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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:
 - Intense and continuous headache
 - Nausea
 - Persistent vomiting
 - A drop in body temperature
 - Dizziness
 - Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool
 If you have any of these symptoms, go to the nearest medical centre IMMEDIATELY

JINDRAH IMAGES

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PM Modi meets Austrian President, discusses bilateral ties, Ukraine

JI NEWS SERVICE
 VIENNA/NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen during which the two leaders discussed ways to expand bilateral cooperation as well as peace in Ukraine.

The PM in a post on X said:

“Had a very good meeting with Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen and discussed ways to expand India-Austria cooperation.”

The Austrian President in posts on X said Austria wants to expand its coop-



eration with India, including in the common fight against the climate catastrophe. The two leaders also discussed the Ukraine conflict and agreed that both countries would sup-

port efforts toward peace.

“Thanks for visiting Austria, @narendramodi! We have a long friendship and strong bilateral relations with

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Flash floods likely as MeT predicts moderate rainfall from Jul 12

JI NEWS SERVICE
 SRINAGAR, JUL 10

As Jammu and Kashmir continues to witness a respite from heat wave; the weatherman here has again predicted the possibility of floods amidst the forecast of moderate rainfall till 17th July.

According to the news agency, the temperature has once again plummeted in Srinagar and elsewhere today with Srinagar recording a maximum temperature of 29.8 degree Celsius.

The maximum temperature across Kashmir settled below 30 degree Celsius after witnessing a rise for the two straight days with Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, recorded 28.4 degree Celsius while Kupwara recorded a maximum temperature of 29.8 degree Celsius.

Kokernag has recorded a maximum temperature of 28.5 degree Celsius while the mercury settled at 25.7 degree Celsius in Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination.

The Jammu City has

however recorded 33.3 degree Celsius while Banihal recorded a temperature of 29.0 degree Celsius.

Batote and Katra recorded a maximum temperature of 28.1 degree Celsius and 29.1 degree Celsius respectively.

However, the weatherman has predicted the possibility of flash floods again, saying that the light to moderate rainfall is expected in the next few days.

Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar

Ahmad said that there is a possibility of a spell of rain and thundershower at many places of Jammu division and scattered places of Kashmir division tomorrow.

However, he said that from July 12 to July 13, a spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower is expected at scattered to fairly widespread places with heavy rain at isolated places of Jammu division on 12th July.

Furthermore, he added that on July 14 & 15, a

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Soldiers fired 5,189 Rounds, Forced Terrorists to retreat: officials recount Kathua ambush

JI NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Taken by surprise when heavily armed men ambushed their convoy but quickly gathering themselves, jawans of the 22 Garhwal regiment fired more than 5,100 rounds to protect their injured colleagues and forced the terrorists to retreat into Kathua's wooded hills, officials said.

Two days after the terror attack that killed five Army personnel and injured five in Jammu

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Sorry Sate of Education

Nearly 4400 Govt schools 'closed' in JK; courtesy zero or low student enrollment

JI NEWS SERVICE
 SRINAGAR, JUL 10

In Jammu and Kashmir nearly 4400 government run schools have been closed owing to 'zero or extremely low' enrollment of students.

The official documents accessed by the news agency states that there were a total of 23,117 government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data.

An official said that the

count of overall public schools in Jammu and Kashmir reduced because “There were some government schools that were having zero or extremely low student enrollment. Those schools were merged with the nearby public schools.”

The official figures reveal that the primary schools category of government schools was hit badly wherein the count of overall public schools in Jammu and Kashmir reduced by nearly 30 percent.

According to the official figures a total of 12,977 government primary schools were functioning in Jammu and Kashmir. However, after the merger, only 8966 primary schools are functional.

Similarly, 392 government middle schools, three high schools and one higher secondary were deleted from the UDISE+ list.

Stating the statistics of private and other schools, the official figures reveal that there were a total of 5688 such educational

institutes out of which only 5555 schools were functional as of now.

Overall, Jammu and Kashmir used to have 28,805 government and private schools. However, as per the official figures, the count has reduced to 24,279 schools.

Previously, the School Education Department had said that it had identified more than 1200 such government schools that were having low enrollment of students. It had said that such

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US business delegation calls on Dr Jitendra Singh, discusses Indo-US collaboration

JI NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A delegation of U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) led by Edward Knight, Executive Vice Chairman, called on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh here today at North Block and discussed Indo-US collaboration in different areas.

The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) represents top global companies operating across the United States and India, creating connections between businesses and governments in both countries. It has around 200 member companies of which 70



percent companies are from the United States and remaining 30 percent from India. Having their offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru in India and headquartered in Wash-

ington D.C. USIBC is also part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State

(Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh said “It is a conducive environment under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make strides in Quantum technology, Artificial Intelligence, critical metals and semiconductors with increased cooperation between India and the United States.”

The Minister recalled PM Modi's recent visit to the US and highlighted the joint statement on

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Army commander asks troops to be prepared for future challenges

JI NEWS SERVICE
 LEH/JAMMU, JULY 10

Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General M V Suchindra Kumar on Wednesday visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Ladakh and asked troops to be prepared for future challenges.

The Army commander also visited the Kargil War Memorial in Drass, and paid homage to those who laid down their lives during Operation Vijay.

“Lt Gen M V Suchindra Kumar, Army commander northern

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LG Sinha reviews preparations for inaugural edition of 'Kashmir Marathon'

JI NEWS SERVICE
 SRINAGAR, JULY 10

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the inaugural edition of 'Kashmir Marathon', at Raj Bhawan.

Padma Shri Chewang Motup Goba, Founder & Race Director Ladakh Marathon also attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed the roadmap, timelines and promotional strategies for the event which is likely to be held in Srinagar in October.

The Lt Governor reiter-



ated the commitment of the UT Administration to put Jammu Kashmir on the global tourism map and developing the Union Territory as an ideal destination for adventure tourism and a hub of running events.

The Lt Governor said that the eyes of the world

will be on Jammu Kashmir as we conduct this marathon event and people especially those associated with trade and tourism will have an opportunity to present our unique culture and warm hospitality to participants from India and abroad.

The prime objective of

the Kashmir Marathon is to showcase J&K's potential internationally and promote eco-friendly tourism and encourage health and wellness. The local communities will also be involved in planning and running the event to foster pride and a sense

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Police arrests Jammu businessman under Official Secrets Act

JI NEWS SERVICE
 JAMMU, JUL 10

Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday apprehended a key suspect accused of running a multi-crore money laundering scheme and unlawfully obtaining confidential official documents with serious security implications.

Police sources informed the news agency that the suspect identified as Tarun Bahl, a prominent businessman and educator based in Jammu, operates multiple educational institutions and owns the newspapers 'Daily Sree Times' and 'Aasman' (Urdu

newspaper) as well as various social media channels from his upscale residence in Channi Himmat, Jammu city. He has been booked under the Official Secrets Act and Section 353/49 of the Indian Penal Code.

A police spokesperson said they received credible information about the circulation of a confidential document related to security matters from police headquarters on WhatsApp groups associated with 'The Sree Times' and 'Aasman' newspaper, owned and managed by Tarun Bahl, allegedly with malicious intent to spread misinformation.

“On this basis, an FIR was registered under sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, along with Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 49 (punishment for abetment) and 353 (statements conducting to public mischief),” he said, adding that the investigation led to the arrest of Tarun Bahl, who has been placed in police remand for four days.

During interrogation, Bahl provided crucial information that unveiled an extensive network of money laundering activities, the spokesperson said.

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Terrorists attack police post, encounter underway in Udhampur

JI NEWS SERVICE
 JAMMU, JULY 10

An encounter between security forces and terrorists is underway at Sang police post of Basantgarh Tehsil in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, according to SSP Joginder Singh. Local media reports said that a massive combing operation has been launched after terrorists attacked the Sang police post around 8pm. Reinforcements have been rushed to the spot from nearby posts of security forces, said reports.

Kathua Ambush: 24 detained as search operation for Terrorists continues in dense forests of J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
 JAMMU, JULY 10

At least 24 people have been detained for questioning as the hunt for the terrorists behind the ambush in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, in which five army personnel were killed, entered its third day on Wednesday, officials said.

The search operation by the army and police is underway amid intermittent heavy rain in dense forests across four districts, besides Kathua. It was launched from three

different areas – Kathua, Udhampur and Baderwah, official said.

Security forces have detained 24 people for questioning in connection with the ambush, they said, as efforts continued to track down and neutralise the terrorists who are believed to be hiding in a forest.

The officials said another search operation is underway in the higher reaches of Doda district where a gunfight took place between terrorists and security forces on Tuesday evening, a

day after the ambush in Kathua.

On the search operation linked to the Kathua ambush, the officials said army and police personnel are also deployed in dense forests in different parts of Udhampur, Samba, Rajouri and Poonch districts.

Fresh searches were also launched in the Lala Chack area of Samba, Manjakote area of Rajouri and Surankote of Poonch on Wednesday morning, they said.

On Monday, terrorists

Jammu Airport set to handle up to 2,000 passengers daily, Expansion Project to Cost Rs 861 Crore

JI NEWS SERVICE
 JAMMU, JUL 10

The ambitious expansion of Jammu airport, estimated to cost Rs 861 crore, is targeted for completion by 2026. Currently, the construction of the security wall is nearing completion, while work on the terminal building and parking facilities is underway.

As per the news agency Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the terminal building during his visit to Jammu in February

2024. The project involves the clearance of about 30 buildings belonging to the Animal Husbandry Department on the new land designated for the airport expansion. Although some of these buildings have been removed, several, including poultry farms, remain in place.

The Animal Husbandry Department has been allocated land in Chattha in exchange for the airport expansion land. Despite this, the department has been slow to vacate its buildings. In April 2024, Civil Aviation Department

(CAD) Secretary Mohammad Ejaz Asad requested the Animal Husbandry Department to expedite the vacating process, but progress has been sluggish. While the cattle farm has been relocated to Chattha, the poultry farm remains operational, delaying further construction.

“The work of expansion of Jammu airport is being carried out by a Chandigarh-based company,” said Dr. Waheeda, Director of the Animal Husbandry

It's now proved Article 370 abrogation has no effect on militancy in J&K: Omar Abdullah

JI NEWS SERVICE
 SRINAGAR, JULY 10

In wake of spree of attacks in Jammu region, National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said it is now proved that Article 370 had no links with militancy.

Former chief minister said the situation in J&K was worsening day by day.

“...Those people(BJP) were claiming that entire militancy is linked

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

DLSA organises One Day Training Programme for LADCs, Panel Lawyers and Para Legal Volunteers at Kishtwar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10

District Legal Services Authority Kishtwar today organized Training Program for LADCs, Panel Lawyers and Para Legal Volunteers under the supervision of Learned Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kishtwar, Manjeet Singh Manhas regarding the effective implementation of the Legal Services Programmes and seminars to educate individuals about the concept of legal aid and the services provided by Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Panel Lawyers and Para Legal Volunteers.

That the program was presided by Learned Principal District and Sessions Judge cum Chairman of District Legal Services Authority Kishtwar, Manjeet Singh Manhas in the presence of Naveed Khur-



shid (Dy. Chief LADC); Sanveer Singh (Assistant LADC) Kishtwar; Panel lawyers; PLVs; and other staff members at Conference Hall, District Court Complex Kishtwar.

Under the astute supervision of Chairman DLSA Kishtwar this training program for Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs), panel lawyers, and para-legal volunteers with an aim to ensure that every individual, regardless of their socio-economic status,

has access to legal assistance and representation. That Legal aid is a cornerstone of a just society which ensures that the right to legal representation is not a privilege reserved for those who can afford it, but a fundamental right available to all.

The concept of legal aid encompasses more than just providing a lawyer to those in need; it includes educating the public about their legal rights, guiding

them through legal processes, and ensuring that they receive fair treatment within the judicial system.

Training program is designed to equip the LADCs, panel lawyers, and para-legal volunteers with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve the community effectively and delve into various aspects of legal aid, from understanding the legal framework to practical skills in client counselling and case management.

The goal of program is to empower to make a real difference in the lives of those who seek help especially those which belongs from weaker section, marginalized people and down trodden areas as provided in Section 12 of Legal Services Authority Act.

Additionally, the Learned Principal District & Sessions Judge cum

Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kishtwar listened patiently to the grievances faced by the participants in delivering the legal services in their area who expressed their problems and hindrance which they faced and they were assured that all their grievances would be addressed.

As the work of the LADCs/Panel Lawyers/PLVs has a profound impact on the lives of many so committing themselves to the principles of justice and equality not only fulfilling the professional duties, but also contributing to the creation of a more fair and just society, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere so the basic objective of the training is to work together and to ensure that justice is accessible to everyone, everywhere.

Weekly Block Diwas meetings continue to resolve public grievances across Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 10

As part of the ongoing Public Outreach campaign aimed at addressing public grievances, the District Administration Ramban, led by Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, organized Weekly Block Diwas meetings at various locations within the identified blocks of the district.

At Govindpura Maitra, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Varunjeet Singh Charak, presided over the Block Diwas meeting, attentively listening to the issues and demands brought forth by the locals. In response, the ADC issued directives to the concerned departments, emphasizing the need to resolve all genuine public interest issues promptly. Similarly, Assistant



Commissioner Revenue, Ramban, S Harpal Singh, attended the Block Diwas at Batote. During the meeting, he addressed and resolved most of the local issues on the spot. Singh also participated in a plantation drive launched from Dakbungalow, Batote, underscoring the administration's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Block Diwas meeting in Sangaldan, chaired by Sub Divisional Magistrate, Gool, Pawan Goswami, witnessed significant public participation. This meeting aimed to resolve issues at the doorstep of the public, reflecting the administration's dedication to accessible

governance. Sub Divisional Magistrate Ramsoo, Ghanshyam Basotra, was present at the Block Diwas meeting in Ukhral. Throughout these meetings, public representatives, prominent citizens, and a large number of general public members raised various issues pertaining to their respective areas.

Similar meetings were also held in Block Banihal, Khari and Gandhari to prioritize public engagement and swift resolution of grievances through these weekly Block Diwas meetings, ensuring that the concerns of the citizens are addressed effectively and efficiently.

ARI & Trainings Department conducts comprehensive inspection of Health Services in Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

In continuation of ongoing administrative inspections for bringing reforms and uniformities in all the departments in day to day official procedures on the instructions of UT Government is being carried out by the Department of Administrative Reforms, Inspections, and Trainings, across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

So far twenty departments have been inspected by various teams headed by senior officers from ARI department.

Today, the team led by Dr. Abdul Kabir Dar, Secretary Technical, Administrative Reforms, Inspections, and Trainings Department, inspected the Directorate of Health Services Jammu and Government Hospital Gandhinagar, at Jammu.

The team comprised Dr. Raman Jandiwal, Under Secretary ARI, Jaidish Khajuria, Sanjay Pandita, Ashok Kumar along with other subject matter experts. They conducted in-depth discus-



sions on important issues, on-the-spot inspections of records, and reviewed the implementation of guidelines and model Performance devised by the ARI & Trainings Department.

Direct interactions were held with various heads of departments, ministerial and technical staff, as well as the public and patients. The inspection included a thorough review of various facilities and equipment.

Director Health Services, Dr. Rakash Magotra, highlighted the good work being done by Health Services for patient care and also flagged certain issues which were noted.

Dr. Kabir Dar, commended the department for its overall performance

and said a lot many innovations have been added to benefit life patients.

Dr Kabir, reiterated that the ARI and Trainings Department is committed to assisting all departments in bringing reforms and excellence to their functions for the better service delivery and overall development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Director Health Jammu expressed gratitude for the timely conduct of the administrative inspection, which will definitely help in bringing more reforms and transparency in administration for delivering better health care to the patients of Jammu and Kashmir.

Focus on Industry-Academia collaboration, entrepreneurship development for achieving objectives of Viksit Bharat: Shailendra Kumar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J) on Wednesday organised Industry-Academia Meet here under the World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project -Institute Development Project (NAHEP-IDP).

The main objective of the meet was to explore, identify and integrate industrial training with academic learning. Besides, it will also help to promote technological advancement and innovation in the field of agriculture and such type of interface are essential for developing research and qualified workforce.

Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department (APD), Shailendra Kumar was the chief guest on the occasion.

In his address, Principal Secretary urged the participants to focus on



Industry-Academia collaboration, establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), entrepreneurship development and collaboration under Corporate Social Responsibility to achieve the objectives of Viksit Bharat. He urged the industry for hand holding of Start-Ups. He appreciated agri-varsity for playing significant role in education and research and building favourable ecosystem for young ignited minds who can contribute towards innovation, creativity and nation build-

ing. He further emphasised that industry should come forward and contribute towards research and boost Start-Up culture in the Universities.

Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu, Prof. B.N. Tripathi, who was chairman during the meet, in his address said that Industry-Academia collaboration is the need of hour to prepare students for meeting futuristic challenges of competitive world. He expressed gratitude to United Phos-

phorus Limited and Fill Industry Limited for entering Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the agri-varsity.

He urged industry to come forward for more collaborations with the University for development of agriculture in general and farmers in particular. He reiterated that expertise of industry and agri-varsity can lead to innovation in agriculture.

He further said that such innovations can help in fulfilling the needs, interests and priorities of the farmers in farming.

The VC added that industry-academia has an advantage of feedback mechanism where the problems of the farmers can be addressed. He stressed upon need-based and problem-oriented research that contributes towards the progress and prosperity of farmers.

Prof Tripathi suggested

that an industry professional may mentor students on areas of personal and professional development like, knowledge related to an industry, functional expertise, a habit, behavioural change and skills. During the meet, panel discussions were held on "Strengthening Education-Infrastructural facilities and Research in partnership with Industry." Dr. Rajinder Peshin, Director Education delivered a presentation on "SKUAST-Jammu: Achievements, Initiatives and Opportunities for Transforming Education and Research."

Besides, Dr. Ram Kumar delivered a lead lecture. Invited company guests, in their address, expressed willingness to support entrepreneurs and Start-ups. During the meet, Start-Ups, companies and university displayed their exhibits and technologies. All the statutory officers, Head of the divisions, concerned faculty members and students also attended the programme.

District Administration Doda conducts successful Block Diwas Programme at various locations

J1 NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 10

Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, the District Administration Doda organized Block Diwas events at multiple locations across the district to address public issues. Senior district and sector officers were present at the Block Diwas venues to address grievances and raise awareness about various individual and community welfare schemes. The program aimed to enhance public outreach, with significant directions given by DC Doda and other concerned heads to ensure the smooth implementation of development initiatives and the swift resolution of public issues.

