

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 sweating
- Disorientation
- Persistent vomiting
- Drop in body temperature
- Disorientation
- Stomach pain, pain in joints, or pain in chest
- Redness

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Start-ups emerged as new avenues of self-employment and sustainable livelihoods: Dr Jitendra Singh

JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR (J&K), JULY 14

“Rising above political considerations, everybody should contribute to accomplish national level developmental projects, said Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh here today.

Addressing a public meeting here, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the developmental projects brought by Prime Minister Narendra Modi do not belong to a particular leader or party, instead, they are for the benefit of the masses across



all sections. After being felicitated for winning the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Parliamentary constituency for a third time, he said, “Prime Minister Modi has

followed a policy of making available what is required where, rising above vote banks”, adding that therefore, everyone should offer their suggestions and give

inputs as to how these projects can be further improved and executed. If there is any ground on that, the administration will be instructed to make

the necessary rectifications”, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh appealed to the gathering that the developmental projects, including the Devika River Rejuvenation project, belong to each section of the society and the benefits will be used by children of every one.

Talking about the famous “kaladi” product of district Udhampur, the Union Minister informed that the milk-made consumable has already been identified for promotion under the One District One Product scheme of the government. Branding of kaldi is necessary to increase its acceptability and value”, he

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‘Hidden Terrorism’ trend emerges in J&K, security agencies on high alert

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 14

Security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir are grappling with what they call the “hidden threat” of “conservation and consolidation” tactics employed by infiltrating terrorists, which was evident in the recent ambushes and encounters in North Kashmir and Kathua district.

Analysing the ambushes and encounters with terrorists, officials in the know of the matter said while security agencies are on high alert, the lack of ground-level intelligence – human intelligence (HUMINT) – hampers operations.

Reliance on technical intelligence (TECHINT) has not been fruitful as

terrorists use online activity to mislead authorities. Officials feel that there is an urgent need for heightened surveillance to counter foreign terrorists, especially in the Jammu region.

The region, previously known for its peaceful atmosphere, has recently seen a surge in terror incidents, particularly in border districts such as Poonch, Rajouri, Doda and Reasi. Attacks on an IAF convoy, a pilgrim bus and the recent killing of soldiers in Kathua highlight the evolving threat.

Under the “conservation and consolidation” tactics, terrorists infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir but remain quiet initially, blend in with the local population and wait for

instructions from handlers in Pakistan before carrying out attacks, the officials said.

Though security agencies are on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir after uncovering the “conservation and consolidation” tactic of the infiltrating terrorists, the absence of on-ground intelligence is playing a spoilsport for operations.

One official explained that technical intelligence has not been that fruitful as the terrorists leave signatures on the Internet only to confuse the security agencies.

Describing this as a significant shift in terrorist activities, officials emphasise the urgent need for heightened surveillance

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Jammu and Kashmir youths demand ‘meritocracy’ in government jobs

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 14

The decision to allocate only 40 per cent of positions for open merit in government job recruitments in Jammu and Kashmir has triggered widespread outrage among the youth in the Union Territory.

The move, which comes after accounting for reserved quotas, has led to opposition in various districts of the erstwhile state.

Contrary to past trends of supporting terrorism or separatism, the youth in the Kashmir Valley and parts of Jammu have taken to the streets demanding

meritocracy in government job placements.

This shift towards advocating for equity in opportunities reflects a new wave of sentiment among today’s youth.

Often news hungry people, who would look for articles about youngsters joining terrorist organisations or mysteriously disappearing to join ranks of Pakistan-supported groups, come across a different trend these days where the youth wants equity in government jobs.

Though some youths are still joining terror groups, the number is lower. Often this is also not reported out of fear

of tough action by the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

While concerns persist about some potentially joining terrorist organisations, there is a noticeable trend where youngsters are pushing for fairness in the allocation of government job positions.

The discontent among the youth underscores a growing need for policy reforms that address the aspirations of all candidates and uphold the principles of equal opportunity.

Be it NEET, NET, CUET or for that matter UPSC and JKSSB, the exams

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PM’s ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ apt reply to climate change: Shah at mega sapling plantation drive



several years as per the Swachh Survekshan, will see 51 lakh saplings being planted.

In a post on X in the morning, Shah said, “Today is a special day, when the people of Indore are going to create a world record by planting 11 lakh saplings.”

As part of the ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ campaign started by the PM, he too would plant saplings at the BSF campus in Revati Range here, Shah added.

Protection of the environment has been one of the biggest priorities of the Modi government, which has made tree plantation a matter of public awareness, Shah said.

Since Saturday evening, pits were dug up at the Border Security Force Academy’s Revati Range and planting of saplings started this morning after state minister Kailash Vijayvargiya performed ‘bhoomi puja’, an official said.

Seven lakh of the 11 lakh saplings had been planted by afternoon, Indore Mayor Pushyamitra

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AGENCIES
INDORE, JUL 14

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday took part in a drive in Indore in Madhya Pradesh, which aims to create a world record of planting 11 lakh saplings in a single day, and asserted the ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was an apt reply to challenges of climate change.

The ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ was launched by Modi on June 5 to mark World Environment Day, under which some 140 crore trees will be planted across the country, includ-

ing 5.5 crore in Madhya Pradesh.

“Development is taking place and we are enhancing facilities. Modiji has asked us to look back and also work for the coming generation. The concern for environment has become important not just for the country. Carbon dioxide and monoxide have reduced the level of ozone and created holes in its layer,” Shah said.

“This has caused rise in temperatures. Climate change is being experienced. The drive launched by Modi ji is a suitable reply to this,” he asserted, adding that Indore, the country’s cleanest city for



Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Youth Affairs and Sports met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan.

NC, Congress, PDP destroyed J&K, looted people: Jugal Kishore Sharma

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

National Conference, Congress and PDP destroyed the beauty, name and fabric of Jammu & Kashmir and looted the innocent people befooling them for decades together, said Jugal Kishore Sharma, member of Parliament.

Jugal Kishore Sharma was addressing in a series of ‘Voter’s ka Abinandan’ programmes.

Jugal Kishore Sharma,



while addressing the programmes, on the one hand ferociously attacked Congress, NC and PDP for befooling the people of

Jammu & Kashmir to loot them and destroying the social, political fabric of the state and

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72 Pc students pass class 11th examinations as JKBOSE declares result

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JUL 14

The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education on Sunday announced results of annual regular exams of 11th standard with an overall pass percentage of 72 per cent.

JKBOSE officials said that among the overall pass percentage includes 75 per cent female students and 69 per cent male

students. An official said that a total of 1,23,026 students were enrolled for the examination out of which 88,396 students passed the exams.

The exam was conducted in the soft and hard zone areas identified in both the UTs.

In the examination, a total of 1179 exam centres were set up by the

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J&K Youth ends life by jumping in Chenab, body found in Pak; kin seek PM’s help to get back body

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JUL 14

The body of a youth who ended his life allegedly by jumping into the Chenab river here last month was recovered in Pakistan, following which his family sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s intervention to bring back the mortal remains for last rites.

Harash Nagotra, a resident of a border village in the Akhnoor sector, went missing on June 11 and his motorcycle was recovered on the banks of the river. A police official said a

missing report was registered by Nagotra’s family the next day.

Preliminary investigation suggested that he might have ended his life by jumping into the river after suffering a loss of over Rs 80,000 in an online gaming application, the official said.

The family got the confirmation about Nagotra’s death through a WhatsApp message from a Pakistani official after the parents reactivated a SIM card of their son who worked in a private telecommunication company.

Nagotra’s father Subash Sharma said the WhatsApp message from the Pakistani official, who claimed to be posted in the post-mortem department, informed them that the body was recovered from a canal in Sialkot in Punjab province on June 13.

The official had informed the deceased’s father that the body had been buried. He also sent Nagotra’s identity card to the grieving family through WhatsApp, confirming that the body recovered in Sialkot is that of their missing son.

“We request our prime minister to help us get back the body of my son for last rites. We want to perform his last rites as per our religion,” Sharma said.

Nagotra’s relative Amrit Bhushan said they have already written to the External Affairs Ministry, Home Ministry and the Prime Minister’s Office over the matter.

“We are in a state of shock and grief and want his body back. We have also appealed to Pakistani authorities to hand over the body,” Bhushan added.

PM Narendra Modi condemns attack on Trump

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed deep concern over the attack on former US president Donald Trump, and said violence has no place in politics and democracies.

Trump’s campaign said that he was “doing well” after an assassination attempt at his election rally in Pennsylvania. Modi said on X, “Deeply concerned by the attack on my friend, former President Donald Trump. Strongly condemn the incident.

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Over 4,800 pilgrims leave Jammu for amarnath cave shrine

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

A fresh batch of 4,889 Amarnath pilgrims left Jammu early on Sunday for the twin base camps of Pahalgam and Baltal in Kashmir, officials said.

The pilgrims left Jammu’s Bhagwati Nagar base camp in a convoy of 187 vehicles around 3 am amid tight security, they said.

While 2,993 pilgrims, including 500 women and 11 children, will take the 48-km traditional Pahalgam route for their yatra, 1,896 pilgrims have preferred the shorter but steep 14-km Baltal route.



With this batch, the number of people who started the Amarnath Yatra from Jammu is 91,202. The rest of the pilgrims have directly reached the base camps in the Valley.

The 52-day yatra commenced from the twin routes of Pahalgam in Anantnag and Baltal in Ganderbal districts on June 29. So far, over 2.97 lakh pilgrims

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Include Uncovered Areas Under JJM, RSY Schemes: MP Khatana

Commends LG's Public Outreach Program for Enhancing Citizen Voices

JJ NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 14:

Member of Parliament and Senior BJP Leader, Er. Gulam Ali Khatana has urged Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to extend the coverage of two crucial welfare schemes to the remaining remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir. The MP emphasized the need to bring the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and the Rooftop Solar Yojana (RSY) schemes to all citizens of the Union Territory, regardless of geographical barriers.

The JJM aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections, while the Rooftop Solar Yojana, or the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana seeks to achieve universal household electrification. "The scheme aims to provide 300 units of free electricity every month to light up one crore households. The objective of this scheme



is to reduce the electricity costs of the house by installing rooftop solar panels and using solar energy", the MP said. Both schemes, launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, have been instrumental in improving the quality of life for numerous residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, Khatana pointed out that several remote areas remain uncovered by these schemes. He specifically mentioned Gulabgarh in Reasi district, Marwah

Sub Division of Kishtwar district, and various areas in Ramban, Doda, Rajouri, and Poonch districts.

"I received numerous deputations from these regions, with residents expressing their long-standing wait for these basic amenities", he added. Khatana commended Lt. Governor Sinha's public outreach program, which has provided a platform for citizens to voice their concerns directly to the administration. Nevertheless, he stressed that immediate attention is required in areas still lacking basic amenities like potable water and electricity.

The MP's appeal comes at a time when the Union Territory is striving to achieve 100% coverage under both schemes. While significant progress has been made, the challenging terrain and remote locations of some areas have posed obstacles to complete implementation. Khatana highlighted

the ongoing challenges in infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in its more isolated regions. It also underscores the importance of these central government schemes in bridging the development gap between urban and rural areas.

The MP expressed hope that the administration would achieve 100% coverage by providing drinking water and electricity to the remaining population. This call to action aligns with the central government's vision of inclusive development and the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' (Together with all, Development for all). As Jammu and Kashmir continues its journey towards full integration with the rest of India, the successful implementation of these schemes could play a crucial role in improving living standards and fostering a sense of inclusion among residents of remote areas.

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 14

Three-day long traditional Shri Ashtadash Bhuj Mata Sarthal Devi Ji Yatra commenced with great religious fervor early today morning by organizing Hawan at Gori Shankar Mandir, Sarkoot in which number of couples offered Aahuti and Puran Aahutis.

The Yatra being organized by Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust under the patronage of Dr Karan Singh, Sole Trustee and Vikarmaditya Singh Chairman Trustee. Impressive Shoba Yatra accompanied by Chari Mubarak was taken from Gori Shankar Mandir by Sunil Sharma, former minister and Sanjeev Parihar, Vice Chairman, Shri Sarthal Devi Management Council. The locals of various localities accorded warm welcome to Chari Mubarak and served refreshment to the pilgrims. Shoba Yatra culminated at Bus Stand Kishtwar from where the devotees boarded buses and other vehicles and left for the historic Sarthal



Devi Temple. Tomorrow morning a Maha Yajna will be performed at Sarthal Devi Mandir. District administration along with police had made all the necessary arrangements at Sarthal and Kishtwar for the welfare of devotees. Vikramaditya Singh, in his message, extended warm greetings to all devotees and people of Kisht-

war on this auspicious occasion and prayed for peace, prosperity and well being of all.

Varinder Jamwal, Additional Secretary J&K Dharmarth Trust also participated in this three-day long traditional Yatra.

The temple of Sarthal Devi Mata is located in Sarthal town of Kishtwar district amidst the mountains

of the Pir Panjal range. The devotees believed that Sarthal Devi is the Hindu Kuldeshi residing in Kishtwar and have held her in high reverence. The historic religious yatra is organized every year in Kishtwar by Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Management Council with great participation and support of residents of Kishtwar.

IIM Jammu to hold a five-day Holistic Orientation Program

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu is set to welcome its new batch of students with a comprehensive five-day orientation program from July 15 to July 20, 2024. The event will cater to the 9th Batch of MBA (2024-26), 3rd Batch of MBA (HA&HM) (2024-26), 5th Batch of Ph.D. (2024-28), 3rd Batch of Ph.D. (Working Professionals) (2024-28), and the 4th Batch of EMBA (2024-26). The onboarding of the students will commence from 13th July to 14th July 2024.

The idea associated with this Orientation Program is to acquaint the incoming students with the culture, academic opportunities, ethos, and general rules of IIM Jammu. The programme will help in facilitating a welcoming environment for the new aspiring students and their families to meet and have open communication with the faculty, staff, senior students, and all key activity heads of the Institute under one roof. The orientation programme includes a mix of academic sessions, personal development workshops, and networking opportunities with top bureaucrats, faculty, industry leaders, and peers.

Dr. Jitendra Singh,

Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Government of India, New Delhi, will be the Chief Guest for the Orientation Programme. Dr. Milind Kamble, Chairman, BoG, IIM Jammu, will preside over the function and deliver the presidential address. Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, will deliver the welcome address. Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Gupta, Director, AIIMS Jammu and Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu, will deliver their welcome addresses.

The valedictory ceremony will feature Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, as the Chief Guest. Shri RK Tyagi, Chairman & Managing Director, Power Grid Corporation Ltd., will be the Guest of Honor. Shri Baldev Prakash, MD & CEO of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, and Shri Sandeep Kumar Gupta, Chairman & Managing Director, GAIL Ltd., will also be gracing the valedictory as Guests of Honor.

Dr. Milind P. Kamble, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Jammu, remarked that the orientation program sets the tone for a collaborative and enriching academic journey. It is an excellent opportunity for students to start building their network and to get a comprehensive understanding of what IIM Jammu has to

offer. He wished all students good luck for their journey ahead.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, emphasized that the orientation program is designed to help students assimilate into the IIM Jammu culture, encouraging academic excellence and personal growth. He expressed happiness in welcoming the new batches at the state-of-the-art campus at Jagti and wished them good luck for their fruitful journey at IIM Jammu.

The inaugural day will feature sessions by Shri R.R. Swain, Director General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, Ms. Mekhla Sinha, Executive Director, Global Human Resource Development Center, (GHRDC) followed by a meeting with Council and Second Year Students followed by dinner.

The Orientation Programme will also feature various interactive and enriching sessions by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, and other faculty and officers of the Institute. During the Orientation Program, each day will commence at 6:00 AM with 'Maximize Happiness and Mindfulness' sessions conducted by Mr. Sahil Mehra, Yoga Guru.

Top bureaucrats and industry speakers are also invited to address the

new batch and motivate them for their academic journey at IIM Jammu. On the second day, Dr. Karan Singh, Former Union Cabinet Minister for Health, Civil Aviation, and Education, Govt. of India, and Ambassador of India to the USA, Dr. Anurag Batra, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief E4m & BW Businessworld Group, Ms. Deepali Jetley, Chief People Officer, Marengo Asia Hospitals, Shri Sourav Dasgupta, Sr. Vice President & Head of IT, All Cargo Logistics Ltd., will address the students. This will be followed by cultural programs organized by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAAACL).

The third day will feature Mr. Shashi Kumar K, Talent Acquisition and Early careers (University Campus) India Lead, Publicis Sapient, Ms. Sheetal Sharma, Associate Director People and Culture, Grant Thornton, Mr. Satish Mohapatra, EVP Talent Acquisition, Maruti Suzuki, Mr. Koushtubh Kanade, Senior Leadership, British Biologicals, Shri Mohit Gupta, Co-Founder, Friends of Books (FROB) and Ms. Anubhuti Sharda, DySP Cyber Cell, Jammu. The day will conclude with cultural programs by 'Natrang' led by Padmashri Balwant Thakur.

The fourth day will fea-

ture prominent leaders and bureaucrats including, Shri Anshul Garg, CEO, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Shri Deven Kanade, Director-Industry Solutions, Oracle, Ms. Kavita Kurup, Chief People Officer, UST, Ms. Dipti Naidu, Manager, HR Business Partner, Mastercard Technology Private Limited, Shri Shiv Shankar Sarma, Secretary at Federation for World Academics (FWA) and Founder & Facilitator, Education Post, Shri Mehul Oza, Vice President - HR, NSE, Dinesh Pandey, Leadership Team of Founder's Office, Mu Sigma. The day will conclude with cultural programs by first-year students.

The fifth day will feature notable speakers including Shri Anand Jain, ADGP, Jammu, Shri Souren Paul, Country Brand Lead - (Marketing Head) Pfizer, Pfizer, Shri Nishant Shekhar, Managing Director, BCG, Sushmita Sinha, Head of Talent Acquisition and Internal Committees, Jubilant Food Works Ltd, Shri Manay Khaitan, Associate Director and Head Supply Chain Finance, PepsiCo.

The holistic five-day orientation program at IIM Jammu is designed to provide a comprehensive and enriching experience, preparing the new batch for a stimulating academic journey ahead.

Natrang stages 'Vishaw Guru Bharat' on culmination of Children Theatre Camp-24



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

Natrang presented a splendid performance of "Vishaw Guru Bharat", a new play by Children at the auditorium of GCW Parade today. This play was an outcome of month-long Children Theatre Workshop organized by Natrang, which is its annual event. The play has been brilliantly written and directed by Sumeet Sharma, a National Awardee director and seasoned theatre trainer of children and youth. Natrang's consistent efforts in bringing remarkable creative energy in thousands of Jammu Children is praiseworthy. Director Natrang, Padmashri Balwant Thakur presented the merit certificates to the participating Children. The performance was staged in collaboration with GCW, Parade.

