

**DENGUE WARNING SIGNS**

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Increased and continuous severe joint pain
- Discomfort or pain in the eyes
- Persistent vomiting
- A drop in body temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool
- Redness on the skin

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## India pitches for infusing new energies into BIMSTEC grouping

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

India on Thursday called on seven-nation BIMSTEC grouping to infuse new energies, resources and a fresh commitment to bolster cooperation among the Bay of Bengal countries.

The appeal was made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar while hosting his counterparts from BIMSTEC member states at a two-day

## PM Modi meets economists ahead of Budget for 2024-25

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is meeting eminent economists to elicit their views and suggestions for the upcoming Budget, a senior Government official said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget for 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on July 23.

Besides economists and sectoral experts, NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery and other members also attended the meeting. Finance Minister Sith-



araman, Planning Minister Rao Inderjit Singh, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran and economists Surjit Bhalla and Ashok Gulati and veteran banker K V Kamath among others were present in the meeting. The Budget for 2024-25 will be the first major economic document of the Modi 3.0

## Four days after Kathua ambush, security forces' combing operations draw blank

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 11

More army personnel were deployed in the hills and dense forests of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua-Udhampur-Doda belt as the search for the terrorists behind the ambush on an army patrol in Kathua district entered its fourth day on Thursday.

Since the attack on Monday, that killed five army personnel and injured as many, 60 people have been detained for questioning, including three individuals suspected of providing food and



shelter to the terrorists, officials said.

One those detained is a woman who cooked food and handed over it to a person. The quantity of

food prepared was sufficient for "10 to 15 people", they said. Security agencies suspect that the food was intended for the terrorists, the officials added.

In Kathua, senior police and Border Security Force officers from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab met to discuss the security grid along the International Border (IB), from across which the terrorists are believed to have infiltrated, the officials said.

In the interstate security review meeting, discussions were held on devising a joint strategy for addressing cross-border infiltration along the Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab stretch of the IB and countering terrorist activities in the

## Army Commander visits Siachen, asks troops to be prepared for challenges

**AGENCIES**  
LEH, JAMMU, JULY 11

Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General M V Suchindra Kumar on Thursday visited forward posts at Siachen glacier in Ladakh and asked the troops to remain in a "high state of operational readiness".

The commander appreciated the professional excellence of the brigade guarding the borderline with Pakistan, the Northern Command said. "Lt Gen M V Suchindra Kumar, Army commander northern command accompanied by



GOC Fire and Fury corps visited forward posts of Siachen brigade to review operational preparedness," it wrote on X.

The commander asked the troops to remain in a high state of operational readiness to meet all challenges and be prepared for future challenges.

## Inter-state Security Review Meet

## Senior BSF, Police Officials from Punjab, J&K fine-tune counter terrorist strategy at Kathua

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 11

Top Border Security Force (BSF) and police officials from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab gathered for an inter-state coordination conference in bordering Kathua district of J&K on Wednesday in the backdrop of a terrorist ambush on an army patrol that left five soldiers dead and as many injured on Tuesday.

As per news agency, the meeting was attended by Special Director General of BSF, Western Command, Y B Khurania, Jammu and



Kashmir Director General of Police R R Swain, his Punjab counterpart

Gaurav Yadav, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), J-K,

Vijay Kumar, ADG (Law and Order), Punjab, Arpit Shukla and Inspector General-rank BSF officers of Punjab and Jammu were also present at the meeting, they said.

"The meeting was held for three and half-hours during which officers from various agencies deliberated on security grid along the International Border and plug any loopholes," officials said, adding "Discussions were held on devising a joint strategy for addressing cross-border infiltration along

## SC collegium recommends two names for elevation as Apex Court Judges

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JUL 11

The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Thursday recommended to the Centre the names of high court judges N Kotiswar Singh and R Mahadevan for elevation to the apex court.

While Justice Singh is currently the Chief Justice of the High Court for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Mahadevan is the Acting

## Unattended Kashmiri Pandit temple, shrine property be protected by State: High Court

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 11

In a judgement of far-reaching consequences, the J&K and Ladakh High Court has ordered that Kashmiri Hindu temples, shrines left unattended and vulnerable to encroachments and land mafia be protected by the state.

Renowned advocate, Mohsin Qadri, senior additional advocate general of J&K represented the state in this case. Senior advocate C.M. Koul represented the petitioners through virtual mode.

Delivering a landmark



judgement, Justice Sanjeev Kumar has allowed a petition by the members of the Kashmiri Pandit community and directed the district magistrate of north Kashmir Ganderbal district to preserve, protect and maintain two Hindu religious shrines namely 'Asthapan Devraj Bharav' situated in Nuner village of the district and 'Vidhush' shrine and to take

requisite steps under the J&K Migrant Immovable Property (Preservation, Protection and Restraint on Distress Sales) Act 1997.

The petitioners had also raised a grievance against unscrupulous elements over the encroachment at the only cremation ground in Ganderbal district for the local Hindu community.

The petitioners held that after the migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, including the Ganderbal district in 1990, respondents number 5 and 6, who had themselves also migrated out of the Valley, had noth-

ing to do with the management of these shrines, but had encumbered upon these by leasing them out to respondents number 7 and 8.

The petitioners held that respondents 5 and 6 in connivance with respondents 7 and 8 have destroyed, encroached upon and encumbered the shrine properties.

The high court order said, "Without going into the rival claims of the petitioners as well as respondents 5 and 6 to manage the shrines and its properties, suffice it to say that the District

## ED arrests another accused in JKSSB SI exam paper leak case

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Nearly three weeks after arresting the alleged mastermind of the 2022 JKSSB Sub-Inspector recruitment exam paper leak, the Enforcement Directorate has nabbed another absconding accused and secured a five-day custody of him from a special court here, officials said on Thursday.

Anil Kumar, 31, a resident of Lahroda in Mahendragarh district of Haryana, was

## Army Chief Gen Dwivedi calls on Dr Jitendra Singh, holds meeting

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi called on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at North Block here.

This was the first meeting between the two after Gen Dwivedi took over as the Army Chief a few days back. Dr Jitendra Singh commended the role and sacrifice of the Indian Army in dealing with the security situation in J&K. Dr. Jitendra Singh congratulated General Dwivedi for the new responsibility and also commended him for his wealth of expe-



rience, expertise and proven track record. He, being a decorated soldier and officer with 40 years of service to the nation, has served in Northern, Eastern and Western theatres in varied operational environments including a long stint in different ter-

rains of Jammu & Kashmir. Dr. Jitendra Singh said, he felt added pleasure to note that Gen Dwivedi belonged to the J&K rifles regiment into which he was commissioned in 1984 and was also well versed with the

## Delay in Panchayat polls

## J&K govt extends tenure of administrators for 3 more months

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JUL 11

Amid delay in holding Panchayat polls in J&K, the administration of the Union Territory has extended the tenure of administrators appointed earlier this year for running affairs of Panchayats, saying that it is satisfied that they cannot be constituted immediately.

As per the news agency, the Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development has extended the tenure of administrators of Panchayats for

a further period of three months w.e.f. 10.07.2024 or till the constitution of Panchayats, whichever is earlier.

On January 10, the J&K government had appointed block development officers (BDOs) as administrators of Panchayat Halqas under their jurisdiction for a period of six months, which is permissible under the J&K's Panchayati Raj Act-1989. The appointments were made as five-year term of Panchayats had come to an end on January 9, 2024.

Under the law, the gov-

ernment is empowered to appoint an administrator, who is a government employee, if it is satisfied that a Halqa Panchayat cannot be constituted by reason of any difficulty in holding the election.

The government has extended their tenure for three more months due to delay in holding Panchayat polls, which were expected to be held in October- November last year but were put off at the eleventh hour.

The elections for local bodies were held last

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Ex-Agniveers to get reservations, age relaxations: CISF, BSF, CRPF Chiefs



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The chiefs of CISF, BSF and CRPF on Thursday said 10 per cent posts of

soldiers will be reserved in their respective forces for former Agniveers in line with a decision by the Union home ministry.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## J&K has entered new era of development and peace: Chugh

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 11

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is also the party incharge for J&K, today said that both Farooq and Omar Abdullah should be declared ambassadors of Pakistan in India because they are only echoing the sentiments of Pakistan ISI without realizing how much growth and development has happened in J&K.

Launching a strong attack on both the Abdullahs the BJP leader said they have no consideration for the armed forces that are performing their



duties round-the-clock to defeat the designs of the Pakistan ISI.

But as soon as an attack happens from the ISI-sponsored terrorists, the Abdullah family quickly goes to the rescue of the terrorists and try to run down the Modi govern-

ment. Chugh said ever since Article 370 has been removed there is a new era of development in J&K. There are no more incidents of stone-throwing or strikes, there has been near peace in J&K.

"Basically the Abdullahs have understood that they were fast losing ground in J&K as the people have understood their nefarious designs. People want upscale education and employment which the Modi government has given them and would keep doing it", Chugh said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## DC Srinagar chairs comprehensive review meeting under AMRUT 2.0

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

A comprehensive review meeting was on Thursday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat to assess the progress and performance of various Water Supply Schemes (WSSs) under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT 2.0) initiative.

On the occasion, a detailed Power Point presentation was given on the current status of Water Supply Projects across Srinagar City by the Executive Engineer Water Works Division.

It was noted that significant progress has been made in several projects, with many DPRs being approved and some have been submitted for the purpose of accord and approval



The meeting addressed various challenges including land acquisition issues. Solutions and action plans were formulated to overcome these hurdles and ensure timely completion of the projects.

Discussions were held on the effective utilization of funds allocated under the AMRUT scheme. The need for additional resources and funding for certain projects was also reviewed, with a commitment to ensure that financial constraints do not hinder the progress of essential water supply schemes.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on future plans and strategies for the expansion and sustainability of water supply schemes under the AMRUT mission. The focus will be on ensuring that all urban areas have access to safe and reliable water supply.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer Water Works Division, Executive Engineer Water Supply Master Plan Srinagar, AEE Water Works Division and AEE Rural Water Supply Division involved in the AMRUT projects.

## MVD conducts enforcement drive to check traffic violations

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Intensifying enforcement drives against traffic law violators, the Motor Vehicles Department launched proactive enforcement drive to check overloading, overcharging by the E-Rickshaws and other public Transport Vehicles from passengers and Pilgrims visiting Shri Amarnathji and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrines. The drive was carried out on the directions of Administrative Secretary Transport, Transport Commissioner J&K and RTO Jammu.

The enforcement drive was conducted at Canal Road, Bhagwati Nagar, Fourth Bridge, Railway Station, Bahu Plaza by the team RTO Jammu comprising ARTO BOI Passenger, Er. Kuldeep Singh, MVI Jasbir Singh, SMVI, Amanish Sharma and other staff.

During the drive, about 300 passenger vehicles



and E-Rickshaws were checked and 60 vehicles were challaned besides one minibus was seized and e-challans amounting to Rs. 45000 were issued.

During the checking, several e-Rickshaws were found to be overcharging and overloading. These vehicles were challaned and warnings were issued by the checking team to be more careful in the future.

ARTO, BOI Jammu, Er. Kuldeep Singh also conducted counseling, orientation of crews / operators during the drive and urged them to be friendly and extend every possible help and assistance to the

tourists and pilgrims visiting Jammu City for Shree Amarnath Yatra and Shree Vaishno Devi Holy Shrines. He also emphasized that the genuine fare fixed by the authorities to be charged from the passengers.

The MVD team further informed that higher authorities are very sensitive and particular about tightening the noose of habitual traffic violators. They emphasized that all operators must be aware that vehicles ply on their designated routes while adhering to traffic rules in the larger interest of road safety.

## Awareness cum seed distribution program held at Tulail, Gurez

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, JULY 10

As the part of broader initiative to bring more area under genetically improved varieties aimed at enhancement of agricultural productivity and ensure food security in the higher himalayan zone of Gurez valley, an awareness cum distribution program of good quality high yielding seed of Shalimar Wheat-2 variety was Wednesday held at Dangthail village of Tulail, Gurez.

The programme was organized by AICRP-National Seed Project in collaboration with KVK-Gurez. Good number of local farmers & farm women experts participated in the program.

The event was attended by Director Research of SKUAST-Kashmir Prof. Haroon Rashid Naik, who emphasized the importance of adopting improved agricultural practices to boost crop yield and ensure sustainable farming in the region. He directed the team to fulfil the requirements with respect to adoption of new technologies and recommendations from SKUAST-Kashmir for the farm families.

On the occasion, tribal farmers were served with 40 quintals of high yielding seed stocks for taking up the sowing operations in the next season. The variety is expected to enhance the productivity levels from current 10 q per ha to 30 q per ha and ensure the

harvest of 300 q green fodder for supporting the cattle and sheep population. Head NSP Prof. Asif Bashir Shikari deliberated upon the significance of quality seed in enhancing the production and sensitized the farmers on new beneficiary related provisions. Dr Aflaq Hamid Wani, Dr Gowhar Ali and Dr Bilal Ahmad Bhat were among other experts who interacted with the participants. They highlighted the benefits of high yielding wheat varieties, modern farming techniques, and efficient resource management. These sessions were designed to equip the farmers with the necessary knowledge to maximize their crop productivity.

## District Programme Officer Poshan Doda visits Bal Vidyalayas in Bhaderwah

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, JULY 11

District Programme Officer Poshan Doda, S. Paramjeet Singh conducted a surprise visit to the Bal Vidyalayas of the Poshan project in Bhaderwah. The surprise inspection aimed to ensure the adherence to norms and guidelines set for the proper functioning of these educational institutions. During the visit, S. Paramjeet Singh expressed concerns about the compliance with established standards and provided stringent instructions to the Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and supervisors. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards in the functioning of Bal Vidyalayas, which play a crucial role in the early development and nutrition of children under the Poshan Abhiyaan initiative.

The Poshan project, also known as the Prime Minister's Overarching



Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN Abhiyaan), aims to address malnutrition and promote the overall health and development of children. Singh reiterated the significance of regular monitoring and accountability to ensure that the objectives of the Poshan Abhiyaan are met. He also stressed the need for proper record-keeping, regular health check-ups, and the provision of nutritious meals to the children.

In addition to these directives, Singh urged the CDPOs and supervisors to foster a child-friendly environment within the Bal Vidyalayas. He called for the implementation of engaging and educational activities that promote cognitive and social development. Ensuring the active participation of parents and community members in the Poshan project was also highlighted as a key factor in its success.

## DC Bandipora holds meeting on development of Bandipora-Gurez-Tulail Road & allied issues



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, JULY 11

The Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman, on Thursday, chaired a meeting at Mini Secretariat to discuss the progress and address various issues related to the development of the Bandipora-Gurez-Tulail Road.

The meeting discussed various issues regarding Construction of Wanpora-Markoot Road, Construction of Bridge over Malangam Nallah and Pending Land Acquisition Cases of Tehsil Bandipora and also discussed challenges faced during execution.

The meeting examined the pending land acquisition cases of projects under the execution of Beacon and strategies to expedite the process. Deputy Commissioner

said that road and related infrastructure projects in Sub Division Gurez are of significant importance for enhancing connectivity. He also emphasized the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders to overcome hurdles and challenges being faced.

Shakeel ul Rehman directed the concerned departments and agencies to expedite the progress of projects, keeping in view the limited working season of Gurez.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Umar Shafi Pandit and Officer Commanding, GREF 56 RCC.

Sub Divisional Magistrate Gurez and Tehsildar Bandipora attended the meeting through virtual mode.

## ALC Ramban disburses Rs 24.28 lakh under Employees Compensation Act



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAMBAN, JULY 11

Assistant Labour Commissioner Ramban, Amit Kumar today disbursed the Employees Compensation amount of Rs. 17.05 lakh in favour of injured Labourer namely Pinku Kumar. Compensation to the tune of Rs. 7.23 lakh

was also disbursed among the dependents of the deceased, Ghulam Nabi.

Assistant Labour Commissioner Ramban said that the department is making all out efforts to settle compensation cases on fast track basis so that immediate relief is provided to the dependents and applicants.

## Ensure timely financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries under govt schemes: Shakeel Ul Rehman

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, JULY 11

The District Consultative Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the quarter ending March 2024 was today jointly chaired by Chairperson, District Development Council Bandipora, Abdul Gani Bhat and Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman.

The meeting focused on the district's credit growth and social security schemes.

While briefing the chair regarding Prime Ministers Social Security Schemes, LDM Shameem Ahmad Haji apprised the chair that under PMMY, 46813 beneficiaries have been covered by different banks operating in the district, while 43693 beneficiaries have been covered under PMSBY, 25858 beneficiaries under PMJJBY, and 99901 beneficiaries have been covered under PMJDY.

The meeting was informed that the district has achieved 57 percent in credit flow for the priority sector, while in the non-priority sector, credit flow for the quarter ending March 2024 was 343 percent.



It was given out that under PMEGP (DIC), 242 cases, under PMEGP (KVIC) 61 cases, under PMEGP (KVIB), 540 cases have been disbursed, whereas under NRLM, 239 cases for the first dose and 132 cases for the second dose stand disbursed.

Sharing the details, Lead District Manager (LDM), Shameem Ahmad Haji, informed that the district has achieved a 96% CD ratio for the quarter ending March 2024.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need to improve performance in priority sectors, particularly agriculture, to boost agricultural productivity and support local farming.

He instructed banks to conduct awareness camps for social security schemes to educate and enroll more beneficiaries under these schemes to enhance social security coverage in the district.

The DC directed LDM to conduct a monthly

review of banks with poor performance to improve their operational efficiency.

The Deputy Commissioner also stressed the need for pre-sanction scrutiny of all requisite documents of beneficiaries by concerned departments to minimise the rejection rate and ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive timely financial assistance under various government schemes.

Stressing youth empowerment, the Deputy Commissioner directed the departments and banks to effectively enhance youth engagement through various government schemes for overall socio-economic development.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool, Chief Horticulture Officer Farooq Ahmad, Chief Agriculture Officer Javid Ahmad, representatives of RBI, NABARD, and others concerned.

## Disaster Management Preparedness for SANJY 2024 via Baltal Axis Reviewed at Sonamarg

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
GANDERBAL, JULY 11

Senior Consultant National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Maj General Ajay Kumar Verma, along with Brigadier Ravinder Gurung (Retd), Senior Consultant (ME & IRS) NDMA, convened a meeting today with officers from various line departments and security agencies, including representatives from the SDRF and NDRF, to review the disaster preparedness for the ongoing Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANJY) 2024 at Youth Hostel Sonamarg.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad, Executive Engineers of various wings, and senior officers from various security agencies.

