion in the House of Representatives for a vote of confidence within thirty days if the political party he represents is divided or if a coalition party withdraws its support.

The Prime Minister has to take a vote of confidence within 30 days of the UML's formal notification of withdrawal of support to the Parliament.

people do not come to vote, we should feel that there is something wrong. There is a shortcoming," he asserted, as per transcripts of the debates on Iranian media.

The statements by Pezeshkian - who is promising looser social curbs and negotiations to relieve sanctions pressure - were also addressed to the disillusioned reform-seeking yet non-voting electorate as he faces a clear loss if they again sit at home on Friday.

In the first round on June 28, Pezeshkian got 10.41 million votes, while Jalili was not far behind with 9.47 million, out of the 24.5 million votes cast, or just about 40 per cent of the 61 million-odd electorate.

Prepoll favourite - Majles Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was the distant third with 3.38 million votes, while Pourmohammadi got 206,397 votes only.

The other two allowed candidates - Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani and Vice President Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi - both conservatives - had quit days before Friday's election.

As the election headed into a run-off as neither Pezeshkian nor Jalili secured the victory margin of 50 per cent plus one, Qalibaf, Zakani, and Hashemi appealed to their supporters to back Jalili. Pourmohammadi did not explicitly endorse anyone but his indirect attack on Jalili for attracting wider sanctions by blocking FATF recommendations is telling.

While the combined vote count of the conservative camp seems enough to propel Jalili to victory, there is a caveat.

As Pourmohammadi shows, despite appearances and (chiefly Western) perceptions, Iranian politics is not just two opposing distinct and united reformist or conservative camps, but a more fluid system due to many different sub-groups with their own agendas and aspirations. There is an overlap in policy too, whether of the conservative hardliners or the progressive reformists.

But political participation, or rather, the lack of it, remains an abiding challenge and it remains to be seen if Pourmohammadi's hopes are realised.

Russian S-350 air defence system 'effectively intercepts' Western missiles

AGENCIES

MOSCOW, JULY 4

Russia's S-350 Vityaz surface-to-air missile system has effectively intercepted Western missiles in the ongoing special military operation, TASS news agency quoted the Russian Ministry of Defence on Thursday.

"In the special military operation zone, the combat crews of the S-350 air defence system successfully repelled enemy airstrikes," the ministry said, reported Xinhua news agency.

"The system is capable of downing both Western ballistic and cruise missiles, such as ATACMS and Storm Shadow," the ministry said. "The S-350 can also neutralise an entire squadron of enemy aircraft or helicopters -- up to 16 in a single salvo."

The ministry highlighted that Vityaz's primary advantage over previous systems lies in its missile capacity: a single S-350 launcher is equipped with the same number of munitions as an entire S-300 division. "With one radar station, five launchers can be operated simultaneously, and the system supports the concurrent operation of three stations. This triples the number of missiles on combat duty, allowing it to counter even massive missile attacks," the ministry added. The S-350 is a medium-range surface-to-air missile system developed by the Russian defence company GSKB Almaz-Antey. ATACMS, or Army Tactical Missile System, is a tactical ballistic missile manufactured by the U.S. defence company Lockheed Martin.

Israel approves largest land seizure in West Bank in decades

AGENCIES

JERUSALEM, JULY 4

Israeli authorities have approved the appropriation of 12.7 square km of land in the occupied West Bank, marking the largest single appropriation in about three decades, an Israeli settlement monitor group has said.

Peace Now, an Israeli-based settlement watchdog, said in a statement on Wednesday that the Custodian of the State's

Property in the Civil Administration, an Israeli body that approves construction in the West Bank, recently declared the seizure of this large land in the Jordan Valley, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the group, this is the largest area designated for appropriation since the Oslo Accords, a set of peace agreements signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993.



In 2024 alone, about 23.7 square km of the West Bank lands have been declared "State Lands"

by Israel, reported Peace Now.

The declaration of "State Land" in the West

Bank is a bureaucratic procedure used by the Israeli government to revoke Palestinian ownership rights to the declared lands, which would be leased exclusively to Israelis, for reshaping land use and building settlements.

Israel seized the West Bank in the 1967 Middle East war and expanded settlements there ever since. The international community widely considers the Israeli settle-

ments in the West Bank, where the Palestinians wish to establish their future state, an obstacle to achieving peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

The move is likely to stoke further tensions in the region, which is already experiencing increasing violence following Israel's onslaught in the Gaza Strip in retaliation for Hamas' attack on southern Israel on October 7 last year.

Pak-Afghan informal talks in Doha again hit TTP roadblock

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, JULY 3

Pakistan and Afghan Taliban held important talks during an informal dinner meeting on the sidelines of the Doha process for Afghanistan earlier this week.

While both sides have officially stated that the talks were "positive in nature", inside sources revealed that many critical roadblocks still persist.

The meeting between Pakistan's Special Envoy on

Afghanistan, Ambassador Asif Durrani, and Afghan Taliban's Chief Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid was held at the residence of Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar. The all-important UN-backed Doha process meeting was attended by several countries, including India.

During the Pak-Afghan meeting, many crucial and sensitive matters were discussed with both sides putting forward their demands and recommendations on the table.

As per reliable sources,

Durrani highlighted the issue of the operational presence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on Afghanistan soil and told the Afghan Taliban to take action against the outfit.

Pakistan insisted that TTP militants are being trained, funded, facilitated, and supported on Afghan territory and are attempting to penetrate into Pakistan through many pockets of the porous Pak-Afghan border.

"Pakistan also briefed the Afghan Taliban on

the scope of 'Operation Azm-e-Istehkam', asserting that there would be no talks with the TTP and the operation to take down TTP militants would not be compromised," said a source on the condition of anonymity.

On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban raised serious concerns over the decision of the Pakistan government to repatriate 1.7 million illegal Afghans without consulting the Afghan Taliban and called for an immediate halt to the ongoing process.

