

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 center.

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
- Severe joint and muscle pain
- Severe stomach pain
- Redness on the skin
- Severe headache
- Severe muscle pain
- Severe fatigue

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 11 | ISSUE NO: 168 | PAGES: 12 | PRICE: Rs 2/- | RNI NO: JKENG/2013/49471 | POSTAL REGD. NO. JK-497/22-24 | dailyjindrahimages.com/Epaper.php | jindrahimages123@gmail.com

Two soldiers injured in another terror incident at Kastigarh area

JI NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JUL 18

Two Army soldiers were injured in yet another terror incident between security forces and terrorists in Zadan area of Kastigarh Tehsil in district Doda when militants resorted to unprovoked firing on security forces late last night.

The firing was retaliated by the Indian Army after which militants fled from the spot by taking advantage of darkness.

Officials told the news agency that the fire fight started around 2.30 am when militants resorted to indiscriminate firing on the Army at Government High School Zadan. "The alert troops retaliated and the firing continued till first light of the day. But taking advantage of darkness, terrorists managed to give forces slip again," an official said.

The Zadan village is situated



on the north-west side of Doda town, about 32 kilometers from district headquarters Doda where the incident occurred around 2.30 am and firing started till 5 am.

Officials said that it was the brave efforts of the injured soldiers who retaliated immediately

and saved the lives of fellow soldiers who were taking rest inside the Government High School Zadan building after completing a hectic search operation in the area.

The injured soldiers with bullet wounds were shifted to associate hospital Government

Medical College (GMC) Doda from where they were airlifted to command hospital northern command Udhampur.

Talking to media persons at Kastigarh, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban range Shridhar Patil said that coordinated operation of security forces is underway in the area. "You have observed that yesterday we had contact with hiding terrorists and today as well we had contact with terrorists. As the search operation is under progress, I can't share much detail but soon we will get success," the DIG said.

In connection with the terror incident police have detained a few suspects from both the Urranbaggi and Kastigarh encounter sites for questioning and one person from Malwas area near Doda town is being put through questioning

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LG inaugurates Kashmir College of Engineering & Technology at Sgr



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 18

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday inaugurated the Kashmir College of Engineering and Technology, at Ranbirgarh, Srinagar.

The Lt Governor, in his address, congratulated the Chairman, Kashmir College of Engineering & Technology Sh Raja Aijaz Ali, and the entire team for their endeavour to strengthen the technological excellence in academia, innovation and nurturing a future-ready skilled workforce.

Speaking on the rapid transformation taking place in the Industry sector, the Lt Governor said the speed and scale of change in 4th Industrial Revolution calls

for strengthening the Industry-Academia collaborations.

He emphasised on fostering innovation culture in Engineering Colleges and realigning the curriculum to fulfill the evolving industry requirements.

"Skills and not the degree will shape the destiny of our industries. The future workforce must have critical skills such as cognitive skills, logical reasoning, technical skills etc to build future-proof careers," the Lt Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor highlighted reforms in the education sector under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to promote startups, innovation and entrepreneur-

ship in Jammu Kashmir.

He also made some valuable suggestions to explore the vast opportunities in the engineering and technology sector.

The demand for professionals in engineering and technology companies has increased. Today, industry is looking for workforce with specific skill set. Our focus should be on building capacities in accordance with the skills required for existing and future job positions, he said.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor Kashmir University; Vikramjit Singh,

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DGP, other senior officers interact with probationary IPS officers at PHQ

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 18

A group of 28 probationary IPS officers (76 RR batch) from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), Hyderabad, visited the Police Headquarters J&K as a part of their Study-cum-Cultural tour.

During their visit, the officers interacted with R.R. Swain, Director General of Police, J&K, and other senior officers, gaining valuable insights into the workings of J&K Police.

In his welcome address, M.K. Sinha, ADGP (Headquarters/Coordination) PHQ/Security J&K, introduced the officers to the geographical uniqueness of the region alongside the distinct policing-related challenges.

Thereafter, he underlined the crucial position held by the Jammu and Kashmir Police in the overall security grid, a



police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

It was followed by a detailed presentation by Iftikhar Talib, SP Operation, Srinagar, who briefed the probationers on the pivotal role played by the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu & Kashmir Police on the anti-terror front. His presentation covered the genesis of SOG, its achievements, and future challenges.

His presentation also focused on the capabilities of SOG covering both intelligence generation as well as conducting kinetic operations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director General of Police J&K shared his thoughts on the unique challenges faced by the Jammu and Kashmir Police over the past three decades.

He also dwelled upon topics like hybrid terrorism and the coordinating role of the Jammu & Kashmir Police among the various security and intelligence agencies operating in the region. The probationers were also engaged in an absorbing question-and-answer session where the senior officers responded to the queries, fostering a deeper understanding of the UT's law enforcement machinery and its different constituents.

Following the interaction, Saurabh A. Narendra presented the vote of thanks on behalf of the visiting group.

The session concluded with the presentation of a memento to the coordinating officer,

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Amarnath Yatra: Fresh batch of over 4300 pilgrims leaves Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

A fresh batch of more than 4300 pilgrims left for Shri Amarnath cave shrine for both Pahalgam and Baltal routes in Kashmir on Thursday from Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas base camp here.

As many as 4383 pilgrims left for Baltal in a fleet of 157.

For Baltal, 1701 pilgrims and for Pahalgam, 2682 pilgrims left from the base camp amidst tight security arrangements.

Last year, over 4.5 lakh pilgrims paid obeisance at the cave shrine.

The 52-day long Amarnath Yatra will conclude on August 19.

Infiltration bid foiled, two terrorists killed in Keran Kupwara: Army

JI NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JUL 18

Security forces on Thursday said they foiled an infiltration attempt by killing two terrorists in an ongoing operation along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Keran Sector of north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

This marks the second successful operation this month where security forces have managed to thwart infiltration attempts by terrorists attempting to cross the border along the LoC in the Keran sector of Kupwara.

An army official informed the news agency that two terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire following inputs regarding their movement along the LoC in the Keran sector. The bodies of the terrorists are

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LG pays obeisance at Mata Sidh Lakshmi Asthapan, Lokbhawan, Anantnag

JI NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, JUL 18

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid obeisance at Mata Sidh Lakshmi Asthapan, Lokbhawan, Anantnag, on the auspicious occasion of 'Har Bah'.

He prayed for the well-being of all and peace and prosperity of J&K.

The Lt Governor also joined the devotees in the Maha Yagya, organised by the Terathraj Sidh Lakshmi Peeth Trust, on Ashadh Shukla Paksha Dwadashi.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor called upon the people



from all sections of the society to work together with the administration to preserve and protect the ancient shrines and places of religious importance.

He also reiterated the commitment of the government to improve

facilities for the pilgrims of holy pilgrimages in Jammu Kashmir.

Syed Fakhruddin Hamid, Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag; members of Terathraj Sidh Lakshmi Peeth Trust and devotees in large numbers were present.