It was informed during the meeting that adequate SDRF and NDRF personnel, along with qualified Disaster Management Professionals, have been deployed at all stations to ensure the smooth conduct of the Yatra.

The DC briefed the meeting on various aspects of disaster man-



agement, including the Incident Response System, communication plan, mitigation plan, medical facilities, KPDC, Fire and Emergency Services, FCS&CA, Jal Shakti, flood-related emergencies, landslides, and the availability of infrastructure during disasters via the Baltal route.

Maj General Ajay Kumar Verma discussed various levels of disaster management, different types of calamities and safeguards against them, the role of departments during disasters, the route plan, meteorological and geographical factors, and other related aspects.

The DC emphasized that the Incident Response System has been revised,

and all vulnerable spots are mapped out with sufficient manpower and machinery deployed to meet any exigency.

For the communication plan, the Incident Response System has been established at Baltal, Sonamarg, and Tehsil levels, manned by representatives of all concerned departments, with wireless coverage ensured at all Yatra Camps for better communication.

For the mitigation plan, it was informed that the

IMD has set up a base camp office at Baltal, equipped with MET instruments and manpower providing 24/7 weather information to Yatra Managers, including the Police, Administration,

CRPF, Army, and Shrine Board. Upon receiving information from the IMD, the Camp Directors will ensure the safety of the Yatris by promptly taking necessary actions.

Maj General Ajay Kumar Verma emphasized the importance of the meeting to review the arrangements and ensure that the disaster preparedness plan is implemented as per guidelines while taking feedback from different stakeholders to further improve it.

He commended the district administration and other agencies for providing foolproof arrangements and an incident-free Yatra since its commencement on June 29, 2024.

## Secretary Health chairs National Ayush Mission's Executive Committee meet

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, today chaired the Executive Committee meeting of National Ayush Mission (NAM, J&K).

The meeting had detailed discussion on annual action plan 2024-25 of J&K NAM for recommendation to the governing body of National Ayush Mission and onward submission to the Union Ministry for Ayush, for approval.

Director Ayush J&K, Dr. Mohan Singh, delivered an elaborate presentation on the Annual Action Plan, 2024-25 which has been prepared for an amount of Rs 157.90 crore. The presentation covered various core components of the action plan including Ayush services, Ayush educational institutions, flexipool and administrative cost. The Annual Action Plan 2024-25 was



in principle recommended to be placed before the Governing Body for approval and its further submission to the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India for approval and release of funds.

The Secretary instructed for submission of the Annual Action Plan to the Governing Body and Union Ministry for Ayush at the earliest to ensure the funds are released for effective implementation of all essential activities under the mission. He emphasized the need for concerted efforts to

implement the National Ayush Mission successfully in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He urged upon all the stakeholders to work diligently towards successful implementation of the mission, thereby ensuring the visibility and accessibility for promotion and propagation of Ayush healthcare services in J&K. Mission Director National Health Mission J&K, Director General Codes Finance Department, Director Finance Health & Medical Education Department, Addi-

tional Secretary Health & Medical Education Department, Additional Secretary Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Department, State Drug Controller J&K, Deputy Director Planning Health & Medical Education Department, Deputy Director Ayush Jammu/Kashmir, Authorized officer J&K Board of Homeopathy, Technical officer J&K Medicinal Plants Board, Program Manager National Ayush Mission J&K and other officers and officials attended the meeting.

## DC Doda chairs District Level Standing Committee Meeting on Land Encroachment



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
DODA, JULY 11

Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, chaired a District Level Standing Committee meeting to address the issue of encroachment on State and Departmental Land.

The meeting reviewed 14 cases of land encroachment in detail. The primary objective was to discuss various litigations and objections concerning encroachments and to formulate strategies for resolving these issues.

Attendees included ACR Doda Sunil Bhutyal, Superintendent Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Doda, DFO Doda, the Principal

of Govt SP Aman Thakur Kastigarh, and Tehsildars from Doda, Bhagwah, and Thathri, among others.

The participants were directed to come prepared with complete information and documentation related to the encroachment cases they were handling. The discussions focused on evaluating the evidence presented and formulating strategies for legal actions, preventive measures, and reclaiming encroached land.

The DC emphasized taking stern action against the state land encroachment mafia. He instructed concerned officers and officials to ensure that

all records and information regarding state land encroachments are up-to-date. Specific instructions were given for timely and effective implementation of the decisions made, including regular follow-ups to ensure compliance.

The meeting concluded with a review and discussion on litigation and objections related to land encroachment, presentations of evidence and information by the concerned officers, and the formulation of strategies for resolving these issues. Directions for legal actions and preventive measures were issued, highlighting the need for timely implementation and regular follow-ups.

## Secy Health reviews healthcare arrangements for Muharram across J&K

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

Secretary Health & Medical Education (H&ME), Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the healthcare arrangements for ongoing holy month of Muharram.

The meeting was attended by Director of Health Services for Kashmir, Director of Health Services for Jammu, Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of all districts and other senior officers of the department.

During the meeting, Dr. Abid emphasized on the need to ensure adequate healthcare facilities during Muharram, particularly in areas where processions will take place.

He stressed on importance of having medicines and ambulances readily available at Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Trauma Centers, and directed that these facilities should remain operational round the clock. He instructed the directors to maintain close coordination with authorities at Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) and Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) to ensure all healthcare needs during Muharram are seamlessly met.

Dr. Abid also directed both directors to conduct daily reviews of the arrangements in areas expecting large processions.

He also gave particular instructions to CMOs to keep provision of all essential medical services at key locations, especially during mourning congregations in consultation with local Shia community representatives to prevent any inconvenience.

Directors and CMOs from districts including Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla, Poonch, and Jammu briefed the Secretary on the arrangements at key locations. They outlined preparations to ensure the availability of ambulances, medications and other essential supplies in areas where Muharram processions are expected.

## SWD Ramban launches awareness campaign on various welfare schemes

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 11

Social Welfare Department, Ramban launched an extensive campaign to raise awareness about various social welfare services.

This initiative aims to educate the public about the Indra Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), the Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS), the Child Helpline, the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and the operations of the District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) and the One Stop Centre (OSC).

District Social Welfare Officer Ramban, Rahul Gupta, highlighted the importance of the ISSS and NSAP pension schemes, which provide



financial assistance to the elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities. By explaining the eligibility criteria, benefits, and application process, the campaign aims to ensure that the most vulnerable sections of society can access these benefits.

Emphasizing the welfare of children, the DSWO stressed the significance of the 24/7 operational Child Helpline. This service provides immediate rescue and support for children in distress. The community is encouraged to use this resource to report child abuse, exploitation,

or any situation endangering a child's safety.

To clarify the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the DSWO provided insights into this modern legal framework designed to streamline and improve India's criminal justice system. Citizens are urged to familiarize themselves with their rights and the legal avenues available to them under the BNS.

The DSWO also explained the functions of the District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) and the One Stop Centre (OSC). These institutions offer legal aid, psy-

chological support, and rehabilitation services to women in distress. The OSC provides integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, making essential services more accessible.

Through community meetings, awareness camps, and door-to-door campaigns, the DSWO is ensuring that information about these schemes and services reaches every part of the district, particularly underserved and remote areas.

This outreach initiative by the Social Welfare Department enhances the community's understanding of essential services and strengthens the social welfare framework in Ramban. The DSWO's dedication and efforts underscore the district's commitment to the welfare and empowerment of its residents.

## Heartwarming completion of PMAY House for Bahadur Singh in Panchayat Draman

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 11

Successful completion of a Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Grameen (PMAY-G) house of Bahadur Singh, son of Butto Ram at Panchayat Draman in Block Rajgarh, under the Awaas Plus Scheme is a remarkable achievement, marks a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to uplift deprived communities and improve living conditions for all the citizens. The Rural Development Department sanctioned Rs. 1, 30,000 for Bahadur Singh's dream house, disbursed in three prescribed installments. In addition to financial support, technical assistance was also provided throughout the construction process to ensure the house met all required standards and specifications.

This PMAY house, sanctioned in the fiscal year 2023-24, proved the commitment of the government to providing dignified and stable living conditions for all. Bahadur Singh, who has tirelessly worked as a labourer and small farmer, previously



faced numerous challenges living in a kucha house at the same location. The transition to a pukka house noticeably improved his quality of life, offering him and his family a safe and stable environment.

Moreover, Bahadur Singh also benefited from the MG-NREGA scheme, securing 90 days of employment which has significantly contributed to his livelihood.

Additionally, a toilet unit worth Rs. 12,000 has been provided, ensuring access to proper sanitation facilities and further enhancing his living conditions.

District Administration extends heartfelt congratulations to Bahadur Singh and his family. They are confident that this new chapter in their lives will bring continued happiness, safety, security, and prosperity.

## Prerna Puri convenes public darbar

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, JULY 11

Commissioner Secretary, Information and Technology, Prerna Puri, today convened an extensive public outreach programme at Shopian to assess and address the public issues and concerns besides reviewing the status of ongoing development works in the district.

The public darbar, being held under J&K government's ambitious initiative to redress public grievances and demands, witnessed overwhelming participation of locals and various public representatives.

The delegations comprising members from District Development Council, fruit growers, traders, industrial bodies, cold chain association, social activists, youth besides locals who projected various welfare and developmental issues and flagged issues and grievances pertaining to different departments.

They raised various issues requiring attention and redressal by the authorities, spanning across different depart-



ments. The major developmental issues inter alia included flood protection works along Fruit Mandi, Aglar, provision of insurance cover for apple, push to post harvesting practices, augmentation of sports and fire services infrastructure, better intra-town transport services, car parking in Shopian town, revision of Master Plan for Shopian town, water supply issues, electricity streamlining, filling up of vacant posts in health centres of the district, irrigation facilities and maintenance of canals, amenities along Mughal Road, tourist promotional events, dedicated Library, establishment of Drug Rehabilitation centre and other issues.

The Commissioner Secretary directed the concerned departments to ensure vigorous follow up on all the public grievances and issues highlighted during the public darbar. Prerna Puri reiterated the government's commitment towards enhancing public services and ensuring an effective and responsive administration for the people of the UT. She underscored the importance of grievance redressal programs in institutionalizing an effective output mechanism.

"The huge network of online service delivery system in J&K is a phenomenal initiative in furthering good governance goals for the larger public ease and convenience",

maintained the Commissioner Secretary. She also appreciated the district administration in curbing drug menace in the district which has been recognized even at the National level.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Faz Lul Haseeb, deliberated on various issues highlighted in the previous public outreach camps, which were redressed promptly, while apprising of other measures and interventions being taken up by the district administration for public welfare and development.

DDC members, ADDC, ADC, ACR, SDM, ACP, other district officers, public representatives and locals participated in the programme.

## District Administration Poonch join hand with Indiahikes to promote trekking, adventure tourism

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JULY 11

The District Administration Poonch joined hands with Indiahikes, a leading private trekking organization, to organize and promote a captivating trek expedition exploring the picturesque landscapes of Poonch.

The collaborative effort, spearheaded by Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Yasin M. Choudhary, aims to showcase the natural wonders and trekking potential of the area. As part of the initiative, Indiahikes has organized a trek that takes participants on a journey through the stunning vistas of the Seven Lakes, a popular trekking route in the region.

The trek expedition commenced on July 9,



2024, with the Indiahikes team trekking from Chandimarh to Thera, covering a distance of 7.8 km. The trek was flagged off by SDM Surankote, Farook

Khan.

On the second day, the team trekked from Thera to Khuan, covering a distance of 9.2 km and the third day saw the

trek from Kaun to Neelsar, covering a distance of 5.5 km.

"This collaboration between the district administration and Indiahikes is a strategic move to showcase the unparalleled natural beauty and trekking opportunities that Poonch has to offer," said the Deputy Commissioner.

The partnership between the district administration and Indiahikes is expected to significantly increase tourist footfall in the area, further contributing to the growth and development of the region.

# JK Swimming Association to hold trials for sub-junior national aquatic championships

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Jammu Kashmir Swimming Association is gearing up to conduct trials for the prestigious 40th and 50th Sub-Junior National Aquatic Championships 2024.

This highly anticipated event will showcase the talents of young swimmers from across the region, competing for a chance to represent their state on a national stage. The championships, encompassing a variety of swimming events, are scheduled to

be held in Bhubaneswar from August 6 to 11. The event is being organized by the Odisha State Aquatic Association under the auspices of the Swimming Federation of India.

The trials will take place at K.C. Sports Club on Akhnoor Road, Jammu, and will commence at 10 am on July 13. This event is expected to draw numerous young swimmers eager to prove their mettle and secure a spot in the national championships.

Participants will be categorized into three age groups to ensure fair

competition:

Group 1: Ages 15-17 (born in 2007, 2008, 2009)

Group 2: Ages 12-14 (born in 2010, 2011, 2012)

Group 3: Ages 10-11 (born in 2013, 2014)

Each swimmer is required to bring essential documents for verification. These include their Date of Birth (D.O.B) certificate, Aadhaar card, and ID card from their respective institutions.

These documents are necessary to confirm the age group and identity of the participants, ensuring a fair and transparent

selection process.

The Jammu Kashmir Swimming Association encourages all eligible young swimmers to participate in these trials. This is an excellent opportunity for aspiring athletes to showcase their skills, gain valuable experience, and potentially advance their swimming careers by competing at the national level.

The organizers are committed to conducting the trials in a professional and efficient manner, adhering to all guidelines set by the Swimming Federation of India. They aim

to identify and nurture promising talent, providing them with the platform and support needed to excel in the sport of swimming.

For more information and updates on the trials, participants and their guardians are advised to stay in touch with the Jammu Kashmir Swimming Association and regularly check official announcements. This event promises to be a significant stepping stone for young swimmers in the region, paving the way for their future success in aquatic sports.

# Indkal Technologies to Launch Smartphones under the Acer Brand in India

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Indkal Technologies, a leading technology company in India, today announced its foray into the smartphone market under a trademark licensing agreement with Acer Incorporated, a global ICT giant, known for its innovative technology and exceptional products. Under this agreement, Indkal will design, manufacture and distribute smartphones under the Acer brand in India. This strategic deal marks the introduction of Acer-branded smartphones into the Indian market,

heralding a new era of innovation and expansion.

Indkal Technologies will launch a wide range of smartphone models under the Acer brand in mid-2024, expecting to quickly build strong momentum and a significant market share. This effort highlights Acer's brand strength and Indkal's commitment to delivering premium-quality products to Indian consumers, featuring robust specifications, cutting-edge hardware and advanced software technologies.

Anand Dubey, CEO of Indkal Technologies,

expressed his excitement, "Acer smartphones are something we have been working on for a couple of years and we are ecstatic to finally announce the foray. With Acer smartphones, we are certain that Indian consumers are in for a treat. Our customers will experience exceptionally well-designed smartphones with high end processors, top notch camera technology and a host of premium features across the range. The best part is that all Acer-branded smartphones will be designed and manufactured in India, which is also a unique achievement for Indkal".

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

### Inter-state Security Review...

the Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab stretch of the IB and countering terrorist activities in the Jammu region, bordering Punjab."

Another officer said that today's meeting was a highly useful Inter-State Coordination Conference between BSF, J&K Police, Central Agencies and the Punjab Police. During the discussion officers shared their jurisdictional challenges, which were addressed and focus was laid on enhancing border security and synergy between the two State Police Forces and the Border Guarding Force. He further added that all agencies in unison agreed to exchange best practices and explore innovative solutions to bolster border management and public safety.

Meanwhile, more than 50 people have so far been detained for questioning, including three individuals among one woman who cooked food and handed over and person suspected of providing food and shelter to the terrorists, as a massive manhunt for the terrorists entered the fourth day.

Officials said that more army personnel were deployed in the hills and dense forests of Jammu Kathua-Udhampur-Doda belt to trace down the terrorists behind the ambush on an army patrol in Kathua.

On the search operation, the officials said troops are moving with caution as there is a threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS). The search has been expanded into the hilly areas of Kathua, Udhampur, and Doda districts of the Jammu region, which has seen a spate of terror incidents since June.

Troops from the army's Yol Based 9 Corps have intensified their presence in the Kathua hills, while the Delta Force of the 16 Corps has moved in more personnel in the twin districts of Udhampur and Doda, focusing on areas like Seoj Dhar, historically a sanctuary for terrorists, particularly foreign militants, in 1990s. A defence spokesperson said that GOC Jammu based 16 corps visited Udhampur and Doda and monitored the search operation.

"GOC White Knight Corps, along with GOC (Delta) visited Basantgarh Doda to assess the present security situation. The review underscored the imperative of synergy & seamless coordination between Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and all Security Agencies to maintain Peace and Stability in the region," the spokesperson said.

This has been done to cordon the hilly areas so that the terrorists cannot escape, the officials said and added that the ground teams are being supported by surveillance data from unmanned aerial vehicles. Special Forces and sniffer dog units of the army have also been deployed, they said. These areas are characterized by dense forests, deep valleys, caves, and rugged terrain, with troops contending with adverse weather conditions such as rain and fog, the officials said.

Security measures have been increased to counter potential IED threats along highways and other sensitive areas, including the sites of the ongoing Amarnath yatra, they said

Earlier on July 8, five army personnel, including a Junior Commissioned Officer, were killed and as many injured when 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. The officials said the terrorists are believed to have successfully infiltrated through the International Border and managed to reach the dense forests of Machedi that connect Basantgarh in Udhampur and Bhaderwah in Doda district.

### PM Modi meets...

Government, which, among other things, is expected to lay the road map for making India a developed nation by 2047.

President Droupadi Murmu, in her address to the joint sitting of Parliament last month, had indicated that the Government would come out with historic steps to accelerate the pace of reforms.

She also said the Budget will be an effective document of the government's far-reaching policies and futuristic vision.

Sitharaman has already held discussions with various stakeholders, including economists and captains of Indian industry, on the forthcoming Budget.

Several experts have urged the Government to provide tax relief to the common man to boost consumption and take steps to check inflation and accelerate economic growth.

The economy has recorded a growth rate of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

Earlier in February, Sitharaman presented an interim budget for 2024-25 in view of the Lok Sabha elections. (Agencies)

### SC collegium...

Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

"In view of the foregoing, the collegium resolves to recommend that the appointment of the above persons be made in the following order of seniority: (i) Justice N Kotiswar Singh, and (ii) Justice R Mahadevan," said the collegium resolution uploaded on the top court's website.