Russia declares Romanian diplomat persona non-grata in tit-for-tat move

AGENCIES

MOSCOW, JULY 3

The Russian Foreign Ministry has declared a diplomat working at the Romanian Embassy in Moscow persona non-grata, according to a Ministry statement issued on Wednesday.

Romanian Ambassador to Russia Cristian Istrate was summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry on Wednes-

day and "handed a note declaring a staff member of the Romanian Embassy persona non-grata", the statement said.

The Romanian Foreign Ministry declared a diplomat working at the Russian Embassy in Bucharest persona non-grata on May 24 for "actions that contradict the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations".

AstraZeneca to expand its Chennai GCC at Rs 250 crore outlay

AGENCIES
Chennai, July 4

AstraZeneca India Private Limited (AZIPL), the Global Capability Centre (GCC) of the pharma group AstraZeneca on Thursday said it will invest Rs 250 crore on expanding its Global Innovation and Technology Centre (GITC) here.

The expansion includes close to 1,300 roles focused on driving innovation, enhancing efficiency, and streamlining operations across the company globally.

The expanded facility was inaugurated in a ceremony officiated by the Minister of Industries Tamil Nadu, T.R.B. Rajaa, British Deputy High Com-

missioner to India Christina Scott CMG, AstraZeneca Vice President for Asia Area Sylvia Varela and others.

The investment marks a significant milestone in AstraZeneca's growth story in India as it celebrates its 45th year in the country this month.

With the highly skilled roles to be brought in by 2025, the expanded GITC will propel the company's vision to leverage technologies such as enterprise platforms, artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, and supply chain analytics to shape healthcare outcomes.

"Technology is the driving force behind innovation and we are committed to make Tamil Nadu



an epicentre of technology and research.

This collaboration with AstraZeneca aligns perfectly with our vision to foster innovation and create high-value opportunities for the people of Tamil Nadu. We are committed to ensure Tamil Nadu's position as a pre-

mier investment destination for companies around the world," Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said.

Minister of Industries Tamil Nadu T.R.B. Rajaa said that in the last three years, Chennai has rapidly emerged as the GCC Capital of India, leading to

historical levels of office space absorption and bringing high-quality jobs to the state.

Referring to AstraZeneca's GCC, Rajaa said, the investment will not only enhance our state's capabilities in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors but also spur technological advancements and economic development.

"Our expansion in Chennai signifies AstraZeneca's unwavering commitment to pioneering science and innovation. India's rich talent pool and dynamic ecosystem for digital advancements make it a pivotal hub for our global operations," Dr. Sanjeev Panchal, Managing Director & Country President AstraZeneca Pharma India

Limited (AZPIL).

Since its inception, the GITC in Chennai has evolved from providing traditional IT services to becoming an engine of AstraZeneca's digital journey, driving productivity, simplification, technology delivery, and innovation across the company's global operations, supporting the delivery of life-changing medicines to patients worldwide.

The facility currently occupies 334,000 square feet of office space at Ramanujan IT City, with plans to add approximately 180,000 square feet over the next six months to accommodate this expansion, creating AstraZeneca's biggest global capability centre.

Electric 2-wheelers see growth in last 2 months, Ola Electric loses market share: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

The electric vehicle (EV) penetration improved in the Indian two-wheeler (2W) sector over the last two months after incentives almost halved in April, a report said on Thursday, adding that Ola Electric lost market share while TVS Motor Co Ltd (TVSL) gained.

The electric 2W penetration and volumes recovered and it is now higher than that of FY24, according to the report by BNP Paribas India.

"E2W sales volume saw strong growth YoY on a low base. Penetration improved month-on-month. TVSL

gained market share for the second consecutive month, while Ola lost," the report mentioned.

Electric passenger vehicle (EPV) penetration deteriorated slightly month-on-month where Tata Motors lost market share while MG gained.

In the electric three-wheeler (E3W) space, volumes went up YoY but declined month-on-month in June.

"In policy news, the FAME III incentives could be announced in the Union Budget and Delhi's EV policy has expired which could lead to e2W and e3W price increases," said Kumar Rakesh, analyst, IT and auto.

India's office market surges in first half of year with record 33.5 million sq. ft. leasing activity: JLL

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 4

Driven by strong leasing activity, Q2 (April-May-June) was the first time when all top seven cities (Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune and Hyderabad) recorded gross leasing volumes of at least 1 million sq. ft., a JLL research report said on Thursday.

The second quarter gross leasing was up 21.3 percent Q-o-Q and was recorded at 18.38 million sq. ft. The last four consecutive (Q22024, Q12024, Q42023, and Q32023) quarters have now exceeded the 15 million sq. ft mark in gross leasing volumes, underpinning the strong momentum in the office market.

This quarter is a tes-



tament to the inherent strengths of the Indian office market, with the strong fundamentals clearly indicating the potential for this year to establish new peaks, surpassing the historic highs seen in 2023, report said.

Furthermore, H1 2024 (January to June) marked the best-ever first half, with leasing volumes at 33.5 million sq. ft., surpassing the previous highest H1 performance seen in 2019.

Bengaluru accounts for a 33 percent share of the

quarterly gross leasing, followed by Delhi NCR with a 20.7 percent share.

Hyderabad and Mumbai also recorded strong leasing activity, with respective shares of 13.1 pc and 12.2 pc. This was the first quarter when all seven cities under review recorded gross leasing levels exceeding 1 million sq. ft. This was on account of the strong performance recorded by Kolkata in the quarter.

"As global economic and business conditions

stabilise, global occupiers are now more certain of their real estate plans, with India at the top of their list for footprint expansion and growth. In Q2, global occupiers accounted for a significant 59.3% share of gross leasing volumes. Nevertheless, domestic occupiers continue to show strong momentum, representing a 48.4% share of India's gross leasing activity since 2022. This is a notable increase from the Rs35% average share in the three-year period from 2017 to 2019. While global occupiers remain bullish on expanding and growing their operations in India, a strong domestic economy is creating resilience in the office market," Dr. Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research and REIS, India, JLL.

