

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 gums
- Disseminated bleeding
- Present vomiting
- Drop in body temperature
- Disorientation
- Stomach pain, pain in joints, or pain behind eyes
- Redness in eyes

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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5 soldiers killed, five injured after terrorists ambush army convoy in Kathua hills

Security forces launch operation to trace, neutralise terrorists believed to be hiding in forest

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JUL 8

In yet another attack on security forces, five army personnel were killed and five injured on Monday when terrorists ambushed their vehicle in the remote hilly terrain of Kathua district, officials said.

Officials informed the news agency that terrorists hurled a grenade and opened fire targeting Army vehicles which were on a routine patrol on the Machedi-Kindli-Malhar road near Badnota village in Lohai Malhar, Billawar around 150 km from district headquarters Kathua. They said an army truck in which 10 soldiers were



travelling was attacked at an isolated location.

"After grenades, terrorists opened indiscriminate fire on the vehicle. However, security forces retaliated but the terrorists fled into the nearby forest and

took advantage of dense vegetation," an officer engaged in the operation said, adding, "An intermittent exchange of firing occurred between the terrorists and security forces." **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

Killing of six, including two A-category terrorists, big blow to HM outfit: Army



JI NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, JUL 08

The killing of six terrorists, including two A-category terrorists, in twin encounters in south

Kashmir's Kulgam district has dealt a big blow to terrorist outfits, particularly the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and its leadership. Addressing a press conference, the army officer said, "A memorable welcome in Moscow! I thank the Indian community for their affection," the PM said on X. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

Moscow's Ostankino Tower lights up in Indian tricolour in honour of PM Modi's visit

JI NEWS SERVICE
MOSCOW/NEW DELHI, JULY 8

In tribute to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia, the Indian tricolour and the Russian flag lighted up Moscow's Ostankino Tower - the tallest free-standing structure in Europe.

Ostankino Tower in Moscow was the tallest structure in the world until 1976.

PM Modi also got a rousing welcome from members of the Indian community, who lined up on either side of the road near his hotel, and shouted "Modi, Modi" as his carcade passed by. "A memorable welcome in Moscow! I thank the Indian community for their affection," the PM said on X. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**



come in Moscow! I thank the Indian community for their affection," the PM said on X.

PM Modi and Russian President Putin last met at the SCO summit in Samarkand in 2022. The last time PM Modi was in Russia was in 2019

when he visited Vladivostok. Modi last traveled to Moscow in 2015.

Russian presidential aide Yury Ushakov noted at a briefing that the Kremlin "attaches paramount importance to this visit". Kremlin Spokesman **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

Record breaker Over 2 lakh pilgrims perform Amarnath Yatra in 10 days



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 08

In an overwhelming response to the Amarnath Yatra, over 200,000 pilgrims have performed the pilgrimage and paid obeisance to Lord Shiva's Ice Lingam in the last ten days.

According to the news agency, with an average of more than 20,000 pilgrims per day, the yatra has surpassed the 200,000 mark within the first 10 days of its commencement.

Officials said that 207,016 pilgrims have performed the yatra so far. Despite facing disruptions due to slippery tracks on Sunday, over 22,000 pilgrims managed to visit the holy

cave, located deep in the Himalayas at an altitude of 3,888 meters, by evening, they said.

Earlier on Tuesday, a fresh batch of 5,803 pilgrims departed from Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in a convoy of 218 light and heavy vehicles, heading towards the twin base camps of Nunwan-Pahalgam and Baltal-Sonamarg under tight security.

Officials said that 22,639 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Himalayan cave in south Kashmir's Anantnag district via the Baltal and Chandanwari routes by yesterday evening. This included 14,736 males, 5,231 females, 253 children, 315 Sadhus, five Sadhvis, **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

Resurgence of Cong in Jammu top agenda of BJP's core group meet

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JUL 08

The resurgence of Congress party in Jammu region in the recently conducted parliamentary elections remained the top agenda of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) core group meeting in Jammu which was chaired by its National President J.P. Nadda.

It was made clear to the leaders that in the upcoming assembly elections, if things continue to remain the same, the party's mission to form government singlehandedly in this union territory will not get fulfilled.

Sources within BJP told the news agency that the agenda of core group meeting of BJP in Jammu

was upcoming assembly elections and deliberations were held as to how to improve the performance during these elections.

"Besides many aspects of the assembly elections, three main issues which remain the hot topic were resurgence of Congress party in Jammu, decline in vote share during parliamentary elections and not able to convert votes of Muslim Paharais during Lok Sabha elections," said a source.

BJP had managed to retain both the seats of Lok Sabha from Jammu region, Udhampur-Doda and Jammu-Reasi, but the winning margin was low compared to the 2019 parliamentary elections. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

LG participates in 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 08

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today participated in 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' plantation drive, which was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

The Lt Governor planted a sapling of Golden Cypress at Raj Bhawan Srinagar as a part of the campaign. He urged the people to join the campaign and plant a tree as a mark of respect and honour for their own mother and dedicate themselves towards protecting environment and Mother Earth.

Senior officials of Lt Governor's Secretariat also participated in the plantation drive and planted tree saplings in the Raj Bhawan premises.



Post-2014 flood management enhances Jhelum's capacity by 30%, reveals RTI

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 08

After the devastating floods that struck Kashmir in September 2014, a comprehensive flood management initiative was launched to bolster the River

Jhelum and its spill channels. Spearheaded by the Central Water Commission (CWC) and backed by significant financial investment, the efforts have resulted in much increase in the river's carrying capacities at key points.

According to an RTI request filed by M M Shuja with the Chief Engineer's office, Irrigation & Flood Control Department Kashmir, the capacity from Sangam to Padshahbagh has risen from 31,800 to 41,000 cusecs. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

BOTTOMLINE

J&K industrial push: Kathua's Bhagthali hub to generate 17,000 jobs

VISHAL BHARTI
JAMMU, JULY 8

In major push to transform Kathua district into a major industrial hub, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has cleared the decks for investment worth Rs 13,009.13 crores in the Bhagthali Industrial Estate that promises to generate 17,000 jobs.

The Bhagthali Industrial Estate is coming up in two phases on 3,322 kanals of land with an investment of Rs 13,009.13 crores, said an official Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir Department of Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, told UNI, "For the first time ever, large industry has come to J&K in cutting edge areas like manufacturing of solar wafers and solar cells."



They added that Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, who regularly reviews the mega project, the Industries and Commerce Department is in touch with the revenue wing to get more land for the project.

Arun Manhas, Director Industries, Jammu, told UNI, "The Industrial Estate after establishment of mega corporate houses will directly or indirectly have a potential to employ 17,468 people."

"Big industrial names from across the country have agreed to set up units at Bhagthali Industrial Estate," said Manhas, adding that development of infrastructure and facilities in the Estate are in progress.

Manhas said that the Bhagthali-I Industrial Phase, with an investment of Rs 7,617.64 crore, will have a potential to generate employment for 9,443 people and it is coming up on 2,099 kanals of land and has been sanctioned 143.5 MW power supply. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

LG meets family of deceased SSF personnel in Budgam

JI NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JUL 08

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday visited the family members of deceased Special Security Force (SSF) Personnel, SGCT. Kulbir Singh, at their residence in Budgam.

The Lt Governor paid homage to SGCT. Kulbir Singh, and recalled his selfless service to the nation. He extended his condolences to the family and assured all assistance and support from the government.

Heat wave unlikely in J&K for next 3 days, temp dips in Kashmir parts

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 08

There has been a slight dip in the mercury for the last couple of days in the maximum temperature while Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, Monday recorded a further rise in the temperature by almost 3 degrees and settled at 32.5 degree Celsius.

However, the weatherman has predicted light rains till July 14 at isolated places of Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the details available with the news agency, Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said, there is a possibility of brief spell of rain and thundershower at scattered places of Jammu division and isolated places of Kashmir

division till July 10.

He added that from July 11 to July 12, a spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower is expected at scattered fairly widespread places while a brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at isolated scattered places on July 13 and July 14.

However, amidst the possibility of more rains in J&K, the temperature continued to settle around the normal temperatures here with Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir recording 31.6 degree Celsius while in Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, the mercury settled at 27.1 degree Celsius.

In Kupwara, a maximum temperature of 31.8 degree Celsius was recorded today while Kokernag and Gulmarg, a famous

ski-resort, recorded a maximum temperature of 30.2 degree Celsius and 22.2 degree Celsius today.

In Jammu division, the mercury also settled around the normal temperatures with Jammu, the winter capital of the Union territory recording a maximum temperature of 36.2 degree Celsius.

Banihal recorded 32.0 degree Celsius while Batote, Katra and Bhaderwah recorded a maximum temperature of 28.4 degree Celsius, 32.9 degree Celsius and 33.1 degree Celsius respectively.

Meanwhile, an Independent weather forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng said that the temperatures can stay above normal temperature by 3 to 4 degree Celsius in the next few days. **CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

Rashmi Singh convenes public darbar at Surinsar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 8

Commissioner Secretary, Hospitality & Protocol Department, Dr Rashmi Singh, today convened a public darbar at Surinsar, providing a platform for the public to voice issues and concerns. She was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner Jammu, Sher Singh besides other senior officers.

The public darbar addressed various concerns including the need for medical staff, issues with power transmission lines and road projects under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Public Works Department (PWD).

Dr Rashmi Singh reviewed the status of various infrastructure projects being funded under different schemes. She also took stock of the ongoing monkey menace troubling the area.



"These public outreach programmes help the administration take stock of public grievances at their doorsteps besides assessing ongoing development works. Regular follow up of public issues by the concerned officers is essential for prompt redressal besides having in place enhanced coordination among all the departments," asserted Dr Rashmi Singh. She emphasised the importance of public participation in decision making besides effective implementation of development works. She asked the officers to ensure that the public is sensitised about their rights and various government schemes.

"Public darbars crucially helping in bridging the gap between the administration and the public. We are committed towards ensuring that the voices of the citizens are heard and their issues addressed promptly", she maintained. ADDC, Sher Singh said that the administration is dedicated towards resolving issues faced by the people besides improving overall infrastructure and services. The event was attended by BDC Chairman, Kuldeep Raj and other public representatives besides officers including Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, Tehsildar Jammu Khas Paramdeep Singh and BDO Nagrota among other district officials.

BDC Chairman Kuldeep Raj and other public representatives lauded the efforts of the district administration for organising such interactive sessions, underscoring their importance in fostering transparent governance and accountability.

I&C department conducts quality checking of Geo-referenced Village Maps in J&K

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 8

To push the mapping of land records on the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP), the Industries & Commerce Department (Nodal department for implementation of GatiShakti in the UT of J&K), in collaboration with the Revenue Department, has undertaken a significant initiative to enhance the accuracy and reliability of Geo-referenced village maps prepared by the Revenue Department, J&K. The Industries & Commerce department is conducting quality checking sessions on a sample basis across all 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir. Each district of J&K is allocated a dedicated 3-day training period where the master trainers and the associated staff of revenue department are required to get the digitised and



geo referenced villages checked on sample basis from the technical team of Industries Commerce Department. The entire program is scheduled from 1st July 2024 to 5th August 2024, ensuring comprehensive coverage and thorough evaluation of geo referenced villages from all districts.

The primary objective of these sessions is to ensure the mapping of cadastral maps on the PM GatiShakti UT Master Portal since land records are crucial for planning

and developmental purposes. The sessions are being conducted by a team of experts from the Industries & Commerce Department, who are providing hands-on training & Counseling to officials from the Revenue Department. This collaborative effort underscores the commitment of the Jammu & Kashmir Government to leverage technology for improved governance and infrastructure development.

"This initiative is expected to significantly

enhance the quality of spatial data, thereby contributing to more efficient and effective administration and development planning in the Union Territory" said Arun Manhas, Director Industries and Commerce Jammu while interacting with the Patwaris from District Samba. Till date 4 districts (Kathua, Poonch, Budgam, Pulwama) in the UT of J&K have completed their 3 days hands on training and the remaining districts will be completed by 1st week of August 2024.

DDC Bandipora chairs meeting on Road Infrastructure Issues

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 8

The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman today chaired a meeting at Mini Secretariat, here to address road infrastructure issues and discuss inter-departmental issues related to the execution of various projects and schemes within the district.

The meeting discussed in detail the maintenance of Bandipora-Gurez-Chakwali road and road cut permissions for various JJM schemes.

Stressing on all-weather connectivity for Gurez, DDC emphasized proper maintenance of Bandipora-Gurez and Tulail road to ensure uninterrupted connectivity.

The meeting also discussed Road Cut Permissions to facilitate Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes. The DDC enjoined upon officers of JJM, Beacon, and NHAI to take up a coordinated approach to expedite project completions and address bottlenecks promptly.

DC Srinagar chairs DLIC meeting



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

The District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) meeting was Monday convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi Ud Din Bhat at DC Office, here to approve Mission youth cases under Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative Scheme (SEI), Mumkin Scheme & Tejaswini Scheme.

During the meeting, 12 cases under the Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative Scheme (SEI) scheme, 05 cases under Mumkin scheme and 14 cases under Tejaswani scheme

were approved.

The meeting threadbare discussed the importance of these self-employment initiatives in fostering youth empowerment within the district.

The DC highlighted the government's commitment to empowering unemployed youth through these schemes, providing them with opportunities to carve a niche in society. He reiterated ongoing efforts to offer more opportunities and proper facilities, urging youth to educate themselves about and capitalize on government-sponsored schemes to realize their dreams and aspirations.

He instructed the committee to give wide publicity to these schemes so that no one is left out, and also identify the bottlenecks in implementation of these schemes.

The meeting was attended by the committee members of DLIC including Hamida Akhter, General Manager DIC Srinagar; Fayaz Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer Srinagar; Dr. Sheeba Inayat, Dy. Director Employment Srinagar; Mukhtar Ahmad, District Social Welfare Officer Srinagar; Syed Farhana Asgar, ARTO Srinagar; Nelofar Jan, Lead District Manager Srinagar and Mubashir, JKEDI Srinagar.

DC reviews preparedness for emergency situations arising amid monsoon

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 8

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Om Prakash Bhagat today chaired a meeting to review the preparedness to meet any eventuality in the Monsoon season.

The officers from different departments briefed the meeting about their measures to tackle the situation arising due to rains. A comprehensive discussion was held on important points such as the identification of flood-prone areas, land loss areas, traffic management in flood-affected areas and others. Officers were instructed to maintain a close vigil on these areas and increase the public awareness about the potential hazards.

Deputy Commissioner Om Prakash Bhagat, emphasized the importance of coordination among all stakeholders to effectively mitigate the impact of the monsoons. The Irrigation and Flood Control (I & FC) department was asked to ensure proper repair and desilting of irrigation canals and keep issuing regular updates regarding the water level in the rivers/streams. The officer from the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) was directed to ensure a proper drainage system from Phalayana to Salani on NH144A. The SDRF was asked to stay fully prepared and ready to quickly respond in case any such situation arises.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the officers to remain prepared to respond promptly in case of any emergency arising out of heavy rains. He stressed the importance of being proactive and taking preventive measures to minimize the impact of monsoons. He also asked the officers to ensure that all necessary equipment and resources are in place and that the emergency services are on high alert. The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the need for



missioner also directed the officers to remain prepared to respond promptly in case of any emergency arising out of heavy rains. He stressed the importance of being proactive and taking preventive measures to minimize the impact of monsoons. He also asked the officers to ensure that all necessary equipment and resources are in place and that the emergency services are on high alert. The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the need for

a coordinated approach to ensure the safety and well-being of the residents during the monsoon season.

The meeting was attended by OC BRO 58 RCC, Ankit Uniyal; EXEN PWD (R&B) Rajouri, Sardar Khan; EXEN Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Sharma; EXEN PDD Rajouri, Mohd Rashid; EXEN Jal Shakti Mechanical, EXEN I&FC; DySP Civil Defence/SDRF, Jabeen Lone; DySP, Latif Ahmed and other concerned officers.

Chairperson DDC Kishtwar chairs quarterly General Council Meet

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 8

The Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Kishtwar Pooja Thakur today presided over the General Council meeting here at Mini Secretariat to finalise plans under the Area Development Fund (DDC/BDC/PRI Grants) 2024-25.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chairperson DDC, Saima Shabir Lone; Deputy Commissioner Dr Devansh Yadav; DDC members, I/C CEO District Development Council (ADC) Pawan Kotwal; Chief Planning Officer Shah Nawaz Bali; ACD Phulail Singh and other concerned stakeholders.

At the outset, ACD welcomed the members of the general council and apprised them about the objectives of the meeting.

The chairperson Pooja Thakur reviewed the sector wise physical and financial status of the works taken up under



District Capex, Area Development Plan & DDC, BDC and PRIs plan for the FY 2024-25.

The meeting focused on allocation and utilization of ADF Grants to bolster developmental initiatives across the district.

Chairperson Pooja Thakur emphasized the importance of prudent planning and transparent execution to ensure that the grants positively impact the socio-economic landscape of Kishtwar. She underscored the council's commitment to prioritizing projects that align with local needs and

aspirations.

The Chairperson expressed confidence that the finalized plans would pave the way for sustainable growth and equitable development in the district. She urged all stakeholders to collaborate effectively to expedite project implementation and achieve tangible outcomes.

She said, District Development Council is committed to harness resources effectively and foster inclusive development across Kishtwar.

I/C CEO Development Council also apprised the

chair about the action taken report (ATR) of the grievances raised in the previous general council meeting. The officers of the concerned departments explained the progress on the grievances pertaining to their departments.

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Dr Devansh Yadav redressed the majority of the grievances on spot in the meeting and assured that the rest of the grievances will be redressed in a time bound manner.

The block wise issues and grievances related to the departments of PHE, Health, JPDCL, Education, PWD etc were also highlighted by the DDC members which were noted down by Concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Devansh Yadav assured that necessary directions will be given to the concerned officers for immediate resolution of the highlighted issues.