The other members of the top court collegium are justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy.

The apex court, which has a sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the CJI, has 32 judges at present. (Agencies)

### ED arrests another...

arrested by the ED-Jammu on Wednesday under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and was produced in the court of special judge, anti-corruption (CBI cases), in Jammu this morning, officials said.

On June 24, the ED arrested 43-year-old Haryana native Yatin Yadav, the alleged kingpin of the leak.

The Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board (JKSSB) sub-inspector recruitment exam was held on March 27, 2022 but the selected list of 1,200 candidates, along with 1,300 junior engineers and 1,000 finance account assistants. Was cancelled by the administration in July following allegations of paper leak and malpractice.

The CBI, which was handed over the case, had filed a charge sheet against 33 accused, including Yadav, on November 12, 2022. The ED case stems from the CBI FIR. (Agencies)

### J&K has entered new era...

and Abdullahs have kept J&K in dark for so many ages but after the abrogation of Article 370 a new era of development and progress has come about in J&K which is not to the liking of the Abdullahs and Mufitis.

"Their covert support to the Pakistan ISI designs is not just reprehensible but a big anti-national stance", Chugh added.

### J&K govt extends tenure...

time in 2018 after J&K came under Central rule following withdrawal of support by the BJP to the Mehbooba Multi-led government-(KNO)

### India pitches for infusing...

retreat in the national capital.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) brings together seven countries of South and Southeast Asia for multifaceted cooperation.

Besides India, BIMSTEC comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

Jaishankar said BIMSTEC should harbour higher aspirations.

"For India, BIMSTEC represents the intersection of its 'Neighbourhood First' outlook, the 'Act East Policy' and the 'SAGAR' vision," Jaishankar said in his opening remarks on the first day of the retreat.

"Each of these endeavours is being proposed with a specific focus on the Bay of Bengal, where collaborative potential has long remained under-realised," he said.

"Our challenge is to change that for the better, and to do so rapidly," he added.

India has been making concerted efforts to make BIMSTEC a vibrant forum for regional cooperation as initiatives under SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) were not moving forward for a variety of reasons.

India has been cooperating with the countries of the Indian Ocean region under the broader policy framework of SAGAR or Security and Growth for all in the Region.

BIMSTEC foreign ministers' retreat is aimed at exchanging ideas openly, candidly and fruitfully.

"We all benefited from the last such exercise in Bangkok. This one now has a particular importance as it serves to prepare strong outcomes for the summit to be held later in the year," Jaishankar said.

"Our message should be clear - that we are all determined to infuse new energies, new resources and a new commitment into cooperation among the Bay of Bengal nations," he said.

Thailand is the current chair of BIMSTEC and it is set to host the annual summit of the grouping later this year.

Jaishankar said the first part of the discussions in the retreat will revolve around connectivity, coopera-

tion in trade and business, collaboration in health and space, digital public infrastructure, capacity building and societal exchanges.

"I hope in the second part of our deliberations, we could focus more sharply on the possible outcomes of the forthcoming summit," he said.

BIMSTEC foreign ministers had last met in a similar format in Bangkok in July last year.

The charter of the grouping came into effect on May 20. "Global and regional developments also make it imperative that we find more solutions amongst ourselves. There are longstanding goals such as capacity building and economic cooperation that have acquired a new urgency," Jaishankar said.

"And not least, a grouping that is so complementary and so congenial in its membership should surely harbour higher aspirations," he said. (Agencies)

### Ex-Agniveers to get...

The remarks by CISF Director General Nina Singh, her BSF counterpart Nitin Agrawal and CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh came amid fresh spotlight on the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

"The Union Home Ministry has taken an important decision regarding the recruitment of ex-Agniveers. Accordingly, the CISF is also preparing the process of the recruitment of ex-Agniveer," Singh said.

The chief of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) said 10 per cent jobs will be reserved for ex-Agniveers in all future appointments of constables.

"In physical tests also, they will be given exemption along with the relaxation on the age. In the first year the age relaxation is for five five years and in the subsequent year, the age relaxation will be three years," she told DD News.

"Ex-Agniveer will be able to take advantage of this and the CISF will ensure that. This will be beneficial for the CISF too as the force will get trained and disciplined personnel," Singh said.

In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services.

The Agnipath scheme provides for recruiting youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half years and 21 for four years with a provision to retain 25 percent of them for 15 more years.

Several opposition parties including the Congress have been targeting the government over the scheme wondering what will happen to 75 percent of the Agniveers after their four-year tenure ends as only 25 per cent of the total recruits will be retained for 15 years. Various central government agencies and departments have already announced plans to recruit former Agniveers.

"They got four years of experience. They are fully disciplined and trained personnel. This is very good for the BSF as we are getting trained soldiers. After short training, they will be deployed along the border," said Border Security Force director general Agrawal.

He said all the security forces will be benefitted by recruiting former Agniveers.

"We are waiting for them to be deployed after giving conversion training, they will be deployed. 10 percent of the total vacancies will be reserved for them," he said.

"There will be age relaxation for them as well. The first batch will get five years of age relaxation and the subsequent batches will get three years of age relaxation," he told DD News.

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General Singh said all arrangements have been made in his force to recruit former Agniveers.

"The recruitment rules have been accordingly amended. A reservation of 10 percent has been made for ex-Agniveers. They will also get relaxation in age. The first batch will get five years of relaxation while it will be three years afterwards," he said.

Singh too said that there will be no physical efficiency test for the former Agniveers.

"This is a welcome step for the force to recruit ex-Agniveers as they are Army trained and have already served in the three services. They will bring dedication and discipline from day one," he said.

Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Daljit Singh Chaudhary said a quota has been fixed for ex-Agniveers in his force.

"We have amended the recruitment rules accordingly. The first batch will be given an age relaxation of five years. And, there will be no physical efficiency test for them," he said.

A defence ministry official said that no physical test would be required for recruitment of the former Agniveers into the paramilitary forces as such tests have already been done by the Army.

They just will need a physical fitness certificate, he

said. (Agencies)

### Army Chief Gen Dwivedi...

conditions in J&K. The courtesy meeting, which was the maiden interaction with the Minister after General Dwivedi took charge as the 30th Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), also touched upon various aspects of security.

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, "The Indian Army is among the best forces in the world and stands as a beacon of courage, discipline, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation's integrity and sovereignty. With a rich history steeped in valour and sacrifice, they exemplify the epitome of bravery and selflessness."

The Minister took pride and praised the Indian army. He said, "Their dedication to duty is unparalleled, whether defending the borders against external threats, providing humanitarian aid during disasters, or participating in peacekeeping missions globally. The Indian Army's ethos of 'Service Before Self' resonates deeply, inspiring respect and admiration worldwide."

General Upendra Dwivedi, while meeting Dr. Jitendra Singh, conveyed his strong commitment to serve the forces in their highest tradition. He also expressed his firm belief and confidence and said, "The army is prepared and ready to meet any challenge to thwart the designs of nation's adversaries." He also shared that his focus will be on promoting a culture of trust, empowerment of Junior officers, the well-being of soldiers and the welfare of veterans and Veer Naris.

### Unattended Kashmiri...

Magistrate, Ganderbal, in whom the migrant properties stand vested after the commencement of the Act of 1997, shall immediately take over and protect, preserve and manage both shrines and properties attached thereto."

"He shall also initiate appropriate steps to ensure that all or any kind of encroachment made on the temple properties including the cremation ground is removed within a period of eight weeks from the date copy of this order is served upon him," the order said.

"So far as the temple property under lease with the respondents 7 and 8 is concerned, admittedly the lease period has expired. There shall be no further extension of the lease and the property shall be taken over by the District Magistrate, Ganderbal. Any party feeling aggrieved of any encroachment on the aforesaid property by any person including the petitioners and respondents 5 to 8, shall be free to bring it to the notice of the District Magistrate, Ganderbal, for appropriate action," the order said.

This judgement is likely to protect and determine the fate of scores of such Hindu religious properties in Kashmir that have remained in disuse and thereby became vulnerable to encroachments by greedy encroachers and influential land mafia. (Agencies)

### Four days after Kathua...

Jammu region, bordering Punjab, they said.

On the search operation, the officials said troops are moving with caution as there is a threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS).

The search has been expanded into the hilly areas of Kathua, Udhampur, and Doda districts of the Jammu region, that has seen a spate in terror incidents since June.

Troops from the army's 9 Corps have intensified their presence in the Kathua hills, while the Delta Force of the 16 Corps has moved in more personnel in the twin districts of Udhampur and Doda, focusing on areas like Seoj Dhar, historically a sanctuary for terrorists, particularly foreign militants, in 1990s.

This has been done to cordon the hilly areas so that the terrorists cannot escape, the officials said and added that the ground teams are being supported by surveillance data from unmanned ariel vehicles. Special forces and sniffer dog units of the army have been also deployed, they said.

These areas are characterized by dense forests, deep valleys, caves, and rugged terrain, with troops contending with adverse weather conditions such as rain and fog, the officials said.

Security measures have been increased to counter potential IED threats along highways and other sensitive areas, including the sites of the ongoing Amarnath yatra, they said. (Agencies)

## District administration launches cleanliness drive in Shree Sarthal Devi Temple ahead of Annual Yatra 2024

**JINews SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR, JULY 11

In a significant initiative under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the District Administration Kishtwar spearheaded by Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr Devansh Yadav in collaboration with the Sarthal Devi Management Trust, conducted a cleanliness drive in the holy premises of Sarthal Devi Temple today.

This drive was organized in anticipation of the Annual Shree Sarthal Devi Yatra 2024, with the aim of ensuring a clean and welcoming environment for the devotees.

The cleanliness drive was spearheaded by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pawan Kotwal, alongside ACD Kishtwar, Phulail Singh, Vice Chairman Sarthal Devi Management Trust Sanjeev Parihar, BDO Trigam Chandan Manhas, EO Municipality and SI Vinay Sharma.

Their efforts were bolstered by the enthusiastic participation of Staff of Kishtwar Municipality, Anganwadi Workers and local residents, reflecting a strong community spirit and dedication to maintaining the sanctity of the



temple premises.

During the drive, the locals and devotees visiting the temple were sensitized about the importance of cleanliness. They were encouraged to maintain the cleanliness of the temple premises and avoid littering. The awareness campaign aimed to instill a sense of responsibility among the visitors and the community at large, ensuring that the temple remains clean and pristine for future visitors.

The collected garbage and litter were properly segregated and disposed of, following the best practices for waste management. This step not only

ensured the immediate cleanliness of the temple premises but also promoted sustainable waste management practices.

The Vice Chairman Sarthal Devi Management Trust, Sanjeev Parihar expressed gratitude towards the District Administration and participants for their active involvement in the cleanliness drive. They acknowledged that such initiatives are crucial in preserving the sanctity and beauty of the temple, especially with the upcoming Annual Shree Sarthal Devi Yatra 2024, which attracts a large number of devotees from across the region.

## JKTPO organizes e-commerce onboarding drive at Kishtwar



**JINews SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR, JULY 11

As part of the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization's (JKTPO's) series of e-commerce onboarding initiative, a workshop was organized in Kishtwar, in collaboration with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

This initiative was part of JKTPO's ongoing efforts to economically empower local sellers by integrating them into the digital economy.

The event was organized under the directives of Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner/Secretary Industries & Commerce, J&K, and with the guidance of Khalid Jahangir, Managing Director, JKTPO, in collaboration with the District Administration Kishtwar spearheaded by Deputy Commissioner, Dr Devansh Yadav.

The workshops aimed to provide comprehensive training to local sellers on how to effectively utilize e-commerce platforms to expand their businesses. The participants received hands-on guidance on creating and managing online storefronts, navigating digital marketplaces, and leveraging online tools to reach a broader customer base. Earlier, Banu Partap

Singh, Vice President of Sales at MyStore, along with Prafull, Manager at MyStore, conducted virtual training sessions for the participants who were interested in registering themselves as sellers on the platform.

During the session, Javed Seikh, Business Facilitator, GeM, emphasized the numerous advantages of joining e-commerce platforms and provided a detailed explanation of the entire onboarding process.

JKTPO coordinated with officials of District Administration Kishtwar for organizing the workshop, playing a crucial role in identifying suitable sellers by coordinating with various other departments such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, etc.

The Administration aims to facilitate the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), create employment opportunities, and stimulate economic development at the grassroots level.

JKTPO plans to continue these efforts by organizing similar workshops across other districts in Jammu & Kashmir, ensuring that maximum sellers can benefit from the digital economy and achieve economic self-reliance.

## DDC Rajouri reviews implementation of FPO scheme at DLMC meeting



**JINews SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, JULY 11

District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today chaired a meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) to review implementation of Farmers Producer Organization (FPO) scheme in the district.

During the meeting, the DC sought a detailed report about the working of the FPOs in the district and issued instructions to the Chief Agriculture Officer to organize special camps to provide fertilizers licenses, seeds licenses, and pesticides licenses to the FPOs. He also highlighted the role of FPOs in promoting sustainable agriculture practices, improving market access, and enhancing the livelihoods of farmers.

The DDM NABARD also highlighted the salient features of the FPO scheme and broad services and activities

being undertaken by the FPOs in the district. The DDC said that FPO which is an institutional mechanism to reduce the cost of production, increase per unit production and facilitate better market linkage so as to enhance the income of farmers. He also said that FPOs provide an end-to-end solution to the problems confronted by the farmers. The DDC also instructed the line departments to have an all-inclusive and holistic approach for the farming community, to enhance their income by having successful FPOs in the district. He also directed the concerned officers to ensure that the constituted FPOs perform their functions effectively for betterment of the farmer community in the district.

The meeting was attended by the DDM NABARD, Chander Sharma; CAO, Sohan Singh; ; DHO, Shafiq Khan; Dy Registrar CS Adnan Rathar; DO NRLM.

## ADM Ramban imposes Rs 30000 penalty on Health Supplement Company

**JINews SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 11

Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Ramban, Varunjeet Singh Charak, who also serves as the Adjudicating Officer, has imposed a substantial penalty of Rs. 30, 000 on a Pharma company also operating in the district. This action is part of a robust enforcement drive aimed at ensuring compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 (FSS Act-2006).

The case was resolved with penalties levied against the traders, including a Health Supplement Company namely Canon Healthcare HI-46, RIICO Industrial area Sarna Dunger Jaipur Rajasthan for manufacturing misbranded insta C in the case titled Food safety officer Block Banihal V/s Shaw Nawaz and other. Retailer FBO was already fined for Rs. 4000 in this

case. The company was given stern warning to be careful in the future and comply with the Provisions of FSSA-2006 otherwise strict action will be taken. This enforcement action targeted multiple manufacturers, wholesale dealers, and retailers found to be violating the provisions of the FSS Act-2006. The ADM, acting as the Adjudicating Officer, underscored the critical importance of adhering to the legal standards governing the food and pharmaceutical industries. He cautioned that any future violations would result in even more severe penalties.

The ADM also instructed the Enforcement Agency to take decisive actions against the violators, reinforcing the administration's commitment to upholding public health and safety standards as per the directives of the FSS Act-2006.

## DLC approves 5 Cases for change of Land use



**JINews SERVICE**  
KULGAM, JULY 11

A meeting of District Committee for change of land use today met Under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Amir Khan here at Mini-secretariat to discuss and dispose of applications submitted for the change of Land Use.

Officers present in the meeting were ACR, CAO, Tehsildars, Exens and other officers and members of the committee. After threadbare discussion the chair approved 5 cases for change of Land use.

On the occasion, the DC Instructs concerned to ensure timely issuance of NOCs to the applicants after proper verification.

## Union MoS visits India International Kashmir Saffron Trade Centre, Pampore

**JINews SERVICE**  
PAMPORE, JULY 11

In a significant move to bolster the saffron industry in Kashmir, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jitin Prasada, today visited the India International Kashmir Saffron Trade Centre (IIKSTC) Dusoo, Pampore.

Present on the occasion were Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal, Managing Director Trade Promotion Organization, Khalid Jahangir and other concerned officers.

During his visit, Jitin Prasada inspected different sections of the centre and reviewed various operations at the state-of-the-art processing unit. He visited different blocks of the centre including, stigma separation, drying, grading, packing and the E-Auction Center. He was thoroughly briefed by the officers about the advanced facilities and the substantial support being provided to farmers by the unit.

The Union Minister also held an interactive session with the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and saffron farmers to discuss promotion and development of the saffron industry in the region.

Responding to several issues raised by the farmers, Jitin Prasada assured that all their grievances and demands would be resolved on a priority basis.

The Union Minister reiterated the central government's commitment towards welfare and development of farmers of Jammu and Kashmir.

The high profile visit underscores the government's dedication towards enhancing the saffron trade and supporting the farmers who are the backbone of this valuable industry.

## DDC Chairperson Kulgam held a comprehensive review meeting of Block Development Office Pombai

**JINews SERVICE**  
KULGAM, JULY 11

In a significant move to accelerate development efforts, the DDC Chairperson Kulgam, Mohammad Afzal Parry conducted a comprehensive review meeting with the Block Development Office Pombai. The session focused on evaluating the progress of various ongoing development works in the DDC constituency.

The meeting was held at the Block Development Office in Pombai and was attended by BDO Pombai, AEs, JEs, PO, other key officials and local responsible members.

The primary agenda was to assess the current status of development works, address bottlenecks, and devise strategies to ensure timely completion of PRI, MGNREGA, PMAY and others works.

During the review, the Chairperson expressed satisfaction with the progress made in several sectors, including PMAY, SBM and other schemes.

The DDC Chairperson reiterated the commitment to fostering development in Kulgam and called for regular follow-up meetings to track progress and address any emerging challenges promptly.

## Mandeep Kaur visits Srinagar city; assesses arrangements for Muharam ul Haram

**JINews SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur, today conducted an exhaustive tour of Srinagar city and its adjoining areas to assess the arrangements put in place for smooth observance of Muharram-ul-Haram.

Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed and various concerned officers from SMC and line departments accompanied the Commissioner Secretary.

Commissioner Secretary inspected several Imambargahs located at Zadibal, Gulshan Bagh Madeen Sahab, Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Hassanabad and had first hand appraisal of various facilities available there for the devotees. She interacted with the representatives of Shia associations who apprised her of their demands and grievances seeking speedy redressal.