India sees highest-ever office space transactions with 33 pc growth in Jan-June period

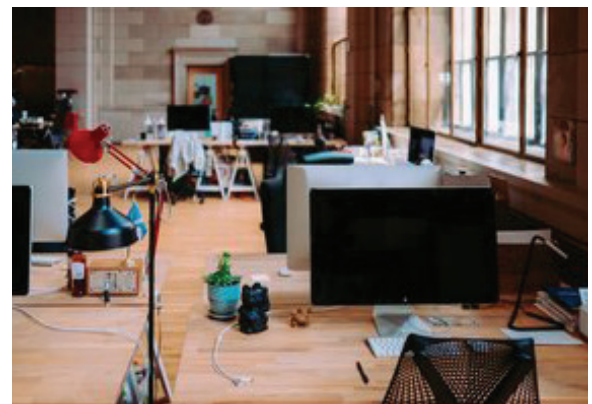
AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 4

India's office market clocked the highest-ever transaction volume in the January-June period this year at 34.7 million square feet across the top eight cities, a report showed on Thursday.

The transactions recorded a growth of 33 per cent (year-on-year) in H1 2024, from 26.1 million square feet in H1 2023, according to the report by Knight Frank India.

Bengaluru remained the largest office market with transactions of 8.4 million square feet, accounting for 26 per cent of total office volume transactions across eight cities.

Mumbai (5.8 mn sq ft) and Delhi-NCR (5.7 mn sq ft) were the other leading



commercial markets in the country.

Ahmedabad recorded the strongest growth of 218 per cent (year-on-year) albeit on a smaller base.

Chennai was the only market to see a reduction in transaction volumes due to the acute limitation of grade-A space in the city, according to the

report. Residential sales hit an 11-year high with 1,73,241 units sold in the eight cities in the first half of this year.

India's real estate market has been buoyant in the last few quarters owing to the strong economic fundamentals and stable socio-political conditions," said Shishir

Baijal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India.

The residential market has recorded a significant rise of 11 per cent YoY anchored by the premium category, which formed 34 per cent of all sales in H1 2024.

"Based on our expectation of continued stability in the socio-economic and political conditions and the current trajectory of growth, we anticipate a strong finish to the year 2024 with both residential and commercial office transactions noting record highs," Baijal added.

In H1 2024, India-facing businesses leased 14.3 mn sq ft which constituted 41 per cent of the total volume of leasing as against 35 per cent in H1 2023.

realme ushers in new era of smartphone photography with ultra clear camera, AI in 13 Pro Series 5G

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

The world of smartphone photography has been democratised by AI and machine learning, putting professional-level results within everyone's reach. AI algorithms are now sophisticated enough to handle challenging lighting, reduce noise for cleaner images, master HDR for perfectly balanced exposures, and much more.

Essentially, AI takes the guesswork out of capturing stunning photos, allowing anyone to unleash their creativity without needing to be a professional in photography. realme's upcoming offering takes this commitment even further with its 13 Pro Series 5G, boasting the world's first Sony LYT-701 sensor.

realme has consistently pushed the boundaries of camera technology, par-

ticularly in the mid-to-high segment. Their dedication is evident in achievements like the realme 12 Pro+, the latest in their flagship Number Series, which earned the coveted title of No. 1 Camera Smartphone in its category on Flipkart.

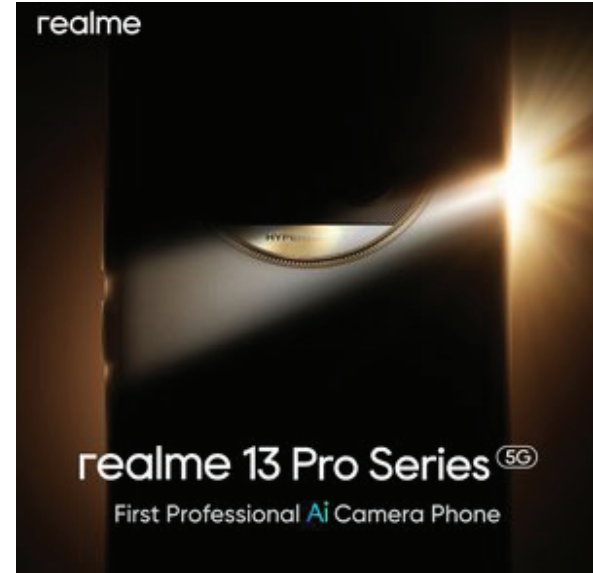
This commitment to innovation sets the stage for realme's next leap forward, where AI takes centre stage, not as a mere feature, but as the driving force behind a revolutionary photography experience.

Following on the success of the 12 Pro Series 5G, realme is now on the cusp of unveiling its next flagship device within the same year: the long-awaited realme 13 Pro Series 5G positioned as the "ultra clear camera with AI" and the first AI professional camera smartphones designed to bring an ultra camera experience to

users.

realme wants to redefine smartphone photography with its 13 Pro Series 5G, launching this month as the "First AI Imaging Phone" with the Sony LYT-701 sensor. This groundbreaking sensor is just one of two Sony sensors in the 13 Pro Series 5G, with the device featuring a 50MP OIS main camera with the Sony LYT-701 and a 50MP periscope telephoto camera with the Sony LYT-600, further solidifying its position as a camera powerhouse.

The device is built on HYPERIMAGE+, a disruptive, full-pipeline AI architecture that marks the latest achievement in realme's AI innovation. As the industry's first AI photography architecture, HYPERIMAGE+ features a three-layer structure: flagship optics, on-device AI imaging algorithms, and



cloud-based AI image editing.