Summer Coaching Camps & Selection Trials commence in Srinagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

Today marked the start of major Summer Coaching Camps in Srinagar, with a 21-day Kabaddi Camp at Sher e Kashmir Indoor Sports Complex (SKISC) and a 10-day Multi-Discipline Coaching Camp at Polo Ground, offering training in Gymnastics, Archery, Rugby, and Hockey.

Dr. Javeed ur Rehman, Divisional Sports Officer Central and Nusrat Gazala Divisional Sports Officer Kashmir inaugurated the Kabaddi Camp, featuring players selected by J&K Sports Council experts.

The Polo Ground Camp provides training under coaches of JKSC Krupali Singh, Mushtaq Sofi, Ishfaq Lone and Mudasar Ahmad.

Participants in both camps expressed excitement, appreciating the opportunity to develop their skills and nurture their talents in a supportive environment.

PMAY-G - A reason for Joy & Relief for Wazir Ahmed & lakhs of others



J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 8

The Rural Development Department (RDD), Ramban District, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, is diligently working to ensure that the benefits of all Rural Development Department sector schemes reach eligible beneficiaries across the district.

Wazir Ahmed, son of Abdul Latief a resident of Panchayat Pernote in Block Ramban, was living in a vulnerable mud house. His family suffered greatly during the rainy season due to the poor

condition of the roof, the mud floor, and multiple cracks in the walls. The house was in dilapidated condition, posing a significant risk of a mishap.

Recognizing the dire situation, the RDD sanctioned a house to Wazir Ahmed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) in the fiscal year 2023-24. In accordance with the eligibility list, an amount of Rs 1.30 Lakh was transferred to his bank account in three installments at different levels.

Additionally, Wazir Ahmed was provided with an Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) unit under the Swachh Bharat Mis-

sion (SBM) and 90 days of employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

With comprehensive support from the RDD Block Ramban, Wazir Ahmed has successfully built a sturdy Pacca House. He and his family now live in a home that offers safety from natural calamities and brought immense joy and relief to his family.

The RDD is working to improve the living conditions of the people in Ramban District, ensuring that every eligible citizen can benefit from the various welfare schemes, especially PMAY.

DC Pulwama chairs comprehensive TB Forum meeting

JINNEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, JULY 8

In a concerted effort towards elimination of tuberculosis (TB) from the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom today chaired a comprehensive TB Forum meeting under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP).

The meeting focused on evaluating the current TB elimination strategies and planning future actions to achieve the ambitious target of a TB-free Pulwama.

Dr. Basharat emphasized the critical importance of coordinated efforts to eradicate TB well before the given timelines, in alignment with national goals. He highlighted the need for comprehensive strategies involving early diagnosis, effective treatment protocols, and robust awareness campaigns to educate the



community about TB prevention and management. Plans for enhancing community outreach through targeted awareness programs aimed at dispelling myths about TB, promoting early diagnosis, and encouraging treatment adherence. Improving data collection and reporting mechanisms to monitor progress and identify areas needing additional focus.

The testing rate has surpassed targets, achieving more than 100% coverage against targets for defined populations. Currently, 63 patients

are under treatment with continuous monitoring and treatment evaluation of treatment regimes. There has been a consistent decrease in incidence.

During the meeting, Dr. Basharat emphasized robust contact tracing of confirmed cases and complete evaluation to diagnose and treat co-morbidities to reduce mortality. Continuous monitoring and follow-up to ensure improved treatment outcomes and reduced patient care gaps.

While evaluating the Nikshay Mitra component, DC volunteered to

be Nikshay Mitra for TB patients to provide nutritional support and urged Officers and Members of Corporate/ industry and other organisations to be part of Nikshay Mitra Scheme.

As on date majority of the active patients are tagged to Nikshay Mitras for Supplementary Nutritional Support. The forum concluded with a collective hope and determination to achieve significant milestones in the fight against TB. The action plan for the next six months will focus on intensifying efforts to detect, treat, and prevent TB, ensuring comprehensive care and support for all affected individuals.

Dr. Basharat called for sustained community involvement and urged citizens to participate actively in the fight against tuberculosis.

JKTPO empowers local entrepreneurs through e-commerce onboarding drives

JINNEWS SERVICE
KULGAM/ KATHUA, JULY 8

Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) continues to bolster economic growth in the region with successful conduct of e-commerce onboarding drives in Kulgam and Kathua.

These initiatives, organized in collaboration with district administrations and e-commerce players, aim to promote local products and educate entrepreneurs on the benefits of selling online, expanding their reach globally. In Kulgam, held at DC office, the event saw active participation from over 200 entrepreneurs, including women entrepreneurs, retailers, artisans, exporters, growers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). The drive facilitated onboarding process for 50 participants on the spot, with the remainder initiating the registration process.

The sessions led by industry experts highlighted the advantages of e-commerce platforms, underscoring JKTPO's commitment towards supporting local exporters and enhancing market access.

Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, General Manager of Dis-



trict Industries Centre Kulgam, emphasized the pivotal role of digital commerce in business growth, citing the benefits of joining e-commerce networks. The event featured informative presentations on platforms like GeM and insights into GST compliance by Maqbool Shah and Gulzar Ahmad Mir, respectively.

In Kathua, hosted at the Ghatti Industrial Area, the event was attended by 80 participants including representatives from Handicrafts & Handlooms (H&H), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), FPOs and manufacturers. GM DIC Kathua, Prem

Singh, alongside representatives from GeM, ONDC and JKTPO, facilitated discussions on e-commerce integration strategies. Thirty participants were successfully onboarded, contributing to the region's economic diversification efforts.

Both events underscored JKTPO's commitment towards fostering a conducive environment for local entrepreneurs to thrive in the global e-commerce landscape. Future initiatives will continue to endorse e-commerce onboarding across districts, reinforcing socio-economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Doda bereaved

JINNEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 8

The District Administration Doda today expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the maternal grandmother of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh.

A condolences meeting was held at Doda to pray for peace to the departed soul and offer support to Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh in this difficult time.

The functionaries of the District Administration Doda extended their heartfelt condolences to the Deputy Commissioner and his family.

The condolence meeting was attended by ADC Doda Sudershan Kumar, ACR Doda Sunil Bhutyal, CPO Doda Manesh Kumar Manhas and staff of DC office Doda

DC Budgam chairs DRSC meeting

JINNEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JULY 8

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today chaired a District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) meeting at Conference Hall, here.

At the outset, SC R&B circle Budgam, G.R Choudhary apprised the chair about the agenda wise details of the work of the Road Safety Committee constituted in the district and also shared ATRs of previous meetings held in the District.

Stressing on implementation of all road safety measures in letter and spirit, the DC Budgam directed the committee members to formulate District Road Safety Plan.

He directed for strict implementation of the Road Safety Plan to minimize the number of accidents in the District.

Similar directions were passed to executing agencies such as R&B and PMGSY to provide details of Black spots and also audit all the roads so as to ensure overall safety and provide quality traffic to the public.

Further, the DC directed the concerned officers for installation of visible and proper signages to avoid accidents in the district and in particular in the vulnerable areas.

The DC emphasized the urgent need to implement effective strategies to reduce road accidents and ensure the safety of all road users.

Moreover, discussions were also held on identifying accident-prone areas, improving road infrastructure, enforcing traffic regulations, and raising public awareness about road safety practices.

DC Rajouri inaugurates basic computer course for girls under BBBP



JINNEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 8

Deputy Commissioner Om Prakash Bhagat, today inaugurated a basic computer course for 120 girls (including girls of Parisha) under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiatives here at ITI Rajouri. The Computer course is being organized by the Social Welfare Department in collaboration with ITI Rajouri and the aim is to

empower girls with digital literacy.

After inaugurating the course, the DC emphasized the importance of education and skill development for girls, stating, "Empowering girls with education and skills is crucial for their bright future and the overall development of society."

The DC also interacted with the trainees, motivating them to excel in the chosen field. He also

encouraged the girls to take full benefit of this opportunity. He stressed the significance of digital literacy in today's world and encouraged the girls to become ambassadors of change in their communities.

The course will cover basic computer skills, equipping the girls with essential digital knowledge and the training will be provided by experienced instructors.

The initiative will strengthen the objectives of the BBBP program, which includes promoting gender equality and creating an enabling environment for girls to pursue their goals.

The event was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Maqsood Ahmed; District Social Welfare Officer, Abdul Raheem; Principal ITI, Ujjwal Mahajan; Principal Boys HSS Rajouri, Principal Girls HSS Rajouri; Administrator OSC, Nitu Sharma; DHEW, Nazma Sheikh and others.

PM National Apprenticeship Mela held at Government ITI Udhampur

JINNEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 8

Prime Minister National Apprenticeship Mela (PMNAM) was organized today in the Government ITI Udhampur under the aegis of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Government of India and supervision of Skill Development Department J&K.

Arun P. Gupta, Chairman IMC of ITI Udhampur, inaugurated the mela as the Chief Guest. Around 200 pass outs of ITIs/other Institutes and about ten Prominent Industrial establishments of Udhampur participated in the Apprenticeship Mela.

The programme started with lighting of the Lamp by the Chief Guest & other distinguished dignitaries. Superintendent ITI Udhampur Er. Ravinder Singh Bhatti welcomed the Chief Guest Arun P. Gupta, Representatives from DIC Udhampur, &

other dignitaries present in the programme.

The Superintendent ITI gave a detailed account of the Apprenticeship Training Scheme. The Superintendent ITI, in the capacity of Assistant Apprenticeship Advisor District Udhampur, also assured to extend every type of help to Industries/Establishments and potential apprentices in the registration and contract generation.

Representatives from the Office of General Manager DIC Udhampur also sought the cooperation of the industry people in making the scheme a success by involving the youth of the area in their establishments and imparted training to them as per their need or requirement to set an example for others to follow. They also exhorted the students to come forward and take the benefit of the Scheme. Fareed Ahmed

Sheikh (Mela In-charge) spoke at length about the Apprenticeship Scheme and stressed upon the youth to stay away from the menace of drug abuse and contribute towards development of the Nation by getting the best skill training as per their interest.

While speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest appreciated Superintendent ITI Udhampur for putting in extra efforts to promote this youth friendly scheme in Udhampur District. He called upon the industry representatives to come forward and enroll maximum students as per their requirement to make this scheme successful in the district. He also called upon the students to take maximum benefit of this "Earn while you learn Scheme".

At the end, Sandeep Singh, Supervisor, ITI Udhampur presented a vote of thanks.

Sampoornata Abhiyan Yatra flagged-off in Baramulla

JINNEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JULY 8

The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina in presence of Deputy Chief Education Officer today flagged-off a Yatra from Government Girls' Higher Secondary School Baramulla as part of NITI Aayog's Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign.

The Sampoornata Abhiyan, launched by NITI Aayog, is a three-month-long campaign focused on ensuring



100% saturation in six key indicators crucial for the socio-economic development of Aspirational districts. These indicators span various sectors, including education, nutrition, health, and agriculture.

The Yatra, which saw

enthusiastic participation from students, educators, health workers, and other stakeholders, made its way through the main town of Baramulla before concluding at the Government Boys' Higher Secondary School Baramulla, serving as a visible dem-

onstration of the community's commitment to the campaign's goals. During the flagging-off ceremony, Dr. Raina emphasized the significance of the Sampoornata Abhiyan in achieving comprehensive development across key sectors. The ADC further stressed on all the stakeholders to work in complete coordination during the campaign period to make sure the benefits under Aspirational District and Aspirational Block programme reach the deserving beneficiaries of the district.

DM Jammu clamps down on land mafia

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 8

District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya has initiated the process of declaring wanted land grabbers Abdul Majid alias Bittu Teli, and Talib Hussain as absconders in view of their prolonged absence. Prior to this, the Public Safety Act (PSA) had been invoked against the duo.

The PSA was invoked as a consequence of their involvement in unlawful land conversion activities, specifically the conversion of forest land into regular parcels and the subsequent sale of these parcels to unsuspecting buyers.

As their activities posed a potential threat to public order, the PSA was slapped against Abdul Majid and Talib Hussain. Given their current absence, the district administration has taken the proactive step of declaring them absconders and will simultaneously initiate the process of attaching their properties.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In part supersession to the Public Notice published in various newspapers on 05.07.2024 regarding Cancellation/Diversion and Short Termination/Origination/Rescheduling/Regulations of Trains due to Pre-non-interlocking & Non-interlocking work in connection with Roza yard remodeling work on Shahjahanpur Jn. - Lucknow & Roza - Sitapur City Jn. double line section over Moradabad Division, the following details as under:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Date(s) of Cancellation (from originating station)	
22454 Meerut City - Lucknow Jn. Rajya Rani Express	03.08.2024 to 06.08.2024	
22453 Lucknow Jn. - Meerut City Rajya Rani Express	02.08.2024 to 05.08.2024	
DIVERSION OF TRAIN		
Train No. & Train Name	Diverted (Via)	Date(s) (from originating station)
15622 Anand Vihar (T) - Kamakhya Express	Ramganga- Bareilly City- Piliphit - Sitapur instead of Ramganga - Roza - Sitapur	26.07.24 & 02.08.24 instead of 27.07.2024 & 03.08.2024
RESTOATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Date(s) of Restoation (from originating station)	
22454 Meerut City - Lucknow Jn. Rajya Rani Express	01.08.2024 & 02.08.2024	
22453 Lucknow Jn. - Meerut City Rajya Rani Express	31.07.2024 to 01.08.2024	
14242 Saharanpur Jn. - Prayagraj Sangam Nauchandi Express with diverted via HAPUR - Khurja Jn. - Kanpur Central - Lucknow instead of HAPUR - Moradabad - Lucknow	23.07.2024 to 04.08.2024	
14241 Prayagraj Sangam - Saharanpur Jn. Nauchandi Express with diverted via Lucknow - Kanpur Central - Khurja Jn. - HAPUR instead of Lucknow - Moradabad - HAPUR	23.07.2024 to 04.08.2024	
14242 Saharanpur Jn. - Prayagraj Sangam Nauchandi Express on proper route.	05.08.2024	
14241 Prayagraj Sangam - Saharanpur Jn. Nauchandi Express on proper route.	22.07.2024	
RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Rescheduling of Trains (Originating Station)	
22454 Meerut City - Lucknow Jn. Rajya Rani Exp.	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Meerut City at 08:55 hrs. instead of 06:40 hrs. (135 minutes late) on 01.08.2024	
22454 Meerut City - Lucknow Jn. Rajya Rani Exp.	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Meerut City at 09:40 hrs. instead of 06:40 hrs. (180 minutes late) on 02.08.2024	

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways Website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav **NORTHERN RAILWAY** Your Convenience-Our Concern Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in **Please join us on**

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Inter District Subroto Mukherjee Football Tournament kick-starts at Baramulla



JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JULY 8

An inaugural ceremony of the Inter District Subroto Mukherjee Football Tournament was organized at Showkat Ali Stadium in Baramulla.

The tournament being organized by the Youth Services and Sports Department Kashmir witnessed enthusiastic participation from almost nine districts across the Kashmir province in the under-15 age category.

The tournament is being conducted under the supervision of Rashid Kohli, Joint Director Youth Services and Sports Kashmir, and is hosted by the Department of Youth Services and Sports Baramulla. The inaugural ceremony was a grand affair, graced by the Principal of GDC Boys Baramulla,

DYSSO Baramulla, and other distinguished dignitaries from the department.

The opening ceremony began with the traditional sports pledge, fostering a spirit of sportsmanship and fair play among the young athletes.

Principal GDC Boys Baramulla and DYSSO Baramulla welcomed all participants, encouraging them to give their best and enjoy the spirit of competition.

The Inter District Subroto Mukherjee Football Tournament aims to promote youth sports and provide a platform for budding footballers to showcase their talent. The event is expected to witness intense and exciting matches over the coming days, reflecting the vibrant sports culture of Jammu & Kashmir.

Mahindra Launches Mileage Guarantee for its entire range of BS6 OBD II trucks

Mahindra's Truck range is designed to provide Unmatched Performance and Reliability

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU JULY 8

Mahindra's Truck and Bus Division (MTBD) a part of the Mahindra Group, continues to lead the way in the commercial vehicle industry by announcing a disruptive customer value proposition for their entire BS6 OBD II range of BLAZO X, FURIO, OPTIMO & JAYO range of HCV, ICV & LCV trucks. This industry first initiative of 'Get More Mileage or Give the Truck Back' is introduced to address the challenges posed by rising fuel prices and evolving regulatory standards.

The new range includes the proven 7.2L mPower Engine (HCVs) and mDi Tech Engine (ILCV) with Fuelsmart Technology, Mild EGR with a proven After Treatment System that results in lower Ad Blue Consumption, and many other technological advancements, as well as the cutting-edge iMAXX Telematics solution, all of which ensure guaranteed higher mileage. This Mileage guarantee not only includes Fuel efficiency but it's also a combination of lowest Ad Blue consumption, So truly speaking Mahindra's mileage guarantee means Best in Class "Fluid Efficiency"



To ensure the efficacy of these enhancements, Mahindra conducted intense fluid efficiency (diesel + Ad Blue) testing across 21 product categories, including 71 models including competitors' vehicles. During these testing, which lasted over 1 lakh kilometres and included a variety of load and road conditions, Mahindra reaffirmed its commitment to providing exceptional mileage performance. All these testing was conducted under the supervision of and validated by an independent credible agency. The result reinforced Mahindra's reputation for dependability and efficiency in the commercial vehicle industry.

Speaking on the announcement, Vinod Sahay - President of Trucks, Buses, CE, Aerospace & Defence Businesses - Mahindra &

in higher fluid efficiency. It was in 2016, when we launched Mileage guarantee in BS3 range. Thereafter we continued this in BS4 & BS6 OBD I and now launching in BS6 OBD2, which will help increasing the profitability of transporters. We have seen an increasing impact on transport clients' margins as fuel costs rise without corresponding increases in freight rates. We saw the need to improve engine efficiency further in order to meet new standards and exceed customer expectations. The new mileage guarantee, embodied by the motto "Zyada Mileage Nahin toh Truck wapas" will provide unmatched value to our customers."