BOTTOMLINE

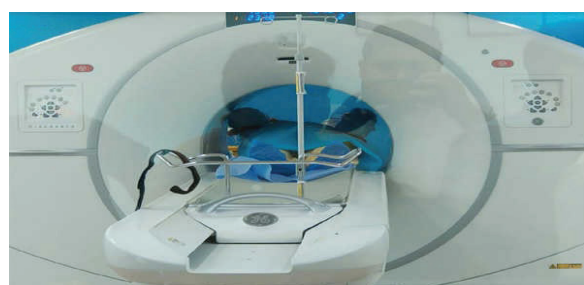
'Landmark achievement': PET scan services launched at State Cancer Institute, GMC Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 18

The much-awaited PET scan services were inaugurated at the State Cancer Institute, GMC Jammu on Thursday.

The Nuclear Medicine team, headed by Prof Ashutosh Gupta, Principal GMC Jammu and a renowned cancer specialist, performed the first PET scan. Other team members from Nuclear Medicine and Radiodiagnosis included Dr Rahul Sharma, Prof Kulbhushan Gupta, Dr Rajeev Gupta, Dr Abdul Waheed, Dr Sudheer Sharma, Ms Sumaira, Ms Lata and other supportive staff.

Four PET scans were conducted today under



the supervision of Dr Deepak Kumar, Medical Superintendent of the State Cancer Institute.

Dr Ashutosh Gupta informed the news agency that this achievement is a landmark not only for GMC Jammu but also for the people of the Jammu region who have suffered greatly due to the non-availability of this vital facility essential for treating and monitoring cancer

patients.

The new PET scan machine, procured for INR 13 crores by J&K Medical Supply Corporation, is the latest generation PET scan by Wipro GE Company, Discovery IQ, he said, adding that the model installed has the highest NEMA sensitivity and quantitation accuracy, which ultimately provides enhanced patient care, comfort, and satisfaction.

Dr Gupta said the PET CT will soon be linked with radiation therapy machines to be installed in the State Cancer Institute, to ensure that all radiation planning is done on PET-based imaging. This will make radiation treatment very precise and accurate, he said.

The State Cancer Institute is a prestigious project funded by the Government of India for INR 104 crores.

Principal GMC Jammu further said that efforts are being undertaken to keep the user charges for PET scans and other facilities at the State Cancer Institute at a very affordable level so that poor patients can utilise the facilities.

LG releases Dr Suheel Rasool Mir's 'Cultural Encyclopedia of Dard Tribe'



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 18

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday released the book 'Cultural Encyclopedia of the Dard Tribe' authored by Dr Suheel Rasool Mir, at Raj Bhawan.

In his address, the Lt Governor extended his felicitations to the author Dr Suheel Rasool Mir for exploring the remote landscapes and intricate

cultural nuances, customs, language and social structures of Dard tribe, through the book.

He appreciated the Shinor Meeras - Shina Cultural Centre at Gurez, Indian Army for preserving traditional wisdom and knowledge, heritage and culture of Dardi people for future generations.

Highlighting the significant contribution of the Tribal community in

nation building, the Lt Governor called for collective efforts from all stakeholders in preserving and promoting the rich customs, culture, and linguistic wealth of the tribal community.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also released the second edition of 'The North Kashmir Gazette', a joint endeavour of Kashmir Writers Association and the Army.

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Security forces fire at suspects near LoC in Rajouri

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

The security forces on Thursday opened fire on at least two suspicious persons close to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sunderbani area of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. The Border Security Force (BSF) troops noticed two suspects and fired at them early on Thursday, said sources.

"The troops fired a few rounds at the suspects and also alerted the nearby posts," a source said. Sources added that the Army troops deployed in the Sunderbani sector also fired some rounds. The joint team of Army and BSF has launched a search operation, they said.

9 Day "All Women Motorbike Expedition: Jammu to Siachen Base Camp via Srinagar" flagged off

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

Under the visionary guidance of Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal and the Director Tourism Jammu, Vivekanand Rai, the Directorate of Tourism Jammu, in collaboration with Shakti Udghosh Foundation, organized a nine day "All Women Motorbike Expedition" from 18th to 27th July 2024. The journey from Jammu to Siachen Base Camp via Srinagar, themed "Ride with Pride: Honouring Our Bravehearts," serves as a tribute to the valour and resilience of Indian women and as homage to the brave soldiers safeguarding our borders in the world's most extreme terrains.

The expedition was flagged off today from the Balidan Stambh by Joint Director Tourism, Suna-

ina Sharma Mehta, who was also the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Mehta shared her words of encouragement for the women embarking on this adventurous journey, expressing deep gratitude for being part of this endeavour aimed at honouring the bravehearts and championing women's empowerment. She expressed hope that this bike rally would highlight the potential of adventure tourism in the Jammu Division and attract other bike enthusiasts from India and abroad to include Jammu in their bike tour circuits. She further added that elaborate arrangements are in place for the smooth facilitation of the bikers.

The expedition began in an environment filled with fervour and enthusiasm. Dr. Preeti Chaudhary,



convenor of the Shakti Udghosh Foundation and the leader of the expedition, served as the Marshal rider, leading a diverse group of bikers comprising 12 women and 3 men. Also present on the occasion were Dr. Showkat Hayat Matto, Deputy Director Tourism Jammu, Mohamad Arif Lone, ADT NHW Batote, Muzamil Hassan, AD Tourism Jammu, and other officials of the department.

Over the next 9 days, the expedition will navi-

gate the majestic Shivaliks, traverse the breathtaking Kashmir Valley, conquer the formidable Zoji La Pass and brave the stark beauty of Ladakh, leading to the Base Camp of Siachen—the world's highest battlefield. The route includes the following stages: Jammu to Srinagar (18th July), Srinagar to Kargil (19th July), Kargil to Leh (20th July), a day halt in Leh for acclimatization (21st July), Leh to Diskit/Panamik (22nd July), Panamik to

Siachen Base Camp and back to Hunder (23rd July), Hunder to Leh (24th July), Leh to Kargil (25th July), Kargil (closing ceremony) and back to Srinagar (26th July), and finally Srinagar to Jammu (27th July).

The event aims to illuminate the courage of our soldiers while showcasing the unwavering strength and determination of women riders, sending a powerful message of empowerment and unity. The participants in this bike rally come from various parts of the country, including Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and the Union Territory of Delhi.

The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and the Shakti Udghosh Foundation proudly present this all-women motorbike expedition, showcasing the indomitable spirit of Indian women and paying tribute to the brave soldiers of India.

One month Skill Development Training for Youth organized in Reasi

J I NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 18

The District Administration Reasi in collaboration with IIT Jammu, organised a comprehensive Training Programme on Soft Skills and Technical Skills for the youth of District Reasi under the AVSAR Scheme, to equip young individuals with essential skills to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial capabilities.

The month-long training program will be held at the Auditorium Hall of DC Office, starting from July 18, 2024.

This initiative underscores the commitment of the District Administration and IIT Jammu to foster skill development and empower the youth of the region.

The training program will cover a wide range of topics, including Tourism, Agro and Allied Sector,



Marketing, Blogging and Telecommunication. Expert trainers from IIT Jammu will conduct the sessions, providing participants with valuable insights and practical knowledge.