At its foundation, cutting-edge optics consisting of multiple lenses, periscope lenses, and large sensors form the base layer, capable of capturing high-quality images.

Building upon this, AI imaging algorithms and AI image editing further process image data to enhance the visual quality of photo and video content. This comprehensive approach takes mobile photography to new heights, enabling

users to enjoy professional-grade photography from the convenience of their smartphones. To showcase this ultra-modern technology, realme is hosting a special AI imaging media preview event in Bangkok on July 4 prior to the device's unveiling. The event, titled "The Future is Here: AI is Revolutionising Mobile Imaging", will feature industry leaders and experts, including Sven-Olaf Steink from TUV Rheinland and Toshimitsu Kurosaka from Sony Semiconductor Solutions.

During the event, realme will not only explore the future of AI in smartphone imaging but also announce a brand-new collaborative initiative with Sony. realme along with Sony is committed to push the boundaries of mobile photography, bringing DSLR-level AI

camera technology to a wider audience.

With the 13 Pro Series 5G, you can capture breathtaking cityscapes, far-off landmarks, and fleeting moments on stage with astonishing clarity, even at 120X SuperZoom. AI Clarity Boost kicks in to rescue details usually lost in a blur of pixels, bringing the distant remarkably close. But HYPERIMAGE+ goes beyond impressive zoom. It unlocks the full potential of every photo by utilising RAW domain image algorithms, a feature rarely seen in this price bracket, to extract maximum quality from every single pixel. This means professional-grade portraits that rival the richness and depth of those shot on DSLRs, low-light shots bursting with detail instead of noise, and telephoto images that remain crisp and vibrant, no

matter how far you zoom.

The realme 13 Pro Series 5G also features advanced AI capabilities including AI HyperRAW Algorithm, AI Pure Bokeh, AI Natural Skin Tone, and AI Ultra Clarity, setting a new benchmark for portrait photography and overall image quality.

The realme 13 Pro Series 5G isn't just another smartphone launch; it's a statement. It embodies realme's commitment to democratising technology, making cutting-edge advancements like AI-powered imaging accessible to everyone, especially young users who demand the best. The 13 Pro Series 5G builds on the legacy of the Number Series, pushing the boundaries of what a smartphone camera can achieve and solidifying realme's position as a leader in mobile photography innovation.

Bengaluru sees 57 pc jump in residential prices in last 5 years: Report

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 4

India's Silicon Valley saw average residential prices surge by 57 per cent in the last five years and considering the current trends, residential launches and sales in the city are expected to rise by 10-15 per cent by the end of this year compared to 2023, a report said on Thursday.

Average capital values are projected to witness a moderate appreciation of 10 per cent across the city, with prime locations and established tech corridors potentially experiencing steeper growth, according to the Anarock report.



"Average residential prices in the city stood at Rs 7,800 per sq feet by the first half (H1) of 2024 end against Rs 4,960 per sq feet at H1 2019 end," said Dr Prashant Thakur,

Regional Director and Head-Research, Anarock Group.

Bengaluru also saw the highest jump of 32 per cent (year-on-year) -- from Rs 5,900 sq feet by

H1 2023-end to Rs 7,800 per sq feet by H1 2024-end.

Nearly 32,500 units were launched in H1 2024 - up 30 per cent against H1 2023 and the premium segment (Rs 80 lakh-Rs 1.5 crore) dominated new launches with 39 per cent overall share, followed by the luxury segment (Rs 1.5 crore and above) with 36 per cent share.

"Increased new launches in Bengaluru's premium and luxury segments in H1 2024 also contributed to the rise in average prices," said Dr Thakur.

By the end of the first half of 2024, Bengaluru's available stock stood at about 45,420 units.

Put mechanisms in place to prevent market abuse, fraud: SEBI tells stock brokers

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 4

In another bid to instill investors' confidence in the stock markets, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday asked brokers to have a proper mechanism to prevent and detect market abuse as well as fraud.

In a circular, the markets regulator said that stock brokers need to put in place an institutional mechanism for prevention and detection of fraud or market abuse.

The markets regulator said stock brokers will comply with the mechanisms as laid down in the Broker Regulations.



These mechanisms are to ensure "systems for surveillance of trading activities and internal controls; obligations of the stock broker and employees; escalation and reporting mechanisms and Whistle Blower Policy".

Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) will need to implement these mechanisms from August 1 while

other brokerages will have to roll these out between January 1, 2025, and April 1, 2026.

The circular stated that the standards of implementation, including operational modalities will be formulated by the brokers' Industry Standards Forum (ISF), in consultation with the SEBI.

The provisions of this circular will come into force in a risk-based, staggered manner to ensure smooth adoption and effective implementation for all the stock brokers by providing enough time for stock brokers, based on their size, for making necessary changes, said the markets regulator.

IIT-Madras partners with industry players to offer employability-focussed programmes

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras on Thursday said that it has partnered with multiple industries to offer employability-focussed programmes on "SWAYAM Plus".

Around 24 MoUs were signed with leading industry partners across multiple sectors to offer skill and employability-focussed online programmes and internships, accessible to learners across the nation.

This takes "SWAYAM Plus" total industry partners to 36.

'Had a memorable conversation on their experiences': PM Modi on hosting T20 World Cup champions

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he had a "memorable conversation" with India's T20 World Cup-winning squad and called it an "excellent meeting" to host the world champions at his residence in 7, Lok Kalyan Marg here on Thursday.

The Rohit Sharma-led squad visited the residence of the PM in the morning upon their return from Barbados. PM Modi shared the pictures of his meeting with the Indian team along with BCCI president Roger Binny and secretary Jay Shah on his 'X'



account.

"An excellent meeting with our Champions! Hosted the World Cup winning team at 7, LKM and had a memorable conversation on their experi-

ences through the tournament," Modi wrote on 'X'.