The event celebrated public participation and highlighted the administration's commitment to transparency and efficiency in governance.

The Block Diwas programs were held at various sub-divisions, includ-



ing Block HQ Bhalla in Sub Division Bhaderwah, Village Dhosa Block Changa in Sub Division Gandoh, Panchayat Ghar Kuthyara in Sub Division Assar, and Nagni Block Kahara in Sub Division Thathri. The ADDC Doda Pran Singh, ADC Doda Sudershan Kumar, SDMs teshildars and BDOs actively facilitated the smooth conduct of the programs in their

respective areas. Public attendance was encouraged, and citizens were invited to present their concerns and provide feedback to the administration. The Block Diwas events also featured discussions on the effective implementation of government schemes and initiatives aimed at improving local infrastructure and services. Directions were

given for the timely completion of ongoing projects and for ensuring that benefits of welfare schemes reach the intended beneficiaries without delay. Public health, education, and rural development were key focus areas, with officials emphasizing the importance of community involvement in these sectors.

Enforcement team lead by AD, FSC&CA Kishtwar conducted intensive market inspections at Sarthal Market ahead of Annual Yatra

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10

Under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav, a comprehensive market inspection was today conducted to ensure fair trading practices and maintain consumer rights ahead of the Shree Sarthal Devi Yatra here at Sarthal Main Market.

The inspection team, led by Shafqat Keen Assistant Director of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Kishtwar, included officials from various departments and police.

The primary objective of this inspection was to monitor the compliance of vendors with government regulations, particularly regarding the display and adherence to approved rate lists, verification of weighing machines, and maintaining overall market hygiene. These measures are essential to



prevent overpricing and ensure that consumers are not exploited during the Yatra Season when market activities typically surge.

The team rigorously checked the rate lists displayed by vendors. It was found that several vendors were not adhering to the approved price lists. Consequently, fines were imposed on defaulters aimed to curb over-profiteering and ensuring that essential commodities remain affordable for all citizens during the Yatra period. Alongside the

inspections, an awareness campaign was conducted to educate vendors on the importance of displaying rate lists, verifying weighing machines, and maintaining cleanliness in their premises.

Ensuring cleanliness in the market area was another focal point of the inspection. Vendors were reminded of their responsibility to maintain hygienic conditions, which is particularly important during festivals when food safety concerns are heightened. They were advised to

keep their stalls clean and dispose of waste properly to prevent any health hazards. The inspection drive received positive feedback from the local community, who appreciated the administration's proactive measures to ensure a fair and clean market environment.

The FCS&CA department assured that similar inspections would continue regularly to maintain market discipline and protect consumers from malpractices.

NOTICE

I, Vishal Kumar S/o Ramesh Kumar R/o Near Petrol Pump, Bye Pass Sidhra, Jammu City, Jammu have lost my Driving License bearing no. JK02 20220001855. Now, I am applying for duplicate of the same. Objection, if any, may be conveyed to concerned authorities within 7 days.

DDC Reasi addresses public concerns during Block Diwas in Reasi

J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 10

District Development Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan convened a Block Diwas at Middle School Upper Seela in Reasi district, where he interacted with local residents to address their concerns and issues.

During the Block Diwas, residents of the area highlighted several key issues including the construction of roads, a fresh survey of PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) beneficiaries, pending payments related to Amrit Sarovar and the construction of lanes and drains.

DDC Mahajan patiently listened to the grievances of the people and assured them that all genuine demands would be fulfilled within the stipulated time. He emphasized the importance of transparent governance and promised efficient resolution of the issues raised.



Addressing the gathering, DDC Mahajan underscored the criteria for PMAY housing allocation, emphasizing that priority is given to those without luxury items in their households. He reiterated the administration's commitment to ensuring that housing benefits reach the most deserving beneficiaries.

Furthermore, highlighting environmental conservation efforts, DDC Mahajan said that a collaborative initiative between the Forest Department and Education Department to organize a plantation drive across all educational institutions in Reasi district, aims to promote a greener and healthier environment.

PO POSHAN Mohamad Anwar Bandy, ACR Anshumali Sharma, ACD PRADEEP KUMAR, CEO Mushtaq Ahmed, XENS JPDCL, JAL SHAKTI and PWD, Tehsildar, BDO Reasi and other concerned officers were also present in the event.

Under the dynamic leadership of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Bas-eer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, the Child Helpline (CHL) Ramban is steadfastly committed to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of children in distress. Through prompt and decisive actions, the helpline has successfully resolved several critical cases, demonstrating its dedication to provide timely support and protection.

In an impressive display of efficiency and coordination, Child Helpline Ramban successfully rescued a kidnapped minor girl. On May 12, 2024, the helpline received a distressing call reporting the abduction of a minor girl from Langya Morh Bagna, Ramban. The caller alleged that a resident of Govindpora Maitra had kidnapped the girl and was holding her

CHL Ramban actively protecting the Interests and Rights of Children in Distress: DCPO Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 10

hostage at another residence in Village Kundi. Upon receiving the complaint, the Child Helpline, with the support of local police, launched a swift and decisive operation. At 11:30 PM, on the same day, they conducted a raid on the specified residence, successfully rescuing the minor girl.

Following her rescue, the child was presented before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), which, after completing all necessary formalities, placed her in the Child Care Institution Parisha. Ultimately, the minor girl was reunited with her family, bringing a joyous conclusion to a potentially tragic situation.

Similarly, Child Helpline Ramban successfully located and rescued a missing minor girl at Banihal Railway Station on 15 June, 2024. At 10:00 PM, the helpline received an urgent report regarding a missing girl at the railway station. Under the

supervision of the District Child Protection Officer, a team led by Project Coordinator of Child Helpline Ramban, Mr. Muddasar Jiral, was promptly dispatched to the scene.

The team, involving all relevant stakeholders and in collaboration with a local NGO, successfully located and rescued the minor girl. She was subsequently placed in the Child Care Institution (CCI) Parisha Ramban for her safety and care.

After completing the requisite formalities, Child Helpline Ramban, under the supervision and direction of the District Child Protection Officer, transferred the child to the Child Welfare Committee Badgam, ensuring her continued protection and well-being.

The efficient handling of these cases not only rescued vulnerable children but also reinforced the community's trust in the helpline and local authorities.

The District Development Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav convened a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) to review applications under the Mission Youth Schemes likewise Mumkin, Tejaswini, and Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative.

GM DIC Kishtwar Phulail Singh, DSWO Kishtwar, Zubair Ahmed, AD Employment Mamta Sundershan; ARTO Kishtwar, Saleem Manhas; Employment Officer Kishtwar, Vinod Shant; representatives from JK Bank; and JKEDI were present in the meeting.

The committee reviewed a total of 36 applications, 12 for Mumkin, 12 for Tejaswini, and 12 for the Spurring Entrepreneurship initiative.

All applications under Mumkin were approved, while 11 out of 12 applications under both Tejaswini and the Spurring Entrepreneurship initiative were approved.

DDC emphasized the significance of these initiatives in promoting youth empowerment and entrepreneurship within the district. He issued specific directions to streamline the application process and ensure the timely disbursement of funds. Furthermore, he urged the committee to identify and address any bottlenecks hindering the schemes' implementation.

Additionally, DDC directed the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring mechanism to track the progress of approved cases, ensuring transparency and accountability in the utilization of the schemes' resources.

DDC Kishtwar chairs DLIC meeting to approve New Applications under Mission Youth Schemes



J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10

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Pavitra Charri (Holy Mace) of Annual Shree Hudh & Trisandhya Mata Yatra 2024 leaves for Dachhan



J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10

The Pavitra Charri (Holy Mace) of Shree Hudh Mata and Trisandhya Mata accompanied by numerous devotees left for Dachhan this morning for onward journey.

Earlier, Holy Mace arrived in Kishtwar on Wednesday for the Annual Hudh Mata & Trisandhya Mata Yatra 2024.

The Civil and Police Administration Kishtwar, along with a large number of locals, warmly welcomed the Pavitra Charri, offering their reverence and seeking blessings.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pawan Kotwal, ASP

Sharma, AO DC office Sattinder Kumar along with other officers and officials, were also present to greet the procession.

The Pavitra Charri was ceremoniously received at the Shree Gori Shankar Mandir Sarkoot, where it rested for the night. The procession resumed its journey for Dachhan today.

The district administration led by Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Dr Devansh Yadav has extended its full support to ensure the smooth conduct of the Yatra, facilitating the devotees and ensuring all necessary arrangements are in place.

Awareness Program on Child Helpline, BBBP, and PMMVY held in Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 10

An impactful awareness program on the Child Helpline, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), and Panjikan Abhiyan under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) was conducted yesterday in Ramban.

The event was led by Pooja Devi, Counselor of the Child Helpline under the overall supervision of the District Social Welfare Officer, Rahul Gupta.

The session aimed to educate the local community about the vital child protection services available through the Child Helpline, the significance of empowering and educating girls under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, and the registration process for expecting mothers under the PMMVY scheme.

Pooja Devi highlighted the critical role of the Child Helpline in providing immediate assistance and support to children in distress. She explained the various services offered and urged the community to utilize the helpline for safeguarding children's rights and welfare.

The program also



emphasized the BBBP campaign, encouraging the community to prioritize the education and empowerment of girls. The initiative aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote gender equality through focused interventions.

Furthermore, the Panjikan Abhiyan under PMMVY was discussed in detail, with Pooja Devi outlining the benefits of the scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers. The registration process and eligibility criteria were explained, encouraging eligible women to enroll

and avail the financial support provided by the government.

The awareness session saw active participation from community members, local leaders, and representatives from various social welfare organizations. The attendees expressed their appreciation for the informative session and committed to spreading the message within their communities.

District Social Welfare Officer Rahul Gupta commended the efforts of Pooja Devi and the team for organizing the awareness program.

CJ administers oath to Justice Rajesh Sekhri as Addl Judge of HC

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh administered the Oath of office to Justice Rajesh Sekhri as Additional Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, today in the Chief Justice's Court Room at Jammu.

The Oath taking ceremony was physically attended by Justice Tashi Rabstan, Justice Atul Sreedharan, Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Puneet Gupta, Justice Rahul Bharti and Justice Mohd. Yousuf Wani and virtually from Srinagar by Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Justice Sanjay Dhar, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, Justice Mohd. Akram Chowdhary, Ms. Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi and Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal.



The proceedings of the Oath taking ceremony were conducted by Shahzad Azeem, Registrar General, who read the contents of the Notification received from Government of India, Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Justice (Appointments Division), the Warrants of Appointment issued by the President of India and the Letter of Authorization issued by the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, authorizing the

Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, to administer the Oath of office to Justice Rajesh Sekhri.

The ceremony was also attended by the Former Judges of the High Court, Advocate General, Deputy Solicitor General of India, Jammu, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti, ADGP Jammu, Principal District Judge Jammu, Members of Bar, others Officers of Civil and Police Administration and Officers and Staff of the Registry.

Awareness session for pregnant & lactating women organized



J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 10

Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women Mission Shakti under the Department of Social Welfare, Udhampur, organized an awareness session for pregnant and lactating women in Panchayat Kambal Danga.

Under the guidance of District Development Commissioner, Udhampur, Saloni Rai, and the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer, Kanika Gupta, the session aimed to educate mothers on nutrition and the need for adequate rest before

childbirth.

The main focus of the session was to raise awareness about diet during and after pregnancy. Sheetal, a Gender Specialist from Sankalp HEW, discussed the maternity benefits available to women from socially and economically weaker sections. She also explained the objectives of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) Scheme, which provides cash incentives as partial compensation for wage loss, enabling women to take adequate rest before and after childbirth.

Additionally, she emphasized the impor-

tance of improving health-seeking behaviors among pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Later, Pooja Jamwal, another Gender Specialist from Sankalp HEW, interacted with PMMVY beneficiaries to assess the impact of the scheme.

An enrolment drive for the PMMVY Scheme, in collaboration with the Poshan Project at Anganwadi Centre Mongerli Ist, Panchayat Kambal Danga, Udhampur, was also conducted to address on-the-spot issues faced by the people. More than 50 participants benefited from the program.

DC Samba presides over Weekly Block Diwas Programme in Rajpura



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 10

The Deputy Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma, led the Weekly Block Diwas programme held today in Rajpura.

This event drew a significant number of residents from the Gaghwal subdivision, including former PRI members, who gathered to express their concerns and demands.

Several key officials attended the programme, including the DDC member, Asha Rani,

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Gaghwal, Sunaina Saini, Tehsildar Rajpura, Karanjeet Singh, Block Development Officer Rajpura, Shivali Choudhary and officers from various line departments.

Residents highlighted numerous issues affecting their daily lives during the interaction. Key concerns raised included compensation for Defence ditch land, land bandobasts, the opening of legal mining stone crushers, minimising electricity cuts during the paddy season, repair-

ing lane drains, fixing the air conditioning in the library at Panchayat Ghar Rajpura, establishing a KV School in Rajpura, desilting the irrigation canal, repairing the boundary wall at GMS Rajpura, and other critical public issues.

Deputy Commissioner Sharma assured the gathering that their concerns would be promptly addressed. He emphasized the administration's commitment to resolving these issues and improving the quality of life for the people of Rajpura. Additionally, he shared insights on HADP and Kissan Sampark Abhiyan and suggested that residents take advantage of online agricultural training videos. Simultaneous Block Diwas programmes were also organized at Block Nud and Ramgarh to redress the grievances of the general public.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For and on behalf of the President of India, Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Firozpur Division, Northern Railway invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for Wagon cleaning work along with disposal of residue material obtained after cleaning of wagons over Firozpur Division. The details is as under: No. of Goods Shed proposed for EOI: All over the Firozpur Division. Department: Commercial Office. Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Northern Railway, Firozpur Cantt. **Name of Work:** Wagon cleaning work along with disposal of residue material obtained after cleaning of wagons at Goods Shed over Firozpur Division. **Scope of Work:** 1. Railway will allow the licensee to clean the only open and BCN wagon at Goods shed over Firozpur Division and dispose the residue material obtained after cleaning of wagons. Cleaning of Wagons will be responsibility of the licensee. 2. No additional investment or expenses shall be made by Railway for provision of wagons cleaning. 3. The material collected after cleaning the wagons will not be dropped on the pathway. If it is found that material after cleaning from wagon is dropped on track, the cleaning of track will be done by the licensee at his own expense. 4. The left-over material from the wagons will be picked up and used by the licensee. If any licensee/authority is required by the Central/State/Local Administration for the use of the remaining material, then it will be made by the licensee. Railways will not have any liability in this regard. 5. Cleaning Time: - No additional cleaning time for wagon will be given to licensee. Cleaning activity to be done simultaneously during loading/unloading activity. There should be no conflict of interest with the loading party by licensee. The interested parties are requested to submit a hard copy of Expression of Interest (EOI) to the office of Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/FS/FZR, before or upto 15:00 hrs on 24/07/2024. For further detail please visit Northern Railway website <https://nr.indianrailways.gov.in/> or the office of Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Northern Railway, DRM office, Firozpur Cantt on any working day during office hours.

No. 179-C/E-auction/FZR/24 Date : 10.07.2024 2100/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile

Principal Secy APD reviews physical, financial progress of HADP, CAPEX, CSS projects

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department (APD), Shailendra Kumar, chaired a meeting at Conference Hall of Directorate of Agriculture here to assess the progress achieved under various ongoing developmental projects of APD.

The meeting mainly focused on evaluating the physical and financial milestones attained under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), CAPEX, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of JKIP for the financial year 2024-25. Director Agriculture Jammu, Director Horticulture Jammu, Director Horticulture (P&M)



Jammu, Managing Director JKAGROS, Director Command Area Development Jammu, Joint Directors, Chief Agriculture and Horticulture Officers and other concerned officers attended the meeting. Addressing the officers during the meeting, the Principal Secretary emphasized on the importance of these projects in fostering agricultural growth and enhancing

rural livelihoods across the region.

He impressed upon the officers to commit themselves towards achieving the targeted outcomes within stipulated timelines, ensuring optimal utilization of allocated resources and seamless coordination among all stakeholders involved.

The Principal Secretary called upon the officers to expedite the ongoing

works on these projects so that required benefits are provided to farming community.

During the meeting, the departmental heads, project managers and financial controllers provided detailed updates on the implementation status, challenges encountered and strategies to expedite pending activities under these schemes.

DC Samba reviews Muharram arrangements

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 10

In order to review the arrangements and the facilities being made for the people during the holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram and ensure smooth and peaceful conduct of Muharram processions in the District, the Deputy Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma held a consultative meeting with prominent Shia leaders here in his office Chamber.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said the purpose of holding interaction is to facilitate the mourners by making all other necessary arrangements, besides sought suggestions from the stakeholders for ensuring peaceful processions during the



holy month.

While responding to the suggestions and issues put forth by the Shia leaders, the Deputy Commissioner assured them that all their genuine demands will be looked into on priority. With regard to arrangements like electricity & water supplies, repairing of roads, providing of ration, sanitation, street lighting and medicare facilities, the DC said that necessary instructions has been given to all concerned Departments.

DC Reasi meets with Senior Citizens in Katra

J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 10

A meeting was convened today by Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan, with senior citizens in Katra.

The meeting, aimed at addressing the concerns and requirements of senior citizens, saw active participation and fruitful discussions.

During the meeting,

senior citizens expressed their gratitude to the District Administration for the special facilities provided to them in hospitals and other government premises. They also highlighted various issues of concern, which were attentively heard by Deputy Commissioner, Mahajan. He assured them that their concerns would be resolved on a priority basis.



FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

LG Sinha reviews...

of belonging, besides showcasing Kashmir's rich heritage and scenic beauty.

Runners from across India and Abroad are expected to participate in two running disciplines: marathon (42 km) and half marathon (21 km).

The meeting was attended by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Yasha Mudgal, Commissioner/Secretary, Tourism Department and other senior officials.

PM Modi meets Austrian...

#Indien , especially in the economic area. We now want to expand these further.

"As the most populous country in the world and a global economic power, India plays an important role in the common fight against the #Klimakatastrophe (climate catastrophe)

"We need India as a partner in a structurally sustainable transformation towards climate neutrality.

"@narendramodi and I also talked about current geopolitical challenges, especially the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

"We agreed that the #Ukraine urgently needs peace and that we will support efforts in this direction. "

The MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X: "Advancing India-Austria partnership!

PM @narendramodi met Federal President @vanderbellen of Austria in Vienna today.