Furthermore, Mahindra Trucks has the iMAXX telematics technology, allows real-time monitoring and optimization of fleet operations. These trucks also include a Driver Information System, which allows for real-time monitoring of vehicle performance and driver conduct, assuring safe and efficient operations. The system gives customers vital information about the functioning of their fleet, allowing them to make educated decisions and maximize profitability.

Mahindra Ltd, Member of Group Executive board, Mahindra Group, said, "The 'Get More Mileage or Give The Truck Back' guarantee across the truck range is a landmark move that reflects our superior high-tech expertise, profound understanding of the segment and evolving needs of our customers. This mileage guarantee program is supported by extensive fluid efficiency testing, demonstrates our unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. With such initiatives, Mahindra is well-positioned to win over customers and become India's leading commercial vehicle player."

Jalaj Gupta, Business Head - Commercial Vehicles, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. said, "Our vehicles' superior technological prowess has resulted

Orientation programme for Education Volunteers of Seasonal Centers held at Shopian



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JULY 8

An orientation programme for education volunteers of various Seasonal Centers of district Shopian was today organised by Chief Education Officer Shopian under SAMAGRA SHIKSHA at DIET Shopian.

On the occasion, the Chief Education Officer Shopian, Mohd Shabir highlighted the essence of this induction programme. He emphasized the integrity and sincerity while teaching the students of Seasonal Centers. He further emphasized on an inclusive educational environment for migratory students.

The CEO appreciated the role of EVs and said teaching is a divine profession and despite many challenges these EVs reach

to the students who have no other means of learning which is worth appreciation.

Bilal Ahmad Wagay a mathematician delivered an expert talk and imparted a training session on how to teach mathematics at elementary level in seasonal centers.

The main session of the training was taken over by Dr Feroz Ahmad who delivered a comprehensive training on how to teach migratory children in Seasonal centers. He elaborated about various skills and methods to be adopted for teaching English and other subjects at elementary level.

Zonal Education Officer Shopian, Sr. Faculty members of DIET and Cultural Coordinator were present on the occasion along with all Seasonal Center volunteers.

DC Ramban inspects facilities for Shri Amarnathji Yatris, reviews security scenario



JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 8

Amid the ongoing Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2024, Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary along with Senior Superintendent of Police Anuj Kumar today inspected various facilities created for the pilgrims at Lamber, Banihal, by the District Administration Ramban and Sevadars (Volunteers). The DC asked the officers to regularly monitor the availability of essential amenities and maintain close coordination with security agencies to guarantee a safe and hassle-free Yatra experience for the pilgrims. The inspection and review aimed to provide a comfortable and secure environment to the devotees undertaking the Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

The Deputy Commissioner inspected the health, sanitation, and boarding and lodging arrangements made by the District Administration. He emphasized the need for vigilance and instructed concerned officers to monitor all tasks related to their respective departments closely. Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner advised the Langer organizations to ensure the quality of food being served to the Yatris. He stressed the importance of adhering to all instructions issued by the government and administration, and maintaining sanitation and hygiene in and around their Langer sites.

providing better protection against future flooding events.

J&K industrial push...

"Bhagithali-II, with an investment of Rs 5,391.49 crore, will come up on 1,223 kanals of land and will generate 8,025 jobs. It has a sanctioned load of 64.79 MW of power supply," Manhas said.

Manhas said 480 kanals of surrendered land is in the process of retrieval and possessions by J&K SIDCO at Bhagithali-I.

Heat wave unlikely...

"The temperatures in Srinagar can go up and settle close to 34 degree Celsius in the next coming days. The heat wave would unlikely be witnessed in Jammu and Kashmir for the next three days," he said.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

5 soldiers killed...

forces for few minutes, but it is believed the terrorists are hiding in the forest as no fresh firing is reported." Reinforcements have been rushed to the area to trace down and neutralise the terrorists, an official said, adding a total of 10 troopers were injured and five of them later succumbed to their injuries.

This was the first such ambush in Kathua district. Earlier, during the peak of terrorism, Kathua was one of the districts which remained least affected. However, from the past few years, the entire Jammu has been high on the terror radar with these attacks being reported from areas known to be free of terrorism.

This is the second major terror attack in Kathua. On June 11 and 12, two suspected terrorists were killed in an encounter with the security forces in Kathua and a large quantity of arms and ammunition, dry fruits, medicines, batteries, walkie talkie sets were recovered from them.

This was followed by the June 9 attack on pilgrims' bus in Reasi, when it was returning from Shiv Khori cave temple in which nine people were killed and 33 injured in the incident.

The attack was carried out on the directions of Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Abu Hamza.

The Chenab Valley comprising Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts and the Pir Panjal region comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts in Jammu have witnessed targeted attacks and infiltration from across the border in the past three years, a senior government official said. Doda district was rocked by twin terror attacks on June 11 and 12. On June 11, six security personnel were injured when terrorists attacked a joint check post at Chhattargalla, while a police personnel was injured in a gunfight with terrorists at Kota top in the Gandoh area on June 12. On June 26, three terrorists were killed during an encounter with security forces in a forest area in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district. Amid a spate of terror attacks in the past three days in the Jammu region, security agencies suspect that three or four groups of terrorists, some of them who are fresh infiltrators, are on the move in the Reasi, Doda and Kathua areas.

A top government source said that since mid-2021, at least 30 terror attacks have occurred in the Jammu division, pointing to sustained bids to revive terrorism in the region after the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution was abrogated on August 5, 2019-(KNO)

Killing of six, including...

conference in Anantnag, DIG south Kashmir, Javid Iqbal Matoon said the six terrorists were all members of HM and were killed in the encounters that took place in Chinagam and Modergam areas.

Brigadier Prithvi Raj Chauhan, Commander 1 Sector RR, told the media persons that four HM terrorists were killed in the Chinagam encounter that lasted for 24 hours. He said that a hideout was made in a house where the terrorists had been hiding for a long time. Around 6 kg of IED was recovered from the spot, but it was damaged on the spot.

Meanwhile, Brigadier Anirudh Chauhan, Commander 2 Sector RR, said that two HM terrorists were killed in the Modergam area of Kulgam. He identified one of the killed terrorists as Adil Hussain Wani, an A-category terrorist who had been active since 2021. Wani was a resident of Kutpora Shopian.

He said, "The success of the operation came after months of tracking the movement of the HM terrorist group by the Army and police. On July 6, they received input about terrorists hiding in a house on the Kulgam-Shopian border. The house was encircled, and there was no chance for the terrorists to escape. Two HM terrorists, including top commander Adil Hussain Wani, were eliminated in the operation."

Both commanders termed the killing of six Hizbul terrorists as a big blow to the terror outfit and its leadership. They credited the success to the people of Kulgam for their help in the fight against terrorism. The commanders said that terrorist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir have no leaders left in the region.

Moscow's Ostankino...

Dmitry Peskov, in an interview with Russia's state-run VGTURK television channel said, "...The agenda of talks will be extensive, if not to say overbusy. It will be an official visit, and we hope that the heads will be able to talk in an informal way as well...We are expecting a very important and full-fledged visit, which is so crucial for Russian-Indian relations."

Record breaker: Over 2 lakh...

and two others, in addition to 2,097 security personnel and service providers.

Thus far, a total of 182,137 pilgrims have visited the holy cave over the past nine days since the 52-day pilgrimage began on June 29. The 11th batch of 5,803 pilgrims left early this morning from Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas for the twin base camps of Nunwan-Pahalgam and Baltal-Sonamarg, accompanied by extensive security measures.

This batch included 4,521 men, 1,139 women, nine children, 124 Sadhus, and ten Sadhvis. Of these, 1,862 pilgrims departed for Baltal at 3:10 am, while 3,941 headed for the Pahalgam base camp at 4 am, from where they will continue their journey to the holy cave.

Yatris can opt for either the traditional 48 km Pahalgam route or the shorter 14 km Baltal route for the Yatra. Those using the Pahalgam route typically take four days to reach the cave shrine, whereas those on the Baltal route return to the base camp the same day after darshan inside the cave shrine.

The cave shrine, situated at 3,888 meters above sea level, houses an ice stalagmite structure that waxes and wanes with the phases of the moon. Devotees believe that the ice stalagmite structure symbolizes the mythical powers of Lord Shiva.

Extensive security arrangements have been made this year along the nearly 300 km Jammu-Srinagar highway, at the twin yatra routes, the two base camps, and the cave shrine, ensuring a smooth and incident-free yatra. Over 124 langars (community kitchens) have been set up along both routes, as well as at transit camps and the cave shrine.

More than 7,000 Sevadars (volunteers) are serving pilgrims during this year's yatra. Helicopter services are also available for yatris on both routes. The 52-day pilgrimage will conclude on August 19. Last year, more than 450,000 pilgrims paid obeisance at the cave shrine.

Resurgence of Cong in Jammu...

"The decline in vote share during the Lok Sabha elections is a matter of concern which means the BJP is losing ground to the Congress party, which is not a good sign ahead of the crucial assembly elections. The BJP core group was asked to pull up the socks and reclaim the lost ground so that it doesn't hurt the party's mission to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Moreover, it was also discussed that the party has invested heavily in the Pahari community by giving them ST status but the BJP wasn't able to convert it in terms of votes during the elections.

"Though the Pahari population of Hindu community supported the party, Muslim Pahari votes remained out of bound. The one reason which was attributed to this was absence of BJP's own candidate from Anantnag-Rajouri seat. The meeting discussed that in assembly elections, the mistake won't be repeated and party will field its own candidates on all assembly seats of Rajouri and Poonch districts so that Pahari people are given a chance to reciprocate the love which they have got from BJP government at the center," the sources added.

Post-2014 flood...

The improvement is part of a broader strategy to implement Phase I and Phase II of the short-term measures proposed by a three-member group led by the Chairman of the CWC, formed by the Prime Minister of India in September 2014.

The RTI response, a copy of which is with the news agency, detailed the measures taken post-floods.

Following the floods, the Prime Minister of India directed the formation of a three-member group led by the Chairman of the Central Water Commission on September 18, 2014. The group proposed immediate, short-term, and long-term measures to address the situation.

The RTI revealed that the department swiftly plugged all breaches and restored numerous sites under Temporary and Permanent Restoration projects, costing Rs 163.11 crore and Rs 96.78 crore, respectively.

These actions were part of a broader strategy to implement Phase I and Phase II of the short-term measures.

Until long-term flood mitigation strategies were developed and approved, a Priority Flood Management Project was initiated to address urgent needs. This project's main objective was to remove significant bottlenecks in the River Jhelum and its flood spill channels, providing immediate relief from low to moderate-magnitude floods. The Central Water Commission approved a detailed project costing Rs. 399.29 Crore, titled "Priority works-Comprehensive Plan for Flood Management Works on Jhelum-Phase-I," in 2015-16. This project, funded under the FMBAP, is nearly complete.

As a result of Phase-I, the carrying capacity of the River Jhelum and its spill channels has increased significantly. The capacity from Sangam to Padshahibagh has grown from 31,800 to 41,000 cusecs, while at Ram Munshibagh, it has increased from 27,000 to 32,000 cusecs. Additionally, the offtake at Padshahibagh has expanded from 4,000 to 27,000 cusecs. In Wullar Baramulla, the outlet at Ningli has seen its capacity rise from 20,000 to 22,700 cusecs, and at Sopore, it has increased from 31,000 to 35,000 cusecs.

These enhancements reflect a significant improvement in the region's flood management capabilities,

Secy RDD inaugurates workshop on 'Panchayat Development Plan & MGNREGA Convergence' in Srinagar



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

Secretary Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, on Monday inaugurated a one day UT level workshop on "Panchayat Development Plan and MGNREGA convergence" in Srinagar.

The workshop was attended by Director Social Welfare Kashmir, Mohammad Akbar Wani, Director General Finance, Sajad Hussain Ganai, Director, RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain, Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, Director Horticulture Kashmir, Zahoor Ahmad, Mission Director JJM, Dr. G. N. Itoo, Additional Secretary Waseem Raja, Deputy Secretary, Sheetal Pandita, HoDs of stakeholder departments and other key officials.

Dr Shahid highlighted the significance of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and underscored the role of multiple departments in achieving a holistic development approach.

The Secretary expressed satisfaction with the collective effort towards a convergent development plan and acknowledged the chal-

lenging journey ahead. He emphasized the importance of efficient resource pooling, leveraging technical expertise from departments such as Agriculture, Education, and Forestry, and maximizing the impact for public good.

Dr Shahid underscored the need for innovation and support for field-level initiatives, aligning with national goals of holistic development and sustainability. Director RDD Kashmir highlighted the significance of the workshop, stressing that preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) is more than just an administrative task. He described it as a cornerstone for economic progress and social equity in rural areas. He urged upon line departments to participate actively in the GPDP process, emphasizing that collaboration and synergy among stakeholders are essential for success.

Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, emphasised the importance of streamlining and enhancing the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) process. He outlined several key strategies aimed at improving coordination, efficiency and effec-

tiveness in rural development planning. He underlined the importance of streamlining data collection and management. He advocated for actively engaging line departments in gathering and updating accurate data on the Panchayat Development Index (PDI) portal.

A number of technical sessions were conducted in the day long workshop. During the workshop, DG Finance, Sajad Hussain Ganai, discussed the integration of UT-funded schemes with GPDP.

Waseem Raja, Additional Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, focused on the convergent plan under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Dr. Shafia Wani, a faculty member at IMPARD, J&K, addressed the challenges and strategies involved in GPDP preparation, emphasizing the expectations from line departments to facilitate the formation of an Integrated GPDP.

Shibabrata Kar, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj expert delivered a presentation on the thematic area-wise preparation of GPDP.

DIPR holds interaction with Media persons at Doda



JI NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 8

The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Doda Centre today organised an interaction with local media persons.

During the meeting, led by DIO Rajinder Kumar Digra and DIO Nisak Ul Farooq, the media fraternity was encouraged to work in coordination and adhere to ethical standards to promote and spread the truth within society. Emphasis was placed on the importance of accurate reporting and the role of the media in maintaining public trust.

Additionally, the media

was advised to disseminate factual information and maintain transparency in their operations. The officials also discussed potential guidelines for the media fraternity, collaboration with local authorities and the implementation of fact-checking procedures to prevent the spread of misinformation.

The meeting concluded with a call for continued cooperation and dedication from the media fraternity to ensure smooth and effective press operations in the district.

The meeting was attended by the media personnel and officials of district information centre Doda

Designated Officer Food Safety inspects Langers, Training of Sevadars at Lamber - Ramban

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 8

To ensure safety and quality of food served to pilgrims during the Shri Amarnath Yatra, Designated Officer Food Safety Ramban, Dev Dutt Sharma along with Food Safety Officer Block Ramban, Balbeer Singh and Food Analyst MFTV Javed Haseeb today conducted a thorough inspection of langers at Lamber in Banihal.

During the inspection, the Food Safety Officer checked the hygiene and

sanitation conditions of the langers, and also ensured that all food handlers have undergone proper medical checkups and are wearing proper uniforms and gloves. They collected and tested 50 Food samples through MFTV (MOBILE Food testing van) all samples were found to conform the standard under FSSR. Imparted training programs and awareness programme regarding Food safety, Good manufacturing practice/Good Hygiene practice and Save food share Food.

Samba Admin, Agriculture Department initiate Major Farming Project Beyond Border Fence

JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBHA, JULY 8

The District Administration of Samba, in collaboration with the Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department, has launched a significant initiative to address a long-standing issue for farmers in the region. For the first time since 1999, approximately 500 Kanal (62.5 acres) land beyond the fence are being cultivated during the Kharif 2024 season.

The initiative focuses on pulse cultivation in the border villages of Chalyari Khurd, Chalyari Kalan, Sayal, and Chachwal in the Rajpura Block of District Samba. As part of this project, the Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare (FW)



Samba has distributed 5 quintals of Walab-1 Mash Variety seeds to the farmers having land beyond the Border fence.

This collaborative effort among the District Administration and the Agriculture Production and FW Samba has brought new hope to the farmers in these border areas. The initiative aims to increase their income by bringing previously uncultivated land into productive use.

Chief Agriculture Officer Madan Gopal Singh,

along with officers from the Army, Agriculture Extension Officers, and PRI members, were present to support the farmers during this pivotal moment.

The initiative is a testament to the commitment of the District Administration and the Agriculture Department for improving the livelihoods of farmers in the border areas, demonstrating a significant step towards agricultural development and self-sufficiency.

Mission Sankalp Jammu hosts awareness event on women centric provisions in Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita & Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU JULY 8

Mission Shakti Sankalp: Hub for Empowerment of Women Jammu Social Welfare Department organized an awareness session on women-centric provisions in Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita here today at BTC Centre Khandwal, Jammu. The main focus of the awareness session

amongst females on the women centric provisions in Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita.

Such events are being held to enable women to learn new laws for safety and protection and stay informed with emerging new law provisions and procedure like BNS (Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita), BNSS (BHARATIYA Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita) and BSA (Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam).

The Resource Person Advocate Amit Khajuria (High Court) explained to the participants about new criminal laws and the replaced form of Indian penal code and the importance of fundamental rights and duties for girls. He also explained the POCSO Act and POSH Act.

The Officials of Mission Shakti SANKALP HEW, BPM, NRLM Umeed, SHG members were present.

Ensuring Eco-Friendly SANJY-2024: Directorate of Rural Sanitation, J&K adopts innovative Sanitation measures

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

In a dedicated effort to ensure an eco-friendly Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2024, the Directorate of Rural Sanitation, under the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj J&K, has adopted a novel approach to sanitation management.

Since June 27th, over 7,000 sanitation workers have been engaged to maintain cleanliness and uphold a zero-landfill policy along the pilgrimage routes.

The Department has integrated a comprehensive strategy, focusing on Men, Machinery, Mechanism, Maintenance, Monitoring, and Motivation to achieve sustainable sanitation. This holistic approach ensures efficient waste management and promotes a cleaner environment for the thousands of pilgrims participating in the Yatra.

