

**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 in chest
- Persistent vomiting
- A drop in body temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool
- Redness in eyes

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## Mother-Son duo killed, several injured in Mughal Road accident

J I NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JULY 12

A woman and her minor son were killed and several others injured after a vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident on Mughal Road on Friday.

Official sources said that a Bolero vehicle (JK02DJ-5386) fell into a gorge near Panar area, resulting in injuries to eight people, all residents of Dharhal Rajouri.

Later, locals and a police party reached the spot and moved the injured including five children to a hospital who were subsequently shifted to GMC Rajouri. Two of the injured, including a mother-son duo succumbed.

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## Haji 2024: Last flight carrying 317 pilgrims lands at Srinagar international airport

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

The final flight of the Haji 2024, carrying 317 pilgrims, has landed at Srinagar International Airport on Friday morning, marking the conclusion of this year's pilgrimage for Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The journey, however, has been marred by tragedy, as 11 pilgrims from the region as per the officials succumbed to 'heat stroke' during the holy pilgrimage.

Dr. Shujhat Qureshi, Executive Officer, Jammu and Kashmir Haji committee said that on Friday morning, the last batch of pilgrims has arrived.

He, however added that 2 pilgrims would

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## Reminder of what happened when constitution was trampled over: Modi on 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that observing June 25 as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' will serve as a reminder of what happened when the Constitution was trampled over.

He said on 'X', "It is also a day to pay homage to each and every person who suffered due to the excesses of the Emergency, a Congress unleashed dark phase of Indian history."

Modi's post came soon after Home Minister Amit Shah announced commemorating June 25, the day Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to remember the "massive contributions" of those who endured inhuman pains during the period.

## MHA amends business rules of J&K Govt

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday amended the transaction of business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019.

According to amendments made by the MHA, the proposals relating to transfer of administrative secretaries and cadre posts of All India Service (AIS) officers shall be submitted to the Lieutenant Governor of J&K by the administrative secretary, General Administration Department through the Chief Secretary.

"Provided also that in respect of matters connected with posting and transfer of Administrative Secretaries and cadre posts of All India Services officers, proposal shall be submitted to the Lieutenant Governor by the Administrative Secretary, General Administration Department through the Chief Secretary," reads



the notification issued by the MHA, a copy of which is in possession of news agency.

The MHA further said the proposals requiring prior concurrence of the Finance department on the matters over which the Lieutenant Governor has discretionary powers shall not be concurred or rejected unless it has been placed before the Lieutenant Governor through the

chief secretary. "No proposal which requires previous concurrence of the Finance Department with regard to 'Police' 'Public Order', 'All India Service' and 'Anti -Corruption Bureau' to exercise the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor under the Act shall be concurred or rejected unless it has been placed before the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary," reads the

amendments.

The MHA, as per amendments, said that Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs shall submit the proposal for appointment of Advocate-General and other law officers to assist the Advocate-General in the court proceedings, for approval of the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister.

"Any proposal regarding grant or refusal of prosecution sanction or filing of appeal shall be placed before the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs," reads the MHA's notification. It further said that the proposals regarding the Prisons, Directorate of Prosecution and Forensic Science Laboratory shall be submitted to the Lieutenant Governor by administrative secretary, Home Department through the Chief Secretary.

## Govt to observe June 25 as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate emergency

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

The government has decided to observe June 25, the day the Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate the "massive contributions" of those who endured inhuman pains of the period, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Friday.

He also said the observance of 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' will help keep the eternal flame of individual freedom and the defence of the democracy alive in every Indian, thus preventing "dictatorial forces" like the Congress from "repeating those horrors".

A gazette notification issued on Friday by the Union Home Ministry notes that Emergency was



declared on June 25, 1975, following which there was "gross abuse of power by the government of the day and people of India were subjected to excesses and atrocities".

The people of India have abiding faith in the Constitution and the power of its resilient democracy, it said.

"Therefore, Government of India declares 25th June as 'Samvidhaan

Hatya Diwas' to pay tribute to all those who suffered and fought against the gross abuse of power during the period of Emergency and to recommit the people of India to not support in any manner such gross abuse of power, in future," says the notification.

Shah said that on June 25, 1975, then prime minister Indira Gandhi, in

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## Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project Nears Completion with Major Tunnel Milestones

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

The long-awaited dream of traveling to Kashmir by train is closer to reality as significant progress has been made on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project. Tunnel T-15 and part of Tunnel T-14 has been completed, marking substantial milestones in this ambitious infrastructure endeavor.

As per news agency, the completion of these tunnels is seen as a pivotal step in enhancing all-weather connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India. As per the officials associated with the project, the USBRL project, set in the chal-



lenging Himalayan terrain, required advanced tunneling techniques including heading, benching, invert excavation, kerb concreting, and the installation of Geo-textile, Geo-membrane, reinforcement, and concrete lining.

To address geological challenges such as loose rocks during tunnel blasting, an umbrella-type pipe roofing system was implemented. The New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM) technology was employed, involving approximately 1,600 skilled and semi-skilled workers during the peak construction phase.

Spanning 272 kilometers, the USBRL project is of national importance and promises to

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## Magnitude 4.1 earthquake hits Baramulla

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

A magnitude 4.1 earthquake struck Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, officials said.

There are no reports of any loss of life or damage to property, they said. The earthquake hit the north Kashmir district at 12.26 pm.

According to the officials, the earthquake struck at a latitude of 34.32 degrees north and a longitude of 74.41 degrees east at a depth of 10 km.

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## Amid forecast of rains, temp settles below normal in J&K parts

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

Amidst the forecast of moderate rainfall and flash floods in Jammu and Kashmir, the maximum temperature has recorded a dip on Friday with Srinagar, the summer capital of the Union Territory, recording a day temperature of 29.6 degree Celsius.

According to the news agency, the highest temperature in Kashmir was recorded at Kupwara at 31.2 degree Celsius while the mercury in other parts settled below 30 degree Celsius today.

Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, has recorded a

maximum temperature of 27.02 degree Celsius while Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination has recorded a maximum temperature of 25.1 degree Celsius. In Kokernag, the mercury settled at 25.8 degree Celsius while in Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort, the mercury settled at 22.2 degree Celsius.

The details however, reveal that except for Kupwara and Gulmarg, the mercury settled below normal in rest parts of the Valley today.

The three stations in Jammu division including Jammu, Katra and Baderwah, have also recorded below normal

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## Assembly Elections 2024: ECI Directs Completion of Voter Lists by Aug 20

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has mandated the completion of all preparations for the proposed assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, with the second special summary revision of voter lists to be completed by August 20.

As per news agency, ECI Director Shubhra Saxena led a virtual meeting on Thursday with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer PK Pole and district election officers, providing crucial instructions.

The two-hour virtual meeting focused on election preparations, with officials detailing the steps taken so far. The special summary revision of voter lists, which commenced on June 25, will be completed by July 24. The period for registering objections and claims will run from July 25 to August 9, with resolutions expect-



ed by August 19. The final voter list is scheduled for release on August 20.

In addition to updating voter lists, efforts are underway to determine and expand the boundaries of polling centers. The number of polling centers is set to increase for the assembly elections compared to the Lok Sabha elections. Door-to-door verification will be conducted, supported by special camps on July 27-28 and August 3-4.

An election official noted that a secretary-level officer of the ECI will meet with Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) on July 12. The push for elections

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## Search operation launched in Jammu following reports of suspicious movement

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Security forces launched a search operation in the border belt of Jammu district on Friday after information was received about suspicious movement in the area, officials said. The forces are on high alert and have



asked people to share any details of suspected movements in their areas.

A joint search operation was launched by Army, police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Guda Patan and Kana Chak areas near the Chenab river in the Akhnoor border belt this morn-

ing after some people informed police about the suspicious movement of three persons in the area, the officials said.

The security forces have scanned agricultural fields, villages and adjoining scattered habitation, they said.

The operation is underway.

## Dr Jitendra Singh hosts media lunch, seeks informal feedback on different issues

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh hosted at his residence an informal Media lunch for print and electronic journalists from various known publications and channels. The event provided an opportunity for exchange of views on a wide range



of varied subjects and sharing of ideas on several current topics.

The luncheon meeting saw a vibrant exchange of views, with journalists offering their inputs on various policy matters and current affairs. The Minister sought informal feedback on different issues asked for

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## Principal Secretary APD reviews progress on HADP, Capex, CSS projects



J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department (APD), Sha-liendra Kumar, today chaired a meeting to assess progress achieved under various ongoing development projects of APD.

The meeting focused on evaluating the physical and financial milestones attained under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Capex and Centrally Sponsored Schemes

(CSS) besides assessing Detail Project Reports (DPRs) of JKCIP for the financial year 2024-25.

Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, Manager Frozen Semen Bank Jammu, Chief Animal Husbandry Officers and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Addressing the officers, the Principal Secretary emphasized the importance of these projects in fostering growth of dairy and poultry sector for enhancing the rural livelihoods across the region. He impressed upon the

officers to commit themselves towards achieving the set targets within stipulated timelines, ensuring optimal utilization of allocated resources. He asked them to expedite ongoing works on these prestigious projects so that benefits are provided to the farming community.

During the meeting, the officers presented detailed updates on implementation status, challenges encountered and strategies to expedite pending activities under these schemes.

## DC reviews maintenance of PMGSY roads in Udhampur



J I NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JULY 12

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, chaired a meeting of officers and contractors to review the status of maintenance for PMGSY roads across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner assured the contractors that the district administration would provide full support to ensure the timely completion and maintenance of road projects. Executive Engineers were directed to expedite

the maintenance work of all PMGSY roads. She emphasized the importance of financial discipline in maintaining the project's momentum.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed all concerned parties to address and resolve any problems or bottlenecks in the maintenance of PMGSY roads.

She directed a detailed report from AEEs regarding issues caused by local population activities and the work of other departments that might be damaging the roads.

## DLIC Poonch approves new applications under Mission Youth Schemes

J I NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JULY 12

The District Development Commissioner Poonch, Yasin M. Chaudhary convened a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) to review applications under the Mission Youth Schemes: Mumkin, Tejaswini, and Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative.

Key officials in attendance included GM DIC Poonch, Khalid Hussain, Deputy Director Employment Poonch, Rafiq Ahmad, ARTO Poonch Tara Mani, Assistant Director DSEO Poonch, Mir Hussain, Nodal Officer JKEDI Poonch, Shabir Hussain Shah, Lead Bank Manager, Aushutosh Koul and others.

The committee reviewed a total of 149 applications: 121 for Mumkin, 18 for Tejaswini, and 10 for the Spurring



Entrepreneurship initiative. 80 applications under Mumkin were approved, whereas 10 & 4 applications approved under TEJASWINI & SEI respectively.

Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of these initiatives in promoting youth empowerment and entrepreneurship within the district. He issued specific directions to streamline the application process and ensure

the timely disbursement of funds. Furthermore, he urged the committee to identify and address any bottlenecks hindering the schemes' implementation.

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

## Dr Shahid reviews progress of RDD schemes in Shopian, Kulgam, and Pulwama

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, conducted a comprehensive review of departmental schemes in Shopian, Kulgam, and Pulwama districts.

The review also assessed the status of ongoing projects funded under the UT Capex budget.

During the meeting, the Secretary RDD reviewed the status of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), and assessed the quarterly targets and achievements of these districts under these schemes.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director JKRLM, Indu Kanwal Chib, Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, Director Finance, Umar Khan, CEO IWMP, Rajnish Kumar, Jt Director Planning, Kamal Kumar Sharma, Additional Secretary RDD&PR, Waseem Raja, Deputy Secretary, Sheetal Pandita,



Technical Officer PMAY-G, Mohammad Riaz, and heads of various schemes, including ACDS, ACPs, and XENS.

Progress on convergence works, the status of Panchayat Ghars, co-location of Common Service Centers (CSCs), and the development of District Development Council (DDC) and Block Development Council (BDC) buildings were assessed.

The Secretary held detailed deliberations with Assistant Commissioner Development (ACDs) and Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACPs), instructing them to focus on achieving the targets set for various schemes.

He emphasized the need for a coordinated effort to realize the full potential of rural development initiatives in Shopian, Kulgam, and Pulwama districts.

Dr Shahid emphasized the need for close moni-

toring of key performance indicators, particularly under MGNREGA and PMAY-G. He stressed the importance of regular progress assessments to ensure the timely achievement of set targets.

He underscored the importance of interdepartmental convergence to ensure effective resource utilization and accelerated progress at the district level.

Dr Shahid called for enhanced collaboration among different departments and stakeholders to achieve set goals efficiently. The Secretary directed officials to focus on optimal utilization of available resources to maximize the impact of rural development initiatives in the region.

He said that this approach aims to create synergies between various schemes and departments, leading to more

comprehensive and sustainable rural development.

The meeting assessed the status of completion of Panchayat Ghars and the co-location of Common Service Centers (CSCs).

Dr Shahid emphasized the need to expedite any pending works in this regard.

The Secretary also reviewed the progress of ongoing construction of District Development Council (DDC) and Block Development Council (BDC) buildings and urged officials to prioritize their completion.

Dr Shahid also conducted a comprehensive review of the status of ongoing projects funded under the UT Capex budget was conducted.

He instructed officials to closely monitor these projects and address any bottlenecks promptly.

The Secretary directed that funds should be released and utilized promptly. He asked district officials to provide detailed requirements to facilitate the timely absorption of funds, emphasizing the need for immediate action to prevent delays.

The Secretary will conduct similar review meetings of the other districts of UT in coming days.

## DC Kupwara reviews progress of Jal Shakti department

J I NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JULY 12

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review the progress of Jal Shakti Department (PHE).

Speaking at the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner stressed upon all the concerned officers to gear up their efforts to ensure cent percent coverage of households under the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission in the district so that the people get uninterrupted water supply.

She directed the officers to speed up the execution of all ongoing works and ensure completion of all projects within the stipulated timeframe.

Regarding water tanker supply, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to identify the water deficient areas in their respective Divisions and frame Action Plan for providing of water tankers to these areas so that the people do not suffer in this dry weather season.

She directed them



ects have been completed so far.

Regarding construction of Dug wells, it was informed that 12 works were allotted in the district out of which 10 works stand completed and work is in progress on rest of the 2 wells.

31 Bore wells

also allotted out of which 25 are completed. Regarding status of formulation/approval of DPRs & Tendering/Allotment, it was informed that 123 DPRs have been framed and approved by DPR Appraisal Committee which includes 48 of PHE Division Kupwara, 58 of PHE Division Handwara, 13 of SSD Tangdar and rest 4 pertaining to PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar.

ADDC Kupwara, SE Jal Shakti, CMO, CPO, Executive Engineers, AEEs other concerned officers attended the meeting.

to submit Water Stress Management plan of all 3 PHE Divisions including Kupwara, Handwara and Karnah to cater the needs of water deficient areas.

Earlier, through a detailed PowerPoint presentation, it was informed that out of 157382 households in the district, 126072 have been connected with Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) so far and 31310 households are yet to be connected.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of all schemes of the PHE

department including FHTC under JJM, Dug wells, Bore wells, Rapid Sand Filtration Plant, Over Head Tank, Pipe Network and Electro-Mechanical water supply schemes, division wise status of pipe availability, besides, bottlenecks in implementation of Water Supply Schemes were also discussed.

While reviewing the status of Approved Water Supply Schemes, it was informed that 251 works have been tendered in all 3 PHE divisions; 235 works were allotted out of which work has been started on 230 projects and 85 proj-

ects have been completed so far.

Regarding status of formulation/approval of DPRs & Tendering/Allotment, it was informed that 123 DPRs have been framed and approved by DPR Appraisal Committee which includes 48 of PHE Division Kupwara, 58 of PHE Division Handwara, 13 of SSD Tangdar and rest 4 pertaining to PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar.

ADDC Kupwara, SE Jal Shakti, CMO, CPO, Executive Engineers, AEEs other concerned officers attended the meeting.

## DC Samba inaugurates District Level Capacity Building Training Programme under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, JULY 12

The Department of Social Welfare, Samba, successfully organized a District Level Capacity Building Training Programme under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative. The event was inaugurated by the District Commissioner (DC) Samba, Abhishek Sharma.

The training programme aimed to empower stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement and promote the objectives of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, which focuses on the survival, protection, and education of the girl child. The initiative underscores the importance of gender equality and the need to enhance the value of girls in society.

In his inaugural address, DC Abhishek Sharma emphasized the significance of educating and empowering girls to ensure their active participation in the socio-economic development of the region. He highlighted the various measures



undertaken by the district administration to support the cause and called for collective efforts to create a conducive environment for the holistic development of girls.

The event, organized by the Social Welfare Department in collaboration with SANKALP: HEW Samba, saw participation from over 300 attendees, including officials such as District Programme Officer Dr. Subhash, SDPO, District Social Welfare Officer Nawaz Sharif, resource persons from Health and Family Welfare, advocates from the High Court, DPM from JKRLM, Mission Shakti

SANKALP:HUB, OSC, SI Samba Special Cell, and students from Government Degree College.

The programme aimed to create awareness about the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme and maintain gender balance in district Samba. Resource persons from the Health and Family Welfare Department educated attendees about the PCPNDT and MTP acts, emphasizing the impact of female foeticide on the declining female sex ratio. Legal experts stressed the importance of legal awareness for women to ensure their safety, dignity, and justice, high-

lighting key provisions in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhinta that offer protection against crimes like domestic violence, sexual harassment, and dowry-related offences. The SANKALP: HEW Mission Shakti team informed participants about various women-centric schemes and initiatives aimed at empowering women through leadership and support. The event concluded with an interactive session, a signature campaign, and a selfie point under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, fostering a sense of commitment and unity towards the cause.

## DDC Chairman Samba finalises District Capex Budget Plan for 2024-25

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, JULY 12

A pivotal meeting chaired by the Chairman of the District Development Council (DDC) Samba, Keshav Sharma took place today in the meeting hall of the District Administrative Complex Samba. The agenda was the finalization and approval of the District Capex Budget Plan for the fiscal year 2024-25.

The meeting saw the active participation of the esteemed District Development Commissioner (DDC) Abhishek Sharma, Vice Chairman, Balwan Singh, Members of the District Development Council Samba, Urban Local Bodies Administrators, Sectoral and District Officers involved with the District Capex Budget, and all Block Development Officers of District Samba.

Proceedings commenced with the Additional District Development Commissioner (CEO-District Development Coun-



cil), Champa Devi initiating the meeting. The Chief Planning Officer Samba, Kasturi Lal presented a comprehensive District Plan, highlighting new works proposed under the District Capex Budget 2024-25 across various sectors and schemes.