"The two leaders discussed bilateral and global issues. They also exchanged views on environmental sustainability, global warming and climate change action."

Police arrests Jammu...

According to officials, Bahl, the proprietor of British International School, Jammu and New Modern School and Colleges, allegedly operated approximately 125 bank accounts, through which an estimated Rs 128 crore was laundered to conceal illicit funds and reintroduce them into the financial system.

"Further investigation revealed that Tarun Bahl possessed 16 luxury cars, multiple properties, commercial vehicles, and valuable jewellery," official sources revealed. They added that Bahl maintained close connections with senior bureaucrats, politicians and police officers, often attending unofficial gatherings and functions.

"In addition to his known identity, Tarun Bahl was allegedly involved in financial misconduct under the pseudonym Ravi Bahl. He is accused of fraudulently obtaining loans from banks in the names of his employees," officials disclosed.

According to investigators, Bahl has been influential in extorting money from senior bureaucrats and local politicians, and he allegedly manipulated confidential information to wield control over government officials for personal gain.

"Our investigation underscores Bahl's unscrupulous business practices and his strategic placement within administrative circles through bribery and coercion," sources informed. "His actions posed a significant threat to national security by compromising sensitive government operations and fostering corruption."

Meanwhile, the police have issued a stern warning to media organisations and WhatsApp group administrators against sharing information or documents that endanger national security and sovereignty. They have warned of strict legal actions against those found violating these directives—(KNO)

Kathua Ambush: 24 detained...

ambushed a patrol party on the Machedi-Kindli-Malhar mountainous road near Badnota village in Lohai Malhar, around 150 km from the Kathua district headquarters, killing the five army personnel and injuring as many. From the Baderwah side, security personnel are moving cautiously because of the area's challenging topography, thick foliage and natural caves, the officials said.

Personnel of the army's special forces "Para" unit have also been deployed to conduct surgical operations in specific areas, they said. The officials said the search teams are being supported by helicopter and UAV surveillance. In addition, sniffer dogs have been deployed and metal detectors are being used, particularly dense forest areas, of the region. They said a team of the National Investigation Agency has visited the scene of

the ambush and it is assisting police in the probe.

On the Doda search operation, officials said police and army personnel are combing the Ghadi Bhagwah forest area, which is around 35 km east of Doda town and borders Kishtwar district.

The operation to hunt down two terrorists, who are believed to have suffered injuries in the Tuesday encounter, resumed early Wednesday. The terrorists are yet to be traced, the officials said.

In the backdrop of the ambush in Badnota in Kathua, residents of Badnota village and its adjoining villages said they were concerned about their safety.

They have demanded that village defence groups be sanctioned for their self-defence and to effectively tackle of threats posed by terrorists.

"The government should provide weapons and training to us, we are ready to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with our forces against the terrorists," Jagdish Raj, a local, said.

Punkaj, a 20-year-old student, said the ambush has caused fear among the local populace but "the situation changes altogether when you have weapons in your hands".

"We can swiftly move into the forests and help tackle the threat of terrorism," he said, demanding a special recruitment drive for the local youth of the area. Shahid Ahmad, who claimed to have moved from the higher reaches to Machedi due to terror threat, said Muslims and Hindus of the area want peace and are ready to assist security forces in wiping out terrorism.

"Our eyes filled with tears with the loss of our soldiers. Such an attack had never happened (here) even during the peak of terrorism over two decades ago," he said, adding that the government should provide weapons and training to them to fight the menace.

Ahmad said innocent villagers, who have moved with their flocks of livestock to the upper reaches, are compelled to provide food to terrorists as they threatened at gunpoint.

"We are with our forces in the fight against terrorism," he said.

Army commander asks...

commander accompanied by GOC Fire and Fury corps visited units deployed along the Line of Control and reviewed operational preparedness of Forever in Operations division," the Northern Command wrote on X.

The Army commander complimented the troops for their high standards of professionalism and exhorted them to be prepared for future challenges.

He also met formation commanders and jawans during his visit to Batalik in Kargil sector.

US business delegation...

deployment of greenfield renewable energy, battery storage and emerging green technology projects in India.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized on the government's vision in Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning and expressed optimism over its integration with the AI task force developed by USIBC. He also shared that Large Language models are being worked upon by the Department of Science and Technology which are aligned with the task force. Going further he added that India is now a frontline nation in next generation technologies. He also informed the delegation about the Anusandhan NRF on the similar lines of the National Research Foundation in the US.

During the interaction, the Earth Sciences Minister mentioned that world will witness two landmarks of one Indian reaching the Deep Sea and another Indian in space in the coming year. he also shared that Indian Science and technology sphere is now empowered under PM Modi with Academia- Industry and Startup integration and opportunities in Electric Vehicles and battery technologies.

Highlighting India's progress in the last decade in science and technology he recalled that the Biotech industry has reached to 140 \$ Bn with 4000 plus companies. NISAR- a joint mission of NASA and ISRO is also an evidence of India's prowess in the Space sector. He also referred to New Space Policy and its benefits reaped in the recent months.

The DoPT Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh referred to reforms in Civil Services in the last 10 years and said "90 percent working in government is Online." He also emphasized that the size of the Government should be small with more citizen centric governance. He stated that India and the US can work in Civil services reforms

through exchange programs and capacity building.

In the presence of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Dr. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology highlighted that India is part of the Quantum Co-ordination Committee with both industry and academia on board.

Dr. Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, Biotechnology referred to Indo- US cooperation on development vaccines and co-operation in Biotechnology.

Dr. N. Kalaiselvi, DG, CSIR in presence of Dr. Jitendra Singh shared that CSIR has three dedicated labs working for metals, metallurgy and mines and that both the countries have ample opportunities for collaboration. She also highlighted that the US has shown interest in our technology of Steel Slag Road.

Edward Knight, Executive Vice Chairman, Nasdaq and Chairman of USIBC Global Board of Directors congratulated Dr. Jitendra Singh for his victory in the recent polls and taking the responsibility of Minister for the 3rd time. He also Appreciated India's Model of Jamtrinity and DBT and invited the Minister for the 49th India Ideas Summit 2024.

Ambassador Atul Keshap, President, USIBC; Alexander Slater, MD, USIBC; Aditya Kaushik, Senior Director, USIBC; Dr. Sameer Gudur, Director, USIBC were also part of the delegation.

Jammu Airport set to...

Department. "Most of the buildings have been vacated, but the poultry farm is still there. We have informed the government about this. I do not know how many buildings are left there."

Airport Director SK Garg added, "The work of expansion of the airport is ongoing. The government and the airport management have asked the Animal Husbandry Department to vacate the buildings as soon as possible. The work on the terminal building is in progress, and by the time the work on the second building starts, the remaining buildings will be removed."

The expansion includes the construction of a civil enclave and a new terminal building that will span 56,693 square meters. The terminal building itself will cover 40,000 square meters, significantly enhancing the airport's capacity to handle up to 2,000 passengers—(KNO)

Flash floods likely as...

brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at scattered places while on July 16 & 17, a brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at isolated places.

In its advisory, the MeT however, has said that flash floods, landslides, mudslides & shooting stones are expected at few vulnerable places during July 11 to July 13.

It added that a few low lying areas may experience temporary water logging conditions in Jammu division—(KNO)

Nearly 4400 Govt...

schools would likely be merged in accordance to the catchment and feasibility of the students.

In April-2022, School Education Department had said that it was all set to merge 720 government-run schools of Jammu and Kashmir having an inadequate student enrollment—(KNO)

Soldiers fired 5,189 Rounds...

and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials began piecing together the events - of what happened when the ambush took place and in the more than two hours of continuous gunfire that followed before reinforcements came in.

The terrorists opened fire on two Army vehicles on the Machedi-Kindli-Malhar mountain road near Badnota village, about 150 km from the district headquarters of Kathua in Jammu region. The soldiers facing heavy a barrage of bullets put up a stiff fight, firing incessantly to prevent more casualties and stop the terrorists from seizing their weapons and inflicting further harm.

Officials are looking at the evidence on the site, the bloodstained helmets, the bullet shells and the vehicles with smashed windscreens and flat tyres, and talking to the injured soldiers to understand how that fateful July 8 afternoon panned out.

The terrorists, believed to be a group of three, positioned themselves at two different locations and targeted the vehicles and the Army men, an official in the

know said.

The attack, the fifth in Jammu in a month and signalling an escalation in violence in the relatively peaceful region compared to Kashmir Valley, started around 3.30 pm.

"Despite facing gruelling physical and mental challenges, the Garhwal regiment soldiers of the Indian Army unleashed a barrage of 5,189 rounds on the terrorists, forcing them to flee the scene," an official said.

The injured jawans are undergoing treatment at the army hospital in Pathankot.

Among them is rifleman Kartik Singh. His right arm was punctured in several places by shrapnel from a grenade launched by terrorists but he was undeterred and continued the fusillade with his left arm until his weapon jammed.

His was only one of the stories of courage. "The soldiers showed unwavering bravery and selfless dedication to duty, even in the face of grave injuries," said an official.

"The precise and relentless counterfire instilled panic among the terrorists who were forced to retreat, and allowed for reinforcements to secure the area," he added.

Those killed were Naib Subedar Anand Singh, Havildar Kamal Singh, Naik Vinod Singh, Rifleman Anuj Negi and Rifleman Adarsh Negi, all from Uttarakhand.

The soldiers were led by Junior Commissioned Officer Naib Subedar Anand Singh. As they fought back, the 22 Garhwal regiment men shouted the war cry "Badri Vishal Ki Jai" (Victory to the sons of Lord Badrinath).

"Despite sustaining initial setbacks and injuries, the brave soldiers of the Garhwal regiment embodied their motto 'Yudhaya Krit Nishchaya' (Fight with determination), standing their ground for more than two hours," an official said.

Kashmir Tigers, a shadow outfit of the banned Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On Tuesday, a day after the terror attack even as operations were continuing in Kathua, a fresh gunfight broke out in Doda district following a search and cordon operation based on specific intelligence about the presence of at least three foreign terrorists.

The search for the terrorists on the run has been expanded to cover vast areas in Udhampur and Kathua districts, with Special Forces deployed to conduct surgical operations against the ultras, officials said.

The Jammu region has been shaken by a series of recent ambushes and terror attacks, particularly in the border districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, and Reasi. (Agencies)

It's now proved...

with Article 370 and after its abrogation, peace would prevail here.... We continuously said that Article 370 had nothing to do with militancy and even if it is removed there won't be any effect on militancy. This has been proved now," Omar told reporters in Srinagar.

He blamed BJP for the militant attacks in Jammu.

"When we were in power, our government was blamed for such attacks. So today attacks are happening. Who is responsible? It is evident that they (BJP) is responsible for these attacks," he said, adding that Raj Bhawan should focus on bringing situation to normalcy.

Omar said he has not heard not any demand of a cross border attack following the recent terror attack.

"...Such decisions are taken at a higher level. But strikes were conducted earlier as well but did the attack stop? The (BJP) exaggerated about Balakot strikes, but militancy didn't stop in J&K. If they can assure that by conducting strikes, they can free the whole J&K from militancy, then we are ready to listen," he said.

Omar said if upcoming assembly polls are postponed because of the rising attacks in Jammu, it would be a surrender of the government to such forces.

Omar said that elections would be held on time only when the Prime Minister and Home Minister will not bow to these forces carrying out attacks.

"I don't have any apprehension (over postponement of polls). If our Home Minister and Prime Minister are not ready to bow before these forces, then election will be held on time," Omar said. "But if our Prime Minister and Home Minister's feet trembled a little and bowed before such forces and postponed the election after attacks, it will be a bad thing for the country."

The former chief minister said if the attacks are being carried to postpone the elections, he would hope that such forces should not be allowed to succeed.

District Development Council Jammu discusses Capex Budget 2024-25

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

In a focussed effort to accelerate development, DDC Chairman Jammu, Bharat Bhushan chaired a meeting of District Development Council, Jammu to discuss and approve the District Capex Budget 2024-25 of Jammu district.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chairman Suraj Singh, all other District Development Council members, ADDC, Sher Singh, Chief Planning Officer, Uttam Singh, ACD Dr. Vikas Sharma, BDOs and other concerned Sectoral/ District officers.

The meeting saw comprehensive discussions on procedural aspects and the distribution of funds. DDC members and Block Development Officers actively engaged in deliberations, highlighting their concerns and the challenges they face in delivering services to the public.

The proposed plans of Key sectors and schemes such as PHE, Irrigation, Education, PWD, Youth



Services and Sports, Health, Samridh Seema Yojana, DDC, BDC, PRI, APDP and ABDP under District Capex Budget 2024-25 were discussed in detail.

The Council emphasised the importance of regularly holding Gram Sabhas and incorporating public feedback and opinions of their elected representatives to ensure effective governance.

The council observed that public complaints should be considered earnestly and resolutions must be promptly addressed.

A significant resolution passed by the Council focussed on the reallocation of lapsed funds of 2023-24 District Capex

Budget.

Chairman Bharat Bhushan stressed that irrigation is a vital sector and block administrators must ensure that rejuvenation and restoration works under MGNREGA or other relevant schemes are taken up immediately.

The meeting concluded with approval of the District Development Council to the Plan proposals of 2024-25 with slight changes in proposal under BDC and PRI components and underlined the need for enhanced coordination among various departments to ensure the timely and efficient execution of development projects, thus contributing to the overall growth and prosperity of the region.

Director Sheep Husbandry Department visits Sheep Breeding Farm Panthal



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Director Sheep Husbandry Department Jammu Dr. Syed Moin -Ul -Haq visited Govt. Sheep Breeding Farm Panthal and reviewed its functioning.

During the visit, the Director stressed on field functionaries to put extra efforts for development of Sheep and goat sectors.

The department has major role in development of small ruminants sector to update the socio-economic status of rural masses at the union territory, he said.

The Director also inspected infrastructure of the Farm and asked the departmental functionar-

ies to manage their farms on modern scientific lines so that they serve as role model for the private breeders. This will on the other hand help in development of livestock sector of UT, he added.

During the visit, he took stock of the working of the office and reviewed its functioning and asked the officers/ officials to work for the welfare of Government livestock so that a good number of rams of superior germplasm are distributed to the breeders for the improvement in breeds of their livestock.

He was accompanied by Dr. Surinder Gupta, Deputy Director (Central) and Dr. Anil Kumar Koul, Assistant Project Officer Jammu/Warwan. Dr. Deepanjali Verma, Assistant Director SBF Panthal briefed the Director about the functioning of the farm.

Block Diwas: DC Jammu attends to public grievances at block Samwan

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya today chaired a public darbar at Block Headquarters Samwan, where he listened to the grievances of the locals and assured systematic resolution of their issues.

The occasion was also graced by DDC Vice Chairman Suraj Singh, SDM Khour Satish Sharma, Block Development Officer Ajay Kumar and other senior officers.

The event saw a large gathering of villagers who raised various concerns, with the majority pertaining to roads, revenue services, flood protection and soil erosion.

Presiding over the event, the DC assured the public that all the issues have been taken note of and would be redressed systematically.

He encouraged the public to come forward not only with their public grievances but also with personal issues, assuring that district officers and



senior officials would be present to provide services during the Block Diwas.

The DC emphasised the importance of making these public meetings successful through heavy participation and welcomed feedback from the public to improve the exercise of Block Diwas and public outreach.

The Deputy Commissioner visited tehsil office Khour and reviewed the services delivery and the quality of services under PSGA, stressing on timely delivery. He also interacted with police officers at

Police Chowki Jogowan, taking feedback on law and order matters.

Sachin Kumar also visited a local contentious revenue issue, making a field visit along with the aggrieved and providing appropriate assurance and a course of resolution.

Additionally, the DC visited WSS Pahariwala and reviewed the progress on the project under Jal Jeevan Mission. Executive Engineer PHE Rural, Rocky Mahajan, briefed him on the status and progress of the project.

DC Poonch reviews progress under District Capex Plan



J1 NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JULY 10

The Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Yasin M. Choudhary chaired a meeting to review the progress of works taken under the District Capex Plan. The meeting was attended by the ADDC Sandesh Kumar Sharma, CPO Mohd.Rafi, ACD Shafiq Mir, CEO Bishamber Dass, CMO Dr. Zulafkar Ahmed and Executive Engineers, among others.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of efficiency and urged the officials to expedite the tendering process and minimize wastage of time. He also instructed the executive engineers to maximize the utilization of funds allocated for the developmental projects.

He further directed the officials to ensure the speedy completion of all building and developmental works, so that the public does not face any kind of difficulty.

The meeting also saw a detailed assessment of the physical and financial status of the ongoing works, providing the Deputy Commissioner with a comprehensive overview of the progress made so far.

Weekly Block diwas held at Udhamapur



J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 10

Deputy Commissioner Udhamapur, Saloni Rai, held the weekly Block diwas cum grievance redressal camp at Block head quarter Kallar, Udhamapur.

The event saw the participation of Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh, IAS Probationer Swati Sheemar, DDC member Puran Chand, Assistant Commissioner Development Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal, and other senior officers, Former BDC Chairman Balwan Singh, ex-PRI members, and the general public from adjoining panchayats also attended the program.

During the camp, several issues and demands were raised by the ex PRIs and local people which included Recruitment of village defence guards, Addressing unscheduled power cuts, Maintenance of the Battalion to Domail road, Early completion of the community hall, Black-topping of various roads, Renewal of contractor licenses, Establishment of a park for children, Installation of solar lights and repairing street lights, Improvement of dilapidated roads, Installation of a transformer at

Upper Malhar, Addressing water logging in front of the BDO office, Resolving scarcity of drinking water, Settling pending material liabilities under MGNREGA, Construction of link roads etc.

Experts from various departments informed the public about government schemes and encouraged them to avail themselves of the benefits.

In response to the demands, the Deputy Commissioner assured the PRIs and local people that their genuine issues would be addressed promptly. She directed the officers to work in coordination to ensure equitable development across all panchayats in the block. The DC also instructed the concerned officers to prioritize and resolve the public's genuine demands and submit detailed reports on pending issues to be projected to higher authorities for consideration.

She added that the main objective of conducting Block Diwas is to resolve everyday public issues and implement centrally sponsored schemes at the ground level. Following the conclusion of Block Diwas, the SDRF team sensitized the public about precautionary measures during flash floods and other natural calamities.

278 Hand pumps made functional in Udhamapur



J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 10

On the recommendations of District Development Council members, the District Administration, Udhamapur under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, launched a unique initiative to repair all defunct hand pumps across the district. As of now, 278 hand pumps in various locations have been successfully repaired. Deputy Commissioner stated that the main objective of this initiative is to make all hand pumps functional and provide a reliable

drinking water facility to the people of the district. This effort aims to ensure that the general public does not suffer from water scarcity during the summer.