As of July 8th, the waste collection and processing details on Pahalgam and Baltal Axis are - Total Quantity of Wet Waste Collected in Tonnes is 43.30. Total Quantity of Wet Waste Processed in Tonnes is 43.17. Total Quantity of Wet Waste Sent to EFL is 0.01



Similarly, total Quantity of Dry Waste Collected in Tonnes is 43.85. Total Quantity of Dry Waste Processed in Tonnes is 42.55 and total Quantity of Dry Waste Sent to EFL is 0.00

The cumulative figures of waste on both the axis remained 114.57 tonnes. Total Quantity of Waste Processed in tonnes remained 85.72. Total Inert Waste generated in tonnes remained 27.43.

The concerted efforts of the waste management teams have yielded impressive results in managing plastic, wet, and inert waste along the pilgrimage route.

Plastic Waste Management
A total of 43.30 tonnes of plastic waste has been

collected. This waste has been efficiently bailed and securely stacked at designated locations. The collected plastic waste would be supplied to registered recyclers like Baba Traders operating in Jammu and Kashmir and the non-recyclable plastic would be supplied to Ultra Tech Cement Plant where it is mixed with conventional fuel to form blended fuel, which would be used in kilns during clinker production process.

These measures ensure that plastic waste is properly managed, minimizing its impact on the environment.

Wet Waste Processing
The collection of wet waste has reached 43.85 tonnes. This waste is being

processed in composting beds, following best practices to produce high-quality manure. The manure would be supplied to the agriculture department as an alternative to chemicals and fertilizers.

This initiative not only reduced waste but also promoted sustainable agricultural practices by generating valuable compost and promoting organic farming.

Inert Waste Disposal
Inert waste generation stands at 27.43 tonnes. Of this, 24 tonnes have been responsibly disposed of at the Achan dumping site of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC). Additionally, 3 tonnes of inert waste have been loaded into compactors for fur-

ther processing. This systematic approach ensures that inert waste is managed effectively, reducing its impact on the environment.

"These waste management initiatives are part of the broader commitment to maintain the sanctity and cleanliness of the pilgrimage route," Director General Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra said, adding, the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including the waste management teams, local authorities, and volunteers, have been instrumental in achieving these milestones.

The Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024 continues to uphold the principles of environmental stewardship, ensuring that the pilgrimage remains a memorable and sustainable experience for all devotees.

The Directorate's commitment to effective waste management highlights their dedication to preserving the natural beauty of the region and ensuring a sustainable pilgrimage experience. By processing all collected waste, the initiative sets a high standard for environmental conservation and responsible waste disposal.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION JAMMU, J&K SPORTS COUNCIL, JAMMU.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender Notice : e-NIT 01/yss of 2024-25 Dated 06.07.2024

For and on behalf of the Secretary, J&K Sports Council Jammu e-tenders are invited on **Percentage Basis** from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works :-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (2% of Adv cost) (in Rs)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor
1	Construction of Borewell including allied fitting and storage sumps at Synthetic Football Turf, Khel Gaon Nagrota..	15.00	600/-	2%	6 Months	B,C & D
2	Protection Net Fencing at Football Ground at Khel Gaon Nagrota adjoining Sainik School Nagrota.	8.00	600/-	2%	6 Months	C & D

Position of AAA :- Recorded Position of TS :- Recorded

Major Head of Accounts :- Capex budget 2024-25

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jktenders.gov.in> per below schedule:

No: SC/CDI/ e-NIT/SS/1077-81

Dated: 06.07.2024

Sd/-

Executive Engineer
Sports Const. Div. Jammu

DIP/J-967-P/24

Date: 8-7-24

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION CHENANI

(Email id: executiveengineerpwdchenani@gmail.com)

CORRIGENDUM-II EXTENSION OF DATES

Name of works:- 1) Improvement of Lathey Morh to Ossu to Pakhlai road. Under City and Town Programme. TENDER ID:- 2024_PWDJK_250484_4
2) Upgradation/Improvement of left out stretch of Chenani Sudmahadev road to Bashat Under City and Town Programme Tender ID :- 2024_PWDJK_250484_3

Reference:- This office e-ENIT NO. 13 of 2024-25 Dated 15.06.2024.

Due to poor response, once again the below noted dates are hereby extended as under:-

- 1) Last date of submission of bid in electronic format is 12-07-2024 upto 1800 Hrs instead of 05-07-2024 upto 1800 Hrs.
- 2) Date of opening of bid is 13-07-2024 after 1200 Hrs instead of 06-07-2024 after 1200 Hrs.

Note:- All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

No. EE/C/2474-81

DT :- 06.07.2024

-Sd-

Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division
Chenani

DIP/J-2558/24

Date: 8-7-24

EDITORIAL

BJP's strategic moves in Ladakh

In the aftermath of its recent electoral setback in Ladakh, the BJP appears to be doubling down on its efforts to fortify its presence in the region. The party's proposal to establish new administrative units, including two districts—Nubra in Leh and Zaskar in Kargil—signals a pivotal shift in its political strategy. This move, purportedly aimed at decentralizing governance and bolstering grassroots democracy, merits closer scrutiny. Firstly, the creation of new districts must be assessed against the backdrop of local aspirations and administrative feasibility. Ladakh, a geographically and ethnically diverse Union Territory, has long grappled with issues of development and equitable governance. The BJP's initiative to carve out Nubra and Zaskar as districts ostensibly seeks to address these concerns by bringing governance closer to the people. However, questions linger about the timing and motivations behind these decisions, especially in light of electoral setbacks and political maneuvering. The recent Lok Sabha elections underscored a shift in political dynamics, with the BJP slipping to third place behind a consolidated opposition in Kargil. This electoral setback may have prompted the BJP's recalibration of its strategy, aiming to regain ground ahead of the upcoming Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) elections in Leh next year. The move to grant district status to regions like Nubra and Zaskar could potentially reshape local electoral dynamics, offering the BJP a platform to consolidate its support base. Moreover, concerns have been raised regarding the potential divisive impact of these administrative changes. The decision to bifurcate the predominantly Muslim-majority Kargil district, albeit indirectly, through the creation of new administrative units, raises many eyebrows. Critics argue that such maneuvers could exacerbate communal tensions and undermine the unity demonstrated by Kargil in recent elections. The BJP's assertion that these changes aim to enhance governance accessibility must be weighed against the risk of fostering political polarization. Furthermore, the procedural transparency and consultation with local stakeholders in the decision-making process remain critical. While the BJP emphasizes its commitment to grassroots democracy, ensuring inclusive dialogue and consensus-building among all communities is imperative. The aspirations of residents in Drass and Sankoo regions, who may also seek district status, must be addressed in a fair and equitable manner, without fueling perceptions of favoritism or neglect. While the BJP's initiative to create new administrative units in Ladakh may ostensibly seek to empower local governance and enhance development outcomes, its broader implications warrant cautious consideration. Upholding the principles of democratic governance necessitates transparency, inclusivity, and sensitivity to local dynamics. As Ladakh navigates this period of administrative reconfiguration, the focus must remain steadfast on fostering unity, promoting equitable development, and safeguarding the region's unique cultural fabric. Ultimately, the success of these initiatives hinges not only on their administrative efficacy but also on their ability to foster trust and inclusivity among all communities in Ladakh.

Modi's Moscow visit comes at a crucial time

SANJAY KAPOOR

Perhaps around the time Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomes Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Moscow — who is on his first State visit after getting re-elected for the third time as prime minister — two trains carrying a consignment of coal from St Petersburg will use the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The INSTC is a multimodal transport system comprising of land and sea routes that will cut through Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran to reach a port in India. This journey is expected to be completed in 25 days, and is shorter than the traditional route through the Suez Canal which would have taken 40-odd days (and cost much more).

This is just a small slice of the increasing partnership between India and Russia that has grown after the Ukraine conflict that began on February 24, 2022. Modi and Putin will be discussing many topics with the resumption of the India-Russia bilateral summit

after three years. The last summit took place in 2021 in New Delhi, and since then a lot has changed since the Ukraine conflict.

As a conscious policy, Western Europe is pushing Russia towards Asia compelling its two allies, India and China, to reconfigure their logistics of trade and communication. It is from this standpoint that the INSTC, which was conceived by Russia, Iran, and India, has got a new life. Russia has a big Asian component, but it has been largely uninhabited. A bulk of the Russian population resides on the European side. What we see now is a geographical shift that will also see greater investments in a depopulated part of the country located in the Asian continent, which has been encroached aggressively by China.

The INSTC is being challenged by the recently signed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which is a sea-land-sea route corridor. It takes cargo from India to Jebel Ali port in the United Arab Emirates, and through

the land route takes it to Haifa port in Israel, then Greece, and beyond. This route is premised on the normalisation of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and the resolution of the Palestine issue.

Coincidentally, the war in Gaza began about a month after the corridor was announced at the Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit. Many wonder whether the corridor had a role to play in the conflagration in Gaza. While the Suez Canal will be severely impacted as the IMEC also is a shorter route to Europe, several gaps in the project have major financial implications before it becomes an assured route to ferry goods from India to Europe.

Recently, however, Israel tested this route and received cargo from India. The reason was to avoid the Houthi attacks on cargo-laden ships going to Israel through the Red Sea. Russia recognises the implications of the IMEC on the INSTC, but is confident that even the Middle East corridor will help in opening land routes of many landlocked coun-

tries of Asia.

In recent months, Russia too has used the INSTC route to supply Russian oil to India, which has reached an astronomical 2+ million barrels a day — more than 40% of the total Indian consumption of oil. This is far higher than what India has bought from Saudi Arabia and Iraq. India's purchase of Russian oil, despite US sanctions, has strengthened ties between the two countries. Experts suggest that Modi skipped the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Kazakhstan as he did not want to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping. Modi will attend the BRICS summit in October 2024, in Kazan, Russia.

Russia's conflict with Ukraine has seen Moscow recruiting soldiers from Asian countries, and the exact number of Indians who are fighting on behalf of Russia against Ukraine is unknown. Many of them died at the border of Ukraine, and though those who have been recruited claim that they have been duped into fighting, reports emanating from Moscow suggest otherwise.

It is learnt that the Indians who have gone to fight for Russia have been lured with the promise of high salaries (of up to Rs 1.6 lakh) and residency in Russia after they serve their contract. Also, those who agreed to go to Russia were not gnawed by guilt as Russia is perceived as a friendly country where they could continue, in many cases, the martial tradition of their families after India's defence ministry scrapped long-term recruitment in the Army and instead brought in the short term Agniveer scheme. Many Indian parents, reports from Moscow suggest, got in touch with the recruitment office directly.

Interestingly, though the external affairs ministry has taken into cognisance the plight of Indians in Ukraine, the government has not replied to this issue when AMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi raised the matter in the opening session of the 18th Lok Sabha. On July 5, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that he raised the issue with his Russian counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO meet in Kazakhstan.

On the same day, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said that Modi while in Russia will press for the early discharge of Indian nationals from the Russian army.

Another compelling issue is the de-dollarisation of BRICS. This involves member nations discarding the US dollar as a reserve currency and transacting in other currencies. The problem here is that there are not many takers for the Indian Rupee, and Russia seems to be sitting on a large pile of Indian Rupees. India has opened its doors to Russian businesses: for example, the Rosneft-Essar Oil deal in 2018, and more recently, in September 2023, the Indo-Russian joint venture Kinet Railway Solutions for the manufacture of Vande Bharat trains. That said, more projects need to be unveiled from India's side. During Modi's Russia visit, a push for more investment in the manufacturing sector is expected, which will help in an uptick of jobs in the country.

(The writer is Editor, Hardnews magazine)

Gold ETFs: The modern, convenient safe haven for young investors

HIMA BINDU KOTA

Gold has always been a traditional safe haven particularly in uncertain situations of geo-political tensions, financial and economic turmoil. Many generations have taken advantage of investing in the security of gold. However, even this traditional investment has witnessed considerable changes with the advent of financial innovation.

The newer generation can now take benefit of security provided by gold which is more convenient, cost effective and eliminates the hassles of physical ownership by investing in Gold Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs). An ETF is an exchange traded passive fund that tracks any index, or a commodity. In this case, a Gold ETF invests in gold bullion and tracks the physical gold price. One Gold ETF unit is equal to 1 gram of gold and is backed by physical gold of highest purity, making it a dematerialised form of physical gold.

This gives Gold ETFs twin advantage of security of gold investment in

combination with flexibility of the stock market, as they are traded on stock exchanges like stocks of any listed companies and can be traded continuously at market prices. Upon redemption of a Gold ETF, investors receive cash equivalent instead of possession of physical gold.

To take maximum advantage of flexibility and security that a Gold ETF has to offer, it is advisable to take some safeguards to achieve maximum returns. The first lookout for an investor is to choose a Gold ETF with lower expense ratio. Expense ratio is the yearly management fee charged by the fund houses, which is usually a percentage of the fund's assets under management (AUM) and is used by the fund house to cover their administrative, advertising and various other operational costs. A lower expense ratio is significant as it would eat less into the investors' returns and result in higher net returns for them, maintaining the cost-advantage of Gold ETFs when compared to storage costs and making charges of physical gold.



The second precaution for investors is to examine the tracking error.

Tracking error measures how closely the fund mirrors the underlying index or the commodity and how different is its performance from that of the benchmark. A low tracking error signifies how effectively the fund reflects the performance of the underlying asset and a high tracking error indicates a higher deviation. Tracking error is an extremely critical performance metric for investors due to a number of reasons. Firstly, it displays consistency of performance. A lower tracking error guarantees reliable

tracking of the actual price changes of physical gold. Secondly, low tracking error resonates the efficiency of the fund management. This metric can be used by investors to identify the Gold ETFs that have better performance and provide higher returns. Thirdly, lower tracking errors indicate lower costs incurred by the fund managers, thereby leaving higher returns for investors to enjoy.

Having many benefits, one cannot stress enough on the importance of tracking error. It is known that higher expense ratio and management fees can lead to deviation of the perfor-

mance of Gold ETFs from the underlying assets, i.e., physical gold. In addition, investors should also be aware of the cash holdings of a Gold ETF. Higher cash holdings again lead to deviation in their performances.

Since ETFs are similar to stocks, liquidity is an important metric. Higher the liquidity of a Gold ETF, lower is the performance deviation. Regular rebalancing the portfolios is an important aspect of any fund, and in doing so Gold ETFs incur costs associated with sales/purchase of physical gold. This again contributes to tracking error. Thirdly, like stocks and commodities, Gold ETFs are subject to market volatility. Since the underlying asset - physical gold - can be volatile due to geo-political conditions, economic and financial factors. Finally, while buying Gold ETFs, one should not forget to factor in the capital gains tax. Long-term capital gains, if held for more than 3 years, are taxed at 20 percent.

The investors, however can take the benefit of indexation. Short-term

capital gains as usual are added to income and taxed at applicable tax slab rate. So, it would be prudent to understand the implications of taxation before investing in Gold ETFs. For young and modern investors, investing in Gold ETFs is a modern and efficient way to invest in gold. For them, Gold ETFs provide a winning combination of traditional security of gold with the benefits of stock market investing. Using an approach of regular and disciplined investing through systematic investment plans (SIPs), young investors can take the advantage of rupee cost averaging and alleviate the impact of market volatility. With varied benefits and much needed flexibility, Gold ETFs can definitely substitute physical gold investment in one's portfolio. Young generation should take advantage of this modern approach to gold investing with a long-term perspective.

(The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal)

Passion is The Catalyst for a Fulfilling Life

RACHNA LAKHPATI

Passion is the powerful force that propels individuals towards their desired objectives, igniting ambition and providing unwavering determination in the face of life's challenges and uncertainties. When someone discovers a pursuit they are truly passionate about, they experience a distinct and unstoppable energy that drives them towards it and motivates them to achieve success. Many individuals find themselves trapped in monotonous routines that weigh them down.

Rise and shine, head to the office, wrap up your tasks, and return to the comfort of your home, only to repeat the routine the following day. Engaging in the same routine day after day can lead to feelings of sadness and discontentment when there is a lack of enthusiasm for



one's daily activities. Why bother doing something if it doesn't ignite your passion? I understand that not everyone has the opportunity to pursue their dream career.

Many individuals work tirelessly to establish sta-

bility in their lives, with some solely focused on providing for their basic needs. Even in such cases, it is important to prioritise and make time for activities that bring joy and fulfilment. Passion evokes a sense of joy, happiness,

and deep satisfaction that emanates from within. Consider my acquaintance, for example. She's immersed in the corporate world, tackling one of those challenging jobs that will provide financial stability but won't ignite her

passion. After a long day of work and on weekends, she dedicates her time to what truly brings her joy: baking.

She radiates enthusiasm as she describes the new recipes she's experimenting with or the joy she feels when she witnesses someone savouring the results of her hard work. It gives her a unique sense of thrill and personal fulfilment that her corporate job fails to deliver. Her unwavering passion keeps her spirits high and provides her with a daily source of motivation, even during the most challenging moments at work.

There's no need to leave your job and venture into uncharted territory abruptly. It's something so small that it can fit into your current routine. Perhaps dedicating a few hours each week to your hobby, taking learning classes, or developing a side hustle could be ben-

eficial. Even though these endeavours may seem modest, they can have a significant impact on your overall health and happiness.

Passion is essential for everyone to lead a fulfilling life, not just a select few. The sense of purpose and the excitement it brings are necessary for keeping our minds and hearts youthful and vibrant. So, if you have a strong passion for something, prioritise and dedicate time to it. You will achieve success by wholeheartedly embracing your pursuits. Indeed, the lengthy voyage can be quite exhausting. The rewards, however, of living a life fueled by passion are immeasurable. Ultimately, it all boils down to passion. Develop it, nourish it, and believe that it will guide you to a happy and prosperous life.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

Researchers identify potential treatment for a rare genetic disorder

AGENCIES
SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 8

A team of researchers from the US-based University of North Carolina has identified a potential treatment for a rare genetic disorder -- 'Angelman syndrome', a new study said on Monday.