The AVSAR Scheme, under which this program is being organized, is dedicated to creating opportunities for the youth and ensuring their holistic development. By leveraging the expertise of IIT Jammu, the scheme aims to provide top-notch training and support to the participants.

The District Development Commissioner Reasi Vishesh Mahajan invites all interested youth to take advantage of this opportunity and participate in the training program.

ADDC Sukhdev Singh Samyal, GM DIC Anwar Bandyal, CPO Narinder Kumar, Chief Agriculture Officer Harbans Singh, Principal Food Craft Institute Jammu Jyoti Bhatti, Principal Degree College Reasi, Project Coordinator Dr. Lakhwinder Singh, Dr. Vinay Chembolu and other officers were present.

Small businesses to launch over 3,200 new products on Amazon.in this Prime Day

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

This Prime Day, small businesses are launching 3200+ new products on Amazon.in across categories like home and kitchen, fashion and grooming, jewelry, handmade products, and many more. Brands like Behoma, Dream of Glory, Orika Spices and others will be showcasing their unique products on Amazon.in and reaching customers across different parts of the country. Tens of thousands of small businesses will be participating in one of the most awaited shopping events on Amazon.in offering lakhs of Prime-enabled products to customers across India.

"Amazon Prime Day is one of the most anticipated shopping events in India, helping us deliver unparalleled value to our sellers and customers. We are thrilled to bring it back to India for the 8th consecutive year, celebrating the craft, creativity, product innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of our sellers, especially small and medium businesses. During the two days of the event, sellers will not only get a massive boost in the visibility of their products and brands but also directly access Amazon's vast customer base across India, spanning 100% of serviceable pin codes. Through such shopping events, our aim is to enable small

and medium businesses to embrace the power of e-commerce and unlock new avenues for their success, fostering a vibrant online marketplace that contributes to the larger economic growth of India," said Amit Nanda, Director, Selling Partner Services, Amazon India.

Small and medium businesses can leverage a robust suite of tools and features available on Amazon to gear up for Prime Day 2024. A streamlined self-service registration process (SSR 2.0) makes it easy for sellers to get started on the Amazon.in marketplace, with multi-language support, easy registration, and invoicing. Sellers can use the Sale Event Planner to opt-in and offer great deals during Prime Day. The tool also offers data-driven recommendations on inventory planning, enabling sellers to maximize their opportunity and sales. The New Seller Success Centre is an onboarding buddy that provides step-by-step guidance to sellers on setting up their online shops, adopting key growth levers, and utilizing features like Ads, Prime, and deals.

"Behoma is excited to launch our newest handcrafted home décor pieces on Prime Day 2024," said Nikhil Jain, Owner, Behoma. "As a modern home decor brand specializing in stylish and innovative designs, we're thrilled to showcase our

latest offerings, including a golden hand-hammered metal planter set and a stylish drop-shaped metal vase in a luxurious gold finish. Prime Day provides us with a fantastic platform to connect with our customers, and we're buzzing with excitement to transform their living spaces with our unique handmade products."

Amazon has also continuously improved the functionalities of the Amazon Seller App, empowering sellers to manage and grow their businesses seamlessly on the go. Sellers can now run their entire selling operations through the app, including managing coupons, deals, and sponsored product campaigns. The app also provides interactive business metrics, allowing sellers to easily track and analyze key performance indicators.

Prime Day 2024 is an invaluable opportunity for small and medium businesses to strengthen their e-commerce footprint, reach more customers, and launch new products. By capitalizing on the potential surge in sales, SMBs can boost their brand visibility, attract new customers, and strengthen their foundation for sustained growth through e-commerce.

Enhancing Everyday Life with Amazon Prime: Amazon India returns with its much-awaited Prime Day on July 20th

& 21st, 2024. Prime members get ready to Discover Joy with big savings, great deals, new launches from leading brands, small and medium businesses, blockbuster entertainment and much more. During Prime Day, save big with 10% savings on payment using ICICI Bank Credit/Debit cards, SBI Credit Cards and EMI transactions on ICICI Bank Credit Cards and SBI Credit Cards. Amazon Prime is designed to make your life better every single day as it provides the best of shopping, savings, and entertainment in one single membership, unlimited 5% cashback on all purchases using their co-branded ICICI credit card, access to exclusive deals, early and exclusive access to our shopping events including Prime Day. Not a member yet? Join Prime Annual at Rs 1,499 for one year, Prime Lite at Rs 799 for one year, and Prime Shopping Edition at Rs 399 for one year at amazon.in/prime to enjoy Prime benefits such as free and fast delivery, unlimited access to award-winning movies & TV shows with Prime Video, unlimited access to more than 100 million songs, ad-free and over podcast episodes with Amazon Music, a free rotating selection of more than 3,000 e-books, magazines and comics with Prime Reading and access to the monthly free-in game content and benefits with Prime Gaming.

DC Jammu inaugurates job fair under SANKALP Scheme



J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

Deputy Commissioner, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, inaugurated a job fair under the SANKALP Scheme at the District Employment & Counselling Centre Jammu. Assistant Director Employment, Mukhlis Ali was also present at the occasion.

The event took place at the Employment Complex Toph Sherkhania marking a significant step towards empowering the youth and job seekers of the dis-

trict by providing ample employment opportunities and career guidance.

Over 13 companies from different sectors actively participated in the Rozgar Mela, offering more than 200 vacancies.

A total of 400 job seekers attended the event, with 65 individuals short-listed and 10 selected on the spot. The Job Fair/Rozgar Mela demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing employment prospects and supporting the career aspirations of the district's youth.

ADM imposes Rs. 50,000 fine on erring trader & edible oil manufacturer for sub-standard products

J I NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 18

Out of Seven cases reviewed, by Additional District Magistrate Ramban (ADM), Varunjeet Singh Charak, who also serves as Adjudicating Officer Ramban, two were decided with imposing Rs. 50000 penalties levied against the Trader, including Edible Soyabean Oil Manufacturer, M/S Spire Industries SIDCO Bari Brahmana Jammu, for the sale & Manufacturing of sub-standard Edible Oil. These violations are in direct contravention of the FSS Act-2006. Other cases were deferred to the next hearing due to the absence of respondents.

This enforcement action targeted multiple manufacturers, wholesale dealers, and retailers

found to be violating the provisions of the FSS Act-2006. This action is part of a robust enforcement drive aimed at ensuring compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 (FSS Act-2006) and to provide the consumers with the quality and standard edible items. The ADM, acting as the Adjudicating Officer, underscored the importance of adhering to the legal standards governing the food and pharmaceutical industries. The ADM issued strict warnings to the offending Food Business Operators (FBOs), directing them to comply rigorously with the Food Safety and Standards Act and its associated regulations. He cautioned that any future violations would result in even more severe penalties.

Commissioner reviews financial position of first quarter of fiscal year 2024-25 of STD

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

Commissioner State Taxes Department (STD), P.K Bhat alongwith Special Secretary, Finance department, K.K Sidha today jointly chaired a meeting at Excise and Taxation Complex here to review the financial position in first quarter of fiscal year 2024-25 ending this June.