The Deputy Commissioner added that the district administration is committed to ensuring that not a single hand pump remains defective in the district.

District Development Council members and local residents expressed their gratitude to the District Administration, particularly the Deputy Commissioner, for this valuable initiative.

DPO Reasi conducts comprehensive inspection of Anganwadi Centers



J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 10

To enhance the functioning and efficiency of Anganwadi centers, the District Programme Officer Reasi, Mohammad Anwar Bandy along with CDPO's of Reasi, conducted a comprehensive inspection of various Anganwadi centers, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Reasi Vishesh Mahajan.

During the inspection, the officials interacted with Anganwadi Sanginis and Sahayikas, emphasizing the critical importance of

adhering to the established human resource policy.

The DPO underscored the necessity for all staff members to perform their duties diligently and responsibly to ensure the centers operate smoothly and effectively serve the community.

A key focus of the inspection was the implementation of the Poshan Tracker, a vital tool for monitoring the nutritional status and growth of children. The DPO instructed all Anganwadi Sanginis and Sahayikas to ensure daily updating of data on the Poshan Tracker.

DDC Samba Abhishek Sharma inspects WSS Chak Lala under JJM in Block Rajpura



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 10

The District Development Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma, conducted a thorough review and inspection of the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) Chak Lala under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Block Rajpura. During the visit, DDC Abhishek Sharma underscored the necessity of ensuring a consistent and reliable water supply for the general public. He directed the officials of the Jal Shakti department to expedite efforts to address

any existing issues and ensure the timely delivery of water to all households in the area. Accompanied by senior officials from the district administration, representatives from the Jal Shakti department, and local community members, DDC Sharma interacted with residents to understand their concerns and needs. The interaction highlighted the significance of the WSS Chak Lala in improving the quality of life and promoting sustainable development in the region.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT PHE MECHANICAL DIVISION SOUTH JAMMU NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-NIT PHE/JMS/50 of 2024-25 Dated 08-07-2024

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

| Name of the Work | Name of the Division | Cost of Tender Document/Tender Fee(In Rs) | Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) | Validity of Rates |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Repair to 60,000 GPH x 165 mtr Head HC pumping Bahu unit -II installed at CPS Boria under Non Plan | PHE Mech. Division South Jammu | Rs. 200.00 (Non-Refundable) In the shape of e-challan/single window challan of JMC pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu/tender fee receipt through online payment through the JMC link http://www.jmcjammu.org/online-payment.html | @ 2% of estimated cost/ tender value in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu | Bid shall be valid for 180 days |

- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 09-07-2024 (10:00 AM) and uploaded from 10-07-2024 (04:00 PM) to 18-07-2024 (1:00 PM). The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktenders.gov.in>.
- Bids must be accompanied by EMD and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 3 & 4 of the table.
- The bid shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of bids. If any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the tenderer shall be debarred from participating in tendering process for a period of 1 year.
- The Technical Bids of the tender document received shall be opened online in the office of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu on 19-07-2024 at 3:00 P.M or any other day convenient to the Ex. Engineer in the office chambers of Executive Engineer, PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu.
- The Financial Bids of the tender document of the qualified bidders shall also be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department PHE Mechanical Division South Jammu during office hours and shall be communicated separately.
- Cost of bidding document in shape of e-challan/single window challan of JMC pledged to Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu/tender fee receipt through online payment through the JMC link <http://www.jmcjammu.org/online-payment.html>
- The original instruments in respect of cost of document, EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR and other relevant document of L1 bidder will be required to be submitted to the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division South Jammu within 05 days after opening of financial bids on line. No separate intimation about opening of financial bids will be sent by this office / by the tender opening authority. In case the original documents are not submitted by the L1 bidder within 05 days after opening of financial bid, the tender will be cancelled and the bidder will not be allowed to participate in any further / future tendering process in the division for a period of one year.
- Other details can be seen inside the detailed tender document.

No: PHE/JMS/1500-04
Dated:- 08-07-2024

A.E.E Sub Div-1
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Mech. Division South Jammu

DIP/J-2609/24
Date: 10-7-24

NOTICE

I, Saleem Mohd R/o Dhanoo, Udhamapur am applying for correction of my daughter and wife name which has been wrongly written as Shania Akhtar instead of Sania Akhtar and Mumtaz Begum instead of Mumtaz Bano in birth certificate of my daughter. Objection, if any, may be conveyed to concerned authorities within 7 days.

EDITORIAL

Need to contain declining enrolment in govt schools

It is a matter of deep concern that the government schools across Jammu and Kashmir report a sharp decline in student enrollment. It warranted immediate and comprehensive remedial measures. According to certain media reports, the latest UDISE+ data for the academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24 reveal a distressing trend: a decrease of 61,451 students in just one year. This significant drop has been identified in 554 schools, raising alarm bells about the state of education in the region. The Directorate of Samagra Shiksha J&K has rightly responded by directing all Chief Education Officers (CEOs) to validate the data and ascertain the reasons behind this decline. As many as 554 schools have shown a decrease of more than 50 students each, compared to the previous year. The urgency of the situation is underscored by the directive for CEOs to submit their reports by the first week of this month, ensuring that the J&K-level report can be finalized promptly. This decline is particularly troubling given the annual enrollment drives conducted by the School Education Department (SED) over the past few years, which purportedly registered over one lakh new admissions across various classes. The discrepancy between the department's claims of increased enrollment and the actual decline evidenced by the UDISE data suggests deeper systemic issues that need to be addressed. Several factors could be contributing to this decline. The quality of education in government schools may be a significant deterrent, with parents opting for private institutions perceived to offer better educational standards. Infrastructure deficiencies, inadequate teaching staff, and outdated curricula could also be driving students away. Additionally, socio-economic challenges faced by families in J&K may be compelling children to drop out of school to support their households. To reverse this troubling trend, a multifaceted approach is required. Firstly, a thorough investigation into the reasons for the decline is essential. The insights gained from the CEOs' reports should guide targeted interventions to address the specific issues identified. Improving the quality of education in government schools is paramount. This includes investing in infrastructure, ensuring adequate and well-trained teaching staff, and updating the curriculum to meet contemporary educational standards. Furthermore, there needs to be a concerted effort to engage with communities and build trust in the public education system. Awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of government schooling, coupled with success stories, can help change perceptions. Additionally, providing financial incentives or support to families struggling to afford education could help retain students in schools. The Directorate of Samagra Shiksha J&K and the School Education Department must also enhance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that enrollment drives and other initiatives are genuinely effective. Regular audits and feedback loops can help identify gaps and make necessary adjustments in real time. The decline in student enrollment in J&K government schools is a wake-up call that must not be ignored. The education authorities must act swiftly and decisively to address the underlying issues. The future of thousands of children hangs in the balance, and the government has a moral and constitutional obligation to provide quality education to every child. There is a need to work in this direction.

Youth Empowerment and Societal Impact of the Agniveer Scheme

BHARATH NANDA

The Agniveer Scheme, beyond its immediate benefits to the Indian Armed Forces, plays a pivotal role in empowering the youth and fostering a disciplined and motivated citizenry. This initiative is not just about creating a robust defense force; it is also about shaping individuals who can contribute significantly to national development across various sectors.

One of the most significant advantages of the Agniveer Scheme is its focus on youth empowerment. By recruiting young individuals and providing them with rigorous training, the scheme instills a strong sense of discipline,

resilience, and responsibility. These qualities are invaluable, not only within the military but also in civilian life. As these individuals transition from military service to civilian roles, they bring with them a level of dedication and commitment that can drive national development. Whether in government, private enterprises, or entrepreneurial ventures, the disciplined and motivated workforce emerging from the Agniveer Scheme will be instrumental in advancing various endeavors of national development.

Furthermore, the scheme nurtures a profound sense of pride, nationalism, and unity among the recruits. Serving in the armed forces



instills a deep appreciation for the nation and its values. These individuals, upon re-entering civilian society, become ambassadors of these values, promoting a sense of unity and national pride within their communities. Their experiences and the values they uphold serve as powerful examples for others, contributing to a more cohesive, integrated, and nationalistic populace.

As Agniveer recruits

reintegrate into society, they carry forward the spirit of camaraderie and national service, fostering a culture of cooperation and mutual respect. This can lead to stronger community bonds and a more harmonious social fabric. The shared experiences and values of former recruits can bridge societal divides, promoting understanding and collaboration across different sections of society.

Moreover, the sense of pride and nationalism fostered by the Agniveer Scheme has the potential to inspire future generations. As former recruits share their stories and experiences, they can ignite a sense of duty and patriotism in young minds. This ripple effect can lead to a more engaged and proactive citizenry, ready to contribute to the nation's growth and well-being.

The Agniveer Scheme thus represents a holistic approach to national development. By empowering the youth and fostering a sense of unity and pride, it not only strengthens the armed forces but also enriches society as a whole. The disciplined, motivated, and nationalistic individuals emerg-

ing from this scheme are poised to drive positive change, ensuring that the values of dedication, commitment, and patriotism continue to thrive in every corner of the nation.

In conclusion, the Agniveer Scheme is more than a military initiative; it is a catalyst for societal transformation. By empowering the youth and promoting a sense of pride and unity, it lays the foundation for a stronger, more cohesive, and prosperous India. The legacy of the Agniveer Scheme will be seen not only in the strength of our armed forces but also in the vitality and dynamism of our nation.

The author is a Geopolitical Analyst and IT Entrepreneur based out of Jammu.

Babas thrive on social equality deficit

SIDHARTH MISHRA

The unfortunate incident in Hathras is finding a very despicable narrative in social media. Nobody seems to be mourning the death of 120-odd people belonging mostly to the Dalit community but contesting the fact that a godman had emerged from the Jatav community. We political analysts talk of undercurrents in polls and leave it unexplained.

The emergence of a Baba like Surajpal Singh explains it. In times when the most powerful of the political leaders with the help of all the money and machinery at their disposal find it difficult to get 25000 people to attend a rally, there must be something in Surajpal Singh's modus operandi which saw a gathering of 250000 people. When the BJP blames the Hindu voters for deserting it, particularly in Uttar Pradesh during the last parliamentary elections, its answer lies in the Hathras incident. The opposition leaders led by Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav have blamed the administration for the tragedy and in a way covertly if not overtly taken a stand in defence of the Baba.

It's not only about a Surajpal from the Jatav community but several others like Rampal from the Jat community in Haryana, who have challenged the upper caste monopoly on Hindu spiritual discourse.

They have their methods that challenge the Puri-



tan practises but they are applauded by their followers for it. The police report filed in the matter states that organisers "under-reported the number of expected attendees, did not cooperate in managing traffic, and concealed evidence after the stampede, which occurred when people stopped to collect soil from the path of the baba's vehicle." The FIR indicated that the police and administration did everything possible with available resources.

The FIR ironically also shows that how the administration, not just district but pan-India, has been completely unaware of the swelling undercurrent. When such a large gathering of people clamber to clutch dust particles kicked up by a departing

godman's car, it reflects that the government and society have failed to engage with the poor and the deprived. Poverty is not as an economist would define it but that of ignorance and inequality. This provides just the fertile ground for a Baba from the community to emerge as a 'social reformer'.

The social reform programmes of the government, be it the 'sarvodaya' of the yore or the 'antodaya' of the current times, have focussed on cash transfer and not social equity transfer. This explains the financial sinews of Surajpal and others like him.

The financially prosperous in the community donate liberally as he talks of ending social discrimination. In his discourses Surajpal talks of equality

and empowerment. He advocates education and even facilitates the admission of children from his community into upmarket schools. He routinely condemns caste-based discrimination and preaches universal brotherhood. What got his following soar was that during the Covid-19 pandemic, he is reported to have facilitated food and medicine distribution and other such succour to the poor from the community. During the second wave of the pandemic, in May 2021, when contagion was at its peak, Surajpal organised a camp in Farukhabad.

The district administration had allowed the presence of 50 people but several thousand attended. Such 'social movements are not alone in western

Uttar Pradesh where Surajpal operates. People flock to 'Deras' of different hues, especially in the region of Haryana-Punjab. Though all these Deras have followers among every caste, most followers are Dalits and backward caste people, who are often economically weaker too. Punjab has been witness to the emergence of a large number of Deras due to prevailing inequality in the social and economic order and the marginal position of the Dalits in society.

According to rough estimates given by Sikh scholars, there are more than 9,000 Sikh and non-Sikh Deras in 12,000 villages in Punjab. Of these, there are about 300 major Deras across Punjab and the neighbouring Haryana. Out of these almost

a dozen have over one lakh devotees each. Going by these standards Surajpal's Ashram has if not more at least as strong a numerical strength as the major Deras of Punjab like Radha Soami (Beas), Dera Sacha Sauda (Sirs), Niran-kari, Namdhari, Diya Jyoti Jagran Sansthan (Nurmahal), Dera Sant Bhanjarwala (Ropar), and Dera Sach Khand (Ballan). As of now, a judicial commission has been set up to enquire into the matter. The commission would blame Surajpal, his devotees and the administration for the tragedy.

The state would also for some time act with full might carrying out arrests. Once the public outcry dies down, the media would withdraw its cameras and post it at another news event. The matter under judicial probe too will hit a dead end. Probably nobody wants to answer why Babas like Surajpal get a tailor-made pitch to mould public emotion.

Through their clout they come to command political influence and every political party wants them on their side. No wonder Congress and Samajwadi Party are backing Surajpal Singh in the same way as the BJP government of Haryana gave liberal furloughs to murder convict Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda. The wrath of Babas could be politically harmful.

(The writer is the author and president of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)

The Imperative of upskilling strategies in modern business

ANISH SRIKRISHNA

In today's fast-evolving business environment, the ability to adapt and thrive through continuous learning has become indispensable for sustained success. To remain competitive amidst technological advancements, economic shifts, and geopolitical changes, businesses must adopt proactive upskilling strategies. These strategies empower organizations to innovate and stay resilient, ensuring readiness to tackle uncertainty and adapt to evolving market demands. A crucial aspect of fostering organizational success lies in developing a robust upskilling plan tailored to the needs of C-suite executives. This comprehensive approach focuses not only on enhancing technical competencies but also on cultivating strategic thinking and leadership abilities. CEOs play a pivotal role in

this endeavor by investing in tailored Learning and Development (L&D) programs. These initiatives aim to refine communication skills, enhance adaptability, manage crises effectively, and unleash influential leadership potential.

Strategic thinking involves synthesising information from diverse sources and cultivating collaborative relationships with stakeholders. These competencies are pivotal for making informed decisions and driving organizational progress. Embracing technology-centric strategies that incorporate cutting-edge skills such as Generative AI, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, and Cybersecurity is essential for navigating complexities and maintaining market competitiveness.

To effectively implement upskilling initiatives, organizations must first



identify skill gaps within their workforce through regular assessments and performance reviews. Tailoring training programs to address these specific needs is key. Technology plays a crucial role in modern L&D, with e-learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and mobile applications offering flexible and accessible training options.

Research underscores the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning. Encouraging cross-functional experience is another pivotal element of a robust development plan. Leaders benefit from rotating through various roles and departments, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the organization and fostering better

decision-making. Building strong internal and external relationships is crucial, enabling effective collaboration and leveraging partnerships for innovation and growth.

The 2024 Business Outlook Report highlights that a significant majority of small and medium-sized enterprises have either implemented or plan to implement upskilling strategies. Failure to do so risks falling behind in a competitive landscape. McKinsey & Company supports this, citing that investment in employee development enhances engagement and retention.

AI-powered Human Capital Management (HCM) systems are transforming how organizations manage skills gaps. These systems analyze workforce data to identify current competencies and predict future skill requirements, recommending personalized development oppor-

tunities. Tracking metrics such as employee engagement, course completion rates, and skill acquisition is crucial for refining L&D strategies aligned with business objectives.

Creating a culture that values learning is pivotal for upskilling success. Leaders must champion continuous development by setting an example, fostering an environment where learning is encouraged and rewarded. This involves integrating development goals into performance reviews, providing incentives for learning activities, and ensuring visible support from CEOs and senior leaders. Such a culture not only keeps businesses abreast of industry changes but also fosters sustainable growth and innovation, securing a competitive edge in the market.

(The writer is CEO, TimesPro; views are personal)

Union Budget: AiMeD seeks 15 pc hike in custom duty on medical devices

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AiMeD) on Wednesday urged the government to make a strategic hike in customs duty on medical devices "to a nominal 10-15 per cent."

In its pre-budget memorandum, submitted to the Ministry of Finance, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda, Secretary Apurva Chandra, and Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of Pharmacy, the industry body urged to increase the customs duty from the current 7.5 per cent.

"This will foster a more balanced trade environment, encouraging domestic manufacturing and reducing reliance on imports, which currently still constitutes a staggering 70 per cent of the sector," said Rajiv



Nath, Forum Coordinator, AiMeD.

"The imports of medical devices are consistently over Rs 61,000 crore for the last three years and regrettably this year, increased by 13 per cent to Rs 69,000 crore," he added.

A significant concern flagged by AiMeD in the memorandum is the prevailing inverted duty structure. To address this, AiMeD proposed the implementation of a 5 per

cent health cess on custom duty for the remaining medical devices as this was earlier applied to a limonite's medical devices, and this health cess was used to fund resources for Ayushman Bharat.

"This correction is expected to harmonise the duty structure, making it more conducive for local manufacturers to thrive and be competitive globally and locally," Nath said.

Another pivotal aspect highlighted by AiMeD is

the necessity for trade margin capping.

"By monitoring the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of imports, the government will curb the excessive mark-ups often seen in the market.

This measure will make medical devices more affordable and accessible to the Indian populace, ultimately benefiting public health as consumers are affected not by import duty protection as much as by artificially inflated MRP of medical devices," he said.

Further, Nath said that the Union Budget for FY 2024-25 must also announce income tax benefits specifically tailored for capital expenditure (CAPEX) and research and development (R&D) investments within the medical device sector.

"Such fiscal incentives are crucial for fostering innovation, enhancing

production capabilities, and propelling India towards self-reliance in medical technology," he said.

Nath also urged the government to raise basic customs duty from 0-7.5 per cent to 15-20 per cent for non-Information Technology Agreement-1 devices, encourage quality production and exports, and should also remove input tax credit for Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on items with zero import duty to prevent unfair advantages over domestic producers.