Angelman syndrome is caused by mutations in the maternally inherited UBE3A gene and is characterised by poor muscle control, limited speech, epilepsy, and intellectual disabilities, explained researchers in the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

Ben Philpot, PhD, the Kenan Distinguished Professor at the UNC School of Medicine, and his lab have



identified a small molecule that could be safe, non-invasively delivered, and capable of 'turning on' the dormant paternally-inherited UBE3A gene copy brain-wide, which would lead to proper protein and cell function, amounting to a kind of gene therapy

for individuals with Angelman syndrome.

"This compound we identified has shown to have excellent uptake in the developing brains of animal models," said Philpot, who is a leading expert on Angelman syndrome.

As per researchers, UBE3A helps regulate the levels of important proteins; missing a working copy leads to severe disruptions in brain development.

The researchers screened over 2,800 small molecules to determine if one could potentially turn on paternal UBE3A in mouse models with Angelman syndrome.

They found that a compound -- (S)-PHA533533, which was previously developed as an anti-tumour agent, caused neurons to express a fluorescent glow that rivalled that induced by topotecan, meaning that its effect was potent enough to successfully turn on paternal UBE3A.

Researchers were able to confirm the same results using induced pluripotent stem cells derived from humans with Angelman syndrome, indicating that this compound has clinical potential, the study mentioned.

In addition, they observed that (S)-PHA533533 has excellent bioavailability in the developing brain, meaning it travels to its target with ease and sticks around.

"We were able to show that (S)-PHA533533 had better uptake and that the same small molecule could be translated in human-derived neural cells, which is a huge finding," said Hanna Vihma, PhD, and first author of the study.

Dengue cases surge past 7k, Karnataka minister outlines action plan

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 8

Karnataka is grappling with a surge in dengue cases, as over 7,000 positive cases have been recorded this year, according to the Commission of Health and Family Welfare Services.

The alarming rise has prompted swift action from health officials.

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao addressed the issue, emphasising the critical need for source reduction to curb the spread of dengue mosquitoes.

"We are monitoring it. The most important part is source reduction, to reduce the proliferation of the dengue mosquito," Rao stated.

He highlighted that recent rainfall has exacerbated the problem by



causing water stagnation, which creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes. In response, extensive spraying activities are being conducted in construction areas, schools, and other vulnerable spots.

Rao assured the public that treatment is readily available. "The treatment is available in government hospitals. For anyone who

requires any kind of IV fluids and platelets, it is available in government hospitals," he confirmed.

With the monsoon season in full swing, the health department is ramping up efforts to control the outbreak and ensure timely medical care for those affected. The public is urged to stay vigilant and take preventive measures to protect themselves from dengue.

It is ok to be fat, time to change our attitude: Indian-origin academic

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

It's time to rethink our attitude to fatness as prejudice against fat people is endemic in our society and public health initiatives aimed at reducing obesity have only worsened the problem, an Indian-origin academic said on Monday.

In her new book titled 'Why It's OK To Be Fat', Rekha Nath who is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alabama in the US, argued for a paradigm shift in how society approaches fatness.

"Being fat is seen as unattractive, even gross. We view fat as a sign of weakness, of greediness, of laziness," she wrote.

"And we have made the pursuit of thinness, bound up as it is with health, fitness, beauty, and discipline into a moralised endeavour: making the 'right' lifestyle choices to



avoid being fat is seen as a duty we each must fulfill," Nath added.

According to research cited in the book, global obesity rates have tripled during the past 50 years, while the World Health Organization has deemed childhood obesity "one of the most serious global public health challenges of the 21st century."

According to Nath, society must stop approaching fatness as a trait to rid the population of, and instead, approach it

through the lens of social equality, attending to the systematic ways that society penalises fat people for their body size.

Fat people are bullied and harassed. They receive worse healthcare, frequently at the hands of doctors and nurses who endorse harmful anti-fat stereotypes.

"Fat students are ridiculed and teased by classmates and even teachers. In the workplace, fat people experience rampant discrimination,

which is legal in most jurisdictions," the author emphasised.

Surveying a body of scientific research, Nath showed that diet and fitness may bear more on our health than weight alone.

For instance, a 2010 systematic review of 36 studies found that fit, obese individuals were less likely to die prematurely than unfit normal-weight individuals.

Nath also pointed to evidence that advice dispensed to fat people to lose excess weight -- eat less and move more -- is ineffective and can even be harmful.

"Numerous studies indicate that people who experience weight stigma are more likely to suffer depression and low self-esteem," she explained.

"It is OK to be fat because there's nothing wrong with being fat," she concluded.

Not all animal diseases are zoonotic: Animal Husbandry department

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Zoonoses are infectious diseases that can transfer between animals and humans, such as rabies, anthrax, influenza (H1N1 and H5N1), Nipah, Covid-19, brucellosis, and tuberculosis; however, not all diseases are 'zoonotic', said the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) on Sunday.

The department has organised an interactive session chaired by the Secretary of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (AHD) to observe the World Zoonoses Day

According to the Animal Husbandry Department, understanding which diseases are zoonotic is crucial for effective public health strategies and preventing unnecessary fear and stigmatisation of animals.

"Raising awareness



aids in early detection, prevention, and control, ultimately protecting public health. Educating the public about the distinction between zoonotic and non-zoonotic diseases helps reduce unwarranted fear and promotes a more informed approach to animal health and safety," said DAHD.

To mitigate the risk of zoonotic diseases, DAHD

has launched a nationwide campaign for Brucella vaccination of bovine calves under the National Animal Disease Control Programme and undertaken rabies vaccination under Assistance to States for Control of Animal Diseases.

The department said that it is also implementing a comprehensive nationwide surveillance plan for

economically important animal diseases.

Additionally, under the One Health approach, the National Joint Outbreak Response Team has been established, comprising experts from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, ICMR, DAHD, ICAR, and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

India has the largest livestock population, with 536 million livestock and 851 million poultry, which accounts for nearly 11 per cent and 18 per cent of the global livestock and poultry population, respectively.

India is the world's largest producer of milk and the second-largest producer of eggs.

World Zoonoses Day is celebrated in honour of Louis Pasteur, who administered the first successful rabies vaccine, a zoonotic disease, on July 6, 1885.

WHO's cancer agency's classification of talc as 'probably carcinogenic' notable development: Doc

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

The recent classification of talc as "probably carcinogenic to humans" by the World Health Organization's cancer agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), is a significant development in the ongoing debate about the safety of talc powder, Dr Salil Patkar, Consultant-Medical

Oncology, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi (Navi Mumbai), said on Sunday.

According to the doctor, the use of talc powder is widespread, and many people are unaware of the potential risks associated with it. "While the evidence is not yet conclusive, it is essential to err on the side of caution when it comes to public health," Patkar told IANS.

"The link between

talcum powder and ovarian cancer is plausible, as talc particles can travel through the reproductive system and cause inflammation and damage to the ovaries. This inflammation can increase the risk of cancer," he added.

The cancer agency classified talc as "probably carcinogenic to humans" on the basis of a combination of limited evidence for cancer in humans (for



ovarian cancer), sufficient evidence for cancer in experimental animals, and strong mechanistic evidence that talc exhibits key characteristics of carcinogens in human primary cells and experimental systems. According to the agency, numerous studies showed an increase in the incidence of ovarian cancer in humans self-reporting the use of body powder in the perineal

region. An increased rate of ovarian cancer was also observed in studies looking at occupational exposure of women exposed to talc in the pulp and paper industry, it added.

Patkar mentioned that it is crucial for individuals, especially women, to be aware of the potential risks associated with talc powder use.

"Alternative products,

such as cornstarch-based powders, can be used instead. Additionally, manufacturers should take responsibility for informing consumers about the potential risks and providing safer alternatives," he said. Based on the current evidence, the doctor suggested that it is essential to exercise caution and consider "the potential risks associated with talc powder use."

S. Korea expected to announce steps against defiant trainee doctors this week

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 8

The South Korean government is expected to announce measures to deal with trainee doctors who refuse to return to hospitals in protest of medical reform as early as this week, officials said on Sunday.

The government is set to announce its measures on the junior doctors, who have left their worksites since late February, as early as Monday, according to government officials.

Health Minister Cho Kyoo-hong earlier pledged to introduce such measures in early July, as hospitals need to prepare for the recruitment of new



junior doctors who will begin training in September, reports Yonhap News Agency.

The government has currently decided to halt the suspension of medical licences of those who

return to work.

As of Thursday, 1,104 junior doctors, or 8 per cent of 13,756 trainee doctors, were on duty at the country's 211 training hospitals, according to government data.

Trainee doctors have been on strike for nearly five months in protest against a hike in medical student admissions, the first such increase in 27 years, which was finalised in May.

The government initially instructed hospitals to not accept trainee doctors' resignations to prevent them from seeking other jobs but reversed this order in late June to normalise operations.

As the protracted walk-out by trainee doctors has shown little signs of ending, medical professors, who also serve as senior doctors at general hospitals, began staging walkouts and other forms of protest.

Anand Mahindra shares video of new tech detecting veins using infrared light

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra has shared a video on the social media platform X, showing a new technology detecting veins using infrared light.

"Using infrared light to locate veins. Saving the pain from repeated attempts to find a vein when drawing blood," he wrote.

Praising the technology, the Mahindra Group Chairman said that it's often the smallest, least glamorous inventions which "significantly improve our medical experience and hence, the quality of our lives".

Since being shared, the video has been viewed



over 680K times. A lot of users also shared their

thoughts in the comment section.

"This is brilliant and could prevent a lot of phobias. From personal experience, the practicality of this would have saved a number of traumas. Helps the professional and the patient," a user wrote.

"We need this Tech at local blood test centres; last year, my yearly check-up nurse did four punctures in my hands," another user said.

One more user mentioned, "This will be really helpful. My mom faces this challenge when we do blood tests for her and it requires an experienced person to identify the vein. This technology can enable a lot of people in the medical industry."

NEET-UG paper leak: SC asks Centre, NTA to initiate action against wrong beneficiaries, next hearing on July 11

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Asking the Centre and National Testing Agency (NTA) about the action initiated against the wrong beneficiaries in the NEET-UG examination held on May 5, the Supreme Court on Monday remarked that denial to the allegations of paper leak is only adding to the problem.

To decide if a re-test should be ordered in entirety, a bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud directed the NTA to make a full disclosure before the apex court regarding the nature of the paper leak, the places where leaks took place, and lag of time between the occurrence of the leak and the conduct of the examination.

The Bench, also com-



prising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, asked the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) to file a status report indicating the status of investigations and the material collected during the course of investigations. "The IO shall place the

material collected during the course of investigation when the leak is alleged to have taken place and when the leaked question paper was made available," it ordered. Further, the apex court said if feasible, it would utilise technology and law to

identify the beneficiary of wrongdoings, so 23 lakh students do not need to appear in re-exam.

The matter will be heard next on July 11.

In a preliminary affidavit filed before the top court last week, the Centre opposed the can-

cellation of the NEET-UG exam saying that scrapping the entire exam would seriously jeopardise the lakhs of honest candidates who attempted the question paper held on May 5.

The affidavit filed by the Union Ministry of Education said: "In the absence of any proof of any large-scale breach of confidentiality in a pan-India examination, it would not be rational to scrap the entire examination and the results already declared. It is submitted that in any examination, there are competing rights that have been created where-by the interests of a large number of students who have taken the examination without adopting any alleged unfair means must not also be jeop-

ardised." As regards the alleged instances of irregularities, including cheating, impersonation, and malpractices, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is undertaking an investigation and has taken over the cases registered in different states, it added. The issue relating to the grant of grace marks in the NEET-UG exam has already been closed by the Supreme Court after NTA submitted the scorecards of 1,563 candidates, who were awarded compensatory marks on account of the loss of time, had been withdrawn and cancelled. These candidates were given the option to appear in a re-test or may appear in counselling on the basis of actual marks obtained in the exam without normalisation.

You are not maharajas but public servants, contain dengue cases, Siddaramaiah tells DCs

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, JULY 8

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday lashed out at the state's Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), reminding them that they are not maharajas but public servants and warning them that if the spread of dengue cases is not contained, higher officers will also be held responsible for negligence and apathy.

Addressing the meeting of DCs and CEOs at the Conference Hall of the Vidhana Soudha here, he said: "If Deputy Commissioners feel that they are maharajas, development and progress are not possible. Both politicians and bureaucrats are public servants, and with this in mind, they should serve the people."

He said that the work on containing dengue cases should be taken up on a war footing and the DCs and District Health Officers (DHOs) must work in coordination with taluk-level officers and act swiftly. Until now, action has been initiated against lower-rung officers for negligence and apathy and from now on, action will be taken against senior officers, Siddaramaiah said.

"Many deaths were reported from the consumption of contaminated water. If these cases recur, action will be initiated against senior officers," he stressed. "Karnataka is a model state in good governance, and there is a responsibility on everyone to uphold this honour. I am receiving 15,000 to 20,000 petitions during public grievance meetings.

Goa CM rules out Cabinet reshuffle, says 'focusing on assembly session'

AGENCIES

PANAJI, JULY 8

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday ruled out possibilities of the Cabinet reshuffle stating he is focusing on the Assembly session commencing from July 15.

"At present, we are only focusing on the Assembly session. The reshuffle will not take place at this time," the Chief Minister said.

He said that during the meeting, they discussed the functioning of the Assembly session and tabling various bills.

"This meeting was purely for preparation of the Assembly session," the Chief Minister said.

He had held a meeting with ministers, BJP MLAs and other MLAs supporting his government. However, as three ministers left the meeting, there were speculations that they would be dropped from



the cabinet.

Last week many BJP MLAs and ministers, including the Chief Minister met central leaders in Delhi.

Speculations of a cabinet reshuffle to accommodate Congress turncoats, along with Goa Legislative Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar are rife in the state after the latter had in June said that he is ready to take on any new responsibility the party allocates him.

Congress turncoat

Digambar Kamat said that only the Chief Minister can speak about the Cabinet reshuffle.

There were also speculations that the Cabinet reshuffle will take place after Narendra Modi takes oath as Prime Minister for the third time.

In November 2023, Congress turncoat Aleixo Sequeira was sworn in as a minister after the then PWD Minister Nilesh Cabral resigned to make way for him. Since then,

speculations of a Cabinet reshuffle to accommodate more Congress turncoats like former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat, MLA Michael Lobo and MLA Sankalp Amonkar, along with senior BJP leader Ramesh Tawadkar have been rife.

Except for Digambar Kamat and Michael Lobo, the BJP government has given key positions to six other defectors in various corporations, however, Sankalp Amonkar has not taken charge of his position as reportedly he was assured the Cabinet berth before joining the BJP.

On September 14, 2022, Aleixo Sequeira along with former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat, Michael Lobo, Delilah Lobo, Kedar Naik, Sankalp Amonkar, Rajesh Faldesai and Rudolf Fernandes joined the BJP, reducing Congress to three MLAs in the 40-member Assembly House.

CM to Oppn: Don't do politics on water logging in Mumbai, priority is to conduct rescue operation

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 8

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday asked the Opposition not to do politics on water logging in Mumbai due to heavy rains as it is the time to conduct relief operations and rescue those trapped in the water logging.

Shinde, who visited the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation control room, said that BMC, Railway Department, Disaster Management Department and NDRF teams are working in close coordination to carry out necessary measures to drain the water from the water-logged places in Mumbai.

Shinde said that schools have been closed as a safety measure. He appealed to the citizens not to venture out of their homes unnecessarily as the weather bureau has announced an Orange Alert at the Konkan coast for the next 24 hours.

He said, "BMC will soon start 7 pumping stations including Morgan and Mahul pumping stations to drain out water and the carrying capacity of Mithi and Poisar rivers will be increased. BMC will also put flood gates so during high tide the



sea water would not flow into the rivers."

"BMC has taken action against encroachments in these areas. There is a need to widen the rivers and canals. BMC will take up these works soon. BMC is going to install pumps and floodgates at various places so that water gathered after the heavy rains can be drained into the sea. Due to floodgates, seawater will not enter the city, even during high tide," added Shinde.

He further stated that BMC has

constructed holding tanks at Hindmata and Milan Subway which has helped to address the issue of water logging in these areas. He added such holding tanks will be constructed elsewhere too. Besides, the micro tunnelling done below the railway tracks has been instrumental in tackling the water logging.

Shinde said that heavy rains were also reported in the coastal districts adding that he has reviewed the situation from the state Disaster Management Control room.

Six guarantees inspired by YSR, says Revanth Reddy

AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, JULY 8

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Monday that the six guarantees announced by the Congress party in Assembly elections were inspired by former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR).

He paid rich tributes to the late Congress leader on his 75th birth anniversary celebrations held at Gandhi Bhavan, the headquarters of Telangana Congress.

The Chief Minister said that his government's plans for the Musi Riverfront Development project, Metro Rail, Krishna and Godavari waters and attracting investments in Hyderabad were all inspired by YSR.

Revanth Reddy stated that YSR's Padayatra also influenced Rahul Gandhi to embark on his Bharat Jodo Yatra. He recalled that the departed senior leader's yatra helped bring Congress to power in united Andhra Pradesh. He claimed that Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo yatra was instrumental in Congress coming to power in Telangana, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh.

The Chief Minister recalled that after coming to power for a second consecutive term in 2009, YSR wanted to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister. "YSR left us even before Rahul Gandhi ascended to the PM's post. With the inspiration of YSR, all the Congress workers should strive hard to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minis-



ter," he said.

Asserting that Rahul Gandhi is already working hard as the Leader of Opposition, Revanth Reddy claimed that he is just one step away from assuming the PM's post. He remarked that the country will develop only under the leadership of

Rahul Gandhi.

He said all Congress workers should take oath to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister. "Posts and positions are not important for Rahul Gandhi. The Congress leader would have become the PM in 2004 and 2014," he said, adding that the entire country was waiting for Rahul Gandhi to become the PM.

Revanth Reddy said that the development that took place during the YSR regime is most useful for Telangana.

"YSR is synonymous with welfare and the entire country remembers the great leader," he said and urged all the political parties and leaders to implement the welfare schemes launched by YSR.