Notably, the PM had congratulated the Men in Blue for their World Cup title over a phone call

after the final last Saturday. India defeated South Africa by seven runs in the pulsating blockbuster clash to lift their second T20 World Cup title after 2007.

Superbet Classic Chess: Gukesh holds Caruana; Praggnanandhaa draws with Nepomniachtchi

AGENCIES
BUCHAREST (ROMANIA), JULY 4

World Championship challenger Grandmaster D Gukesh played out a draw with tournament leader and top seed Fabiano Caruana of United States in the seventh round of the Superbet Classic Chess tournament here.

On another all-draws day, R Praggnanandhaa signed peace with Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia leaving the lead positions intact like the previous round.

Caruana on 4.5 points remains in front with two victories and five draws, he is followed by Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Alireza Firouzja of France, who are all half a point behind the American.

Nepomniachtchi shares the fifth spot with Maxime



Praggnanandhaa had a relatively easy day against Nepomniachtchi despite playing black. Years of working with World number one Magnus Carlsen and his own expertise as the two-time world championship challenger has made Nepomniachtchi a leading theoretician but in the seventh round the Indian surprised him with what looked like a sensational preparation.

The next round would mostly decide the final outcome of the tournament as Caruana is facing Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh has a tough nut to crack in his final white game in Anish. Firouzja might also fancy his chances for a maiden victory in the Grand Chess tour if he can conquer the machine-like precision of Nepomniachtchi.

Vachier-Lagrave of France with a fifty percent score, a half point ahead of the trio of American Wesley So, Dutch Anish Giri and Uzbekistan's first son in chess Nodirbek Abdusattorov.

Just two rounds remain in the USD 3,500,000 prize money tournament.

Gukesh's choice of Italian opening gave him an optical advantage against Caruana. After the initial

tussle, the players reached a middle game wherein the Indian had an edge thanks to better placed forces but Caruana was up to the task in finding the defense to maintain the balance.

The pieces got traded at regular intervals in this encounter and the players arrived at a Queen and rook endgame where neither side had a real chance. The game was drawn after 62 moves.

Indian women look to finetune strategies in T20I series against SA ahead of Asia Cup, World Cup

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JULY 4

Indian women's team will be eager to use the three-match T20I series against South Africa, beginning here from Friday, as a testbed to finetune its strategies before hitting the road to the Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup.

In fact, this is India's last white ball bilateral series ahead of the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka from July 19 and the ICC showpiece in Bangladesh from October 4.

In that context, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will leave no stone unturned in their effort to embark for those big events in the best possible frame of mind.

They have displayed signs of it too in the preceding three-match ODI series in Bengaluru and in the one-off Test here.

The relentless India have won all those assignments despite the Proteas creating pockets of fight.

Since 2023, India have featured in seven T20I series, winning three of them and losing four. They would certainly want to bridge that gap, however narrow it might be.

India will take consolation from the form of their players in the first two legs



of this series.

In the ODIs, vice-captain and star batter Smriti Mandhana shone brightly with two hundreds and a fifty in three matches, while Harmanpreet found her feet with a hundred in the final ODI.

The only jarring note of that triumphant run might have been the shoddy form of opener Shafali Verma but she allayed the concerns with a fiery double hundred, the quickest in women's cricket, in the one-off Test here.

Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh too have shown sparks of regaining their touch, and these batters occupy the first

five places in India's run-makers' list in the shortest format.

So, the team management will eye a flawless outing from this quintet against South Africa, who are coming off a less than satisfactory outing against the Lankans at home in the T20Is.

India's bowling too looks very strong on paper, as pacers Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy have been on the money, while spinners Deepti Sharma, Radha Yadav, Asha Sobhana and Shreyanka Patil present a formidable force.

From a South African

perspective, they will depend heavily on skipper Laura Wolvaardt for runs up the order and early momentum.

Wolvaardt showed her prolific side slamming a century each in the ODIs and in the one-off Test.

The opener's form will be a crucial factor if SA want to win a T20I series since January last year when they prevailed in a home tri-series also involving India and the West Indies.

"We have played a lot of good cricket in patches, but to narrow it down, we have to be more consistent," all-rounder Chloe

Tryon had mentioned in the pre-match press meet.

But the tourists can't lean on Wolvaardt alone as they need runs from Marizanne Kapp, Sune Luus, Anneke Bosch and Tazmin Brits.

Nonkululeko Mlaba and Masabata Klaas, Nadine de Klerk and Ayabonga Khaka will have to be at their absolute best against this Indian batting line-up.

The Proteas will also hope that they can get a few overs from the experienced Kapp, who has not bowled in the series so far as she is recovering from an injury.

Although the MA Chidambaram pitch generally remains on the sluggish side, it was a smoother one in the one-off Test.

So, the teams will be keeping an eye on its nature too ahead of this series.

Teams (from): India Women: Harmanpreet Kaur © Smriti Mandhana (vc), Uma Chetry (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Dayalan Hemalatha, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeewan Sajana, Deepti Sharma, Asha Sobhana, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Shabnam Shakil, Pooja Vastrakar and Radha Yadav.

With an eye on hat-trick, Pankaj Advani continues winning streak at Asian Billiards



AGENCIES
RIVADH, JULY 4

Ace Indian cueist Pankaj Advani, who is vying for a hat-trick of Asian Billiards titles kept his winning momentum as he beat Siddharth Parikh 4-2. Siddharth and Pankaj faced off in a series of six frames that showcased their exceptional skills under pressure.

The match started with Siddharth taking an early lead. Showing precision and control, he scored 101 points, leaving Pankaj trailing with 38. Siddharth's commanding performance set the tone for the match.

The second frame was a nail-biter. Siddharth managed to edge out Pankaj with a close score of 100 to 99. Notably, Siddharth had a break of 65, while Pankaj almost turned the

frame in his favor with an impressive break of 92.