Additional Commissioner Administration & Enforcement, Jammu, Namrita Dogra; Deputy Commissioners of STD, Assistant Commissioners of STD and all the State Tax Officers (STO's) of Jammu division were present in the meeting.

During the meeting, the Tax officers of Jammu and Kashmir have been instructed to take strict action against cases of tax evasion, tax leakage and tax pilferage in the Union Territory for revenue augmentation besides ensuring 100% compliance in return filing by registered taxpayers.

Addressing the meeting, Commissioner STD expressed his concerns over dip in revenue collection and directed tax officers to gear-up for remaining three quarters, where at least 20% hike is expected from each circle to meet



the revenue targets of FY 2024-25.

The Commissioner instructed officers for usage of analytical portal provided to officers to detect cases of tax evasion. He stressed on the enhanced usability of the GST portal by all the concerned officers as there are many indicators which could help in early detection of any fraudulent activity.

Special Secretary, Finance K.K. Sidha, advised the officers to get familiar with type of dealers pertaining to their circles thoroughly as it is most important to know the basic fabric of revenue stream. He also stressed the officers to increase the field activity and make taxpayers aware of consequences of non-compliance and tax evasions with a view to create deterrence amongst the taxpayers.

The Special Secretary stressed on proactive information sharing

amongst various wings of the department to detect tax evasion and revenue leakage cases. He directed the officers to ensure compliance in sectors like banquet halls, catering business, tuition centers, car accessory and modification shops where business is primarily done on a cash receipt and not on proper GST invoice.

He asked the enforcement wings to intensify their field actions and take appropriate measure to curb undervaluation with special focus outer and remote areas. He impressed the officers of enforcements wings to make workable rosters for area and trade specific enforcements.

During the meeting, Namrita Dogra gave a presentation showing circle wise performance of each tax circle. The performance of Deputy Commissioners of Enforcement Wings and Stamps were also discussed in the detail.

Health screening camps organized in Block Ghat schools

J I NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 18

After the reopening of educational institutions post-summer break, the RBSK Teams of Block Ghat today conducted screening camps in various schools within the Medical Block Ghat. This initiative was part of their routine work to ensure the health and well-being of students.

The drive was conducted under the guidance of BMO Ghat, Dr. Ab Gafoor and the overall supervision of CMO Doda, Dr. Om Kumar. Their leadership ensured the smooth and effective execution of the health screening activities.

During the camp, the RBSK health team diligently screened the students for various health issues. They also educated the students about diseases covered under the RBSK scheme, emphasizing the importance of early detection and prevention. In addition to health screenings, the team provided valuable suggestions on maintaining proper health and hygiene. This included a live demonstration of various hand-washing techniques, aimed at promoting better personal hygiene practices among the students.

DC Kulgam reviews progress of Works under Jal Jeevan Mission

J I NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 18

To evaluate the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting with concerned officers of the Jal Shakti Department at mini-secretariat, here.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed both the physical and financial progress of the works being executed under the Jal Jeevan Mission in the district. The Executive Engineer gave a detailed brief of all works to the chair. It was also informed that under the JJM, the district has a total of 143 schemes encompassing



213 works, with several works already completed.

Emphasizing the importance of JJM as a flagship program aimed at cover-

ing all households, officers were instructed to work in coordination to ensure the smooth execution of JJM works in their respective

areas by the DC. Various issues and bottlenecks were comprehensively discussed during the meeting impeding the speedy completion of few projects. The DC instructed the concerned to ensure timely completion and target achievement under Jal Jeevan Mission.

He instructed for strict measures like penalties and black-listing of contractors/firms failing to meet project conditions and deadlines.

The meeting was attended by JDP-Zahid Sajjad; Executive Engineers, AEEs and other officers.

DC Rajouri inaugurates disability camp for specially-abled persons, senior citizens at GMC&AH

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 18

A disability camp for specially-abled persons and senior citizens was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat at GMC&AH Rajouri.

The camp aims to provide assistive devices and appliances to needy individuals, promoting their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. While speaking at the inaugural function, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized on the objective to assist the needy persons with disabilities by providing durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities. He also said that the initiative is a significant step towards promoting inclusivity and empowering specially-abled persons and senior citizens in the



region.

District Social Welfare Officer Rajouri, Abdul Raheem briefed the participants about the initiative for improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities, senior citizens and ensuring their access to essential mobility aids.

He further informed that such assessment camps are also being organized at Tehsil Headquarters of Darhal, Thanamandi, Kotranka, Nowshera, Sunderbani and Kalakote w.e.f 18.07.2024 to 26.07.2024 for the assessment of Physically Challenged persons / Senior Citizens of the District for providing assistive devices/aids and appliances

under ADIP and Rashtriya Vyoshri Yojana (RVY) Schemes.

Dr. Mehmood Bajjar, Superintendent GMC Rajouri informed that to provide assistance to these specially-abled persons, the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre has been established at District Hospital Rajouri for providing similar facilities to specially abled persons. Among others, District Social Welfare Officer Rajouri, Abdul Raheem; Superintendent GMC Rajouri, Mehmood Bajjar, Doctors from GMC Rajouri, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer Rajouri and experts from ALMICO were present on the occasion.

Cricket Tournament organised under 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan' at Ramban



JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 18

In a spirited initiative to promote a drug-free lifestyle among youth, the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Ramban organized a cricket tournament under 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.' The event, held under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary and overall supervision of District Social Welfare Officer, Rahul Gupta, saw enthusiastic participation from young cricket enthusiasts across the district.

The tournament aimed to engage the youth in

constructive and healthy activities, steering them away from the menace of drug abuse. It featured teams from various regions, showcasing their cricketing skills and sportsmanship. The event not only provided a platform for young talents to shine but also served as a medium to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drugs.

DSWO emphasized the importance of such events in creating a positive and drug-free environment for the youth. He highlighted that sports can be a powerful tool in diverting young minds from negative influ-

ences and instilling discipline, teamwork, and a sense of achievement.

The tournament concluded with an award ceremony where the winning team was felicitated with trophies and certificates. Participants and spectators alike expressed appreciation for the event, noting its positive impact on raising awareness about drug prevention.

The successful execution of this cricket tournament marks a significant step towards a drug-free Ramban, fostering a healthier and more vibrant community for the youth.

J&K Youth Congress organizes "Chalo Panchayat" Program at Jhanger, Nowshera



JI NEWS SERVICE
NOWSHERA, JULY 18

The Jammu and Kashmir Youth Congress successfully organized the "Chalo Panchayat" program at Jhanger Nowshera, under the leadership of *Man Singh Rathore, State In-charge (PYC) and organised by Amit Syal vice President (Pyc -JK), demonstrating its commitment to grassroots engagement and community development. The event witnessed significant participation from local youth and key leaders, reinforcing the Youth

Congress's dedication to addressing the issues and aspirations of the people at the panchayat level.