In his address, Padmashri Balwant Thakur expressed gladness on witnessing such a thought-provoking performance by children. He complemented the team behind this production for providing a wonderful learning opportunity to children, who are going to lead the Nation in coming years and this positively channelized energy will act as a guiding light for them. He informed that taking

the multifaceted benefits of theatre in consideration, Natrang initiated regular children theatre programmes since 1990 and over the period of 24 years, it has kindled confidence, creativity and team-spirit in thousands of children who are doing wonderful in their respective fields. On the occasion he thanked Dr Ravender Tickoo Principal GCW, Parade for the venue support. The play "Vishaw Guru Bharat" very beautifully depicts the strength and prowess of India which has all the capabilities to lead the world on the strong basis of its Indian-ness. At the beginning, children are shown confused as they are not finding any solution to the threatening issues like Inflation, Pollution, Global Warming, Smart Phone Intoxication and Competition. As usual, they look towards the West for the solutions but this was of no use. Suddenly someone advised them to have an introspection and refer to the Indian Scripture and Wisdom to find the solution to the World-Wide problems. In the process, children have an interaction with real Indian heroes like Swami Vivekananda, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, APJ Abdul Kalam and more in fiction and they find

answers to all their questions and started feeling confident. Other than the wonderful content of the play, the confidence and zestfulness of children was a treat to watch.

The highly dedicated team of Natrang, which made this workshop successful included Mohd. Yaseen, Kananpreet Kaur, Palshin Dutta and Mihir Gajral. The choreography was done by Ms. Neetika Aggarwal (Classical) and Mr. Sunny Mujoo (Contemporary). Designing by Sh. Chandershekhar and Saujanya Shekhar. Music by Nitish Sharma. Hall Management was looked after by Aadesh Dhar.

The show was brilliantly conducted by Riya Jandial. Those who performed in the play included Aarav Gupta, Adeesha Singh, Aaradhya Sharma, Amayra Mahajan, Ayaan Dutt, Dhanak Chandan, Anmol Sharma, Jazz Shah, Nirvana Shah, Raaga Sharma, Ruhaan Chandan, Saisha Malhotra, Sharvya Sharma, Shranaya Mahajan, Vaibhav Mahajan, Viraj Singh, Aadhiraj Dharmat, Aarvya Jain, Adhira Gupta, Advik Sharma, Anadi Abrol, Avni, Daivik Gupta, Jayaditya Singh Jamwal, Mehak Chib, Priyal Gupta, Reshik, Ryan Gupta, Sharvil Mahajan, Shivaay Mittal, Vaanya Modi, Viraj Gupta and Kamakhya.

Rekha distributes Ration, Ayushman Cards, and Domicile Certificates to Common Masses, Reinforcing the BJP's Commitment

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) District President Jammu South Rekha Mahajan today distributed ration cards, domicile certificates, and Ayushman Cards to the general public, reaffirming the BJP government's dedication to the welfare of the common masses under the supreme leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This comprehensive initiative aims to ensure that the numerous benefits of government schemes, including food security, health insurance, and residency rights, reach the

most vulnerable sections of society.

Rekha Mahajan interacted with the beneficiaries, listening to their concerns and assuring them of the government's support. She highlights that the BJP government is committed to the well-being of the general public, and we are dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of our schemes reach every household, and we will continue to work tirelessly towards this goal.

Rekha Mahajan emphasized that these magical cards symbolize the government's dedication to



providing access to quality healthcare, residency rights, and food security to all. The Ayushman card

ensures health insurance, the domicile card grants residency rights, and the ration card provides sub-

sized food grains. She said the unprecedented access to free healthcare provided under Ayushman Bharat: "After 70 years, the PM Modi-led government has ensured free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh for millions of people. Rekha added that the BJP's 2024 manifesto, titled "Modi ki Guarantee," also promises to extend the coverage of Ayushman Bharat further to include senior citizens above 75 years of age and the transgender community.

SOS Int'l asks govt to see writing on the wall; fulfill our legitimate demands or face agitation

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

SOS International--a registered body of displaced PoJK persons--today asked the BJP-led Central government to see the writing on the wall and not to test the patience of displaced people while maintaining a complete neglect of the community during the last 10 years. The organization said the double engine government of the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir has written a dark chapter of destruction of PoJK people, triggering strong resentment among them as they are left with no options to start a mass agitation to get their legitimate rights. On the call of the SOS International, thousands of PoJK people gathered at the 'Rosh Rally' here on Sunday. The rally was held to draw immediate attention of the government towards the longstanding and overlooked issues of the refugee community. The participants raised slogans like "Double Engine BJP Sarkar, Murdabad-Murdabad", "Double Engine BJP Sarkar, Hosh me Aao-Hosh me Aao" and "Double Engine BJP Sarkar, Insaaf karo-Insaaf Karo" during the Rosh Rally. The speakers, in their address, warned the ruling BJP of having serious consequences in the upcoming Assembly polls if it fails to fulfill four legitimate and genuine demands of the PoJK community. Addressing the large gathering, Rajiv Chuni, Chairman of SOS International, while delivering a powerful speech at the event, highlighted the



persistent neglect faced by PoJK refugees over the last decade under the BJP-led central government. "Since the double-engine government took over the reins in Jammu and Kashmir, it has written a black chapter of destruction of our people. Whatever we had achieved through decades-long struggle, it has been destroyed under a systematic plan. Our representatives, who have been elected for Lok Sabha for three consecutive times, remained silent on all issues confronting the community. This is quite shameful," Mr Chuni said. He added, "We are also equally responsible for this continued neglect of the community as we, PoJK community, never exercised our voting rights wisely. We got swayed by emotions and false promises of political parties which have failed to come up to the expectations of our people". The senior refugee leader expressed disappointment over the lack of commitments by successive regimes to empower PoJK commu-

nity politically as they never ensured that the people of the community got elected for Assembly or Parliament". He said it was the resolve of today's rally that the PoJK community should field its own candidates in the areas where the community has strong presence. "It is a valid suggestion but it needs a strong wisdom on our part. Political parties know the art of befooling the people. They can reach out to you because they have good resources. We, being a neglected lot, lack such resources. We will have to work wisely and cautiously while executing any such plan". He cautioned the LG administration that the people of PoJK community were fed up with false promises as it made no acknowledgement of their demands during the last four years. Mr Chuni emphasized that the financial package announced for the refugees in 2014 has been effectively diluted, leaving all promises made with community unfulfilled. He said, "In 2014, the Central government announced a

package intended to support PoJK refugee families. This package included: A financial package of Rs 25 lakh for each refugee family. Reservation for the wards of refugees in professional colleges. 8500 government jobs to unemployed educated youths of PoJK DPs. Other provisions aimed at addressing the refugees' needs. However, the implementation of this package has fallen short of expectations, with all major demands being ignored altogether". Chuni also criticized the central government for ignoring the PoJK refugees after reservation granted to Pahari communities. He accused the government of betrayal, stating that the refugees have been consistently denied their rightful entitlements. Chuni outlined four major demands that have been consistently raised by the PoJK refugee community including Rs 25 lakh to all PoJK displaced families, reservation in Professional and Technical Institutes for educated youth of the community and job package for them, reservation

of eight seats in J&K Legislative Assembly and grant of Pahari Status to all PoJK displaced community members. Another critical issue he raised was related to the land allotted to PoJK refugees. "Under Article 3 of the erstwhile J&K State, refugees were permitted to sell and mortgage their property. However, following the abrogation of Article 370, these rights have been curtailed, transforming the land into a liability for the refugees," he said. The leader also drew a comparison with the Valley Migrants, highlighting that despite their smaller population of approximately 200,000, they have been allocated one seat in the Assembly segment following delimitation. This, according to Chuni, underscored the disparity in the treatment of PoJK refugees. He warned that they would launch a vigorous and massive agitation if the government fails to address the genuine and legitimate issues of the community without any further delay. "The government shall be responsible for any physical or financial loss to our people during the agitation to be launched shortly," he warned, saying "if the government has plans and policies for Kashmiri migrants, why it has been living in complete denial in case of PoJK people". Others who attended the rally included Vinod Datta, Prof. N N Sharma, Prof Suresh, Ved Raj Bali, Jagjeet Singh, D V Gupta, Satinder Singh, Daleep Sharma, Ravi Kant Dutta, Harbans Sabharwal & others.

Purnima initiates plantation drive under 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

Adv. Purnima Sharma, Spokesperson of BJP J&K and former Deputy Mayor of Jammu, today spearheaded a significant plantation drive under the ongoing 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. The event, held in collaboration with the Parade Ground Morning Walkers Association, saw enthusiastic participation from community members and local environmentalists. The 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to promote environmental sustainability and honor the nurturing spirit of mothers by planting trees in their names. Adv. Purnima Sharma, in her address, highlighted the importance of this initiative in fostering a green and healthy environment for future generations. She emphasized that planting trees is a simple yet impactful way to contribute to the well-being of our planet. She expressed her gratitude towards Prime Minister Modi for initiating such a noble campaign. She remarked, "Prime



Minister Modi's visionary leadership has always prioritized environmental conservation and sustainability. The 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign is a testament to his commitment to a greener India. By planting trees in the name of our mothers, we not only pay tribute to their nurturing spirit but also take a significant step towards combating climate change and preserving our natural resources." The plantation drive witnessed the planting of various indigenous saplings in the Parade Ground area, including fruit-bearing and shade-providing trees. Members of the Parade Ground Morning Walkers Association actively participated in the event, reflecting their

dedication to environmental causes and community welfare. The Association members lauded Purnima Sharma for her continuous efforts in promoting green initiatives and raising awareness about environmental issues. The event concluded with a pledge by all participants to continue supporting and participating in plantation drives and other environmental conservation activities. Among those who were present in the plantation drive include Rajesh Gupta, Rajendra Gupta, Surendra Anand, Anil Gupta, Jaidev Singh kaku, Munna Ji, Bittu ji, Ashok ji, Sushant Gupta, Balkrishna ji, Surjit Singh and Rajesh Kapoor.

Congress will fight battle tooth and nail to take on BJP: Karan Bhagat

JNEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 14

JKPC SC Department Chairman Karan Bhagat Sunday said Jammu and Kashmir does not face as much threat from Pakistan or the muzzle of the gun as from the forces who were "hell-bent on destroying J&K state" during executive meet of District Samba & program under Samvidhan Pe Charcha. Speaking on the occasion, Karan said keeping in view the challenges J&K is facing, the people have to make a right choice in the ensuing elections while choosing their representative for J&K Assembly. He said BJP is hell-bent on destroying the Constitution. He said, "The Constitution guarantees equality and reservations for Dalits, backward classes, and Adivasis. The BJP is against both equality and reservation, and that is why it wants to get rid of the Constitution." Under-scoring the need of sending a credible and strong voice to Assembly, he said ensuing elections provide the people an opportunity to send a person to Assembly who could debate on the issues pertaining to people of J&K. Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Karan said, it is your responsibility to expose the hollow claims made by PM Modi to the people of J&K. BJP Govt is capturing every democratic institution of the country; we have to defend our institutions. He said that people of Jammu and Kashmir are the worst hit due to the "wrong policies" of BJP Govt and accused them of "snatch-



ing" their rights over land and jobs and "downgrading" a full-fledged state to a Union Territory. He asked party workers to get ready to defeat the "anti-people, anti-youth, anti-students, anti-farmers" regime in the upcoming polls. He also complimented the people of the Jammu region for believing in togetherness and religious harmony despite grave provocations by vested interests. The Congress leader alleged that the wrong policies of the Narendra Modi-led Government have "ruined" the country, especially Jammu and Kashmir. He called upon the party functionaries to maintain close rapport with the public and highlight the "various failures" of the BJP government. He asked the local leadership

of districts, blocks, wards and observers to get ready for polls. Without taking any name, he said parties exploiting the sentiments of the people on various emotional issues for vote bank politics need to be isolated. "They have utterly failed to deliver on their commitments, causing unrest in different regions and sections of the society. The people must identify such political parties and reject them for being their worst enemies and responsible for the mistrust and unrest amongst the people," he said. Karan asked the people of the Jammu region to join hands and defeat the "nefarious designs of communal, divisive and separatist forces". He said property tax, toll plazas, smart electricity meters

and unemployment have added to the misery of people of Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted honorarium rates, delayed payments and inadequate facilities to Anganwadi workers and helpers. He emphasized the need for timely payments to meet their essential needs without undue financial strain. Karan said that Congress has launched campaign to apprise the people of the kind of hatred which is seen in society and the prevailing situation in J&K. He said anti-people policies of the BJP government at the Centre and in J&K being highlighted by organising various programmes. He observed that the treachery and deceit of the BJP is haunting Jammu people who reposed their unflinching faith and support to it with the hope that Jammu may perhaps get a better deal as during the days of its wilderness in the opposition, the BJP leaders were crying hoarse over discrimination and neglect. "Not only on the front of development but equally in terms of instilling a sense of confidence among the people, the BJP has desperately failed", Karan said and referred to uncertain political climate prevailing across the state ever-since BJP dispensation came into being. He said the BJP ditched each segment of society which feel left out with government nowhere visible on ground. He advised the Govt to put their act together and get into operational mode by shunning opportunism and politics of convenience.

JKTJAC elected its zonal body of zone Gandhi Nagar

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

A meeting of Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Joint action committee was held today on 14/06/2023 under the chairmanship of UT Vice president Surjit Singh Chib in which Rajesh Jamwal Provincial President, Subash Chander organiser, Ravinder Manhas District President Jammu, MP Singh ZP jourian and Rajeeet Singh were guest of honour the meeting was attended by large number of teachers from different parts of Zone Gandhi Nagar participated and elected its zonal body Mr. Rakesh khajuria was elected as president, Rajinder Singh chairman, Jasbir Singh Sr vice president, manzoor Hussain vice president, Dinesh Singh chief organizer, Randhir Singh chief Coordinator, narain Daas convener, Sachin chief convener, Deepak khajuria, convener ruler, Shareef hussain cashier, sukhddev Singh chief Spokesperson, Varinder Sharma Gen. Secretary, chanderkant organizer, D D. Bhagat Coordinator, Munish Sharma convener urban, karan Singh Advisor, jasbir Singh chief Advisor. Meanwhile they discussed the burning issues of zone including timely release of salary and completion of service books. Others who were present in the meeting includes Mohd. Yunas, Vijay Singh, pawan kumar, Rohit Sharma, Munir Ahmed, Gulzar Ahmed Rajinder Singh and other.

Pakistan's frustration behind Jammu terror attacks: Kesri

JNEWS SERVICE
ARNIA, JULY 14

Shiv Sena Hindustan J&K President Pt Rajesh Kesri today led strong protest against Pakistan over recent attacks in Jammu region in Arnia on Sunday, calling it as an act of cowardice by Pakistan-based terrorists. Prominent among those who participated in protest include Balveer Kumar, Balwant Saini Ramesh Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Vijay Luthra, Rajkumar, Brahm Singh, Darshana Devi, Neeru Devi, Rajni Devi, Vijay Kumari besides others. Raising anti-Pakistan slogans and chanting "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," protesters demanded befitting reply to Pakistan for daring to target our brave security forces cowardly. They also paid homage to the brave army personnel who sacrificed their lives for the nation. Speaking on the occasion, Kesri said we pay homage and tributes to the army personnel who laid down their lives for the nation. We stand with their families. We are ready to lay down our lives for these bravehearts defending the country," he said. He condemned recent terror attack, stating, "It is an act of cowardice by Pakistan-backed terrorists. Pakistan continues



to sponsor terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir." He said Pakistan resorts to cowardly terror attacks through terrorists when they fail to confront India directly. "They persist in supporting and sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir," he added. "Pakistan should be held accountable. It has been aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir," Kesri said. He said India's Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) with Pakistan are well-fenced, surveyed, and manned. Yet Pakistani state and non-state players are upping the ante and using technology to smuggle illegal arms, ammunition, drugs, currency, propaganda pamphlets, and other items to their supporters and operatives. Drones are cheap and available commercially off-the-shelf

and have replaced human smugglers and even terrorists in some cases, as was the case in the Jammu airfield attack a few years ago. India needs to be prepared for next-gen terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir and info warfare in Punjab and neighboring states, added Kesri. Kesri linked the surge in violence to the successful completion of the Lok Sabha elections and suggested that increased military operations in the Kashmir Valley have forced terrorists to shift their focus to the Jammu region. Kesri noted, "The center of terrorist activity has moved towards Jammu over the last three years as Army operations have curtailed their ability to operate in the Kashmir Valley. The Army has significantly weakened terrorist networks in Kashmir, and this has frustrated Pakistan."

JKBS members congrat Ajit Dogra on his well deserved promotion as Assistant Commandant in CRPF

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14:

The Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha members today congratulated Ajit Dogra on his well deserved promotion as Assistant Commandant in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Ajit Dogra belongs to Sandhu clan of Batwal



community and hails from Jammu. JKBS' General Secretary

R.L. Kaith and executive members said that they are extremely happy for him about his new assignment. Aji Dogra thanked Kaith and others for their congratulations on his promotion, and appreciated their kind words and support. He said he is grateful to have such wonderful people like them in his life.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh chairs review meeting with Udhampur district administration

JINNEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR (J&K), JULY 14

The Udhampur administration and local bodies must leave no stone unturned in ensuring timely and seamless delivery of public amenities", said Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh here today.

Chairing a meeting alongside the Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, senior officials of the district administration and over a dozen representatives of the PRIs, Dr Jitendra Singh issued instructions for immediate resolution of pressing issues, such as water scarcity, power outages, dilapidated roads and unauthorised parking. Calling upon the district administration to take all possible measures to address public issues, he reiterated that the government is committed to the service of the masses, adding that all its steps are focused on ensuring ease



of living for all sections of society.

The Union Minister affirmed that with the mantra of Nation First, the governance model of the Modi government is bed-rocked by the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari and Sankalp se Siddh. The Union Minister also urged the DDCs to play their part in redressing public grievances and demands. "Councillors must take immediate steps to address issues raised in today's meeting", he directed.

On the issue of recurring power outages as reported by the public representatives hailing from several areas of the district, Dr Jitendra Singh issued the direction that the concerned officials of

the Power Department must undertake visits to make on-the-spot assessment and resolve the issue forthwith. "It must be ensured that less inconvenience is caused to the public in sweltering heat due to power curtailment", the Minister underscored.

Similarly, the Minister called for repair of dilapidated roads and macadamisation of other roads in rural areas to improve connectivity and prevent accidents. Dr Jitendra Singh directed all the officers must work in close coordination with the stakeholders, including PRIs, for better delivery of services to the citizens. He also directed the officers to remain in touch with

the local people, visit regularly the affected areas and organise awareness camps in remote villages so that people gain knowledge about the benefits of schemes on sanitation, housing and education.

During the review meeting, Dr Jitendra Singh made a strong pitch for promoting lavender cultivation in the district in a big way. He said start-ups engaged in this new industry have become avenues of employment for the local youth. He reiterated that it is not possible for the government to provide jobs to all. Therefore, the youth should explore other lucrative avenues of employment to earn a living, the minister advised.