Going into the next frame, Pankaj bounced back strongly, shutting out Siddharth completely with a score of 101 to 0. His break of 60 was a testament to his strategic prowess and execution. The fourth frame was an intense battle. Siddharth scored 95, but it wasn't enough to surpass Pankaj's 101. Pankaj, with a break of 93, demonstrated his resilience and ability to perform under pressure, narrowly winning the frame. He continued his dominance in the fifth frame, scoring 104 to Siddharth's 2. With a remarkable break of 87, Pankaj showcased his consistent high-level play and strategic acumen, leaving Siddharth struggling to catch up.

Ahead of T20I series against India, Zimbabwe appoint Charl Langeveldt as bowling coach

AGENCIES
HARARE, JULY 4

Ahead of the five-match T20I series against India, Zimbabwe have appointed former South Africa fast-bowler Charl Langeveldt as their new bowling coach. Zimbabwe had earlier appointed Justin Sammons as head coach and Dion Ebrahim as the batting coach. Langeveldt has been part of the South Africa coaching team in two stints and also serves as the bowling coach of the Indian Premier League franchise Punjab Kings. Zimbabwe Cricket said in a statement that the appointments were in line with the recommendations made by the Mhishi Committee of Inquiry that was established to probe the team's failure to qualify for the recently concluded ICC Men's T20 WC, which led to the resignation of Dave Houghton as head coach. "All the appointments were made in consultation with Sammons, who also opted to retain Stuart, although he now assumes the role of Fielding Coach, while Amato Machikicho will continue serving as the team's Physiotherapist," it further said.

Suryakumar shows off dancing skills as T20 World Cup champions get grand welcome in Delhi

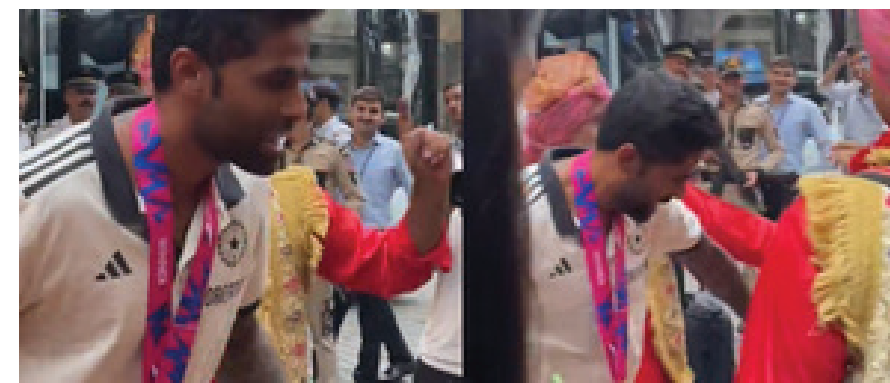
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

Team India's batter Suryakumar Yadav stole the spotlight as he danced his heart out during a warm welcome celebration at the ITC Maurya Hotel on Thursday morning.

The Indian squad departed from Barbados on Wednesday afternoon

and landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the early hours of Thursday after being stranded in Barbados for three days due to Hurricane Beryl.

The team was accorded a hero's welcome at the airport after touching down in India and then at the hotel. Despite the delay and the fatigue from their journey, the spirits



were high as the Men in Blue boarded the bus to the ITC Maurya Hotel, where they received a grand welcome with load cheers.

Skipper Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Mohamud Siraj also showed their dancing skills outside the hotel on the beats of barrel and kettle drums.

Upon their arrival at

the hotel, the team was greeted with cheers and applause from the staff. Suryakumar was seen joyfully dancing outside the hotel, much to the delight of fans and onlookers.

The players, visibly thrilled by the enthusiastic reception, joined in the celebration, marking their triumphant return from the World Cup.

The reception at the

ITC Maurya Hotel has set the tone for what promises to be a series of celebrations honouring the team's success.

The players and their families will have a brief period of rest before their scheduled meeting with PM Narendra Modi, where they will be congratulated for their outstanding performance on the global stage.

Sinner edges Berrettini in thrilling Wimbledon clash

AGENCIES
London, July 4

In a thrilling showdown at Wimbledon on Wednesday, Italian tennis sensation Jannik Sinner secured a remarkable victory over fellow countryman and former finalist Matteo Berrettini.

The gripping second-round clash, which lasted an intense three hours and 45 minutes, saw Sinner triumph 7-6(3), 7-6(4), 2-6, 7-6(4), showcasing his tenacity and skill on the grand stage.

Facing each other for just the second time, Sinner and Berrettini delivered a masterclass in baseline power play, each vying to dominate the exchanges with

blistering groundstrokes. The match was a nail-biter, with little to separate the two competitors.

Sinner, however, managed to force crucial backhand errors from Berrettini at crucial junctures. His resilience was evident as he fought back from a breakdown in both the second and fourth sets, securing his place in the third round just 27 minutes before the 11 pm curfew.

With this victory, the top seed extended his flawless tour-level record against fellow Italians to an impressive 14-0.

Berrettini, who spent much of 2019 to 2022 as Italy's No. 1 and reached the Wimbledon final in 2021, has seen a shift in fortunes.

After dropping out of the Top 10 in June 2022, Sinner quickly ascended past him, continuing to rise. Sinner, now World No. 1, has since defeated Berrettini en route to winning his first ATP Masters 1000 title in Toronto and clinching his maiden major crown at the Australian Open in January.

In contrast, World No. 59 Berrettini has battled injuries, with his best result recently being a title in Marrakech in April.

In this high-stakes encounter between two of Italy's finest, Sinner displayed his prowess with 32 winners and only 25 unforced errors, notching his 40th tour-level win of the season. He effectively countered Berrettini's 28

aces, winning 82 percent of his first-serve points.

As Sinner continues his quest for a second major title and a Tour-leading fifth crown of the year, he next faces Miomir Kecmanovic, who defeated 27th seed Tallon Griekspoor in a five-set thriller.