In-depth discussions

were held on the proposed new works across all sectors, including Area Development Funds (DDC, BDC, and PRIs), ABDP, APDP, TWID, PWD, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Youth Services & Sports, Health, PHE, and Urban Local Bodies.

The Chairman and Mem-

bers of the District Development Council Samba expressed their satisfaction with the proposed work plans. Consequently, the District Capex Budget Plan for 2024-25, encompassing all the aforementioned sectors, was unanimously approved during the meeting.

## DC Kulgam Chairs DLC Meeting of HADP, Approves 173 Cases

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KULGAM, JULY 12

A meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) for the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) was held today at the Mini-Secretariat, chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan.

During the meeting, the committee reviewed and approved 173 cases under various projects and components of the HADP.

This initiative is a significant step towards promoting agricultural development and enhanc-

ing the livelihoods of the farming community in the district. DC Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, emphasized the importance of these projects in achieving sustainable agricultural growth.

He highlighted the administration's commitment to support farmers through comprehensive development programs and ensuring the efficient implementation of approved projects.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, representatives from the agriculture department.

## DC Kupwara chairs DLC meeting under HADP



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, JULY 12

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today stressed upon the concerned officers of Agriculture and allied departments to improve their performance or face action. She was reviewing the progress of the departments under Holistic Agriculture Development Program in the District Level Committee (DLC) meeting here today.

Expressing serious displeasure over the dismal performance of the Agriculture and allied departments under the HADP, the Deputy Commissioner warned the concerned officers to improve their work otherwise they will face action. While setting targets for the departments, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure submission of panchayat wise daily report on the coverage of beneficiaries which shall reach her office by 5 pm every day. She impressed upon

them to categorize and submit the reasons for rejection of HADP cases so as to closely monitor the performance. The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of all Agriculture zones and enquired about the number of beneficiaries covered from the given farmer population. She stressed upon the officers to gear up the work to achieve the set targets.

Earlier, it was informed in the meeting that 8114 applications under HADP were received online by different departments including Agriculture, Horticulture department, Horticulture-P&M, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Sericulture departments. Out of these, 3881 applications were approved, 2950 are pending and 1283 stands rejected.

ADDC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, Chief Agriculture Officer, CPO, besides, District/Zonal Officers of Agriculture and allied departments and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

## NABARD, Agriculture Deptt kickstart FPO saturation Campaign in Anantnag & Kulgam

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
ANANTNAG, JULY 12

NABARD in collaboration with Department of Agriculture launched saturation drive for Farmers producers organizations (FPOs) in Anantnag and Kulgam districts.

In this regard, separate district level programmes were held in Anantnag and Kulgam in which large number of farmers from various FPOs participated besides the board directors and CEOs of these FPOs. On the occasion, District Development Manager (DDM) NABARD, Chief Agriculture officers of the respective district, District Agriculture Officers, Sub divisional Agriculture Officers and Cluster Based Business Orga-

nizations (CBBOs) were present. DDM NABARD, Rouf Zargar informed that Government has launched the saturation drive for FPOs after the success of PMKISAN saturation drive which benefited the individual farmers.

During the drive FPOs will be provided various benefits by Agriculture department in the form of licenses of Inputs, Seeds, fertilizer etc.

They will also be linked to Mandis, facilitated with registrations under GST, FSSAI and onboarded on platforms like ONDC and other E-retailing platforms for sale of their produce.

The emphasis would be laid on banks to provide loans to FPOs for meeting out their credit requirements.

## DC Doda chairs District Level Review Committee meeting

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
DODA, JULY 12

A meeting of the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) and District Consultative Committee (DCC) for Doda was held at the conference hall of the DC office complex.

The session was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh and saw the presence of several key officials, including CPO Doda Manesh Kumar Manhas, ACD Doda Manoj Kumar, District Project Officer S. Parmjeet Singh, LDM Parveen Kumar, the General Manager of DIC, and other representatives from various departments and banks.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner urged bank stakeholders to maximize the disbursement of bank schemes and achieve set targets.

Discussions focused on various processes, including application status received, target achievements, disbursement, and employment generation through the banking sector. The meeting's agenda covered the confirmation of the minutes from the last meeting and a review of bank-wise and sector-wise achievements related to the priority and non-priority sectors under



the Annual Credit Plan 2023-24 as of March 2024.

The committee analyzed the progress of banks in deposits, advances, and the Credit-Deposit (C.D.) Ratio, discussing mechanisms to increase the CD ratio and the flow of credit to priority sectors and weaker sections of society.

Specific directions were issued by the Deputy Commissioner to ensure the effective execution of the meeting's agenda, emphasizing a thorough review and validation of the previous meeting's minutes, accurate reporting and transparency in achievements under the Annual Credit Plan, and strategic

methods to enhance the CD ratio.

Additionally, discussions extended to government-sponsored self-employment schemes and priority sector lending, particularly focusing on agriculture, animal husbandry, and other allied sectors. Progress under SHG, social security schemes, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), and Aadhaar seeding by banks were reviewed. The meeting concluded with resolutions for actionable steps to improve credit facilities and support for various sectors, aiming for sustainable development and financial inclusion within the district.

## Power connection mandatory for under-construction buildings: KPDCL

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has advised the owners of under-construction commercial and residential buildings to immediately apply for temporary connection (TC) in the concerned Electric Subdivision offices for running operations that require electricity.

The owners can apply

for TC, after following due procedure as enshrined in the Supply Code and avail TC facility easily.

In a press statement issued here today, a KPDCL spokesperson informed the owners that electricity connection for under-construction commercial and residential buildings is mandatory and not applying for connection and using electricity unauthorised shall invite punitive action under the Electric-

ity Act.

He further stated that directions have been issued to all Executive Engineers of KPDCL to inspect and frame list of under-construction buildings with status of power connections.

Giving details, the KPDCL spokesperson said those owners who apply for a new electricity connection for their under-construction buildings falling in commercial or

## DC Ramban takes appraisal of Developmental Schemes, Meets Public at Banihal



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 12

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, visited Banihal today to review the progress of various developmental schemes and to address public grievances.

During his visit, the Deputy Commissioner assessed the implementation of the ICDS, Jal Shakti, JPDC, Health, and the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the area. He evaluated the achievements and challenges faced by these departments.

In reviewing the HADP, the Deputy Commissioner directed all stakeholder departments to maximize outreach during the weekly Kissan Sampark Abhiyan, Phase-III meetings across all blocks, ensuring comprehensive KCC cover-

age. He also instructed the local administration to support efforts to achieve targets under the Kissan Sampark Abhiyan.

Further, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to extend the benefits of all their schemes to farmers, ensuring full coverage of Soil Health Cards and KCC in the district.

While evaluating the progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the Deputy Commissioner set a target for the completion of all sanctioned water supply schemes. He instructed the Executive Engineer of JPDC to ensure a reliable power supply and avoid unscheduled power curtailments for public convenience.

Regarding the Health

Department, the Deputy Commissioner directed the CMO to ensure all health institutions function properly and to monitor the performance of field staff.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner held a public darbar, listening to the grievances of the people and resolving most of the issues on the spot by instructing the concerned officers. He assured the public that the administration is committed to addressing their concerns and ensuring the effective implementation of developmental schemes.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by PO ICDS Jahangir Hashmi, SDM Banihal Rizwan Asgar, and senior officers from the concerned departments.

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
Corrigendum			
Sr. Divisional Material Manager, NRY, Store Branch DRM Office, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India issue (Corrigendum) through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items:-			
Sr. No.	Tender No.	Description	Quantity
1.	94245627A	Office Hysteroscope with Hysteroenomat set	01 nos
2.	94235470A	ARTHROSCOPY SYSTEM	01 nos
3.	94245624A	Automated Immune Assay Analyze	01 nos
Corrigendum			
Sr. No.	Reference	Existing	Revise
1.	5. Standered Governing Condition Clause-5.3	ITT_Rev_1.21_APRIL_2024. Public procurement of this item is restricted to Class - I and Class-II local suppliers only. Thus, only class-I and class-II local supplier as defined under the public procurement (preference to Make in India) Order, 2017, as amended shall be eligible to bid in this tender. Offer from vendors who do not quality to be class - I or Class-II local supplier, shall be summarily rejected and, therefore, such vendors should not participate in the tender.	Deleted
2.	Tender Opening Date	94245627A (TOD-17.07.24), 94235470A (TOD-10.07.24), 94245624A (TOD-17.07.24)	06.08.2024
Note:- Above tenders with detailed description are uploaded on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. The firm, who desires to participate against e-tenders, is advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a class III digital certificate form certifying Agencies authorized under IT Act 2000 by Govt. of India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be accepted.			
Corrigendum 13/2024-25 Date:- 12.07.2024 2120/2024			
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

## SANJY-2024: Div Com Kashmir conducts evening tour of Yatra Transit Camp Pantha Chowk



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

To ensure smooth facilitation to Yatries, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today evening conducted a surprise visit of Yatra Transit Camp, Pantha Chowk.

The Div Com accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Commissioner SMC Dr Owais Ahmad; and other Officers from R&B, Jal Shakti, KPDCL besides other departments on the occasion took first-hand stock of arrangements put in place for smooth facilitation to yatries.

During the visit, the Div Com inspected the physical status of various facilities at the site including electricity, drinking water, sanitation, parking space besides medical facilities.

He also took stock of the functioning of the Food Langars established at the camp. He interacted with the Langar func-

tionaries. Earlier, the DC inspected the temporary accommodation sheds, public convenience facilities, First Aid and Health camp, Water Management, etc. The Div Com asked the Departments to keep provisions for extra arrangements at the Camp to tackle any exigent situation so that Yatries do not face any difficulty. It was further informed that all necessary arrangements with regard to drinking water and electricity facilities have been made well in advance at the halt camp.

With regard to sanitation and cleanliness facilities, the officers of Srinagar Municipal Corporation were directed to ensure proper sanitation and cleanliness in the transit camp on a regular basis, besides deployment of sufficient staff at the camp for peridical cleanliness in and around the transit camp.

The Div Com assured the yatries of all possible facilities at the transit camp for their smooth and pleasant stay.

## DC Rajouri launches plantation drive at Dassal panchayat

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, JULY 12

In a bid to promote environmental conservation, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat, launched a plantation drive at Dassal Panchayat.

The drive was kicked off with the planting of a Loquat (Eriobotrya japonica) sapling, a fruit-bearing tree species. The event was organised by the State Bank of India in collaboration with District Administration. He stressed the significance of trees in maintaining ecological balance, purifying the air, and supporting the wildlife. He emphasized the need for collective efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

The DC directed concerned officers to replicate the plantation drive in all panchayats of the district. He highlighted the crucial role of trees in supporting human life and the need for their conservation. He has also appealed to the people to come forward and join the drive to make Rajouri a greener and more sustainable district.

## DC Rajouri launches plantation drive at Dassal panchayat

Among the others who were present on the occasion were Additional District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Dr Raj Kumar Thapa; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Sheraz Chowhan, Officers of State Bank of India, officials of RDD and other departments.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-Auction Notice	
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division:	
<b>Catalogue No.:</b> EAFZR-SLR24-34	<b>Auction Start:</b> 29/07/2024 at 11:00 Hrs.
<b>Name of work:</b> Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 14630/R1, 12478/F1, 14662/F1, 19614/F1, 15532/F1, 14616/F1, 14662/F2, 12492/F1, 19326/F1, 14674/F1, 12426/F1, 12460/F1, 14606/F1, 14630/F1, 12550/F1, 14610/F1, 14662/R1, 11906/R1, 12920/F1, 22706/F1, 11906/F1.	
<b>Catalogue No.:</b> EAFZR-CTG24-13	<b>Auction Start:</b> 26/07/2024 at 11:00 AM
<b>Name of work:</b> Allotment of Catering stalls at Mukatsar, Palampur Himachal, Nagrota Surian, Nagrota, Guler, Nurpur, Kartarpur & Bhogpur Sirwal Railway Station.	
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in. 2128/2024	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

RESTORATION / DIVERSION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Diverted (Via)	Date(s) of Restoration (from originating station)
15211 Darbhanga Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Jannayak Express	Burhwal Jn. -	23.07.2024 to 04.08.2024
15212 Amritsar Jn. - Darbhanga Jn. Jannayak Express	Barabanki Jn. - Lucknow -	25.07.2024 to 06.08.2024
14603 Saharsa Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Jansadharan Express	Kanpur Central -	26.07.2024 & 02.08.2024
14604 Amritsar Jn. - Saharsa Jn. Jansadharan Express	Khurja Jn. - Hapur Jn. -	24.07.2024 & 31.07.2024
15531 Saharsa Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Jansadharan Express	Meerut City - Saharanpur & vice versa	21.07, 28.07 & 04.08.2024
15532 Amritsar Jn. - Saharsa Jn. Jansadharan Express		22.07, 29.07 & 05.08.2024

Note : Train No. 15531 on 21.07.2024, 28.07.2024 & 04.08.2024 and Train No. 15532 on 22.07.2024, 29.07.2024 & 05.08.2024 will also be diverted via Ambala Cantt - Sirhind Jn - Sanehalw skipping stoppage at Chandigarh Jn & vice versa.

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



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# Ram Darash Mishra Birth Centenary Seminar organized by Sahitya Akademi

Ram Darsh Mishra's literature has true elements of humanity: Chaudhary

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DELHI, JULY 12

Sahitya Akademi organised the birth centenary seminar of renowned poet and storyteller Ram Darash Mishra. The seminar was inaugurated by renowned Gujarati writer and senior member of Sahitya Akademi Raghuvir Chaudhary. Ram Darsh Mishra himself was present as a special guest. The keynote address was given by renowned Hindi writer Prakash Manu and the presidential address was given by Sahitya Akademi's vice-president Kumud Sharma. At the beginning of the programme, the welcome address was given by the secretary of the Akademi K. Srinivas Rao. In this whole day long programme, articles were read by invited scholars in two separate sessions on the poetry and prose

literature of Ram Darash Mishra ji. In the first session, renowned poet Balswaroop Rahi as the chair and poet-critic Om Nischal and Mishra ji's daughter Professor Smita Mishra as the speakers expressed their views. The second session was chaired by Girishwar Mishra, former Vice Chancellor of Antarashtriy Mahatma Gandhi Hindi University, Wardha. In this session, Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla read his articles on Mishra ji's non-fiction prose literature, poet-storyteller Ms. Alka Sinha on fiction literature and senior critic Ved Prakash Amitabh on criticism.

On this occasion, Secretary of Sahitya Akademi K. Srinivas Rao described the birth centenary seminar as a rare opportunity and said that the simplicity of Ram Darash Mishra's nature is also present in his writings, which makes

his personality as well as his work important. Jnanpith Award winner Raghuvir Chaudhary, who has also been a disciple of Prof Mishra in Ahmedabad, while remembering his 'Sir', shared many memories related to Gujarat with the audience. He especially discussed the dramatic elements in his works and the points of awakening of humanity at the end of the stories. He further said that his novels are important because of the unique characterization of the characters. Describing 'Apne Log' as his best novel, he said that even his short novels are unique in their artistry.

Delivering the keynote address, Prakash Manu said that Shri Mishra is the titanic in literature, the new generation can learn many things from him. The history of time is found in his entire writing and the mood of all



of it is Ganga-Jamuni. His poems not only have the understanding of the new era, but his prose is also very impressive. In every genre of his, the common man is at the center.

Ram Darash Mishra thanked the Sahitya Akademi for this grand event and said that I am overwhelmed by this honor. While explaining the secret of his long life, he said that I give three reasons for this, first - I did not nurture any overreaching ambition,

second I did not consume any intoxicants, not even paan and third I have no connection with the market, meaning I only enjoyed my home. Narrating many of his memoirs, he said that wherever I go, I generally want to become a part of that place. That is why I am also called a homebody. Recalling his eight years in Gujarat very fondly, he also remembered Umashankar Joshi and Bhola Bhai Patel. He also narrated many memoirs

of his guru Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. In the end, he recited many of his Mukhtaks, poems and his famous ghazal "Banaaya hai maine yeh ghar dhire dhire".

In her presidential address, Vice President of Sahitya Akademi, Kumud Sharma said that the village was always with Mishra ji and humanity has been enshrined in his poems. In his works, the entire era's understanding along with rural sentiments is presented with authenticity.

The first session, which was focused on his poetry, was chaired by Balswaroop Rahi and his daughters Smita Mishra and Om Nischal presented their articles. Smita Mishra, mentioning her father's goodness and will to live, said that it was because of his courage that the family's courage remained intact. Om Nischal said

that the lyricism of his poetry is its strength. The poetic understanding of the entire century is reflected in his writings.

The second session, focused on the prose literature of Ramdarash Mishra, was chaired by eminent writer and educationist Girishwar Mishra. In this session, Alka Sinha, mentioning the imagination of the betterment of neglected characters and the struggles of women in his fiction writings, said that his entire writing is a depiction of the reality of the village and has been done very honestly. Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla expressed his views on his non-fiction prose in detail and said that there are elements of poetry/story in his non-fiction prose as well. His non-fiction literature, resonates with 'jeevan-rag' and the identity of life values. Commenting on his critical books,

the well-known critic Vedprakash Amitabh said that value is the key word to understand his criticism. Ram Darsh Mishra has made criticism creative. In other words, his criticism can be called 'creative criticism'.

Finally, in his presidential address, Girishwar Mishra said that the establishment of human values is found in his writings in a natural way. There is a true representation of life's struggle in all his works. Overall, Ram Darsh Mishra is in favor of creating literature with totality.

The program was conducted by the Deputy Secretary of the Academy, Devendra Kumar Devesh. Along with the entire family of Ram Darsh Mishra, many of his disciples, writers, college students and journalists were present in the program.

## Director Rajbhasha conducts Official Language Inspection at Central University Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Director Rajbhasha, Ministry of Education GOI, Mr. Jagdish Ram Pauri, on Wednesday conducted an official language inspection at the Central University of Jammu. The inspection team included three other officials from the Ministry of Education.

During the inspection, Mr. Pauri assessed the compliance with the implementation of the Official Language Hindi in administrative functions. The CU Jammu was represented by the Registrar, Prof. Yashwant Singh.

During the inspection, Dr. Priyanjan, Assistant Director (O.L.), presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing the work carried out in Hindi at Central University of Jammu. He also reported that over the past three years, the percentage of work conducted in Hindi at the university has increased from 20% to 80%. This progress is attributed to the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, under whose competent guidance this advance-



ment has been achieved. Dr. Priyanjan said under his dynamic leadership, all clerical staff, translators, and typists at the university have been trained in Hindi and are now capable of performing their tasks in Hindi, which is evident in the results. Mr. Pauri praised the compliance with the Official Language Hindi policy at Central University of Jammu and emphasized further enhancing the goal of working in Hindi. During the inspec-

tion, all administrative officers and staff of the university were present, including HoD English, Prof. Vandana Sharma, and HoD Hindi Prof. Bharat Bhushan Sharma and discussed solutions to their issues.