He mentioned that

he took charge as TPC President on July 7, 2021. He claimed that despite facing numerous hurdles in three years, he brought the party to power in Telangana.

Earlier, the Chief Minister inaugurated a photo exhibition on YSR at Praja Bhavan. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, AICC in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi, former MP K. V. P. Ramachandra Rao, senior leaders Madhu Yaskhi, Mohammed Ali Shabbir and other leaders were present.

The Chief Minister also garlanded the statue of YSR at Panjagutta in the heart of the city and paid tributes to the leader, who had served as Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh between 2004 and 2009.

Yogi govt to nurture 948 heritage trees in UP

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, JULY 8

As part of its decision to preserve the state's cultural heritage, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh will nurture 948 heritage trees through the Heritage Tree Adoption Scheme.

As many as 28 species of trees that are more than 100 years old have been designated as "heritage trees."

These trees are spread over all the 75 districts of the state. There are a maximum of 99 heritage trees in Varanasi, 53 in Prayagraj, 37 in Hardoi, 35 in Ghazipur, and 34 in Unnao. The Yogi government is raising awareness among the general public by conserving the endangered tree species and trees connected to mythological/historical events, special people, monuments, religious traditions, and beliefs.

Guidelines have been given for the selection and documentation of heritage trees by the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.

A government Spokesperson said that a 'Heritage Tree Garden' will also be developed to grow saplings of these trees.

More than 100-year-old trees, belong-

ing to 28 species, and situated in non-forest areas (community land) have been designated as 'heritage trees' by the Uttar Pradesh State Biodiversity Board.

These include Aru, Arjun, Mango, Tamarind, Kaim, Kareel, Kusum, Khirmi, Shami, Gamhar, Gular, Chitwan, Chilbil, Jamun, Neem, Adansonia, Pakad, Peepal, Peelu, Banyan, Mahua, Mahogany, Mysore Banyan, Sheesham, Sal, Semal, Haldu and Tumul.

There are 422 Peepal and 363 Banyan trees. The heritage tree category includes trees related to the spiritual and freedom movement. In Gorakhpur, the hometown of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, 19 trees have been designated as heritage trees.

It also includes, mother trees of Dussehri and Langra mangoes in Lucknow and Varanasi, Bachan Imli in Fatehpur, Imli tree in Imlitala temple complex in Mathura, Karil tree in Pratapgarh, Adansonia tree in Barabanki, Pakad tree in Hapur and Sant Kabir Nagar, Bodhi tree of Sarnath, Peepal tree of Ambedkar Nagar, famous as Baba Jharkhand and Peepal tree associated with freedom movement at Ordinance Cloth Factory Shahjahanpur.

K'taka: I am still with BJP, says expelled party leader Eshwarappa

AGENCIES

SHIVAMOGGA, (KARNATAKA) JULY 8

Expelled senior BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa on Monday claimed that he was still with the BJP.

Speaking to reporters in Shivamogga, Eshwarappa continued his attack on the BJP Central Parliamentary Committee Member B.S. Yediyurappa and his son, party state president B.Y. Vijayendra. He stated "It is wrong that the party

reins are held by the father and son duo. I had contested the Lok Sabha election with the intention of getting justice for Hindu activists and Hindutva."

"I am planning to organize the Rayanna Brigade in the future but a decision has not been made yet," he added. Eshwarappa had contested against Yediyurappa's son B.Y. Raghavendra in the general election as an independent candidate and managed to get 30,050 votes. Raghav-

endra won the election with a margin of 2.43 lakh votes.

Commenting on Rahul Gandhi's recent speech in Parliament, Eshwarappa stated that no one dared to criticise the Hindu community earlier.

Now, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi is targeting the Hindu religion. He has caused pain to Hindus. Rahul Gandhi must conduct himself in a dignified manner befitting his position failing which

the entire Hindu community will turn against him.

Talking about the Valmiki tribal welfare board scam, Eshwarappa stated, the scam has caught the attention of the nation. In spite of this, the board chairman has not resigned.

Former Minister B. Nagendra, who resigned following the scam coming to light and board chairman, Congress MLA Basavaraja Daddal should be arrested immediately.

Telangana CM pays rich tributes to Rajasekhara Reddy on his 75th birth anniversary

AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, JULY 8

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy paid rich tributes to former Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy (affectionately known as YSR) on the occasion of his 75th birth anniversary celebrations held at Gandhi Bhavan here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that YSR is the inspiration behind the six

guarantees of the Congress party.

He highlighted that YSR's rule symbolizes welfare in the country and his legacy is strongly imprinted in the hearts of the poor.

Revanth Reddy stated that his (YSR) aim was to make Congress leader Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister of the country.

He emphasized that the inspiration for Rahul's padayatra (foot march) was YSR's paday-

atra, which also played a crucial role in Congress coming to power in Telangana.

Reddy noted that Rahul is excelling as the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha and is one step away from becoming the Prime Minister, which he believes is a historical necessity.

The Chief Minister asserted that the true successors of YSR are those who work hard to make Rahul Gandhi the

Prime Minister. He added that those who go against Rahul Gandhi's leadership are not the descendants of YSR.

On the occasion, Reddy also inaugurated a photo exhibition of YSR.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Minister Sridhar Babu, AICC In-charge Deepa Das Munshi, former Rajya Sabha MP K V P Ramachandra Rao, MLAs, MLCs, and party leaders were present at the event.

French President Macron rejects his PM Attal's resignation

AGENCIES
PARIS, JULY 8

French President Emmanuel Macron rejected Prime Minister Gabriel Attal's resignation on Monday after the ruling party failed to secure a majority in the snap legislative elections, French news channel BFMTV reported.

Macron has asked Attal to remain as prime minister "for the moment" to ensure the country's stability, BFMTV reported, citing the presidential office, the Elysee, reports Xinhua news agency.

In the two rounds of legislative elections held on June 30 and July 7, Macron's centrist coalition finished second with 163 seats, trailing the left-wing parties' alliance, the New Popular Front (NFP), which secured a relative majority with 182 seats in the 577-member National Assembly.

The French president announced the dissolution of the National Assembly on June 9 and called for new legislative elections after his Renaissance party coalition suffered a heavy defeat in the European Parliament elections.

Downpours affect expressways, flights in China

AGENCIES
BEIJING, JULY 8

Downpours lasting from Sunday noon to Monday morning have delayed flights and closed expressways in central China's Henan Province.

Rainfall has been heaviest in western and north-central parts of Henan, including its capital city of Zhengzhou, with precipitation reaching as high as 145 mm, reports Xinhua news agency, citing local meteorological authorities.

As of 8 a.m. on Monday, entrances to the Zhengzhou-Shaolin Temple Expressway and Zhengzhou Ring Expressway were closed because of heavy rainfall. A flight from Changchun in northeast China's Jilin Province to Zhengzhou was cancelled, while five other domestic flights were delayed due to the weather.

The provincial Department of Transport has been publicising weather and road information via social media, radio broadcasts, television and roadside electronic screens and has prepared disaster relief materials such as sandbags in advance at places prone to landslides, rock-mud flows and collapse.

Nearly 550 emergency response teams consisting of about 30,000 people were formed. In addition, more than 8,000 vehicles, 283 vessels and 2,711 large rescue equipment items, including cranes, bulldozers and excavating machinery, as well as emergency equipment like water pumps and alternators, have been made available in order to cope with extreme situations such as power failures.

Vast parts of the country have experienced persistent heavy rains since the flood season began. In Dongting Lake, China's second-largest freshwater lake, a breach in the dike since Friday has forced the evacuation of at least 7,000 residents.

Philippine troops kill two suspected rebels in clash

AGENCIES
MANILA, JULY 8

Philippine troops killed two suspected rebels in a clash early Monday in Masbate province, southeast of Manila, a spokesperson for the Philippine military said.

Major Frank Roldan of the Philippine Army said the two New People's Army (NPA) insurgents were killed in a 15-minute fighting that broke out before 7 a.m. local time in Esperanza town, reports Xinhua news agency.

He added that four rebels fled the encounter site, leaving behind their dead companies.

The troops recovered an M653 rifle, a calibre 38 revolver, and other personal belongings of the rebels. No government soldier was killed or wounded in the clash.

NPA rebels have been fighting the government troops since 1969. Despite the decreasing number of fighters, NPA rebels concentrate their attacks on rural areas and have skirmishes with the military.

Military data showed that the NPA's personnel strength has declined since its peak of around 25,000 armed members in the 1980s.

Thwarted Ukrainian attempt to hijack Tu-22M3 strategic bomber: Russia

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, JULY 8

Russia stopped an attempt by the Ukrainian special services to organise a hijack of a Russian Tu-22M3 strategic bomber abroad, local media reported on Monday, citing Federal Security Service (FSB).

TASS news agency quoted an FSB statement as saying that the agency also found the involvement of NATO special services in preparing and implementing the operation.

The Ukrainian intelligence planned to recruit a Russian military pilot for a monetary reward and the promise of Italian citizenship to persuade him to fly and land the missile carrier in Ukraine, reports Xinhua news agency, citing the FSB statement.

During the operation, the Russian counterintelligence also received information that helped to deliver a fire strike at a Ukrainian air base, it said.

The Tu-22M3 is a long-range supersonic missile carrier bomber with variable-sweep wings designed to strike sea and land targets with guided missiles and bombs. It can carry both nuclear and conventional bombs and missiles.

PM Modi arrives in Moscow, to meet Russian President in evening

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, JULY 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Moscow Monday afternoon, kicking off a two-day visit to Russia -- his first to the country since 2019 and first to its capital after 2015.

"I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with my friend President Vladimir Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues," PM Modi said in his departure statement before leaving New Delhi.

He spotlighted that the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia has advanced over the past 10 years, including in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment, health, education, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Prime Minister Modi last visited Russia for the 20th India-Russia Bilateral Summit held on the sidelines of the 5th Eastern Economic Summit -- where he was the guest of honour -- at Vladivostok in September 2019.

A lot has changed in the region since then, especially after the start of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022. However, the India-Russia Special and Privileged Partnership has remained resilient in the wake of multiple geopolitical challenges that the world has been facing.

New Delhi has maintained a steady relationship with Moscow even as PM Modi repeatedly asserted that no solution can ever be arrived at the cost of human lives and that escalation of hostilities and violence is in no one's interest.



"We seek to play a supportive role for a peaceful and stable region," mentioned PM's departure statement on Monday.

With the Russian President hosting a private dinner for Prime Minister Modi later in the evening, the two leaders are expected to discuss a range of issues of regional and global importance of mutual interest.

On Tuesday, PM Modi will interact with the vibrant Indian community in Russia, lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Kremlin and thereafter visit the Rosatom pavilion at an exhibition venue in Moscow.

These engagements will be followed by a restricted-level talk between PM Modi and President Putin, which will then be followed by delegation-level talks.

"The issue of early dis-

charge of Indian nationals who have been misled into the service of the Russian army is also expected to figure in the discussions. Other areas of interest would also include cooperation across the range of areas," Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said last week.

He highlighted that the India-Russia bilateral trade has seen a sharp increase in 2023-24 and has since touched close to \$65 billion, primarily due to strong energy cooperation between the two countries.

"We also have growing investment ties between the two countries, including in the field of energy, banking, railways, and steel.

These are the growing areas of our investment partnership. Russia also remains an important

partner for India's energy security and defence. In the area of nuclear energy, Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant units 1 and 2 have already become operational. And the work is progressing on units 3 and 6," said the Indian Foreign Secretary.

All eyes will also be focused on the growing defence cooperation between the two countries as they continue to work closely across a full range of its sub-domains.

"Both sides are currently working on a series of outcome documents, which would be the result of the summit," Kwatra stated last week.

After concluding his Moscow visit, PM Modi will travel to Austria on Tuesday which will be the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in 41 years.

Record-breaking heat wave grips western US, triggering wildfires, evacuations

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES, JULY 8

A persistent heat wave is shattering temperature records across the Western United States, putting millions of people under extreme heat warnings and fueling dangerous wildfires that forced evacuations in several states.

Nearly 75 million people, primarily in the West, are under some form of extreme heat advisory on Sunday as a powerful heat dome hovers over the region, according to the National Weather Service, which has issued excessive heat warnings stretching from Arizona and Nevada through California and northward into Oregon and Washington, reports Xinhua news agency.

On Sunday, Las Vegas, Nevada, experienced a new all-time high temperature of 48.9 degrees Celsius, surpassing its previous record by three degrees, the National Weather Service Las Vegas said in a post on social media X, formerly Twitter. The record was officially recorded at Harry Reid International Airport.

California's Death Valley, known for its extreme temperatures, reached 53.9 degrees Celsius on Sunday. The day before, a high temperature of 53.3 degrees Celsius was recorded at Death Valley National Park, where a visitor died from heat exposure and another was hospitalised for severe heat-related illness, according to a report by NBC News.

Other cities across the region also saw their record books rewritten. Palm Springs, California, reached a blistering 51.1 degrees Celsius on Friday, the hottest temperature ever recorded in the town. This surpassed the previous record of 50.6 degrees Celsius, set four times before, most recently in 2021.

The extreme temperatures are not limited to desert areas.

Sacramento, California's capital, has experienced temperatures over 40.6 degrees Celsius for three consecutive days, while inland areas of Monterey County, typically cooled by the nearby Pacific Ocean, have seen temperatures soar well

over 43.3 degrees Celsius.

The extreme heat was fueled by a strong ridge of high pressure parked over Central California. This weather pattern prevents hot air near the surface from rising higher in the atmosphere, effectively trapping the heat and creating a "heat dome" effect.

As the region swelters, the risk of wildfires has dramatically increased. Officials across Western states warned that the combination of extreme heat and winds had spawned many new wildfires in the past week.

One significant blaze, the French Fire in Mariposa County, California, began on Thursday near Yosemite National Park. By Sunday night, it had burned through 908 acres (3.67 square kilometers) and was 55 per cent contained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

In California's Santa Barbara County, firefighters are battling the Lake Fire, which exploded over the weekend to more than 13,000 acres. As of Sunday morning, it was only 8 per cent contained. The blaze is threatening homes in the area, including Michael Jackson's former Neverland Ranch.

Further north, crews are combating the Royal Fire, which burned in the Tahoe National Forest Sunday night. Forest service officials have reported that the fire was located in remote and rugged terrain, presenting significant challenges for firefighting operations.

The heat wave and associated wildfires have prompted evacuations in multiple counties across California, including Santa Barbara, Placer, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Fresno and Butte counties.

As the heat wave continues, authorities are continuing to urge residents to take precautions. These include staying adequately hydrated, minimising outdoor activities during the hottest times of the day, and never leaving children or pets unattended in vehicles.

Climate experts warned that extreme heat events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity due to climate change.

Russian envoy voices hope for better relations with South Korea despite soured ties

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 8

Russia hopes to maintain "safe lines" in its bilateral relations with South Korea and work to improve ties despite the current chill, its top envoy to Seoul said on Monday.

Russian Ambassador Georgy Zinoviev made the remarks at a Seoul event marking the shared history of the two countries, throughout which he noted Russia has been a neighbour that has worked to act in consideration of South Korea's interests, reports Yonhap news agency.

"Our country was a genuinely interested in Korea's autonomy and independence. Russia continuously pursued this line after establishing de facto diplomatic relations," Zinoviev said at the opening ceremony of an exhibition marking the 140th anniversary of the signing of the first bilateral treaty.

"Russia did not act

against Korea's interests, instead it tried to defend them in every possible way," he said.

Zinoviev's remarks came at a time when Seoul-Moscow relations remain frayed over Moscow's tightening relationship with North Korea, with a focus on military cooperation.

The bilateral ties further chilled after Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to Pyongyang last month for talks with the North's leader Kim Jong-un, during which they signed a treaty pledging mutual military assistance in case of an armed attack on either of them.

"We hope that our relations will maintain the safe lines and develop in a better direction," he said, adding that he is making every effort to create positive momentum.

Zinoviev accused the West of "discrediting" his country in the wrong way, as they have been so in history, calling for

an "objective" view of the present for the future of the bilateral ties.

"We witness attempts to discredit Russia, present its actions in a false light," he said, confirming afterwards that he meant the Western media and politicians.

"Sometime in the future, we could see more of an objective view on Russia's actions, both in the past and in the present," Zinoviev said.

The exhibition, co-hosted by the Russian Embassy in Seoul, features historical materials and archives related to Korea-Russia relations between the late 19th and early 20th century, including reproduced paintings by Jang Seung-eop, a renowned Korean painter from the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910).

The two paintings, unveiled to the public for the first time, are part of his artwork that Joseon's King Gojong presented to then-Russian Emperor Nicholas II for his coronation in 1896.

Another Mongolian opposition party accepts ruling party's proposal for coalition



AGENCIES
ULAN BATOR, JULY 8

Another Mongolian opposition party, the Hun Party, announced on Monday that it has agreed to form a coalition government with the ruling Mongolian People's Party (MPP).

"People may wonder why we, the opposition, are choosing to form a coalition government with the ruling party. We aim to foster a culture of stability and collaborative governance," Togmid Dorjkhand, Chairman of the Hun Party, said in a statement, reports Xinhua news agency.

"However, we will engage in debates at the parliament level. At the

government level, the Hun Party accepts the proposal to form a coalition government, emphasising the need to move beyond partisan bickering and advance the country's major projects."

The MPP secured a narrow margin of victory in the parliamentary elections held on June 28, winning 68 of the 126 seats up for grabs, while the Democratic Party (DP) obtained 42 seats.

The Hun Party secured eight seats, with the Civil Will-Green Party and the National Coalition each securing four seats.

The ruling party has proposed the formation of a coalition government with the main opposition:

the Democratic Party and the Hun Party.

On Sunday, the DP announced that it had accepted the ruling party's proposal to form a coalition government.

In May 2023, the Asian country's parliament, also known as the State Great Khural, passed amendments increasing the number of legislators from 76 to 126.

The elections were conducted under a mixed electoral system, with 78 legislators elected through majority representation and 48 through proportional representation.

The Asian country's parliament operates under a unicameral system with a four-year term.