Fresh off winning the ATP 500 grass-court event in Halle, the 22-year-old Sinner has battled hard in his opening matches at Wimbledon, including a four-set victory over Yannick Hanfmann.

With determination and poise, Sinner is making his mark, poised to leave a lasting impression on the hallowed lawns of Wimbledon.

BCCI gifts special 'NAMO' India jersey to PM Modi

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

BCCI president Roger Binny and secretary Jay Shah gifted a special 'NAMO' India jersey to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after meeting him at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg on Thursday. PM Modi hosted the Rohit Sharma-led T20 World Cup-winning team at his residence upon their arrival from Barbados.

The members of the Indian team including head coach Rahul Dravid had an interaction with PM Modi. The team also showed the T20 World



Cup trophy to the Prime Minister.

"The triumphant Indian Cricket Team met with the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, at his official residence today upon

arrival. Sir, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your inspiring words and the invaluable support you have provided to #TeamIndia," BCCI wrote on 'X' after the meeting with PM Modi.

J&K Sheep and Wool Workers' association meets new director to address employee issues

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 5

A delegation of All J&K Sheep and Wool Workers' Association led by Mohd Rafiq Malik UT President accompanied by Sunil Sharma Provincial President met with New Director Dr Syed Moin ul Haq. The threadbare discussion held on various issues and problems of employees. After hearing, the worthy Director assured that all your issues would be redressed on time bound manner.

The J&K Sheep and Wool Workers' Association extends its heartfelt gratitude to Sri Shailendra Kumar IAS, Principal Secretary of Agriculture Production, for the recent



appointments of Dr. Syed Moin ul Haq and Dr. Mohd Rafiq Shah as Director of Sheep Husbandry for Jammu and Kashmir, respectively.

Mr Mohd Rafiq Malik UT President, Mr. Muzaffer Ganai Provincial President Kashmir, Sh Sunil Sharma Provincial

President Jammu and other senior leaders of the Association have welcomed this significant move, recognizing the urgent need for technically proficient directors to lead the department. The association believes that the appointment of these esteemed profes-

sionals is a positive step toward addressing the longstanding issues within the department.

The Association is optimistic that with the new leadership, all pending issues faced by employees will be resolved promptly. They also expressed their full support to Dr. Syed Moin ul Haq and Dr. Mohd Rafiq Shah, committing to work collaboratively to elevate the department to new heights of success.

The J&K Sheep and Wool Workers' Association looks forward to a fruitful tenure under the guidance of the newly appointed directors and anticipates significant advancements in the department's operations and employee welfare.

Horticulture Department organises Farmers' interaction program at Border Pyt. Palanwalla

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 4

The Department of Horticulture Jammu organized a one-day farmers' interaction programme, here today in the border area of Panchayat Palanwalla-Khour



Director Horticulture Jammu Chaman Lal Sharma chaired the event in presence of Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu, Rakesh Kotwal, MCC Uttam Lal and Horticulture Development Officer Khour, Amit Saraf. A large number of participants, with a notable presence of women and unemployed youth, attended the event underscoring the community's keen interest in agricultural development.

The Director highlighted central and UT Government-sponsored schemes available to farmers, with a special focus on

the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). He elaborated on the benefits these schemes offer, particularly to unemployed youth and women farmers. By setting up small-scale fruit processing units and forming self-help groups, farmers can achieve self-reliance and create employment opportunities within their communities.

He also stressed the importance of these initiatives in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing the economic stability of farmers. "The HADP is designed to

provide comprehensive support, enabling farmers to harness modern techniques and resources for better productivity and profitability," he said.

During the programme, the Director also handed over keys of Tractors to the beneficiaries under HADP (Farm Mechanization & Automation).

Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu, Rakesh Kotwal urged farmers, particularly the educated youth to come forward and avail benefits from the schemes under HADP to enhance the production and increase income under

the Horticulture sector. He also emphasized the ease and accessibility of the online HADP portal, encouraging farmers to make full use of the available resources to enhance their horticultural practices.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Horticulture Development Officer Khour, Amit Saraf. He also expressed gratitude to all participants for their enthusiastic involvement and reaffirmed the department's commitment to supporting the farming community.

J&K Govt's 'From Waste to Wonder' initiatives marks shift towards environmentally sustainable Amarnathji Yatra

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

Spiritually blissful Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is witnessing a remarkable shift towards a cleaner and more sustainable pilgrimage with implementation of 'From Waste to Wonder' initiatives by the Jammu and Kashmir government. This reflects the administration's commitment to maintain ecology and environment.

The Directorate of Rural Sanitation, Department of Rural Department and Panchayati Raj, J&K is executing a comprehensive program for collection, segregation, transportation and disposal of waste stuff, aiming reduction in plastic waste generation and encouraging a positive behavioral shift among the pilgrims regarding their role in maintaining the ecosystem. To



create awareness among the pilgrims about the importance of recycling, the Directorate organized an exhibition at Baltal which not only encouraged responsible waste disposal but showcased its potential for transformation towards a sustainable environment. The display of everyday items crafted from recycled materials like paper bags, furniture made from Tetra packs and creative uses of plastic waste served as a powerful reminder of the 'From waste to Wonder' concept.

The enthusiastic pilgrims explored all the exhibits showcasing the

potential of upcycling and innovative design with each piece telling a story of transformation, turning waste material into objects of wonder.

During the exhibition, Dhoopbatti, Agarbatti and other usable products like jute bags, flowerpots, waste glass bottles and many other such products prepared by Self Help Groups (SHG) are being displayed which have been prepared by using the flowers collected from the Mandir.

At the base camp, composting methods like Bucket Composting, Home Composting and Aaga

Drum Composting are being displayed to encourage the pilgrims to implement sustainable waste management practices beyond the Yatra. Besides, a counter for awareness generation among the pilgrims for avoiding the use of single use plastic has also been set up where they are receiving free cotton bags as alternatives for plastic bags.