BJP committed to ensure safety, security of J&K people, says Slathia



JINNEWS SERVICE
SAMBA JULY 14

Former minister and Senior Vice President Pradesh BJP Mr Surjeet Singh Slathia today called for collective efforts to fight scourge of terrorism, saying the valiant people will not allow any attempt by terror ecosystem to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere across the Jammu region.

"The BJP led NDA government is unwavering in its commitment to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir", Mr Slathia said while addressing a public meeting at Village Badwal Panchayat Sangwal in Assembly Constituency Samba, adding that terrorism in the

region will be met with an uncompromising and robust response.

He said the BJP has tirelessly worked for restoration of peace and normalcy across the Union Territory and has succeeded in building a sense of security among the people. Unnerved by near normalcy in the Valley with business and tourism scaling new heights, the terror regime across the border with active support of Pakistan's sinister ISI is desperately trying to show presence in Jammu, he said, adding that they are destined to doom in their nefarious machinations.

"Peace and development are our top priorities and the BJP will continue to work resolutely

to create an environment where economic growth and prosperity can flourish", Mr Slathia said, emphasising that the security forces were capable enough to meet the challenge posed by the enemies of peace. He lauded the resilience and determination of the people for remaining steadfast in their resolve to isolate the terror ecosystem, which remains on toes to shield inhuman and barbaric elements.

Referring to the issues highlighted by the locals, Mr Slathia assured that these would be raised at appropriate forums for earnest redressal. Welfare of people and inclusive development with opportunities of prog-

ress to all, irrespective of religion, region or caste, as per the Prime Minister's cherished agenda of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas remains core of the BJP philosophy, he added.

Several other speakers highlighted the measures taken by the Prime Minister in giving new wings to development and the various welfare programs in Jammu and Kashmir in the recent years, especially after the abrogation of Article 370.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Ex Sarpanch Jatinder Singh, District Vice President BJP Vijay Singh, Maan Singh Ashok Singh Ranjeet Kumar and others.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Start-ups emerged as...

noted, urging the local Chamber of Commerce to play its part in this endeavour.

In the same vein, Dr Jitendra Singh pitched for harnessing the lavender, and informed the gathering that its cultivation has already commenced in Dudu-Basantgarh area of the district. "The Aroma Mission which began in Bharderwah tehsil of district Doda has reached Udhampur", he said, adding that start-ups born from the Purple and White Revolutions have emerged as the new avenues of self-employment and sources of sustainable livelihoods.

"Udhampur is home to numerous milk products which can be converted into brands in the New Industrial Estate coming up here", the Minister suggested. He appealed to both the media and society to create awareness about lavender cultivation and milk products of the area. Underlining that the natural resources of Udhampur have not been fully explored, the Union Minister stated that these resources will add value to India's economy as it rises.

'Hidden Terrorism'...

to prevent foreign mercenaries from carrying out their malicious intentions.

The April 26 encounter in Sopore, in which the foreign terrorists involved had been hiding for 18 months, serves as a stark reminder of the "conservation and consolidation" tactic. Evidence showed their connections with terror groups across Kashmir and their use of sophisticated weaponry.

Similar operations in June further dismantled hidden networks, exposed terrorists' plans and capabilities, and also threw light on a previously unseen high level of infiltration from across the border.

While two terrorists belonging to Rawalakot in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were killed on April 26, dreaded Pakistani terrorist Usman Langda is said to have been killed in the June 19 encounter at Hadipora of Sopore.

The decline in HUMINT, coupled with the use of encrypted communication tools like "Ultra Set" phones by terrorists, makes tracking them difficult. Security agencies are urging heightened surveillance and public vigilance to counter this hidden threat.

While the terrorists' capabilities may have diminished, their intent remains a constant threat, a senior police official said.

Officials have highlighted the challenge posed by the use of encrypted messaging apps for radicalising and recruiting youths, and planning attacks. They have emphasised public vigilance in monitoring suspicious communication, especially among the youths, to safeguard the community. (Agencies)

Jammu and Kashmir...

are a constant point of discussion at mushrooming coffee shops in the Valley where youths are expressing their disappointment over the ever reducing percentage of seats for the general category.

While political parties agree in private that open merit candidates have an unfair deal, none have come out and openly supported them as this would cost them votes from the reserved categories.

PDP leader Waheem Para in May posted on X that the new reservation policy undermined the merit and aspirations of countless intelligent students and eroded meritocracy. He had also appealed to the government for reconsidering the policy so that a balance is struck for all stakeholders to have equitable opportunities.

However, six hours later, he had to delete the post after PDP president Mehbooba Mufti distanced herself and the party from his views.

Prominent figures like Sahil Parray and leaders of the

Youth Against Corruption (YAC) group such as Vinkal Sharma have been actively engaging with local politicians to address the concerns of students and job seekers in the Valley.

Sharma and Parray, also a YAC leader, have been engaged in meetings with politicians such as newly elected Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar Syed Aga Rullah Mehdi on the issue.

Critics of the new reservation policy like Sharma have denounced the move as a "murder of open merit candidates", citing concerns over limited opportunities for people from the general category in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharma feels that the recent amendments to the Scheduled Tribes list, through the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024, raises questions about regional focus and potential impacts.

Supporting the cause of Kashmiri students, Sharma said at least 70 per cent of the population in the Valley comprises general category students. "Now, with limited open competition seats, securing opportunities based solely on merit becomes more challenging," he said.

The debate surrounding the reservation policy intensifies as voices like Javed Dar and Khandan Imtiaz express fear of dashed dreams and restricted prospects for government employment in the region.

Dar, who hails from Baramulla, feels that the present reservation policy of the Union Territory goes against the 1992 Indra Sawney judgement of the Supreme Court that fixed a cap of 50 per cent reservation.

"The new policy reserves 60 per cent of government jobs and educational seats for various categories, leaving 40 per cent for open competition. Additionally, concerns exist about the removal of the 'creamy layer' concept, which excludes those already benefiting from privilege within reserved categories," he said.

Imtiaz, a student pursuing a Masters in Political Science, has expressed strong disapproval of the Jammu and Kashmir government's new reservation policy as he fears the policy will negatively impact students from the unreserved category.

He argues that while uplifting certain sections of society is important, it shouldn't come at the expense of others.

"This policy will be the reason for the downfall of many dreams held by students from the unreserved category," Imtiaz said and urged policymakers to find a "just way out" that ensures opportunities for both the reserved and general categories without jeopardising the aspirations of deserving students.

A detailed breakdown of seat reservation has sparked debate and concerns among general category candidates.

The notification shows that Scheduled Castes have a eight per cent reservation, Scheduled Tribes (20), socially and educationally backward classes (8), residents of Line of Control (4), residents of backward areas and economically weaker sections (10 per cent each), persons with disabilities (4), children of defence personnel (3), outstanding sports candidates (2) and one per cent for children of paramilitary and police forces.

The 2011 census data indicates that 69 per cent of Kashmir Valley's population falls under the general category, which encompasses individuals not classified under Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. (AGENCIES)

PM's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'...

Bhargava said. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on July 6 launched 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' in the state, under which 5.5 crores saplings are to be planted, including

51 lakh in Indore. (AGENCIES)

NC, Congress, PDP...

demolishing its name and fame on the national international level also praised the BJP leadership and the cadre for their selfless work in the service to the nation.

He said that the BJP believes in the nation building and service to the nation and every single activist of party is actively engaged in the service for 365 days in the year.

Jugal thanked the people, who as voters chose Modi government for the third time in a row and put their faith in the strong and decisive leadership of Modi ji. He said that the party has worked to strengthen the democracy and give pace to the development in the nation. He also assured the people that he will leave no stone unturned to develop the areas fulfilling the faith of the people that they have put in him and the Modi government.

BJP Vice-President & former Minister Sham Lal Sharma, Spokesperson Adv Abhinav Sharma, district President Omi Khajuria, DDC Chairperson were present in a programme.

BJP Vice-President Yudhvir Sethi, former Minister Priya Sethi, District President Parmod Kapahi, Rajinder Sharma, Rajeev Charak, Sanjeeta Dogra, Sunil Prajapati, jatiyar, Raman Parveen, Jai dev Rajwal, Rajesh Gupta, Anu Gupta, Manav, Karan, Asha, Narotam, Anil Masoom, Dinesh, Nidhi, Suneet, Akshay, Rajinder Sharma and others were present in the other programme.

72 Pc students pass...

board. Chairman of JKBOSE, Parikshat Singh Manhas

congratulated all teaching and non-teaching fraternity for their support and gave best wishes to the successful students for their next academic journey.

"The annual examinations 2024 conducted by JKBOSE under Uniform Academic Calendar have successfully concluded with the declaration of this result," he said.

Manhas said, "It is heartening to see that the concerned government departments and all the wings of JKBOSE worked in close coordination to achieve this goal."

He encouraged those students who have not qualified this time to try their best in forthcoming Bi-annual exams with renewed zeal. (KNO)

PM Narendra Modi...

Violence has no place in politics and democracies. Wish him speedy recovery."


Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased, those injured and the American people, he added.

Trump was injured during his election rally when a suspected shooter fired multiple shots toward the stage from an elevated position outside of the rally venue in Butler, the US Secret Service said.

Over 4,800 pilgrims leave...

have paid obeisance at the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas.

The yatra will culminate on 'Shravan Purnima' coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan on August 19. Last year, over 4.5 lakh pilgrims offered prayers at the shrine.



UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT
Office of Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Jammu
Phone: 0191-2577745, Email: jfcj.xenmidjmu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT OF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
e-NIT No. MID/J/e-NIT/2024-25/45 Dated: 12/07/2024

Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Canal Road, Jammu, on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K UT, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from registered and reputed Firms **Repair/ Rewinding of damaged motor of pumping unit no-2 of Manyal Brahmana along with allied works of LIS Gurah Pattan.** The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers viz. Cover 'I' -Tender fee and Earnest Money Deposit, fulfillment of prequalification criteria, technical specifications and acceptance of terms and conditions of the tender and Cover 'II' - Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

S. No.	Name of Work	Qty.	Earnest Money	Cost of tender document	Period of completion	Validity of Rates	Name of Division
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Repair/ Rewinding of damaged motor of pumping unit no-2 of Manyal Brahmana along with allied works of LIS Gurah Pattan.	Complete job as per Scope of Work	2% of the quoted value	Rs200.00	10 Days	180 Days from date of Submission of bid.	Mechanical Irrigation Division, Jammu.

- The tender documents can be viewed and downloaded from the website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>: 12/07/2024 (06:00PM)
- Submission of online bids: 13/07/2024 (10:00PM) to 23-07-2024 (02:00 P.M).
- Opening of Cover I online bids: 24/07/2024 (2:00 PM)

-Sd-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Jammu

DIP/J-2852/24
Date: 13-7-24

BJP is facing unprecedented public resentment across J&K: Bhalla

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla on Sunday denounced the Centre's move to widen the scope of Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant governor's (LG) powers on key administrative and legal matters – ranging from police and public order to postings and prosecution sanction – saying that the step will render the chief minister "powerless" and "disempower" the region's people. This was stated by former Minister while addressing prominent persons of Jallochak, Ward-68 Greater Kailash in RS Pura Jammu South constituency. Prominent among those present on the occasion include former Minister Yash Paul Kundal, Ex MLA Durga Das, General Secretary JKPCC Satish Sharma, Sarpanch Shmsher Singh, Block President Sanjeev Katal, Budhi Singh, Sham Lal, Garu Sngral, Happy Randhawa, Rakesh Chopada, Ganddeep besides others.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla said the move indicated that elections were "around the corner", adding that "a firm commitment laying out the timeline" for restoration of J&K's statehood was a prerequisite for the polls. "The people of J&K deserve better than powerless, rubber stamp CM who will have to beg the LG to get his/her peon appointed," he said. He said the move will convert the J&K assembly into a municipality. "Bhalla accused the central government of continuing to "betray J&K". Govt wants to delay the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, even though the Supreme Court has mandated Assembly Elections by Sept 30th, 2024. Even if full statehood is restored, it wants to keep the newly elected State Govt at the mercy of the LG, by clamping its executive power," he said. Bhalla said that BJP is facing unprecedented public resentment across J&K for its alleged anti people policies but consistently remains in



denial mode to address public issues on priority. Bhalla attacked BJP for its anti-poor, anti-middle class policies. He said "the ruling dispensation has not been able to live up to its promises of providing employment to youth, handholding of artisans and much awaited relief to the poor and downtrodden sections of society". To cover up their failures further, BJP is shying away from elections as the clouds of worry have surrounded them. Life and livelihood of those living on the edge of poverty is not changing for the better", he said and added "amidst untamed inflation and unemployment, the withdrawal of food schemes only added to the daily woes of people".

Bhalla said "how will BJP face people from whose plates it has snatched food? How can a government that has unleashed tax terrorism on people face them? Our middle class, BPL and other marginalized communities are particularly at the receiving end", he added. The former Minister said, "Congress is committed to uplift the poor and downtrodden sections of the society", he said. Bhalla alleged that J&K has witnessed huge

setbacks due to the revocation of statehood by the BJP government including seizing of jobs, land, and the suppression of political and civil rights. JKPCC Working President also castigated the Centre for remaining busy in rhetoric rather than doing work on ground. He said that the situation on ground zero in J&K is contrary to the claims of the BJP leadership over colossal development and lasting peace.

Bhalla said the only aim of BJP is to acquire power by politicizing different issues and the party does not have any motive to work for the people. He said people want change, as the BJP has failed on all fronts of governance especially unchecked price rise, record unemployment besides other anti-employees, anti-trade, anti-poor politics in J&K. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir have only one option to fight this monster of hate and discrimination, that option is the Indian National Congress, the only party which hasn't and which will never cozy with BJP," Bhalla said. "Having failed to give employment to highest number of educated unemployed youth, the Centre and UT Administration is beating

about bushes and finding faults in the past Govts", he added.

Bhalla alleged that decisions taken by the Centre has always deprived the poor people of their rights, he said that the leaders of state BJP never fight for ensuring the rights of poor people of J&K. People of the J&K are aware of this and have shown their power to party in Parliament elections. The people of J&K will continue to reject the BJP in future for its anti-people policies; he added reiterating his demand for restoration of statehood. They know the people are angry with its policies and they have already got a taste of it. The electorate of J&K is waiting for an opportunity to take this government to task for its misdeeds, the Congress leader said. However, Bhalla said, "I want to tell them that the voters of J&K are politically mature and cannot be misled by false slogans and promises. They know their well-wishers and whom to vote for. The people are facing the brunt of the huge taxes as the Modi government is passing on the burden to the common people, he said.

Former Minister Yashpal Kundal said that the

BJP has pushed the Jammu and Kashmir into unprecedented political uncertainty by indulging in politics of hate. BJP ever since getting access to power in Delhi had been on a rampage of dispossessing and disempowering common people of Jammu and Kashmir. It's not about a particular community or a sect, they have went berserk against all of us collectively. We have been used as political cannon fodder by BJP all across the country", Kundal said. "Democracy is in our veins, it is in our culture; 'India is the mother of democracy'; 'India is the temple of democracy'. Great sounding words that the international community lap up & regurgitate ad-nauseam. Meanwhile J&K has already completed 6 years under central rule. Democracy ends where J&K begins," he said. "Entire nation & its leadership must hang their heads in shame for calling itself 'Mother of Democracy'. J&K languishes under central rule for a staggering 5 years, with the last election held 10 years ago. The blatant disregard for people's rights & representation is appalling," Sawhney said.

Ex MLA Durga Das lambasting the BJP-controlled J&K government for playing with the future of J&K people, said "We will not remain a mute spectator to such anti-people decision of the government", he warned and promised that party workers will strongly oppose such actions on the streets. He took a swipe at the BJP-led government at the Centre over inflation saying it is skyrocketing due to anti-people policies. Taking a jibe at the government, he said prices of all essential commodities including vegetables, flour, rice, pulses are increasing continuously. The plate has become costlier by 28 per cent in 1.5 months. "The public has also now understood that this government's entire focus is only on saving the image of the Prime Minister and benefiting its capitalist friends," he added.

Dalip slams Centre's notification enhancing L-G's power

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SUCHETGARH, JULY 14

Senior Congress leader and BDC Chairman Dilip Kumar Sunday termed the Centre's notification giving the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir more power over the police and the civil services a "betrayal" of the people of the Union Territory (UT) and "murder" of the Constitution of India. This was stated by him during his visit at villages Talhar and Gandli in Suchetgarh constituency to listen to grievances of aggrieved people.

Speaking on the occasion, Dalip said the amendments made to the Transaction of Business Rules imply that the Union government is delaying the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, which was downgraded to a UT in 2019. He slammed the Union government's move and termed it a step towards "disempowering" the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The change indicates that there will be limited powers for the elected government in the union territory in matters such as internal security, transfers, prosecution, and appointment of government lawyers, includ-



ing the Attorney-General. In the past, proposals concerning police, public order, all-India services and the Anti-Corruption Bureau required approval from the finance department of Jammu and Kashmir before reaching the L-G, added Dalip. Dalip raised concerns about the implications of having a "powerless and rubber stamp" Chief Minister who would need the L-G's approval even for minor appointments. Despite acknowledging the timing of the decision in relation to upcoming elections, he emphasised the importance of a clear commitment towards restoring full statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. "This is why a firm commitment to laying out the timeline for restoration of full and undiluted statehood for Jammu

and Kashmir is a prerequisite for these polls. "The only meaning that can be drawn from this notification is that full-fledged statehood for Jammu and Kashmir does not seem likely in the immediate future, added Dalip."

"The order seeks to disempower the powers of the next Jammu and Kashmir state government only because the BJP doesn't want to cede control or lose its iron grip over Kashmir. Statehood is out of the question. An elected government in Jammu and Kashmir will be reduced to a Municipality," Dalip said. He raised concerns about the potential impact of the Union government's decision on the upcoming assembly elections and the Centre's reluctance to relinquish control in Jammu and Kashmir.

More than 900 members join in Shiv Sena

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 14

In major boost to the party joining program was organised by Bilal Ahmad Khan District General Secretary Pulwama & Shabir Ahmad Dar at District Ganderbal. More than 900 member & Youth of different Political Parties joined Shiv Sena in the presence of Sh. Shahid Ahmad Wani District President Pulwama, Gulam Jeelani District President Youth & District of Horner Sh. Gulzar Ahmad District President Budgam. Ganderbal Joining Function in Presence of Sh. Naseer Ahmad Lone Vice President Kashmir Division & Shabir Ahmad Beigh Secretary Kashmir Division.

Sh. Ashwani Gupta State President, Sh. Sanjay Bhat State Secretary (Organisation) / Prabhari & State Youth President Ajay Dhar joined the joining program through Video Conferencing.

Sh. Ashwani Gupta welcomed the new member in the party fold to work with respect to the teachings of Bala Sahib and Eknath Shinde. He further asked them to reach to public and bring the genuine problem in the notice knowledge of administration, so that relief to be provided.