He said that the Centre must halt the import of used or old medical devices, ensuring safety, environmental protection, and domestic industry growth, and should introduce a Performance Linked Incentive scheme to promote value-added production for high-import products.

High-intensity interval exercise by elderly can boost brain function for years

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) like cycling, push-ups, burpees, squats, and lunges may not just delay cognitive decline in the elderly but also boost brain function that can last for years, according to a study on Wednesday.

The study by the University of Queensland in Australia found that six months of high-intensity interval training can boost important brain functions such as hippocampal-based learning and memory in older adults for up to five years.

In the study, 151 participants aged 65-85 with no cognitive deficits were randomly assigned to one of three exercise interventions (low (LIT) - predominantly motor function, balance, and stretching;



medium (MIT) -- brisk walking on a treadmill; and HIIT -- four cycles running on a treadmill at near maximum exertion.

Each participant attended 72 supervised exercise sessions for six months.

The results, published in Aging and Disease, showed that only the HIIT exercise led to cognitive improvement retained for up to 5 years.

High-resolution MRI scans showed that only the HIIT exercise group

had structural and connectivity changes in the hippocampus -- the area responsible for learning and memory.

Researcher Dr. Daniel Blackmore, from the varsity's Queensland Brain Institute, said they also displayed "blood biomarkers that changed in correlation to improvements in cognition."

With 1 in 3 people aged 85 years likely to develop dementia, he noted that the impact of the research was far-reaching.

Even as ageing is one of the biggest risks for dementia, "keeping people cognitively healthier for longer with a simple intervention like exercise, we can potentially save our community from the enormous personal, economic and social costs associated with dementia," said Professor Perry Bartlett from the varsity.

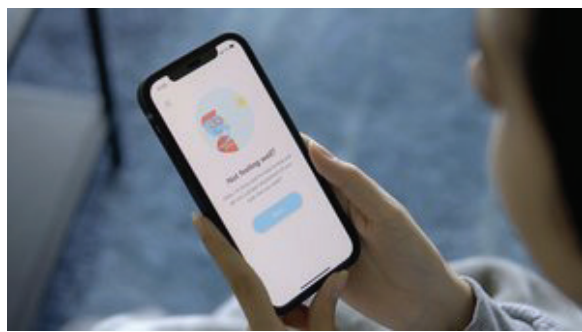
Majority Indians aware of AI, stress on increasing trust & transparency: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

About 96 per cent of Indians are aware of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including generative AI platforms like Google Gemini (formerly Bard) and ChatGPT, but 81 per cent researchers and clinicians in the country stress increasing transparency, while a 71 per cent call for building up trust, according to a report on Wednesday.

The report by Elsevier titled The 'Insights 2024: Attitudes toward AI' is based on a survey of 3,000 researchers and clinicians from 123 countries who show willingness to use AI in their daily work. It showed that they believe in AI's high potential in research and healthcare but demand transparency and trust.

The report showed that despite high awareness



of AI, only 22 per cent of Indians have used AI for work purposes.

However, 79 per cent of Indians who have not yet used AI expect to use it within the next two to five years.

Further, the report showed that Indians (41 per cent) also feel positive about the future impact of AI on their work, and they (72 per cent) believe AI will have a transformative or significant impact on their work.

A whopping 94 per

cent of clinicians in India believe AI can bring significant benefits in clinical activities such as assessing symptoms and identifying conditions or diseases.

But, transparency and quality of content are crucial. While 81 per cent of Indian researchers and clinicians expect to be informed if the tools they use rely on generative AI, 71 per cent expect results to be based on high-quality, trusted sources.

Further, the report also

showed that doctors (82 per cent) in India are concerned that physicians will become overly reliant on AI for clinical decisions.

"Researchers and clinicians worldwide are telling us they have an appetite for adoption to aid their profession and work but not at the cost of ethics, transparency, and accuracy," said Kieran West, Executive Vice President of Strategy at Elsevier.

"They have indicated that high-quality verified information, responsible development, and transparency are paramount to building trust in AI tools over time and alleviating concerns over misinformation and inaccuracy," West added.

He noted that the report highlighted the "steps that need to be taken to build confidence and usage in the AI tools of today and tomorrow."

UK's sugar tax cut daily intake by 5g in kids, 11g in adults: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Introduction of the "sugar tax" in the UK led to a significant reduction of daily sugar intake by around 5 g in children and by around 11 g in adults, revealed a study on Wednesday.

More than 50 countries have introduced a sugar tax on soft drinks to persuade manufacturers to reformulate their products. In the UK, the sugar tax, also known as the soft drinks industry levy, was announced in March 2016 and came into effect in April 2018.

Researchers from the universities of Cambridge, Bath, and Oxford analysed 11 years of data involving 7,999 adults and 7,656 children from the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey.

The results, published online in the Journal of



Epidemiology and Community Health, showed that one year after the UK sugar tax had come into force, children further reduced their free sugar intake from food and drink combined by around 5 g per day (relative reduction of 10 per cent) and adults by around 11 g per day (a relative reduction of 20 per cent). Over half of this total was from soft

drinks alone -- accounting for around 3 g per day (relative reduction of 23.5 per cent) in children and around 5 g per day (relative reduction of just under 40.5 per cent) in adults. Protein intake remained stable throughout in children and adults.

"In children, a daily reduction of 4.8 g sugar equates to approximately 19.2 kilocalories out of

an approximate daily intake of 2,000 kilocalories, which is equivalent to approximately 1 per cent reduction in energy intake," pointed out the researchers.

There is ample evidence to suggest that consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks -- a major source of dietary free sugars, particularly among children -- results in a heightened risk of weight gain, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and premature death.

However, the overall daily energy intake from free sugar levels was still higher than the updated recommendation from the World Health Organization (WHO) of 5 per cent -- equivalent to 30 g/day for adults, 24 g for 7-10-year-olds, and 19 g for 4-6-year-olds, said the researchers.

Study Finds Two-Way Causal Links Between Poverty, Mental Illnesses

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Living in poverty could be causing mental illnesses and vice-versa, according to a study.

While previous studies have shown a strong correlation between poverty and mental illness, researchers said that they have not been able to discern the cause-and-effect relationship between the two.

While certain mental conditions are known to impact financial stability, the authors found that poverty "can lead to mental health problems". They analysed data from the UK Biobank and the international Psychiatric Genomic Consortium.

"We discovered that schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) causally contribute to poverty. Conversely, poverty contributes to major depressive disorder and schizophrenia," said Marco Boks, a psychiatrist at Amsterdam University Medical Center in The Netherlands. People with ADHD have short attention spans, along with restlessness and impulsivity, while those with



schizophrenia harbour a distorted perception of reality, affecting how they think, feel and behave.

For the study, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, the researchers determined a measure of poverty, using household income, occupational income and social deprivation.

They then used the genetic information of the participants to distinguish the effects of poverty on mental health and vice-versa. They used the Mendelian randomisation method, which helps understand how a certain exposure (such as poverty) caused a certain outcome (developing a mental illness). "We were able to capture aspects of poverty shared between the individual,

the household, and the area in which one lives. This enabled us to better identify the causal effects of poverty on mental illness," said author David Hill, a statistical geneticist at the University of Edinburgh, UK. The researchers said using genetic data, they were able to identify poverty as something that can be targeted in order to improve mental health.

They said that by recognising the two-way influence between poverty and mental health, policymakers can develop more effective interventions aimed at breaking the cycle. "The research provides robust evidence for the need to also look at social factors such as poverty, when you delve into the development of mental illness," said Boks.

Zika Virus: 2 more pregnant women test positive, overall count reaches 15

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 7

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has said that two pregnant women, aged 18 and 19, tested positive for the Zika virus, taking the total number of infected expecting mothers to eight and the overall case count in the Maharashtra city to 15, reports said.

PMC Assistant Chief Medical Officer Dr Rajesh Dighe said that the two women who tested positive are the with mosquitoes-borne illness are from slum areas of the Pashan suburb where uncovered water containers serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The Zika virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito, which is also known to transmit infections like dengue and chikungunya. The virus was first identified in Uganda in 1947.

According to WHO, the majority of people infected with the Zika virus do not develop symptoms. Symptoms are generally mild including fever, rash, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain and headache, and usually last for



two-seven days.

In pregnant women, it may cause microcephaly (condition in which the head is significantly smaller due to abnormal brain development) in the foetus.

Govt issues health advisory to states after Maharashtra reports 7 Zika virus cases Govt issues health advisory to states after Maharashtra reports 7 Zika virus cases

The 18-year-old woman is in her 28th week of pregnancy, while the 19-year-old is in her 23rd week. Both experienced symptoms such as joint pain and headache but are currently stable, a report said.

The Centre has asked states to mandate healthcare providers treating patients in impacted regions and health institutions to screen pregnant women for Zika virus infection and track the development of the foetus for would-be-mothers who have tested positive.

A total of Rs 1.3 lakh in fines has been imposed on societies and under-construction sites where mosquito breeding spots were found in Pune. On July 9, breeding sites were identified at 354 residences spanning Warje, Karvenagar, Mundhwa, Pashan, Ambegaon, Sinhad Road, Kharadi.

Italian health ministry declares red alert in 7 cities due to heat wave

AGENCIES
ROME, JULY 10

The Italian Health Ministry is predicting abnormal heat in seven of Italy's 27 major cities on Thursday, issuing a red alert, according to its weather bulletin.

A red alert has been issued for Rome, the northern city of Trieste, and the city of Perugia in central Italy, as well as three cities in the central Lazio region.

The most intense heat, reaching 42-43 degrees Celsius (107-109 degrees Fahrenheit), is expected on the islands of Sicily

and Sardinia, while 37-38 degrees Celsius heat is predicted in Rome and Florence.

According to the ilmeteo.it website, the current heat wave will last about 10 days.

Earlier in the day, the Italian Ministry of Health announced an orange weather alert in 13 major cities.

In Italy, bad weather conditions are graded by four colours indicating the level of danger to people, with red indicating an emergency situation in which there is a danger to the life and health of all residents.

3 polio cases detected in S. Afghanistan

AGENCIES
KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN, JULY 10

Afghan authorities have registered three positive polio cases in the south Afghanistan Kandahar province, bringing the number of the crippling disease among children to nine in the country, provincial government spokesman Mawlawi Mahmood Ezam said Wednesday.

The trio positive cases of the paralyz-

ing disease have been detected in Kandahar's provincial capital Kandahar city, Shah Wali Kot and Arghistan districts in 2024, the official said.

Afghan caretaker government launched a four-day house-to-house anti-polio campaign in 23 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces on Monday during which some 8 million children under five will receive the immunity vaccines against the crippling disease.

India flags need to resolve abandonment of seafarers issue at IMO meet

AGENCIES
LONDON, JULY 10

India on Wednesday flagged the urgent need for taking action on the issue of abandonment of seafarers in order to ensure the safety and welfare of the maritime workforce, at a high-level meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The Indian delegation led by the Secretary of Shipping and Ports, T.K. Ramachandran, pointed out that despite efforts, there are currently 44 active cases involving 292 Indian seafarers. India's strong stance on the need for effective measures and oversight to resolve such issues was well received.

India, an elected member of the IMO Council in the category of countries with the largest interest in international seaborne trade, emphasised the urgent issue of seafarer abandonment.

In recognition of its continued commitment to addressing seafarers' issues, India secured its position as one of the eight governments representing IMO in the Joint Tripartite Working Group. This group is dedicated to identifying and tackling seafarers' issues and the human element in maritime operations. Other proposed members include the Philippines, Thailand, Liberia, Panama, Greece, the US, and France.

"India remains deeply committed to addressing the issue of seafarer abandonment and ensuring

the safety and welfare of our maritime workforce. India's participation in the IMO Council session underscores dedication to international maritime cooperation and innovation. The establishment of the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport is a testament to India's leadership in promoting environmentally sustainable and technologically advanced maritime practices. We look forward to collaborating with global partners to drive positive change in the maritime sector," said Ramachandran. The Indian delegation also addressed concerns over disruptions in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and adjoining areas, which have been impacting shipping and trade logistics.

Highlighting India's commitment to maritime safety and security, the delegation cited two significant incidents where the Indian Navy successfully intervened. These included the rescue of a Marshall Island-flagged crude oil carrier, MV Marlyn Luanda, and the interception of the vessel MV Ruen off the coast of Somalia, ensuring the safety of crew members and handling piracy threats effectively.

Furthermore, India reiterated its proposal for the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT). This regional hub aims to transform the maritime sector in India and South Asia into a technologically advanced, environmentally sustainable, and digitally proficient industry. The Centre will focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering technical cooperation, capacity-building, and digital transition.

India's leadership in evolving the SACE-SMarT in collaboration with the IMO's global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs) was highlighted as a significant step towards sustainable maritime development. The 132nd session of the IMO Council, which commenced on July 8, 2024, will continue until July 12, 2024, addressing various critical issues and proposals for the future of global maritime operations.

Bengal Assembly bypolls: Complaints of violence flood CEO's office

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, JULY 10

Polling for bye-elections for four Assembly constituencies in West Bengal continued on Wednesday amid reports of violence reaching the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

Till 3 P.M. the CEO's office had received 91 complaints, out of which 61 were from Ranaghat-Dakshin Assembly constituency in Nadia District.

At Maniktala constituency in Kolkata, the situation flared up as the BJP candidate Kalyan Chaubey allegedly apprehended a fake voter and chased him.

Soon Chaubey was surrounded by a group of Trinamool Congress activists who started shouting "go-back" slogans. They alleged that the



BJP candidate was unnecessarily trying to create tension in the area when the polling process was absolutely peaceful.

Later the BJP supporters staged a protest in front of Phoolbag Police Station against the development. BJP President in West Bengal and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar said that the Election Commission of India (ECI) should have been more proactive in preventing such malpractices.

"At many places the election process has turned out to be a farce.

But this cannot continue forever and in the coming days there will be a mass uprising against the ruling party. At the same time I expected a more proactive role from the commission," he said.

As per CEO office records, till 3 P.M. the average polling percentage in the four Assembly constituencies had been recorded at 50.22 per cent, with the highest figure being at Raiganj at 53.89 followed by Ranaghat-Dakshin at 52.41, Bagda at 50.81 and Maniktala being the lowest at 43.78 per cent.

Telangana Cabinet panel begins gathering feedback on Rythu Bharosa

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JULY 10

A Cabinet Sub-Committee, constituted by the Telangana government, on Wednesday, began taking feedback from farmers and people on the implementation of the ruling Congress' guarantee Rythu Bharosa scheme.

The Sub-Committee, headed by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, held the first meeting in Khammam on Wednesday.

The meeting, held for the erstwhile Khammam district, was attended by two other members of the Sub-Committee - Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and Revenue Ponguleti Minister Srinivasa Reddy.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Congress government is determined to implement the Rythu Bharosa scheme. The Sub-Committee was constituted last month to take feedback from farmers and other stakeholders to work out modalities for the scheme.



Rythu Bharosa was one of the schemes promised by Congress in Assembly elections. Under the scheme, annual financial assistance of Rs.15,000 per acre will be provided to farmers. This scheme will replace the existing Rythu Bandhu, implemented by the previous government of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), under which farmers were getting Rs 10,000 per acre.

Vikramarka, who is also the Finance Minister, said the Sub-Committee's exercise is aimed at taking suggestions to draft modalities so that the benefits reach

the eligible farmers. The Sub-Committee will visit all 10 erstwhile districts to take suggestions from people and farmers before submitting its report to the government. The report will be discussed in the upcoming Budget session of the state legislature before finalising the modalities.

He said the government would make an allocation for implementation of the scheme in the full-fledged State Budget for 2024-25. He said since the Centre could not present a full-fledged Union Budget due to Lok Sabha elections, the state government also had to present a vote-on-account Budget. Agriculture Minister

Nageswara Rao said the government was taking all steps to do justice to small and marginal farmers. He said the schemes of the previous government did not reach the real beneficiaries. Revenue Minister Srinivasa Reddy said the exercise was aimed at making sure that there is no misuse of public money.

He said the previous government used to take decisions within four walls and impose it on people but their government was working in a transparent manner by taking feedback from people.

The Rythu Bharosa scheme will cover tenant farmers as promised by the Congress.

The tenant farmers were not beneficiaries of the previous government's scheme.

There were also allegations that assistance under Rythu Bandhu was given to landlords, including those who were not engaged in agriculture.

Political parties should state their stance on reservation in writing: Shinde

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 10

Maharashtra State Chief Minister Eknath Shinde appealed that the political parties should inform the government of their position and opinion in writing regarding reservation, assuring that the state government will not allow injustice to any social group while maintaining the tradition of progressive Maharashtra in order not to create a rift between the Maratha and OBC communities in the state.

He was speaking in a all party meeting regarding reservation at Sahyadri guest house in Mumbai Tuesday night.

On this occasion Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Deputy Speaker Narhari Jirwal, Ministers Chandrakant Patil, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Chhagan Bhujbal, Ravindra Chavan, Shambhuraj Desai, Dadaji



Bhuse, Atul Save, Dhananjay Munde along with MPs Ashok Chavan, Sunil Tatkare, Senior Leader Prakash Ambedkar, MLA Sarveshree Praveen Darekar, Gopichand Padalkar, Bachu Kadu, Bharat Gogawle, Mahadev Jankar and other dignitaries were present.

Regarding reservation, the role of various political parties and organizations is important and a way should be found through the discussion regarding the reservation of Maratha and OBC community in the state, said Shinde.

He stated that communal harmony should also be maintained while main-

taining law and order. The government has decided to give 10 percent reservation to the Maratha community. We are trying to keep it within the framework of the law. Since this decision was taken, candidates from Maratha community have benefited in education, post recruitment.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister also assured that he will not allow injustice to other social groups while giving lasting reservation to the Maratha community.

The Chief Minister said a team of 11 people has been sent to Hyderabad to inspect the Gazette.

Reservation is not a matter of politics but it is an honest role of the government to maintain social harmony. In that direction, the positive process of the government is going on, Shinde further said.

In order to maintain a harmonious atmosphere in the state, today's meeting was called to take the members of all parties into confidence and find a way out of the discussion. Today's meeting was to remove the bitterness between the Maratha and OBC communities.

The Chief Minister also said an all-party meeting was held in a similar manner on November 1, 2023, added Shinde.

Meanwhile, opposition parties including Congress, NCP-SP and UBT members did not attend the all party meeting and they had demanded that the state government should make a statement in house of state assembly in regard.