Also, the mascots of Lord Ganesha and Lord Hanuman at the camp added a cultural relevance and made the message of sustainability more relatable.

The sustainable waste

management initiatives are being hugely appreciated by the Yattris. The success of these initiatives, prioritizing sustainable waste management practices, has set a commendable example for the future pilgrimages.

Further, in order to ensure smooth experience for the pilgrims, nearly 7000 sanitation work force has been deployed on field by the Rural Sanitation, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, especially for looking after the sanitation services in the entire route of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Health Deptt team holds awareness camp on Leprosy at Sarak Marmat

JNEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 4

The Health Department Doda has launched a village hot spot survey after detection of a suspected Leprosy Case in Village Sarak Marmat falling within the Medical Block Assar.

On the first Day of the campaign being conducted under National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP), a health team from CMO Office hosted a series of awareness programmes on Leprosy at the Village Sarak, Govt Middle Schools Sarak and Labbar. The team is slated to conduct house to house survey during the next two days.

Sr. Paramedical Supervisor, Surinder Bijayal who was part of the team, urged the participants to know in detail about the precautions to control



leprosy and also threw light on NLEP. He said that highly effective treatment is available to cure leprosy. "Early detection and timely treatment and dosage are essential to eradicate leprosy," he added.

Moreover, along with Leprosy, awareness

regarding Malaria was also imparted to the general public by the visiting team.

The team comprised of Dr Javed Parray, Medical Officer Leprosy, Krishan Chand (Sr.PMA), Ram Raj (PMA) and Farooq Ahmed (JH) from Malaria Unit Doda

JKTPO, district administration organize onboarding drive at Poonch, Pulwama

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), in collaboration with respective district administrations, is organizing e-commerce onboarding drives across all districts of the Union Territory with emphasis on One District One Product (ODOP) and District Export Hubs (DEH) initiatives.

The primary objective of these drives is to enhance the digital presence and market reach of local artisans, manufacturing units, weavers, farmers, entrepreneurs, self-help groups (SHGs) and small businesses. By facilitating their onboarding onto prominent e-commerce platforms, JKTPO aims to provide these stakeholders with broader market opportunities and increased visibility.

The onboarding drives are being organised by the JKTPO on the directions of Chief Secretary, Atal Duloo and under the guidance of Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh, aimed at integrating local entrepreneurs into digital commerce platforms to enhance their global market pres-



ence. The ODOP and DEH initiatives have demonstrated significant potential in promoting unique and high-quality products from each district, thereby boosting local economies. The e-commerce onboarding drives are a crucial step towards achieving these goals, enhancing visibility, recognition, and the global presence of Jammu and Kashmir's unique offerings. These drives include training and workshops, platform registration, product listing, marketing, and sales. JKTPO has scheduled these e-commerce onboarding drives throughout July in each district of the Union Territory, with simultaneous events planned in both the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Recently, JKTPO conducted successful e-commerce onboarding drives at Pulwama's Circuit House and Poonch's Government Dak Bungalow. Earlier, the JKTPO organised E-Commerce onboarding drives at Anantnag and Jammu for benefit of the artisans,

entrepreneurs, farmers.

At Pulwama, the drive witnessed enthusiastic participation of leading e-commerce players' besides over 150 entrepreneurs including women entrepreneurs, exporters, growers and government officials. The initiative included insightful sessions highlighting the benefits of e-commerce platforms and facilitated the immediate onboarding of over 35 participants onto platforms like Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Showkat Ahmad Rather, ADDC Pulwama, while addressing the gathering, emphasized the pivotal role of digital commerce in business growth and highlighted the government initiatives supporting local products from Pulwama.

Simultaneously, the event was organized by JKTPO in collaboration with the district administration in Poonch, which attracted more than 150 local entrepreneurs, artisans, and retailers. The initiative focused on

onboarding participants onto platforms like ONDC and GeM, with 50 sellers registering on-the-spot across various sectors. The onboarding drive at Poonch was chaired by Additional District Development Commissioner, Sandesh Kumar Sharma.

Managing Director JKTPO, Khalid Jahangir, stressed the importance of these initiatives in empowering local entrepreneurs and expanding their market reach beyond traditional boundaries. The workshops provided

valuable insights into leveraging e-commerce for economic growth and connecting unique local products with domestic and overseas markets, to actualize the vision of Vocal for Local and Local goes Global.

These events mark the beginning of a series planned across Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting JKTPO's sustained efforts towards enhancing the socio-economic landscape by integrating local businesses with e-commerce platforms.

DDC Reasi reviews implementation of Self-Employment Schemes, approves new cases

JNEWS SERVICE
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District Development Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan, convened a comprehensive meeting today to review and expedite the sanctioning of cases under various self-employment schemes. The meeting aimed to bolster the local economy by empowering unemployed youth and aspiring entrepreneurs through financial and logistical support.

DDC emphasized the criti-

cal role of self-employment in promoting economic growth and reducing unemployment in the district. He urged the concerned departments to ensure the timely processing and disbursement of funds to beneficiaries under schemes such as the Mumkin, Tejaswini, HADP, PMFME and other self-employment oriented initiatives.

During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the progress of previously sanctioned cases and directed officials to address any bottlenecks

hindering the timely approval and disbursement of new cases. He stressed the importance of efficiency in these processes to maximize the benefits to the local community.

Significantly, the DDC approved 22 cases under the Mumkin scheme and 17 cases under the Tejaswini scheme during the meeting. He instructed the bankers to expedite the processing of pending cases and to share detailed updates on their progress.

LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY
J&K State Committee
 Jayanti of
Sh. Ram Bilas Paswan







RAFIQ MAILK STATE PRESIDENT
VIKRAM SINGH GEN SECRETARY
PANKAJ GUPTA STATE SECRETARY
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With Regards Vikram Singh State Gen Secretary
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