Mandeep Kaur said that special arrangements are in place with respect to sanitation, electricity, drinking water, street lighting and macadamized roads so that Muharram Mourners may not face any inconvenience. She directed the concerned officers to fumigate all the vital locations viz. Imam Bargahs and masjids.

Later, the Commissioner Secretary reviewed Sewerage Scheme in zone III of Greater Srinagar at Dr. Ali Jan Road, Outfall station and 60 MLD STP at Noorbagh Qamarwari. She also took stock of SSCL projects at Khayam Chowk, Mahraj Gunj and Balidan Stambh at Pratap Park Lal Chowk.

## Career counselling prog held at Nawakadal College Sgr

**JINews SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

SANKALP Hub For Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Srinagar, Department of Social Welfare organised career counselling cum sensitization programme under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in collaboration with Govt. Degree college Nawakadal for the female students of college.

The significance of the programme was to help in understanding the importance of career options like how to pursue different careers, selection of the appropriate career and aid on the development of confidence and skills. Various experts in this regard were invited who shared their expertise on various topics viz-a-viz career and its development, career opportunities after 10th and self-employment

opportunities/ schemes. The Principal Nawa Kadal College Prof. Dr Mohammad Farooq Mir while speaking on the occasion about Career counselling as a process that will help in knowing and understanding oneself and the world of work in order to make career, educational and life decisions.

Career counselling provides guidance in decision making, clarity in career goals, skill development, strategies for overcoming challenges, advice on job searches and increases confidence, he said.

Among other members present on the occasion were Ruqaya Ashraf District Mission Coordinator- HEW Srinagar, staff from SANKALP- Hub for Empowerment of Women Mission Shakti Srinagar faculty from the Nawa Kadal College Srinagar.

## DC Srinagar takes review of projects under NABARD

**JINews SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today convened a meeting of Officers to take review of the projects under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in District Srinagar.

During the meeting, the DC took holistic review of the ongoing and new projects, projects facing impediments and completed projects funded by NABARD.

At the outset, the DDM NABARD through a PowerPoint presentation presented the details including sectoral distribution of sanctions and cumulative position as on 31 March, 2024, sectoral distribution of disbursements and cumulative position as on 31 March, 2024, and year wise performance- sanc-

tions/ disbursements. She also presented the status of RIDF in PWD, Central Kashmir Zone (Srinagar).

The DC directed for preparation of estimation for 14 new projects worth 96.82 crores recommended under NABARD as discussed in the meeting. He instructed the concerned to prepare estimates of these projects forthwith so that they are ready for tendering as and when approved by government.

During the meeting, the concerned Engineers highlighted the bottlenecks hampering the progress of some of the projects.

On projects facing bottlenecks, the DC directed the concerned quarters to take corrective measures and speed up the work for their early completion. He also assured of all necessary support for early project completion.

## DLSA observed World Population Day



**JINews SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority Observed World Population Day at Harwan Srinagar which was held under the able guidance of Jawad Ahmed, Chairman District Legal Services Authority Srinagar (PDJ), Srinagar).

The programme was attended by a large number of local residents from Fakhir Gujri, Astaan Marg, Dhara, and Harwan. The main aim of this observance was to raise awareness about the importance of population control and its impact on the environment, economy, and society as a whole.

Tasneem Kausar, Deputy Legal Aid Defence Counsel, and Adv. Suhaila Ali, Panel Lawyer of DLSA Srinagar, were the resource persons for the program. They emphasized the need for population control and its significance in maintaining

a healthy and sustainable society.

They also highlighted the importance of education, family planning, and women empowerment in controlling population growth.

The program was a huge success, with the local masses actively participating in the discussions and showing keen interest in the issues related to population control. The event was organized to sensitize the people about the importance of population control and to promote awareness about the various schemes and programs initiated by the government to control population growth.

District Legal Services Authority, Srinagar, has been actively involved in organizing various awareness programs and activities to promote legal literacy and awareness among the masses. The observance of World Population Day is a part of its efforts to sensitize the people about the importance of population control and its impact on the society.

EDITORIAL

Sports, terrorism can't coexist!

India's decision, with all possibilities, not to participate in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan reflects a complex intersection of sports, diplomacy, and national security imperatives. This move underscores India's unwavering stance against terrorism sponsored by Pakistan, particularly in the troubled region of Jammu and Kashmir. For decades, Pakistan has pursued a military doctrine aimed at "bleeding India by a thousand cuts," using insurgent groups to wage a covert war against its neighbour. This strategy has not only fueled instability in the region but has also targeted civilians through acts of terrorism. Despite numerous diplomatic efforts to resolve differences, Pakistan continues to support terrorist activities aimed at destabilizing India.

Against this backdrop, the decision by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) not to send its team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy is significant. It underscores the principle that terrorism and sports cannot coexist. While sports have often been a bridge for cultural exchange and goodwill between nations, India's stance reaffirms that there are clear lines that cannot be crossed. The BCCI's stance aligns with the sentiments of the Indian government, which has consistently emphasized that any decision regarding sporting events involving Pakistan must be in accordance with national security considerations. The proposal to relocate matches to Sri Lanka or Dubai underscores India's commitment to safety and security for its players and fans, while also respecting the spirit of international sportsmanship. It is important to note that India's reluctance to engage in sporting events in Pakistan is not merely about cricket; it is a reflection of deeper geopolitical tensions and concerns. Since the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were orchestrated by Pakistan-based terrorists, bilateral cricketing ties between India and Pakistan have been sporadic and fraught with challenges. The Champions Trophy, scheduled for February to March 2025, presents a fresh dilemma in this strained relationship. Despite efforts by the Pakistan Cricket Board to accommodate India's concerns, including proposals for hosting matches in a single secure location, India's position remains firm. From a sporting perspective, the absence of India, one of cricket's powerhouse nations, will undoubtedly impact the tournament's dynamics and viewership. However, the broader message it sends about international norms and the fight against terrorism is of paramount importance. While the decision may disappoint cricket enthusiasts hoping for a spectacle, it underscores India's principled stand against terrorism and its commitment to safeguarding national interests. The ball now lies in the ICC's court to consider the implications of India's stance on the upcoming tournament and how best to uphold the spirit of fair play and safety in global cricketing events.

Union budget 2024-25: High hopes for transformative healthcare reforms

P NARORA

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman prepares to present the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, the healthcare sector stands poised with high expectations and pressing demands. Amidst the ongoing pandemic recovery and a renewed focus on public health infrastructure, stakeholders are looking towards strategic investments and policy reforms to drive equitable access, innovation, and sustainability within the healthcare sector.

The interim budget underscored the importance of expanding medical education facilities within existing hospitals alongside efforts to promote preventive healthcare. A notable initiative targeted at reducing cervical cancer cases through vaccination for girls aged 9-14 was also announced. Moreover, plans for a comprehensive scheme integrating various mother and child care programs highlight the government's commitment to enhanc-

ing healthcare services. The budgetary allocations for flagship schemes like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana have seen increases reflecting a strategic focus on improving healthcare access and outcomes across the country, mission was increased from Rs2,100 crore in 2023-24 to Rs4,108 crore in 2024-25. Additionally, the introduction of digital health initiatives, such as the U-WIN platform aims to optimize vaccine distribution and strengthen immunization efforts through enhanced data management capabilities.

Now the upcoming budget holds immense significance for the healthcare sector as it navigates through a period of transformation and challenges. The expectations are high for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to announce measures that not only address immediate healthcare needs but also pave the way for long-term sustainable



Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics are seen as transformative tools that can enhance medical outcomes, streamline healthcare delivery, and

reduce costs. The sector expects incentives and support for domestic manufacturing of medical devices, aligning with the 'Make in India' campaign and reducing dependency on imports. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer pose a significant health burden in India. Experts expect a need for increased budget allocation for the prevention, treatment, and management of NCDs. This includes supporting research, public awareness campaigns, and accessible treatment options to curb the rising prevalence of these diseases.

The healthcare sector also expects strategic moves to address the improvement in the healthcare system at the grassroots level. Additionally, there is a call for initiatives that support training and reskilling healthcare workers to leverage new technologies and meet evolving healthcare demands effectively. Key priorities include addressing the effort to expand recruitment efforts. These measures are crucial for improving healthcare delivery and meeting the growing demand for quality medical services across the country. In health insurance, stakeholders seek fiscal reforms that promote a more inclusive and sustainable health coverage model.

This includes revisiting GST tariffs on healthcare services and products ensuring affordability and accessibility across all socioeconomic segments. Moreover, encourages insurance coverage for preventive healthcare measures rather than solely focusing on reactive medical treatments. Healthcare in India has witnessed a significant surge in medical tourism, marked by a notable rise in foreign visitors. The Federation of Indian Chambers

of Commerce and Industry states "The Medical Value Travel in India is expected to grow at CAGR of 21.1% from 2020-2027. The MVT market in India was estimated at around \$ 6 billion in 2022 and is projected to increase to \$13 billion by 2026".

This growth underscores India's increasing prominence in the world as a preferred destination for medical treatments, driven by competitive costs, advanced healthcare facilities, and renowned medical expertise. Hence to continue to maintain the prominence of India's capability in healthcare services and excellence in innovation, it is of utmost importance that the government introduce key policy reforms to further elevate India's stature in medical tourism. We expect that the upcoming budget underlines the clear goal to enhance our healthcare system that ensures every citizen has access to affordable and quality healthcare.

(The writer is chairman Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals; views are personal)

Regime change on cards in Nepal

ASHOK K MEHTA

On Friday, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda will seek his fifth vote of confidence in the last 18 months which he will lose as former Prime Minister KP Oli's UML has withdrawn support to the Left alliance. A midnight 7-point deal last Monday between former Prime Minister's Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress (NC) and Oli's UML (the largest and second largest parties) will form the fourth government since December 2022 to end the king-maker role or CPN Maoists, the third largest party. A NC leader told me that the arrest one day before the deal of one Bechain Jha, linked to the Bhutanese refugee scandal whose tread-marks lead to apex NC and UML leaders triggered the deal. Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane whom NC had been gunning and UML protecting in Parliament over the Pokhara Cooperative fraud case called the deal: "Oli and Deuba's bid to escape corruption

cases". Balen Shah, Mayor of Kathmandu, made snide remarks about Giri-Bandhu Tea Estate corruption case. Just ten days ago the government had announced eight new envoys including replacing its NC appointed Indian Ambassador, Shankar Sharma who survived an earlier attempt when Oli was Prachanda's senior coalition partner. The 7-point deal is essentially about power-sharing during the remaining 40 months of Parliament with Deuba offering Oli the first PM as he wants to be premier before the 2027 elections. They have agreed over the number of ministries they will share with UML keeping Finance and NC taking Home ministry. NC and UML are sworn enemies with differing ideologies. Both their leaders are widely experienced and have done stints in jail. While Deuba has been PM five times, Oli has led Nepal twice. Deuba is recognized as India's blue-eyed boy and is favoured by the West, Oli is coveted by China though he is not

a red-blooded Communist but a democrat at heart. Political instability has plagued Nepal since the first multi-party elections in 2008 under interim constitution. 16 PMs have played musical chairs over 16 years, even after the federal, democratic republican constitution of 2015. The electoral system produces a hung parliament. Removing this malaise is ostensibly the aim of the national consensus government by altering the constitution with a two thirds majority of 184 seats in a House of 275. It will propose deleting Proportional Representation (PR) system for 110 seats, making changes in the Upper House, turning Nepal into a Hindu state and even removing the federal system. These modifications are emerging from the speculation-mill in Kathmandu. But one message is also clear: the two mainline parties do not intend to be sidelined by so-called king-makers with 20 to 30 lawmakers. Prachanda who led

the 10 year long people's war and helped introduce transformative constitutional reforms is no green-horn. He adores power and considers it the ultimate aphrodisiac. Even with his party's dwindling electoral scores, he has managed to capture the limelight. Despite the proposed Left-Centre alliance holding a sizeable majority of 167, Prachanda has refused to resign on moral grounds. He is expecting that since government formation was under Article 76 (2) of the constitution President Ramchandra Paudyal will invoke Article 76(3) to invite Deuba, leader of the single largest party to form a government which will deprive Oli of premiership. Both Prachanda and another former PM Madhav Nepal, formerly UML, despise Oli and would give their left arm to ensure he does not become PM again. Senior NC leader Shank Koirala has said a NC-UML coalition will weaken opposition forces. Another NC top leader Shekhar Koirala noted that government forma-

tion may legally veer towards 76(3) not 76(2). This will wreck the midnight deal and ensure that Deuba is first PM with Prachanda ready to offer him PM for the entire remaining period. It will restore the democratic alliance of NC, CPN (M) and smaller parties that ruled for a year till March. As Paudyal is an NC appointee backed by CPN (M), he can be easily asked to follow 76(3) junking 76(2). Many in NC are unhappy with the deal. Neither China nor India has reacted to the impending fall of Prachanda-led government though news in the Kathmandu market is that India was not happy with the China-inspired Left alliance government. The Chinese Communist Party was keen to unite all Left parties under former President Bidya Devi Bhandari wife of late Madan Bhandari, UML's charismatic leader. But Oli rejected the idea. The Chinese will be disappointed with brief longevity of Left alliance, blaming India for it. This is the grapevine in Kathmandu even

though Delhi does not want Oli as PM. For a national consensus government securing a two thirds majority will not be difficult. The NC and UML together have 167 lawmakers. 17 other lawmakers are needed for amending the constitution in order to bring political stability to Nepal. Already smaller parties are falling in line hoping for political stability. But key questions remain. What will become of the NC corruption crusade against Lamichhane who was being shielded by Oli and Prachanda? What about UML-driven change of NC-appointed envoys? Will Oli do to Deuba what he did to Prachanda in not honouring a power-sharing deal earlier? Can a government of opposite poles cohabit? or will it collapse sooner than later? (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

The power of innovative workplace design

AKSHAY LAKHANPAL

In today's fast-paced and dynamic business landscape, the success of an organization depends on its ability to foster collaboration and innovation. It is no longer enough to have talented individuals working in silos; the true potential of a company lies in the synergy of a highly collaborative team. As businesses strive to create an environment that nurtures creativity and teamwork, the importance of innovative workplace design cannot be overlooked. The Changing Nature of Work: With the advent of technology and globalization, the nature of work has undergone a paradigm shift. Traditional hierarchical structures are giving way to flatter, more flexible organizations. Remote work, distributed teams, and freelancing have become the norm, necessitating a rethinking

of workplace design. Companies are recognizing that the physical environment profoundly impacts employees' productivity, engagement, and overall well-being. Embracing Collaborative Spaces: To encourage collaboration, offices need to offer a variety of spaces that cater to different workstyles and activities. Gone are the days of isolated cubicles; today's workplace design focuses on creating open, flexible, and collaborative environments. These spaces may include comfortable lounges for casual discussions, huddle rooms for quick brainstorming sessions, and dedicated project rooms for in-depth collaborations. Such spaces not only foster teamwork but also promote cross-functional communication, which is essential for innovation. Technology as a Catalyst



for Collaboration: Innovative workplace design goes hand in hand with cutting-edge technology. As organizations embrace digital transformation, integrating technology into the workplace becomes imperative. Smart whiteboards, video conferencing facilities, and collaborative software platforms are now essential tools that facilitate seam-

less communication and idea-sharing, regardless of geographical barriers. By making these technologies readily accessible, companies can empower employees to collaborate effortlessly and bridge the gap between remote and in-office teams. Balance between Collaboration & Autonomy: While collaboration is crucial, it is equally impor-

tant to strike a balance that allows for individual autonomy. Employees should have the freedom to personalize their workspaces and choose an environment that best suits their needs. Some individuals thrive in lively, interactive spaces, while others may require quiet areas for deep focus. Designing for Well-Being: An innovative workplace design must also prioritize employee well-being. Comfortable ergonomic furniture, adequate natural light, indoor plants, and proper ventilation all contribute to a healthy and inspiring work environment. When employees feel physically and mentally supported, they are more likely to be engaged and contribute positively to the collaborative efforts of the organization. Impact on Organizational Culture: Workplace design plays a pivotal role

in shaping organizational culture. A collaborative and inviting physical environment signals to employees that their contributions are valued and fosters a sense of belonging. It breaks down barriers, encourages the exchange of diverse perspectives, and promotes a culture of trust and cooperation. Conclusion: As the business landscape continues to evolve, organizations must adapt their workplace design to unlock the full potential of collaboration. A collaborative organizational culture is not only essential for staying competitive in the modern world but also for attracting and retaining top talent who seek an environment that encourages teamwork and empowers them to reach new heights. (The writer is CEO of Space Matrix; views are personal)

## India has 1/5th of global population; must work towards population stabilisation: Union Minister Nadda

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Highlighting that one-fifth of the global population resides in India, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda on Thursday stressed the need to reaffirm and recommit to work towards population stabilisation.

Addressing a virtual meeting with State/UTs the minister called on Centre and States "to collectively work to ensure that women can exercise their right to make family planning choices".

"The goal of Viksit Bharat can only be

achieved when the health of India's families is well maintained which can be achieved by smaller families," he stated on the occasion of World Population Day.

Women should not be "burdened by unwanted pregnancy", the minister said, noting that "the objective of the family planning programme needs to be 'Birth by choice and by informed choice'".

He also called on the Centre and States to collectively address the "unmet needs of contraceptives, especially in the high-burden states, districts, and blocks".



"Promoting healthy timing and spacing between births, achieving optimal family sizes, and empowering voluntary adoption of contraceptive choices are crucial for

nurturing healthier and happier families, thereby contributing to our nation's brighter future," he stated.

Further, he also lauded 'Mission Parivar Vikas

(MPV), one of the successful schemes of the National Family Planning Programme, which was initially launched for 146 high-priority districts (HPDs) in seven high-focus states, and later expanded to cover all districts in these states and six northeastern states.

He emphasised the remarkable impact of the scheme and underlined the significant increase in access to contraceptives in these states and successful reductions in maternal, infant, and under-five mortality rates.

"Making districts as the primary focal point"

helped in bringing down the Total fertility rate (TFR) in states, as well as in the nation, he said.

Cautioning states/UTs against getting complacent in these efforts, he stressed "to work towards maintaining low TFR in the States that have already achieved it, and work towards achieving in other States", he added.

The Union Minister also commended the tireless work and dedication of the healthcare and front-line workers and various line departments in reaching the last mile in spreading the messages of family planning and service delivery.

## New treatment for deadly brain cancer shows promise in pre-clinical trials: IIT Delhi

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

A novel nanoformulation to cure deadly brain tumours has shown promise in pre-clinical trials, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi said on Thursday.