Spotlight on crucial role of assistive technology in empowering PwDs at ASSOCHAM event

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The sixth conference on 'Empowering Persons with Disabilities through Accessible and Assistive Technology' was organised by ASSOCHAM.

With the theme this year being 'Innovation and Sustainable Solutions for Equal Opportunities', the conference highlighted the importance of accessible information and communication technologies (ICTs), physical infrastructure and transportation, promoting employment opportuni-

ties through policy interventions, the role of public and private partnership in ensuring access to quality and affordable assistive technology.

Assistive technology has taken on a whole new dimension -- giving voice to the previously voiceless, hearing to the deaf, and greater mobility than previously available. Empowering persons with disabilities (PwDs) with the confidence to achieve seemingly impossible goals, assistive technology has provided them with devices to excel at work-



places and prove their mettle.

Artificial Intelligence is also playing a catalytic role by boosting the number of

features available by augmenting assistive devices; capabilities and personalising experiences.

Anil Rajput, Chairper-

son of the ASSOCHAM National CSR Council, said: "According to the WHO, 16 per cent of the world's population, which is over a billion people, have some form of disability, and 80 per cent of these live in the developing countries. With mobility being a critical factor in the lives of PwDs, in this context, I appeal to the automobile manufacturers in India to bring in the latest technologies in vehicles for disabled people that are being used in different parts of the world. This could have a transforma-

tional impact in the lives of persons with disabilities in India."

"I also urge the media to not only focus on the challenges faced by the PwDs but also showcase their success stories. This will inspire many more to excel as well as bring forth their unique abilities before the larger audience," he added.

According to estimates, the number of disabled persons in India stands at over 4 crore with some reports putting the number between 6 and 8 crore. Thus, ensuring an

inclusive environment for PwDs will require concerted efforts of government, corporate houses and non-government organisations.

Rajesh Agarwal, IAS, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, said: "Every fourth family has a child with a disability and although society is becoming more inclusive, we need to do a lot more to ensure inclusivity. Although the government has policies in place for providing employment

opportunities to PwDs, I believe employment opportunities in large numbers will have to come from the private sector. We also need more special schools in the country."

"Education is important as it will help them become independent and ensure their all-round development. Use of devices like braille displays, speech-to-text software, specialised keyboards, and software solutions have also emboldened PwDs and made them exemplary professionals," he further said.

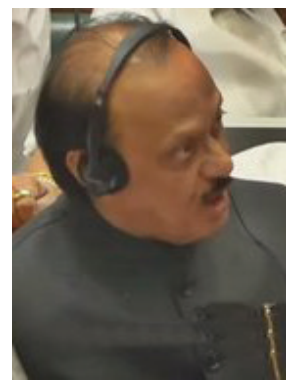
After four adjournments, M'ashtra Assembly adjourned for the day amid slogan shouting

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 10

The Maharashtra Assembly was adjourned for the day at 2.25 p.m on Wednesday after four adjournments and the completion of the day's agenda amid slogan shouting by the treasury bench members on the Maratha OBC reservation issue. They asked the opposition members to clarify whether they were in favour of providing reservation to the Maratha community separately or from the

OBC quota instead of playing politics. They also took strong objection to the opposition skipping the all party meeting convened by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday to discuss the Maratha OBC quota issue amid the ongoing protests and arrive at a consensus to maintain social harmony.

Amid slogan shouting by the treasury benches, the assembly passed the supplementary demands worth Rs 94,889.06 crore. The resolution in this regard was moved by the



Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Ajit Pawar.

The assembly passed

the Appropriation Bill without any debate.

The assembly also passed without any debate the Maharashtra Competitive Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 which has proposed stringent penalties for those found guilty of using unfair means and malpractices. According to the legislation, any person or persons resorting to unfair means will be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than three years but which can extend to five

years with a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh. The service provider will be liable to be punished with a fine of up to Rs 1 crore and the proportionate cost of the examination will also be recovered from such providers. They will not be assigned any responsibility for the conduct of any competitive examination for four years.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Legislative Council was also adjourned for the day amid pandemonium over the Maratha OBC quota issue.

BJP accuses Delhi govt of 'surreptitiously' increasing power tariff

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Wednesday accused the AAP government of "surreptitiously" increasing electricity tariffs under the guise of the Power Purchase Adjustment Cost (PPAC) Act.

Sachdeva told IANS, "They are increasing the rates surreptitiously. They are not changing the units, but under the PPAC Act, the charges have increased to 8.5 per cent, hence, doubling it for the consumers."

Increased rates have been implemented under PPAC to cover the costs incurred by distribution companies when purchasing electricity from power generation firms.

The BJP has accused the Delhi government of passing the higher costs onto consumers through their electricity bills.

Questioning the "financial burden" on the public due to the pension trust for retired employees of the companies, the BJP state chief said, "There is a pension trust for retired employees from companies who will receive pen-

sions. Why should the people of Delhi bear the burden of this expense?"

Criticising the government, Sachdeva said, "It is the policy of the Delhi government that along with running the government from jail, they will also loot Delhi from prison."

Addressing a press conference earlier in the day, Sachdeva highlighted the frequent power cuts in the national Capital during the scorching summer, claiming that the government secretly arranged to increase electricity prices to "loot Delhi."

Sri Lanka approves national action plan to eliminate sexual, gender-based harassment

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, JULY 10

The Sri Lankan cabinet approved a multi-sectoral national action plan for implementation between 2024 and 2028 to eliminate sexual and gender-based harassment in the country, said the government information department on Wednesday.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is also the minister of women, children affairs and social empowerment, presented the proposal, the department said, reported Xinhua news agency.

The department said that policy involvement must ensure the right of women, men and children to live in a fair and social environment without any violence, adding that the first national action plan to address such harassment was implemented with an integrated approach between 2012 and 2020.

The necessity of a new national action plan has been identified in a follow-up assessment to find out the impact of the previous action plan, according to the department.

Urban flooding alert issued for Pakistan amid monsoon rains

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD, JULY 10

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of Pakistan issued an alert for urban flooding in parts of the country's south Sindh province during the ongoing spell of monsoon rains.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the NDMA quoted its national emergencies operation centre as saying that under the monsoon's influence, scattered rainfall, windstorms, and thunderstorms are expected across various regions of the province, reports Xinhua news agency.

The NDMA advised the provincial disaster management authority and the local municipal administration to closely monitor the situation and take appropriate measures to safeguard the population at risk.

"People dwelling in low-lying areas are advised to take extra caution and undertake emergency preparation given potential urban flooding," the statement added.

Communities at risk are also advised to follow instructions from local authorities and download the NDMA's mobile application for timely disaster alerts, guidelines, and precautionary measures, the statement noted.

25 Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrike on school in Gaza: Sources

AGENCIES
GAZA, JULY 10

At least 25 Palestinians were killed and some others wounded in an Israeli airstrike targeting a school in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said.

Security sources told Xinhua news agency on Tuesday that Israeli aircraft targeted the gate of the Al-Awda School, which houses hundreds of displaced people in the town of Abasan al-Kabira, east of Khan Younis, using at least one missile.

The videos shared by Palestinian activists on the social media platform Facebook showed dozens of bodies lying on the ground, covered in blood, Xinhua news agency reported.

Medical sources said the Israeli airstrike killed at least 25 people, including women and children, and wounded dozens in varying degrees.

The sources told Xinhua that the number of victims is expected to rise due to the overcrowding of displaced people in the area.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about the incident.

4.2-metre crocodile that killed 12-year-old girl shot dead

AGENCIES
CANNBERRA, JULY 10

Authorities have shot dead a crocodile that killed a child in Australia's Northern Territory (NT).

NT Police on Wednesday confirmed that the 4.2-meter saltwater crocodile that attacked a 12-year-old girl earlier in July has been located and destroyed.

The girl was swimming with family in a creek near the small remote town of Palumpa - more than 200 kilometers southwest of Darwin - on July 2 when she disappeared.

Her remains were found on July 4 following a two-day search that involved aerial surveillance, police, park rangers and members of the local community.

Police said at the time that her injuries were consistent with a crocodile attack. It was the first lethal crocodile attack in the NT since 2018.

In a statement on Wednesday, NT Police said a 4.2-meter crocodile was shot by rangers on Sunday with the permission of local Indigenous traditional owners of the area.

The crocodile resurfaced on Tuesday, police said, when it was confirmed to be the animal that attacked the child.

"The events of last week have had a huge impact on the family and local police are continuing to provide support to everyone impacted," NT Police Senior Sergeant Erica Gibson said in the statement.

"The family have requested privacy as they grieve."

According to the NT government, there is estimated to be over 100,000 saltwater crocodiles in the wild in the NT - more than in any other Australian state or territory.

Russia's missile attack 'was real hell', Kiev children's hospital head tells UNSC

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 10

"It was a real hell," the director of the children's hospital in Kiev, Volodymyr Zhovniir, told the Security Council, describing Russia's missile attack on the institution.

"We felt a powerful explosion, the ground shook, and walls trembled," he said at Tuesday's meeting on the barrage of missiles that struck two hospitals in the capital and other targets around Ukraine.

"Children and adults screamed and cried from fear, and wounds, from pain," he added.

"We heard people crying out for help from beneath the rubble," he said.

At that time, 600 children were undergoing treatment at the hospital, some of them on drips, and three heart surgeries were in progress, Zhovniir added.

About 300 people were

injured in the attack on the Okhmatdyt National Children's Specialised Hospital, and a doctor was among two people killed, he said.

Russia's Permanent Representative Vasily Nebenzya, who is the President of the Council for this month, listened stone-faced to several representatives condemning the hospital attack.

Accusing Russia of war crimes, Britain's Permanent Representative Barbara Woodward said, "Its conduct is a disgrace to the Security Council, especially to the President's seat."

Nebenzya denied that Russia had hit the hospital and asserted that it was a Ukrainian missile that landed on the hospital.

"If this was a Russian strike, there would have been nothing left of the building, and all the children would have been killed and not wounded," he said bizarrely.

A Ukrainian missile that



tried to intercept a Russian warhead targeting a factory had caused the damage at the hospital, he added.

Western countries were engaged in "verbal gymnastics" to protect Ukraine as the NATO summit was starting in Washington, he said.

Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sergiy Kyslytsya, countered, showing pictures that he said were of the missile fragments that had Russian markings found at the hospital, and of the route the missile fol-

lowed.

"The footage (recording the attack) captured the moment the KH 101 missile dived towards the hospital building," he said.

Acting United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Joyce Msuya, said, "Intentionally directing attacks against a protected hospital is a war crime, and perpetrators must be held to account."

"Yesterday's attacks and their impacts are a reminder of the deplorable human toll of this war,

particularly on the most vulnerable members of society—tragedies we will see again and again as long as this conflict continues and the rules of war are defied," she added.

Guyana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, asked, "What military or other advantage is there to gain from the unconscionable attack against a children's hospital?"

The lives of innocent children "cannot continue to be sacrificed at the altar of political brinkmanship," she said.

South Korea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Joonkook Hwang, called the attack a "new low" and said, "An attack against the most vulnerable among us betrays a basic lack of humanity."

The US Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said that "yesterday's attack makes

abundantly clear (Russia's President Vladimir Putin) is not interested in peace" even though he was pushing Kiev "to accept an unjust peace while facing the barrel of a gun".

China's Deputy Permanent Representative to United Nations, Geng Shuang, short of outrightly condemning Russia, expressed concern at the "large number of casualties among innocent civilians" and over the "fighting (that) has intensified and vicious attacks occurred from time to time, which resulted in serious casualties". "There is no winner in military confrontation," he said.

Meanwhile in Moscow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on a visit to Russia, offered his own criticism of the attack without naming his hosts, "When innocent children are killed, when we see innocent children dying, then the heart pains. And that pain is very horrible."

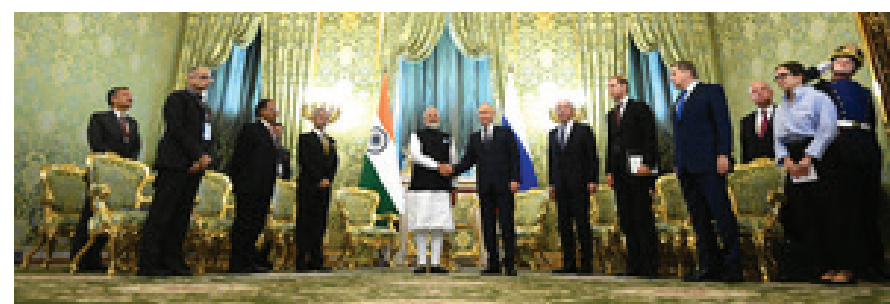
India, Russia set \$100 billion trade target by 2030, to move forward on FTA: Foreign Secretary

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, JULY 9

India and Russia have set a new target of \$100 billion in trade between the two nations by 2030, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said on Tuesday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed larger space of economic engagement, covering trade, capital linkages, energy, science and technology cooperation, and defence and security.

Trade between India and Russia stood at \$65.7 billion in the financial year ending March 2024, a 33 per cent rise over the previous year.

In a media briefing, Kwatra said that a significant component of the bilateral meetings was to how the partnership between India and Russia



can also give a fillip to 'Make in India' and other manufacturing partnerships across a whole range of economic domains.

"PM Modi took up the need to broaden the trade basket between the two countries and in this regard, spoke about a greater market access for Indian goods, both in the agriculture and the industrial sector," he said.

The two leaders also spoke about the need to move forward on the free trade agreement (FTA)

with the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). "We have had one round of discussions between the two countries and it is expected that this would be expedited in the months ahead," said Kwatra.

The two sides have signed nine documents, principally in the economic space. The two leaders also spoke about the new proposed corridor -- the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor. They also focused

on important areas in the economic domain, particularly fertiliser supply from Russia to India which is directly linked to the crop production and the farmers' yield in India.

In the nuclear energy field, the continuing cooperation on the economical nuclear power projects was discussed between the two leaders. Earlier, PM Modi was conferred the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called, Russia's highest civilian award.

PM Modi and Austrian Chancellor agree to strengthen ties, discuss conflict in Ukraine and West Asia

AGENCIES
VIENNA, JULY 10

India and Austria have identified "new possibilities" to further strengthen mutual cooperation besides also deciding to give a strategic direction to their bilateral ties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced here on Wednesday.

Making a joint statement along with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Prime Minister Modi, who arrived in Vienna from Moscow on Tuesday evening, said that he also held detailed discussions on the current geopolitical situation in the world.

"Chancellor Nehammer and I have discussed in detail all the ongoing disputes in the world, whether it is the conflict in Ukraine or the situation in West Asia. I have said it earlier also that this is not the time for war," he said.

PM Modi noted that mutual trust and shared interests have strengthened India-Austria relations.

"Today I had a very fruitful conversation with Chancellor Nehammer.



Shared beliefs in values such as democracy and the rule of law are the strong foundation of India-Austria relations. We both strongly condemn terrorism. We agree that it is not acceptable in any form. It cannot be justified in any way. We also agree to reform the United Nations and other international organizations to make them contemporary and effective," he said.

Earlier, the PM was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Federal Chancery as he began his landmark visit to Austria, the first by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in 41 years.

Scripting a new chapter in bilateral relations,

he was warmly received by Chancellor Nehammer who had last week called the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Vienna as a "special honour".

The Austrian Chancellor hosted PM Modi for a private engagement as the Indian PM arrived from Moscow on Tuesday evening. This was the first meeting between the two leaders and comes at a time when the two countries are marking 75 years of diplomatic relations. He said that discussions on realising the "full potential" of bilateral partnership lie ahead.

Prime Minister Modi thanked Chancellor Nehammer for the "warm welcome" and said that he was looking forward to the discussions on Wednesday as both nations continue working together to further global good. Besides holding talks with Chancellor Nehammer, PM Modi is also scheduled to call on Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, address business leaders from India and Austria and interact with members of the Indian community in Vienna.

Trump vows to stop outsourcing, if elected President

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JULY 9

Former American President Donald Trump has promised to end outsourcing if re-elected, which should sound alarm bells across India's multi-billion-dollar outsourcing industry whose largest customer is the US,

"Stop outsourcing, and turn the United States into a manufacturing superpower," said Trump's 2024 Republican Party Platform released ahead of the party convention next week to anoint him as the party nominee for the White House, in his third run.

The platform is a list of 20 promises that articulate Trump's "vision to Make America Great Again in a way that is concise and digestible for every voter", said Trump Campaign Senior Advisors Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles. "While Joe Biden and Democrats argue about who will be at the top of their ticket and have implemented policies that have raised prices on everyday families, opened the floodgates to migrant crime via wide-open borders, shackled American energy with red tape forced by



Washington bureaucrats, and sewn chaos across the world through weak foreign policy, President Trump will Make America Great Again through these America First principles."

The platform was a mix of the party's conservative agenda and populist measures. They included promises to "seal the border", conduct the largest ever deportation programme, "prevent World War Three", tax cuts for workers, end inflation, build the strongest military in the world, bring peace to Europe and West Asia, and retain the dollar as the world's reserve currency. The Indian government and businesses will be alarmed by the promise to end outsourcing, which will bring back memories of a slew of measures announced in Trump's first term to curb outsourcing and target-

ing of Indian companies that dominated the outsourcing industry in the US. The administration had targeted the H-1B visa programme that American companies use to make up for the shortage of manpower available locally for high-specialty jobs.

The US accounts for an estimated 62 per cent of the business that the Indian outsourcing industry gets worldwide. US companies that have outsourced to Indian companies include giants like Ford Motors, Cisco, American Express (Amex), General Electric and Microsoft. It's not unusual for the US President to rail against outsourcing and offshoring as vast swathes of the country were wiped clean of manufacturing jobs that were shipped abroad to low-wage countries in a globalised economy.

Nikki Haley releases delegates to Republican National Convention, advocates backing Trump

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JULY 10

Nikki Haley, who dropped out of the Republican presidential race in early March, has said that she is releasing her delegates to the Republican National Convention (RNC), urging them to support former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee.

Haley, a former South Carolina governor and former US ambassador to the United Nations, said on Tuesday in a statement that the upcoming nominating convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a time for Republican "unity," as reported by Xinhua news agency.

Haley, who had fiercely criticised the former president, explicitly said in a May speech that she would vote for Trump,

despite the contentious issues that arose between them during the Republican presidential primaries.

Haley is not invited to the 2024 RNC, but she has made it clear she's voting for him, spokeswoman Chaney Denton was quoted by CNN as saying.

According to The Associated Press' estimate, Haley earned 97 delegates during the primary process.