After the inspection, Mr. Jagdish Ram Pauri organized a workshop for the university staff on "Inspiration, Motivation, Goodwill, and Award through Language Implementation". In the workshop, the Director provided a

formula for encouraging the use and advancement of the Hindi language in government work through 12 P's: Inspiration, Motivation, Love, Award, Training, Usage, Promotion, Spread, Management, Promotion, Commitment, and Effort.

The workshop proved to be very beneficial for all employees and officers. The formal vote of thanks was presented by Prof. Bharat Bhushan Sharma, Head of the Hindi Department.

## NCC conducts Conclave for Principals, NCC Officers of Poonch District

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JULY 12

Group Commander Jammu, Brigadier PS Cheema along with Col Naresh Kaushik of 5 J&K Battalion NCC, Poonch, conducted a Conclave at Govt Degree College, Poonch for Principals of Major Colleges and Schools as well as Associate NCC Officers. The Group Commander NCC was welcomed by Prof (Dr) Jasbir Singh, Principal, SKGCDC Poonch along with Prof (Dr) Mohd Azam, Principal, GDC Mendhar and 11 ANOs/CTOs of neighbouring Colleges and Schools. During the conclave Brig PS Cheema reiterated the importance of NCC in Nation and Character building of the youth and the incentives which are increasing by the day for the Cadets to become employable. The Vision and Mission of DG NCC and ADG NCC Directorate Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh was emphasised upon along with the action plan to bring it to fruition.

This conclave also presented an opportunity to the ANOs to bring on the



table various challenges they face while shuffling the role of a faculty member in the institute and an ANO. The Group Commander assured them that many such issues of their postings to non-NCC institutes as well as sparing them for the PRCN courses have already been projected by the DG NCC and the ADG to the Hon'ble Lt Governor as well as Principle Secretary Higher/School education and are under favourable consideration.

During his visit, Brig Cheema acknowledged the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm of all stakeholders in conducting the NCC activities in the border district achieving the stated Aim and Objectives. Interacting with NCC Cadets, Brig

Cheema emphasized the transformative role NCC is playing in enabling the youth with future ready skills and mindset, and coaxed them to look beyond personal to collective upliftment of society by becoming the agents of positive change.

Addressing the gathering, Brig Cheema highlighted the vast opportunities NCC offers for personal and professional growth, encouraging cadets to aim high in their careers while consistently sharpening their craft at academics and soft skills. He personally spoke to six SSB aspirants, sharing invaluable insights from his experience. Such interactions of the cadets with the senior officers of the NCC play a very important role in dispelling many

inhibitions of the cadets. This empowers them to clarify their mind and choose the career of their choice with conscious awareness.

Brig Cheema stressed the importance of leveraging technology in innovatively utilising the computation power of the computers and working smart. He also stressed on resource identification and utilisation of domain experts in steering certain programmes and campaigns with Passion and Purpose.

The Heads of the Institutes were appreciative of this step of the Group Commander having visited the border institutes and ANOs & cadets were inspired and motivated to pursue excellence in all their endeavours.

NCC Directorate of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh remains committed to mentor and guide the youth move powerfully in making India realise many of its dreams. Each young cadet has the ability to start a Movement and NCC stands firmly to enable and empower the youth.

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

### Govt to observe June 25...

a "brazen display of a dictatorial mindset, strangled the soul of India's democracy by imposing the Emergency on the nation". Lakhs of people were thrown behind the bars for no fault of their own, and the voice of the media was silenced, he said.

"The Government of India has decided to observe the 25th of June every year as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas.' This day will commemorate the massive contributions of all those who endured the inhuman pains of the 1975 Emergency," he said in a post on X.

"The decision made by the government led by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji is intended to honour the spirit of millions who struggled to revive democracy despite facing inexplicable persecution at the hands of an oppressive government," he said.

### Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla...

transform transportation in the region. The Indian Railways conducted a successful trial run from Sangaldan to Reasi at a speed of 110 km/hr, navigating through Tunnel T-15 and part of Tunnel T-14.

### Magnitude 4.1 earthquake...

On: 12/07/2024 12:26:24 IST, Lat: 34.32 N, Long: 74.34 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, National Center for Seismology post on X.

### Amid forecast of rains...

temperatures today. In Jammu, the mercury settled at 34.0 degree Celsius while Katra and Bhaderwah recorded 30.4 degree Celsius and 27.2 degree Celsius respectively.

As per the details, Banihal and Batote recorded a maximum temperature of 28.8 degree Celsius and 28.1 degree Celsius respectively.

Meanwhile, the weatherman here has predicted a

brief spell of rain for the next few days.

Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, told KNO from July 13 to July 15, a brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at scattered places while a brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at isolated places on July 16 and July 17.

From July 18 to July 20, the MeT Director said that a brief spell of rain and thundershower is expected at scattered places.

### ECI Directs Completion...

follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on International Yoga Day in Srinagar, where he declared the intention to hold assembly elections and restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. Subsequently, BJP National President JP Nadda visited the region to further this agenda.

### Dr Jitendra Singh hosts...

joint effort to enhance governance and public service delivery.

The gathering was marked by an atmosphere of constructive dialogue, where the Minister engaged directly with journalists on a range of topics concerning his Ministries. The interactive session allowed for insightful conversations that delved into the government's initiatives, upcoming legislative priorities, J&K and the broader vision for the nation's development.

Welcoming the guests, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, MoS Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh said "I am delighted to have this opportunity to engage with all of you today. Your role as journalists is vital in a democracy and informal conversations like these are essential to understand each other better and work towards our common national goals."

Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated the crucial role played by the media in informing the public and shaping public opinion. When asked about the new reforms of Modi Govt. 3.0, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) act 2024 enacted to tackle unfair practices in central recruitment and educational institution entrance exams and assured the zero tolerance by the government in such cases and its aspiration for Meritocracy. The DoPT Minister also emphasised on the rule to role shift in governance by upgrading the skills and capacity building of Civil Servants. He also underscored the government's commitment to transparency and accountability, highlighting the importance of constructive criticism in the democratic process.

Beat journalists covering Science and Technology, Space and Earth Sciences wanted to know about India's Space Missions, Deep Sea Mission and next generation Technologies. The Minister Made them aware of the current developments and highlighted that progress happened in S&T will continue even at a faster rate as Anusandhan NRF has been Brought in p-lace to collaborate and converge the efforts of both Public and Private sector. He recalled the success in the Space Sector after private participation was encouraged. He said in just two years 200 Space startups have started many with global capacity. The India's bio-economy has grown 13 fold in the last 10 years from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024.

In terms of energy security Dr. Jitendra Singh said "India's Nuclear Power generation capacity to increase by around 70 percent in the next 5 years".

On the Pensions and pensioners welfare, Dr. Jitendra Singh Said that Prime Minister Modi is quite sensitive to the concerns of the senior citizens and following his visions we have started Pension Adalats and empowered women. The unmarried and divorced daughters and widows are sought to be empowered through pensions. He also underlined the need for a humane approach in governance and shared the human feedback model

adopted by the ministry after redressal of grievances.

### Mother-Son duo...

SHO Surankote Rajesh Thapa confirmed the death of two people including the child in the accident and said that the injured are under treatment. He said a case has been registered in this regard.

### Hajj 2024: Last flight...

be staying back as one of the pilgrim is still in hospital undergoing the treatment and is accompanied by her husband.

"This year, a total of 7008 pilgrims from J&K embarked on the holy journey, sadly 11 of them passed away due to the heat stroke," he said.

"That was the last flight for this year's Hajj pilgrimage. The flight with 317 pilgrims has landed this morning at Srinagar international airport", he added.

Officials, however earlier said that the last flight was scheduled to arrive at Srinagar International airport on Thursday, but was cancelled and rescheduled for Friday morning.

Responding to a question on the arrangements, cited as 'poor' by J&K pilgrims this year, Dr. Qureshi said that facilities this year were better than last year and that accommodation within Markazia (within 400 meters of Masjid Nabvi SAW) in Madina tul Manawara and quality of hotels was much better.

He, however said that scorching heat on Arafat day and traffic Jam during movements in Mashair region were challenging for Hajj 2024.

"In Makkah transport facilities were better than last years. In Mashair region, all were accommodated within traditional boundaries of Mina during stay at Mina", he added. (KNO)

## Khatana calls Abdullah's concerns misguided, credits Modi, Kashmiris for crushing terrorism

**JNEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

In a strongly worded statement, Rajya Sabha MP Er. Gulam Ali Khatana has criticized former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's recent remarks linking terrorist attacks to the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. Khatana expressed deep disappointment over what he termed "misguided rhetoric" from Abdullah.

The MP asserted that Abdullah's comments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the transformative changes in J&K under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Khatana dismissed Abdullah's claim that the abrogation of Article 370 failed to stop militancy, calling it shortsighted and ignorant of the region's significant progress since the historic decision. Khatana pointed

out Abdullah's recent electoral defeat in the Baramulla Lok Sabha seat, suggesting it indicates his disconnect from the new realities of a developing J&K. The MP accused the Abdullah and Mufti dynasties of exploiting youth for political gain over decades, contrasting their approach with PM Modi Ji's efforts to provide a bright future for young Kashmiris.

Highlighting the post-Article 370 era, Khatana described a J&K experiencing unprecedented development, with projects worth thousands of crores transforming the region. He noted the shift from headlines about stone-throwing to stories of economic advancement and social upliftment.

The MP lauded various government schemes, particularly the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), for providing direct financial assistance to both urban

and rural residents. "Gone are the days when the poor had to perform menial tasks for bureaucrats and politicians just to secure government support for building their homes. Today, entitled citizens receive their pensions directly in their bank accounts, without having to wait in long queues or navigate complex procedures", he said, and emphasized the elimination of bureaucratic hurdles and the dismantling of middleman culture under the Modi government.

"PM Modi Ji has decentralized power, empowering local bodies so that public representatives now receive sufficient funds for every constituency, from Panchayats to the Lok Sabha without any discrimination," said the MP.

"The Kashmiri Awam is dedicated to peace and progress, contributing wholeheartedly to eliminating terrorism from the

soil of Sufism. Our security forces, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Modi Ji, have broken the backbone of terrorists, and terrorism is on its last leg. Soon, we will rid ourselves of it," said the MP, highlighting the collective efforts of the Kashmiri people in combating terrorism.

Reassuring the nation about the security situation, the MP expressed confidence in the current leadership's ability to maintain safety and order. "The country is in safe hands, Mr. Abdullah; you should not worry," he stated, underscoring the progress made in the fight against terrorism and the strengthened security measures. By recognizing the contributions of Kashmiris in fighting terrorism, the MP aimed to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose in continuing the region's path toward peace and development.

MP Khatana firmly addressed the issue of local support for terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, stating, "Certainly, there are some anti-national elements who provide logistical support to our enemies. They will be dealt with an iron hand."

Expressing frustration at Abdullah's apparent inability to acknowledge these achievements, Khatana argued that the focus in J&K has shifted from conflict to development. He cited the people's participation in democratic processes and embrace of development initiatives as a clear rejection of divisive politics.

Khatana called on political leaders to support the aspirations of the people, declaring the end of using Article 370 as a political tool. He urged Abdullah to shed outdated perspectives and join efforts to build a prosperous J&K.

## Empowering MSMEs of Bharat: Vi Business, PayU Partner to Accelerate Digital Growth with exclusive offers

**JNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Vi Business, the enterprise arm of Vi, a leading telecom operator, and PayU, one of India's leading digital financial services providers, have come together in a strategic partnership to propel India's MSME's into their digital journeys, by providing them bespoke digital payment solutions.

The partnership will combine Vi Businesses digital transformation solutions and PayU's expertise in digital payments and financial services solutions to offer a comprehensive suite of services designed to address growing needs of MSMEs. This collaboration brings innovative payment solutions, bespoke offers engine, buy-now-pay-later

options, and seamless WhatsApp integration - all meticulously designed keeping India's growing MSMEs at the core.

Vi Business, as part of its dedicated MSME program, ReadyForNext is also offering an exclusive range of productivity & collaboration digital tools tailor-made for MSMEs at special prices. The products include location tracking, google workspace, personal cloud storage and mobile security solutions to assist MSME's in efficiently managing their digital workplace, business and customer engagements.

Speaking on the partnership, Arvind Nevtia, Chief Enterprise Business Officer, Vodafone Idea, said, "Our partnership with PayU underscores our commitment towards digital

enablement of small and medium sized businesses in India. By combining Vi Business's best-in-class enterprise solutions and PayU's expertise in fintech, we aim to accelerate MSMEs growth journey."

Anirban Mukherjee - Chief Executive Officer, PayU said, "At PayU, we believe in the power of digital innovation to transform businesses at a grassroots level. Our partnership with Vi Business is a testament to our commitment to supporting Indian MSMEs in their digital transformation. Together, we are providing a robust suite of business and digital finance solutions designed to increase revenues and boost efficiency, enabling these MSMEs to thrive in today's competitive market."

## Journalism Department Concludes Internship Program, Signs Collaboration Agreement

**JNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 12

The Department of Journalism and Media Studies, University of Jammu today organized a valedictory function on the successful conclusion of a 20 days internship program for the students of PSPS, Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar. The valedictory function also marked the signing of a significant letter of collaboration between the Department of Journalism and Dainik State Samachar.

On the occasion, Registrar of the University, Prof Rahul Gupta was the chief guest, who emphasized the importance of the practical training in Journalism.

Aligning this initiative with the National Education Policy (NEP), Registrar, Prof Rahul Gupta said, "NEP advocates for experiential learning and industry-academia collaboration."

He praised the collaborative efforts of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies and GCW Gandhi Nagar, underscoring how such partnerships enhance the academic and professional growth of students in line with NEP guidelines.

"The National Education Policy envisions a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education, which includes a strong emphasis on practical and vocational training," Prof Gupta said, adding "The maiden collaboration with Dainik State Samachar is a testimony to the commitment of the Department in particular and Jammu University in general to promote NEP."

Speaking on the occasion, Shamsher Singh Charak, Managing Director Dainik State Samachar expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration.

"We are delighted to partner with the Univer-



sity of Jammu in general and the Department of Journalism and Media Studies in particular. We aim to contribute to the professional development of the aspiring journalists," said the Managing Director, adding this collaboration is a significant step towards nurturing talent and ensuring that students are well-prepared to meet the challenges of the modern media landscape.

Sharing her views about the internship program and letter of collaboration, Head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Prof Garima Gupta said, "Our department is dedicated

to providing students with comprehensive education and training that extends beyond the classroom," she added, "This internship program and our collaboration with Dainik State Samachar exemplify our commitment to integrating academic knowledge with practical experience, as envisaged and emphasized by Vice Chancellor, Prof Umesh Rai, who has been inspiring and encouraging us to take such initiatives for the betterment of students as well as the society."

On the occasion, the intern students also shared their learning experiences and they termed

this internship program, a transformative experience. One of the students said, "The hands-on experience and the mentorship from industry and faculty were invaluable. It has prepared me well for my future career in journalism."

It is pertinent to mention here that industry experts including Pradeep Dutta, Bureau Head Times Now Jammu, Amit Bhardwaj, Senior videographer, Times Now Jammu, Prof Parmil Kumar, Coordinator Wildlife Photography, Vishal Bharti, Bureau Head UNI Jammu among others interacted with the students during the intern-

ship program.

Earlier, Prof Garima Gupta, Head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies welcomed chief guest, faculty and students. The proceedings of the event were conducted by Kumerjit Chajgotra, faculty, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, whereas Dr Pardeep Singh Bali, faculty Department of Journalism and Media Studies extended formal vote of thanks.

Others present on the occasion included Prof Nareesh Sharma and Rippy Bawa from PSPS GCW Gandhi Nagar, Dr Raviya Gupta faculty, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, team member from Dainik State Samachar, including Govind Chouhan, Praveen Sharma, Sanjay Kulshreshtha, Arun Kumar, Deepak Singh Jamwal, Darshan Kumar, Pushpinder Singh Jamwal, Bupinder Sharma, Vaishali Sharma, Sakshi Sawhney and Sulekha Gandhi.

## Army organizes Air Rifle, Pistol training for Daughters of Rural Areas



**JNEWS SERVICE**  
AKHNOOR, JULY 12

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, the Indian Army organized a special air rifle and pistol training for girls in the last border village of Palanwala Sector. During this unique training, participants were taught the basics of weapon handling and firing. The main aim of this initiative was to instill confidence and a sense of self-defense among the girls, as well as to inspire them to actively participate in the defense of the nation in the future. This training was held for seven days of training, during which the children fired the weapons themselves.

This initiative by the army generated tremendous enthusiasm among the girls from rural areas. As a result, around 50 girls participated in the

training, showcasing their amazing skills. Expressing her happiness, one participant said, "I am extremely excited by this step taken by the army. This program has given me confidence and helped me recognize a new talent within myself. I want to pursue this skill further and make a name for myself in the state and the country."

According to army officials, the two main objectives of this initiative were to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, and to build a strong and capable citizen who can play a crucial role in the defense and progress of the nation. During the training, some girls displayed exceptional talent in air rifle and pistol shooting. With proper resources and guidance at the right time, these girls could excel at the state and national levels.

## Every section of society worried about their future under BJP rule: Bhalla

**JNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 12

JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla on Friday emphasized on the need to extend all sorts of help to the poor and needy people while addressing prominent persons of Dilli area of RS Pura Jammu South constituency. Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla said Congress believes in the philosophy of equality and his Party always work for upliftment of poor people and devise policies for uplifting their living standard. He lambasted the present dispensation for inflicting sufferings on the poor and deprived classes and demanded such steps should be taken which would ease the living of poor masses. He also said, "Congress has been doing social works from time to time and always remains on the front line to help the needy persons indiscriminately."

Highlighting achievements under Congress rule, Bhalla said "lots of revolutionary steps in Jammu & Kashmir were initiated to inculcate the spirit of unity, integrity, prosperity as well as brotherhood to work for overall development/welfare of the people of J&K, in general, and especially the downtrodden sections of the society in particular." The educated youth of J&K



is frustrated and hopeless as majority of them are getting over-aged and special employment packages should be extended to them by central govt, said Bhalla. He added that the business community of J&K has also suffered adversely and it has pinned high hopes on Congress for mitigation of their sufferings.