Sh. Sanjay Bhat welcomed the new members in the party fold and emphasised upon them to work for the eradication of drug menace in the society particularly amongst the youth & take forward the ideals of Shri Balasahab Ji to every nook & corner of the State.

While addressing the function State Youth President Sh. Ajay Dhar said that Shiv Sena is rapidly expanding its base in JKUT and the party will have approach everywhere in the state. He further appealed the youth to aware people about the importance of taking part in electoral process as every vote matters. While



addressing the function Shahid Ahmad Wani District President Pulwama said Shiv Sena party is for the public and development is our main agenda & further he emphasized the need for conducting SKILL DEVELOPMENT programs in the Districts for the benefit of the Public.

Sh. Gulzar Ahmad District President Budgam said Shiv Sena will fight for the rights of public & asked all members to work for the betterment of the society.

While addressing the function Bilal Ahmad Khan District General Secretary Pulwama said Shiv Sena party is for the public and peace & development is our agenda.

While addressing the another function at Ganderbal District Naseer Ahmad Lone Vice President Kashmir Division praising Hon'ble Chief Minister Sh. Eknath Shinde Ji, that it is the vision of our leadership that Bharat is becoming powerful in every field.

Shabir Ahmad Beigh Secretary Kashmir Division said that youth's strength is nation's strength and youth should come forward to work for nation building.

The others who were present in the joining program are Mohd. Rafiq, Ali Mohd. Yattoo, Lagteef Ahmad Ganie, Lafteef

Ahmad Teli, Nazeer Ahmad Malla, Ab. Gani Ganie, Mohd. Shero Ganie, Mohd. Saleem Ganie, Parvaz Ah Bakshi, Irshad Ah Reshi, Altaf Ah sheikh & Mohd. Rafiq, Ali Mohd. Yattoo, Lagteef Ahmad Ganie, Lafteef Ahmad Teli, Nazeer Ahmad Malla, Ab. Gani Ganie, Mohd. Shero Ganie, Mohd. Saleem Ganie, Parvaz Ah Bakshi, Irshad Ah Reshi, Altaf Ah sheikh, Mohd. Rafiq dar, mohd Shafi Khan, abdul qayoom, Mushtaq Ah lone, mohd Aysan Khan ab ganie Khan, mohd shaban lone, ab Khaliq lone, Abid ayoom lone. Lateef & Altaf Ji, Mohd. Rafiq, Ali Mohd. Yattoo, Lagteef Ahmad Ganie, Lafteef Ahmad Teli, Nazeer Ahmad Malla, Ab. Gani Ganie, Mohd. Shero Ganie, Mohd. Saleem Ganie, Parvaz Ah Bakshi, Irshad Ah Reshi, altaf Ah sheikh, altaf Ah sheikh, mohd Rafiq dar, mohd Shafi Khan, abdul qayoom, Mushtaq Ah lone, mohd Aysan Khan ab ganie Khan, mohd shaban lone, ab Khaliq lone, Abid ayoom lone. Lateef & Altaf Ji & Many more.

20 Days Translation Skill Internship Workshop concluded at Dogri Sanstha Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

20 Days Translation Skill Internship Workshop concluded at Dogri Sanstha Jammu. In the concluding function organized at Dogri Sanstha, Dogri Bhawan, Karan Nagar, Jammu Dr. S.P. Saraswat, Principal, Padmashri Padma Sachdev Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu was the Chief Guest.

A 60 hours Translation Skill Internship Workshop that ran continuously for 20 days with 3 hours a day covered many subjects related to development of translation skills of the participants that would be quite helpful in making their professional career or earn livelihood in future. These included News, Informative Literature, Journalism, Fiction, Sub Titling, Web Content, Advertisement, Prose and Poetry. About 36 students of Government Women College Parade and Padmashri Padma Sachdev Government College for



Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu participated in the Internship Workshop which had galaxy of faculty members like Prof. Lalit Magotra, Prof. Veena Gupta, Prof. Shashi Pathania, Prof. Archana Kesar, Dr. Nirmal Vinod, Dr. Bansilal Sharma, Dr. Chanchal Bhasin, Dr. Sandeep Dubey and Jagdeep Dubey. All the faculty members have either served or serving at Jammu University in different capacities or are well-known litterateurs.

Prof. Lalit Magotra, President Dogri Sanstha Jammu while speaking on the occasion said that this initiative under New Education Policy is a welcome step as such internship workshops if orga-

nized on regular basis will not only develop skills of participants but will also connect them with their mother tongue and cultural heritage. He appreciated the participants for their keen interest to learn the basics and hoped that their enthusiasm will not diminish after the conclusion of this workshop but will inspire them to continue practicing so as to get benefitted from such initiatives at right time thus coming up to expectations of Government aimed at. He said that many of the participants have good writing skills and if they concentrate more on it, they may emerge as good writers also thus contributing to different genres

of Dogri literature. He further added that it was a privilege for Dogri Sanstha also that it got an opportunity to conduct such an ambitious and important workshop and hoped that the association for such projects with different colleges will continue in future too.

Dr. S.P. Saraswat, the Chief Guest in his address while extending his gratitude to Dogri Sanstha for facilitating Translation Skill Internship Workshop for the students said that Dogri Sanstha is a strong voice for preserving and promoting mother tongue Dogri and students are lucky enough to learn the skills from the expert faculty members. He said

that skill development workshops are necessary as these initiatives give confidence to students to generate income and make their future of their own choice as many options are available backed with their skills. He also added that this particular workshop is a special one as it has provided an opportunity to participants to get connected with their roots. He expected that collaboration with Dogri Sanstha will become a regular feature for such projects of utmost importance.

In the concluding function, the participants enamoured the gathering with dogri poems written by established poets of the region. They were given participation certificates, Dogri books and a brief biography of Padma Sachdev. The concluding function was anchored by Pawan Verma and Prof. Shashi Pathania extended vote of thanks. It was attended by many litterateurs & literature lovers and concluded with Dogri Dham.

EDITORIAL

Congress party's leadership dilemma in J&K

The recent developments surrounding the prospective return of former legislators from the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) to the Congress party in Jammu and Kashmir have brought to light a significant challenge within the Congress leadership. While some leaders are keen on reuniting with their former political home under the Congress banner, internal dynamics and ambitions are muddying the waters. It's evident that certain local leaders within the Congress are wary of the return of these DPAP-affiliated leaders. Their fear seems rooted in the potential challenge to their own positions of influence within the party hierarchy. This apprehension has reportedly led to misinformation campaigns aimed at dissuading the Congress high command from welcoming back these leaders, who are viewed as threats to their entrenched positions. The Congress party, traditionally known for its inclusive ethos and broad-based coalition, finds itself at a crossroads in J&K. On one hand, there is a pragmatic opportunity to bolster its ranks with experienced politicians who have expressed a desire to return, citing disillusionment with the current trajectory of DPAP under Ghulam Nabi Azad. These leaders, having contested elections on Congress tickets previously, now seek a familiar and possibly more promising political landscape ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. However, the reported resistance from within the Congress ranks underscores deeper issues of internal politics and power struggles. The reluctance to facilitate the return of these leaders suggests a disconnect between the aspirational goals of the party and the tactical maneuvering of its local factions. Such discord risks undermining the party's cohesion and electoral prospects at a crucial juncture. Moreover, the timing of these developments is critical. With Assembly elections looming, the Congress party cannot afford internal strife or indecision. It must demonstrate unity and clarity of purpose to present a formidable alternative to other political entities in the region. The potential return of seasoned leaders should be viewed not just as a reunion but as a strategic opportunity to consolidate and expand its electoral base. In navigating this situation, the Congress high command must exercise judicious leadership. It should prioritize the long-term interests of the party over short-sighted factionalism. Welcoming back former members should be accompanied by a commitment to fostering a cohesive and supportive environment within the party, where diverse perspectives contribute to a stronger political force. Ultimately, the Congress party's response to the "Ghar Wapsi" of these leaders will serve as a litmus test of its ability to reconcile internal differences and present a united front. This is not just about individual political ambitions but about the party's collective resilience and electoral viability in Jammu and Kashmir. Clarity, inclusivity, and strategic foresight should guide the Congress leadership's decisions in the days ahead. The opportunity for reconciliation and renewal is at hand. It remains to be seen whether the Congress party can rise above internal discord and harness the potential of returning leaders to rejuvenate its presence in Jammu and Kashmir's political landscape.

NATO: A legacy of conflict and controversy

NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), widely regarded as the most notorious and venomous military alliance in history, celebrated its 75th anniversary in Washington this week, amidst claims of establishing global peace. However, NATO's actions have often spread war across continents in pursuit of supremacy. Following a disastrous performance in the presidential debate, President Joe Biden unsurprisingly announced increased military aid to Ukraine, targeting their 'designated enemy' at the expense of this small European nation. NATO's ambitions are clear: to weaken Russia through proxy wars and to provoke China into potential conflict in Asia.

However, finding examples where NATO has truly ensured peaceful lives for ordinary people, rather than pursuing its broader goal of supremacy through alliances with enemies of its enemies, remains challenging. NATO must be held accountable for its violations of international law and its failure to protect unarmed civilians in nearly every conflict it has engaged in since its inception. While NATO celebrated its 75th anniversary, mainstream media barely acknowledged the 25th anniversary of this war-oriented alliance. June 10 marks the 25th anniversary of the end of NATO's bombing campaign in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, initiated without UN Security Council approval and lasting 78 days. NATO dropped 22,000 tonnes of bombs, including 15 tonnes of depleted uranium, result-

ing in over 2,500 deaths, including 79 children, and displacing over a million residents. The aftermath included long-term health and environmental impacts from depleted uranium munitions. In the decade following the bombing, approximately 30,000 people in Serbia developed cancer, with over 10,000 deaths. Studies indicate increased cancer rates and other serious health issues among children born after 1999. Three thousand victims have filed lawsuits against NATO, despite the alliance claiming immunity based on agreements with Serbia and Montenegro.

Serbian experts dispute this, stating that no agreements grant NATO immunity for past war crimes. NATO's attempts to evade accountability only accentuate its war crimes and the suffering it caused. Since its establishment, NATO's military operations have frequently resulted in chaos and trauma rather than peace and stability. From April 1992 to December 1995, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina erupted among its three main ethnic groups over their future and territorial divisions. Shortly before the outbreak of war in Bosnia, NATO hastily recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence, exacerbating ethnic conflicts in the region. NATO launched extensive airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs, eventually compelling the three ethnic groups to sign the Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a consequence, 278,000 civilians perished, over 2 million people became refugees, and the war inflicted more than \$5.1 billion in direct economic

losses, with the majority of economic facilities destroyed. The Kosovo War, ignited by ethnic tensions and led by the US-backed NATO without UN authorisation, lasted from March 24, 1999, to June 10, 1999. The three-month bombing campaign caused 1,800 civilian deaths, 6,000 injuries, and substantial infrastructure damage, amounting to economic losses of £150 billion. This marked NATO's first offensive war against a sovereign state without UN approval, marking a shift towards interventionism and expansionism.

NATO's actions violated international law, including the UN Charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, through the use of force against Belgrade. Despite this, no NATO member has been fully held accountable for their actions, in stark contrast to incidents involving their erstwhile 'puppets,' such as the swift hanging of Saddam Hussein of Iraq by Western forces or the extrajudicial killing of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, famously remarked on by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with, 'We came, we saw, he died.' In Afghanistan, the US-led NATO coalition launched a war against al-Qaida and the Taliban on October 7, 2001, in response to the September 11 attacks.

The two-decade-long conflict ended abruptly with the withdrawal of US and NATO forces in May 2021, resulting in 241,000 deaths, including 71,000 civilians, and displacing millions.

The war generated significant economic losses, averaging approximately \$45 million per day, and led to social disorder in Afghanistan, with 72% of the population living

below the poverty line and 3.5 million children deprived of education. A new report issued this Monday by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) revealed shocking statistics: over 24% of Afghan children aged 5-17 experience anxiety, while 15% suffer from depression in this war-torn country.

This is the legacy left behind by those who claimed they could guarantee a peaceful life under a rule-based system founded on democratic norms. During this period, terrorist networks such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Al-Qaeda expanded, worsening regional instability. This pattern of devastation persisted in Iraq and Libya, where NATO interventions resulted in substantial civilian casualties and prolonged instability.

NATO's actions consistently undermined peace and security, earning it a reputation as a war machine rather than a force for peace. However, in Ukraine, NATO finds itself in disarray, having underestimated Russia's determination to defend its interests while overestimating its ability to expand its military alliance to Moscow's doorstep. The strategy of flooding Ukraine with weaponry for swift victory has backfired, with Russia proving resilient in defence.

As the conflict drags on, NATO member states face escalating costs and inflationary debt, while Ukraine depletes its fighting-age soldiers. Western leaders, deeply invested in the conflict, encounter diminishing confidence in Ukraine's capacity to reclaim territories without escalating the conflict and potentially involving NATO troops—a

move that lacks public support. In recent months, Russia has made incremental territorial gains, advancing in the Kharkiv Oblast and compelling Ukrainian forces to retreat from a neighbourhood in Chasiv Yar, Donetsk.

However, the lack of significant progress has raised doubts about Russia's capabilities. While struggling to maintain the frontline, Ukraine has targeted Russian ships, energy depots, and border regions with drones, resulting in casualties. Two and a half years into the conflict, neither side appears capable of achieving a military solution. Ukraine faces substantial challenges in reclaiming captured territories, while Russia's aggression has bolstered NATO's resolve, which now pledges long-term support for Kyiv. A viable resolution entails bringing both parties to the negotiating table. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have expressed support for dialogue. Russia's allies should urge President Vladimir Putin to cease hostilities and engage earnestly in negotiations, while Ukraine's supporters should encourage Kyiv to consider peace talks—although NATO vehemently opposes this idea.

With American elections looming, a Trump victory could pave the way for a negotiated settlement, whereas a Biden re-election might prolong the conflict, potentially transforming Ukraine into another Afghanistan or Vietnam. Meanwhile, Russia's economy has strengthened despite sanctions, buoyed by trade partnerships with China and India.

Historians might view the US-led NATO expan-

sion as a strategic failure that catalysed the formation of an alliance among BRICS nations to counter NATO. President Xi Jinping perceives Putin as pivotal in opposing the United States and its allies, although a new Trump administration could potentially avert broader conflict and repair relations with adversaries. The summit's news report highlighted NATO and its Indo-Pacific partners—Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand—launching four joint projects aimed at deepening cooperation, announced by US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at the NATO Defence Industry Forum. Amidst the celebration of this military alliance, Asia faces the daunting task of safeguarding its position against a coalition adept at leveraging proxies to achieve its objectives. This historical pattern resonates with poignant examples throughout history.

Asia's imperative now is to cultivate robust trade relationships and settle territorial disputes through constructive dialogue, preempting external interference. History presents a stark choice: yield to foreign ambitions, akin to the post-World War II tragedies and subsequent killing fields from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and West Asia to present-day conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, or thrive together in dignified coexistence. The path to a peaceful future hinges on a unified commitment to peace and saying no to NATO and its proxies. Better the devil you know than the angel you don't.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views are personal)

Balancing Empathy and Professionalism

RACHNA LAKHPATI

Layoffs are never easy. The impact on the affected employees will be deep and most often devastating; it is a turning point in their professional and personal lives—a stressful one, of course. But what the majority of people are not aware of is that those tasked to deliver the message—the HR professionals—also carry an emotional burden. It may be the senior leadership making tough decisions, but HR bears the heart-wrenching job of communicating them. HR professionals are often the stoic face of the company during

these times. But behind the professionalism of that stone exterior is a very real understanding of the weight of their actions. They, too, are humans.

They also carry the burden of those decisions. The difference lies in their need to balance empathy with the requirement of upholding company policies and procedures, often concealing their feelings in the process. When an HR professional sits down with an employee to discuss a layoff, how complicated the emotions in that moment can be is beyond measure. They know they are delivering news that will change a life. However, how that news is con-

veyed does indeed have an impact.

There are no ideal words to cushion the blow, but compassion can help ease the transition. Difficult situations present an opportunity for HR professionals to think of effective strategies. They can understand and relate to the challenges faced by their staff, while also providing a positive outlook and potential for growth. They could say, "I do appreciate that this job may be a priority to you, but on the other hand, this could be one of those opportunities for upskilling to do something you are passionate about." I mean, such words, though

they don't diminish the hardship—can usher in a glimmer of positivity.

This compassionate attitude toward the situation epitomises how such initiatives can give hope and dignity to the employees during this painful process of transition. It is important to keep in mind that neither the employee nor the organisation wants to end their relationship on a sour note. By approaching layoffs with professionalism laced with humanity, HR can help ensure a transition to be as respectful and supportive as possible, even while it remains painful.

That being said, while layoffs can be one of

the more challenging aspects of corporate life, there is certainly room for improvement in how these transitions are handled. Showing empathy, fostering clear communication, and providing support can greatly improve the experience for those undergoing layoffs. In times of uncertainty and change, it's important to remember that even small acts of kindness can make a difference.

Moreover, providing outplacement services, career counseling, and job search assistance can help laid-off employees find new opportunities more quickly. Encouraging networking and offer-

ing workshops on resume writing and interview skills can also make a significant difference. HR departments can collaborate with local businesses and employment agencies to create a support network for those affected.

By taking these extra steps, companies can demonstrate a genuine commitment to the well-being of their employees, even in difficult times. This holistic approach not only aids in the immediate transition but also helps maintain a positive company reputation in the long term.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

Modi-Putin summit revives India-Russia relations amid global tensions

PARUL CHANDRA

Just when there was a growing perception that ties between India and Russia were losing momentum, even stagnating, the summit-level meeting between PM Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin should help impart a fresh impetus to bilateral relations.

Held after a gap of over two years, amid the ongoing geopolitical churn, the 22nd summit saw the two sides resolve to unlock the full potential of their strategic partnership. The summit's outcomes conveyed New Delhi's intent to continue to forge closer ties with Moscow, notwithstanding the widespread Western opprobrium Putin has drawn after Russia invaded Ukraine and the consequent sanctions slapped on his country. With Putin preoccupied with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, now into its

third year, the summit-level meetings had fallen by the wayside. The last summit was held in New Delhi in December 2021.

The summit indicated eagerness on the part of both sides to not just reinvigorate the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership', but also make economic cooperation the lynchpin of the relationship. This was reflected in a separate joint statement spelling out nine key areas for economic cooperation, with a new bilateral trade target of \$100 billion being set for 2030. While the Modi-Putin Summit left Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressing "disappointing and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal", it's unlikely to hurt New Delhi's close ties with Kyiv. India may not have condemned the inva-

sion, but Modi did tell Putin "there is no peace on the battlefield" while reiterating India's position on the need for dialogue. While Washington also expressed its displeasure over the Modi-Putin meeting, it is unlikely that will allow this to impact the trajectory of its ties with Moscow, propelled as they are by India's strategic imperatives. One of them, of course, is the tightening Russia-China embrace. The thrust on closer ties with Russia will also help address Moscow's concerns over New Delhi's decidedly pronounced tilt towards Washington. India has so far managed to do a fine balancing act between the two geopolitical rivals and should continue to do so.