Trump has garnered 2,265 delegates so far, far exceeding the 1,215 benchmark needed for the party's nomination.

Haley's call for "unity" within the Republican Party comes at a time when US President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, is facing mounting pressure to withdraw from the race due to concerns about his physical and mental fitness.

PLI booster: Telecom equipment manufacturing sales cross Rs 50,000 crore

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The telecom equipment manufacturing sales have crossed Rs 50,000 crore under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, creating more than 17,800 direct jobs and many more indirect jobs, the government said on Wednesday.

Within three years of the telecom PLI scheme, it attracted an investment of Rs 3,400 crore, the telecom equipment production exceeded the milestone of Rs 50,000 crore with exports at about Rs 10,500 crore, said the Ministry of Commu-

tions.

The sales of telecom and networking products by PLI beneficiary companies in FY2023-24 increased by 370 per cent in comparison to base year (FY 2019-20).

The gap between telecom imports and exports has reduced significantly with the total value of goods (both telecom equipment and mobiles put together) exported is over Rs 1.49 lakh crore as against imports of over Rs 1.53 lakh crore in FY 23-24, the Centre informed.

"This milestone underscores the robust growth and competitiveness of India's telecom manufac-



turing industry, driven by government initiatives to promote local production and reduce import dependency," said the ministry. India was a large importer of mobile phones in 2014-15, when only 5.8 crore units were produced in the country,

while 21 crore units were imported.

In 2023-24, 33 crore units were produced in India and only 0.3 crore units were imported and close to 5 crore units were exported, according to latest ministry data.

The value of exports of

mobile phones has gone up from Rs 1,556 crore in 2014-15 and just Rs 1,367 crore in 2017-18, to Rs 1,28,982 crore in 2023-24.

"Import of mobile phones was valued at Rs 48,609 crore in 2014-15 and has dropped to just Rs 7,665 crore in 2023-24," the government informed.

By encouraging local production, the PLI scheme has significantly reduced the country's reliance on imported telecom equipment, resulting in import substitution of 60 per cent.

India has become almost self-reliant in Antennae, GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Network)

and CPE (Customer Premises Equipment).

According to the government, the Indian manufacturers are increasingly competing on a global scale, offering high-quality products at competitive prices.

Over the last five years, the trade deficit in telecom (both telecom equipment and mobiles put together) has reduced from Rs 68,000 crore to Rs 4,000 crore and both the PLI schemes have started to make Indian manufacturers globally competitive, attracting investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology.

Thousands to witness welcoming of first mother ship at Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port on Friday

AGENCIES
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 9

Thousands of people will be present at the country's trans-shipment port, the Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port located near the famed Kovalam beach, at 10 a.m. on Friday as it receives its first mothership, Kerala Minister V.N. Vasavan on Tuesday. Vasavan said it is going to be a historic day for the state as the first phase of the port is ready. Present on the occasion would be Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, and Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd (APSEZ) Manag-

ing Director Karan Adani.

"This port will be the country's biggest and globally it will be ranked 6th or 7th. At the moment a 3,000-metre breakwater and 800-metre container berth are ready. Of the 32 cranes required, all but one have come. A 1.7 km approach road for connectivity is almost complete, while the office building, security area and the electric lines are all ready," Vasavan said.

"The first mother ship is coming with around 2,000 containers. After that smaller ships with cargo will also be arriving and it will be a regular feature from then," he added.

64 pc of Indian firms observed enhanced innovative work with GenAI adoption: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

About 64 per cent of the Indian organisations observed enhanced innovative work like developing new features, with adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), versus 61 per cent globally, a new report said on Wednesday.

According to the IT firm Capgemini, innovative work and upskilling are the top areas where organisations are channelling productivity gains.

"GenAI has emerged as a powerful technology to assist software engineers, rapidly gaining adoption. Its impact on coding efficiency and quality is mea-



asurable and proven, yet it holds promise for other software activities," said Pierre-Yves Glever, Head of Global Cloud & Custom Applications at Capgemini.

The report surveyed 1,098 senior executives (director and above) and 1,092 software professionals (architects, developers, testers, and project man-

agers, among others).

Moreover, the report showed that 49 per cent of Indian organisations are focusing on software professionals' efforts on complex, high-value tasks as compared to 46 per cent globally.

About 47 per cent of organisations in India and globally are upskilling

software professionals on business skills and understanding.

Further, the report mentioned that 35 per cent of Indian and global organisations are assessing and evaluating potential GenAI use cases.

About 20 per cent of Indian organisations are running pilots with GenAI as compared to 27 per cent globally.

Around 54 per cent stated that they have the culture and leadership for the implementation of GenAI, while 44 per cent said they have the computation infrastructure and the processes and workflows for the implementation of GenAI.

DoT asks TSPs to adopt villages & employ 5G tech to bridge urban-rural gap

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Department of Communications has asked the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to come forward and adopt villages and employ 5G technology to make the "smart" villages and create sustainable and prosperous future of India's rural communities.

Addressing a workshop on "Transforming Rural Landscape: Designing 5G Intelligent Villages", DoT Secretary Dr Neeraj Mittal highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving the vision of intelligent villages.

He discussed the concept of "smart" and "intelligent" villages, emphasizing the ability of these communities to interact, sense their surroundings, convey data, and extract knowledge, to be able to make informed decisions.

Mittal urged Industry and TSPs to come forward and adopt villages and employ technology to make them intelligent villages. He expressed the hope that workshop will come out with smart solution and test use-cases for creating a sustainable and prosperous future for our rural communities.

Member (T), DoT, Ms Madhu Arora emphasised on the need to bridge the

digital gap between Urban and Rural landscapes. She said the evolving technologies have the potential to enrich the lives of people in rural areas in all spheres of life, be it education, health, environment, agriculture and conservation and intelligent use of natural resources etc.

Senior ministry official firmly asserted that technology must enhance the lives of people in rural areas to be truly valuable. Therefore, we need to develop innovative solutions, ranging from 'Intelligent Display' to micro-robots, to create 5G Intelligent Villages that will positively affect

all sectors and benefit the society at large, particularly the rural population.

The workshop aimed at integrating technology and rural development to enhance quality of life. The integration of cutting-edge innovations, like 5G, with traditional rural practices was highlighted as a pathway to foster sustainable growth and improve living standards in rural areas.

The 5G Intelligent Village Initiative of the DoT responds to the pressing need for equitable technological advancement by harnessing the transformative power of 5G technology to uplift rural communities.

FDI in Indian real estate sector to grow at 20 pc by 2025: Industry

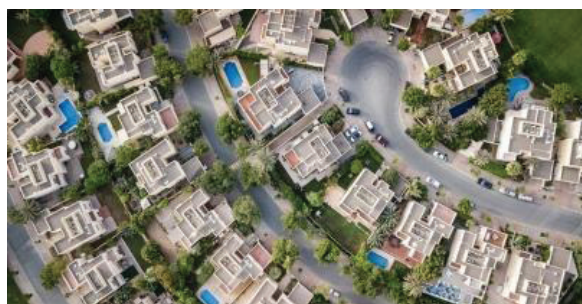
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Indian real estate has emerged as an economic growth engine and foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector is expected to grow at 20 per cent by 2025, industry experts said on Wednesday.

The real estate sector has emerged as the largest employment provider and rapid urbanisation, smart cities, housing for all and relaxation in the FDI regulations will further boost the sector, said Sanjeev Kumar Arora, Member, Haryana RERA, at an ASSOCHAM event.

The government introduced the RERA Act, 2016 with an aim to bring transparency to the sector with disciplined growth and sustainability solutions. About 1.25 lakh projects have been registered under RERA in pan-India since its enactment, Arora said.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Chairman, National Coun-



cil on Real Estate, Housing and Urban Development, ASSOCHAM and Chairman, Signature Global (India), said that in order to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, the housing and real estate sector needs a constant push, which will also generate more employment opportunities.

"The vision is that every family will have a home and job opportunity, as this sector is crucial to make India the top economy. Real estate is a Rs 24 lakh crore market, and its GDP contribution is around 13.8 per cent," Aggarwal told the gathering.

In a boost for 'ease of living' and dignity for crores of Indians, the Cabinet has decided to further expand the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and construct 3 crore additional rural and urban houses.

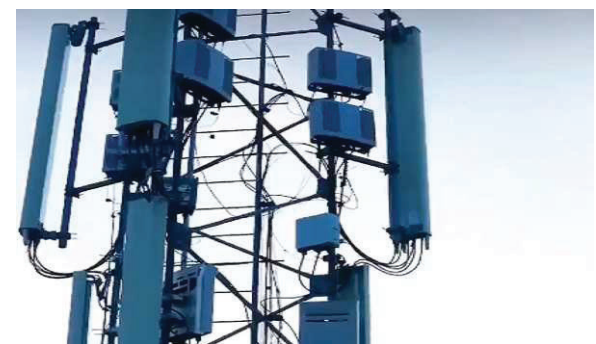
According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this decision "underscores the government's commitment to addressing the housing needs of our nation and ensuring that every citizen leads a better quality of life". "The expansion of PMAY also highlights our government's commitment to inclusive growth and social welfare," he said.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has pushed Telecom and Network production to exceed Rs 50,000 crore mark and generating thousands of job both direct and indirect, says Government.

Within three years of the Telecom PLI scheme, the scheme has attracted an investment of Rs 3,400 crore, the telecom equipment production has exceeded the milestone of Rs 50,000 crore with exports totaling approximately Rs 10,500 crore, creating more than 17,800 direct jobs and many more indirect jobs, Ministry of Communication said in an official statement.

This milestone underscores the robust growth and competitiveness of India's telecom manufacturing industry, driven by government initiatives to promote local production and reduce import dependency.



The PLI scheme aims to enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities and make India a global hub for telecom equipment production. The scheme also offers financial incentives to manufacturers based on their incremental sales from products manufactured in India.

The PLI Scheme for Large Scale Electronic Manufacturing of Electronics covers the manufacture of mobile phones and its components. As a result of this PLI scheme, both the production and export of mobile phones from India has picked up greatly.

dropped to just Rs 7,665 crore in 2023-24.

India has been importing telecom gear for many years, but the balance has changed due to the Make-in-India and PLI scheme, leading to the production of equipment valued at over Rs 50,000 crore in the country, the statement said.

Indian manufacturers are increasingly competing on a global scale, offering high-quality products at competitive prices.

Telecom equipment includes intricate items like radios, routers, and network equipment, among others. Furthermore, companies are permitted by the government to avail benefits for producing 5G equipments. 5G Telecom equipment manufactured in India is currently being exported to North America and Europe.

As a result of the PLI Scheme for Telecom and Networking Products and other related initiatives

In fact, over the last five years, the trade deficit in telecom (both telecom equipment and mobiles put together) has reduced from Rs 68,000 crore to Rs 4,000 crore and both the PLI Schemes have started to make Indian manufacturers globally competitive, attract investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology; ensure efficiencies of scale; enhance exports and make India an integral part of the global value chain. It has transformed India's exports basket from traditional commodities to high value-added products.

Industry, telcos to deploy technology to create 5G intelligent villages: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Emphasising the priority to unlock the potential of 5G technology for rural development, the government on Wednesday urged the industry and telecom service providers (TSPs) to come forward and deploy technology to create "5G Intelligent Villages".

The "5G Intelligent Village" initiative of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) responds to the pressing need for equitable tech-



nological advancement by harnessing the transformative power of 5G technology to uplift rural communities.

At a DoT workshop,

Telecommunications Secretary Dr Neeraj Mittal discussed the concept of "smart" and "intelligent" villages, emphasising the ability of these communi-

ties to interact, sense their surroundings, convey data, and extract knowledge, to be able to make informed decisions.

He urged Industry and TSPs to come forward and adopt villages and employ technology to make them intelligent villages.

Emphasising the government's priority on enhancing rural development, the workshop showcased initiatives aimed at improving connectivity, digital literacy, and sustainable practices to significantly enhance

the quality of life for rural communities.

The experts emphasised on the need to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural landscapes. The workshop aimed at integrating technology and rural development to enhance quality of life.

The integration of cutting-edge innovations, like 5G, with traditional rural practices was highlighted as a pathway to foster sustainable growth and improve living standards in rural areas.

Supreme Court gives big relief to Adani Ports in land case in Gujarat

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed a Gujarat High Court order that had asked the state government to recover 108 hectares of land that had been allotted to Adani Ports and SEZ.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan passed the order in an appeal filed by Adani Ports against the recovery

of around 108 hectares of land by the Gujarat government. The Supreme Court has now sought the Gujarat government's reply on the matter.

This land is located near Mundra port in Kachchh district. The matter goes back to 2005 when the 108 hectares were allotted to Adani Ports. In 2010, when Adani Ports started fencing the land, residents of Navinal village there approached the high

court with a public interest litigation (PIL) and challenged the allotment of 231 hectares of grazing land to Adani Ports. They argued that the village was facing a shortage of grazing land and this allotment would leave them with only 45 acres. In 2014, the court disposed of the matter after the state government said that an order granting 387 hectares of government land for grazing had been passed.

Sunil Chhetri promises full commitment to Indian footballing dream at Durand Cup 2024 unveiling

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

At an event that honoured the long-stemmed history of the Durand Cup, President of India Droupadi Murmu unveiled the three trophies, Durand Cup, Shimla Trophy, and President Cup ahead of the 2024 edition of the tournament. Indian football's absolute brightest star Sunil Chhetri was present at the event and gave a passionate speech regarding his feelings on Indian Football and said he 'can't wait' for the day Indian football reaches its potential.

"Over the last two decades, I have had the opportunity to see the highs and endure the lows as a footballer and have faced whatever Indian football has had to offer. The one constant has been the belief that one day we as a nation will realise the potential of complete Indian football and I can't wait for that,"



said Chhetri whilst speaking at the event,

Chhetri's comments come at a time when the country's footballing scene seems to be like a rudderless ship.

The team currently does not have a Head Coach after the debacle between the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and Igor Stimac unfolded in June. The new coach will be announced at the

end of July.

"I am an optimist, most of when it comes to Indian football. While I can't change anything on the pitch as I am no longer a player for the national team, I can very happily promise that I am committed to doing whatever it takes to make sure we as a nation can reach the promised land.

It's on all of us to back Indian footballers, the ecosystem, and chase the dream we all commonly share," added India's all-time leading top scorer.

Sunil Chhetri's ability to raise optimism in the minds of many people matches his remarkable prowess in the field as the man with the most appearances in a Blue Tigers shirt went on to talk about the prestigious Durand Cup.

"It's an honour to be here amongst all of you as an ambassador of my sport but also more importantly as a citizen of this glorious country who had the good fortune of playing for my nation for 19 years," he added.

Chhetri played for City Club in Delhi at the 2001-02 season of the Durand Cup where he managed to impress scouts which kickstarted his career and went on to become one of the most important in the history of the sport in India.

When I got discovered. As a young kid in Delhi, I was discovered here and I got my big break and that's how my journey started. This is not just any tournament, it's a very important tournament with a lot of history, tradition, and culture and I could not be more happy to be here on this stage talking about the Durand Cup," concluded the former Indian speaker.

Alvarez, Messi score as Argentina beat Canada to enter Copa America final

AGENCIES
EAST RUTHERFORD (US), JULY 10

With goals from Julian Alvarez and Lionel Messi, Argentina defeated Canada 2-0 on Tuesday in the Copa America 2024 semifinal at the MetLife Stadium to make back-to-back finals in the competition.

This is Argentina's fourth final in the last five editions of the tournament. The will play the final of the tournament on July 14 at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami against the winner of the Colombia-Uruguay match.

Canada will play on July 13 at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte against the loser of the aforementioned match.

Canada and Argentina delivered a first half that began chaotically and was equally entertaining: without a midfield, and without the tension that defining matches usually have.

The first blow finally came in the 23rd minute



with a goal from Alvarez, who received a good through ball from Rodrigo De Paul, shook off the marking and scored to break the tie.

Argentina neutralised the Canadian attacks and created good scoring opportunities.

At the end of the first half, Messi made a move in the area, and his shot went just past the goalkeeper's post.

The last chance of the first half was for Jonathan David, with Canada's first shot on goal in the match. At halftime, Argentina was ahead 1-0.

At the start of the

second half, Messi cut in from the right as he used to do in his early days. Inside the box, he passed to Rodrigo de Paul, and after a rebound, Enzo Fernandez shot at the goal. Messi himself deflected it, and after a VAR review, it was confirmed as 2-0 for Argentina, marking Messi's first goal in this edition and his 14th in his Copa America career.

With that comfortable lead, Argentina slowed the game down and made substitutions to refresh the team. Di Maria also came off, in one of his last matches for the national team.

Indian women's star duo, Diksha and Aditi ready for busy schedule including Evian Championship

AGENCIES
EVIAN-LES-BAINS (FRANCE), JULY 10

Diksha Dagar and Aditi Ashok will fly the Indian flag at the women's Major, the Amundi Evian Championships this week. The two Indians will play a series of high-profile events over the next six weeks and they include two Majors, an Olympic Games, and the Women's Scottish Open, a Ladies European Tour (LET) event, which is co-sanctioned with the LPGA.

While Diksha plays seven events in eight weeks, Aditi Ashok, who has been playing on the

LPGA in the US, will play the two Majors, Evian and AIG Women's Open, Olympic Games, and the Women's Scottish Open.

Aditi, one spot away from a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, plays her third Olympics, while Diksha is ready for her second one.

Diksha is coming off a T-14 finish at the Aramco Series London and has been showing signs of coming back into the kind of form that saw her finish third on the LET order of Merit.

Currently, 14th on the Order of Merit, she has had three Top-10s, four Top-20, and two other Top-25 finishes.

Rachin, Sears, O'Rourke, Duffy get New Zealand cricket central contracts

AGENCIES
CHRISTCHURCH, JULY 10

Rachin Ravindra, Ben Sears, Will O'Rourke and Jacob Duffy have been offered their first New Zealand central contracts for the 2024-25 year with left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel returning to the list.

Ravindra shone at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 in India, finishing as the competition's fourth leading run-scorer with 578 runs, before returning home to star in the Test and T20I summer.

His rise was rewarded in January when he was named the ICC Emerging Player of the Year for 2023, and in March when he became the youngest

recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal at the ANZ New Zealand Cricket Awards.

"Growing up you'd see those contract lists come out each year and think it would be cool to be on that list one day - and for it to eventuate now is a pinch-myself moment. It's been a really cool past 12 months playing international cricket. I've learned a lot and the hunger is definitely there to keep improving and giving to the BLACKCAPS," said Ravindra.