While speaking on the occasion, Bhalla urged upon the youth to get ready for playing a vital role to bring change. He said that the present scenario of J&K has pushed the youth towards depression and anxiety as they are worried about their future presently looming in darkness. "The people of J&K were promised that they will get jobs, development, peace, prosperity and many other things, but nothing happened on the ground and people are running from pillars to post to get their things done", Bhalla lamented. Lauding the pro-people work done during the

Congress rule, he said that his party leadership knew the ground realities and framed the policies in such a way that people of J&K irrespective of region, religion, caste and creed benefited equally. "Congress reads the pulse of the people in the true sense of the term but the present government took all decisions in a hasty manner just to fulfill their political agenda," he added.

"The law and order situation has deteriorated, the business community is incurring losses, unemployment rate is highest in the country, corruption and scams are happening everywhere, administrators & bureaucrats are not being held accountable. This is the state of affairs in J&K," Bhalla said. He said that people are being cheated under Smart City narrative and the condition of Jammu city is bad. There are potholes all over the streets, drains are broken and when it rains, the entire city turns into

flood hitting the normal life of commoners. Is this what Smart City is like, he asked, adding that Smart City is not made by installing Signs Boards, but by providing all kinds of facilities to the people, he said.

Bhalla alleged that the political party in power has totally spoiled the earning pattern of locals of Jammu as all the Govt works including contracts of sand, bajri, wine shops, and parking spots have been allotted to the people from outside JK UT jeopardizing the living standard of general public Jammu and Kashmir and drastically dwindling their livelihood. He further said that all the important positions in the UT Govt sector and universities have deliberately been given and occupied by officers from outside JKUT under a well knit conspiracy to make the lives of people here quite miserable with none to listen to their genuine grievances, he added.

Bhalla said that the time

has come to defeat such forces and strengthen the hands of Congress for lasting peace in the Union Territory. Slamming present UT Rule for pushing J&K into dark era, former said that everybody is unhappy and restless under the present regime and eagerly waiting for conduct of Assembly elections to elect a popular government. He said, "Congress is the only party which believes in secularism and can fight for the rights of the downtrodden class of the society. Party has taken many historic decisions in the past for the welfare of the marginalized sections of the society." Congress has served the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir with utmost honesty and dedication", Bhalla added.

Bhalla further said that the last election was held in 2014 in Jammu and Kashmir and since then no election has been conducted depriving people of their constitutional and democratic rights. He said that India was called as mother of democracy but keeping people without elections for long is the murder of democracy and urged upon the Centre to hold assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir without any delay. He further said that no democracy can survive without elections as popular government is the soul and people

are its body. "The elections in Jammu and Kashmir had been conducted in the worst situations in the past and one cannot digest the excuse of the Centre that the situation is not conducive for elections", he added.

**Department of Wildlife Protection J&K Government**  
**Office of the Wildlife Warden, Jammu**  
Manda Hills, Near Hotel Ashok Jammu.  
Email: [wljammu@gmail.com](mailto:wljammu@gmail.com)  
**TENDERING**

**Tender Notice : e-NIT No.- 13/WLWJ of 2024-25 dated: 10-07-2024**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Govt. /Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:

Name of work	Adv. Cost (in lacs)	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender Document (in Rs.)	Time of completion	Receiving/Opening Authority
Improvement of Guard Hut at Janipur in Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary	1.00 lac	D	600	60 days	Tender opening committee

**EMD (2% of advertised amount)- Rs 2,000/-**  
The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental Website:- <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

AA/TS No. & Date	99 of 2024-25 (WLWJ) dated 08-07-2024
Position of Funds	Approved under CAMPA
Publishing Date	10-07-2024
Download Start Date	11-07-2024
Bid Submission Start Date	11-07-2024
Bid submission End Date	31-07-2024 up to 02:00 PM
Date of opening of Technical Bid	01-08-2024 at 12:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu)
Date of opening of Financial Bid.	01-08-2024

Bid documents can be seen at and download from the website: - <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.

(Vijay Kumar, SFS)  
Wildlife Warden  
Jammu

No.: WLWJ/ \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: -07-2024

**DIP/J-2729/24**  
**Date: 12-7-24**

## EDITORIAL

## Strengthening security grid in hilly terrains

There are reports that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) have decided to deploy Army and paramilitary forces in hilly areas to preempt terrorist strikes. The decision marks a crucial strategic shift in combating the persistent threat of terrorism. This proactive measure, initiated at the highest levels of governance, underscores a renewed commitment to safeguarding our borders and protecting civilian lives. In the wake of escalating terror attacks, particularly in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where rugged terrain often serves as a haven for militants, the deployment of additional forces is not merely a reactive response but a calculated effort to enhance preemptive capabilities. The decision to station troops in strategic hilltops and patrol routes frequented by security convoys is aimed at disrupting terrorist activities at their inception. Terrorists have exploited the geographical advantages offered by hilly areas, using natural caves and dense foliage as hideouts. By intensifying presence in districts like Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, and others identified as high-risk, security forces are better positioned to detect and neutralize threats before they materialize. This initiative not only strengthens our defensive posture but also reassures local communities, who have endured the brunt of terror-induced fear. The recent reinforcement of Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) in response to incidents like the ambush in Kathua district highlights the agility and preparedness of our armed forces. These teams, equipped with specialized training and rapid response capabilities, are pivotal in countering sudden attacks and apprehending perpetrators swiftly. Moreover, the integration of surveillance technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) underscores a synergy between human intelligence and advanced reconnaissance tools. This synergy enhances situational awareness and operational effectiveness in challenging terrain, where conventional methods alone may fall short. It is imperative to acknowledge the bravery and resilience of our armed forces, as evidenced in recent encounters where they thwarted attacks despite facing significant odds. Their dedication to duty and unwavering commitment to protecting civilian lives serve as a beacon of hope amidst adversity. Looking ahead, sustaining momentum in these efforts is crucial. Continuous adaptation to evolving tactics employed by terrorists, such as leveraging local guides and exploiting natural features for cover, demands a dynamic and multifaceted approach. This includes bolstering intelligence networks, fostering community engagement, and investing in technology-driven solutions to enhance border security. In conclusion, while the deployment of Army and paramilitary forces in hilly areas represents a proactive step towards securing our borders, it is equally a testament to our resolve to safeguard national integrity and promoting peace. The collaborative efforts of all stakeholders—security forces, local administration, and citizens—are indispensable in fortifying our defenses against terrorism's insidious threats. As we navigate these challenges, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to a secure and resilient nation.

J.S. RAJPUT

The Constitution and its makers deserve respect in a functional democracy, election times could indeed become a celebration time, not only the competing candidates and their parties, but also for the entire country, which may involve votes, and future voters. Imagine a situation in which every candidate remains respectful to all others, and is ever conscious of his words and their usage in every interaction, interview and interpretation of the views of his competitors. Everyone who enters the election fray is duty-bound to remember that there is a generation of younger people watching closely how they conduct themselves in competitive conditions, and the extent to which they are conscious of their conduct and behaviour, both in public and private. Though it is a major responsibility of the family and school to shape the growing up of the children, the significance of the role of society and particularly those keen to lead the society could never be ignored. It is not only the 'Aacharya' whose conduct is under watch and is emulated, children in their sensitive years learn from numerous sources, and no one is out of their ambit of keen observation. Having seen, observed and

participated in the elections that were just over, one may find all these 'expectations' just 'utopian, to be aspired for, but with full understanding that these would never be fulfilled! After the election results, the parliament meets, and there is only a superficial bonhomie of a few minutes, followed by the same old routine of distrust, and a sense of shyness, the creation of hurdles and ensuring that the nation must once again get ready to suffer continuous shouting in both the Houses of parliament and regular walk-outs! It is amazing - and sadly enough, amusing - that the elected representatives of the great Indian democracy just cannot sit together and find out ways and means to sit together, express themselves, and arrive at inferences that are for the good of their voters? How could they ignore that they are the legatees of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagolachari, and that illustrious lot that prepared the Constitution, and had created conditions to enable them to get elected, enjoy all the perks and privileges that have been acquiring bulging proportions? A veteran of the freedom struggle once told me he finds it repulsive when people go to Raj Ghat before beginning their so-called fasts, political dramas and whatever you may call it. I share his

anguish. Many others would also be doing so. Those who indulge in such frivolities could remember what Dr Ambedkar had mentioned in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949: "If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also a fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha." He goes on to point out that even with the Constitution in place, the nation, its people in general and those occupying constitutional positions in particular must never forget: "... however good a constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot.... The Constitution can provide only the organs of the State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary.

The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depends are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics." Not only Dr. Ambedkar, but other stalwarts were also equally concerned about how things may take shape in future. Speaking on November 26 of 1949, the final remarks of the President of the Constituent Assembly could be the guiding light for every member of parliament, irrespective of his party affiliations: "Whatever the Constitution may or may not provide, the welfare of the country will depend on how the country is administered. That will depend upon the men who administer it. It is a trite saying that a country can have only the Government it deserves.

If the people who are elected are capable, and men of character and integrity, they will be able to make the best even of a defective Constitution. If they are lacking in these, the Constitution cannot help the country. After all, a constitution like a machine is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them". There can be no better articulation of the anxiety and anguish that every concerned Indian citizen experiences at this juncture of history. India needs awakeners not only in every section of Indian society." The newly elected MPs could rally move towards an illustrious political career if they just internalize the thoughts, ideas and ideals of three of the illustrious Indians: Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and Ambedkar; the ARG" This could become their tribute and salutations to the three of them, and that would equip them to plunge into the service of the people and India. Scholars and institutions must launch serious analysis of certain aspects of how the democratic process has fared in its actual practice, in sustaining its credibility amongst the voters.

They could also find out with academic fidelity - and inform the people what has eroded Gandhian values that were supposed to become the cornerstone of the Indian Democracy after the Constitution of India was prepared with un-heard of dexterity and socio-economic and cultural comprehension by its framers, all of whom were distinguished freedom fighters, known for their sacrifice, non-accumulation, and commitment to a cause. Not only in India, the greatness of the contributions of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar is acknowledged globally. It is indeed intriguing for numerous people how those who swore by his name all the time to give a zing to their political ambitions, blatantly ignore some of his basic premises which were an outcome not only of his intellectual prowess but also a precise and incisive comprehension of life he had led! Take the example of reservations for the SC/SC communities. It is the responsibility of the members of the Parliament and State assemblies to fact-check the extent to which reservations have helped the target groups. How long shall the unscrupulous among the politicians shall be allowed to play the games of caste, creed, religion, region and even language? If all this is permitted to continue, it would be impossible to create an India that projects social cohesion and religious amity. Revert back to the sixties of the last century, Gandhi had gone but had not vanished from the psyche of the people, young persons were convinced that the caste system would be eliminated during the next two to three decades. Yes, that was the spirit of the Constitution of India, that was the India of Baba Saheb's Dreams! (Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity; views are personal)

## A call for civility and integrity in democracy

## India needs a middle-class-friendly Budget

PUZHANKARA SIVAKUMAR  
RANJITH KRISHNAN  
ANJU PANICKER

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is preparing to present the Union Budget for the sixth consecutive year. With July 23rd hardly a fortnight away, a palpable sense of anticipation among the public is evident, as past experiences have proved that the Budget offerings, especially on matters that impact the general public, are almost always mismatched with the current economic indicators. Despite all the industrial and economic growth targeted in the interim budget in February, the most relatable benefit that concerns an ordinary taxpaying citizen is a change in tax benefits - what portion of their hard-earned savings should they forego for the greater good? The working middle class is the backbone of our economy, but this is overlooked when it comes to tax benefits and incentives for this

class. A significant aspect of being a person in the 'middle class' is understood to be their dependency on a monthly income. The painful irony is that the income they earn as well as most of the investments they make to secure their retired life are taxable, all the while having a laughable social security system. The call for a significant raise in the rates of standard deduction and deduction limits under various heads and extension of tax slabs, should not be seen as a deterrent to the earning capacity of the government, but as a need of the hour to alleviate the demographic's burden, given that most of these existing limits have seen half-decade anniversaries, if not more. This would provide much-needed relief to the middle class and incentivise savings and investment for their future, thereby creating more stability in India's economic growth. The government should acknowledge that the current income tax slabs and

structure do not keep pace with inflation and rising costs of living, and the Budget should reflect this. Also, when an investor moves their investments from one mutual fund to another, within the same asset management company, they are required to pay a capital gains tax. This is unfair to the investor, who has not realised those gains, acting as an enormous deterrent to efficient portfolio management. Intra-scheme transfers should be exempted from the capital gains tax, encouraging active management of portfolios, optimising investments and financial prudence, without the fear of unfair additional tax liabilities. These rectifications will benefit the ordinary person by effectively allowing them to grow wealth out of their savings. The new budget should be an enormous boost to investors, allowing greater flexibility without penalising prudent personal finance management. Another area on similar

lines is that better tax benefits must be provided for purchasing property, which remains a primary investment option, especially in Tier II and Tier III cities. A crucial plight that affects senior citizens is the taxation on retirement funds and pensions of senior citizens. Currently, the State taxes the return on retirement savings of senior citizens who lack a pension scheme. This norm is a serious concern for personal finances for the elderly because the sole means of support for a section of them are their self-planned retirement funds and the returns on such funds. The Budget should exempt the returns on retirement funds from tax; this would be a much-needed relief for senior citizens. In addition, only two slabs of tax benefits exist for the elderly: senior citizens (between the ages of 60 and 80) and super senior citizens (above the age of 80). Keeping in mind the financial realities the elderly face, the Budget can adopt

a gradient approach, with incremental benefits at 65, 70, and 75. Medical expenses have reached a new high for people of all ages, and awareness about the necessity for insurance coverage is also on the rise. This ties in with the IRDAI's mission to achieve 'Insurance for all' by 2047. The government needs to keep pace with the revolutionary changes taking place in the insurance sector, and significantly step up insurance benefits under the tax regime to further motivate people to get insured. A more progressive Budget as compared to the earlier versions and more importantly, a realistic tax regime, could provide significant relief to the salaried middle-class taxpayers who are the significant contributors to India's growth in all aspects, considering that they drive our revenue as well as commerce. Their ability to save and spend is a critical element of economic stability. Even if the government faces a small

reduction in revenue by reducing the tax liability of the middle-class, their earnings continue to contribute to the economy in the form of more purchases or investments, while it provides them a sense of satiety. While Indians are accustomed to the minimal government support and expect nothing out of our poorly ranked social security system, the government can considerably help them by addressing the actual needs of the middle-class and enabling them to save better. Coalition governments generally come out with Budgets that are middle-class-friendly. Let us wait to find out if this Narendra Modi-led government is bringing relief to the middle class. (Puzhankara Sivakumar is a practising company secretary, Ranjith Krishnan is a sustainability consultant, and Anju Panicker is director, SEP Learning and Corporate Solutions Private Limited.)

## PM Modi's Strategic Visit

KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

This week marked several high-profile meetings amongst senior leaders around the globe, discussing primarily various conflicts and possible outcomes. PM Narendra Modi, in his first state visit during his third stint, visited Russia and Austria. The State visit by the India PM was the first since the Ukraine war and underscores the primacy of Russia in India's state of affairs. Meanwhile, all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders assembled in Washington DC to discuss global geopolitics. Ukraine and the Middle East featured prominently in all the discussions, even though the flavours were significantly different. The India-Russia joint statement following President Putin and PM Modi's bilateral meetings read "The Sides highlighted

the imperative of peaceful resolution of the conflict around Ukraine through dialogue and diplomacy including engagement between both parties. They noted with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law and based on the UN Charter in its entirety and totality. "Earlier, PM Modi during one of the televised speeches of the two leaders told his Russian counterpart "peace is of utmost importance" and solution to Ukraine could not be found on the battlefield. He expressed serious concern regarding the bombing of a children's hospital in Kyiv and said "When innocent children are murdered, one sees them die, the heart pains and that pain is unbearable." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with whom PM Modi has had several tele-



phone calls in the past, called the Russia state visit by India "a blow to peace efforts." NATO Secretary General, Mr Stoltenberg in the run-up to the NATO summit said "Allies will agree a financial pledge for Ukraine", and that he also expects more immediate military support to Ukraine." Ukraine is moving closer to NATO ". The close relationship with NATO was one of

the reasons Russia came marching into Ukraine. It was a tightrope walk for PM Modi, in Russia, given the relatively new strategic relationships, he has developed in his last decade of being at the helm, crucial among them being the India-US partnership. It would be worth mentioning that in the wake of the war in Ukraine, India has not yet verbally criticised Russia, for its aggression and has also stayed away

from multilateral resolutions against Moscow. In the first few months, of Russia's attack on Ukraine, several US top leaders had criticised India's stance regarding the war, and even a threat of sanctions was discussed. However, with deft diplomatic efforts made by both long-term partners, the high-decibel criticism was restricted to closed-door meetings. PM Modi's state visit to Russia opened some of the past heartburn regarding Ukraine in Washington. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said "US has raised concerns with India regarding its relationship with Russia". He added "We would urge India, as we do any country when it engages with Russia, to make clear that any resolution to the conflict in Ukraine needs to be one that respects the UN charter, that respects Ukraine's territorial integrity." This

comes at a time when the US has been seen to be one of the most important allies of India in the recent past. Interestingly President Putin upon re-election chose to visit Beijing in one of his first official trips and followed it with a bilateral last week, on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Kazakhstan. China and Russia have mutually agreed to be friends without any limitations, and are widely seen as challengers to what they allege as the US-led democratic order. India and China are on an extremely rough patch due to the military aggression on India's borders. India managed to walk the tight rope for now, but at some point of time it will have to balance it out with more actionable statements on world conflicts. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

## Ola CEO calls for 70 hours work week, doctor warns of diseases, premature death risk

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

After Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal backed Infosys founder Narayana Murthy's 70-hour work-week advice, a top neurologist on Friday warned that it could increase the risk of several serious diseases and even premature death.

Murthy had, in 2023, said that if India wants to compete with developed economies that have made remarkable progress in recent decades, youngsters should work for 70 hours a week.

In a recent podcast,



Bhavish reignited the debate on the 70-hour work week, saying that he is "fully in sync" with his advice.

"Working long hours is associated with increased risk of multiple serious diseases and even premature

death," said Sudhir Kumar, from Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, in a post on social media platform X.com.

Citing several scientific studies the doctor said that "working 55 or more hours per week is associ-

ated with a 35 per cent higher risk of a stroke and a 17 per cent higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week".

Further, working for more than 55 hours a week kills more than 8,00,000 people every year, he said.

Long working hours also raise the risk of being overweight, prediabetes, and Type 2 diabetes -- a precursor to many diseases and early death.