India sees Russia as a time-tested trusted partner. Much as the Western world would like to keep a sanctions-hit Russia isolated over the Ukraine war, India's push for broader

and deeper economic linkages reflects its own strategic needs. India's purchase of Russian oil despite the sanctions will not just continue but is expected to increase further. Crude imports from Russia have increased from 2.5 million tonnes in 2021 to 90 million tonnes in 2023, with India being clear this is vital for its energy security. Investments in the energy sector by both sides also remain a top priority. Fertilizer imports from Russia, too, are seen as vital for India's agriculture sector. Russian oil imports have helped push the bilateral trade figures to \$65.70 billion. But while Indian imports were worth \$61.44 billion, its exports accounted for a mere \$4.26 billion.

While happy to import Russian oil at discounted rates, New Delhi will need to address this trade imbalance by widening the trade basket with Russia. Among the major export items

from India are pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, iron and steel and electrical machinery.

That the two sides agreed to look at the possibility of eliminating non-tariff trade barriers and the setting up of a Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-India Free Trade Area shows the seriousness of intent to promote bilateral trade. The nudge to begin full negotiations for a free trade agreement between India and the EAEU too should lend a fillip to trade ties.

Connectivity too remains a priority for both sides. It would mean access for Indian goods to the Eurasian markets. However, the proposed INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) is still a long way away from becoming a reality. While there is renewed interest between the two sides to establish a Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor, which was first mooted in 2019, it also

remains to be seen whether it will fructify. The summit, of course, also emphasized the importance of robust cooperation in the defence sector, which is an important element of India's security paradigm. Russia remains India's biggest arms supplier despite New Delhi's continuing efforts to diversify by turning to others like the US, France and Israel to meet its requirements. India would have undoubtedly sought to address its concerns over the delays in the supply of Russian military hardware and spares owing to the Ukraine war. The Modi-Putin Summit may have left the West flummoxed, but it's fairly obvious New Delhi will plough its furrow so long as it serves its strategic priorities. The writer is a senior journalist who writes on foreign affairs.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

India needs stronger policy & infra to enable healthier food choices: Expert

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

India is ahead of neighbouring countries in the implementation of food environment policies, but needs stronger policies and infrastructure to enable healthier food choices to combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like obesity, diabetes, and heart diseases, according to an expert on Sunday.

In a recent study, an international team of researchers, including scientists from The George Institute for Global Health, mapped the food policies and supporting infrastructure in four South Asian countries including Ban-

gladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The team assessed the level of implementation of these policies and identified priority actions for the primary prevention of diet-related NCDs.

Speaking to IANS, Elisa Pineda, Research Fellow at The George Institute for Global Health, UK, said, "India was generally better than neighbouring countries in terms of implementation of food environment policies and infrastructure support related to food and health".

"But it still needs improvement to prevent the rising incidence of diet-related diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular dis-

ease," she added.

The study, published in the journal *The Lancet Regional Health - South-east Asia*, showed that NCDs are the leading cause of illness and death worldwide.

South Asians, in particular, face a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases compared to other populations. The prevalence of diabetes in South Asia is projected to be about 151 million by 2045, it noted.

While the causes of NCDs are complex, an unhealthy diet is a leading modifiable risk factor, Dr. Elisa said.

Evidence suggests that improving food environ-



ments and implementing effective food-related policies are key to achieving healthier diets and reducing the prevalence of NCDs.

"India showed moderate progress in food labelling and taxation -- all packaged foods were labelled in line

with Codex recommendations and the government has introduced health taxes and regulations on the content of salt, sugar, and fat in food products, fruits and vegetables are tax-free, and there is a "Fat Tax" on unhealthy foods," the researcher said.

"However, other areas like food composition, provision, trade policies, and promotion remained weak.

"Although the promotion of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt was prohibited in schools, regulation of the promotion of unhealthy foods in other settings is required," Elisa said.

Further, the study showed that in terms of infrastructure support for healthier food environments, India performed relatively well in leadership, governance, monitoring, and funding compared to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

However, "areas like platforms and integrat-

ing health into all policies were still weak, as there were no processes to assess the health impacts during the development of other non-food-related policies and no formal platforms between the government, the commercial sector, and civil society on food policies for improving population health," Elisa said.

"Overall, while India was ahead in certain aspects, significant efforts are needed to achieve stronger and more comprehensive implementation in both policy and infrastructure support to enable healthier food choices and prevent non-communicable diseases like type 2 diabetes and

cardiovascular diseases," she added.

The study called for urgent action to expand food policies beyond hygiene and food security measures.

Key recommendations include enhancing food labelling to help consumers make healthier choices; introducing taxes on unhealthy foods and subsidies for healthy options to encourage better eating habits; implementing stricter regulations on the marketing of unhealthy foods, especially to children; and ensuring that school meals meet high nutritional standards to promote healthy eating habits from a young age.

Scientists find protein to block muscle fatigue in long Covid, Alzheimer's

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

US researchers have identified a protein responsible for causing fatigue in people with long Covid, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

While infections and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's are known to cause inflammation in the brain, the patients often develop muscle problems that seem to be independent of the central nervous system. A team led by the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis found that it is caused by a specific protein that travels from the brain to the muscles and leads to loss of muscle function. The study, conducted in fruit flies and mice, also identified ways



to block this process. This may help physicians treat or prevent muscle wasting caused by bacterial infections, Alzheimer's disease, and long Covid.

Aaron Johnson, Associate professor of developmental biology explained that when people are ill, "messenger proteins from the brain travel through the bloodstream and reduce energy levels in skeletal muscle."

The "process reduces

energy levels in skeletal muscle, decreasing the capacity to move and function normally", he said, in the study, published in the journal *Science Immunology*. For the study, the team modelled three different types of diseases -- an E. coli bacterial infection, a SARS-CoV-2 viral infection, and Alzheimer's.

They found that when the brain is exposed to inflammation, it builds

up damaging chemicals called reactive oxygen species. This causes brain cells to produce an immune-related molecule called interleukin-6 (IL-6), which travels throughout the body via the bloodstream.

In mice, IL-6 was responsible -- and the corresponding protein in fruit flies -- for reducing energy production in muscles' mitochondria, known as the cells' energy factories.

They also found that IL-6 activates what is called the JAK-STAT pathway in muscle, and this is what causes the reduced energy production of mitochondria.

Currently, several therapeutics already approved by the Food and Drug Administration for other diseases can block this pathway, the team said.

Monsoon likely to trigger foot ulcers in diabetic patients: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Monsoon raises the risk of foot ulcers in people with diabetes due to increased moisture and humidity, said experts on Sunday, stating the urgent need for specialised care and awareness.

Diabetic foot is a severe complication of diabetes that takes a toll on the feet due to prolonged high blood sugar levels. It raises the risk of nerve damage (neuropathy) and poor blood circulation, foot ulcers, infections, and amputation in severe cases.

An estimated 15 per cent of diabetics are likely to experience the foot problem. While the risk runs all year, increased humidity during monsoons worsens the con-

dition, said experts.

"Diabetic foot cases are seen more often especially in hot and humid weather, though we see them across the year. More than 50 per cent of people with diabetes experience foot infections during monsoon. People in the age group 50-65 with uncontrolled diabetes tend to commonly suffer from foot infections," Shashank Joshi, Endocrinologist, Lilavati Hospital Mumbai, told IANS.

Diabetic foot ulcer patients with severe infection may even require amputation. It also accounts for a significant proportion of non-traumatic lower-limb amputations, stressing the need for preventive care and timely intervention.

"Diabetic foot ulcers lead to serious infections, amputations, and decreased quality of life. With monsoon season raising the risk due to increased moisture and humidity, diabetic patients need to maintain foot hygiene, opt for regular check-ups, and wear appropriate footwear to prevent ulcers," Jaism Chopra, Vascular Surgeon at Apollo Spectra Hospitals, Delhi, told IANS.

According to a recent study by the Christian Medical College, Vellore, in India, more people with diabetes are having their toes or even feet removed due to sores than the former estimates.

It also found that after one amputation, the chance of having another

in the future is three times higher.

"The reason for this is lack of nerve sensation and blood supply, so awareness and regular foot care is crucial. This is preventable," Shashank said.

The key to good foot care is good sugar control, and care of nerves and vessels as well as regular foot check.

Specialist diabetic footwear is also available and people living with diabetes should seek expert care.

He advised diabetics to "quit smoking to enhance circulation, dry your feet, not walk barefoot, trim nails regularly, choose good quality socks if you are wearing shoes, and to consult an expert in case of wounds, redness, blisters, or ulcers".

Four children die in Gujarat from suspected Chandipura virus infection

AGENCIES
SABARKANTHA (GUJARAT), JULY 14

Four children have succumbed to suspected Chandipura virus infection in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district, while two others are receiving treatment at the Himmatnagar civil hospital, an official statement said on Saturday.

In the wake of the outbreak, district authorities have initiated preventive measures, including dusting to eliminate sandflies in the affected areas to curb the spread of the infection.

The deaths occurred on July 10 and one of the deceased was from Sabarkantha, two were from the neighbouring Aravalli

district, and the fourth was from Rajasthan. The two children undergoing treatment also hail from Rajasthan.

Rajasthan authorities have been notified about the death due to the suspected viral infection.

The Chandipura virus, a member of the Rhabdoviridae family, leads to symptoms akin to flu and can cause acute encephalitis, a severe inflammation of the brain.

It was first identified in 1965 in Maharashtra and has been linked to various outbreaks of encephalitic illness in the country. A significant outbreak occurred in 2003 in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, resulting in 183 deaths among 329 affected children. Sporadic cases and fatalities were also noted in Gujarat in 2004.

Transmission of the virus occurs through vectors like mosquitoes, ticks, and sandflies.

Sabarkantha Chief District Health Officer, Raj Sutariya, said that blood samples from the six affected children have been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune for confirmation.

"Paediatricians at the Himmatnagar Civil Hospital suspected the Chandipura virus following the deaths of four children on July 10. The two other children currently hospitalised are displaying similar symptoms, indicating a likely infection by the same virus," an official said.

Indian-American scientist discovers new biomarker for obsessive compulsive disorder

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

A team of researchers led by an Indian-American scientist Dr Sameer Sheth has identified a specific neural activity pattern for patients who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and have undergone deep brain stimulation (DBS) for its treatment.

The team's goal was to determine how low-frequency brain oscillations in the theta (4-8 Hertz) to alpha (8-12 Hertz) range, which have been shown in a substantial body of scientific literature to play an important role in cognitive processes, were altered in people with severe, treatment-resistant OCD.

To accomplish this, the team from Baylor College

of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital in the US used a novel feature of contemporary DBS devices: the ability to record brain activity in addition to providing stimulation.

Unlike most studies, which are done in lab conditions, this one was done in real-life situations.

Before DBS, predictable and periodic neural activity was seen and after its activation, symptomatic reactions were seen, because DBS helps the patients let go of their phobias and embedded responses, allowing them to behave more normally, the researchers noted in the study published in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

"This neuro-psychological biomarker can serve as a better litmus test to

check on the improvements in the lives of people having OCD and could be used for other debilitating conditions as well for they stem from similar neural patterns," said Dr Sheth at Baylor College of Medicine.

OCD is a prevalent and debilitating mental health illness that affects approximately 2-3 per cent of the global population.

In severe circumstances, patients spend a significant amount of time engaging in repetitive compulsions and dwell on intrusive ideas.

OCD has a significant impact on the health and quality of life of patients and careers. Approximately 20-40 per cent of people with severe OCD are resistant to traditional therapies.

Eating beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas may help you manage diabetes better

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

Finding it hard to manage your blood sugar levels? Pulses like beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas can help manage your diabetes, according to a new review of studies on Friday. Pulses also have positive effects on important cardiovascular biomarkers, like low-density lipoprotein (LDL), also known as bad cholesterol, and high-density lipoprotein (HDL), also known as good cholesterol, revealed the study. The review, based on 30 articles, contributes to the body of evidence supporting the need for future dietary guidelines and additional research on increasing

pulse consumption within optimal dietary patterns. The most frequently assessed study outcomes included changes in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, fasting blood sugar, haemoglobin A1c, waist circumference, and C-reactive protein or high-sensitivity C-reactive protein. The review, published in the journal *Nutrients*, points out the "potential role of pulses in maintaining health and preventing chronic disease", said Taylor C. Wallace, Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Medicine at George Washington University, US.

Cellular inflammation behind rare neurodegenerative condition: Scientists

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Researchers have found that inflammation in an immune cell may be responsible for very rare genetic conditions known as lysosomal storage diseases (LSDs).

The LSDs affect one in 7,700 live births and while symptoms present themselves in early ages, most children affected by this scenario die a premature, cruel death.

New research by Hospital for Sick Children (Sick-Kids), affiliated with the University of Toronto, and published in *Nature Cell Biology* shed lights on this condition which has been lounging in the scientific darkrooms for a long time.



Macrophage cells absorb and digest vast amounts of nutrients to help the immune system function properly. Lysosomes are small organelles that help cells break down and recycle nutrients.

When functional, a

lysosome can convert big carbohydrates into tiny sugars, which are then used as an energy source. LSDs cause these macrophage lysosomes to swell and fill with debris, a process that involves enlarged lysosomes struggle to

avoid breaking apart and spilling their contents, which would kill the cell, explained the study led by Dr Spencer Freeman, a scientist in the Cell Biology programme; Ruiqi Cai, a senior post-doctoral fellow and Ori Scott, a transition clinician scientist in the Cell Biology programme.

To accomplish this, lysosomes establish a channel that transfers sodium out of the lysosomes, followed by water, to keep them smaller. This sends a sign that the lysosome and cell are stressed.

The stressed macrophages subsequently

send out a "SOS" signal by releasing a chemical called MCP-1 (monocyte chemoattractant protein 1), which instructs other macrophages.

The findings indicate that inhibiting the sodium channel or the MCP-1 receptor in macrophages may minimize inflammation and tissue damage in LSDs.

The researchers are likely to keep exploring the molecular underpinnings underlying lysosome failure and inflammation, only then it will be easier to identify new therapeutic targets and enhance the quality of life for individuals suffering with LSDs and other associated disorders such as Parkinson's.

New biomarkers reveal if glaucoma patients are at high risk of losing eyesight

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

A team of researchers has discovered blood markers that may predict whether glaucoma patients are at a higher risk of continuing to lose eyesight after normal therapy.

Glaucoma (known as kala motia in India), affects nearly 11.2 million people aged 40 and above in India. It's the third common cause of blindness in our country, according to experts.

The main factors for glaucoma are old age and high blood pressure. Treatments to lower the intraocular pressure in the eye are available but they are



not foolproof.

Researchers from University College London (UCL) and Moorfields Eye Hospital in the UK investigated whether mitochondrial function, as evaluated in white blood cells, is lower in people with glaucoma and if there is any connection at all.

The subjects were studied on the efficiency of their blood cells using oxygen, the amount of eyesight lost

over time, and the levels of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD).

NAD is a chemical in the body that helps cells produce energy and is derived from vitamin B3 in the food.

Firstly, the researchers observed that particular cells in the blood, known as peripheral blood mononuclear cells, use oxygen differently in persons with glaucoma.

Secondly, people with glaucoma have lower amounts of NAD in their blood cells, which means lower oxygen consumption in their body cells, according to the study published in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

Eyeing Assembly poll, Ajit Pawar discusses seat-sharing with HM Shah

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JULY 14

Buoyed by the victory of its two candidates in the biennial election to the Maharashtra Legislative Council held on Friday, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed a range of issues including crucial seat-sharing among the MahaYuti partners for the upcoming assembly election, a road map to further strengthen the alliance to take on the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and the crop loan waiver for farmers.

Confirming Pawar's

meeting with Shah, sources from NCP on Sunday said, "It is very clear that MahaYuti will together contest the ensuing assembly election in Maharashtra with full force and strength with a sole objective of retaining the power. Shah has ruled out the possibility of the BJP going solo or severing links with the NCP or with Shiv Sena. A veteran BJP leader and Union home minister also clarified that the BJP will give due justice to the allies including Shiv Sena and NCP in the seat-sharing with winnability as the leading criteria."

The sources added that MahaYuti's victory over nine seats in the state council election has boost-



ed the morale of its party workers, especially after the dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections.

The timing of Pawar's meeting is crucial as Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had reportedly held a similar meeting with Shah a fortnight ago. Shinde, who will lead the MahaYuti in the upcoming assembly election, has been call-

ing the shots after he won seven of the 15 seats fought in the Lok Sabha elections.

Shinde is believed to have conveyed to the BJP that Shiv Sena is keen to contest 100 seats in the Assembly election. Shinde's proposal came after pressures mounted on the BJP from the cadres to not contest less than 150 seats considering its victo-

ry on 106 seats in the 2009 assembly elections.

Against this backdrop, Pawar's meeting was all the more significant as the NCP has been repeatedly reminding the BJP that it was promised 90 Assembly seats when it joined MahaYuti in July 2022. If BJP is staking claim over 150 seats and Shinde on 100 seats then NCP will be left with 38 seats which will be unacceptable for it.

As per the sources, Shah has reiterated that MahaYuti will remain intact.

Pawar, who as the state finance minister has proposed a slew of freebies and sops to farmers, women, youth, industry and varied sections in the budget, has also made a

strong case for the waiver in crop loan in a bid to give much-needed relief to farmers who are in distress due to damage to their crops in the wake of natural calamities and market variations in the prices of agricultural produces.

The deputy CM brought to Shah's notice that the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi government had implemented a crop loan waiver scheme but MahaYuti covered and gave benefits to the farmers who were repaying their loans regularly. Pawar's suggestion is important as during 2023-24, agriculture and allied sectors are expected to grow by a paltry 1.9 per cent against 4.5 per cent in 2022-23.

Foreign powers tried to stop BJP from coming to power: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

AGENCIES

JAIPUR, JULY 13

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan on Saturday said that foreign powers did their best to "stop" Prime Minister Narendra Modi from coming to power for a third time.

"Foreign powers interfered in Lok Sabha elections. These powers tried all ways and means to ensure that the BJP government doesn't get elected at the Centre for the third time," Chouhan said while addressing the BJP's State Working Committee meeting in Jaipur.

BJP Election in Charge and National Vice President Vinay Sahastrabudde also supported the Union Minister's remarks, saying that the BJP got fewer seats due

to interference of foreign powers who played a "role" in the elections.

"Foreign powers and the opposition's fake narrative on the reservation issue were two things due to which we got fewer seats. We got around 60 to 65 seats less, which is painful," he said.

In Rajasthan, the BJP lost 11 seats out of 25 seats in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma told party workers to work hard as their work is being monitored.