"It's such a special group to be in, from players to support staff - and that's been the most enjoyable part, to be honest. Playing a game you love with your mates for a living is some-



thing very special, and I hold it close to my heart," he added.

Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel added to the 20-player contract list after missing out during the previous cycle.

Patel, contracted previously in the 2020-21 and 2022-23 seasons, received his offer ahead of a busy red ball schedule, including upcoming overseas Tests against Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and India, and a three match home series

against England.

Rachin will be joined by team-mate Ben Sears, Will O'Rourke and Otago's Jacob Duffy, should they accept their offers, as new faces on a proposed annual International Playing Contract list.

Sears, who played alongside Ravindra at the 2016 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup, featured in 11 T20Is for the Blackcaps during the 2023-24 season, claiming 13 wickets at an average of 22.

He made his Test debut against Australia at Hagley Oval in March, claiming four for 90 in the second innings. The 26-year-old pace-bowler was also included as a travelling reserve in the New Zealand

land squad for the ICC T20 World Cup in the West Indies and USA.

Meanwhile, O'Rourke's contract offer came after a 12-month period in which he made his international debut in all three formats.

Of the players contracted in the previous year, Kane Williamson, Lockie Ferguson and Adam Milne made themselves unavailable for a contract for the coming season.

Williamson has been offered a 'casual playing contract' by NZC for the 2024-25 season after reaffirming his commitment to the BlackCaps for the coming home summer, in which he is set to feature outside the January window.

Neil Wagner will not appear on the central contract list for the first time since 2013 after retiring from international cricket in February, while Central Stags bowler Blair Ticker has not been offered a central contract offer for the upcoming year.

Players offered central contracts for 2024-25: Finn Allen, Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Will Young

Suryakumar Yadav retains second spot in T20I batting rankings

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JULY 10

Star batter Suryakumar Yadav stayed put on second position in the latest ICC Men's T20I batting rankings, which also features Rituraj Gaikwad, who made significant progress following his exploits in the ongoing away series against Zimbabwe.

Suryakumar is placed second with 821 rating points behind Australia's Travis Head, who has 844 rating points.

Phil Salt of England is paced third with 797

points, ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam (755), Mohammad Rizwan (746) and Jos Buttler (716).

Gaikwad has gained 13 places to climb to the seventh spot in the rankings on the back of a stellar 77 not out off 47 balls in a comprehensive 100-run win for India in the second T20I against Zimbabwe.

With most of India's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024-winning squad rested for the Zimbabwe tour, the five-game series has allowed India's back-up players to showcase their talent, and with the



retirement of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja, the

upcoming players can make a good case for a regular place in the side.

Apart from Gaikwad, Rinku Singh and Abhishek Sharma also made solid gains among the India batters.

Rinku, who was among the reserves for the T20 World Cup, jumped four places to reach the 39th spot on the back of an attacking 48 not out from 22 balls in the second T20I.

And after a duck in the first game, all-rounder Abhishek smashed a stunning 100 from just 47 balls in the second game. With this spectacular knock, he entered the rankings for

the first time at 75th spot. Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett gained 25 places to finish at the 96th position courtesy of his two attacking cameos, making 22 off 15 and 26 off nine in the two matches.

In the bowlers' T20I chart, left-arm spinner Axar Patel dropped two places to be the lone Indian in top-10 at the ninth position with 644 rating points.

Fellow left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav also dropped three places to the 11th spot, while T20 World Cup's player-of-

the-tournament Jasprit Bumrah also slid two rungs to 14th position.

Besides, there were some movements in the top 10 positions of the bowling rankings, with Adam Zampa (7th), Fazalhaq Farooqi (8th), and Maheesh Theekshana (10th) gaining positions.

India's Ravi Bishnoi, with his six scalps in the first two games against Zimbabwe, jumped eight places to move to the 14th spot.

Blessing Muzarabani also gained eight positions after the first two matches,

up to 55th, with his spell of 1/17 instrumental in Zimbabwe winning the first T20I.

India vice-captain Hardik Pandya, meanwhile, dropped a place to the second position in the T20I all-rounders' rankings.

Wanindu Hasaranga of Sri Lanka moved to pole position.

India's Washington Sundar entered the top 50 on the back of his quickfire 27 in the first game, as well as his three wickets in two outings.

Axar is placed 12th in the all-rounders' rankings.

Gautam Gambhir yet to ink salary deal, first big 'Test' would be 'Down Under'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The financial nitty-gritties of Gautam Gambhir's appointment as India's head coach are yet to be worked out but that's the "last of his concerns" right now as he is focussed on getting a support staff of choice to prepare for the enormous challenges that await him during the three-year stint.

On Tuesday, BCCI secretary Jay Shah officially announced Gambhir's appointment, which was on cards for a long time. However, it is learnt that his salary is yet to be finalised although it is expected to be in the same bracket as that of his predecessors Rahul Dravid and Ravi Shastri.

"For Gautam, it was important that he took charge and salary and other stuff can be worked out as it's not going anywhere. It is similar to the case of Ravi Shastri in 2014 when he was first made Director of Cricket over head coach Duncan Fletcher," a BCCI source told PTI.

"The day Ravi joined, he didn't even have a contract and things worked out. In case of Gautam also, some finer details are being worked out. The salary will be in the same range of Rahul Dravid," he added. It is understood that Gambhir will be given his own team to work with, who will also closely co-ordinate with the NCA (National Cricket Academy) coaches, who look

after the pathways teams (India A and U-19) as well as the targeted players.

"I look forward to working closely with the BCCI, Head of Cricket - Mr VVS Laxman, the support staff, and, most importantly, the players, as we work towards achieving success in the upcoming tournaments," Gambhir had said.

Laxman is currently in Zimbabwe with the young T20 team, but it is expected that once he is back, the NCA head, along with the new head coach and chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar, the two captains Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya will have a discussion on the road ahead.

Brainstorming over support staff

There is a lot of interest surrounding who will be

Gambhir's core support staff.

Abhishek Nayar, the head of KKR's academy and a former Mumbai stalwart has been one of the key back-room strategists for the IPL franchise.

He is also known to be a life coach, who has helped players one-on-one on professional basis.

More importantly, he is one of current captain Rohit Sharma's closest friends. Having ticked all boxes, he looks set to be one of the assistant coaches. One BCCI office-bearer, who primarily operates from Delhi, is believed to have floated the names of L Balaji and Zaheer Khan as two prospective candidates for the bowling coach's job.

A few other reports

have indicated R Vinay Kumar's name, believed to be Gambhir's choice.

However, it is understood that the BCCI has rejected the proposal even though there's no confirmation of such a development from BCCI secretary Jay Shah, the man who matters in BCCI.

As far as the fielding coach's role is concerned, Jonty Rhodes' name seems to have cropped up again but if one looks at the trend of the past two coaching cycles, BCCI has always preferred one of its home-grown talents in the set-up.

For instance, R Sridhar was a core member of Shastri's team and worked through the ranks in the NCA and the India U-19 set-up. Ditto for T Dilip, who

worked extensively under Dravid at NCA and also went for India A assignments.

There is a school of thought that perhaps Munish Bali, who has been around the set-up for some time now and knows most of the youngsters coming through the system, can be given a try as well.

The T20I and ODI squad for the Sri Lanka series will be announced in the next few days but the IPL-winning former KKR mentor's priority for the next one year would be the two traditional formats -- ODIs and Tests.

Gambhir's first big test would certainly be Australia, where India under Ravi Shastri's tutelage had won back-to-back Test series in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

DDCA releases tender invitations for inaugural season of Delhi Premier League

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 6

The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA), a duly affiliated state unit of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has invited bids to own team franchises in its upcoming state-level T20 cricket leagues for men's and women's titled as the 'Delhi Premier League'.

The DDCA has released a 'Notice Inviting Tender' (NIT) inviting bidders on team franchisees proposed to be introduced to take part in the League. The governing body has proposed the beginning of the new league in August/September 2024.

The League will initially comprise six teams each for men and women that will participate in the league under a round-robin format during each season, with Play-off Matches following the first round to decide the winner, runner-up, and third-placed team in the League. The DDCA also has the right to change the number of teams participating in the League as it may deem appropriate from time to time.

Bidders will have to put up a minimum bid of Rs 25,00,000 (twenty-five lakh) and after evaluations, the qualified bidders will have to give a presentation before the final decision is made.

Vice Chairman DDC presides over Weekly Block Diwas proceedings at Kathua

JNEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JULY 10

The Weekly Block Diwas proceedings for Block Kathua were held at the Conference Hall of the DC office complex, presided over by Vice Chairman, DDC Kathua, Raghunandan Singh in presence of ADC Kathua, Ranjit Singh.

CPO Kathua Ranjit Thakur, CMO, CEO, XENs of PHE, PWD, Irrigation, DFO, other District and Sectoral level officers, and public representatives were also present.

The proceedings commenced with Ex Sarpanch Sahar highlighting issues related to the incomplete CFC Building. In response, the XEN REW was directed to escalate the matter to higher authorities to expedite the building's completion.

Ex Sarpanch Khartore presented concerns



regarding the slow pace of JJM works, the dilapidated condition of the link road, the bifurcation of Ration Cards, the posting of Patwari in Halqa Kharote, the completion of pending building work at GHSS Kharote, and the slow pace of PMGSY work.

Ex Sarpanch Logate brought attention to the need for a boundary wall for the local Tubewell and the provision of a flyover on the railway line.

Other issues raised by the public included the formation of Village Defence Committees in Border and Kandi villages, illegal tree felling,

solutions for the monkey menace in the Kandi belt of Kathua, and incidents of illegal mining.

Addressing the issue of slow pace of JJM works in Kharote, the XEN PHE informed that the pace of work will increase as the dry dugwell has been taken up and the construction of a new Tubewell will start soon, following the completion of the tendering process. He assured that the boundary wall of the Tubewell will be constructed shortly.

It was informed in the meeting that the repair of the link road will be addressed by the con-

cerned executing agency in a timely manner.

ADC Kathua assured that the vacant post of Patwari will be filled as a priority.

Regarding the issue of illegal tree felling, the DFO Kathua emphasized that any such incidents should be reported to the Forest Department promptly, enabling swift action against the perpetrators.

Vice Chairman DDC Raghunandan Singh assured that issues related to the monkey menace and the formation of VDCs will be addressed at appropriate forums to ensure public concerns are resolved effectively.

ADC Kathua directed all stakeholder departments to resolve issues related to their departments in a time-bound manner, ensuring efficient redressal of public grievances.

SANKALP-HEW, Mission Shakti Kishtwar organises Awareness Camp on Maternity Benefit Week under 100 days

JNEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10



In a significant step towards enhancing maternal and child health, Sankalp HEW Kishtwar under the directions of DSWO Kishtwar Zubair Ahmed, conducted an awareness session in collaboration with ICDS at PO ICDS New DC Office Complex Kishtwar.

This session aimed at educating pregnant and lactating mothers about the importance of nutrition and adequate rest before childbirth. The primary objectives of this session are Educating Mothers on Nutrition, emphasising the need for rest and creating awareness on health practices.

Sankalp team discussed the objectives of PMMVY Schemes to provide cash incentive for partial compensation for the wage loss so that the women can take adequate rest before and after child birth and

to improve health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The collaborative effort by SANKALP-HEW and ICDS marks a significant stride in promoting maternal and child health. By focusing on the critical aspects of nutrition and rest, this awareness session aim to ensure healthier outcomes for mothers and their babies, contributing to the overall well-being of communities.

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Kishtwar-Paddar Road reopened after clearance of landslide at Pathernaki Point, Nagseni

JNEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 10

The crucial Kishtwar to Paddar road was successfully reopened today following the clearance of a landslide at the Pathernaki Point of Nagseni. Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav personally ensured the safety of the newly cleared road by test-driving his vehicle.

The previous day, the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar visited the landslide affected area at Pathernaki Point, Nagseni, and oversaw the road clearance work throughout the day, accompanied by SDM Paddar Amit Kumar, DDC Paddar Hari Krishan Chouhan, Tehsildar Nagseni Rafie Naik, and project authorities.

The combined efforts of the District Admin-



istration, Police, GREF, and hydroelectric power projects have resulted in the successful reopening of the road at Pathernaki slide point by this morning.

The road for light vehicles has been restored, thereby re-establishing connectivity to the Paddar Sub Division.

Pilgrims and stranded individuals have now been able to cross, and essential commodities have been supplied to Paddar.

Deputy Commissioner expressed his appreciation for the patience of people and the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders involved in this critical operation.

Block Diwas: DDC Rajouri held public outreach camp at Thananandi

JNEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 10

District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today convened a public outreach camp at Thananandi under the weekly Block Diwas program, reaffirming the commitment of the district administration to transparency, accountability, and doorstep delivery of government services.

The camp provided a platform for the public and their representatives to raise various issues, including power and water supply, healthcare facilities, roads, education, and drainage systems. The DDC, Om Prakash Bhagat, patiently listened to the concerns and assured the public that their genuine demands would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

He emphasized the



dedication of the district administration to development and its efforts to provide government services at the doorstep of the general public. The DDC directed the concerned officers to take immediate measures to mitigate the problems highlighted during the camp.

Regarding the drainage system, the Executive Officer Municipal Committee

Thananandi was instructed to ensure a proper drainage system within the municipal limits. The concerned Executive Engineers were also directed to ensure proper maintenance of roads during the rainy season to prevent public inconvenience.

The DDC apprised the public of various government schemes and programs launched for their

welfare and urged them to come forward and avail themselves of the benefits. He exhorted the officers to work with zeal, devotion and dedication to provide facilities at the doorstep of the public.

The DDC also carried out a plantation drive in the premises of Government Boys Higher Secondary School Thananandi.

The event was attended by ADDC, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, SDM Thananandi Abid Hussain Shah, ACP, Sheraz Chowhan, CEO, Mohd Mushtaq, CMO, Dr. Manohar Rana, EXEN Jal Shakti Rajouri Ashwini Sharma, EXEN PMGSY Rajouri and concerned district and sectoral officers.

District Administration Samba launches crackdown on Illegal Mining

JNEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 10

In a significant move to combat illegal mining, the District Administration Samba has launched a comprehensive and coordinated effort to curb this menace.

Led by District Magistrate Samba, Abhishek Sharma, the initiative has resulted in creation of a database of defaulters and potential miners first of its kind in Jammu and Kashmir, the same will be shared with police and other enforcement agency for further scrutiny.

Identification of area-wise hotspots and potential illegal miners,

Intensified raids by geology and mining department resulted in Penalising of 50 vehicles and imposition of penalties in last ten days. 6 FIRs were also registered in different police stations in last five months.

In a decisive move to curb illegal mining activities in the district, Deputy Commissioner Samba Abhishek Sharma has announced the initiation of the toughest actions against violators.

The Deputy Commissioner revealed that district administration has adopted zero-tolerance policy towards illegal mining and anyone found involved in such activities will be dealt with an iron hand.

The district administration is committed to taking all necessary actions to ensure the protection of our resources, he added.

Moreover, Deputy Commissioner also emphasised on the review of weekly progress of Tehsil Level Multi Departmental Task Force cell and monthly review about the achievements and progress made by the department of geology and mining.

Mega Campus Placement Drive held at Government Polytechnic Jammu



JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 10

Two days mega placement drive was organized by Government Polytechnic Jammu on the 9th and 10th of July, 2024, to provide employment to the students.

About 215 Students participated in the placement drive out of which 111 students from Government Polytechnic Jammu, Women Polytechnic Kathua, Government Polytechnic Samba, Reasi, Udhampur, Ramban, Rajouri, NITS, and IECS were selected.

Er. Arun Bangotra, Principal of the Institute thanked Tata Motors for providing the job opportunity to the Polytechnic students. He also impressed upon the students to participate in the placement drive with full enthusiasm and make full use of their professional and technical skill for employability to

aged them to wholeheartedly join the Tata group. He also appreciated the efforts of Er. Arun Bangotra and his Team for organizing such a mega placement drive to provide employment to the students.

The arrangements for the placement drive were done by the Training and placement cell of Polytechnic, Er. Ajay Thapa, OIC and his dedicated team, including Rishabh Gupta and Manmoham Singh.

Others present on the occasion were Inderjeet Singh, Workshop Superintendent; Manjeet Singh, HOD Electrical Engg, Raj Shekhar, HOD Automobile Engg, Sanjay Koul, HOD of Computer Engg, Er Rani Devi, HOD I.T; and Sanam Gupta, Incharge Mechanical Engg Deptt., Amit Sharma, I/C T&T, and staff of the college.

various organizations.

Mr. Naim Qureshi HR Manager from Tata Motors delivered a pre-placement talk to the students, following which written tests and personal interviews were conducted over the two-day recruitment event.

The Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, and the Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, in collaboration with the District Manager Common Service Centers (CSC).

The primary focus of the session was to enhance the skills of CSC operators, enabling PACS to efficiently provide various government-to-citizen, business-to-citizen services, financial inclusion, insurance, and more to its members and the general public.

The Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, chaired the session. She urged the CSC operators and secretaries of PACS to take full advantage of the training and engage proactively in the program.

Capacity building training session held in Udhampur

JNEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 10

A one-day capacity building and training session was organized for the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) of Udhampur and Ramban districts. This session was conducted by the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, and the Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, in collaboration with the District Manager Common Service Centers (CSC).

The primary focus of the session was to enhance the skills of CSC operators, enabling PACS to efficiently provide various government-to-citizen, business-to-citizen services, financial inclusion, insurance, and more to its members and the general public.

The Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Udhampur, chaired the session. She urged the CSC operators and secretaries of PACS to take full advantage of the training and engage proactively in the program.

LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY

J&K State Committee



Welcomes

Sh. Chirag Paswan Ji

Hon'ble Minister of
Food Processing Industries

National President
Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas)


Pranab Kumar
NATIONAL YOUTH PRESIDENT


Rafiq Mailk
STATE PRESIDENT


VIKRAM SINGH
STATE GEN SECRETARY


R.P. Singh State
GEN SECRETARY


Devinder Pal Singh
STATE SECRETARY


Puran Chand
STATE SECRETARY


Pankaj Gupta
STATE SECRETARY


M.K. Bhat
STATE PRESIDENT MIGRANT


Shakeel Ahmed
STATE PRESIDENT ST CELL


Varun Bali
STATE SR VICE PRESIDENT


Shehbaz Malik
STATE YOUTH PRESIDENT


Arbaz Malik
VICE PRESIDENT (YOUTH WING)