"People working 69 or more hours a week are more likely to have moderate to severe depres-

sive symptoms than those working 40 hours a week," he said.

"CEOs are inclined to recommend long working hours for their employees to improve their company's profits and their own net worth," the neurologist said.

He added that in the case "where employees fall sick, they can be easily substituted".

"It is in your best interest to choose an organisation that cares for employees and recommends reasonable working hours to ensure a better work-life balance," he said.

## Laos, WHO join hands to address health-related challenges

AGENCIES  
VIENTIANE, JULY 12

Laos' Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO) will continue to work together to address current and future health issues in Laos.

While Laos is tackling remaining challenges and preparing for health risks in the future, such as non-communicable diseases and climate change, the Lao Ministry of Health is proud to be working side-by-side with the WHO, according to a report from the ministry's Centre of Information and Education for Health on Friday.

The WHO is fully committed to supporting Laos in addressing the health issues faced now and in the years to come.

WHO's support has enabled remarkable health progress over the decades, including the successful management of COVID-19, the elimination of lymphatic filariasis and trachoma, the near elimination of malaria, and a nearly 80 per cent reduction in maternal mortality since 2000.

The WHO has been working closely with the Lao Ministry of Health and other ministries to tackle various health challenges in the country, according to the report.

## Niger plans to vaccinate nearly 7 mln children against poliomyelitis

AGENCIES  
NIAMEY, JULY 12

The Nigerian government launched a vast five-day polio vaccination campaign in Niamey, the capital of Niger, on Thursday, targeting nearly 7 million children living in the national territory.

At the launch of these national vaccination days, Minister of Health Garba Hakimi indicated that there are precisely 6,842,491 children under the age of five affected by the campaign, which ends Monday.

## New AI model to speed up heart scans, save time, boost treatment

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Researchers have developed a very innovative method for analysing MRI heart scans with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) technology which could save valuable time and resources and improve patient care.

The teams from the Universities of East Anglia (UEA), Sheffield, and Leeds have created a model that uses AI to examine heart MRI scans in a view known as the four-chamber plane.

"This model determines the size and function of



the heart's chambers and demonstrates outcomes comparable to those done by doctors but unimaginably faster," said Pankaj Garg, from the University of East Anglia's Norwich Medical School.

He noted that a stan-

dard MRI process takes 45 minutes, but the new model takes "a matter of seconds", leading to an overall betterment of this field. The retrospective observational study consisted of data from 814 patients. Further, scans

and data from another 101 patients were also sampled.

While the previous studies focused on only the two main chambers of the heart, the new study focuses on all four.

The team said this would lead to faster, more accurate diagnoses and help patients.

They also stressed the need for future studies to focus on larger groups of patients from different hospitals, with different types of MRI scanners, and other common diseases seen in medical practice to verify the accuracy.

## 9 infants die of whooping cough outbreak in Britain

AGENCIES  
LONDON, JULY 12

Nine infants have died since the beginning of an outbreak of whooping cough in November last year, according to figures released by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on Thursday.

In the first five months of 2024, 7,599 children and adults have been infected by the disease, which affects the lungs and breathing tubes and spreads easily, the figures showed.

"Young babies are at highest risk of severe complications and death from whooping cough," the UKHSA said in its alert Thursday.

Over half of those

infected are people aged 15 or older and suffer a mild illness, the agency said, adding that high numbers continue to be reported in babies under three months of age who are at greatest risk from the infection.

Medics have urged pregnant women and babies to get whooping cough vaccinations. The UKHSA said the latest uptake data for vaccinations offered to pregnant women to protect newborn infants against whooping cough has fallen below 60 per cent.

Timely vaccination in pregnancy and in childhood is important to protect vulnerable young infants from serious disease, according to the

UKHSA.

"Vaccination is the best defense against whooping cough, and it is vital that pregnant women and young infants receive their vaccines at the right time," said Dr. Mary Ramsay, director of Immunization at the UKHSA.

Andrew Preston, a professor from the Milner Center for Evolution and the Department of Life Sciences at the University of Bath, said: "We've now reached levels that we haven't seen in the UK for well over ten years. This is a genuine outbreak of pertussis (whooping cough)."

"The levels of infant vaccination against pertussis have dropped over the last ten years and thousands of infants haven't received

the vaccinations that we know provide protection," he told Xinhua.

Preston said there has also been a striking reduction in maternal vaccination coverage in some parts of the country, down as low as 25 per cent to 30 per cent in some urban parts of Britain.

"I think that's contributing to some of the more serious cases in those very young infants," he added.

Preston said he was not sure how long the current outbreak will last. "It's on an upward trajectory, and to be honest, I don't think we know when it will plateau, but I think it's probably going to be at an enhanced incidence for most of this year."

## Sleep duration can make diabetics more vulnerable to blood vessel damage: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

People with Type 2 diabetes who experience short or long sleep duration are more prone to microvascular disease, or damage to the small blood vessels, which can lead to serious complications in the future, according to a study on Friday.

The study by Odense University Hospital in Denmark showed that microvascular complications, such as retinopathy and nephropathy, are the top contributors to complications associated with diabetes.



Variations in sleep schedules can further heighten the risk of these complications, revealed the study.

The study included 396 participants, averaging 62 years with a high body mass index (BMI) and on

antihypertensive medicine.

Of these 28 per cent of participants had long sleep duration, 60 per cent had ideal sleep, and 12 per cent had short sleep.

People with short sleep duration had a 38 per

cent prevalence of microvascular damage. Those with optimal sleep had an 18 per cent risk, while the long sleep duration group had 31 risks.

People with the short sleep duration had a 2.6 times higher chance of developing the condition, while the long sleep group had a 2.3 times higher risk than the optimal sleep category.

Age was another factor, said the researchers. People under the age of 62, had a 23 per cent risk, and the number was nearly 6 times higher among the elderly.

"Both short and long

sleep durations are associated with a higher prevalence of microvascular disease compared to optimal sleep duration at night. Age amplifies the association between short sleep duration and microvascular disease, suggesting increased vulnerability among older individuals," the team said.

They suggested lifestyle changes like good sleeping habits, but also stressed further studies.

The study will be presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) in Spain.

## Senior doctors at Korea University hospitals set to reduce patient treatment

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 12

Senior doctors at three major hospitals affiliated with Korea University are set to begin reducing treatment of non-critical patients from Friday to join walkouts by two other major hospitals in support of striking junior doctors.

The planned walkout by Korea University's three hospitals -- Anam Hospital, Guro Hospital, and Ansan Hospital -- will not affect critically ill patients and emergency rooms, according to the university's medical professors who serve

as senior doctors at the hospitals, Yonhap news agency reported.

About 80 per cent of the professors voted in favour of the walkout, and they will take voluntary leave. Medical professors at three major hospitals of Yonsei University have also been participating in a walkout since late last month, while those at Asan Medical Center have been cutting outpatient care since early July, blaming the government for causing disruptions in public health services.

Since late February, about 12,000 trainee doctors have left their work-sites in protest of the gov-

ernment's plan to boost the number of medical students. The walkout has put a strain on major hospitals because they heavily rely on junior doctors.

With the hike in the medical school admissions quota finalised, the government has taken steps to persuade trainee doctors to return to hospitals, including a decision to drop all punitive measures against them.

But junior doctors were largely seen as unresponsive. According to the health ministry, only 8 per cent of junior doctors at 211 training hospitals remained at their work-sites as of Wednesday.

## Global prevalence of gout to rise more than 70pc by 2050: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

The number of individuals with gout -- a type of inflammatory arthritis, which manifests as acute episodes of severe joint pain and swelling -- will increase by more than 70 per cent by 2050, according to a study.

The study led by researchers from the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in the US showed that worldwide 55.8 million people had gout in 2020 -- an increase of 22.5 per cent since 1990.

Further, males had a 3.26 times higher prevalence of gout than females, and the disease also increased with age.

"The total number of prevalent cases of gout is estimated to reach 95.8 million in 2050," predicted the study published in The Lancet Rheumatol-



ogy.

The study estimated gout prevalence and years lived with disability (YLDs) from 1990 to 2020 drawing on population-based data from 35 countries. The findings showed that the age-standardised gout prevalence in 2050 is forecast to be 667 per 100,000 population.

"We estimate that the number of individuals with gout will increase by more than 70 per cent from 2020 to 2050," the researchers said, adding that it is "primarily due

to population growth and ageing".

Importantly, the team found that high body mass index (BMI) accounted for 34.3 per cent of YLDs due to gout and kidney dysfunction accounted for 11.8 per cent.

A separate study by Harvard University researchers, published in the journal Scientific Reports, attributed the surge in gout cases to the rise in comorbid conditions known to be precursors to gout, including obesity, insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, and renal diseases.

To reduce the burden of gout, the researchers stressed the need to curb high BMI, and dietary and lifestyle modifications focusing on body weight reduction. They also called for increasing access to interventions to prevent and control flares.

## Pankajakasthuri achieves milestone of 1 crore customers for Breathe Eazy granules

AGENCIES  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 12

Pankajakasthuri Herbals, the leading Indian Ayurvedic company headquartered in Kerala, has achieved a significant milestone with 1 crore customers for its flagship product, Breathe Eazy granules.

Breathe Eazy granules, formulated through extensive research and development with over 17 herbs and natural ingredients, are designed to widen the respiratory tract and facilitate easier breathing.

"The product's journey began as a go-to-solution for patients suffering from acute respiratory issues. The fact that Breathe Eazy has achieved one crore customers is a testament to its effectiveness and

the trust customers have placed in our product," said Dr. J. Hareendran Nair, the Founder & Managing Director, Pankajakasthuri Herbals.

Initially launched as Pankajakasthuri, this innovative product was later rebranded as Breathe Eazy granules.

Proven to help prevent allergies, strengthen immunity, and relieve bronchitis, eosinophilia, sinusitis, and rhinitis, Breathe Eazy granules continue to offer natural and effective respiratory relief.

"Pankajakasthuri Herbals has always been ahead of the industry in adopting the best manufacturing practices.

Breathe Eazy goes through 26 quality checkpoints to ensure product quality before reaching the market. We are also

upgrading our existing facility at Kattakkada, Thiruvananthapuram, to WHO Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards.

Currently, 1600 employees are working at Pankajakasthuri group, with seventy per cent of them being female employees," added Dr. J. Hareendran Nair.

"Pankajakasthuri has already initiated exports to Malaysia and UAE with the approvals. Additionally, the company plans to start exporting to countries like USA, Canada, and Europe in the near future," said Arun Visakh Nair, Director, Sales & Marketing, Pankajakasthuri Herbals. Kishan Chand and Shyam Krishnan, Executive Directors, Pankajakasthuri Herbals, were also present at the press conference.

## Israel reports 19 deaths of West Nile fever

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM, JULY 12

Israel has reported a new death of West Nile fever, raising the total fatalities in the country's ongoing outbreak to 19.

The Israeli health ministry also reported 25 new infections, bringing the tallies to 356 since the beginning of May.

Mosquitoes in the coastal city of Tel Aviv and the nearby cities of Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak, and Ramla had been carrying the virus, Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection announced a day earlier.

Following the detection, the ministry instructed the four municipalities to expand the monitoring and extermination system.

Also on Wednesday, Tamir Goshen, Director of Veterinary Services at the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, told the Ynet



news website that in the last two months, 159 birds were found infected with the virus, many of them grey crows, a surge from three detected infections among birds last year.

The virus is transmitted to humans from birds by mosquito bites. Most human infections show no to mild cold symptoms, but occasionally, some people could develop severe illnesses affecting the central nervous system.

Goshen noted that some birds infected with the virus show neural signs while others die without any preliminary signs.

# PM's vision of 'Purvodaya' for NE to be gateway of India's progress: Scindia

AGENCIES

GUWAHATI/SHILLONG, JULY 12

Minister of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Communications, Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Purvodaya' for this region would be the gateway of India's progress.

Scindia, who as part of his maiden two-day visit to Assam and Meghalaya as DoNER minister, arrived in Guwahati, said that the northeast region was a repository of culture, tradition, abundance of resources and that repository must be showcased to the world.

"Huge social development as well as progress in health, education, sports, tourism and industry took place during the last ten years of the NDA government. The region has huge



resources of bamboo, agar woods and many other natural resources with tremendous potential for development," the minister told the media at the Guwahati airport.

Referring to the portfolio of Civil Aviation he held during the previous tenure, Scindia said that the number of airports in the region increased from 9 to 17.

"Though this is my

first visit as the DoNER Minister, I have very old and strong ties with this region. I would like to thank the PM, our party President (JP Nadda), and our Home Minister (Amit Shah) for giving me this responsibility.

"It will be my resolve that the PM's vision of 'Purvodaya' for this region to be the gateway of India's progress, translates into reality. This

vision has been on track for the last 10 years in terms of the huge outlay increase for the northeast," he said.

He added that the budgetary outlay for the northeastern region had been increased from Rs 24,000 crore to almost Rs 82,000 crore, from infrastructure point of view, whether it's roads, rail or civil aviation.

"Our 'Look East policy' is now an 'Act East policy' and the northeast region would be a pivot in that policy going forward..." the DoNER minister said, adding that he would act as a facilitator of aspiration of each state of the northeast region.

Later the DoNER Minister left for Shillong where he would hold a series of meetings with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma and senior officials on various issues of developments and

schemes.

In Shillong, Scindia would chair a review meeting at the North East Council Secretariat with the officials from DoNER ministry, NEC, and state governments of the region to assess the progress of various regional projects and initiatives.

The 'NEC Vision 2047' would be presented in the meeting and the NERACE app would be launched.

The NERACE app serves as a unified digital platform designed to connect farmers with global markets, facilitating direct transactions and price negotiations.

It includes a multilingual helpline (English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Nepali, Khasi, Mizo, and Manipuri) and integrates farmers and sellers, thereby enhancing agricultural connectivity across northeast India.

## ISIS terror plot: NIA files charge sheet in Mumbai court; names 2, including Libyan man

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JULY 12

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge sheet before a Mumbai Special Court, naming two accused, including a Libyan national in the sensational ISIS terror conspiracy busted in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, an official said here on Friday.

The NIA has named M. Zoheb Khan of Maharashtra, who was arrested earlier this year (February 2024) and the Libyan M. Shoeb Khan, as the key conspirators in the terror plot linked with a module in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar to the ISIS' global networks.

Zoheb was recruited by Shoeb and they hatched a plot to promote ISIS' anti-India agenda, recruit vulnerable youth to carry out terrorist strikes at sensitive installations across the country.

The charge sheet before the NIA Special Court has exposed the international



linkages of the conspiracy involving the overseas handlers of the ISIS/IS operatives.

The NIA probe has already exposed the web of anti-India activities involving Zoheb and Shoeb, who had taken 'bayath (pledge of allegiance)' towards the self-anointed Khalifa of ISIS.

After targeting India with a series of terror strikes, Zoheb and Shoeb had planned to flee to Turkey or Afghanistan, as per the NIA probe.

They were actively involved in developing and hosting a website to promote the violent, extremist ISIS ideology through which they planned to recruit youth

from across the world into the ISIS fold.

The probe found that Zoheb had already formed a WhatsApp group with over 50 youths as members from the Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, with the intention to radicalise and recruit them to further the ISIS' nefarious activities in India. Both Zoheb and Shoeb were exchanging videos pertaining to manufacturing of explosives and fabricating IEDs for the planned terror strikes.

They had also prepared a detailed time-table of their agenda, comprising planning, preparing and executing terror hits at multiple locations in India, and the follow-up action in the aftermath.

## CAG on Maha PSUs: 41 accumulated huge losses, net worth of 31 eroded

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JULY 12

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has observed that 41 state public sector undertakings in Maharashtra had accumulated losses of Rs 50,098.55 crore while the net worth of 31 SPSUs, including 13 inactive, had completely eroded.

Further, the total negative net worth of these 31 SPSUs was Rs 9,887.19 crore against the paid-up capital of Rs 7,551.83 crore as of March 31, 2023.

The CAG report on State Finances for the year ended March 31, 2023, was on Friday tabled in the state Assembly.

As per the report, the maximum erosion of net worth was noticed in Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Limited (Rs 2,948.11 crore), Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (Rs 2,610.86 crore), Maharashtra Power Development Corporation Limited (Rs 1,013.63 crore) and Maharashtra State Textile Corporation Limited (Rs 1,006.74 crore).

Out of the total loss of

Rs 3,623.40 crore incurred by 45 SPSUs for the period 2022-23, a loss of Rs 3,355.13 crore was contributed by four SPSUs, which have incurred losses of more than Rs 200 crore. These include Maharashtra Power Generation Company Limited (Rs 1,644.34 crore), Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (Rs 1,145.57 crore), MSRDC Sea Link Limited (Rs 297.67 crore) and Mumbai Pune Expressway Limited (Rs 266.55 crore).

Further, the net loss after tax amounting to Rs 3,623.40 crore was reported by 39 government-controlled companies at Rs 2,322.19 crore, three statutory corporations (SCs) at Rs 1,223.14 crore and three government-controlled other companies (GCOC) at Rs 78.07 crore.

As of March 31, 2023, there were 110 SPSUs of which 91 are working and 19 are inactive in the state under the audit jurisdiction of CAG.

Out of 110 SPSUs, 39 working SPSUs and five inactive SPSUs did not furnish any financial statements (FSs) by September

30, 2023. As a result of the non-submission of FSs, there is no assurance whether the investment and expenditure had been properly accounted for and the purpose for which the amount was invested by the state government was achieved said the report.

During 2022-23, a total of 52 SPSUs registered an annual turnover of Rs 1,22,154.70 crore, which was equal to 3.46 per cent of the GSDP of Maharashtra.

The investment of the state government in equity and long-term loans in these SPSUs was Rs 2,33,626.89 crore as against the total investment of Rs 4,90,595.02 crore at the end of March 31, 2023, the CAG report said.

Out of the 110 SPSUs, 47 SPSUs earned profits (Rs 1,833.29 crore), while 45 SPSUs incurred losses (Rs 3,623.40 crore) and 10 SPSUs reported neither profit nor loss.

The financial statements for the year 2022-23 were received only from 14 SPSUs within the stipulated time (Septem-

ber 30, 2023). Eight SPSUs have not submitted their first statements since their inception.

The silver lining was that 49 SPSUs had accumulated a surplus of Rs 9,717.76 crore and 12 SPSUs had neither accumulated losses nor surplus, the report said.

CAG has suggested that the state government may review the functioning of all loss-making SPSUs and take necessary steps to improve their financial performance.

The government may issue necessary instructions to administrative departments to set targets for individual SPSUs to furnish the FSs in time and to strictly monitor the clearance of arrears.