Glioblastoma, the most common and aggressive type of cancerous brain tumour in adults, poses significant treatment challenges despite available options like surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy.

Patients diagnosed with glioblastoma typically have a life expectancy of only 12-18 months post-diagnosis.

The team developed a novel nanoformulation, namely Immunosomes, that combines a CD40 agonist antibody with the small molecule inhibitor RRX-001. The innovative approach, published in the journal Biomaterials, aims to enhance treatment efficacy for brain tumours, potentially offering new hope for improving outcomes in glioblastoma patients.

In this study, mice bearing glioblastoma treated with Immunosomes showed complete eradication of the tumour and remained tumour-free for at least three months.

## Is replacing butter with high-quality plant oils healthy?

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Switching from a diet high in saturated animal fats like butter to one with plant-based unsaturated fats like olive oil can affect the fat composition in the blood, which, in turn, can influence long-term disease risk, according to a study on Thursday.

The current guidelines call for increasing dietary unsaturated fat intake while reducing saturated fats to prevent cardiometabolic diseases, which include heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and insulin resistance.

The new study, published in Nature Medicine, demonstrated that a controlled dietary substitution of saturated fats with unsaturated fats may be good for health and can reduce cardiometabolic risk.

For the study, the team involved 113 participants



who were divided into two groups: one consuming a diet high in saturated animal fats, while the other group had a diet rich in unsaturated plant-based fats.

These were followed for 16 weeks, and their blood samples were analysed using lipidomics, or

an analysis of fats in the blood.

A higher multi-lipid score (MLS) -- indicating a healthy blood fat profile -- showed a substantially reduced risk of developing cardiometabolic diseases. A healthy fat-rich diet was found to be associated with a 32 per cent fewer

incident of cardiovascular disease and 26 per cent fewer type 2 diabetes cases.

The "study confirms with even more certainty the health benefits of a diet high in unsaturated plant fats such as the Mediterranean diet and could help provide targeted dietary advice to those who would benefit most from changing their eating habits", said Clemens Wittenbecher, research leader at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden.

The study also showed that it is possible to accurately measure diet-related fat changes in the blood and directly link them to the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

It also highlighted the potential of lipidomics-based scores for targeting and monitoring dietary interventions in biomarker-guided precision nutrition approaches.

## Suicide largest public health crisis facing India: Experts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Even as the latest suicide case of a father-son duo in Mumbai shocked us, experts on Thursday said that suicide is the largest public health crisis facing people, both young and old in India.

India has the dubious distinction of having the highest number of suicides in the world. According to a National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report released in April, 1.71 lakh people died by suicide in 2022 in India.

The suicide rate has increased to 12.4 per 1,00,000 -- the highest rate ever recorded in India.

But what is leading to the tragedy?

Health experts point out that the major reason is depression -- a mental illness that in some can be genetic and can be

induced by some kinds of stressors.

"The most common underlying reason for suicide is depression which in layman's language we say stress otherwise it can be due to impulsiveness or other factors also, but the majority are because of depression," Rajiv Mehta, Vice Chairperson, Institute of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, told IANS.

The doctor noted that common stressors in life are related to work, finances, relationship issues, and health.

"These are the four common areas where the ups and downs in life can produce stress and slowly when stress becomes severe, it gets converted into anxiety and depression, which leads to suicide," he explained.

Studies also indicate that about 50 to 90 per cent of individuals who

die by suicide also suffer from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.

"Today, suicide is the largest public health crisis facing India.

It is the leading cause of death among youth. Suicide can occur impulsively during periods of extreme stress, and those who are vulnerable may struggle to cope with such stressors as financial difficulties, medical conditions, or personal loss. Loneliness and isolation are also significant risk factors," Shyam Bhat, Psychiatrist and Chairperson, LiveLoveLaugh, told IANS.

"The rising trend of suicide in India is quite concerning and calls for attention," added Shambhavi Jaiman, Consultant Psychiatrist, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram.

In addition to mental health concerns or

mental illnesses like depression, economic stress, unemployment, financial instability, huge amounts of debt for whatever reasons in their business, family conflicts, and marital discord all leading to hopelessness, are other contributing factors, the doctor told IANS.

Unfortunately, due to stigma and fear, discussions about suicide often happen in hushed tones, which only adds to its mystery.

Shyam called for offering genuine support without judgement or unsolicited advice to people in distress and helping them seek guidance.

"If you notice someone feeling depressed or down, encourage them. Offer support in helping them connect with a mental health professional who can provide perspective and guidance," he said.

## World Population Day: Focus on needs of women, youth & marginalised, say experts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

It is imperative to focus on the needs of women, youth, and marginalised communities that remain inadequate owing to the rising population, said experts on World Population Day on Thursday.

World Population Day is observed every year on July 11 to raise awareness about global population issues and their impact on society. The theme for this year is "Leave no one behind, count everyone".

With about 142.86 crore population, India over-

took China to become the world's most populous nation, according to the UNFPA's State of the World Population Report in 2023.

Speaking to IANS, Poonam Muttreja, Executive Director of the Population Foundation of India (PFI), said even though India became the world's most populous nation, "we have attained the replacement-level fertility rate."

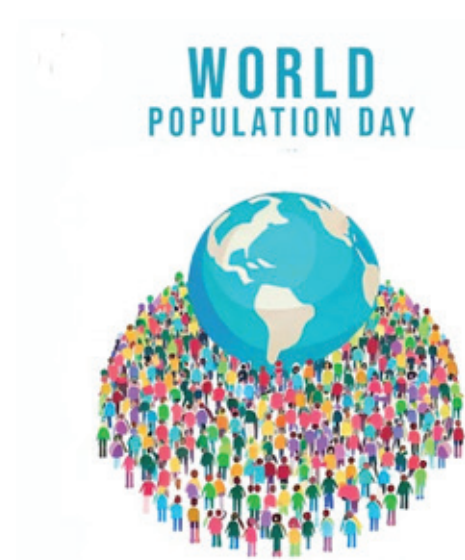
"This means that the average number of children born per woman is sufficient to keep the population size stable from one generation to the next," she explained.

Yet, due to a large proportion of young people, the population in India will continue to grow.

"Nonetheless, we have made remarkable progress towards population stabilisation," Poonam said.

However, she called for a shift in focus -- on reaching the unreached, that is, the women, young people, and marginalised communities. "The reproductive rights, access to resources, and health and well-being outcomes of these groups remain inadequate," Poonam said.

There are approximately 24 million women with an



unmet need for family planning, meaning they want to stop or delay childbearing but lack the access or agency to use contraception.

"The upcoming budget must increase the investment in family planning, especially in long-lasting modern contraceptives, as addressing these needs is crucial for achieving equitable and sustainable development," the PFI chief said.

This was also advocated by the Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda, who called for "healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy for the health and well-being

of mother and child."

Population increases also create congestion and deplete human health resources.

"It also adds load to our already overburdened infrastructure, deprives people of basic amenities, causes scarcity of water, problems related to hygiene and sewage," M Wali, Senior Consultant, Department of Medicine, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told IANS. Overpopulation can also worsen health care indices like morbidity and mortality as preventive and screening health care needs of the population (especially

the vulnerable sections like women, children, and elderly) are not adequately met.

"Uplifting women is an efficient strategy to keep the overpopulation problem in check. Educated women are more likely to exercise their reproductive rights, that is, use contraception and motivate their partners for the same, plan families, and consider termination of undesired pregnancies. They are also more likely to understand the importance of having small and healthy families," Isha Wadhawan, from Fortis Faridabad, told IANS.

## Acceptance of modern contraceptives in India increased to over 56 pc: Centre

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Acceptance of modern contraceptives in India has increased to over 56 per cent, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel said on Thursday.

In a virtual meeting with State/UTs, Patel highlighted this as the success of the country's National Family Planning Programme, which currently offers a variety of reversible modern contraceptives encompassing condoms, intrauterine contraceptive devices, oral pills, injectable contraceptives, etc.

"It is encouraging to note that the acceptance of modern contraceptives in the country has increased to over 56 per cent," she said.



From 47.8 per cent (NFHS 4, 2015-16) to 56.5 per cent (NFHS-5, 2019-20), the "increase has been substantial".

The NFHS-5 data also "shows an overall positive shift towards spacing methods (between pregnancies) which would positively impact maternal and infant mortality and morbidity".

Notably, "the Unmet

Need for Family Planning has declined to 9.4 from 12.9 (NFHS IV) which is an encouraging achievement," she added.

Further, Patel noted that "more than 65 per cent of India's population falls in the reproductive age group which makes it pertinent to ensure that they are provided with choices and not burdened with unplanned family

growth".

She informed that from the earlier two phases, the Union Government's family planning programme "has now been expanded to three phases: the preparatory phase, community participation, and service delivery." Importantly, she noted that after seven decades of family programme activities, "31 of 36 states/UTs have now reached replacement level of Total fertility rate (TFR)". She called on states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, and Manipur to take up "concerted activities to bring down the TFR".

Patel also noted that the Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV) scheme has been expanded to over 340 districts from 146 districts initially.

## TB continues to be No-1 killer among infectious diseases despite rampant use of antibiotics: Expert

AGENCIES  
Thiruvananthapuram, July 11

Despite the clinical use of over 20 antibiotics and BCG, a century-old vaccine, tuberculosis has remained as the number one killer among all infectious diseases, accounting for nearly 1.5 million deaths yearly, a leading microbiologist said here on Thursday.

Dr Vinay Nandicoori, Director, CSIR-CCMB, Hyderabad, however, said recent findings in labs on mycobacterial cell division held out hopes of dealing with the increasingly drug-resistant strains of the disease in a more effective manner.

He was delivering a

talk on the topic "Delimiting Molecular Mechanisms that drive the survival of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis (Mtb)" at Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB) here.

RGCB Director Prof Chandrabhas Narayana welcomed the gathering.

Dr Nandicoori, a J C Bose Fellow, said TB has been among the oldest diseases in the world with its strains found in mummies in Egypt. The gradual rise in the emergence of increasingly drug-resistant strains and HIV-TB co-infection highlights the urgency to identify newer attractive drugs.

"India, unfortunately, has the highest burden of TB in the world, and it is

our problem. Many people do not know that TB is not limited to lungs. It can be in eyes, in reproductive organs, in liver, stomach, and bones. And the worst part of it is diagnosis is even more difficult," he said.

"It is not an easy pathogen to deal with. And if you end up using getting multi drug resistant (MDR) bacteria, that would be a serious issue if it comes to treatment. The reason is for anybody with a TB disease, the treatment time is four to six months, depending on the therapy. And if you end up getting MDR TB, it takes about nine months to a year, sometimes even longer," he noted.

Dr Nandicoori said in

every infectious disease, such as anthrax, septicemia, tuberculosis and cholera, a basic postulate is that the organism should be present in every case of the disease. Also, it can be cultured outside, while inoculation of this culture should cause the disease in an animal, and organism should be found after the infection.

Dr Nandicoori said it is important to continue with research on TB as in case of SARS and COVID, which have come to stay. COVID alone has killed around 10 million people, but TB kills around 1.5 million people every year. "For SARS and COVID, one can develop a vaccine, but for TB, it is not an easy one," he noted.

# Supreme Court summons Chief Secretaries, Finance Secretaries of 16 states for non-compliance of judicial pay commission recommendations

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The Supreme Court on Thursday summoned the Chief Secretaries and Finance Secretaries of 16 states for non-compliance of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission recommendations on the payment of arrears of pension and other retirement benefits to the judicial officers.

Expressing strong displeasure over non-compliance of the SNJPC's recommendations, a Bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "We know how to extract compliance now. If we just say that the Chief Secretary will be present if the affidavit is not filed then it will not be filed."

"We are not sending them to jail but let them be here and then an affidavit will be submitted. Let them be personally present now," the Bench said.

Though seven opportunities have been granted to the states, it appears that full compliance has not been effected and several states are in default, it said.

"The Chief Secretaries and Finance Secretaries have to be personally present. Failing compliance, the court will be constrained to initiate contempt," it said.

According to the order, the Bench directed the top two bureaucrats of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Odisha and Rajasthan to appear before it on August 23.

The Bench made clear that it will not grant any more extensions.

It passed the orders after taking note of the submissions and perusing the note provided by



lawyer K Parmeswar who is assisting the court as amicus curiae (a friend of court).

At the outset, he also referred to the deduction of tax at source by the states on allowances which are due to the present and retired judicial officers.

"Wherever exemptions are available under the Income Tax Act from deduction of TDS (tax deducted at source) on allowances, the state governments shall ensure

that no deductions are made. Wherever TDS are wrongly deducted, the amount shall be refunded to the judicial officers," the Bench said.

The Bench heard submissions on compliance of the SNJPC by various states.

It rejected the submissions of states like West Bengal, which sought one more year's time, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala on the alleged

delay in complying with the recommendations on payment of arrears and other benefits to the judicial officers.

The Bench directed the defaulting states to report compliance by August 20 besides asking their chief secretaries and finance secretaries to appear personally on August 23.

It rejected the vehement submission of Assam that the order be deferred as the state was facing massive flood situations.

The Bench also did not allow the submission of Delhi that it was awaiting the Centre's approval.

"We are not concerned with that. You sort it out with the Centre," the CJI said.

On January 10, the top court, in its verdict, had said there was a need to maintain uniformity in service conditions of judicial officers across the country.

It had directed the constitution of a two-judge

committee in each high court for overseeing the implementation of the orders on pay, pension and other retirement benefits for the judicial officers according to the SNJPC.

The top court had said it was a matter of grave concern that though officers in other services have availed of a revision of their conditions of service as far back as on January 1, 2016, similar issues pertaining to the judicial officers are still awaiting a final decision eight years thereafter.

It said the judges have retired from service and the family pensioners of those who have passed away are awaiting resolution as well.

The SNJPC recommendations cover pay structure, pension and family pension and allowances, besides dealing with the issue of establishing a permanent mechanism to determine subjects of service conditions of the district judiciary.

## Kerala set to emerge as AI nerve centre of India: CM Vijayan

AGENCIES  
KOCHI, JULY 11

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said Kerala is set to emerge as India's nerve centre of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by leveraging AI tools and systems in all sectors, besides making indigenous contributions in the domain.

CM Vijayan said this while inaugurating the country's first International Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) conclave, here, organised by Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) in collaboration with IBM.

"The conclave is a stepping stone towards elevating Kerala into the hub of GenAI in the country. Integrating AI into all key sectors including tourism, healthcare, education, IT and renewable energy will stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life of people," said CM Vijayan.

"The government has identified AI as a focus sector in its new Industrial Policy. Automated warning systems using AI can be explored in saving lives

from man-animal conflicts. More AI-based investments are anticipated in the state in the near future. AI can give solutions for improving irrigation, agriculture production and climate change mitigation, environmental protection and forecast adverse weather incidents," added CM Vijayan.

Terming the conclave as a milestone event for the entire country, State Industries Minister P Rajeev said GenAI is set to revolutionise industry by enhancing efficiency and productivity.

"This conclave is a platform to explore possibilities like how GenAI can address real life challenges and expand avenues for growth, besides developing tools that can benefit various sectors through our economy and society," said Rajeev.

Dinesh Nirmal, Senior Vice President, IBM, said the firm is focusing on how to contribute to society through GenAI.

"The conclave will showcase how we can infuse GenAI into enterprises, besides exploring how a product created in Kochi can be branded globally," said Nirmal.

## Govt should waive crop loan & electricity bill arrears to help farmers: Maha LoP

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, JULY 11

Maharashtra Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadetiwar on Thursday demanded a complete loan waiver for farmers who are in distress due to damage caused by natural calamities and dip in the prices for agricultural produce.

In his speech at the resolution moved by the Treasury Bench members on agriculture and related issues, LoP Wadetiwar slammed the state government over rising cases of farmer suicides, saying that it won't be enough to provide free electricity up to 7.5 horse-power to agriculture pumps.

"The government must waive off the electricity



bill arrears payable by the farmers," the LoP said.

He said that the farmers have been devastated due to the lack of guarantee from the Central and state governments.

"Due to the cruel nature and government fraud, farmers have been crushed leading to rap-

idly increase in farmers suicides. Farmers are also affected by export ban lack of minimum support price, increasing debt burden, fraud by crop insurance companies, increased rates of fertilisers, seeds, agricultural implements, and inflation," said LoP Wadeti-

war. He asked that the government to get out of the election campaign drive and publicity mode and make decisions to help the farmers on a priority basis.

LoP Wadetiwar claimed that despite the government's announcement of paying minimum support price to the farmers, it was not procuring the agricultural produce by paying MSP.

He said that 18 per cent GST on agricultural inputs created further hardships for the farming community.

He alleged that bogus seeds are being widely sold in the state and demanded that the government should immediately take action.

## SC judge recuses himself from hearing Sisodia's bail pleas

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Supreme Court judge, Justice Sanjay Kumar on Thursday withdrew himself from hearing the bail plea of senior AAP leader, Manish Sisodia, in the alleged liquor policy scam.

At the outset, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, leading a three-judge Bench, informed senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia, about Justice Kumar's recusal.

"Dr Singhvi, my brother Justice Kumar will not like to hear this matter for personal reasons," said Justice Khanna.

Ultimately, the matter was directed to be listed in the week commencing July 15 before a different Bench after obtaining the directions of the Chief Justice of India (CJI), who is the



master of the roster.

On Monday, senior AAP leader Sisodia's counsel requested CJI, DY Chandrachud, to urgently list his pleas seeking bail.

He submitted that the top court had granted liberty to the senior AAP leader to revive his Special Leave Petitions challenging the denial of bail.

Last month, the apex court had disposed of the former Deputy CM's plea seeking bail in corruption and money laundering cases after Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta,

the second-highest law officer of the Centre, made an undertaking that the final charge sheet/complaint in the liquor policy case would be filed by July 3.

Earlier, the Delhi High Court had denied bail to the senior AAP leader, saying that he failed to pass the triple test for grant of bail in the corruption case and the twin conditions required under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

A Bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma of the High Court, however, clarified that he could continue to meet his ailing wife every week, on the same terms as set earlier by the trial court.

In March, the Supreme Court dismissed the curative petitions filed by Sisodia against the dismissal of his review pleas against its

2023 verdict denying him bail in connection with the liquor policy case.