"You all are also being monitored by the organisation. Your work is also being monitored. I was also one amongst you till recently," the Chief Minister said.

Manipur: CRPF trooper killed, 3 cops injured after militants ambush joint patrol party

AGENCIES

IMPHAL, JULY 14

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan was killed and three other security personnel got injured when suspected militants ambushed a joint patrol party with the state police in Manipur's Jiribam district on Sunday, police said.

The three injured include a CRPF jawan and two Manipur police personnel.

A police official in Imphal said that the joint patrol party came under heavy fire from the hilltop by suspected militants at Morbung village of Jiribam district bordering Assam.

The CRPF troopers were inside a patrol SUV when the suspected insurgents opened fire, the police official said, adding that the vehicle was later found with bullet holes and its windshield shattered.



The security personnel retaliated and the militants took shelter in the forest of the mountainous terrain.

A combing operation is now going on and additional forces have rushed to the areas.

The injured security personnel were quickly evacuated and are currently under medical treatment in the govern-

ment hospital.

Sunday's incident was the second militant attack on the security forces in Manipur in five weeks.

On June 10, suspected militants attacked the advance security convoy of Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in the state's Kangpokpi district and a security personnel was injured in the attack.

The advance security convoy was on its way to the trouble-torn Jiribam district on June 10 ahead of the Chief Minister's scheduled visit to the state's bordering district with Assam which recently witnessed violence.

The advance convoy was attacked near Kotlen village on the Imphal-Jiribam National Highway (NH-37).

Jiribam witnessed a wave of violence after the killing of 59-year-old farmer Soibam Sarat Kumar Singh on June 6.

The Jiribam violence led to around 900 tribals belonging to the Kuki and Hmar communities taking shelter at the homes of relatives and friends in two villages in the Cachar district of southern Assam, while around 1,000 people, mostly belonging to the Meitei community, are now sheltered in seven relief camps in Jiribam.

NITI Aayog launches hackathon to accelerate zero-emission truck adoption in India

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 14

NITI Aayog, on Sunday, announced the launch of the GearShift challenge as part of the e-FAST India initiative.

The hackathon is in collaboration with Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore, Smart Freight Centre India, CALSTART/Drive to Zero, and WRI India.

It "will help foster innovative business models for the adoption of zero-emission trucks (ZETs) in India, and also address the nation's pressing economic and environmental challenges," NITI Aayog said.

As part of the hackathon, students, transport service practitioners, academics, and researchers will develop innovative business models that address financial, technical, and operational challenges in the adoption of electric trucks.

In the first round, teams will submit their initial business models addressing a specific barrier - technical, operational, or financial - that is supported by high-level strategies and research.

Those shortlisted will then present detailed business models with



an implementation roadmap, backed by both primary and secondary research.

The proposals will be mentored by industry leaders to ensure practical and impactful solutions, NITI Aayog said.

"India's freight sector is vital to the economy, ensuring the smooth delivery of goods to over 1.4 billion people. With road freight accounting for a staggering 55 per cent of India's annual diesel consumption and nearly 40 per cent of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from road transport, there is an urgent need to transition to more sustainable solutions," the apex public policy think

-tank said. It noted that the "electrification of freight transportation is a key priority, as electric trucks offer a transformative opportunity to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and enhance energy security."

"The GearShift Challenge marks a pivotal move towards sustainable freight transportation in India," NITI Aayog said.

The hackathon will tap into the creativity and expertise of participants, and help generate practical solutions that will accelerate the adoption of zero-emission trucks. It will both benefit the economy and the environment.

Amid row, Assam's Tinsukia promises to reinstall Mahatma statue

AGENCIES

GUWAHATI, JULY 14

Amidst huge controversy after the removal of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi for the construction of a clock tower in Assam's Doomdooma town in Tinsukia, the district administration decided that a new seven-foot tall statue of the father of the nation would be installed in the town.

The controversy began after a social media post last week by Mahatma Gandhi's great-grandson Tushar Gandhi.

Tagging a newspaper clipping, Tushar Gandhi in his post on the X said: "Not

surprising that the BJP government in Assam decided to replace Bapu's statue with a clock tower. Their slavish colonial hangover persists."

Earlier, the Tinsukia district administration said that the statue was removed as part of the Doom Doom's makeover project which included building a clock tower and replacing the old statue with another statue.

Congress leaders and workers led by former Doomdooma MLA and party leader Durga Bhumij strongly protested the move.

When the contractor of

the project began the work recently, Bhumij along with party workers arrived at the site and strongly opposed the removal of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

"The BJP never paid due respect to Gandhiji. Instead, it always gave respect to Nathuram Godse," the Congress leader had said.

"At a time when Gandhiji's statue was set up in as many as 80 countries around the world, the Board is going to build a clock tower by removing the statue of the Father of the Nation," the Congress leader had told the media.



An official of the Tinsukia district administration on Sunday said that the Mahatma Gandhi statue was installed at Gandhi Chowk in Doomdooma town around the year 1958.

"Since 1958, the statue

had undergone a lot of wear and tear and damage. However, it appears that no scheme was undertaken for its restoration or replacement. Owing to this, a plan was undertaken to replace the existing 5 feet 8-inch Mahatma

Gandhi statue with a new 7 feet tall statue under the scheme Installation of a new Mahatma Gandhi statue at Gandhi Chowk, Doomdooma' under the 15th Finance Commission Grant of Doomdooma Municipal Board," the official told the media.

He said on February 15, a public meeting involving various organisations of Doomdooma town was held and the details of the two schemes mentioned and discussed with the public clearly and transparently and members present in the meeting agreed to the implementation of the two schemes.

After the huge controversy, Doomdooma BJP MLA Rupesh Gowala assured them that a new and taller statue of Mahatma Gandhi would be erected at the same site.

"The old statue was in a dilapidated condition and the new one would be installed within six months, along with beautification of the site," Gowala had told the media.

Lakhimpur MP Pradan Baruah laid the foundation for Doom Doom's development project on March 7.

District administration officials said that the site of construction was cleared on July 3 and the existing

statue of Mahatma Gandhi was lifted on July 5 to prevent any damage due to the construction work.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, reacting to a post of Tushar Gandhi, on Friday said on X: "I am not aware of this decision taken by the district administration. Let me verify the facts. Assam owes much to Mahatma Gandhi."

"He stood firmly with Bharat Ratna Gopinath Bordoloi when the Congress party led by Nehru wanted to include Assam in Pakistan under the Grouping Plan," Sarma had said.

India needs economic growth that is relatable to every individual: Jagdeep Dhankhar

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 14

India has made significant economic growth in the last 10 years, and as per Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, now "we need economic growth that is relatable to every individual."

Speaking at a cyber security conference organised by the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC) in the national capital, the Vice President said that "from slot number 11, we are at number 5, ahead of the UK, France, Canada, Brazil."

He noted that in a matter of time, India will also be ahead of Japan and Ger-



many.

However, we now need "economic growth that is relatable to every individual," he said.

Dhankhar informed about the "banking inclusion of 500 million people" and that the country "accounts for nearly 50 per

cent of global transactions."

Citing that India's Internet per capita consumption is more than that of the US and China taken together, he also called for ramping up cyber security.

"What India has achieved in just six years is normally not achievable

in four decades. And that being so, we have to be extremely well prepared to sustain our economic growth, to see the trajectories incrementally, so that people are not disheartened by the onslaught of cybercrimes so that they are not cheated," Dhankhar said.

Further, he noted that the government is focusing on commercialisation of 6G. He also called on educational institutions, and people to brace up to live with and to get training in disruptive technologies like the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and machine learning, which is here to stay.

"We have decided for

ourselves that in 2047, when we have the centennial celebration of our Independence, Bharat will be a developed nation," he said, noting that India is "in a position to handhold other nations" as during the Covid pandemic.

Notably, India helped 100 countries with its Covaxin-Maitri programme.

"We must build a cyber capacity building in the Global South that will promote a secure and inclusive cyberspace for sustainable development. Development is vital, but sustainable development is soothing, wholesome, relieves the pain of everyone," said the Vice President.

NEET-UG row: NTA files fresh batch of pleas seeking transfer of cases to SC

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 14

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has filed a fresh batch of petitions seeking the transfer of pleas pending before the Rajasthan High Court related to the alleged NEET-UG paper leak to the Supreme Court.

The matter is listed before a bench presided over by CJI DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on July 15 (Monday), as per the causelist published on the website of the apex court.

Earlier on June 20, the top court had stayed the proceedings pending before various high courts of the country pertaining to alleged NEET-UG paper leak and had allowed the withdrawal of other transfer petitions filed by NTA seeking transfer of writ petitions pending before various high courts pertaining to the award of compensatory marks in view of its earlier order.

In an order passed on June 13, the Supreme Court decided to close the issue relating to the grant of grace marks in the NEET (UG) exam

after NTA submitted that scorecards of 1,563 candidates, who were awarded compensatory marks on account of the loss of time, had been withdrawn and cancelled.

These candidates were given an option to appear in a re-test to be held on June 23 or may appear in counselling on the basis of actual marks obtained in the exam without normalisation.

The main batch of petitions, including pleas seeking cancellation of the NEET-UG exam, is coming up for hearing on July 18.

Former US Prez Donald Trump injured but safe after assassination attempt

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, JULY 14

Former US President Donald Trump was injured in what the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) confirmed as an "assassination attempt" during his Presidential campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday evening, officials said.

Trump, who was rushed out of the stage with a bloodied face, is "safe", the Secret Service said. The former US president said on social media that he was shot with a bullet that pierced "the upper part of my right ear". His campaign team said Trump was "fine".

The gunman and at least one member in the audience were killed, the US Secret Service said in a statement.

"One spectator was

killed, two spectators were critically injured. The incident is currently under investigation and the Secret Service has formally notified the Federal Bureau of Investigation," the statement said.

"A suspected shooter fired multiple shots at former President Trump's campaign rally ... from an elevated position outside the venue," the Secret Service said.

"U.S. Secret Service personnel neutralised the shooter who is now deceased. U.S. Secret Service quickly responded with protective measures and the former president is safe and being evaluated," the statement added.

The FBI termed the shooting an "assassination attempt" against Trump, CNN reported.

"This evening, we had what we're calling an



assassination attempt against our former President Donald Trump," the special agent in charge of the FBI's Pittsburgh field office Kevin Rojek, told a news conference in Butler.

The FBI identified the gunman as Thomas Matthew Crooks, and said he fired multiple shots from a building rooftop just outside the rally venue, before being killed by Secret Ser-

vice agents.

He said a probe was on to find the motive behind the assassination attempt.

US President Joe Biden, who was in Delaware, denounced the violence, and spoke to Trump after the shooting. The White House said.

"Tonight, the President is returning to Washington DC. Tomorrow morning at the White House, he will receive an updated brief-

ing from homeland security and law enforcement officials," a White House official said in a statement.

Biden in a statement said he was grateful that Trump was "safe and doing well".

"I have been briefed on the shooting at Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania. I'm grateful to hear that he's safe and doing well. I'm praying for him and his family and for all those who were at the rally, as we await further information."

"Jill (Biden, US First Lady) and I are grateful to the Secret Service for getting him to safety. There's no place for this kind of violence in America. We must unite as one nation to condemn it."

Trump on his social media platform Truth Social said, 'I was shot with a bullet that pierced

the upper part of my right ear. I knew immediately that something was wrong in that I heard a whizzing sound, shots, and immediately felt the bullet ripping through the skin. Much bleeding took place, so I realised then what was happening.'

It is incredible that such an act can take place in our Country. Nothing is known at this time about the shooter, who is now dead, he added.

Trump's campaign issued a statement announcing that he is "fine" after the "heinous act", and thanked law enforcement and first responders for their quick action.

According to CNN, a witness claimed he told officers that he saw a gunman moving "from roof to roof," minutes before the assassination attempt.

Kenyan president orders swift probe into mysterious killings

AGENCIES
NAIROBI, JULY 14



Kenyan President William Ruto has directed security agencies to speed up investigations into the mysterious killings in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, after nine mutilated bodies were retrieved from a dumpsite in a slum.

Ruto, who spoke in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, northwest Kenya, on Saturday, assured citizens that those behind the killings will be held to account, saying no stone will be left unturned, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Nine bodies have been retrieved from Kware dumpsite in Mukuru kwa Njenga (slum), the majority being bodies of women and girls," he said and appealed to every Kenyan to uphold peace and conduct their business with-

out breaking the law.

The President has been under intense pressure to take firm action on security officers who have been abducting young Kenyans who have been holding anti-government and anti-tax hike demonstrations across the country.

The bodies were well-wrapped in sacks and black polythene bags and later tied with ropes, while some had burns and were decomposing.

The state-funded Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) said at least nine deceased people were dumped less than 100 metre from the Kware police station.

World leaders condemn assassination attempt on Trump

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 14

World leaders have condemned the attack on former US President Donald Trump at an election rally in western Pennsylvania.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's Spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, on Saturday said, "The Secretary-General unequivocally condemns this act of political violence."

"He sends his best wishes to President Trump for a speedy recovery," he added.

Trump, who is due to be anointed the Republican Party's presidential candidate, had a narrow escape on Saturday when shots aimed at him at a campaign rally grazed his

ear and killed two people at the event.

Many leaders took to X, the social media for immediate dissemination, to express their disgust with the attack and condemn political violence, while some saw it as an attack on democracy.

US Vice President Kamala Harris took to her X handle and expressed her shock over the attack on Republican Party Presidential candidate Trump.

"I have been briefed on the shooting at former President Trump's event in Pennsylvania. Doug and I are relieved that he is not seriously injured. We are praying for him, his family, and all those who have been injured and impacted by this senseless shooting," Harris wrote.

She said, "We are grateful to the United States Secret Service, first responders, and local authorities for their immediate action."

"Violence such as this has no place in our nation. We must all condemn this abhorrent act and do our part to ensure that it does not lead to more violence," Harris added, condemning the attack.

Former US President Barack Obama said, "There is absolutely no place for political violence in our democracy. Although we do not yet know exactly what happened, we should all be relieved that former President Trump was not seriously hurt, and use this moment to recommit ourselves to civility and

respect in our politics. Michelle and I are wishing him a quick recovery."

Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also expressed shock over the incident and wished for Trump's speedy recovery.

"As one whose family has been the victim of political violence, I know firsthand that political violence of any kind has no place in our society. I thank God that former President Trump is safe. As we learn more details about this horrifying incident, let us pray that all those in attendance at the former President's rally today are unharmed," Pelosi said in a post on X.

Former Presidential candidate Nikki Haley, in a post on X, said, "This should horrify every freedom-loving American.

Violence against presidential candidates must never be normalized. We are lifting up Donald Trump, the entire Trump family, and all in attendance in prayer."

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed his shock over the attack and said that political violence has no place in society.

"I am appalled by the shocking scenes at President Trump's rally, and we send him and his family our best wishes. Political violence in any form has no place in our societies, and my thoughts are with all the victims of this attack," Starmer said in a post on X.

One of Trump's closest Western allies, Hungary's President Viktor Orban posted, "My thoughts and prayers are with Presi-

dent in these dark hours."

Another right-wing politician, Argentina's President Javier Milei, blamed what he called the "international left" for the attack, writing, "In panic of losing at the polls, they resort to terrorism to impose their backward and authoritarian agenda."

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, another leader from the right, expressed "apprehension" and wrote that she hoped during "the electoral campaign, dialogue and responsibility can prevail over hate and violence."

From the US neighbour to the north, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted, "I'm sickened by the shooting at former President Trump. It cannot be overstated -

political violence is never acceptable."

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said, "We must stand firm against any form of violence that challenges democracy. I pray for former President Trump's speedy recovery."

Writing in Portuguese, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said, "The attack on former President Donald Trump must be vehemently repudiated by all defenders of democracy."

Writing on his and his wife's behalf, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted, "Sara and I were shocked by the apparent attack on President Trump. We pray for his safety and speedy recovery."

Australian Prime Min-

ister Anthony Albanese wrote that the "incident" at the campaign rally "is concerning and confronting. There is no place for violence in the democratic process."

Chile's President Gabriel Boric Font posted in Spanish, "Violence is a threat to democracies and weakens our life together. We must all reject it."

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol denounced the attack as "horrible political violence" and wished Trump a quick recovery.

"I am appalled by the horrible political violence. I wish former President Trump a speedy recovery. The people of Korea stand in solidarity with the people of America," Yoon wrote in English on his official X handle.

South Korea warns to end North Korean regime if Pyongyang uses nuclear weapons

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 14

South Korea warned on Sunday that North Korea will face the end of its regime if it attempts to use nuclear weapons.

"We sternly warn that there is no scenario in which North Korea's regime will survive after using nuclear weapons," Seoul's defence ministry said in a statement, reported Yonhap news agency.

It was released in response to a statement by the North Korean defence ministry from the previous day. After South Korea and the United States adopted "Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean



Peninsula" in Washington on Thursday, North Korea condemned it as a "reckless provocative act."

North Korea also threatened that Seoul and Washington would pay "an unimaginably harsh price."

Commending the signing of the guidelines, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and US President Joe Biden warned any North Korean nuclear attack against South Korea will be met with a swift, overwhelming, and deci-

sive response.

The allies' guidelines are expected to expand the assignment of the US strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula by increasing the frequency and level of their deployment during both wartime and peacetime.

The South's defence ministry said it was "self-contradictory" on North Korea's part to condemn Seoul and Washington for formulating joint nuclear deterrence guidelines when it is Pyongyang that threatens the use of nuclear weapons.

"Without North Korean nuclear threats in the first place, those joint guidelines would not have been necessary," the ministry

added. "This is a fair step taken by the South Korea-US alliance in the face of the improving North Korean nuclear capabilities and its blatant nuclear threats."

The ministry also blamed the rising tension in the Korean Peninsula on the North Korean regime and noted, "Despite opposition from the international community and sufferings of North Korean people, the regime has continued with its illegal nuclear missile development."

The ministry issued a similar warning in April after North Korea said it had conducted rocket drills simulating a nuclear counterattack.

South Sudan secures \$46 mn grant to improve agriculture, food security

AGENCIES
JUBA, JULY 14

African Development Bank Group (AfDB) has said it has approved a \$46.2 million grant for South Sudan to boost agricultural productivity, improve food security and enhance the country's resilience.

The AfDB, a financial provider to African governments and private companies investing in the regional member countries, said the first phase of the climate resilient agri-food system transformation programme in South Sudan is set to be implemented from September 2024 to December 2030, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

Themba Bhebhe, the Bank Group's Country

Manager for South Sudan, said in a statement issued in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, on Friday evening that the program's activities will help boost productivity and produce an additional 350,000 tonnes of cereals (rice and sorghum) and 2,450 tonnes of fish.

"They will strengthen agricultural value chains and entrepreneurship, creating at least 200 more agri-food businesses that are more profitable for women and young people," Bhebhe added.

He emphasised that developing digitalisation and professional skills will create 179,200 direct jobs, including 50 per cent for women and 60 per cent for young people.