Further, CAG has recommended that the government review the inactive Government Companies and may take appropriate decisions on their revival/winding up. The government may impress upon the management of profit-making SPSUs to declare dividends as per the Government of Maharashtra Resolution of 2012.

## SC grants interim bail to Kejriwal, refers legal questions on arrest by ED to larger bench

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 12

The Supreme Court on Friday granted interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case lodged by the ED in the alleged excise policy scam but he will remain in jail as the CBI had later arrested him in a related matter.

The top court said it is up to Kejriwal to decide if he should continue as chief minister.

"We are conscious of the fact that Arvind Kejriwal is an elected leader," a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said while also noting that Kejriwal has suffered incarceration for over 90 days.

It also referred the questions pertaining to legality of his arrest in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) case to a larger bench.

The court said since the matter is concerned with the right to life and the issue of arrest has been referred to a larger bench, Kejriwal be released on interim bail.

The top court framed three questions related to power, necessity of



granted bail by a trial court here on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh in the case.

However, the ED had moved the Delhi High Court the next day and contended that the trial court's order granting bail to Kejriwal was "perverse", "one-sided" and "wrong-sided" and that the findings were based on irrelevant facts.

The high court, on June 21, imposed an interim stay on the trial court's bail order till passing of an order on ED's application for interim relief. On June 25, the high court had passed a detailed order staying the trial court order.

Kejriwal was also arrested by the CBI on June 26 in connection with the corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

The plea challenging his arrest by the CBI is pending before the Delhi High Court.

The matter relates to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22, which has now been scrapped.

On June 20, he was

arrest under section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and policy of arrest by the ED.

It said Kejriwal will be released on interim bail in terms of the conditions in the order of May 10.

While releasing Kejriwal on interim bail on May 10 for electioneering during the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, the top court had imposed conditions on him that he will not visit his office or the Delhi Secretariat during the tenure of his interim bail. Besides imposing slew of conditions, it had asked Kejriwal to not sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period.

On May 17, the top court

had reserved its verdict on Kejriwal's plea challenging legality of his arrest by the ED on March 21 in the case.

The apex court had on April 15 sought a response from the ED on Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest in the money laundering case.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief has challenged in the top court the April 9 order of the Delhi High Court that had upheld his arrest in the case.

The high court had upheld Kejriwal's arrest in the case, saying there was no illegality about it and that the ED was left with "little option" after he skipped repeated summonses and refused to join the investigation.

On June 20, he was

## K'taka will appeal against order to release water to TN: Siddaramaiah

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, JULY 12

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said that the state government has decided to appeal to the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) against the order of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) to release 1 TMC of water per day to Tamil Nadu.

"Despite weather forecasts indicating normal rainfall this time, there has been a 28 per cent deficiency in inflow so far. We had clearly stated our position to the CWRC and requested that no decision be made until the end of July," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said while addressing a press conference after holding a meeting with ministers and senior officials at the Home Office Krishna.

The Chief Minister said that a decision on the state's next steps will



be taken at an all-party meeting on July 14. "We are united on the water issue in Karnataka that is why we have called an all-party meeting," the Chief Minister said.

He said that all the Central ministers, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members from the Cauvery basin, and MLAs will also be invited to the meeting.

The CWRC has directed Karnataka to release 1 TMC of water per day starting from July 12.

"It was decided in today's meeting that the state government should

appeal this order to the CWMA," the Chief Minister said.

He also mentioned that while measuring at Biligundlu, the amount of water equivalent to the inflow into the Kabini Dam is being released to Tamil Nadu.

"Only 60 TMC of water is available in all four reservoirs of the Cauvery basin. We have to provide water for agricultural activities as well. Considering the shortage of rainfall, we have requested to wait until the end of July," the Chief Minister said.

## Voting for 11 Maharashtra Legislative Council seats ends, 274 MLAs cast votes

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JULY 12

Voting for 11 seats in the Maharashtra Legislative Council biennial election, which started on Friday at 9 a.m., concluded at 4 p.m. after 274 Assembly members cast their votes.

There are 12 candidates in the fray for 11 seats.

The winning quota for the election is pegged at 23, given the current strength of the 288-member Assembly is 274.

The counting will begin at 5 p.m. and the result is expected late on Friday night.

The ruling MahaYuti has fielded 9 nominees while the Maha Vikas Aghadi has fielded three.

Cross-voting was feared due to horse-trading. However, both MahaYuti and MVA had taken due precautions to avoid this as they had kept their respective legislators in the various five-star hotels in the city and brought them to

the legislature in special buses.

The BJP has fielded five nominees including former minister Pankaja Munde, former ministers of state Parinay Fuke and Sadabhau Khot, former state youth wing chief Yogesh Tilekar, and party functionary Amit Gorkhe. The Shiv Sena has nominated former MPs Krupal Tumane and Bhavan Gawli while the NCP has fielded Rajesh Vitekar and Shivajirao Garje.

The Congress has renominated Pradnya Satav, who is the wife of former MP Rajiv Satav while the Shiv Sena-UBT has fielded party chief Uddhav Thackeray's close confidant Milind Narvekar. Outgoing Peasants and Workers Party lawmaker Jayant Patil has entered the fray with the support of the NCP-SP.

The BJP has 103 legislators so the party is quite confident in the election of its five nominees. The

Shiv Sena with its 37 legislators and support from 10 independents is sure of victory of two candidates. Further, NCP with its 39 legislators sees no problem in the victory of its two nominees.

The Congress is confident in the victory of its lone nominee with its 37 legislators. Incidentally, PWP's Patil and Shiv Sena-UBT nominee Narvekar are banking on excess votes from Congress and also from the support from 15 legislators of the Shiv Sena-UBT and 13 legislators of the NCP-SP.

The biennial elections were necessitated due to the retirement of 11 MLAs - Manisha Kayande (Shiv Sena), Anil Parab (Shiv Sena-UBT), Vijay Girkar, Nilay Naik, Ramesh Patil, Ramrao Patil (BJP), Abdulah Durrani (NCP), Wajahat Mirza and Pragya Satav (Congress), Mahadev Jankar (RSP), and Jayant Patil (PWP).

## 25 dead, 39 injured in 24 hours in Bihar lightning strikes

AGENCIES

PATNA, JULY 12

As many as 25 people lost their lives and 39 others were injured in lightning strikes across several districts of Bihar in the last 24 hours.

Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar, on Friday expressed condolences and directed officials to provide Rs 4 lakh as ex-gratia to each of the families of the deceased.

He also urged people to stay indoors during the rain and thunderstorms.

Out of the 25 people who lost their lives, five died in Madhubani, four in Aurangabad, three in Supaul, three in Nalanda, two each in Lakhisarai and Patna, and one each in Begusarai, Jamui, Gopalganj, Rohtas, Samastipur and Purnea.

According to the Bihar State Disaster Management Authority, 50 people have died due to lightning strikes in July alone.

However, the unofficial figure may be more than that.

The Authority has urged caution in the next few days as heavy rains, thunderstorms, and lightning strikes occurred in several districts of Bihar on Thursday and are expected to continue for the next two days.

The Meteorological Department has forecast moderate to heavy rain with thunderstorms and lightning in many areas, including Patna, on Friday, and issued an 'Orange Alert' for Kishanganj and Araria districts.

On Thursday, 22 students in Barka Gaon Village, under Tarari police station, were injured when lightning struck a palm tree near their classrooms. They were admitted to Sadar Hospital Arrah.

In other districts, 17 more people sustained burn injuries due to lightning strikes.



## US strategic assets to be assigned to Korean Peninsula on 'constant' level: ministry

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 12

A joint nuclear deterrence guidelines document signed by South Korea and the United States will significantly expand the assignment of US strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula to a "constant" level, South Korea's defence ministry said Friday, as the allies seek to bolster their cooperation in responding to North Korean threats.

On Thursday, Cho Chang-rae, Seoul's Deputy Defence Minister for Policy, and Vipin Narang, Acting US Assistant Secretary of Defence for Space Policy, inked the 'Guidelines for Nuclear

Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula'.

The signing of the document came a year after the allies launched the Nuclear Consultative Group in joint efforts to ensure the credibility of America's "extended deterrence" commitment to South Korea in an integrated way that includes South Korea's conventional support for US nuclear operations in a contingency.

Extended deterrence refers to a US pledge to mobilize the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear arms, to defend its ally, reports Yonhap news agency.

Under the joint guidelines, the allies will seek

to expand the frequency and level of US strategic assets deployed to the Korean Peninsula, as the document commits to the assignment of Korean Peninsula missions of such weapons during both wartime and peacetime, according to the ministry.

The document also paves the way for the allies to sharpen their practical capabilities against nuclear threats through the joint sharing of intelligence, planning, training and implementation of operations, with South Korea expected to play a bigger role compared with the past, it added.

"The US had notified of

and discussed imminent deployment of strategic assets. But South Korea and the US will now discuss the need for such deployment around-the-clock," a ministry official said.

The ministry emphasised that the signing of the document elevates the South Korea-US alliance that had been based on conventional weapons to a "firm nuclear-based alliance."

"The conventional nuclear integration between South Korea and the US marks the first and sole case of a non-nuclear nation directly discussing nuclear operations with the US," the ministry said according to Yonhap news

agency.

On Thursday, President Yoon Suk Yeol and US President Joe Biden warned that any North Korean nuclear attack against South Korea will be met with a "swift, overwhelming and decisive" response, as they highlighted "tremendous" progress in their joint deterrence efforts.

The leaders issued the warning as they met on the margins of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation summit in Washington amid growing concerns over North Korea's unceasing pursuit of advanced nuclear and missile programmes and its deepening military alignment with Russia.

## Joe Biden says Kamala Harris is 'qualified to be president'

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JULY 12

US President Joe Biden on Thursday said his deputy, Vice-President Kamala Harris, is "qualified" to lead the country.

At a high-stake press conference here on Thursday, Biden said, "From the very beginning, I made no bones about that. She is qualified to be the president. That's why I picked her." When asked about the reasons for this, he said "Firstly, because of the way she's handled the issue of freedom of women's bodies, to have control of their bodies and secondly, her ability to handle almost any issue on the board." "This was a hell of a prosecutor.



She was a first-rate person and in the Senate, she was really good. I wouldn't have picked her unless I thought she was qualified to be the President," Biden said.

Harris, 59, was the first black South Asian American woman to be elected as US Vice-President in

2020. Biden's remarks on Harris came amidst growing calls for the 81-year-old to step aside from the race for the White House in November since he stumbled through a TV debate with his Republican rival Donald Trump last month.

## Russian medical team members injured in explosion in Syria

AGENCIES  
DAMASCUS, JULY 12

An explosive device detonated when a Russian medical team was assisting at a medical centre in the northeastern Syrian province of Hasakah, leaving several injured, including a Russian officer, sources told the media.

The incident occurred during the Russian medical team's regular visit to the centre to provide medical aid for local communities, said the source on Thursday on condition of anonymity.

The explosion resulted in injuries to several individuals, including a Russian officer who sustained

minor wounds, a Russian translator, a Syrian translator, and a civilian, the source noted.

Additionally, two cars belonging to the medical team were damaged, and the medical centre's windows were shattered in the explosion, Xinhua news agency reported.

The motive behind the attack remains unclear.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported the incident, saying a Russian soldier, a translator, and a civilian were injured as an improvised explosive device went off in an ambulance belonging to the Russian forces near the Al-Lulua Medical Centre in Al-Hasakah city.

## UN projects world's population to peak within this century

AGENCIES  
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 12

The United Nations has released a report projecting that the global population will peak this century.

According to the World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results, it is expected that the world's population will peak in the mid-2080s, growing over the next 60 years from 8.2 billion people in 2024 to around 10.3 billion in the mid-2080s, and then returning to around 10.2 billion by the end of the century, Xinhua news agency reported on Thursday.

The size of the world's population in 2100 is now expected to be six per

cent lower—or 700 million fewer—than anticipated a decade ago.

"The demographic landscape has evolved greatly in recent years," said Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

"In some countries, the birth rate is now even lower than previously anticipated, and we are also seeing slightly faster declines in some high-fertility regions."

"The earlier and lower peak is a hopeful sign. This could mean reduced environmental pressures from human impact due to lower aggregate consumption. However, slower population growth will not eliminate the

need to reduce the average impact attributable to the activities of each individual person," he noted.

The earlier population peak is due to several factors, including lower levels of fertility in some of the world's largest countries. Globally, women are having one child fewer on average, than they did around 1990, according to the report.

In more than half of all countries and areas, the average number of live births per woman is below 2.1—the level required for a population to maintain a constant size over the long term without migration—and nearly a fifth of all countries and areas now have "ultra-low" fertility, with fewer than 1.4

live births per woman over a lifetime.

Early pregnancies remain a challenge, particularly in low-income countries.

In 2024, 4.7 million babies, or about 3.5 per cent of the total worldwide, were born to mothers under the age of 18. Of these, some 340,000 were born to children under the age of 15, with serious consequences for the health and well-being of both the young mothers and their children.

The report found that investing in the education of young people, especially girls, and increasing the age of marriage and first childbearing in countries where these have an early onset will have posi-

tive outcomes for women's health, educational attainment, and labour force participation. These efforts will also contribute to slowing population growth and reducing the scale of the investments required to achieve sustainable development while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Over the past three decades, mortality rates have decreased and life expectancy has increased significantly.

After a brief decline during the Covid-19 pandemic, global life expectancy at birth is rising again, reaching 73.3 years in 2024, up from 70.9 years during the pandemic. By the late 2050s, more than half of all

global deaths will occur at the age of 80 or higher, a substantial increase from 17 per cent in 1995.

By the late 2070s, the number of persons aged 65 years or older is projected to surpass the number of children (under the age of 18), while the number of persons at the age of 80 and higher is projected to be larger than the number of infants (under the age of one) already by the mid-2030s.

Even in countries that are still growing rapidly and have a relatively young population, the number of persons aged 65 years or older is expected to rise over the next 30 years, according to the report.

## Pakistan seeks balance between resources, population size for economic growth: PM

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD, JULY 12

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that his country needs to strike a balance between resources and population size to stimulate economic growth, enhance living standards, and alleviate poverty.

In order to create an environment where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive, Pakistan must effectively manage population growth, considering the diverse needs and challenges of a growing population, the Prime Minister said in his message on World Population Day being observed here on Thursday.

He added that the population of Pakistan, currently estimated at more than



240 million, is experiencing a high growth rate of 2.55 per cent, adding that the country's population is projected to reach 263 million by 2030 and 383 million by 2050, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We are committed to ensuring that every individual, community, and voice from across Pakistan is taken into consideration in our policies and programs through inclu-

sive data, as it enables us to identify the areas where we need to focus our efforts, ranging from healthcare and education to economic opportunities and social protection," he said.

Talking about the huge youth bulge of Pakistan, with more than 65 per cent of the population being under 30 years of age, the Prime Minister noted that the demographic composi-

tion presents both opportunities and challenges for the country.

"On the one hand, the youth of Pakistan hold immense potential to drive economic growth, innovation, and social progress. On the other hand, the large youth population also poses challenges in terms of education, employment, and social integration," he said.

Sharif added that Pakistan is fully committed to its endeavours of providing quality education and skills training to this young generation to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy, adding that the government is creating sufficient job opportunities for the youth to harness their potential and turn this youth bulge into an asset.

AGENCIES  
TOKYO, JULY 12

A US Air Force member in Japan's island prefecture of Okinawa pleaded not guilty on Friday to charges of allegedly kidnapping a girl under the age of 16 and committing nonconsensual sexual intercourse in December last year, local media reported.

At his first hearing at the Naha District Court, Brennan Washington, 25, said, "I'm not guilty," asserting he is innocent of the charges, Kyodo News said.

The case came to light in late June, around three months after his indictment, as local police decided not to disclose the incident. The decision has inflamed strong and

long-existing opposition to the US military presence in the prefecture, reported Xinhua news agency.

According to the indictment dated March 27, the US serviceman allegedly invited the girl to speak to him in his car at a park in the village of Yomitan on December 24, 2023, and drove her to his residence before committing indecent acts such as kissing and touching the lower half of the girl's body with the knowledge that she was under 16.

Washington was handed over to Japanese authorities following the indictment but was released after posting bail and is currently in US custody, according to the Okinawa prefectural government.

Just days after Washington's case came to light, it was revealed that a US Marine had been arrested in May on suspicion of attempted rape resulting in injury. The case was also not made public by the police at the time, citing the victim's privacy.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry was aware of the two incidents but refrained from providing the information to the Okinawa prefectural government, taking the police's decision into account, the report said.

In the wake of the revelations of these sex crimes involving US military personnel, the Japanese government earlier this month reviewed information-sharing arrangements with local governments, vowing to notify

municipalities of any crimes allegedly committed by US military members "without exception," the report added.

Okinawa hosts 70 per cent of all the US military bases in Japan while accounting for only 0.6 per cent of the country's total land area. Crimes committed by US service members and nonmilitary personnel have been a constant source of grievance for locals.

The rape of a 12-year-old Okinawa schoolgirl by three US servicemen in 1995 prompted a wave of public outrage. Other cases include the rape and murder of a 20-year-old woman in 2016 by a former US base worker who was later sentenced to life in prison, according to Kyodo News.

## Nepal: Over 60 missing after landslide sweeps away buses

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU, JULY 12

Heavy rains caused a landslide in Nepal on Friday, sweeping two buses into a river and leaving more than 60 people missing, according to the authorities.

Residents discovered three persons, who had managed to escape the disaster and swim to shore, and sent them to a nearby hospital for treatment, Kathmandu Post reported.

Local authorities said search and rescue crews were on the scene hunting for additional survivors.



There were 41 people on the bus from Kathmandu to Gaur and 24 people on the bus from Birgunj to Kathmandu. Both buses and people have gone missing in the Trishuli River, according to police spokesman Dan

Bahadur Karki.

"We are not sure of the total number because the buses could have picked up others on the road," he said.

"The river has swollen and no one else has been found yet."

## African people support Russia, Putin, admits top EU diplomat

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JULY 12

EU's top diplomat Josep Borell has admitted there is a high level of support for Russian President Vladimir Putin among African nations and people, as he stressed the need to augment information warfare capabilities to win the battle for perception.

"In Africa, people support Putin. They say Putin saved Donbass," Borell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said at the NATO Public Forum on

Thursday, RT reported.

His remarks came amid closer ties between Russia and various African nations in several fields, including security. Some West African nations have ended their counter-terrorism security agreements with Western nations and turned to Russia for assistance.

He called for a new approach to defence, focusing on information warfare rather than traditional military tactics.