Additionally, this initiative focuses on the upcoming state elections, aiming to mobilize and engage the youth to participate actively in the electoral process. By addressing the local issues and empowering the youth, the Youth Congress seeks to build a strong and informed voter base that will contribute to a vibrant and dynamic democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Prosthetic Aid distribution camp for specially-abled held at B'la

JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JULY 18

Social Welfare Department Baramulla, in collaboration with Artificial Limbs Corporation of India (ALIMCO) and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited today organised a prosthetics aid distribution camp for specially-abled persons at Dak Bungalow Baramulla.

The 2-Day camp was inaugurated by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina in presence of District Social Welfare Officer Baramulla (DSWO), Sajad Ahmad Bhat, officers from ALIMCO and NHPC and was attended by all the specially-abled beneficiaries who were identified by the department for the necessary support and help.



The ADC emphasized the importance of such initiatives in creating a more inclusive society and stated that collective efforts are needed to ensure that specially-abled individuals have access to the resources they need to lead fulfilling lives.

On the first day of the camp, 365 different aid related materials and devices like wheel chairs, CP wheel chair with com-

mode, ADL kit, E-tri-

cycles, smart phones, smart canes, hearing aid, auxiliary crutches, artificial limbs, collar support, knee brace belts were distributed among 200 specially-abled persons. Throughout the camp, recipients of assistive devices also received comprehensive training from district social welfare officials and ALIMCO representatives on how to effectively use these aids to improve their daily lives.

One month training program on Fruit & Vegetables preservation concludes at Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

The Department of Horticulture Jammu is imparting training to the farmers especially women farmers in the art of processing of fruits and vegetables.

In this context, a one month training programme on Fruit and Vegetables Preservation concluded here today at Fruit and Vegetable Craft Centre, Chand Nagar Jammu wherein Director Horticulture Jammu, Chaman Lal Sharma was the Chief Guest.

During the programme, the Director distributed certificates among the 64 women farmers for successfully completing the one month training course in the presence of Chief Canning and Processing Instructor, Gul Sayed and Assistant Director, Satish Kumar.

While addressing a large gathering of women farmers, the Director urged them to come forward and avail incentives under different schemes of the department for setting up of small fruit and veg-



etables processing units. He asked them to form Self Help Groups (SHG's), associate with the Horticulture Department and assured that the department will help them in setting up of Micro Food Processing units for the value addition of fruit and vegetable products which will not only provide employment opportunities, but also become self reliant and can play an important role in enhancing the family income.

The training was imparted to the participants for the processing of fruits and vegetables to convert it into value added products such as Jam,

Pickle, Preserve, Candy, Sauces, Squash, Jelly's etc and more than 2000 budding entrepreneurs have been trained by the department thereby exploiting entrepreneurship by establishing more than 150 micro processing units by the beneficiaries with the assistance of the department.

The participants also appealed to the women farmers to get themselves trained in the art of fruit and vegetables preservation and set up small processing units with the assistance of the department and also thanked the department for providing such training courses.

Awareness about child rights held at Batpora Hyhama



JI NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JULY 18

Mission Vatsalya Kupwara through its CWC unit in collaboration with ICDS Block Kupwara conducted an awareness programme about child rights in remote area Batpora in Hayhama block of District Kupwara.

The programme was conducted under the supervision of CDPO Kupwara. Students from High School Batpora Hayhama

also participated in the programme.

CDPO Kupwara highlighted the benefits under ICDS for adolescent girls.

Mohd Rafi Shah from CWC sensitized the audience about the rights of the children under Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006.

Also the locals were sensitized about the ill consequences of employing children less than 18 years.

Mandeep Kaur inspects developmental works in Srinagar

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur, accompanied by Commissioner SMC/CEO, SSCL, Dr Owais Ahmed, undertook a thorough inspection of ongoing developmental works in Srinagar.

Senior officers from various line departments accompanied the Commissioner Secretary during the visit.

The Commissioner SMC/CEO, SSCL provided a detailed briefing to the Commissioner Secretary on various projects as the review commenced from Karanagar.

Mandeep Kaur inspected the development work on underground ducting for communication and electricity cables, development of road including pavements at Karanagar.

Moving forward, the inspection encompassed Shireen Bagh, focusing on the development of walkways and footpaths along the bund.

At Habba Kadal, Mandeep Kaur further directed



the officers for construction of public convenience at old Habba Kadal Bridge. She also asked for expediting the repair work and facade improvement of Iskcon Temple besides illumination of old Habba Kadal Bridge.

The inspection further extended to the heritage corridor of city for retrofitting, conservation and facade improvement of Residential/ Commercial Buildings, Walkways/

Pathways including the old Khanqah-e- Moulla shrine besides development and improvement of Jamia Masjid precinct walkway.

Noteworthy projects at Achan Landfill site included Design, Construction, Erection and Commissioning of 130 KLD Septage Treatment Plant including creation of buffer zones around the landfill site.

Mandeep also inspected the construction of shopping complex having

twelve shops and two halls at Soura Housing Colony being developed by JKHB.

She inspected the community hall at Malla Bagh and Imamia Park at Alamgari Bazar. She asked for plantation of deodar trees and illumination of park. The inspection further extended to Low Lying Pump Station at Ashai Bagh.

Lastly, Mandeep Kaur directed the concerned to expedite all the works being executed in Srinagar while maintaining all set quality parameters.

"These inspections underscore the government's commitment to enhance the urban landscape and fostering sustainable development practices across Srinagar. Through collaborative efforts and strategic planning, these projects aim to elevate the quality of life for residents and visitors alike", maintained the Commissioner Secretary.

DC Kupwara chairs Rent Assessment Committee meeting

JI NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JULY 18

In order to finalize the various Rent Assessment Cases of the buildings under-utilization of different Government Departments, a meeting of the District Rent Assessment Committee (DRAC) was held under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan here.

During the DRAC meeting, as many as 37 rent cases of buildings presently used by Government Departments including School Education, Handicraft & Handloom, Social Welfare, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Health, Skill development, Ayush, R&B, Department of Libraries and Research, Medical College and Police Department were put forth before the Committee for fixing of monthly rent.

The Committee deliberated on all the rent assessment cases in detail and each case was examined thoroughly keeping in view various administrative and other necessities. On the occasion, out of



the total 37 cases, 27 cases were approved while 10 other cases were scheduled to be put up again due to some technical deficiencies.

The Chairperson DRAC meticulously reviewed the functioning of GMC boys and Girls hostels from rented accommodations and took stock of facilities being provided.

She also took the appraisal of the availability of food store buildings for dumping of winter stocks at far-off areas of Karnah, Keran, Machil, Jungund, Kamkadi and Budnumbal.

The DC impressed upon the Officers to ensure that vacant govt. buildings are occupied for official purposes and rented accommodation remains the last

option. She emphasized that government buildings should be constructed by concerned departments on priority.

Meeting was attended by Principal GMC Handwara, Dr. Khursheed, CPO Kupwara, Parvaiz Ahmed, CMO, CEO, Executive Engineers and other concerned officers.