South Sudan is the third most fragile country in the

world and the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change globally, AfDB said.

Agriculture, the primary source of income for about 95 per cent of the South Sudanese population, employs around 70.5 per cent of the country's labour force.

The project comprises four main components: large-scale deployment of climate-smart technologies and production systems; strengthening the priority value chains of businesses led by women and young people; promoting digital agricultural and climate advisory solutions; and developing professional, technical and entrepreneurial skills to create more jobs for women and young people.

Strong efforts required to release demographic dividend as Africa's population crosses 1.5 bn: UNECA

AGENCIES
ADDIS ABABA, JULY 14

As Africa's population crosses the 1.5 billion mark and the demographic window is opening, social policy experts at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) stressed that getting the dividend requires more time and stronger efforts.

The latest call followed the publication of the World Population Prospects and Forecast that was released by the United Nations on World

Population Day, which is annually observed on July 11, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

Noting that the world's population has witnessed tremendous growth in the last six decades, in which the global population was around three billion in 1960, the report indicated that in just two decades (by 1982), it had surpassed five billion and since November 2022 there are more than eight billion people in the world.

Social policy experts at the UNECA, in a situation analysis

report on Africa's population prospects issued on Friday, said the African continent has been at the centre of the global population growth, as the continent accounts for the largest relative growth, with its population expanding from 283 million in 1960 to more than 1.5 billion in 2024, a more than five-fold increase. And it is projected to increase by 950 million and touch 2.5 billion by 2050.

The growing population will increase Africa's share of the world's population from 10

per cent in 1960 to 28 per cent by 2050. Globally, more than one in four people will be African in 2050, from one in 10 in 1960, it was noted.

According to the publication, among the reasons for Africa's rapid population growth is the declining rate of infant mortality across Africa. Data from the UNECA show that infant mortality has declined from 145 per 1,000 children born in 1960 to 38 per 1,000 children born in 2024. As a result, average life expectancy in Africa increased from

43 years to 66 years during the reported period and is projected to increase to 70 years by 2050.

In 1960, on average a woman in Africa had 6.6 children over her lifetime. This has progressively reduced to 3.8 in 2024 and is expected to decline further to 2.6 by 2050. Overall, and compared to other regions of the world, fertility rates in Africa remain high and are declining only gradually.

The UNECA report indicated that Africa's future is bright with the potential to realise a

demographic transition and a large demographic dividend by the middle of this century.

It, however, raised a critical question as to what it takes for countries in Africa to achieve the age structure necessary for the demographic dividend, and under what conditions this age structure can catalyse the continent's economic growth.

These are important policy questions since as promising as it sounds, a demographic dividend is by no means guaranteed. How well countries capitalise on the demographic

window has a lot to do with appropriate policies and the strength of institutions, social policy experts at the UNECA said.

They said that for fertility rates to decline and the age structure to change, working-age individuals need high-quality education and decent and productive jobs. Countries must invest in the education and health of the workforce, particularly where the demographic window of opportunity is still more than a decade away.

India's defence exports record over 30-fold quantum leap in last 10 years

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

India's defence exports have recorded a 30-fold quantum leap over the last 10 years from a mere Rs 686 crore in the financial year 2013-14 to a record Rs 21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, reflecting the global acceptability of Indian defence products and technologies.

With exports reaching more than 85 countries across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, India's defence industry has shown its capability of design and development to the world, with around 100 firms exporting defence products at present, a senior official said.

To give a push to defence exports, the Government has taken a number of policy initiatives like 'Make in India' and rolled out economic reforms over the last 10 years. Export procedures



have been simplified and made industry-friendly with end-to-end online export authorisation curtailing delays and bringing Ease of Doing Business, he added.

Further, the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives have helped the country by encouraging indigenous design, development and manufacture of defence equipment in the country, thereby reducing dependence on imports in the long run.

A significant development has been the emergence of the private sector as a supplier of defence equipment with companies such as Larsen & Toubro, Tata Advanced Systems, and Bharat Forge emerging as major players.

Of the total value of production in 2023-24, about 79.2 per cent has been contributed by DPSUs/other PSUs and 20.8 per cent by the private sector. The official data shows

that in terms of absolute value, both DPSUs/PSUs and the private sector have recorded steady growth in defence production.

India's export basket of defence products includes missiles, radars, naval systems, helicopters, and surveillance equipment.

India has made substantial progress in the indigenous production of advanced naval systems that also cater to the export market. Advanced platforms like the INS Vikrant aircraft carrier highlight the achievement in this segment.

Fast-attack naval craft, offshore patrol vessels, and various maritime weapon systems are other products that are being exported. The export of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, developed jointly with Russia, has been another major achievement, with countries like the Philippines purchasing the system recently.

RBI governor says it's 'premature' to cut rates; Economists divided on whether it's hurting growth

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that it might be "too premature" to talk about cutting interest rates, citing elevated inflation levels. Das's remarks in an interview to CNBC-TV18 Thursday effectively ended speculation on whether the central bank would cut rates by the end of the year or not.

Economists, on the other hand, are divided on whether the RBI's stance on interest rate cuts might be hurting economic growth in the country.

Some, including current members of the rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI, argue that growth is already being hurt and that real interest rates are too high. However, others feel, as the governor does, that growth is robust, inflation is too high and that the RBI should wait before cutting rates.

The MPC, in its 49th meeting last month, left the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent - rates have remained at this level for over a year - to achieve the objective of bringing inflation down to the medium-term target of 4 per cent. At the time, the latest data showed India's retail inflation rate at a higher level than this target, although it had been easing for a few months.

The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to commercial banks, and is used to control inflation.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, stood at 4.83 per cent in April 2024, down from 4.85 per cent in March 2024, and 5.09 per cent in February.

It then dropped to a 12-month low of 4.75 per cent in May, though this data was released after the MPC's 5-7 June meeting.

In June, however, inflation again rose to 5.08 per cent, according to data

released Friday.

Economist Pronab Sen, the current chairman of the Standing Committee on Statistics and former chief statistician of India, termed RBI's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged as "sensible and cautious". He said that any decision on interest rates should be taken after the Union Budget for the year is announced.

"I think the RBI is being sensible, they are being cautious. You just had an election. There's a new government in place. Wait till the budget comes then take a call. Otherwise, there is a very large unknown. So, I think they are being sensible," Sen said, adding that while it is not obvious that interest rates are hurting growth, they can be reduced.

Radhika Pandey, associate professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), told ThePrint that interest rate decisions should be guided by inflation trends

over the coming months. She noted that the policy repo rate has remained unchanged since April 2023, but growth overall has remained strong.

For this year as well, she added, the economy is projected to grow at 7.2 per cent.

At present, there are no indications of a growth slowdown due to elevated interest rates, Pandey said. She explained that a cut in interest rates may de-anchor inflation expectations, and that the likelihood of an inflation level of 4 per cent for a sustained period remains remote.

"The decision on cutting rates should be taken, when CPI inflation has fallen to 4 per cent on a durable (sustained) level," she told ThePrint. "Given the uptick in wholesale price index inflation and the possibility of a rise in core inflation, the possibility of inflation reaching the 4 per cent level on a sustained basis, still remains some distance away."

Last decade saw Indian homebuyers' wait for possession reduce to 4.9 years: Report

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 14

The last decade has seen homebuyers' wait for possession in large under-construction projects in the top cities reduce to 4.9 years, from 6.1 years in the 2010-2019 period, a report showed on Sunday.

The average time to complete residential projects of more than 500 units in the top seven cities came down to 4.9 years from the first half of 2014 to the first half of 2024.

This can be seen as a combined effect of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), modernisation of construction technology, and the increasing market share of large and listed developers, according to the report by Anarock Group.

"The stringent rules imposed on project delays by the regulatory authorities have also been a key factor in reducing the completion time," said Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group.



For all large projects launched and completed between 2014 and H1 2024, the average completion time was lowest in Chennai with 3.6 years, while Hyderabad and Bengaluru clocked in at 4.2 and 4.8 years, respectively.

For most large projects in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), developers had purchased land outright, thereby compromising their overall financial health and delivery capability.

"On the other hand, most projects in the main southern cities are joint developments where landowners usually get a certain share of the devel-

oped units," said Puri. In NCR, extreme weather conditions and the statutory restrictions imposed on construction when the pollution levels rise also affect construction timelines in the region.

In Kolkata, large projects launched and completed between 2014 to H1 2024 took the longest average time to complete, at 5.7 years.

In MMR, it took an average of 4.7 years to complete small projects and around 5.2 years for large projects.

In Delhi-NCR, homebuyers waited an average of 4.7 years for small projects and 5.4 years for large ones, the report noted.

Market outlook: Q1 results, FII inflow, monsoon updates key factors next week

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 14

The Indian equity market experienced one of the best weeks of 2024, with the Nifty and Sensex reaching all-time highs of 24,592.20 and 80,893.51, respectively, before closing at 24,502.15 and 80,519.34.

This marked gains of 0.73 per cent for the Nifty and 0.65 per cent for the Sensex. Both benchmark indices extended their winning streak for a sixth consecutive week.

It is the first time ever that the nifty closed above 24,500.

On the other side, small-cap and mid-cap stocks underperformed compared to large-cap. However, several PSU stocks posted staller gains during last week.

The outlook of the market will be guided by several domestic and international factors next week.

On the domestic front, upcoming budget-related announcements, Q1 FY25 results, monsoon updates



and foreign institutional investments (FIIs) inflows will catch investors' eyes in the week ahead.

On the global front, China will be a significant focus.

The country is scheduled to announce its GDP and Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Additionally, there is speculation about a major economic stimulus announcement, which could keep the metal sector in the spotlight.

Other global factors to watch include the speech by the US Federal Reserve Chairman, US retail sales figures, and macroeconomic data from Japan. These developments are

likely to influence market movements and investor sentiment.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research of Geojit Financial Services said: "We expect stock-specific moves to gain traction due to the ongoing earnings season; indeed, IT will be in the limelight due to the good start to the earnings and outlook."

Arvinder Singh Nanda, Senior Vice President of Master Capital Services, said that on the daily chart analysis, Nifty has exhibited a breakout from the psychological resistance level of 24,500, indicating that the bullish trend is likely to continue into the next week.

Indian realty sector saw over Rs 5,327 cr investment from domestic investors in April-June



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Keeping up with the growth momentum in the Indian real estate industry, the domestic investors pumped in around \$638 million (more than Rs 5,327 crore) in the real estate sector in the second quarter this year, from \$127 million in the same period last year.

According to data from leading real estate consultant Vestian, institutional investments in the real estate sector surged 96 per cent to \$3.1 billion, from \$1.6 billion in the same period last year.

"The Indian real estate sector garnered significant investments in the second quarter of 2024, dominated by foreign investors as the looming uncertainty over the major economies of the world has faded away," said Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian.

According to the firm, foreign investors had the highest share of 71 per cent of the total investments in Q2 2024.

Industrial and warehousing sector reported a single large deal worth \$1.5 billion, accounting for 48 per cent of the total investments received in Q2.

M-cap of 7 of top-10 most valued firms jump Rs 1.72 lakh crore; TCS steals show

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,72,225.62 crore last week, with IT bellwether Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) stealing the show, amid a rally in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 522.74 points, or 0.65 per cent.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 622 points, or 0.78 per cent, to settle at a record closing level of 80,519.34 on Friday. During the day, it zoomed



996.17 points, or 1.24 per cent, to hit an all-time high of 80,893.51.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of TCS surged Rs 62,393.92 crore to Rs

15,14,133.45 crore.

Shares of TCS on Friday surged nearly 7 per cent after the country's largest IT services player reported an 8.7 per cent growth in

the June quarter net profit at Rs 12,040 crore.

ITC added Rs 31,858.83 crore taking its valuation to Rs 5,73,258.78 crore.

The m-cap of Infosys zoomed Rs 26,905.14 crore to Rs 7,10,827.27 crore and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) jumped Rs 22,422.12 crore to Rs 6,64,947.01 crore.

Hindustan Unilever's market valuation rallied Rs 17,668.92 crore to Rs 6,16,156.81 crore and that of Reliance Industries soared Rs 9,066.19 crore to Rs 21,60,628.75 crore.

The m-cap of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 1,910.5

crore to Rs 8,15,705.36 crore.

However, the valuation of HDFC Bank got eroded by Rs 18,069.29 crore to Rs 12,35,825.35 crore.

The m-cap of State Bank of India diminished Rs 356.99 crore to Rs 7,67,204.26 crore and that of ICICI Bank declined Rs 210.5 crore to Rs 8,67,668.16 crore.

Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Apple approves first PC emulator for iOS to run classic games

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Tech giant Apple has approved the first PC emulator for the iOS ecosystem to run classic software and games.

The iPhone maker approved 'UTM SE' after initially rejecting and banning it from being notarised for third-party app stores in the European Union (EU).

The app is now available for free for iOS, iPadOS, and visionOS.

It can run classic software and old-school games for Windows, Mac OS 9, and Linux on your iPhone.

"We are happy to announce that UTM SE is available (for free) on iOS and visionOS App Store (and coming soon to AltStore PAL)," the app posted on X social media platform.

"Shoutouts to AltStore team for their help and to Apple for reconsidering their policy," it added.

UTM SE is a PC emulator that allows people to run classic software and old-school games.

It supports both VGA mode for graphics and terminal mode for text-only operating systems.

It emulates x86, PPC, and RISC-V architectures and run pre-built machines or "create your own configuration from scratch".

The app is built from QEMU, a powerful and widely used emulator.

FPIs invest Rs 15,352 crore in equities in first two weeks of July

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JUL 14

Foreign investors infused Rs 15,352 crore into Indian equities during the first half of this month, driven by the government's commitment to ongoing reforms, low US Federal rates, and strong domestic demand.

The upcoming Union

Budget will be one of the most watched events by foreign investors to understand the government's plans for economic growth, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

According to the data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors

(FPIs) have made a net inflow of Rs 15,352 crore in equities this month (till July 12).

This came following an inflow of Rs 26,565 crore in equities in June on the back of political stability and a sharp rebound in markets.

Before that, FPIs withdrew Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and over

Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields.

The latest FPIs' flow can be attributed to the positive sentiments, stable government's assurance on continuity of reforms, tepid US Fed rates and a strong domestic demand, Manoj Purohit, Partner

and leader - FS Tax, Tax and Regulatory Services, BDO India, said.

Additionally, the anticipation of a reform-oriented budget has also lifted investor sentiment. Better than expected earnings season so far has also worked towards building investor confidence, Srivastava said.

Apart from equities,

FPIs invested Rs 8,484 crore in the debt market during the period under review.

This has pushed the debt tally to Rs 77,109 crore this year so far.

The key characteristic of institutional equity flows into the Indian market is the unpredictable nature of FPI flows compared to the consistent growth

of domestic institutional investors (DIIs) including mutual funds' flow.

DIIs have been consistent buyers every month in 2024, while FPIs have fluctuated between buying and selling. FPIs sold a cumulative amount of Rs 60,000 crore in January, April, and May but bought Rs 63,200 crore in February, March, and June

together.

"The reason for this divergence is that FPI activity is influenced by external factors like US bond yields and valuations in other markets while DII activity is largely driven by domestic flows into the market," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Samson's fifty, Mukesh Kumar's 4-fer secure India's victory

AGENCIES
HARARE, JULY 14

India defeated Zimbabwe by a convincing 42-run margin to pocket their five-game T20I series 4-1 on Sunday.

Zimbabwe managed to win only the opening outing.

The foundation of India's win was laid by Sanju Samson's impressive knock of 58 runs off 45 balls. Samson's innings was a masterclass in composure and aggression, as he took charge of India's batting lineup after the early loss of three wickets. His innings was adorned with four sixes and a boundary, which electrified the fans and pro-



vided the much-needed momentum to India's innings. Mukesh Kumar's bowl-

ing spell was the turning point of the match, as he struck in his first two overs to dismiss Zim-

babwe's opening batsmen Wessly Madhevere. Although Dion Myers was reprieved due to a no-ball, Kumar's devastating spell continued to rattle the Zimbabwean batting lineup, paving the way for India's convincing victory. Kumar's figures of 4/22 were a testament to his exceptional bowling skills.

Despite a valiant effort from Faraz Akram, who scored a quickfire 27 off 13 balls, Zimbabwe's batting collapsed. The hosts slipped from 85/3 to 94/7, which ultimately sealed their fate.

The series victory was a fitting culmination of India's impressive performance throughout the engagements.

BCCI comes to aid of ailing ex-cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 14

In a heartwarming gesture, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced immediate financial assistance of Rs 1 crore for the treatment of former Indian cricketer and coach Anshuman Gaekwad, who has been bravely battling cancer.

The decision comes after widespread appeals from the cricket fraternity and fans to support the 71-year-old legend. BCCI Secretary Jay Shah has personally spoken to Gaekwad's family to offer support and comfort during this challenging time.

"The BCCI Apex Council has approved the financial

assistance, and we have instructed the release of Rs 1 crore with immediate effect to support Mr. Gaekwad's treatment," Shah on Sunday.

"We stand by his family and will do everything possible to aid his speedy recovery. We are confident that he will overcome this phase and come out stronger."

Gaekwad, a renowned batsman and coach, represented India in 40 Tests and 15 ODIs between 1975 and 1987. His contributions to Indian cricket have been invaluable, and this gesture by the BCCI is a testament to the board's commitment to supporting its cricketing heroes in times of need.

Arsenal and Ajax reach agreement for English goalkeeper Tommy Setford: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Arsenal have agreed a deal for the signature of 18-year old English goalkeeper Tommy Setford from Ajax on a four-year contract, says a report.

The young goalkeeper will be moving from the Dutch country to the London based side on a deal which runs till 2028. The deal is reported to be close to One million Euros plus addons, according to The Athletic report.

This will be Arsenal's third signing of the summer with all three new joiners being goalkeepers. The first being the signing of on loan goalkeeper from Brentford, David Raya and the other being the incoming signing of 18-year old Danish goalie



Lucas Nygaard.

The reason behind the signings is the importance of blistering the goalkeeper set up in the academy with Ovie Ejeheri, James Hillson, and Arthur Okonkwo all leaving this summer.

With David Raya now joining the side on a permanent transfer, the likelihood of Aaron Ramsdale

leaving the North London signed increased as the talented England goalkeeper spent a majority of the 2023/24 season on the bench.

It was also reported that the Gunners had a bid worth 30 million Euros rejected by Wolverhampton Wanderers for experienced 30-year old goalie Dan Bentley.

Junior Men, Women East Zone Hockey: Jharkhand, Odisha, Bengal get winning start

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, JULY 14

The opening day of the 2nd Hockey India Junior Men & Women East Zone Championship 2024 saw Hockey Jharkhand, Hockey Association of Odisha, and Hockey Bengal claiming victories in both women's and men's categories on the opening day of the tournament at Netaji Subhas Eastern Centre, Salt Lake here in Kolkata.