In its judgment delivered on October 30, 2023, the top court denied bail to Sisodia but said that if the trial proceeds slowly in the next three months, he may apply for bail afresh.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja of Rouse Avenue Court had on April 30, refused to grant bail to Sisodia who was seeking regular bail a second time. During the trial court's decision to deny bail, it was noted that delays in the case proceedings were largely due to actions attributable to Sisodia himself, dismissing his claims of undue delay.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court last week extended till July 15 the judicial custody of Sisodia in the excise policy case being probed by the ED.

## Possible to revive Vizag Steel Plant, PM will take decision: Kumaraswamy

AGENCIES  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

Ruling out the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Union Heavy Industries and Steel Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Thursday said that there is a possibility of reviving the plant and a final decision would be taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He told media persons after a visit to the plant that there is a possibility of reviving the public sector undertaking.

"Who told you we are going to privatise? Why did I come here? There is no question of privatisation. Before I announce, the PM's permission is required. I have to con-

vince him," said Kumaraswamy, who along with Union Minister of State for Steel B. Srinivasa Verma, visited Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), the corporate entity of VSP.

He held talks with the management, the leaders of trade unions, and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Stating that they had held threadbare discussions, the Union Minister said several suggestions were made.

"Ultimately we are going to take some decision with the higher authority," he said.

Kumaraswamy said he was preparing a note to revive the plant and this

would be presented to the Prime Minister.

"There is a possibility of reviving it. We can do it. For that we are working out," he said.

TDP state President P. Srinivas Rao, who met Kumaraswamy, said he gave the assurance that the project would be revived and protected. He requested that the VSP's land, which is with the Centre, be transferred to the RINL so that the company can get loans from the banks.

Allocation of iron ore mines, financial assistance of Rs 20,000 crore, and a merger with Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) were other options mooted by them.

BJP leader Vishnu



Kumar Raju said Kumaraswamy sought two months for a decision on reviving the plant.

Earlier, Kumaraswamy said nobody should have fears that the steel plant will be shut down. He stated that with the sup-

port of Prime Minister Modi, the plant is operating at 100 per cent capacity. The minister, who penned his thoughts in the visitors' book, affirmed VSP's contribution to the nation's development. He noted that many people

are dependent on the plant for their livelihood.

He, along with officials, went around the factory and interacted with workers to review the production activities. The ministers were accompanied by Visakhapatnam MP M. Bharat, BJP leader G.V.L. Narasimha Rao, local MLA Palla Srinivas, VSP Chairman and Managing Director Atul Bhatt and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Steel, Sanjay Roy and senior officials.

The Union Minister visited the plant amid the demand by the unions for its merger with the SAIL. Leaders of various employees' unions of VSP, who have been fighting for more than 1,000 days

against the proposal to privatise the steel plant, are likely to meet Kumaraswamy to seek the merger of RINL-VSP with SAIL, as apart from this, there is no other alternative.

The BJP MPs from Andhra Pradesh are also pushing for the VSP's merger with SAIL. Last month, a delegation of BJP MPs led by the party's state chief and former Union Minister D. Purandeswari had met Kumaraswamy and submitted a representation, requesting him to consider a takeover of RINL Vizag and Nagarnar Steel, Chhattisgarh by SAIL. The delegation of MPs included Minister of State for Steel Srinivasa Varma. After a report in an

English daily that the NDA government had taken a U-turn on the privatisation of VSP, Purandeswari posted on X that she had hand-delivered a letter to Kumaraswamy and had been diligently monitoring the situation.

"This takeover will not only expedite the national steel policy 2017 targets but also integrate and optimise resources, resulting in increased profitability and market expansion for SAIL.

Additionally, the merger will yield considerable cost savings in interest rates and raw materials, contributing to the faster profitability of the RINL Vizag plant," she said in the letter, posted on X.

## Custody death: Calcutta HC directs preservation of video-recording of autopsy

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, JULY 11

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed preservation of the video recording of the autopsy of Abu Siddik Halder, a youth from Dholahat who died in police custody on Monday night.

On Wednesday, the family members of the deceased filed a petition at the single-judge Bench of Justice Amrita Sinha

seeking a detailed and independent probe in the matter.

On Thursday, as the matter came up for hearing, the counsel for the state government rubbished claims of custodial torture and said that Halder's death was caused by the rise in urea and creatinine levels in his body.

When Justice Sinha asked for CCTV footage of the Dholahat Police Station, where the

alleged custodial torture took place, the counsel of the state government informed that the camera had not been working for quite some time.

Thereafter, Justice Sinha ordered the preservation of the video recordings of the post mortem of the victim's body.

The matter will come up for hearing again on Friday.

Halder died on July 8, just four days after he

was released on bail by a District Court in South 24 Parganas District on July 4.

On Thursday, the victim's family members informed the court that they had to pay a bribe of Rs 1.75 lakh to cops to ensure his bail.

The victim was arrested by police on June 30 on charges of stealing jewellery. The family members alleged that he was beaten up in custody, which was

evident from the injuries that were visible while he was presented to a District Court on July 4.

He was granted bail on that day and was sent to a local hospital, where he was released after primary treatment.

The victim's mother Taslima Bibi claimed that his condition started deteriorating when he came back home, following which he was shifted to a hospital in Kolkata.

AGENCIES  
PATNA, JULY 11

The continuous rain in North Bihar has led to several rivers flowing above the danger level, creating a dangerous situation, especially in the catchment areas of rivers like Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Adhwara, Kamla Balan, Parman, Kosi, Mahananda.

The floodwater entered many villages of West

Champan, East Champan, Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Khagaria, Purnea, Kishanganj and other districts of North Bihar and Seemanchal regions.

Residents of low-lying areas are taking shelter on roads or migrating to higher places.

According to the Central Water Commission, rivers like Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla Balan, Kosi, and Mahananda are flow-

ing above the danger mark at multiple locations.

According to the Commission, the Gandak River was flowing 107 cm above the danger mark at Dumriya Ghat in Gopalganj.

The water level of the Gandak River was above the danger mark at Reva Ghat in Muzaffarpur. The Bagmati River was 44 cm above the danger mark at Benibad in Muzaffarpur district.



## Indian companies keen to explore investment opportunities in Austria: Industry

AGENCIES  
VIENNA, JULY 11

Indian companies are keen to explore investment opportunities in Austria across areas such as Research and Development, artificial intelligence (AI) and software in sustainability areas for addressing the European market, industry experts as Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his historic visit to the country.

Speaking at the India-Austria Business Forum in Vienna, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with Austrian Federal Economic



Chamber and Federation of Austrian Industries in conjunction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Austria, Martin Kocher, Minister of Labour

and Economy, Austria stressed that we value the Indian startup ecosystem as one of the most vibrant in the world. He added that there are

cooperation opportunities in renewable energy, smart cities, audio-visual and films, tourism and other sectors.

Sanjiv Puri, President, CII, said we must encourage two-way cooperation in sustainable agriculture, water treatment and food processing.

"In critical areas in sustainability cooperation of circularity, adaptation to weather disruptions and biodiversity, Austrian technology partnerships can help India in these areas through AI, advanced sensors and other new tech instruments," said Puri. Talking about India-

Austria trade relations, R. K. Singh, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Investments and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that the two-way trade between India and Austria is worth about \$2 billion which is relatively well balanced.

"Most MNCs who have invested in India, including many European ones who have stayed the course have reaped rich dividends in terms of outshining their parents, both in terms of topline and bottom-line expansion, profitability as well as enterprise value," said Singh.

## Malawian president calls for regional collaboration in addressing climate change

AGENCIES  
LILONGWE, JULY 11

Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera urged southern African countries to collaborate in finding solutions that would help address climate change issues affecting farmers in the region. Chakwera emphasised the importance of collaboration during his opening speech on Wednesday at the two-day annual Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) conference in Lilongwe. The conference has brought together representatives from 12 member countries in southern Africa, reports Xinhua news agency.

Chakwera highlighted that the climate change

impacts, such as El Nino and cyclones, are not limited to Malawian farmers alone but are affecting farmers across the entire southern African region. He stressed the importance of regional solidarity, urging countries to unite and collectively develop solutions to protect farmers from these challenges.

Chakwera said the collaboration would help develop robust strategies and policies to effectively mitigate the impacts of climate change on farmers in the region. He added that joint efforts by the southern African countries would also help build and strengthen the resilience of the farmers against the impacts of climate change by adopting new ways

of farming to improve their productivity. The Malawian leader affirmed Malawi's unwavering commitment to collaborating with other southern African countries in the fight against climate change. He highlighted key initiatives that Malawi is undertaking, including efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance carbon sinks, and promote sustainable development practices.

According to Chakwera, Malawi has already made good progress in its efforts to combat climate change, and meanwhile, the country is promoting conservation agriculture, agro-forestry and other climate-smart activities to enhance the resilience and productivity of farmers.

## South Korea vows to strengthen defence ties with Australia

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 11

South Korean Vice Defence Minister Kim Seon-ho on Thursday vowed to strengthen defence cooperation with Australia, his office said, amid growing arms industry ties between the two countries.

Kim made the remark during a bilateral defence conference in Canberra, which discussed key threats in the Indo-Pacific region and ways to bolster cooperation between the militaries and defence industries of the two countries, Yonhap news agency reported. South Korean defence companies, including shipbuilders Hanwha Ocean and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries, also participated in the conference to feature

their products.

"Amid a grave global security environment, (the conference) presented an opportunity to further strengthen relations between South Korea and Australia," Kim said. "We will make further efforts to strengthen bilateral defence and arms industry cooperation." The two countries have bolstered defence ties in recent years, with Canberra signing major deals to purchase South Korean weapons systems, including the Redback infantry fighting vehicle and K9 howitzers. South Korea has sought closer security ties with Australia, with their top diplomats and defence chiefs discussing Seoul's potential participation in part of the AUKUS security partnership in May.

## OECD calls for South Korea to adopt tighter fiscal rules amid deficit, rapid aging

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 11

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) called on South Korea on Thursday to introduce tighter fiscal rules and maintain a restrictive policy as its budget is projected to remain in deficit through next year and rapid aging would add longer-term pressure.

"The budget is projected to remain in deficit in 2024 and 2025. South Korea needs to restrain spending through next year," the OECD said in its biennial economic report on South Korea released in the day, reported Yonhap news agency.

"The government needs to adopt the proposed fiscal rules and continue to carry out regular spend-

ing reviews to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability," it added.

In 2022, the government announced a plan to introduce the fiscal rule that calls for capping the fiscal deficit at 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). If debt exceeds 60 per cent of GDP, the government shall lower the deficit to 2 per cent, though the bill has yet to be passed.

Public debt remains low in South Korea, compared with other OECD peers, but it is "set to increase rapidly going forward and exceed 150 per cent of GDP by 2060" as demographic changes are to increase fiscal pressures from pensions, health care and longer-term care, the OECD said.

In 2023, the country's total revenue fell 77 trillion



won (\$55.82 billion) on-year to 497 trillion won, as tax collection went down markedly due to poor corporate performances and the property market slump reducing transaction taxes.

The OECD also pointed to the government's tax

relief as a reason for the marked fall in tax revenue last year.

Responding to population decline, the OECD recommended measures to improve work-life balance and to boost female employment.

The total fertility rate,

which means the average number of expected births from a woman in her lifetime, also hit a record yearly low of 0.72 in 2023, which came far below the 2.1 births per woman needed to maintain a stable population without immigration.

"South Korea is advised to tighten and enforce quality criteria for private childcare, improve the accessibility of public childcare, encourage workplace childcare, and extend formal childcare hours to accommodate working parents' needs," the organisation said.

Policy suggestions also include expanding parental leave coverage to the entire workplace, increasing the parental leave ceiling for all leave takers, and financing parental leave benefits and other associ-

ated charges with public resources.

The OECD also stressed the need to break down labour market dualism, expand social insurance enrollment and consider relaxing regulations on reconstruction and pre-sale price caps as part of efforts to boost the housing supply.

It advised South Korea to introduce a flexible wage system and raise the pension eligibility age so as to extend the retirement age. The current pensionable age in South Korea came to 63, which is one of the lowest among the OECD nations.

The organisation also called on the Seoul government to push for reform of its support scheme for small and mid-sized companies so as to boost their productivity.

## US sees second-warmest June on record amid heatwaves

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 11

The United States saw the second-hottest June in its 130-year record, with the average temperature reaching 22.1 degrees Celsius, 3.4 degrees above the long-term average, the country's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported.

The month was marked by severe weather incidents, extreme temperatures, and significant precipitation variations across different regions, according to the monthly report from the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), a division of NOAA. An estimated 24 million people endured their hottest nights ever recorded, particularly across the West, South, and Northeast, Xinhua



news agency reported. Heatwaves plagued these regions alongside the Great Lakes and Puerto Rico, shattering temperature records and posing serious health risks, the report said.

The US states of Arizona and New Mexico bore the brunt of the heat, both experiencing their hottest

Junes ever recorded, with 18 additional states ranking among their top 10 warmest Junes on record. Fueled by the extreme heat, the devastating South Fork fire, which ignited on June 17, ravaged over 70 square kilometres in New Mexico, destroying nearly 1,400 buildings and claiming two lives.

While the nation grappled with exceptional heat, catastrophic flooding struck parts of the Midwest. Days of heavy rains caused rivers and streams to overflow their banks, forcing residents to evacuate as water destroyed roads and bridges.

On June 30, Hurricane Beryl made a record-breaking entrance into the Atlantic Ocean, becoming the earliest Category 4 hurricane storm ever to form in the Atlantic Ocean in June.

Last month, four new billion-dollar weather and climate disasters were confirmed, including two hail events that impacted the US state of Texas in late April and Colorado in late May, one severe weather event that impacted the central, southern and eastern parts of the country in

mid-May, and a tornado outbreak that impacted portions of the Central United States in mid-May.

Moreover, for the January-June period, the average contiguous US temperature was 50.9 degrees Fahrenheit (about 10.5 degrees Celsius), ranking second-warmest on record for this period, NCEI added.

There have been 15 confirmed disasters so far this year, resulting in at least 106 fatalities and more than \$37 billion in economic losses.

The United States has sustained 391 separate weather and climate disasters since 1980, where overall damage reached or exceeded \$1 billion. The total cost of these 391 events exceeds \$2.755 trillion, according to the report.

## Palestinian PM calls for unified government after Gaza ceasefire

AGENCIES  
RAMALLAH, JULY 11

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa has called for a unified Palestine under a single authority and government once a ceasefire is reached in Gaza.

During a meeting with UN officials, consuls, and ambassadors in Ramallah, Mustafa emphasised the need for unity and cooperation, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday.

"The day after the war ends, Palestine must be unified under one authority and one government, working with partners as one team with one plan. There can be no undefined transitional

period that would create more complexity and chaos," the Prime Minister said on Wednesday, according to a statement from his office sent to Xinhua.

Mustafa urged international partners, donors, and UN institutions to closely coordinate with the Palestinian government to ensure swift recovery and address urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the conflict in Gaza and its repercussions in the West Bank.

He highlighted the Palestinian Authority's longstanding responsibility for providing essential services such as health-care, education, water, and electricity to Gaza

residents despite Israeli deductions from Palestinian funds.

Delegations from Egypt, the US, Qatar, and Israel met on Wednesday in Qatar's capital, Doha, to resume the Gaza truce talks.

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed his country's commitment to a potential ceasefire agreement during a meeting with US President Joe Biden's special envoy to the Middle East, Brett McGurk, in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu assured McGurk of his "commitment to the deal as long as Israeli red lines are maintained," according to a statement from his office.

## Nepali Congress issues whip to vote against PM Dahal in floor test

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU, JULY 11

The Nepali Congress directed its legislators on Thursday to vote against Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal in a floor test slated for Friday, media reports said.

The top whip of the party, Ramesh Lekhak, sent out a notification asking Nepali Congress members to vote against the resolution that the Prime Minister will bring to secure the House of Representatives' confidence, according to The Kathmandu Post.

Dahal chose to use the floor test in accordance



with Article 100(2) of the constitution, which states that "if the political party that the Prime Minister represents is divided or a political party in coalition government withdraws its support, the Prime Minister shall table a motion

in the House of Representatives for a vote of confidence within thirty days."

The CPN-UML withdrew its support to the government on Wednesday after abandoning its coalition with the CPN (Maoist

Centre) and joining up with the Nepali Congress to create a new government, the report said.

The Ashok Rai-led Janata Samajbadi Party and the Nagarik Unmukti Party have also withdrawn their support to the government.

It will be Dahal's fifth floor test since being appointed prime minister on December 25, 2022, due to frequent coalition changes.

According to the report, the Prime Minister could lose the trust vote this time since the CPN-UML, which was the largest party in the coalition, has withdrawn its support.

## US House passes bill to require proof of citizenship

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JULY 11

The US House of Representatives passed legislation to require individuals to present proof of US citizenship to register to vote in federal elections in the United States.

House lawmakers passed the bill, dubbed the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, in a vote of 221 in favor and 198 opposed on Wednesday.

US House Majority Leader Steve Scalise said that it is vital to bolster election security to ensure that only US citizens are voting in federal elections, amid an influx of illegal



immigration across the southern border under the Biden administration.

The White House said that it strongly opposes the legislation. The bill is based on "easily disproven falsehoods," the White House said, adding that it is rare that non-citizens

break the law by voting in federal elections.

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk said that lawmakers who oppose the legislation are traitors to the United States and that those who disagree with the bill are seeking to cheat in elections.

## US will send ammunition batch to Israel in coming days

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV, JULY 11

White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk informed Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that some of the critical ammunition, the delivery of which was previously delayed, will be sent to Israel in the coming days, the Israeli Defense Ministry said on Thursday.

"On Thursday, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant met with White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk at the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv...

# India's oil & gas exploration sector offers \$100 billion investment opportunity: Union Minister Puri

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The exploration and production (E&P) segment of India's oil and gas sector will throw up an investment opportunity of at least \$100 billion by 2030, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Thursday.

Addressing the 'Urja Varta 2024' at Bharat Mandapam here, he said, "Despite our progress much of our exploration and production potential still lies untapped within India's 26 sedimentary basins. Despite the abundant geological resources



round, 16 per cent would come under exploration, he added.

The Union Minister said that the government was able to control oil prices due to neutral policies. The minister also referred to the increased purchases of oil from Russia that have helped India to keep fuel prices under control.