"We need a different army. We need people watching the network and people explaining what is going on, reprogramming

the listeners, giving them the correct information, in order to prevent intervention in electoral processes," he maintained.

Borell, who was in Washington to participate in NATO's 75th anniversary summit, contended that it was important to focus on the "information battle", conducted not on a physical battlefield but within the people's minds.

"We don't need to drop bombs or deploy tanks; we need to disseminate news and occupy cyberspace. The EU is very active in this area," he claimed.

## South Korea vows to strengthen solidarity with France

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 12

South Korea's Defence Minister Shin Won-sik vowed Friday to strengthen solidarity with France and other countries that share common values at an event commemorating France's national day, his office said.

Shin made the pledge during the Bastille Day ceremony organised by the French Embassy in Seoul and the French Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Sebitseom artificial islands on the Han River in Seoul, according to the ministry.

This year's Bastille Day

falls on Sunday.

"The Republic of Korea is serving as a bulwark to defend the free world against forces that attempt to change the status quo by force, and (we) will further strengthen solidarity with value-sharing countries, such as France, to protect the peace and stability of the free world," he said, according to his office, reported Yonhap news agency.

Shin also hailed the service of French troops who took part in the 1950-53 Korean War, including the late Capt. Robert Goupil, as part of UN forces that backed South Korea.

## India equity capital markets raise \$29.5 bn in 2024 1st half, M&A activity hits \$37.3 bn

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

The India equity capital markets (ECM) hit a record high and raised \$29.5 billion in the first half this year, up 144.9 per cent compared to a year ago, a report has said, as follow-on public offers (FPOs) saw stupendous growth.

Initial public offerings (IPO) from Indian companies raised \$4.4 billion, up 97.8 per cent compared to the same period last year, and the number of IPOs jumped 70.6 per cent year-on-year, according to data shared by LSEG Deals Intelligence.



"Follow-on offerings, which accounted for 85 per cent of India's overall ECM proceeds, raised \$25.1 billion, up 155.7 per cent from a year ago, while the number of follow-on offerings grew 56.4 per cent year-on-year," the report mentioned. ECM issuance from India's industrial sector accounted for the majority of the nation's ECM activity with a 21.4 per cent market share worth

\$6.3 billion in proceeds, a 96.2 per cent increase from a year ago.

"Private equity investments in India saw a marked improvement in the second quarter of 2024, as the sum of equity invested amounted to \$3.6 billion, a 75 per cent sequential increase from the first quarter of 2024," said Elaine Tan, senior manager, LSEG Deals Intelligence.

India remains a critical market for deploying private equity capital, accounting for at least 22 per cent of Asia Pacific's sum of equity invested during the first half of 2024 compared to 19 per

cent market share from the first half of last year, Tan added.

Meanwhile, overall Indian mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity during the first half of 2024 grew 4.4 per cent in deal value to \$37.3 billion compared to the same period last year, according to Tan.

The majority of the deal-making activity involving India targeted the high technology sector which totalled \$5.8 billion, a 13.2 per cent increase in value from the comparative period last year and accounted for 15.6 per cent market share.

## India's industrial production posts 5.9 pc growth in May

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose by 5.9 per cent in May this year, compared to the same month last year, and accelerating from 5 per cent in April, data released by the Ministry of Statistics on Friday showed.

The growth rates of the mining, manufacturing, and electricity sectors of the index stood at 6.6 per cent, 4.6 per cent and 13.7 per cent, respectively, in May 2024 compared to the same month last year.

Within the manufacturing sector, the growth rate of the top three positive



contributors to the growth of IIP for the month of May 2024 is "Manufacture of basic metals" (7.8 per cent), "Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products" (7.5 per cent), and "Manufacture of electrical equipment" (14.7 per cent), according

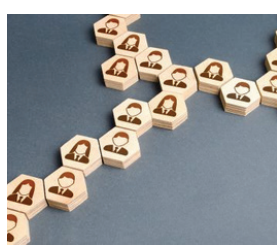
to the official figures. Data on use-based classification shows that the output of consumer durables such as refrigerators, washing machines and TVs surged by 12.3 per cent which is a positive sign of demand for these goods picking up in a growing economy.

## Flexi staffing industry rose over 15 pc, 220K flexible jobs created in FY24: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Flexi staffing industry increased 15.3 per cent (year-on-year) in the previous fiscal (FY24), up from 14 per cent, and about 220,000 flexible jobs were created, a new report has shown.

According to the Indian Staffing Federation's (ISF) Annual Employment Trends 2024 report, the staffing industry kept on demonstrating quarter-on-quarter growth of 2.3 per cent in the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24, adding 30,000 new flexi



employment opportunities. The federation mentioned that the total flexi workforce employed by ISF members grew to about 166,000 during the financial year. "The market witnessed a significant improvement across most sectors," ISF

President Lohit Bhatia said.

"The sectors that contributed to the growth were e-commerce, logistics and manufacturing along with healthcare, retail and energy," he added.

Moreover, the report mentioned that the growth in general flexi staffing (excluding IT flexi staffing) was fuelled by sustained demand in sectors such as FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), e-commerce, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, logistics, banking and energy.

## Automobile sales jump in Q1 FY25 over economic growth, rural demand: SIAM

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Riding on overall economic growth, especially in the rural markets, the Indian automobile industry saw a robust performance across all segments in the first quarter of the current fiscal (FY25), including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers, and two-wheelers, data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said on Friday.

In the passenger vehicles segment, sales surpassed one million units in Q1 FY25 for the first time.



According to SIAM, sales grew by 3 per cent compared to the same period last year, reaching a total of 1,026,006 units. The growth was driven primarily by utility vehicles, which saw an 18 per cent increase, and even vans, which rose by 9.2

per cent. The two-wheeler segment also experienced substantial growth, with sales rising by 20.4 per cent to nearly five million units. Scooters led this charge with an impressive 28.2 per cent growth, while

motorcycles and mopeds also posted significant increases.

The three-wheeler segment saw a 14.2 per cent growth, reaching 165,081 units, the highest ever for Q1, driven by both passenger carriers and goods carriers.

"The automotive sector shows resilience and adaptability, and is poised to continue its upward trajectory benefiting from both domestic demand recovery and favourable export conditions," said SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal, citing positive monsoon forecasts and the festive season as potential growth drivers.

Commercial vehicles also showed positive momentum with a 3.5 per cent increase in sales, totalling 224,209 units.

In June, the Indian auto industry produced 2,336,255 units of passenger vehicles.

When it comes to exports, passenger vehicle exports grew significantly by 18.6 per cent over the April-June period, with utility vehicles contributing a substantial 40.2 per cent.

"The export of M&HCVs and LCVs grew by 11.3 per cent and 6.3 per cent respectively," the report noted.

## Peak XV Partners opens applications for 10th cohort of 'Surge' programme in India

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Venture capital and growth investing firm Peak XV Partners, on Friday, announced that the application is now open for the 10th cohort of its rapid scale-up programme for early-stage companies 'Surge', which will begin in October in India.

The company also announced about the development in a post on X and mentioned that the applications for this cohort will close on August 15, and the programme will conclude in the US in October.

"If you are building in



AI - from anywhere in the world - and looking to raise a seed round, we would love to hear from you," said Rajan Anandan,

MD, Peak XV, and Surge. The firm also revealed its AI portfolio of 28 companies. These companies are

across the AI tech stack including Sarvam.ai and Consequent AI in foundation models, Atlan and RedBrick AI in AI tooling and infrastructure, Invideo and Pix.ai in consumer and prosumer AI, Gan.AI, Aampe, Relevance AI in enterprise AI, and Arintra and Attentive in vertical AI, among others, according to the company.

Moreover, the company mentioned that the ninth cohort of Surge was notable for its focus on AI and deep tech, with 10 out of the 13 startups specialising in advanced manufacturing, quantum computing, climate tech, health tech, and more.

## Sensex closes at all-time high, tech stocks lead rally

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, JULY 12

Indian equity benchmarks closed in the green following a rally in IT stocks on Friday.

At closing, the Sensex was 622 points or 0.78 per cent, at 80,519 and Nifty was 186 points or 0.77 per cent, at 24,502.

During the day, the Sensex and Nifty both made new all-time highs of 80,893 and 24,592 respectively.

The market was mainly driven by tech stocks.

The share price of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) surged to a high 6.6 per cent after being the first major IT firm to report its June quarter results for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) on Thursday.



Other tech stocks, including Tech Mahindra, Infosys, and HCL Tech also showed positive momentum due to the result.

Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities said, "The sentiment looks positive from here, as the indicators and popular overlays indicate a continuation of strength.

"Support is visible at

24,400. The buy-on-dips strategy should favour the street until Nifty falls below 24,400. On the higher end, the current rally might extend towards 24,800."

Trading in midcap and smallcap remained snubbed as compared to largecap.

The Nifty Midcap 100 index closed at 57,173, up

25 points or 0.04 per cent, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 index closed at 18,949, up 29 points or 0.16 per cent.

Apart from IT stocks, Pharma, FMCG, and energy index were top gainers.

PSU Bank, Realty, and PSE index were major laggards. Vaibhav Vidwani, Research Analyst at Bonanza Portfolio said, "Inflation cooled more than expected. US CPI rose 3 per cent year-on-year in June 2024 versus a forecast of 3.1 per cent. This news made investors change their investment approach.

"The market is optimistic that this improvement in inflation could lead the Federal Reserve to start easing monetary policy by this September."

## Vizhinjam Port a perfect example of PM Modi's 'Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047' vision: Karan Adani

AGENCIES  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 12

Vizhinjam Port is a perfect example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's triple focus - Ports for Prosperity, Ports for Progress and Ports for Productivity - Karan Adani, Managing Director of Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd (APSEZ) said on Friday, adding that the company has fulfilled the promise to convert Vizhinjam into a world-class port. Addressing the gathering after officially receiving the first mother-ship at the country's first trans-shipment port near Kovalam Beach in Kerala, Karan Adani said that every aspect that they had planned for "is coming together".

"We are privileged to have been given this opportunity to use our expertise to transform this part of India, in line

with 'Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047', our Prime Minister's vision for the maritime sector," said the Adani Ports Managing Director.

He said that today is the day when a 33-year-old dream has finally come true for "Vizhinjam, for Kerala and for India".

The company has already created over 2,000 direct and indirect jobs in construction, operations and other segments and now, with these wide-ranging developments, "we will create more than 5,500 additional direct and indirect employment opportunities right here in Vizhinjam".

On Thursday, 'San Fernando', a vessel of the world's second-largest shipping company Maersk, arrived at the port country with over 2,000 containers on it.

With the arrival of the first mother-ship, Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port



has catapulted India into the world port business as globally this port will rank 6th or 7th.

Speaking in the presence of Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, and state Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Karan Adani said that 'San Fernando', is a symbol of a new, glorious achievement in Indian maritime history.

"It is a messenger that will tell the world that India's first automated container transshipment port and largest deepwa-

ter port has begun commercial operations," said Karan Adani.

In 1991, when this port project was first announced, Vizhinjam was just another village with ordinary prospects.

"At that time, no one could have imagined that it would become a world-class port - and, let me tell you in all humility, this port is going to be one of the world's top destinations for global container shipping," he noted.

The 300-metre-long San Fernando, operated by Maersk which is one of the world's leaders in shipping and logistics, is the first commercial container cargo vessel to call at this port.

"We can all be confident that this ship is just the first of many thousands of very large container ships that will berth in this port in the years ahead," Karan Adani noted.

He extended his deep gratitude on behalf of the Adani Group to Chief Minister Vijayan and Union Minister Sonowal, along with the state and central governments.

"The people of Kerala are known for their resilience, intellect and progressive outlook. To the world, Keralites or Malayalis represent educated human capital. That gives us the confidence that the people of Kerala want this port to be a global leader - a port that will become a beacon of progress and prosperity for Kerala and beyond," Karan Adani emphasised.

As soon as the Adani Group receives the environmental clearance and other regulatory approvals, the company will begin work immediately on the port's remaining phases - and this could begin as early as October this year.

## Samsung participates in US biotech company's \$277 million investment

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 12

Samsung Electronics said on Friday it has participated in a Series D investment round for the US biotech company Element Biosciences as a strategic investor, expecting to create synergy in the potential medical and digital health care sectors.

Samsung Electronics joins other investors, including Fidelity and Foresite Capital, in the US company's \$277 million Series D round, reports Yonhap news agency.

The South Korean tech giant said the investment will help it explore new business opportunities in a wide range of fields, from medical devices to digital health, by combining Element Bioscience's DNA analysis technology



with its AI capabilities, medical devices and digital health technologies.

"Their products set a new industry standard and are foundational to the next wave of biological innovation," said Vice Chairman Han Jong-hee of Samsung. "We are incredibly excited about Element's vision to make

precision medicine affordable and are impressed with the team they built together."

Founded in 2017, Element Bioscience is known for disruptive DNA sequencing and multi-omics technologies for the research market. It posted \$25 million in sales last year.

## James Anderson bows out on a high as England thrash West Indies by an innings and 114 runs

AGENCIES  
LONDON, JULY 12

Veteran fast-bowler James Anderson bowed out of international cricket on a high as England thrashed the West Indies by an innings and 114 runs on Day 3 of the first Test at the iconic Lord's here on Friday. In his 188th and last Test before retiring from international duties for England, Anderson ended his tally at 704 wickets, the most taken by any fast bowler, in the format's history and four behind the late Shane Warne.

Debutant pacer Gus Atkinson ended his game with wonderful match figures of 12-106 as England took a 1-0 lead in the



Anderson if he held onto a return catch from Guda-

three-Test series. It might have been 705 scalps for

Anderson received another guard of honour from both England and West Indies players, as

he signed off from international cricket on a high after contributing to a Test win for the hosts. He will now take up a fast-bowling mentor role for England's rest of the Test summer.

The win at the Lord's was just England's fourth in this cycle of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle as they sit with 33 points and a points percentage of 25%.

They are level on points percentage with South Africa and Bangladesh in the bottom half of the standings.

Brief scores: England 371 (Zak Crawley 76; Jayden Seales 4-77) beat West Indies 121 & 136 in 47 overs (Gus Atkinson 5-61, James Anderson 3-32) by an innings and 114 runs

## Stokes being in same category alongside Kallis and Sobers is phenomenal achievement, says Hussain

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Former England captain Nasser Hussain said Ben Stokes being placed alongside Jacques Kallis and Sir Garfield Sobers in an exclusive all-rounders club of taking 200 wickets and scoring 6,000 runs in Test cricket is a phenomenal achievement for the side's current captain.

On day two of England's ongoing Test against the West Indies at Lord's, Stokes trapped West Indies batter Kirk McKenzie lbw to become just the third player after Sobers and Kallis to do the double of scalping 200 wickets and amassing 6,000 runs in Test cricket.

"Some that played against Sobers would tell you he was the best player

they had seen as a batter alone. Stokes being in that category alongside them is a phenomenal achievement and the fact he is bowling again is so positive for England, because it provides this team with balance," wrote Hussain in his column for Daily Mail.

Stokes, who made his Test debut in 2013, is now back to his full-fledged all-rounder duties for England after undergoing a successful knee surgery post the 2023 ODI World Cup. "At times last winter when he played as a specialist with the bat, he went into his shell a little bit.

"But when you've got two strings to your bow, there is a greater licence to attack and now he's back bowling, I don't think it will be long before we see

him replicating that positive intent of the past and scoring runs again - he's too good a player to keep down for long.

"More importantly, though, he adds something to the attack not just as a part-time, hold-up-and-end bowler but a genuine wicket taking option. How nice it has been to see him running in and delivering the ball without a grimace this week," added Hussain.

He also hopes for Stokes to not exert himself much while bowling and went on to explain how he causes problems for batters in Tests. "My only concern is that he doesn't overdo it. He bowled an eight-over spell in the first innings and trumped it with one of 10 on the second evening.

## Euro 2024: It will mean everything to England, says Seagraves ahead of their bid to win first title

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

England are on the hunt for their maiden European Championship and their first ever major tournament victory since the 1966 FIFA World Cup and hope to end the drought when they take on Spain in the final of the Euro 2024 in Munich on Sunday. The Three Lions' fans have been through it all and are eagerly waiting for the side to finally win an international trophy.

In an exclusive conversation with IANS, former English defender Mark Seagraves spoke on what it would mean to the country for them to finally bring the trophy home.

"It will mean everything to the country, we haven't won anything since 1966. You ask that to a Spanish player, 'Does England want it more than you?' Of course, they won't. The Spanish players will want it equally as much as the English players. Everyone on that pitch, everyone who sat on the bench and everyone who's in the stand will want their team to win and will have the



necessary oomph about themselves to do that," Seagraves told IANS.

England will be hoping to end the misery of their fans and finally get over the final hurdle. A lot of talk surrounds English forward Bukayo Saka after his heroics in the match against Switzerland, the 23-year-old missed a pen-

alty in the finals of the 2020 Euro Cup but saved his team from being eliminated in the quarterfinal with his first goal of this edition.

Alongside Saka, Seagraves also spoke about RB Leipzig midfielder Dani Olmo who has made a stellar name at the tournament having scored

three goals and provided two assists while averaging only 56.84 minutes per game.

"Are we going to keep talking about that? It's an experience that has gone, he's had so many games since for Arsenal and for England let's look at what he does on the field, and what he does on the field for England is fantastic. He's played in so many different positions for England just in the tournament and he's been really good and knows that missing a penalty is irrelevant," he added.

"He wasn't as popular before Pedri got injured because he wasn't in the team. I like Dani Olmo. I've seen him play on lots of occasions in the Bundesliga this year he's got a goal in him. He's technically very gifted. There's no doubting his ability. Absolutely, he's fantastic. But somewhere along the line, these managers who work with him, you know, are not as vociferous in that because they don't start him. But I'm sure he'll start on Sunday," concluded Seagraves

## MLC: Washington Freedom edge Seattle Orcas by five wickets in a low-scoring thriller

AGENCIES  
DALLAS, JULY 12

Washington Freedom edged out Seattle Orcas by five wickets in a tense low-scoring match of the 2024 Major League Cricket at Grand Prairie Stadium, Dallas on Thursday.

Lockie Ferguson (4/26) and Saurabh Netravalkar (3/18) shared seven wickets between them to bundle out Seattle Orcas to 124 in 19.4 overs. Lahiru Milantha (33\* off 30) and Obus Pienaar (31\* off 30) then anchored a crucial unbeaten 63-run partnership to guide Washington Freedom past their 125-run target with 10 balls to spare.

With this win, Washington Freedom moved to the top of the points table with five points from three matches, remaining the only unbeaten team in the tournament thus far.