Indian economy among the few where investment rates rose between 2015-2023: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

The Indian economy is among the few in the region where investment rates rose between 2015 and 2023, a report showed on Monday.

The broad narrative around the pick-up in the investment upcycle is that it is driven mostly by the public sector, led by the Central government, according to a research note by DBS Bank.

According to Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, and Daisy Sharma, Data



Analytics, DBS Bank, the private sector has led the pickup in capital formation post-pandemic, driven by households.

"Overall gross capital

formation (GCF) rose to 33 per cent of nominal GDP in FY24, better than in recent years but still lower than a decade ago," the report mentioned.

Digging deeper, the composition of investments showed that the share of the public sector in GCF was at 22 per cent in FY23, with the rest accounted for by the private sector - corporates and households - making up the bulk of the overall GCF. Within the private sector, households led the pack with a 40 per cent share in FY23, followed by non-financial corporates at 37 per cent.

"Household investments rose to the highest in a decade in FY23 and, alongside corporates, totalling 25 per cent of GDP. Public sector financial as well as non-financial entities and general government comprise the rest 7 per cent of GDP," read the note.

According to the note, dwellings and buildings have been at the forefront, also reflecting higher public sector participation.

"An upturn in machinery and equipment is a work in progress. We see similar stirrings in the sectoral breakdown as well. Lastly, we construct a multivariate regression model to gauge the drivers and outlook of gross fixed investments," said Rao.

Microsoft rolls out spellcheck, autocorrect for Notepad users in Windows 11

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

In good news for Notepad users, Microsoft has rolled out spellcheck and autocorrect in the Notepad app in Windows 11 - 40 years after the text editor was first introduced in Windows in 1983.

The tech giant started testing both features in March. According to multiple reports, it has now quietly begun rolling out both the features for Windows 11 users.

The spellcheck feature is nearly identical to how Word or Microsoft Edge highlight misspelled



words, with a red underline to show errors.

The users can enable or disable spellcheck on a file type basis in Notepad for Windows 11. Microsoft has been adding new features to its Notepad app for Windows 11.

Notepad now offers character count, dark

mode, tabs, Copilot integration, and even a virtual fidget spinner.

In December last year, Notepad app on Windows 11 received a character count feature at the bottom, similar to how Microsoft Word counts the number of words in a document.

Ducati launches new motorcycle at Rs 16.5 lakh in India

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Luxury motorcycle brand Ducati, on Monday, launched a new motorcycle - Hypermotard 698 Mono at Rs 16,50,000 (ex-showroom) in India.

The deliveries of the motorcycle will begin by the end of July.

"Ducati's engineering prowess is on full display with the world's most powerful single-cylinder

engine, a masterpiece of performance that delivers exhilarating power with every twist of the throttle," Bipul Chandra, MD, Ducati India, said in a statement.

Sporting a quintessential Ducati style, the Hypermotard 698 Mono boasts a Supermotard racing aesthetic and a design language that makes the Mono compact, aggressive, sporty, and fun-to-ride motorcycle, the company said.

Two-wheeler industry to sustain steady volume growth rate of up to 9 pc in FY25: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Two-wheeler industry is expected to sustain a steady volume growth rate of around 7 to 9 per cent in FY25, considering both domestic and export markets, a new report said on Monday.

The growth in FY25 is expected to be driven by higher electric vehicle (EV) sales supported by the government's Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024, according to the knowledge-based analytical group CareEdge

Ratings. "Post-covid, sales volume of two-wheelers had consistently declined during FY20, FY21 & FY22 before starting to recover from FY23, with sales momentum continuing in FY24 as well," said Hardik Shah, Director at CareEdge Ratings.

In FY23, the two-wheeler industry recorded sales of 19.51 million units, an 8 per cent growth compared to the previous fiscal year's 18.01 million units.

In FY24, the industry continued its upward trajectory, achieving 9.8 per



cent growth with a total sales volume of 21.43 million units.

However, this was short of the peak sales volume recorded in FY19 when

annual sales volume had reached 24.46 million units, according to the report.

During FY24, the domestic two-wheeler

industry witnessed a total sales volume of 17.97 million units, reflecting a growth rate of 13 per cent, while the export volume experienced a decline of 5 per cent though recovered from FY23.

The overall volume growth in FY23 and FY24 was supported by the increasing demand for EVs.

In FY23, EV sales reached about 0.73 million units, accounting for 4.54 per cent of total two-wheeler sales, reflecting a remarkable year-on-year growth of 188

per cent. Continuing the positive trend, EV sales grew by around 30 per cent in FY24 surpassing volume of 0.94 million units.

Segment-wise, motorcycles have dominated the market, contributing to the majority of the two-wheeler sales - while sales volumes of motorcycles grew by 8 per cent in FY24 that of scooters grew by 13 per cent during the year, the report mentioned.

This segment-wise growth trend is expected to continue in FY25.

PLI scheme for ACs & LED lights to further push 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' goal: Industry

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Industry players on Monday welcomed the Centre's decision to reopen the application window for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods (ACs and LED lights), saying it will further push Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' goal by driving India's growth and creating jobs.

The application window for the scheme will remain open from July 15 to October 12.

So far, 66 applicants with committed investments of Rs 6,962 crore have been selected as beneficiaries under the PLI scheme.

Daikin, Voltas, Hindalco, Amber, PG Technoplast, Epack, Mettube,



LG, Blue Star, Johnson Hitachi, Panasonic, Haier, Midea, Havells, and Lucas are among the companies manufacturing components of ACs.

Avneet Singh Marwah, CEO of Super Plastronics Pvt Ltd (SPPL) told IANS that expanding PLI

schemes to include smart TVs, ACs, refrigerators and washing machines "is essential to foster broader market growth and enhance manufacturing capabilities".

"India's contribution of \$3.7 trillion to the global economy, within a total

of \$100 trillion, coupled with its largest population of young individuals, presents substantial untapped potential. To unlock this potential, it is crucial for the government to drive local production and stimulate consumption," he added.

The Cabinet had given approval for the PLI scheme for White Goods for the manufacture of components and sub-assemblies of ACs and LED lights in 2021. The scheme is to be implemented over a seven-year period, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2028-29 and has an outlay of Rs. 6,238 crore.

In manufacturing components of LED lights, there have been investments by companies like Dixon, RK Lighting, Crompton Greaves, Stove Kraft, Chenfeng, Luker and Fulham etc.

Accenture acquires Bengaluru-based chip design services provider Excelmax

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 8

Global IT services firm Accenture on Monday said it has acquired Excelmax Technologies, a Bengaluru-based semiconductor design services provider, for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition will enhance Accenture's growing silicon design and engineering capabilities, the company said in a statement.

Excelmax provides custom silicon solutions used in consumer devices, data centres, artificial intelligence (AI) and computational platforms that enable edge AI deployments, to clients in the automotive, telecommunications and high-tech industries.

Karthik Narain, group chief executive-Technology at Accenture, said that



the acquisition of Excelmax "enhances our expertise across every aspect of silicon design and development - from concept to production - so we can help our clients fuel innovation and drive growth."

Founded in 2019, Excelmax will add approxi-

been on developing the best talent to deliver tailor-made solutions for our global clients that help them build and maintain competitive advantage," said Shekhar Patil, Founder and CEO, Excelmax Technologies.

"Joining Accenture enables us to remain at the forefront of innovation, providing new and exciting opportunities for both our clients and our people," he added.

The semiconductor market is experiencing a surge in demand for silicon design engineering, driven by the proliferation of data centers and the increasing use of AI and edge computing.

This acquisition by Accenture follows the addition of XtremeEDA, a Canada-based silicon design services company, in 2022.

73 pc Indian firms plan to use GenAI to enhance security measures: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

About 73 per cent of Indian organisations plan to harness generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) within the next 12 months to enhance security measures and align IT objectives with broader business goals, a new report said on Monday.

However, only 8 per cent of organisations showed high confidence in effectively implementing GenAI technologies, according to the exposure management company Tenable.

"Despite the rise of AI, many Indian businesses are still developing their technology maturity and often lack the resources or skills needed to properly create, train, and implement AI, as well as maintain high standards of data governance," said Nigel Ng, Senior VP, Tenable APJ.

The report surveyed 826 IT and cybersecurity professionals, including 52 Indian respondents conducted in October 2023.

Moreover, the report identified two major challenges hindering Indian organisations from utilising or optimising AI technologies - a lack of technological maturity (71 per cent) and uncertainty about the applicability of AI within their operations (54 per cent).

An aspect of concern highlighted by the report was the perception of GenAI as a greater security threat than an opportunity among 40 per cent of Indian organisations.

Internal misuse of GenAI emerged as a major concern, with 67 per cent expressing worry about potential misuse within their organisations. Additionally, 60 per cent said that providing sensi-

tive data to open-source GenAI puts them at risk of intellectual property theft.

Despite facing significant challenges in adopting AI technologies, cybersecurity and IT leaders in India were optimistic about the potential benefits of GenAI.

Around 31 per cent believe GenAI can enhance preventive threat response, 42 per cent think it can automate security measures, and 40 per cent feel it can improve actionability, according to the report.

"The future holds great promise in leveraging GenAI's evolutionary capabilities for preventive cybersecurity measures. This shift moves the needle on merging IT and security objectives and places importance on prioritising AI governance and using the technology responsibly," Ng said.

July begins with healthy rainfall, sowing status better than last year: Report



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

Signalling a normal monsoon ahead, The cumulative rainfall reached 1 per cent above the long-term average (as on July 6) while weekly rainfall (as on July 3) was 32 per cent above the long-term average in the country, a report showed on Monday.

Spatial divergence has reduced with most of the country receiving healthy

rains during the last week. North and West India (3 per cent), Central India (-6 per cent), East and North East India (0 per cent), and the southern peninsula (13 per cent) have now all had normal rains so far, according to the report by Emkay Global Financial Services.

"With June having ended in deficit, it is imperative that July sees healthy rainfall and the month has begun on a

promising note," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, Emkay Global Financial Services.

While sowing was delayed, it has now picked up and is better than last year.

"Total area under sowing (24.1 million hectare), as on June 28, is sharply higher (33 per cent YoY) than last year. This is mainly due to accelerated sowing of pulses and oilseeds," the report noted. Rice sowing area is the same as last year thus far whereas sugarcane is better. Among non-food crops, cotton sowing is much higher.

Overall area under sowing is at 22 per cent of normal area sown, compared with 18.6 per cent at the same point in 2023.

"July is extremely important in this regard with nearly 80 per cent of sowing activity completed by the end of the month," said Arora.

Tata Motors Group clocks 2 pc growth in global wholesales in April-June quarter



AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 8

The global wholesales of Tata Motors Group, including Jaguar Land Rover, reached 3,29,847 vehicles in the April-June quarter of the current fiscal (FY25), up 2 per cent compared to Q1 FY24, the company said on Monday.

Global wholesales of all Tata Motors' commercial vehicles and Tata Daewoo range in Q1 FY25 were at 93,410, higher by 6 per

cent over Q1 FY24. The company recorded global wholesales of passenger vehicles (including electric vehicles) at 138,682, lower by 1 per cent.

Jaguar Land Rover saw 97,755 vehicles being sold, higher by 5 per cent.

"Jaguar wholesales for the quarter were 8,227 vehicles, while Land Rover wholesales for the quarter were 89,528 vehicles," according to the company.

Indian men's hockey contingent departs with the 2024 Paris Olympics in sight

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 8

The Indian men's hockey team left for Switzerland on Monday, and following three days designed to instill mental toughness, the team will move to the Netherlands to play practice matches. After completing this final block of training the team is scheduled to arrive in the City of Lights on July 20.

"We just completed a gruelling two-week camp in SAI, Bengaluru and after a short detour in Switzerland with Mike Horn, who is reputed for his extreme adventures that conquer his fears, the team will play some practice matches against the Netherlands and Malaysia to ensure we are in the best state of mind and body before we begin our Olympic journey. The



team is in high spirits and is looking forward to the final block of training," the Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said before the team's departure.

India will begin their Paris 2024 Olympics journey, in Pool B, with a match against New Zealand on July 27, followed by a match against Argen-

tina on July 29. They will then face Ireland and Belgium on July 30 and August 1, respectively, with their final group stage game against Australia on August 2. A top-4 finish will ensure that India advances to the knockout stages.

"The team has prepared well so far, we identified areas that needed improvement from the

London and Antwerp stages of FIH Pro League 2023/24 and worked on it in the training camp in SAI Bengaluru.

The best teams in the world will take part in the Paris 2024 Olympics but this squad is ready to seize the opportunity and bring glory to India. We are confident in our abilities and excited about the journey

ahead," added vice-captain Hardik Singh.

India has historically been a force to reckon with in hockey and has won 12 medals to date which include 8 gold, 1 silver, and 3 bronze medals.

Indian men's hockey team for the Paris 2024 Olympics:

Goalkeeper: Sreejesh P.R

Defenders: Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay

Midfielders: Rajkumar Pal, Shamsher Singh, Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad

Forwards: Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh

Reserve players: Nilakanta Sharma, Jugraj Singh, Krishan Bahadur Pathak

Punjab Hockey League: Round glass Hockey Academy stay unbeaten to clinch top spot in Week 2

AGENCIES
MOHALI, JULY 8

Roundglass Hockey Academy (RGHA) climbed to the top of the table of the Punjab Hockey League after winning both their matches in the week. They have six points from two matches, while the second-placed SGPC Hockey Academy, Amritsar also have six points from four matches. Surjit Hockey Academy PIS, Jalandhar are currently in third position with five points from two matches.

RGHA beat PIS, Ludhiana 6-0 in their first match of the league played at the Balbir Singh Sr. International Hockey Stadium, Mohali.

Arjandeep Singh scored twice, while Amandeep, Harshjot Singh, Japneet



Singh, and Navjot Singh completed the scoring for the winners. In the other match of the day played at the same stadium, SGPC Hockey Academy, Amritsar thumped PIS Mohali 7-1.

RGHA then came back on Sunday to complete a comprehensive 8-1 victory over SGPC Hockey Acad-

emy, Amritsar to claim the top position in the table. In the other match of the day, Namdhari Sports Academy beat PIS Mohali 4-1 for their first win in the league.

The next set of matches will be played July 13 and 14 at Olympian Prithipal Singh Hockey Stadium in Ludhiana.

Indian senior women's team aims to register first win against higher-ranked Myanmar

AGENCIES
YANGON (MYANMAR), JULY 8

The Indian senior women's team touched down in Myanmar on Sunday night ahead of the first of their two friendlies against the hosts on Tuesday at the Thuwunna Stadium. This will be India's second consecutive FIFA women's international match window in which the team faces a higher-ranked opponent. Myanmar is ranked 54th in the world, while India are 67th. The Blue Tigresses had previously faced 48th-ranked Uzbekistan in Tashkent on May 31 and June 4, losing 0-3 and drawing 0-0, respectively.

"Myanmar are a good side and we are ready to face them. It's going to be a high-intensity encounter. We don't need to play a defensive game, we can play attacking football and my girls are perfectly capable of doing so," said head coach Langam Chaoba Devi to the AIFF Media Team.

India began their training camp at the AIFF



National Centre of Excellence in Kolkata on June 26 with 29 players before Chaoba narrowed it down to a 23-member squad on Saturday for the Myanmar tour.

"Overall, the camp went well, though some days were difficult because of a few injuries. But we have managed to overcome them and are ready to face the challenges in Myanmar," said skipper Loitongbam Ashalata Devi.

India are winless in all five of their meetings with Myanmar so far, losing four and drawing the most recent one 3-3 in the AFC Women's Olympic Quali-

fiers in Mandalay in 2019. Sandhiya Ranganathan, Sanju, and Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi, all of them part of the current squad as well, scored in that fixture.

Before that, India suffered defeats on each of the four occasions at the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers (2013), AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers (2015, 2018) and the Gold Cup (2019).

Elaborating on their experience of facing their tough neighbours, Ashalata said, "We've played against them before, so we have an idea about them. Myanmar are strong and

physically tough. Their mobility and speed are also good."

However, it's been over five years since India last faced Myanmar, and the captain believes these two games will mark a fresh start in this rivalry.

As far as their recent form is concerned, Myanmar have been out of action since the Asian Games in China last September.

They were knocked out of the group stage after losing to the Korea Republic (0-3) and the Philippines (0-3), and their only win came against Hong Kong (1-0). Before that, Myanmar finished runners-up to Vietnam in the Southeast Asian Games.

"Competing against better and higher-ranked opponents is always an advantage.

It leaves us with the opportunity to learn more and change strategies according to different situations as we did against Uzbekistan. I'm sure we'll learn a lot from the Myanmar games too," Ashalata concluded.

Euro 2024: England hunting for maiden crown; Netherlands hoping to end 36-year drought

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

England and Netherlands are two teams that have genuinely struggled during the course of the past two weeks but have set up a blockbuster clash at the Signal Iduna Park in the second semifinal of the 2024 Euros.

The English side finished first in their Group but had won only one game (1-0 vs Slovakia) whilst drawing against Slovenia and Denmark.

They then went on to face Slovakia in the Round of 16 and were almost knocked out of the tournament if it was not for a bicycle kick by Jude Bellingham in the 95th minute of the game that revived the English side as they went on to win 2-1 in extra time.

They then faced a strong Switzerland side and found themselves trailing by a goal heading into the final ten minutes. Bukayo Saka was the hero in the quarterfinal for the Three Lions as the Arsenal forward scored a brilliant curling effort into the



bottom left corner of the goal to tie the game which they won 5-3 via penalty shootouts.

Despite the side's struggles in attack which has seen them appear clueless and dull whilst trying to break the opposition's defence, England manager Gareth Southgate hails his sides chances in the tournament.

"We continue to give people fantastic memories. Now we want to deliver one more thing - we

have never been to a final outside England, never won a Euros, so there are two bits of history we would love to create," said Southgate to BBC five.