"There was a global turmoil. We could have followed what the West was advising us to do and not sourced oil from a particular country and then oil prices would have shot up," the minister said.

available to us." "Our efforts in the past have been far short of what needs to be done in the E&P sector," he added. The minister also highlighted that, as of

now, 10 per cent of the country's sedimentary blocks are under exploration. Following the completion of the 10th Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP)

# Banking sector witnessing a decade-high performance: RBI

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

As India aims to become the world's third largest economy soon, the banking sector is undergoing a decade-high performance in financial metrics, according to Swaminathan J, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

According to him, the central bank is busy improving the auditing process to safeguard the integrity and stability of financial institutions.

"Auditors and chief financial officers are key pillars of financial integrity and governance in our banking system. Auditors must apply due rigor in their audit processes to mitigate any potential for divergence, under-provisioning, or non-compliance with statutory and



between stakeholders in the banking financial system.

Meanwhile, India's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) for the financial year ended March 31, 2024, improved to 64.2 compared to 60.1 in March 2023, with growth witnessed across all sub-indices, the RBI announced.

The improvement in the FI-Index reflects a deepening of financial inclusion across the country.

There has been a renewed national focus on financial inclusion, promoting financial education and literacy and making credit available to productive sectors of the economy including the rural and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector which has led to the improvement in the FI-Index.

regulatory requirements, said Swaminathan at a conference in Mumbai.

Swaminathan said that the RBI has introduced structured meetings between supervisory teams and auditors, exception reporting, and streamlined auditor appointment processes.

He also cautioned Chief Financial Officers against the evergreening of loans and fraudulent transactions through certain bank accounts without valid reasons.

Swaminathan also emphasised the importance of collaboration

# EU accepts Apple's offer to open up contactless payments

AGENCIES  
LONDON, JULY 11

The European Union (EU) on Thursday accepted commitments offered by Apple over how it operates Apple Pay to end a long-running competition investigation.

"The Commission has decided to accept commitments offered by Apple. These commitments address our preliminary concerns that Apple may have illegally restricted competition for mobile wallets on iPhones," said Commission EVP Margrethe Vestager, who heads up the EU's competition division.

"Apple has until July 25 to implement their commitments. As of this date,



In 2022, the Commission found that Apple Pay could restrict competition as it was the only option for iPhone users.

"Our preliminary finding was therefore that Apple abused its dominant position by refusing to supply the NFC technology to competing mobile wallet developers," the Commission mentioned.

In Europe, the most widely available technology for mobile payments in stores is called 'Near Field Communication' (NFC). This technology enables wireless communication between a mobile phone and a store's payments terminal. It allows users to 'tap and go' with their mobile phone.

NFC technology was not

developed by Apple. It is a standardised technology and made available for free.

Apple refused to give access to the NFC technology on the iPhone to rival wallet developers and instead reserved the use of the technology on the iPhone to its own mobile wallet solution, the Commission said.

Now, the Commission has ended the investigation and mentioned that iPhone users will be able to use their preferred mobile wallet for payments in stores.

"They will be able to do so while enjoying all the iPhone's functionalities, including tap-and-go, Double-Click and FaceID," it added.

developers will be able to offer a mobile wallet on the iPhone with the same 'tap and go' experience that so far has been reserved for Apple Pay," she added.

In 2020, the EU formally launched an antitrust investigation related to

Apple Pay. The investigation looked at the terms and conditions Apple sets for integrating Apple Pay in apps and websites and concerns around the 'tap and go' technology and alleged refusals of accessing Apple Pay.

# 96 pc of Indian SMBs may consider paying cybercriminals: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

About 96 per cent of Indian small-and-medium businesses (SMBs) might consider paying cybercriminals in the event of ransomware extortion, a new report said on Thursday. According to cybersecurity company ESET, about 88 per cent of Indian SMBs experienced breach attempts or incidents in the past 12 months.

"Our report reveals that

although SMBs are confident in their security measures and IT expertise, the majority still faced cybersecurity incidents over the past year," said Parvinder Walia, President of Asia Pacific & Japan at ESET. The report, which surveyed over 1,400 IT professionals, found that ransomware, web-based attacks, and phishing emails emerged as the top concerns of Indian SMBs.

India and New Zealand experienced the highest number of secu-

rity breaches or incidents, despite expressing the highest levels of confidence in their security systems.

Moreover, the report mentioned that 63 per cent anticipated a rise in cybersecurity spending over the next 12 months, with 48 per cent of these firms expecting to do so by more than 80 per cent.

SMBs in India are also planning significant cybersecurity enhancements over the next 12 months.

# India pips China to become real estate capital of Asia: Hurun report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

With real estate companies worth \$36 billion in 2024, India is accelerating to become the real estate capital of Asia, pushing away China in terms of growth rate, a new report said on Thursday. China's real estate market is facing significant headwinds due to government clampdowns and demand slowdown.

While in India, with the middle class projected to reach 547 million by 2030, residential sales are expected to grow 10-12 per cent in FY2024-25, according to the '2024 GROHE-Hurun India Real Estate 100' report.

"Rising foreign investments of around \$4 billion yearly are further catalysing growth," said Anas Rahman Junaid, Founder and Chief



Researcher, Hurun India. Sixty of the top 100 companies operate beyond their core state headquarters, indicating a significant trend towards national brand building in the real estate sector.

"Notably, six companies on the list have an

international presence, demonstrating the global ambitions of Indian real estate companies. With the strength of the Indian diaspora, Indian real estate companies are well-positioned to expand internationally, a trend we expect to see grow in the coming

years," Junaid emphasised. DLF emerged as the top real estate company in the list, with a valuation of Rs 2,02,140 crore, followed by Macrotech Developers with a valuation of Rs 1,36,730 crore and Indian Hotels Company at third spot with a Rs 79,150 crore

valuation.

Among the top 10 companies, 60 per cent are headquartered in Mumbai, while two are based in Bengaluru and one each in Gurugram and Ahmedabad.

"The list showcases that entrepreneurs hailing from tier 2 cities are forging some of the most impactful real estate enterprises in the nation. Five per cent of the entrants in 2024 GROHE-Hurun India Real Estate 100 hail from tier 2 cities.

This highlights the fact that geographic boundaries no longer limit the rise of influential real estate players in India," informed Junaid.

India is projected to add 200,000 km of national highways by 2037, fostering the growth of micro cities and further value addition by India's real estate sector, he added.

# Indian auto component industry's revenue to grow by up to 7 pc in FY25: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The revenue growth for the Indian auto component industry is expected to moderate in FY2025, about 5 to 7 per cent, after a strong performance in FY2024, a new report showed on Thursday.

According to rating agency ICRA, operating margins are expected to improve year-on-year in FY25, driven by factors like better operating leverage and higher value addition.

"Demand from domestic original equipment manufacturers (OEM) constitutes over 50 per cent of sales for the Indian auto component industry and the pace of growth in the segment is expected to moderate in FY2025," said Vinutaa Sriraman, VP and Sector Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA Limited.

"Growth in replacement demand is pegged at 5-7 per cent, after two to three years of healthy growth, following a relatively weak Q1 in the current fiscal," she added.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR  
OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER  
POSHAN PROJECT DANSAL, DISTRICT JAMMU  
E-Mail Id: cfoodansal@gmail.com Phone No. 0191-2669163

**Extension Notice**

**Subject:- Extension to the Advertisement Notice No. 06 of 2023 Dated:- 26-02-2024 re published in State Times on dated:-24-06-2024 for Ten days w.e.f. 21-06-2024 upto 30-06-2024.**

Last date of the submission of application forms with regard to Advertisement Notice No. 06 of 2023 Dated:- 26-02-2024 was 15-03-2024 but as no application was received and also in view of the huge rush of applicants having deficiency in requisite documents for the post of Sangini (Anganwadi Workers) and Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) of Poshan Project Dansal, it was re-advertised in State Times on 24-06-2024, the last date for receipt of forms for aforementioned post were extended for Ten days w.e.f. 21-06-2024 upto 30-06-2024. As still no application form was received at the office of the undersigned. As such, the last date for the receipt of application forms has been extended further for the last time for ten days w.e.f. 11-07-24 upto 20-07-24. Further all applicants (concerned) are requested to submit the application forms along with the affidavit and ward certificate issued from the competent authority as per the format enclosed in the advertisement notice.

**Note:- No further extension in dates of receipt of forms shall be issued.**

**DIP/J-2659/24**  
**Date: 11-7-24**

Child Development Project Officer  
Dansal

Dated: -10-07-2024

No:-CDPO/D/ 145-152/2024

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**DIRECTORATE OF FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS KASHMIR**

Sub:- Appointment of candidates as Depot Assistant (MTS) in Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department Kashmir under Hon'ble Prime Minister's Special package for Kashmiri Migrants and Non-Migrants Kashmiri Pandits.

Ref: -

- Administrative Department's letter No. FCS&CA/Est/69/2019 dated 15.10.2021
- SSP/ Dy. Superintendent of Police (Hqrs) For Special DG CID J&K's verification No.CID/B/2023/Final/83001-14D-1 dated 04.10.2023 & Form No.106038 dated 24.06.2024.

**Order No: - 1050-DFCS&CAK of 2024**  
**Dated: - 29-06-2024**

Consequent upon receipt of satisfactory Character/Antecedents verification report from Criminal Investigation Department J&K vide letters referred to above, recommendations made by J&K Service Selection Board communicated vide their letter No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/7046-53 dated 14.10.2021 and Administrative Department's letter referred to above read with Govt order No. 32 JK(FCS&CA) of 2024 dated 31.05.2024, sanction is hereby accorded to the temporary appointment of Mr. Sahil Pandita S/o Manmohan Pandita R/o Gund Gushi, Kupwara District Kupwara Depot Assistant (Multitasking Staff) under RBA carrying substantive pay level of Rs.14800-47100 (SL-1) under Hon'ble Prime Minister's Special Package for Kashmiri Migrants and Non-Migrant Kashmiri Pandits.

The appointment of the appointee shall be subject to the following conditions:-

- That the emoluments of the appointee shall be governed under S.O 194 dated 17.06.2020 as extended vide government order No. 586 JK GAD of 2021 dated 17.07.2021.
- That the appointee shall give an undertaking in the shape of an affidavit to the effect that if on verification, genuineness of the qualification, migrant, domicile and category (if any) certificates from the concerned issuing authority are found fake/forged, the claim of the appointee for appointment shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio.
- The salary of the appointee shall be drawn and disbursed by the concerned Drawing and Disbursing Officer only after receipt of satisfactory report in respect of documents as mentioned at (b).
- The in-terse-seniority of the appointee shall be as per the order as it exist in the selection list as communicated by J&K Service Selection Board.
- The appointment and other terms and conditions shall be governed by SRO 412 of 2009 dated 30.12.2009 issued by Revenue Department.
- The appointment of the candidate shall be governed by the "New Pension Scheme" notified vide SRO-400 of 2009 dated 24.12.2009.
- The appointment is subject to the outcome of any writ petitions (s), if any, pending before any court of competent jurisdiction.
- That if the candidate has taken loan DIC/Employment Department, to be ascertained from the District Industries Centre (DIC) and District Employment & Counseling Centre of the domicile District, he/she shall relinquish proprietorship of unit/enterprise and also stakes, if any, in self-employment unit/enterprise before joining the Government service. He/she shall be required to repay the entire loan in suitable EMIS to be worked out by the DDO concerned from his/her salary. DDO concerned shall obtain an affidavit from concerned appointee regarding both relinquishment proprietorship and stakes, if any, in such a self-employment until/ enterprise and recovery to be made and also monitor its recovery.

The appointee shall report to the Assistant Director Kupwara - Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Kashmir within a period of (21) twenty - one days from the date of issuance of this order and shall be allowed to join only on production of the following documents/ certificates (in original) wherever applicable to be verified subsequently:-

- Academic Qualification Certificate(s).
- Date of Birth Certificate.
- Domicile Certificate.
- Health Certificate from the concerned Chief Medical Officer.
- Migrant certificate
- Non-Migrant Certificate (For Non-Migrant Kashmiri Pandits) from concerned Revenue authority
- Category certificate, if any.

In case the appointee fails to join within a period of 21 (twenty one) days from the date of issuance of this order, he shall forfeit his right and his appointment shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio without any further notice as per Circular No. 08-JK(GAD) of 2019 dated 04-12-2019 issued by General Administration Department.

**DIP/J-2687/24**  
**Date: 11-7-24**

(Abdul Rashid War) JKAS  
Director,  
Food, Civil Supplies & CA Dept,  
Kashmir

No:- DFCS&CA-ADM/179/2023-02/e-7320419 Dated: - 29-06-2024

# Champions Trophy 2025: BCCI bats for hybrid model, Team India won't travel to Pakistan, say sources

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Team India is unlikely to travel to Pakistan for the 2025 Champions Trophy as the BCCI will propose a hybrid model to International Cricket Council (ICC), the sources told IANS.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has proposed that the ICC Champions Trophy will be scheduled from February 19 to March 9, 2025 with all the matches to take place across three major cities -- Karachi, Rawalpindi



and Lahore -- refusing to opt for a hybrid model for

India's matches.

PCB has also proposed Lahore as base for Team India for the tournament including India vs Pakistan match to be played in the city due to the security reasons.

Last year, Pakistan had the hosting rights for the Asia Cup 2023 but the Indian government did not give approval to the team to travel and their matches were shifted to Sri Lanka.

The Indian cricket team has not played in Pakistan since the Asia Cup in 2008 and the two sides play

each other only at ICC or ACC events.

In their last meeting in the T20 World Cup 2024 last month, India defeated Pakistan by six runs in the group stage and went on to lift their second title.

The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 will be the first major international cricket tournament hosted solely by Pakistan.

Previously, Pakistan had co-hosted the 1996 Cricket World Cup with India and Sri Lanka and before that co-hosted the Reliance Cup with India in 1987.

## Gambhir has great cricket brain, he's going to be fantastic for India: Dale Steyn

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Former South Africa pacer Dale Steyn lauded Gautam Gambhir's appointment as India's head coach and said his aggression and game awareness on the field will be beneficial for the Men in Blue.

BCCI announced Gambhir as head coach of the Indian team after the departure of Rahul Dravid. India clinched the T20 World Cup title to end the 11-year-long ICC trophy drought in his last assignment.

"I'm a big fan of Gautam Gambhir. I love his aggression. He's one of the few Indians I ever played against who came back at you, and I like that. I think he's going to take that into the dressing room with

guys like Virat and some of the other senior players who might not play as big a part anymore. I'm not too sure," Steyn told Star Sports.

"Not just in India, but in world cricket, we need guys who are a little bit more aggressive and play the game a little bit harder. We all seem to play in the leagues against each other, and we become quite friendly and friends. I like the way that he's fierce on the field but a gentleman off the field. He's also streetwise, a very smart cricketer, and has a great cricket brain. So I think from that point of view, he's going to be fantastic for them too," he added.

Former Proteas all-rounder Jacques Kallis also remains confident in Gambhir's ability to excel

in the job with his aggressive nature.

"It's great to see Gautam getting into the coaching side of things. He's got a really good cricket brain. He'll bring some fire and loves playing the game aggressively. I think he'll bring that added touch, and the guys will certainly learn a lot from him. He's got a lot to add and will bring significant value to that Indian side. I wish him all the best--not too much against us, but I'm sure he'll do a fantastic job," Kallis said.

Former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi added, "I think it's a big opportunity, and we need to see how he makes the most of it. I have seen his interviews, and he talks positively and is very straightforward."

## USA sack head coach Gregg Berhalter after Copa America exit

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JULY 11

The USA have sacked head coach Gregg Berhalter following their Copa America group-stage exit.

The 50-year-old rejoined the men's national football team in 2023 for a second spell, having led USA to the last-16 of the 2022 World Cup, but defeats to Panama and Uruguay on home soil have brought an end to 14-match tenure.

"Gregg Berhalter has been relieved of his duties as head coach of the U.S. Men's National Team, effective immediately," US Soccer Federation said in a statement.

U.S. Soccer Sporting Director Matt Crocker will lead and has launched a search for

Berhalter's replacement.

"We are deeply grateful to Gregg for his commitment the past five years to the Men's National Team and to U.S. Soccer. Gregg has earned the respect of everyone within our organization and has played a pivotal role in bringing together a young team and moving the program forward. We wish Gregg all the best in his future endeavors, and we know he will find success in his next coaching position," said Crocker.

Berhalter compiled a 44 wins, 17 losses and 13 draws record in 74 matches as USMNT head coach and 29 wins, 9 losses and 7 draws record in official competitions during his tenure, leading the USMNT to a successful 2022 World Cup qualification campaign.

## 'Excited to give my all for India in Paris': Hockey midfielder Manpreet ready for his fourth Olympics

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Indian hockey team senior midfielder Manpreet Singh is excited to represent the country in his fourth Olympics in Paris, a remarkable achievement that puts him alongside the legendary Dhanraj Pillay.

Set to play in his fourth Olympics, Manpreet expressed his excitement and pride, saying, "Playing in my fourth Olympics is a dream come true and a milestone that fills me with immense pride. It is a testament to years of hard work, dedication, and unwavering support from my family, coaches, and teammates. To follow in the footsteps of a legend like Dhanraj Pillay, who has been an inspiration for

countless players including myself, is an honour beyond words."

"I am excited to give my all for India in Paris, representing not just the team but the hopes and dreams of millions of fans back home. Our team is ready to show the world the spirit and strength of Indian hockey. We have prepared rigorously, and we are determined to perform at our best, bringing honour to our country and making our countrymen proud," he added.

Manpreet made his senior team debut in 2011. Since then, the dynamic midfielder has amassed an impressive 370 caps and scored 27 goals, showcasing his skill and consistency on the field. His journey with the national team



includes participation in three previous Olympic Games: the 2012 London Olympics, the 2016 Rio Olympics, and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, where he led the team to a historic Bronze medal under his

captaincy to mark India's first Olympic hockey medal in 41 years.

Also, speaking about the team's mindset and expectations for the Paris Olympics and if there will be any pressure to match the

Tokyo Olympics' performance, Manpreet asserted, "There is no pressure on us; instead, we are looking forward to enjoying our performance in every match. We must not underestimate any team, regardless of their ranking. Each team will bring their best to the field, and so will we."

"Our focus is on fulfilling our responsibilities and supporting each other as a cohesive unit. We believe that by concentrating on our game and maintaining our composure, we can achieve great results. It's all about playing with passion and determination, without letting pressure hinder our performance."

Notably, the Indian men's hockey team on Monday departed for Mike

Horn's base in Switzerland, where they will undergo a three-day training period designed to instil mental toughness. Following this, the Harmanpreet Singh-led team will move to the Netherlands for a series of practice matches before arriving in Paris on July 20.