Seattle Orcas came out firing to defend a low total of 125 runs. Imad Wasim removed the dangerous Travis Head for a duck on the second ball of the innings, ending the over with a wicket maiden. Steve Smith and Rachin



Ravindra then looked to rebuild with the counter-attack. They scored as many as 18 runs in the third over. Ravindra looked dangerous with the bat, but Nandre Burger dismissed him in the fifth over for 26 off 16 balls, which included three boundaries and two sixes. Smith (12 off 13) followed him back to the pavilion in the following over, leaving the Orcas at 47/3 after six overs.

Both Mukhtar Ahmed and Glenn Maxwell were given lifelines with dropped catches but couldn't capitalise on them. Ahmed (8 off 8) was dismissed by Burger in the eighth over, and Maxwell (10 off 11) fell to Harmeet, leaving their team struggling at 68/5 after 10 overs.

Despite the dire situa-

tion, Washington Freedom batters Lahiru Milantha and Obus Pienaar showed resilience as they cautiously approached the target. They helped Washington reach the 100-run mark in the 16th over, reducing the equation to 23 runs needed off 24 balls. Milantha (33\* off 30) and Pienaar (31\* off 30) constructed a match-winning partnership to help their side get past the winning line.

Earlier in the contest, the Seattle Orcas had a shaky start to their innings. Nauman Anwar was dismissed cheaply for 3 off 9 balls by Saurabh Netravalkar in the second over. The Seattle batters struggled to accelerate on the slow batting track, managing only 35 runs in the Powerplay. Ryan Rick-

elton also fell for 4 off 11 balls to Lockie Ferguson in the sixth over.

Quinton de Kock (24 off 19) failed to build on his start and was bowled by Ferguson in the eighth over, with Seattle struggling at 44/3 after eight overs.

Heinrich Klaasen and Shubham Ranjane carefully constructed a crucial partnership that steadied Seattle's innings. However, Ranjane (12 off 17) was unfortunately run out on the first ball of the 14th over. Klaasen, batting as if on a different surface, completed his fifty in just 29 balls but was immediately caught by Mukhtar Ahmed at long-off off Marco Jansen in the 15th over. His crucial innings, which included four fours and three sixes, helped Seattle cross the 100-run mark in the 15th over.

Meanwhile, the Washington bowlers didn't allow the following batters to score big. Ferguson took two wickets in the 17th over, finishing his spell with four wickets. He removed Imad Wasim (4 off 6) and Hammad Azam (4 off 9) in his last over.

## Copa America: CONMEBOL opens investigation into clash between Uruguay players and Colombia fans

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Ahead of the Copa America final, CONMEBOL, the South American Football Confederation, has launched an investigation into the altercation between Uruguay players and Colombia fans that occurred after semifinal match on Wednesday.

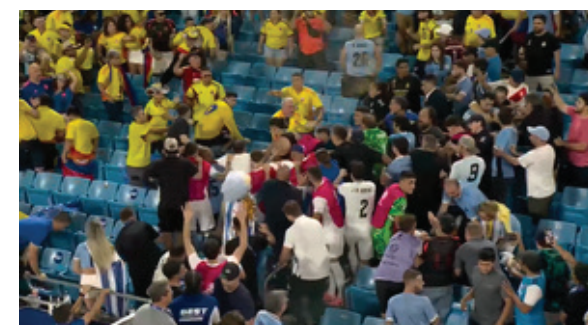
Following Uruguay's

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, broke out in a section of the stadium where many family members of the Uruguay players were

seated. A number of Uruguayan players including the striker Darwin Nunez 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.

"The Disciplinary committee of CONMEBOL has



opened an investigation to understand the sequence

of events and the responsibilities of those involved

in the acts of violence that occurred at the end of the match between the national teams of Uruguay and Colombia," read a statement from South American football's governing body as quoted by The Athletic.

"On the eve of the final of Copa America, we want to reaffirm and warn that no action will be tolerated that tarnishes this global

football celebration, which involves both the players and the fans present in the stadium, and which will be watched by hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide. "It is unacceptable that an incident like this turns passion into violence. Therefore, no behavior that harms the sporting competition and the most beautiful spectacle in the world, which

belongs to the entire football family, will be tolerated," it added. The 10-man Colombia beat Uruguay 1-0 and qualified for the Copa America final, where on Sunday they 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.

## 'Hockey India gave me a chance to rebuild my career', says Jarmanpreet ahead of his Olympic debut

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

In 2015, when Jarmanpreet Singh was picked by the Punjab franchise in the celebrated Hockey India League, the defender was touted as the next big thing in Indian hockey.

He was well on his way to playing for India at the Junior World Cup in 2016 which catapulted the careers of many of his peers including the current Indian Captain Harmanpreet Singh and mercurial forwards Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, midfielders Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit among others.

But a failed dope test



- a result of an injection administered by a medical practitioner in his home town for lower back pain - caused him two precious years in his budding career. While his peers subsequently went on to play for the Senior India

team, he had to endure the two-year ban - with the future looking bleak in hockey.

Fast-forward to 2024, he is on his way to making his maiden appearance at the Olympic Games - a quest he credits to his innate

quality of being persistent. "It was not easy. It was one of my darkest phases, with many uncertainties. Players don't usually emerge from a setback like this. To sit out of matches for two years is a big gap in the sport," recalled Jarmanpreet, who is now an officer with the Income Tax.

"But I was persistent and I knew I had to bounce back. I don't think I could have done this without a strong domestic structure where I could show the selectors that I still had it in me. In 2018, after the Hockey India Senior Men National Championship, I was among the 50 proba-

bles in the camp. Hockey India gave me a chance to rebuild my career.

"I was selected for the national program for senior men where I was given an opportunity to catch up with my peers and make my Senior India debut. They saw that potential in me and I didn't give up on my dream to play for India at the Olympic Games," expressed Jarmanpreet.

Now in Switzerland where the team is going through a mental conditioning camp, Jarmanpreet is excited and eager to experience his first outing in the prestigious quadrennial event.

## Shaheen Afridi is likely to miss Bangladesh Tests due to birth of his first child

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Pakistan pacer Shaheen Afridi is likely to miss the upcoming Test series against Bangladesh due to the birth of his first child with his wife Ansha Afridi.

Pakistan Test head coach Jason Gillespie confirmed the news and added that the pacer's participation in the home two-match series is not confirmed yet.

"Shaheen can miss Bangladesh Test matches due to childbirth. We can give him (some) rest if he wants to stay with his wife till then," Geo News quoted Gillespie as saying.

Pakistan are scheduled



to host Bangladesh in Rawalpindi and Karachi, commencing on August 21.

Shaheen and his wife Ansha got married in September last year at the Zakaria Mosque in Karachi. The wedding ceremony was attended by Pakistani stars including captain Babar Azam

and former cricketers including Misbah-ul-Haq, Saeed Anwar, Sohail Khan, and Tanveer Ahmed and others. The speedster has been under the radar after reports emerged that he misbehaved with batting coach Mohammad Yousuf during Pakistan's tour to England, just before the T20 World Cup 2024.

Earlier, he was replaced by Babar as Pakistan's white-ball captain in March following their 4-1 T20I series defeat against New Zealand.

In the aftermath of that incident, he reportedly turned down Pakistan's limited-overs vice-captain role ahead of the T20 World Cup.

## One-Day District Level Workshop on Panchayat Plan & MGNREGA Convergence held in Doda

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, JULY 12

The Department of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Doda organized a one-day district-level workshop focused on the convergence of the Panchayat Plan and MGNREGA at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Doda.

The event was supervised by Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, and aimed to enhance coordination between these key rural development initiatives to foster holistic development and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in rural areas.

The workshop was inaugurated by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Doda, Pran Singh, who highlighted the pivotal role of convergent Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) in promoting com-



prehensive rural development. Singh underscored the importance of integrating strategies to maximize the impact of developmental efforts at the grassroots level.

Nida Rafiq, a thematic expert from the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, provided an overview of

the process for preparing thematic area-wise GPDPs, addressing key issues, challenges, and strategies essential for their formulation in the Union Territory. She emphasized the crucial role of line departments in facilitating the creation of integrated GPDPs that align with local developmental needs and

priorities.

During the workshop, Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Doda, Manesh Kumar, presented on the integration of UT-funded schemes with GPDPs and highlighted the administrative department's role in ensuring seamless implementation and monitoring. The event was attended by various officials, including Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Manoj Kumar, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Musharif Haif, and other stakeholders from the district administration and line departments. The workshop concluded with a consensus on the imperative need for collaborative efforts and synchronized planning to accelerate rural development and effectively achieve the SDGs across the region.

## DDC B'la chairs meeting to review implementation of CSS-FPO, RIDF projects under Jal Shakti

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, JULY 12

District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today convened a meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLIC) at the DC office meeting hall to review the implementation of the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) Scheme and ongoing RIDF (Rural Infrastructure Development Fund) projects under the Jal Shakti Sector in the District Baramulla.

The meeting was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Qamar Sajad, Chief Planning Officer, Javaid Ahmad, Chief Agricultural Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, executive engineers, member Secy CSS-FPO, and other district-level officers.



At the outset, the chair was provided with a detailed briefing on the physical and financial progress of various projects under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) tranches 24, 25, and 26, executed by the Jal Shakti Department.

The DDC emphasized the importance of these projects for the community and directed all the concerned executing agencies

to intensify their efforts, instructing them to ensure that the projects are completed on time and commissioned for public use.

Minga Sherpa further instructed the officers to proactively identify and eliminate any obstacles that might be hindering the progress of the ongoing works and ensure that the projects stay on track and meet their scheduled deadlines.

The meeting also conducted a comprehensive review of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), which is a centrally sponsored scheme to create 10,000 FPOs across the country. The meeting covered its health, the status of saturation, and other aspects related to the implementation of the scheme in the district.

Strategies to saturate the scheme by holding workshops at block level, connecting the FPOs to the market linkage, capacity building, process and value addition, and other methods were also discussed during the meeting.

The ADDC instructed all stakeholders and executing agencies to collaborate effectively to ensure the successful implementation of the scheme, as it serves as a significant source of employment.

## Advisor Bhatnagar reviews performance of School Education Dept

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat to review the performance of School Education Department (SED) as well as assess the progress achieved in implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) like Samagra Shiksha, PM-POSHAN, New India Literacy Program and PM-SHRI across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary SED, Alok Kumar; Secretary JKBOSE, Director SED Jammu/Kashmir, Project Director Samagra Shiksha, Special Secretary SED and other senior officers of the department.

During the meeting, Advisor Bhatnagar examined the department's achievements and challenges in improving education outcomes, infrastructure development, teacher training and overall



performance of the schools. He also analysed the department's progress in enhancing student enrollment, improving learning outcomes and promoting inclusive education across J&K.

The Advisor further assessed the department's efforts in implementing innovative programs and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education.

Speaking during the meeting, Advisor Bhatnagar called upon the department to focus on strengthening infrastructure with due upgradation in technology and enhance capacity building of teachers so that students receive quality education. He also stressed the need for effective monitor-

ing and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

While reviewing different aspects of SED, the Advisor called upon both the Directors to increase the retention rate in schools besides required infrastructure should be upgraded as per the consolidation of schools. He urged upon all the stakeholders to maintain close synergy so that desired results are achieved from this plan.

He also called upon both the Directors for placement of sufficient teachers in hard zone areas so that desired Pupil-Teacher ratio is met.

The Advisor further delved upon the officers to prepare a holistic plan for

development of particular sports in each school in consultation with Youth Services and Sports department so that students can be provided an opportunity of excelling in their sport of interest also. He asked them to prepare a sports infrastructure database of each school so that required facilities can be established in these schools.

Analysing the infrastructure status of schools, Advisor Bhatnagar made out that the timely utilisation of funds is paramount for successful completion of projects being executed under various schemes. He called upon the officers to complete all projects within set timelines.

The Advisor, in the meeting, also took stock of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. He asked the officers to make the child friendly furniture as well as ECCE kits available in all identified schools.

The Advisor also reviewed the functioning of

Vidya Samiksha Kendra in the meeting. He called upon the officers to make this Kendra fully functional so that the desired outcomes are met.

During the meeting, Advisor Bhatnagar also discussed Human Resource Management issues of the department. He called upon the officers to hold regular DPCs for the smooth career progression of teachers and lecturers. He also directed the officers to refer vacant posts to recruiting agencies immediately.

Advisor Bhatnagar, during the meeting, reiterated the UT Administration's commitment to transforming the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that education is a key priority area and administration is dedicated to providing quality education to all, especially in rural and far-flung areas. He assured the department of his full support and guidance in achieving their goals.

## JKEDI holds 'Idea Generation Workshop' for students of Women's College Gandhi Nagar Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Friday conducted an "Idea Generation Workshop" for 100 students of Govt College for Women (GCW), Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The workshop was conducted under J&K Startup Policy 2024-27 here at Bari Brahmna campus of the institute.

The workshop aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship saw an enthusiastic participation from students of the Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. During the workshop various aspects to be considered while starting out sustainable and scalable businesses, were highlighted.

"The institute is actively involving the youth under J&K Startup Policy and the response has been quite satisfactory. Students received valuable insight as to how to think and generate ideas for startups," said Director JKEDI, Rajinder Kumar Sharma.

The Idea Generation Workshop began with the session by the team of the Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Business Modelling (CIIBM), a program vertical of JKEDI encouraging the participant students to think of the various problems faced by the society.

The team comprising Zahid Ali Dar and Sorab Mengi spoke about generating ideas that would be viable as businesses and encouraged students to think about uniqueness, feasibility and competi-

tion as well. It was an interactive session where 100 students from GCW Gandhi Nagar Jammu participated and made it a fun workshop. Some students shared their ideas and a professional discussion over the steps to take an idea to a business took place over the same. The participants were guided through various exercises and activities designed to stimulate their creative thinking and idea generation skills. The workshop aimed to provide a platform for students to explore their entrepreneurial potential and develop innovative solutions to real world problems.

"It was a great learning experience for us and an exciting experience for everybody present here," a participant student said

## Auto / e-Rickshaw Drivers to face action for Overcharging, overloading: Warns RTO Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 12

Motor Vehicles Department today warned the Auto/e-Rickshaw drivers of punitive action if they overcharge commuters and refuse to ply as per notified fare and functional fare meter.

During the drive, enforcement wing informed the drivers that the department would come down hard on errant auto drivers if any such violations found on ground, which might also lead to cancellation of RCs of their vehicles or even cancellation of their Driving Licenses.

The department has carried out regular such drives on the special directions of Higher Authorities, after receiving series of complaints regarding overcharging during ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Speaking on the occasion Regional Transport Officer Jammu, Pankaj Bhagotra said "We are determined to regulate plying of auto/e-rickshaw. Department will take action against those drivers who refuse to ply by the Fare Meter besides refusal to ply or misbehav-



ing with commuters will also attract penalty as per license condition.

He further added that Department is determined/committed to bring discipline on the roads so the auto/e-Rickshaw drivers are also directed to be courteous with commuters," he said.

The officials of enforcement wing of transport department will ensure that auto/e-Rickshaws ply their vehicles as per guidelines issued by Transport Department particularly regarding Fare. In this regard the enforcement

wing is keeping a close vigil as per Order issued by higher authorities of Transport department vide No.78-TC of 2024 under endorsement No. TCJK-ESTB/2024/2301-31 J&K regarding the Fare to be charged from commuters for e-Rickshaws during ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra for the convenience of the yatries.

The enforcement Drive was carried out under the direct supervision of RTO Jammu, Pankaj Bhagotra at different locations viz Bhagwat Nagar, Tawi 4th Bridge, Near Railway Sta-

tion & Zorawar Chowk. As many as 260 vehicles were checked during the drive out of which 97 Auto/e-Rickshaws were e-challaned for offences pertaining to overcharging, overloading and deficiency of documents. One e-Rickshaw was seized for being plied by an underage driver and handed over to In-Charge Police Post Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. The other team members comprised of ARTO (Hqr) Rehana Tabassam, MVIs Vikas Srivats & Jagandeep Singh and MVTA Tarunot Singh.

## Ensure top-notch arrangements for celebration of Independence Day: Div Com Kashmir

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 12

Corresponding to the celebration of forthcoming Independence Day with enthusiasm, patriotism & gaiety, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Friday chaired a high level meeting to ensure befitting arrangements for the observance of national festival and Flag hoisting ceremony. The meeting was attended by Commissioner SMC/CEO SSCL; Deputy Commissioners of all Districts; Director Colleges, officers of Health, Floriculture, School Education, Information, Hospitality & Protocol, Government Medical College, SKIMS, RDD, PHE, PDD, R&B, AACL, UEED, YSS, SRTC, Transport, Fire & Emergency, Forest Protection, Sports Council and other departments.

While from security departments, the meeting was attended by IGP Kashmir Zone, DIG CRK, DIG Armed, SSPs and senior officers of CRPF, BSF and other agencies.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com underlined the importance of top-notch arrangements to



exhibit colorful display to celebrate national event.

On the occasion, he asked the security & other departments to prepare their parade contingent and begin the practice in advance.

He directed concerned officers of the School Education Department for deputing the students for parade contingent training well in time for synchronizing the practice with other contingents.

Similarly, he instructed concerned departments for deployment of band contingents and upgrading the presentation.

Also, Div Com asked officers of Cultural, Education & Sports departments for making arrangements for the presentation of cultural programmes to enthral the participants & guests.

SRTC was asked to make the arrangements

of vehicles for the participants while the Hospitality & Protocol department was directed to make arrangements for providing refreshment to all participants.

The Floriculture Department was asked to decorate the stage with flowers of different colors for enhancing the vibrancy besides spraying of flower petals while hoisting the National Flag.

Regarding the live commentary of the event, Div Com directed officers of Information, Radio & Police departments to depute the expert officers one each for the assigned job.

Div Com directed concerned for making proper seating arrangement for participants besides ensuring drinking water facility and availability of uninterrupted electricity. The Joint Director

Information was instructed to begin the conduct of Quiz & Essay writing competitions for students under the theme besides organise National Anthem singing competitions.

Moreover, Div Com directed CE, R&B for making the arrangement for installing LED Screens at the venue and providing a good quality sound system.

Regarding the traffic management, Div Com directed SSP Traffic Srinagar to execute a meticulous plan for the movement of vehicles bound to the venue.

Besides, Div Com asked all the officers to sensitize their staff for displaying proper posture when the National Anthem is being played while Flag hoisting.

Bidhuri also directed concerned for conducting sanitation drive at the venue to ensure cleanliness all around.

Later, Div Com visited Bakhshi Stadium to inspect the arrangements where he gave a slew of directions to the officers of various departments for smooth & successful celebration of Independence Day.