Hockey Jharkhand took on Manipur Hockey in the first match of the day and won 4-1 in the women's category. The goal scorers for Hockey Jharkhand were Hemrom Leoni (4'), Pinki Kumari (20', 27'), and Barwa Purnima (51'). Devi Mutum Priya (50')

was the lone goal scorer for Manipur Hockey.

The second match ended with the Hockey Association of Odisha beating Assam Hockey by a comprehensive 17-0 margin in the women's category.

Amisha Ekka (4', 38'), Ekka Sonali (7'), Bhoi Doli (9', 33', 41'), Neharika Toppo (20'), Kujur Rambha (24', 29'), Yashoda (27', 32'), Supriya (39'), Anushka Bhawre (43', 47', 50'), Kujur Priyanka (51'), and Captain Drupati Naik (52') got on the scoresheet for Hockey Association of Odisha.

The last match of the day in the women's category saw Hockey Bengal beat Hockey Bihar by 7-0. The goal scorers for



Hockey Bengal were Lalanchhungi (7', 10', 19'), Shanti Horo (15', 34', 59'), and Silbiya Nag (60').

In the first men's category match of the day Hockey Jharkhand took on Manipur Hockey and registered a narrow 1-0 victory.

The breakthrough came when Dodray Sandeep (40') breached the net

in the third quarter and Hockey Jharkhand held onto their slender lead the rest of the game to seal their victory.

The fifth match of the day saw the Hockey Association of Odisha beat Assam Hockey by 13-0 in the men's category. Deonath Nanwar (2', 11') began the goal-fest with a brace

for Hockey Association of Odisha, followed by goals from Karan Lakra (12', 60'), Pradip Mandal (14'), Aryan Xess (21', 33', 35'), Rohit Kulu (28', 48'), Sunil Lakra (30', 58'), and Adhikarimayum Suresh Sharma (55').

Hockey Bengal defeated Hockey Bihar by 3-2 in the last match of the day in the men's category. Bishnu Paswan (3') and Ayush Prasad (3') scored early in the game to grant Hockey Bengal a two-goal lead but a resilient Hockey Bihar equalised through goals from Aakash Yadav (26') and Lama Shanu (47').

It was Bijay Shaw's (48') penalty corner goal in the last quarter that clinched the victory for Hockey Bengal.

Euro 2024: Luis de la Fuente claims Spain are not 'favourites' heading into finals

AGENCIES
BERLIN, JULY 14

The joint-record winners of the European Championship, Spain will be taking on England in a blockbuster final of the Euro 2024 at the Olympiastadion Berlin on Monday (as per IST).

Ahead of the highly-awaited encounter, many believe that the Spaniards are the favourites given the ruthlessness they have shown throughout the tournament but head coach Luis de la Fuente has stated that 'there are no favourites' in the matchup.

"There are no favourites. It's an even matchup, just as our previous knockout games were. If we are not above the level we displayed in those games, we won't have a chance of winning -- and the same if we make mis-



takes," said de la Fuente in the pre-game conference.

Spain have been one of the best teams at the tournament, they are playing with a fun, free-flowing identity, raising their game to a level which we are accustomed to seeing the La Roja perform at.

They have scored 13 goals so far in the Euro 2024, the highest by any team in the tournament whilst only conceding three goals which has seen them remain the only

team that has won all their games so far.

"It's fantastic to be here and we are excited to be in the final. It's one of the biggest sporting achievements there is. We are relaxed and looking forward to playing. Sunday will be a complicated game against a great team, between the best two teams [in the tournament], that's why we are in the final," he added.

Out of the two finalists, Spain have definitely had

the harder road to Berlin. The side defeated Georgia 4-1 in the Round of 16 which set their clashes against Germany in the quarterfinal (2-1) before a 2-1 victory over France in the semi-finals of the tournament.

"These matches, which are so even, are often decided by the finer details. The team that makes the fewest mistakes will have the best chance of winning," concluded the Spanish head coach.

Alcaraz, Djokovic meet again in Wimbledon final

AGENCIES
LONDON, JULY 14

Last year's finalists Carlos Alcaraz of Spain and Serbia's Novak Djokovic set up a final clash at Wimbledon again after both taking victories in the men's singles semifinals.

Reigning champion Alcaraz overcame a slow start to see off Russia's fifth seed Daniil Medvedev.

The 21-year-old Spaniard faced the same opponent as he did in last year's Wimbledon semifinals where he won in straight sets. But Medvedev refused to repeat the same scenario as the 28-year-old took the first set after dominating the tiebreak 7-1.

Alcaraz, winning his first French Open title one month ago, raised his game since the second set. He kept trying to play drop shots to break Medvedev's

resilience in baseline and saved many balls with tireless run.

"Since the tournament began, I didn't think I'm the defending champion," said Alcaraz. "I try to be better every day to play better tennis every match."

Alcaraz said he definitely didn't play at his best on Friday, but "I'm coming into a final feeling great with really high level of confidence."

After winning the following sets 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, Alcaraz is only one victory away from defending his title at the All England Club.

The last man who could hold him off is Djokovic again, as the 37-year-old Serb defeated Italian Lorenzo Musetti to reach the Wimbledon final for the 10th time.

Musetti, 22, dragged

Djokovic into a five-set battle at the French Open last month, and challenged the 24-time champion again on Friday with amazing performance.

"I'm really happy to make the finals because I was not thinking about, particularly in the first couple of matches, of the eventual title match," said Djokovic who took a knee surgery less than a month ago right after the injury forced him to pull out of the quarterfinals of French Open. "I was just thinking about moving well, not injuring myself, to be honest, and feeling more free so to say in my movement."

"That's what happened I think in the third and particularly fourth round. I felt like I'm actually playing close to my best, and I can have a shot at the title," Djokovic added.

Scaloni praises James Rodriguez ahead of Copa America final

AGENCIES
NEW JERSEY, JULY 14

Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni has singled out James Rodriguez for praise ahead of his team's clash with Colombia in the Copa America final here on Sunday.

Rodriguez is one of the favorites to win the Golden Ball award for the best player in the tournament, having set a new Copa America record with six assists in this edition.

"He [Rodriguez] is a great player and it's a pleasure to watch him," Scaloni said ahead of the final at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium. Despite his sublime form with Colombia's national team, Rodriguez has struggled at club level in recent years and is currently searching for a new home after a disappointing 12-month spell at Sao Paulo.

Telangana: 15th edition of Monsoon Regatta to start on July 15

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JULY 14

The 15 edition of the Monsoon Regatta by the Telangana Sailing Association and The Yacht Club of Hyderabad, will start here from Monday.

The prestigious Monsoon Regatta Trophy for the winner and the SH Babu Memorial Trophy for the most consistent sailor at this National Ranking Championship is up for grabs.

This year, the Monsoon Regatta will host a record 140 sailors from Tamilnadu, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Orissa, Karnataka,



Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh while close to 40 percent of the fleet is from the host state of Telangana.

The event will conclude on July 20 with the prize distribution by HMDA Metropolitan Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmad.

This year is the addi-

tion of three new under-18 Classes of boats, ILCA4, 29er, and International 420.

"During the last few years, Telamngana dominated the 470 class with Preethi Kongara heading for the Asian Games in 2023. We thought introducing the International

420 as a transition class would be very useful for the future." Telangana Sailing Association (TSA) President Suheim Sheikh said in a release here.

In the under-16 Optimist Class, local Telangana girl Deekshita Komaravelli is the top seed to watch out for closely followed by Shreya Krishna from Tamilnadu. Govardhan Pallara will lead the boys having won the Nationals at Shillong.

In the under-18 Laser Class, it's a tight tussle between MP and Goa while in the under-19 Mixed Classes it is dominated by top seeds from Telangana

Vaishnavi Veeravamsham and crew Shravan Kathravath.

The Under-18 girls is a tight race between Somya Singh of Bhopal and Alia Sabreen of Orissa and in boys, Yuvraj Yadav of Goa and Shashank Batham of Bhopal are top seeds.

An International Jury comprising International Judges from Thailand, Australia, Hongkong, and India will be presiding over the regatta chaired by Rut Subniram of Thailand. In the 29er Skiffs it is a tight race between Madhya Pradesh and Goa represented by sailors from INS Mandovi.

Colombia must be at best to beat Argentina: Lorenzo

AGENCIES
NEW JERSEY, JULY 14

Colombia will need to be at their best to have any chance of beating Argentina in the Copa America final, Cafeteros manager Nestor Lorenzo said on Saturday.

Argentina, the reigning Copa America and World Cup champions, occupy top spot in FIFA's latest world rankings and, according to Lorenzo, are favorites going into Sunday's duel at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

Meanwhile, Colombia - who are seeking their second Copa America title and first since 2001 - are 12th in the rankings, despite a 28-game unbeaten run dating back to early 2022.

"We need to be the best version of Colombia to defeat the champions of everything," Lorenzo said, who also alluded to Argentina's victory over Italy in the 2022 CONMEBOL-UEFA Cup of Champions.

"If we had not performed well we would not

be here. But to beat Argentina you have to have the best version of each player and multiply it."

Colombia reached the final by defeating Uruguay 1-0 in their last match, despite playing for more than 45 minutes with only 10 men. Argentina advanced by overcoming Canada 2-0 in the other semifinal.

While conceding that Argentina were formidable rivals, Lorenzo was quietly confident that his team could cause an upset.

Srinagar Administration allows 8th Muharram procession from Gurubazar to Dalgate

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 14

The District Administration Srinagar on Sunday granted permission for 8th Muharram procession through the traditional route from Guru Bazar to Dalgate via Budshah Kadal and M.A Road.

According to an order issued by District Magistrate Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat vide No. DMS/JUD/Muharram/2024/786-793, dated 14.07.2024, stated that after considering the Shia leaders application about allowing the Muharram processions through traditional routes, Government has decided to allow the processions on 8th Muharram.

The order reads that "Whereas, an application was received from Yaadgar-i-Hussaini Committee seeking permission for taking out Muharram procession on 8th Muharram-1446 from Guru Bazar to Dalgate via Budshah Kadal and M.A Road, Srinagar".

The order added that "Whereas, the matter was taken up with the Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar vide this office No. DMS/Jud/Muharram/2024/596-597 dated: 05-7-2024 for comments". The order



further stated "Whereas Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar vide No. CS/45-2024/48172-74 Dated: 14.07.2024 has conveyed NO OBJECTION in favour (Yaadgar-i-Hussaini Committee) for taking out Muharram procession on 8th Muharram-1446 from Guru Bazar to Dalgate via Budshah Kadal and M.A Road, Srinagar subject to various conditions like no activity during the procession should be prejudicial to the security and sovereignty of the state and should not disrespect any national symbol/ emblem. That they shall not hoist any flag depicting provocative slogans /text and / or photos of terror outfits, logos of banned organizations at both national and interna-

tional. That the organizers shall abide by all the rules and regulations and shall not indulge in any activity which may lead to law and order problem in the area. That activities of the participants attending the procession should remain strictly confined to the programme only.

That they shall cooperate with local police and other security agencies as desired by them in the public interest.

The DMs order also reads, "Keeping in view the above, the permission is hereby Granted in favour of Yaadgar-i-Hussaini Committee, Kaloo Manzil Mohalla Guru Bazar for taking out Muharram procession on 8th Muharram-1446 from Guru Bazar to Dalgate. via

Budshah Kadal and M.A Road, Srinagar from 6:00 am to 8:00 am on 15th July, 2024".

The time window has been finalized in the larger public interest as the procession route encompasses massive business / commercial establishments, movement of ambulances, students, office staff, general passengers, etc". the order also added.

The various prominent Shia organisations have hailed the decision of the Government to allow 8th Muharram procession. They have said that this Jaloos of Hazrat Imam Hussain A.S holds utmost significance for the Shia community and Government has respected their sentiments.

Director Agriculture Jammu reviews progress under HADP, CAPEX, District Plans & Deliverables

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

Director Agriculture Production & Farmers' Welfare Jammu, S. A.S. Reen chaired a meeting of the District Agriculture officers and Sub Divisional Agriculture Officers of Jammu Division to review the progress under CAPEX, HADP and CSS District Agriculture Plans & Deliverables at Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, Jammu today.

The meeting aimed at suggestions and directions for easy implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, HADP and CAPEX Budget (Scheme wise/District wise) 2024-25.

At the outset, Director Agriculture reviewed in detail the status/progress of various deliverables under Departmental schemes and District Agriculture Plan including Agriculture Technol-



ogy Management Agency (ATMA), Seed Distribution (Mushroom & Bee-Keeping), Soil Health Cards (SHC), Protected cultiva-

tion, Fertilizer/Pesticide samples, Plant Health Management services besides Farm Mechanization and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

He impressed upon the officers to identify and resolve the bottlenecks in successful implementation of farmer welfare schemes.

Emphasis was laid on the latest update under various components of HADP Schemes with the directions for regular reporting of the same.

Directions were issued for achieving the physical targets and need based operations of HADP, PKVY, RKVY and various centrally sponsored schemes in the districts for facilitation of the farmers. It was further impressed upon the officers to report the activities under HADP on daily basis.

The meeting was attended by District and Sub-divisional officers who assured fulfillment of targets for all farmer-benefiting schemes undertaken by the agriculture department.

SWD Ramban organizes trekking expedition under BBBP

JINNEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 14

In a commendable initiative to empower young girls and promote gender equality, the Social Welfare Department of Ramban under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary organized an exhilarating trekking expedition under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) campaign.

This event was held under the overall supervision of District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Ramban, Rahul Gupta.

The expedition aimed to encourage girls to embrace outdoor activities, build confidence, and foster a sense of adventure and resilience.



The trek saw enthusiastic participation from girls across the district, who demonstrated their spirit

and determination by conquering challenging terrains. The DSWO expressed

satisfaction with the successful organization of the event, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in breaking stereotypes and empowering young girls.

The girls were accompanied by experienced guides and support staff to ensure their safety and provide necessary assistance throughout the journey. The participants were also educated about the significance of physical fitness and the benefits of engaging in outdoor activities.

The trekking expedition under BBBP is part of a broader initiative by the Social Welfare Department of Ramban to promote the well-being and development of girls in the district.

DC Udhampur chairs DCDC meeting

JINNEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 14

A meeting of the District Cooperative Development Committee was held at the Mini Conference Hall DC Office Complex Udhampur, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the effective implementation of various schemes aimed at strengthening the cooperative movement and extending its reach to the grassroots level.

ADDC Rajinder Singh, ACR Dr. Umesh Shan, CPO Mohammad Iqbal, Deputy Registrar Cooperatives, Chief Agriculture Officer Sanjay Anand, and other officers attended



the meeting. Deputy Commissioner who is also the Chairman of the DCDC Committee, conducted a detailed review of several key issues, including Adoption of model bye-laws by PACS for making them multipurpose and multi-dimensional, Status of hardware purchases, District-wise targets for establishing new multipurpose PACS or Primary Dairy/Fisheries Coopera-

tive Societies in uncovered panchayats and villages, Identification of PACS for convergence with the PM-KUSUM scheme to promote green energy at the panchayat level. The DC emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among all committee members to achieve the targets of various initiatives, further strengthening the cooperative ecosystem in the district.

FIR lodged against individual for interfering with Revenue Department work

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 14

An FIR has been registered against an individual for illegally interfering and participating in the official work of the Revenue Department. The district administration Jammu has taken swift action, lodging an FIR and sending a strong message against corruption.

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya, has issued a stern warning against anyone who attempts to interfere or influence the fair and routine functioning of the department's work.

The DC's warning comes after taking cognisance of the individual for trying to illegally influence the department's decisions in Niabat Channi Rama. He has directed the Revenue Department to ensure that all work is carried out in a transparent and fair manner, without any external pressure or influence.

DC Ramban holds extensive public outreach program in Banihal

JINNEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 14

The Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, held a comprehensive public interaction session at Banihal, addressing the concerns of residents from the dual Sub Divisions of Ramsoo and Banihal.

The event, part of an ongoing public outreach program, saw the Deputy Commissioner engaged in a day-long interaction on the second day of his visit.

Large number of people from various walks of life attended, bringing forth their issues and concerns. Demonstrating his commitment to responsive governance, the Deputy Commissioner resolved most public interest issues



on the spot, assuring the attendees of prompt and effective redressal of their grievances.

Accompanying the Deputy Commissioner were SDM Rizwan Asgar, Tehsildar Imtiaaz Ahmed, and other senior officers from various departments. These officials also interacted with the public, providing on-the-spot solutions and reinforcing the administra-

tion's dedication to addressing the needs of the community.

Appreciating the efforts of the district administration, people said that these public outreach programmes highlighted the administration's proactive approach in fostering direct communication with the people, ensuring their voices are heard and their issues are swiftly addressed.

DC Doda visits accident site, extends support to injured

JINNEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 14

The Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh visited the site of a tragic mini bus accident at Bhatyas in Sub Division Gandoh yesterday. During his visit, the DC met with the victims of the accident at Sub-District Hospital Gandoh and similarly at Government Medical College Doda to ensure that all the injured persons were receiving the necessary treatment for their speedy recovery. The DC interacted with SDM, Doctors, hospital staff and local authorities to assess the condition of the injured individuals.

Unfortunately, the accident resulted in 25 injuries, with 2 fatalities reported. 2 critically injured individuals were immediately referred



to GMC Jammu for further treatment while 01 fatality was reported at GMC Jammu. The DC expressed deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and assured them of all possible sup-

port during this difficult time. The DC directed the concerned authorities to provide immediate assistance to the injured and ensure they receive the best medical care available.

Samba Administration initiates issue of farmers regarding cultivation along border area

JINNEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 14

The District Administration Samba in collaboration with the Agriculture Department has initiated a major issue of the farmers of District Samba regarding the cultivation of land beyond the fence which has not been cultivated from the year 1999 during the financial year 2024-25. The Chief Agriculture



Officer Samba, Madan Gopal Singh said that about 500 Kanals (62.5 acres) of land has been brought under Border Cultivation comprising the area of villages Chalyari Khurd, Chalyari Kalan, Sayal, Chachwal of Rajpura Block District Samba.

The Department of Agriculture Production and FW Samba

has issued 5 quintals of Mash Variety Walab 1 to the farmers whose land beyond the fence has been cultivated.

The joint initiative of District Administration in Collaboration with Agriculture Production and FW Samba have brought a ray of hope to the farmers of border areas with the cultivation of their land beyond the fence so that their income will increase.

Representatives of MSME Development Forum call on LG

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 14

Representatives of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Forum, led by its Founder Chairman Sh Rajnish Goenka, today called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan.

The members of MSME Development Forum discussed the promotion of Trade, Industry and Tourism sector of Jammu Kashmir.

They also briefed the Lt Governor on its endeavours to connect the local artisans with the buyers from across the country and to provide entrepreneurial opportunities to the youth of J&K.

The Lt Governor assured the MSME Development Forum all support and necessary interventions from the UT administration in strengthening the MSME and Start-ups ecosystem in Jammu Kashmir.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) was also present during the meeting.