Netherlands on the other hand have won only one major tournament in the country's history (1988 Euros) and find themselves with an opportunity to recreate history. The Dutch side, like their opposition have not been at their strongest through the campaign. A dismal

outing in the Group Stages saw them qualify after finishing third in their group behind Austria and France. Although a strong outing in the Round of 16 saw them defeat Romania (3-0) with comfort, they struggled heavily against Turkey in the quarterfinal and trailed for a majority of the game before scoring two late goals to secure a 2-1 victory.

Netherlands has scored nine goals in Euro 2024 so far with Cody Gakpo being the tied top scorer at the tournament with three to his name. The team has struggled at defense and have conceded five goals so far.

"I think for the whole nation it's something special, we're a small nation and we're in the semis with England, France and Spain, and we're really proud. We had a big heart - sometimes we get criticism about that, that we don't have that compared to other nations, (but) the players showed a big heart (against Turkey)," said Ronald Koeman in the post match conference.

Khelo India Women's Wushu League: Ayeera Chisti, Komal Nagar to headline North Zone meet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

International wushu players Ayeera Chisti and Komal Nagar will grab a lot of attention in the northern zonal round of the Khelo India women's wushu league to be held at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports in Patiala from July 9 to 13. A total 350 athletes across sub-junior, junior, and senior categories will be competing in the North Zonal meet that features both Sanda (fighting) and Taolu (forms).

The event is open to wushu players from Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The North Zonal event follows the South Zonal event held last month in Karnataka. After the four zonal meets, the national ranking championship will be held.

The Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports funds the Rs 7.2 lakh prize money

competition conducted by the Wushu Federation of India.

The top eight wushu athletes from the sub-junior, junior and senior events will get cash incentives.

The women's wushu league will provide an opportunity to several players wanting to make it big like international medallists Ayeera (18 years) and Komal (19 years), who train at the NSNIS Patiala centre.

"I am very excited to play in my home ground here in my third Khelo India women's wushu league, having won gold in the last two championships," said Ayeera, who debuted in this competition in 2022.

Jammu and Kashmir's Ayeera, who will take part in the senior 52kg Sanda category, won a bronze at the junior wushu world championship in Indonesia in 2022. She also landed a gold at the international wushu championship in Georgia in 2022 as well as a gold at the Russian Moscow Stars Wushu International Championship in 2024.

"The Khelo India women's league is very important for a lot of girls especially looking at the future and I'm thankful to the government for this. As for me, I want to clinch gold medal at the Asian Games in the 52kg category and become the first woman to achieve this feat for India in this weight division. Before that, I am aiming for the gold at the senior Asian championships in China this September," she added.

Chandigarh's Komal, gold medallist at the Russian Moscow Stars Wushu International Championship 2023 in Sanda, said "Getting an opportunity to play one more tournament in the calendar year besides the nationals, bolsters our confidence.

"The Khelo India Women's league gives us a good playfield for our performance assessment, understand flaws in our game and areas to work on," said Chandigarh's Komal, who started learning self-defence techniques when she was 14.

Euro 2024 semifinal: Dominant Spain look to move past struggling France

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

The 2024 European Championship has reached its final legs, as only four teams remain of the original 24 that entered the competition. Spain, France, England, and the Netherlands are the four contenders remaining in the race for European glory.

Spain are the favourites heading into the semifinals.

Luis Da le Fuente's men have been the best outlet at the Euros, which showed in their recent outing, where they defeated hosts Germany in what was a heartbreaking result for Deutschland.

The side has scored 11 goals at the tournament so far, despite being one of the best defensive units at the tournament, conceding only two goals (2-1 vs Germany and 4-1 vs Georgia).

However, the team will be worried as their strong defensive lineup has been damaged ahead of their match against France.

Pedri will miss the game due to a knee injury he



suffered in the quarterfinals. Along with Pedri, Carvajal and Normand will miss the game due to picking up suspensions in the quarterfinal.

France, on the other hand, have not been up to the standards that the side has set over the past major tournaments. The side is yet to score a goal from open play in the tournament.

They have only scored three goals so far in the campaign, with two being own goals and one being a penalty scored by Mbappe in their final Group Stage game against Poland.

Another cause for concern for the team will be the reduced impact of Kylian Mbappe. The

captain of the Les Bleus suffered a broken nose in their opening game against Austria and has struggled to find his footing in games since, with the Real Madrid forward even admitting that the mask is causing him trouble playing.

"He might not have been here at all, so we need to look at it in a positive light. Kylian is here, even if he is not at 100 percent, and I know that has an impact on the opposition, who are forced to adapt to him," said Deschamps to TFI on Sunday.

France are aiming to win their first European crown since 2000, while Spain's last victory came at the 2008 edition.

Jyothi becomes first Indian women to qualify for 100m hurdles event at Paris Olympics

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 8

Jyothi Yarraji, the fastest Indian hurdler, will be the first Indian woman ever to compete in the women's 100m hurdles event at the Paris Olympics.

The women's 100m hurdles event has been a part of every Olympics since 1972, but this will be the first time that an Indian athlete will feature on the start list.

Jyothi, supported by the Reliance Foundation, is the reigning national record holder in the event. She is also the only Indian woman ever to medal in the women's 100m hurdles event at the Asian Games, where she won silver last year after showing impressive fortitude in standing her ground after a false disqualification.

She is the only Indian woman to dip below the 13s mark and holds the 15 fastest times ever run by an Indian in this category. As a knock-on effect, three other women have now run faster than the long-standing national record

of Anuradha Biswal that Jyothi broke.

Jyothi's personal best stands at 12.78s, a mark she matched earlier this year at the Motonet GP in Finland despite a hard collision with the final hurdle. She also won gold at the recent Senior Interstate Athletics Championships, continuing her unbeaten run on Indian soil.

"We are overjoyed and immensely proud of our Reliance Foundation athlete, Jyothi Yarraji, for becoming the first Indian to qualify for the women's 100m hurdles at the Olympics. Jyothi's journey, her dedication, and this incredible achievement are a testament to the power of dreams and relentless hard work. She embodies the spirit, talent, and resilience of the youth of India," founder and Chairperson Reliance Foundation Nita M Ambani said in a statement.

"At Reliance Foundation, we remain committed to supporting Jyothi and all our young athletes in every way we can.

District Development Council Kathua approves Annual plan for 2024-25

JNEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JULY 8

To finalise the developmental plan under District Capex Budget 2024-2025, District Development Council Kathua met under the Chairmanship of Col (Retd) Mahan Singh here today in the conference Hall of DC Office Complex. DC Kathua Rakesh Minhas; Vice Chairman, DDC, Raghunandan Singh; DDC members, ADDC Kathua, Surinder Mohan, Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur, ACD, ACP, CMO, CEO, XEN PHE, XEN Irrigation, XEN PMGSY, BDOs besides other District officers attended the meeting.

At the outset, DC apprised the council that in view of the end of the tenure of BDCs and Sarpanchs, the government has assigned the task of Plan formulation to the respective BDOs of the Block as Administrators. "The BDOs have drafted

the plan in consultation with concerned PRIs with the focus on creating substantial development assets especially in Health and Education Sectors, besides taking up maximum number of convergence works under MGNREGA," he added.

The DDC council members, after detailed deliberations, unanimously approved the Capex Plan pegged at Rs 90, 30,14,000/- to meet development needs of the district. The Council also unanimously passed the resolution that the allocated funds shall be used for the capital projects of allocated sectors. Besides, it decided to give priority to projects that align with the district's strategic developmental goals as outlined in the plan. The meeting also resolved that the District Administration shall provide quarterly reports to the DDC on the progress of capital projects and expenditures



wherein District Treasurer is authorized to disburse funds in accordance with the approved budget and subject to applicable financial regulations.

Earlier, DDC Chairman Col (Retd) Mahan Singh

exhorted the council members to focus on the projects of public importance under current allocation of district Capex so as to meet the popular development aspirations of the people.

Underscoring the need to complete the projects of critical importance, DDC Chairman said JJM projects under implementation across the district will give relief to the inhabitants especially residing in kandi and hilly pockets of the region.

The Chairman DDC Kathua also highlighted the issue of some pending Flood protection assets to which XEN Flood Control apprised that major flood protection works are under execution, further informed that some works are to be completed through NABARD funding.

While reviewing the JPDCL sector, the council highlighted the issue of erratic power supply, lack of electric poles and delay in execution of tendered works, the DC directed AEE JPDCL to look into the matter besides fixing responsibilities of the concerned contractors to execute the works within stipulated timelines.

The DDC Chairperson urged all the DDC members and District officers to coordinate with each other in execution of rational plans maintaining the sanctity of the 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj. Vice Chairman Raghunandan Singh exhorted upon the need to make quality asset creation within timelines alongwith playing joint supervisory role by Officers and Elected PRIs.

Earlier, CPO Kathua gave a powerpoint presentation on the sector wise funds earmarked for the works.

DC Bandipora chairs CLU meeting; approves 07 cases

JNEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 8

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman on Monday convened a meeting at Mini Secretariat, here to discuss Change of Land Use (CLU) cases.

The meeting discussed threadbare all pending CLU applications one by one to identify bottlenecks and expedite the decision-making process.

On the occasion, 08 cases were presented, out of which 07 were approved and 01 was rejected. Stressing on an efficient process for handling CLU cases, the DC emphasized ensuring speedy disposal of applications within PSGA timelines. He directed

SDM Gurez to prioritise construction of eco-friendly structures in Gurez, maintaining environmental and regulatory standards.

The DC also emphasised coordination between different departments for improving the overall efficiency of the CLU process.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ACR Shabir Ahmad Wani, Chief Agriculture Officer Javid Ahmad, Chief Horticulture Officer Farooq Ahmad, GM DIC, Officers from Pollution Control Board, Beacon, Representatives from PDD and other concerned Departments.

SDM Gurez, Tehsildar Gurez, Ex. Engineer SSD Gurez, and other concerned also attended the meeting virtually.

Srinagar Administration holds SFCAC meeting for sanctioning of Sponsorship cases



JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

In order to approve cases under Sponsorship program (non institutional service under Mission VATSALYA), a Sponsorship and Foster care Approval Committee (SFAC) meeting was held on Monday under the chairmanship of District Magistrate (DM) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat.

Under such Sponsorship programs, financial assistance at the rate of Rs. 4000 per month is given to children belonging to widow/ divorce/ abandoned mothers, orphans, disabled and other vul-

nerable ones so that they grow in their families or extended families and continue their education.

Around 700 cases were reviewed and approved by the committee, which were received from field functionaries of Social Welfare, ICDS and Education.

Among other members present in the meeting were Program Officer ICDS, Chief Planning Officer, District Social Welfare Officer Srinagar, Chairperson Child Welfare Committee Srinagar, Superintendent Specialized Adoption Agency Srinagar and President Chotey Taray (NGO).

JKTPO strengthens local entrepreneurs through e-Commerce Onboarding Drive

JNEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 8

As a part of ongoing e-Commerce onboarding drive, Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) along with the District Administration Kulgam and leading e-Commerce players today achieved one more milestone in strengthening and boosting economic growth in the region by hosting e-Commerce onboarding drive at Auditorium Hall, DC Office, Kulgam.

The main aim of the drive was reaching out at grassroots level to promote local products and aware entrepreneurs/artisans regarding the benefits of selling products on the e-Commerce platforms and to expand their operations in the global market. The drive is in line with the planned drives to be held across the UT for the onboarding of local products on e-Commerce platform.

The event witnessed exciting and active participation of 200 participants including women entrepreneurs, retailers, artisans, exporters, growers and FPO. The event highlighted the advantages of onboarding on e-Commerce platforms and encouraged the participants to join online marketplace.

During this day-long drive, around 50 participants were registered on-spot free of cost from various sectors and rest started the process of onboarding. The drive included detailed sessions by the experts on benefits of selling products on e-Commerce platforms.

A representative from JKTPO highlighted the importance of ODOP and DEH initiatives and the advantages of onboarding the products on e-Commerce platform.

The forum was addressed by Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, General



Manager District Industries Centre Kulgam, who emphasized on the pivotal role of digital commerce in business growth. He provided insights into the e-Commerce network and highlighted the numerous benefits of joining the platform.

The onboarding drive aligns with JKTPO's commitment to supporting local exporters by providing diverse marketing platforms and forward linkages.

Maqbool Shah from GeM gave a detailed presentation about the importance of GeM and its registration process on GeM portal and facilitated onboarding of the participants onto GeM portal.

Gulzar Ahmad Mir, Sales Tax Officer Kulgam, also briefed about the GST, its importance for doing any online business and the registration process through a powerpoint presentation.

Ravinder Kumar Tripa-

thi Chief Agricultural Officer, Dr Zahoor Ahmad Reshi Technical Officer, Agriculture Department Kulgam, Dr Kausar Hakeem and the representatives from JKKB, DE&CC and Handicrafts also graced the occasion with their insightful knowledge about their subject matter, besides redressing on spot grievances of the participants.

The highlight of the event was the one-on-one onboarding sessions,

where sellers and partners were directly onboarded onto the GeM portal. This hands-on approach allowed participants to swiftly integrate into the marketplace.

The event showcased the commitment of JKTPO and District Administration to empower local entrepreneurs and facilitate their entry into the global e-Commerce landscape by providing a platform for small businesses to reach a global audience, this initiative aims to boost economic growth and create sustainable opportunities for the vibrant entrepreneurial community in Jammu and Kashmir.

A similar on-boarding drive is currently going in other districts of the UT and shall continue the spree of such events to endorse e-Commerce on-boarding of potential entrepreneurs and boost the socio-economic scenario of J&K.

Kishtwar admin finalises arrangements for Annual Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Yatra 2024

JNEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 8

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav today presided over a meeting of the line departments and socio-religious representatives to discuss and finalise the necessary arrangements for 3-day Sarthal Devi Ji Yatra set to commence from July 14, 2024.

The meeting was attended by SSP Abdul Qayoom; ADC Pawan Kotwal; ACR, Idrees Ahmed Lone; ACD Phulail Singh; AD Food/DIO Shafiqat Keen; Vice Chairman Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust Sanjeev Parihar; President SD Sabha Kishtwar Surinder Sen, besides district heads of the line departments & police and other religious representatives.

During the meeting, the Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Management Council informed the chair that the annual Sarthal Devi Yatra, in honor of Shri Ashtadash Bhujia Mata Sarthal Devi Ji, will take place on June 14 and 15, 2024. The Shobha Yatra will commence from Gauri Shankar Mandir Sarkoot at 2 PM on June 14, 2024, following the conclusion of



the Hawan (religious ceremony) and Puran Aahuti (offering).

Emphasizing the importance of timely arrangements, the Deputy Commissioner urged the line departments to ensure that all necessary preparations are made ahead of time.

The SSP assured the meeting that foolproof security measures will be implemented, starting from the Gauri Shankar Mandir and extending along the route to Sarthal Mata Bhawan, on both days of the Yatra.

To ensure the successful conduct of the Yatra, the Deputy Commissioner directed for uninterrupted water supply, power supply, cleanliness/lime lining, healthcare facilities,

ensuring the upkeep of streets, lanes, and drains under their respective jurisdictions to guarantee the safety and well-being of the pilgrims.

DC Kishtwar also directed the Municipal Department to conduct regular cleanliness drives around Gauri Shankar Temple Sarkoot for three months during the Yatra period. The initiative aims to provide a tranquil experience to the pilgrims and tourists visiting the Gauri Shankar Mandir.

The executing agencies responsible for road maintenance were directed to conduct necessary repairs and upkeep on the roads from Hasti to Sarthal.

The ACD was entrusted with the responsibility of installing dustbins at the venue and taking appropriate measures to provide sanitary and toilet facilities at Bhawan.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed to both the local residents and pilgrims to uphold the religious sanctity and environmental serenity of the region by strictly adhering to the government's guidelines, including the avoidance of plastic usage.

KPDCL adds 13,179 connections in 3 months, carries out 55K inspections to curb losses

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 8

Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has added 13,179 fresh connections to its domestic consumer base of 9.81 lakh, adding load of 7.5 MW in the system.

To curb power theft and bring down losses, as many as 55,321 inspection drives were carried out by Kashmir DISCOM from April to June this year.

In a statement issued here today, a KPDCL spokesperson stated that vigorous enforcement drives are being undertaken on a daily basis at Subdivisional level to crackdown on incidents of power pilferage, primarily by hooking and bypassing of meters in urban areas and exceeding of sanctioned load in rural areas. "Strict directions have been given to SDOs to recover dues for energy unauthorisedly consumed, raise Writ of Demand and present their cases for imposition of penalty before the Designated Courts," he explained, adding those found using electricity unauthorisedly shall be dealt with an iron hand.



Giving details, the spokesman said 1949 new connections were added in Kulgam, 1630 in Budgam, 1269 in Sopore, 982 in Anantnag, 935 in Tangmarg, 843 in Ganderbal, 812 in Shopian, 747 in Awantipora and 611 in Bijbehara Electric Division. Apart from above, KPDCL has also intensified action against tampering of smart meters with several FIRs registered in concerned Police Stations. "Nearly 600 applications have been filed for registration of FIRs for smart meter tampering and other thefts like hooking," he added.

Expressing concern over unauthorised use of electricity by consumers,

the KPDCL spokesman said that even in peak summer months, reports of damage to distribution transformers are being received from some parts of Kashmir Valley. "KPDCL advises its consumers to avoid using crude heating gadgets like heaters and boilers, which have been banned by the Government," he added.

The spokesman further stated that KPDCL has disconnected 11,450 consumers for non-payment of pending dues during the first quarter of the current financial year. This includes 8,655 domestic, 2,697 commercial, 94 hoteliers and 34 industrial units. "Outstanding arrears amounting to

Rs.43.26 crore have also been recovered from the consumers," he added.

Urging the consumers to ignore rumours on tariff hike, the spokesman once again reiterated that KPDCL has not hiked electricity tariff in both metered and non-metered areas. He, however, stated that calibrated rationalization of load as per actual consumption in unmetered areas is being carried out by all Electric Subdivisions, following Supply Code regulations. "Consumers can opt for metered billing, if they find flat-rated charges disproportionate to their consumption," the spokesman advised.