J&K Fencing Athletes make India proud at Commonwealth Championship in New Zealand

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

J&K fencers representing India have made the Nation proud by securing 1 silver and 3 bronze medals at the Commonwealth Fencing Championship in New Zealand.

Harshit Kohli won a silver medal in the Sabre team event; Shreya Gupta earned a bronze medal in the Sabre individual event; Chhavi Sharma took home a bronze medal in the Sabre team event while Sufyan Waheed Sohail won a bronze medal in the Epee team event.

It is noteworthy that Harshit Kohli and Chhavi Sharma are the trainees at the JKSC's Khelo India State Centre of Excellence for Fencing, while



Shreya Gupta and Sufyan Waheed are being trained at the National Centre of Excellence in Gujarat and Patiala, respectively.

Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Sarmad Hafeez, congratulated all the medalists and praised their exceptional performance at the prestigious Commonwealth

Fencing Championship. "It is heartening to see our youth competing on international stages and proving to be the best. The diligent efforts of the LG administration are evident as athletes from these centers consistently win medals at both national and international levels," he added.

PMFME workshop/ awareness camp held in Kathua

JI NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JULY 18

Prime Minister's Formalization of Micro Food Processing (PM-FME) scheme awareness workshop was organized by Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing (Nodal Department- PMFME) Kathua at Community Centre, Kharote (Kathua).

The workshop was attended by Mohan Singh ex-Sarpanch, Area Marketing Officer, Kathua, AGMO Kathua besides GMIS and other officials of the department.

Lead Bank Manager Kathua, District Resource Person PMFME Kathua also attended the workshop. Ramesh Chander Sharma (DRP) briefed the audience about features of the Scheme, its scope and benefits. Rajeev Sharma GMI Kathua briefed about scope of Food Processing Industry in District Kathua and people were encouraged to avail maximum benefits under the Scheme, where handholding will be provided by all the concerned.

The programme witnessed large participation and several interested participants were covered under the PMFME Scheme on spot. AMO Kathua briefed participants about the scope of Micro food processing industry for providing employment to unemployed youth, SHG members and also for value addition of farmers' produce. LDM Kathua briefed the audience about the various benefits of Food processing under the Aegis of PMFME. Mohan Singh, ex-Sarpanch from Kharote appreciated efforts being put in by the government to make the public aware about various government schemes through a number of outreach programs. He exhorted the public to take benefit of the PMFME scheme to become self-sufficient and also to give employment to others.

My Youth My Pride: Summer Activities Kickstart in South Kashmir



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

Aiming to reach and engage the maximum number of youths in sports, the J&K Sports Council has launched summer activities for the Kashmir division under the banner of 'My Youth My Pride 2024-25' from Tral in South Kashmir.

The activities were inaugurated at the Indoor Sports Hall, Tral, by Divisional Sports Officer, Kashmir, Divisional Sports Officer, Central, the Manager of Bakshi Stadium, along with other officials.

Approximately 200 athletes (boys and girls) participated in the Thang-Ta event, witnessed by 250 spectators at the Indoor Sports Hall, Tral.

Similarly, 150 athletes

and 200 spectators were involved in a Kabaddi competition held at the Sports Stadium, Pulwama. The playfield in Pampore was vibrant with Tennis Ball Cricket activities, engaging 48 players and 140 spectators.

Furthermore, the playfield in Devsar, Indoor Sports Hall, and Indoor Hall in Qaimoh, Kulgam, were bustling with Kabadidi, Badminton, and Kho Kho events respectively, attracting 180 athletes and captivating an audience of 240. Also, special sports activities were conducted at the Sports Stadium, Shopian, where six volleyball teams, four cricket teams, and 50 athletes participated in Taekwondo events, drawing the admiration of 700 spectators.

DC Samba reviews power scenario in district



JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 18

In light of the ongoing peak summer season, the Deputy Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma, chaired an emergency review meeting of the Power Development Department (PDD), here today. The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer, PDD, Assis-

tant Executive Engineers (AEEs) and Assistant Engineers (AEs).

The DC emphasized the critical need to ensure an uninterrupted power supply during this period of heightened demand. He directed the PDD officials to take all necessary measures to maintain a stable and reliable power supply to all residents of Samba district.

DC chairs local level committee meeting under National Trust Act in Udhampur



JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 18

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai chaired a meeting of local level committee with regard to appointment of legal guardian. One case related to legal guardianship under the National Trust Act 2021 was sanctioned by the committee.

Among others, members of committee were present Kanika Gupta, District Social Welfare Officer Udhampur, Sr. Advocate Ch. Mohd Shafi, District Health Officer, Parveen Sangral, founder Muskan NGO, Dr Roopika Jamwal. The Deputy Commissioner passed instructions regarding extensive awareness drive for awareness of all the schemes for Disabled under National Trust act.

Later, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner, the Department of Social Welfare Udhampur organized an awareness camp at Senior Citizen's Club Udhampur for Divy-

angjans.

Parveen Sangral, founder Muskan Foundation awarded the people about Nirmaya health insurance scheme which provides benefit of upto Rs. 1 lakh to people with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Autism, Mental retardation and multiple disabilities. She also sensitized the masses about the obligation of appointing guardians for persons suffering with disabilities as specified above.

District Social Welfare Officer, Kanika Gupta, presided over the program. She encouraged all divyangjans to avail benefit of the Nirmaya Health Insurance scheme and Legal guardianship of National Trust Act.

The audience actively took part in the program and raised various queries which were successfully answered by the chair.

Around 60-70 divyangjans along with their family members took benefit of the awareness session.

License of a medical establishment suspended for 10 days on account of irregularities at Anantnag

JI NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, JULY 18

In a joint operation, the Drug Control Authority Anantnag and local police conducted inspections of over 20 medical establishments in the Achabal area.

During the inspection, most of the establishments were found to be compliant, while GM Medicate Achabal was found violating license conditions and dispensing expired medication to a patient as such action was taken against the erring.

The license of the erring has been suspended for a period of 10 days, and the authorities have issued a stern warning, indicating that further violations could lead to permanent license cancellation.

Following the inspections, an awareness program was conducted at the Achabal town hall to educate pharmacists about Good Pharmacy Practices, medication handling, storage, and legal regulations under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. The local police also participated in the event.

This action highlights the authorities' commitment to ensuring the quality and safety of medication available to the public.

ADC Kupwara visits border area Keran, listens grievances of people



JI NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JULY 18

On the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, the Additional Deputy Commissioner ADC Kupwara, M Rouf Rahman today had an extensive tour to the border area of Keran to take stock of the situation, efficient delivery of public services and review the functioning of Tehsil Level offices at Mini Secretariat Keran.

The ADC took an extensive review of achievements of different departments and emphasized on focusing on efficient public service delivery.

During the visit, the ADC held an interactive meeting with the people including Senior citizens, Market Association, Tourist Players, Lumberdars, Chowkidars and other stakeholders of Keran who apprised the ADC about the issues being faced by people of Keran and Tourists visiting the area.

Key issues raised included the mobile network connectivity, parking area, road connectivity, macadamisation and cleanliness.