India are placed in Pool B for the Paris 2024 Olympics, alongside defending Champions Belgium, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand, and Ireland.

To advance to the Quarter-Finals, the team must secure a top-four finish in their pool. Pool A features the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, South Africa, and host nation France, setting the stage for a highly competitive 12-team men's hockey tournament.

## Starc admits to being unhappy over being dropped for T20 WC match vs Afghanistan

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Australia's left-arm fast-bowler Mitchell Starc said he was unhappy over being dropped for the Men's T20 World Cup Super Eight match against Afghanistan last month, adding that fielding eventually led to the side's surprise 21-run defeat at St Vincent.

Australia had replaced Starc with left-arm spin all-rounder Ashton Agar for the crucial game against Afghanistan to tie down their batters on a slow spin-aiding pitch. But that move didn't yield desired results as Agar didn't pick any wickets, with openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran having an opening stand of 118 runs, their third century stand of the competition.

"No - two World Cups in



a row. Just the match-up, they saw previous games on that ground in St Vincent with spin playing a part and obviously Ash and the left-arm ermer enticing them to make a change I think Ash bowled pretty well in the power play.

"They probably played the spin quite well and batting first probably assessed the conditions a little bit better than we did, and

had a couple of stumbles that in the end cost us the game. It was probably the fielding that cost us again that game. That meant we had to win against India and we fell short there as well," said Starc to the Willow Talk podcast.

After a sloppy fielding show, Australia's batting crumbled in face of captain Rashid Khan and seam bowling all-rounder

Gulbadin Naib to lose the game, which jeopardised their semi-finals hopes. After that, Australia suffered a defeat to eventual champions India in their last Super Eight game at St Lucia, which confirmed their exit from the competition. Starc, who won IPL 2024 with the Kolkata Knight Riders, was also displeased with the scheduling and pre-seeding arrangements in the tournament that saw Australia advance to the hectic Super Eight stage in the Group 1, a pre-determined move despite topping Group B.

"We finished ahead of England and end up where we were pre-seeded as the second side. All of a sudden, you're in a different group. The argument was it was because it was so hard to get around the

West Indies, so fans knew where your team was playing. So then why don't you have the chock-a-block tournament at the front and then spread it out at the back end?"

"We had the two night games and the third was a day game, so it wasn't the best preparation. We had a delayed flight out of St Vincent, it was a 90-minute drive from the airport to the hotel in St Lucia, and then we had a 10 o'clock toss."

"I think that was probably maybe a misread (by organisers), the fact that the front half of the tournament was more spread out, and then you hit the super eights and travel around the West Indies is probably not the easiest thing to do, certainly not to travel home from," concluded Starc.

## Copa America: Darwin Nunez involved in brawl with fans after Uruguay's SF loss to Colombia

AGENCIES  
CHARLOTTE (US), JULY 11

Following Uruguay's narrow 1-0 defeat to Colombia in the Copa America semifinals, a heated altercation erupted in the stands involving Uruguayan players and Colombian supporters.

The incident, which occurred after the final whistle on Wednesday evening, saw Uruguay forward Darwin Nunez at the heart of the chaos.

As Uruguayan players approached the stands, a confrontation with Colombian fans quickly escalated into a physical altercation.

Punches were thrown, and objects, including beverages and food, were hurled between the two groups.

Broadcast footage captured the intense scene, involving both players and spectators, according to Spanish national sports daily Marca.

The Copa America organising body has condemned the "act of violence", saying "There is no place for intolerance and violence on and off the field".

"Our work is based on the conviction that soccer connects and unites us through its positive values.

We invite everyone in the remaining days to pour all their passion into cheering on their national teams and having an unforgettable party," it said in a statement.

Colombia extended its unbeaten streak to 28 games after beating Uruguay 1-0 on Wednesday night and qualified for the Copa America final, where on Sunday it will seek its second continental title in its history against Argentina.

After the semifinal loss, Uruguay will play Canada at Bank of America Stadium on Saturday to determine third place.

## Sourav Ganguly buys Kolkata Royal Tigers team in Indian Racing Festival

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Indian Racing Festival, a motorsport event in India gearing up for its third season, received a major shot in the arm with former India cricket captain and ex-BCCI president Sourav Ganguly becoming an owner of the Kolkata Royal Tigers Racing team ahead of the 2024 season.

With eight city-based teams -- Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Kochi, and Ahmedabad -- set to compete from August to November this year.

Kolkata is set to participate for the first time,

adding an extra layer of excitement to the competition. Expressing his enthusiasm for the association, Ganguly said "I am truly excited to embark on this journey with the Kolkata team in the Indian Racing Festival. Motorsports has always been a passion of mine while this opportunity not only allows me to contribute to the growth of motorsport in Kolkata but also aligns with my belief in fostering a culture of excellence and sportsmanship."

"Together with the Kolkata Royal Tigers, we aim to build a strong legacy in the Indian Racing Festival and inspire a new genera-

tion of motorsport enthusiasts, making the Kolkata Royal Tigers a formidable force in the Festival"

The Indian Racing Festival, conceptualised by Racing Promotions Pvt. Ltd., is a meticulously curated motorsport event designed to captivate the growing motorsport fan base in India. The festival encompasses two main championships: the Indian Racing League (IRL) and the Formula 4 Indian Championship (F4IC).

"We are thrilled to announce Sourav Ganguly as the owner of the Kolkata franchise. His visionary leadership and commitment to excel-

lence, shaped by years of legendary cricketing success, brings unparalleled dynamism to the Indian Racing Festival. Ganguly's influence is set to inspire a new generation of motorsport enthusiasts across India, igniting passion and driving young athletes towards greatness.

"Additionally, his association is expected to significantly enhance awareness of the Indian Racing Festival (IRF) among a broader audience, further solidifying its position as a premier motorsport event in India," stated Akhilesh Reddy, Chairman and Managing Director of RPPL.

## Winning the tournament is still our aim, says Southgate after England's Euro 2024 final entry

AGENCIES  
DORTMUND, JULY 11

England manager Gareth Southgate heaped praise on his players and remained committed to their goal of winning the Euro 2024 after his side sealed their first major final spot on foreign soil after beating Netherlands 2-1 in the semi-final to set up a summit clash with Spain.

England came from behind to turn the tide in their favour after conceding the early goal in the seventh minute of the game. Xavi Simons stunned the Eng-

lish defence as he struck the ball from outside the box on the top left of Jordan Pickford's post. His goal gave the upper hand to the Dutch team in the clash before Harry Kane scored an equaliser on the penalty. In the 90th minute of the clash, substitute Ollie Watkins' goal kept England's hopes alive to win their first European title.

"I took the job to try to improve English football and we're now in a second final. The last one was the first in over 50 years. We're now in a first one overseas. We're giving people amaz-

ing nights. We've given our supporters some of the best nights in the last 50 years. I'm hugely proud of that," Southgate said after the match.

"I'm delighted if everyone at home is feeling the way we are and the way those in the stadium were. But we're not finished. We've got the greatest possible test to prepare for. We came here to try to win the tournament and that's still our aim," he added.

England have had a difficult journey to the final, being the first team in Euros history to do so after trailing

in both their quarter-final and semi-final matches.

Jude Bellingham's bicycle kick in the 95th minute put them ahead of Slovakia in the last 16, and they needed a penalty shootout to beat Switzerland. In fury, fans threw plastic cups aimed at Southgate after their 0-0 draw with Slovenia in the group stages.

"We all want to be loved, right? When you're doing something for your country, you're a proud Englishman - you don't feel that back and all you read is criticism, it's hard," said Southgate.

## DC Rajouri reviews implementation of self-employment generation schemes

J I NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, JULY 11

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today conducted a comprehensive review of the progress made in implementation of self-employment generation schemes in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner took stock of the existing employment schemes being implemented by different departments in the district including DIC, NRLM, Employment, JKEDI, Animal and Sheep Husbandary and other concerned departments. He directed the officers to proactively identify and support beneficiaries under the self-employment generation schemes. He emphasized that these schemes play a crucial role in enabling individuals to



become self-reliant and contribute significantly to the development of the district. Stressing the importance of diligent monitoring and evaluation to ensure the success of these programs, he directed the officers to establish robust mechanisms for tracking progress, promptly addressing challenges and fostering collaboration with other departments and stake-

holders for optimal outcomes.

The self-employment generation schemes are part of the broader vision of the District Administration to foster economic empowerment and create sustainable livelihood options. Through these initiatives, the District Administration aims to empower individuals, promote entrepreneurship, and stimulate eco-

nomics growth, thereby fostering a prosperous and self-reliant community in Rajouri.

The DC also directed the officers to organize awareness camps across the district to educate the public about the self-employment generation schemes and their benefits. He emphasized the need to create awareness about the schemes and encouraged the officers to mobilize the stakeholders to ensure maximum participation.

The meeting was attended by the ADDC, Dr Raj Kumar Thapa; GM DIC, Fareed Kohli; Director RSETI, Raman Sharma; DIO NIC, Muzaffar Mir; Principal ITI Rajouri Ujjwal Mahajan; Dy Registrar CS, Adnan Rathar; and other concerned officers.

## Blood donation camp held at Govt College of Education Srinagar

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

A blood donation camp was organized today by Department of Health Care Centre (IASE) of Government College of Education (IASE), M. A. Road, Srinagar in collaboration with Government Lal Ded Hospital, Srinagar within the College campus, here.

A team of doctors from Government Lal Ded Hospital Srinagar and the Government College of Education officials were present during the camp. The NCC cadets, students and staff of the college took part in the day-long blood donation camp.

More than 36 students and staff members from the college generously donated blood during the camp, showcasing acts of kindness and solidarity. Dr. Ab. Rashid Sheikh, Prof. Mohd Yasin Pir, Prof.



Showkeen Bilal Gul, Shabir Ahmad Para, Asif Shah, Riyaz Ahmad were among the staff members who donated the blood.

On the occasion, Prof (Dr) Seema Naz, Principal of the college said that blood donation is a noble cause through which precious lives can be saved as it does not cause any weakness but has many health benefits.

Dr. Seema thanked all the donors and participants for their overwhelming participation and further said that organising such camps in the College is giving an opportunity to every student and staff of the College to participate in the noble

cause, and also emphasized more such camps be organized in the College.

All the staff members were seen taking greater initiatives both as volunteers and donors.

Prof. Seema Naz and other faculty members of the college were present on the occasion to supervise all the activities of the blood donation camp.

Prof. Nahida, Arshad Suleha, Daljeet Kour, Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Wagi, Prof. Ab. Rashid, Nighat Jeelani, Ms. Snobar Jan and other staff members of the college were present on the occasion to supervise all the activities of the blood donation camp.

## Power shutdown

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Chief Engineer (Distribution), JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Manthalla, Jai Road, Dhareja and its adjoining areas will remain affected on July 12 and 13 from 6 am to 11 am.

Similarly, the power supply to Gulabgarh Machail, Sohail and its adjoining areas will remain affected on July 12 from 6 am to 12 noon.

Likewise, the power supply to Darhal, Rakiban and adjoining areas will remain affected on July 13 and 14 from 8 am to 1 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Budhal, Kewal, Naghatub and adjoining areas will remain affected on July 14 from 8 am to 10 am.

Likewise, the power supply to Thanamandi, Fatehpura, Shahdra Sharief, Bhattian and adjoining areas will remain affected on July 14 from 7 am to 12 noon.

## Plantation drive held at Jammu wing of High Court

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11

Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice N.Kotiswar Singh and guidance of Judge High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, a plantation drive was held today in the High Court Complex, Janipur here.

Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice N.Kotiswar Singh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, Justice Atul Sreedharan, Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Puneet Gupta, Justice Rahul Bhatti, Justice Mohd. Yousuf Wani and President, J and K High Court Bar Association, Jammu keenly took part in the plantation drive and also gave message of plantation to youth by planting



trees of different varieties. Principal Secretary to Chief Justice, M.K. Sharma; Director Judicial Academy, Y.P. Bourney; Registrar Rules, Rajinder Sapru; Registrar Judicial, Jammu Wing, Sandeep Kour; Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority; Amit Kumar Gupta; Secretary, High Court

Legal Service Committee, Prem Sagar; advocates and officers/officials of the registry were also present on the occasion.

The event was organized with an aim of enhancing the concept of Van-Mahotsav and making people aware about environment and importance of green cover around us.

## DC Rajouri reviews formulation of Skill Development Plan

J I NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, JULY 11

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today chaired a meeting to deliberate on formulation of a comprehensive Skill Development Plan for the financial year 2024-25.

The DC stressed the need for formulating an effective plan that addresses the specific needs of the youth of the district aligning with the market demands and bridging the existing skill gap. He emphasized the importance of identifying the target audience, assessing their skill levels, and designing tailored programs to equip them with relevant skills.

Addressing the committee members, DC emphasized the abundant opportunities available for individuals possessing skills



in the current job market. He underscored that the pressing need of the hour is to inspire the unemployed, educated youth of the district to embark on a journey of skill acquisition.

In a comprehensive overview of the measures initiated by District Administration to bolster youth skill development, the DC directed the officers to take proactive steps for training of maximum number of unemployed youth under various skill development courses. The

DC directed the officers to submit the requisite data for finalisation of the plan within one week, ensuring timely completion and implementation of the skill development initiatives.

The meeting was attended by the ADDC, Dr Raj Kumar Thapa; GM DIC, Fareed Kohli; DIO NIC, Muzaffar Mir DSWO, Abdul Raheem; Dy Registrar CS, Adnan Rathar; AL, Pradyot Gupta; Principal ITI, Ujjwal Mahajan and other concerned officers.

## District Administration Udhampur initiates establishment of drugs de-addiction rehabilitation centre

J I NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JULY 11

The Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai along with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anil Manhas and District Social Welfare Officer Kanika Gupta, conducted a site visit at the Government Medical College Udhampur today to identify a location for establishing a drugs de-addiction rehabilitation centre in the district.

During the visit, the District Social Welfare Officer provided the Deputy Commissioner with a detailed overview of the planned operation of the rehabilitation centre. The DC instructed the concerned authorities to expedite the establishment process to ensure timely support for those affected by drug addiction.

She assured that the District Administration



will provide all possible support to affected individuals, assisting them in reintegrating into society by extending the benefits of various government schemes/ programmes. She emphasized that eliminating the drug menace from society is a top priority for the government.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner also conducted surprise inspection of ALC Office, One Stop Centre for Women, District Hub for Empowerment of Women and District Poshan Udhampur.

## JKTPO's e-Commerce onboarding Drive reaches Srinagar to empower & boost local entrepreneurs

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

Continuing its efforts to promote local entrepreneurs, the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) along with the District Administration Srinagar and leading e-Commerce players, today successfully organized e-Commerce onboarding drive at Banquet Hall Srinagar to boost economic growth and potential of the local entrepreneurs in the region.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat addressed the forum who was accompanied by the Chief Planning Officer Srinagar, Fayaz Ahmad Dar.

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



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

During this day-long drive 25 participants were registered on-spot free of cost from various sectors and the rest started the process of onboarding. The drive included detailed sessions by the experts on benefits of selling products on e-Commerce platforms.

In his address, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the pivotal

role of digital commerce in business growth during his welcome address. He provided insights into the e-Commerce network and highlighted the numerous benefits of joining the platform.

The onboarding drive aligns with JKTPO's commitment to supporting local exporters by providing diverse marketing platforms and forward linkages. Earlier, representatives from JKTPO highlighted the importance of ODOP and DEH initiatives and the advantages of onboarding the products on e-Commerce platform. Maqbool Shah from GeM gave a detailed presentation about the importance of GeM and its registration process on GeM portal and facilitated onboarding of the

participants onto GeM portal.

Rafi Ahmad Trambo, State Tax Officer Srinagar, through a powerpoint presentation briefed about the GST, its importance for doing any online business and the registration process. Khalid Chesti STO, Abdul Rouf Shah STO, Majeed ul Islam STO were also present on the occasion.

The highlight of the event was the one-on-one onboarding sessions, where seller and partners were directly onboarded onto the GeM portal. This hands-on approach allowed participants to swiftly integrate into the marketplace.

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

## Directorate of Family Welfare J&K celebrates World Population Day 2024

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 11



On the occasion of World Population Day 2024, the Directorate of Family Welfare J&K, under the overall supervision of Director Dr. Tajamul Hussain Khan, organized an awareness rally from Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The event aimed to highlight the importance of family planning and sustainable population growth.

The rally was flagged off by Dr. Hamid Zargar, Medical Superintendent Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, in the presence of Dr. Shahid Hussain, State Immunization Officer J&K. The rally traversed various areas of Gandhi Nagar and key locations of the city.

Participants commenced with slogans emphasizing the need for informed decision-making regarding family size and reproductive health. Students carried placards and banners advocating for accessible healthcare services and education on reproductive rights.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Hamid Zargar stressed the significance of empowering communities with knowledge on contraception and maternal health. He highlighted the hospital's initiatives in providing counseling and support to expectant mothers and families.

Participants pledged to continue advocating for policies that prioritize reproductive health and ensure every individual's right to make informed choices regarding their

families.

The event at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar on World Population Day 2024 stands as a testament to the proactive role of youth in fostering dialogue and action towards a balanced and equitable society.

Among those present during the launch were Anoop Luthra, DD (E&S), Dr. Arti Nayar, Deputy CMO Jammu, Dr. Rashmi Sharma, DIO Jammu, Rakesh Sharma, SMO J&K, Dr. Isha, SPO eVIN UNDP, Parshotam Kumar, SCCO J&K, Vijay Rekha, Tutor at AMT School Gandhi Nagar, and Naveen Sharma, JHI, along with other officials.

Prizes were also awarded to students who made placards and posters on the World Population Day theme.

## 3-Day Institutional Review Board meeting of GMC Concludes

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

A three-day marathon meeting of the Institutional Review Board of Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar concluded today, here. More than 300 research proposals from 20 diverse medical branches including MD thesis, MCH research and individual research projects of many faculty members were discussed.

The highlight of the meeting was Centre for Disease Control (US)-AIIMS collaborated study on Burden and Sequelae of influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses associated Severe Acute Respiratory Infections among Adult Indian Population aged 18-60 years, which was presented and cleared.

This research aimed to monitor and mitigate influenza outbreaks following the COVID-19 pandemic, using insights gained during the global health crisis to enhance preparedness and response.