The ADC gave a patient hearing to the grievances of the public and assured early action on all the genuine demands in a time bound manner. He emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination and stressed the need for timely completion of ongoing developmental projects in the area.

The ADC impressed upon the Officers and field functionaries to work with zeal and added dedication to facilitate the people of this border area with efficient public services delivery so that people and tourists do not face any inconvenience.

The meeting was attended by Tehsildar Keran, SHO Keran, Principal, HSS Keran, NT, Health, R&B, RDD, Forest, Food, Education & Revenue officials.

Visit of Vigyan Jyoti students to Indian Institute of Technology Jammu



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 18

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu hosted 50 students from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) Reasi, Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Reasi and Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) Reasi as part of the Vigyan Jyoti Programme.

This initiative aims to promote gender parity in STEM fields by increasing the representation of girls

in science and technology.

The outreach section, led by Prof. Abhay Sharma, Dean, and Dr. Nalin Kumar Sharma, Associate Dean, organized the visit to the institute's various facilities, including the Tinkerer's Lab, Central Workshop, and Physics Lab, where dedicated staff explained the operation and significance of equipment. The day included informative sessions where Dr. Pervaiz Fathima Khatoun, Assis-

tant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering and Dr. Nalin Kumar Sharma motivated the students towards STEM. The event concluded with refreshments served to all participants. This visit was a pivotal step in inspiring and empowering young girls to pursue careers in STEM, reinforcing IIT Jammu's commitment to fostering educational outreach and support for future generations.

DC Rajouri reviews arrangements for Independence Day celebrations



JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JULY 18

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today reviewed the arrangements for the Independence Day celebrations.

The meeting was attended by officers of line departments, where different aspects of the arrangements were discussed in detail.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of the day and directed officers to put in coordinated efforts to ensure that all arrangements are put in place well in time. It was decided that the celebrations of the day will begin with Shehnaiz Vadan by the Information Department, followed by the flag hoisting ceremony, parade and holding of cultural activities.

The meeting informed that the main function will be held at District Police Line Rajouri and full dress rehearsal shall be conducted on 13th August, 2024.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed officers

to ensure adequate security arrangements, cleanliness, medicare, illumination of government buildings, parking facilities, traffic management and proper seating arrangements at the main venue. He underscored the need for meticulous planning and coordination to ensure a memorable and impactful celebration of the day.

The meeting was attended by the ADC, Rajiv Kumar Khajuria; ASP, Musadiq Majid Basu; Officers from Army, CRPF, BSF, CPO, Maqsood Ahmed; ACR, Mohd Jhanagir Khan; SE PWD(R&B), Devi Dayal; ACD, Vijay Kumar; ACP, Sheraz Chowhan; DSEO, Sandeep Sharma; DIO, Mohd Nawaz Choudhary; CEO Education, Mohammad Mushtaq; ARTO, Pawan Kumar; AD FCS&CA, Rohit Kumar; EXEN PWD(R&B) Rajouri, Sardar Khan; EXEN Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Sharma; EXEN PDD Rajouri, Mohd Rashid; EXEN PMGSY Rajouri, Intiaz Mir, Executive Officer MC Rajouri and other officers of the district.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Two soldiers injured...

at Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) Doda. The arrested person was brought to the Associated Hospital GMC Doda for medical checkup by the police and was taken back to JIC for further questioning.

Meanwhile, Kashmir Tigers, an offshoot of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) terror organization, has claimed responsibility for the terror attacks and have released disturbing videos on facebook, the authenticity of which can't be confirmed.

LG inaugurates Kashmir...

Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce department; Vidhi Kumar Birdi, IGP Kashmir and other senior officials.

Raja Aijaz Ali, Chairman, Kashmir College of Engineering & Technology; Dr Syed Jalal Ahmad, Principal along with faculty members and staff of the college were present on the occasion.

DGP, other senior...

Sandeep Singh, by the Director General of Police J&K. DGP J&K also received a souvenir from the Director General, SVP National Police Academy (NPA). Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID J&K, V.K Birdi, IGP Kashmir, B.S. Tuti, IGP (Headquarters/POS) PHQ/ Traffic J&K, Nisha Nathyal, DIG (Headquarter) PHQ, AIsG of PHQ, and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

Infiltration bid foiled...

yet to be retrieved, as the operation is still ongoing, the official said.

"An infiltration attempt has been successfully prevented with the elimination of two terrorists on the LoC in the Keran sector. Anti-infiltration operations are continuing," read a post by Chinar Corps-Indian Army on X (formerly Twitter).

Security forces on Monday said three hardcore foreign terrorists, who attempted to infiltrate across the LoC in the Keran Sector, were eliminated. A large

quantity of warlike stores, including three AK series rifles with magazines, four pistols, and grenades were recovered during searches in the area.

"In recent weeks, there have been intelligence inputs regarding terrorists attempting to infiltrate the Line of Control along the Keran sector. They intended to carry out sabotage and subversive activities, aiming to disturb normalcy, particularly the ongoing Amarnath Yatra," Brigadier NR Kulkarni, Commander of the 268 Infantry Brigade, Keran sector, said during a press conference on Tuesday, July 15.

LG releases Dr Suheel...

Maj. Gen. Girish Kalia, GOC, Vajr Division; Dr Suheel Rasool Mir, author of Cultural Encyclopedia of Dard Tribe; Fida Firdous, President Kashmir Writers Association; senior officials of Army, members of Shina Cultural Centre and Kashmir Writers Association were present.

DLSA Kupwara holds Under Trial Review Committee meeting

JINews SERVICE
KUPWARA, JULY 18

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kupwara convened an Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting today in view of the Schedule of Quarterly UTRC Meetings-2024 and in adherence to the directives issued by the National Legal Services Authority (NLSA) and J&K Legal Services Authority (J&KLSA).

The meeting, held at Conference Hall ADR Centre, DLSA Kupwara was aimed at identification and consideration of eligible prisoners for release under UTRC.

The meeting was chaired by Shazia Tabasum, Chairperson DLSA, Principal District & Sessions Judge Kupwara and was attended by Manzoor Ahmad Khan Sub-Judge/Secretary DLSA Kupwara; Reyaz Ahmad, Superintendent District Jail, Kupwara;



Dr. Mir Ramzan, Chief Medical Officer, Kupwara; Mumtaz Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kupwara; Syed Jehangir, Ld. Public Prosecutor, Kupwara; Zafar Nawaz, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Handwara, 1st Class Executive Magistrate/ Tehsildar, Handwara, Dy. Superintendent HQ., Kupwara.

As per the NALSAs SOPs, the committee reviewed the identified cases of the Under Trials, thoroughly.

The Cases of the under-trials falling under the Specified categories were threadbare discussed. Various cases of Prisoners falling under UTRC categories were recommended by the Committee for release. The meeting concluded with appreciation expressed by Chairperson DLSA Kupwara to all the stakeholders for their proactive participation in addressing the concerns related to under trial prisoners.

Workshop on Panchayat Plan & MGNREGA Convergence held at Ganderbal

JINews SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JULY 18

The Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj today organized a one-day District Level Consultation Workshop for formulating Integrated Gram Panchayat Development Plan and strategies for MGNREGA Convergence in the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Ganderbal. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Planning Officer, DPO and line departments were present during the workshop.

The workshop was aimed to enhance the capacity building and training of front-line workers of line departments, field functionaries and other related stakeholders associated with the formulation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) which focused on devising effective strategies for MGNREGA convergence.

The Deputy Commissioner, presided over the workshop and delivered the welcome address, emphasizing the importance and the critical role of Convergent GPDP in fostering holistic development and achieving the SDGs in rural areas.

He emphasized such integration would lead to more efficient resource utilization and the creation of tangible assets for the welfare of the people.

Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr Bashir Ahmad highlighted the critical need for convergence between Panchayat Development Plans and MGNREGA to foster holistic development and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in rural areas.

Shahid Bashir, thematic expert from Department of Rural development & Panchayati Raj, J&K, gave an overview of the process for preparing the thematic area-wise GPDP. He also elaborated on the issues,



challenges, and strategies in preparing convergent GPDPs, along with the expectations from the line departments to facilitate the formation of integrated GPDPs.

He also briefed about the role of BDOs, Panchayat Inspectors, Panchayat Secretaries and line departments.

Meanwhile, a question-answer session was also held to clear doubts of participants/stakeholders.

Chief Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on UT funded schemes to be integrated with GPDP and the role of Administrative Departments.

Justice Tashi Rabstan visits District Court Complex, Srinagar

JINews SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice (Acting), High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, today visited the District Court Complex, Mominabad, Srinagar, to review the ongoing developmental projects and address the issues faced by judicial officers, bar members, litigants and other stakeholders.

Jawad Ahmed, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, along with other judicial officers of Srinagar district were present on the occasion.

Justice Tashi Rabstan engaged in an interactive session with the judicial officers, where

he expressed his keen interest in the overall efficacy of the justice delivery system. He compassionately listened to the concerns and issues raised by the judicial officers and assured prompt redressal, reflecting his dedication in improving the judicial processes and infrastructure.

During the visit, Jawad Ahmed gave a detailed presentation on the ongoing developmental projects within the District Court Complex. These works included Phase-II construction of District Court Complex, which aims to enhance the capacity and facilities of the judicial infrastructure and installation of CCTV cameras within courtrooms.

Mission Director NHM felicitates MOs for training completion in Community Mental Health through NIMHANS Bengaluru

JINews SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

Mission Director, NHM, Nazim Zai Khan, felicitated 13 Medical Officers of Kashmir Division for completing 6 months online training in Community Mental Health Programme by NIMHANS Bengaluru.

Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather besides other senior officers were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Mission Director said that J&K has one psychiatrist for every 2 lakh population mostly available in the Medical College Hospitals of


Jammu & Srinagar. Since in most of the district hospitals we have hardly any psychiatrist posted and to address this issue and take the mental health services to the district and sub-district level J&K Health & Medical Education Department, in collaboration with NIMHANS Bengaluru took an initiative for training the in-service Medical Officers in Community Mental Health through online mode. In this regard, an MoU was signed on 5th July, 2023 between NIMHANS Bengaluru and National Health Mission J&K.

Nazim Zai, while complimenting the doctors,

emphasized that their knowledge, skills and compassion will continue to serve as beacons of hope for those in need of mental health support.

Pertinently, 25 Medical Officers have successfully completed the course who have been deployed by the concerned Directorate of Health Services at district level for implementation of DMHP and addiction treatment services in various health institutions.

Director Health Services Kashmir also congratulated the Medical Officers for successful completion of their training.



UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) ELECTRIC DIVISION JAMMU

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
xenpwdelecdv.jammu@gmail.com

e-NIT No.EDJ/48 of 2024-2025 Dated 16-07-2024

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

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Estimated Cost (₹ in lacs)	Cost of document (in ₹)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1.	Stage Contract for Maintenance of Electrical works special repair and renovation of electrical system at DC Office Udhampur and DC Residence Udhampur under the Jurisdictions of PWD RandB Division Udhampur during the year 2024-2025 upto 31-03-2025.	PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu	15.03	600/-	30060/-	Upto ending 31 march 2025	27-07-2024 At or after (12:00 A.N)	"A" Class Electrical Contractor


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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16-07-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 17-07-2024 to 26-07-2024, 4:00 P.M
3	Bid submission Start Date	17-07-2024
4	Bid Submission End Date	26-07-2024 up to 4:00 P.M
5	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	27-07-2024 at or after 12:00 A.N in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu
6	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date and also indicating the name of work and NIT No. duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favouring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu. uploading a copy of treasury challan/receipt.** The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, and relevant documents of **L1** be submitted to the **Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu.** at the time of allotment. No :- EDJ/3577-85
Dated :-16-07-2024

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Electric Division
Jammu

DIP/J-2993/24
Date: 18-7-24



JAMMU POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ELECTRIC DIVISION REASI
Mini Secretariat, District Administrative Complex, Reasi Block II,
Hall No-301 jpdclexreasi@gmail.com
TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT No:11 of 2024-25 Dated 05-07-2024

- INVITATION:-**
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the Executive Engineer (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi, JPDC Jammu, hereinafter referred as 'Employer', invites online e-bids from reputed Companies or Class 'A' registered contractors for
Rate contract for Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 250 KVA Transformer Substation under the jurisdiction of Executive Engineer, (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi JPDC Jammu.
- Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful/conscious study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications.
- The tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested Bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

A	Tender Document Sale/Download Start Date	08.07.2021 from 1000 Hrs
B	Tender Document Sale/Download End Date	29-07-2024 up to 1600 Hrs
C	e-Bid submission (start) date & time	08.07.2021 from 1000 Hrs
D	e-Bid submission (end) date & time	29-07-2024 up to 1600 Hrs
E	Submission of Hard Copy of Tender Fee (End) date & time	28.07.2024 up to 1600 Hrs
F	Clarification Start Date	08.07.2021 from 1000 Hrs
G	Clarification End Date	29-07-2024 up to 1600 Hrs
I	Commercial and Technical Bid opening date & time	30.07.2024 at 1530 Hrs
J	Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified Bidders)	Will be communicated to the Technically Qualifying Bidders.
K	Venue of opening of techno-commercial Bids	Office of the Executive Engineer, Electric Division Reasi JPDC Jammu.
L	Cost of e-Bid document	Rs. 1000 (One thousand only, (Non Refundable))
M	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs21980/-

- The Bidders need to submit the proof/cost of e-Bid document as stated in the above table through Demand Draft from any Nationalized/Scheduled bank pledged to Executive Engineer (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi, JPDC Jammu, payable at Jammu. The original demand draft shall be submitted in a separate envelope to the Office of the Executive Engineer (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi, **JPDC Jammu** and should reach **before opening** time of commercial and technical e-Bid. The scanned copy of the Demand Draft must be uploaded along with the e-Bids.
- Bidders must quote for all the particulars of the item in the Technical Bid and in the price schedule/BOQ of financial bid. The bids of Bidders who will not quote for all the particulars for any item in technical and financial bids shall be liable to be rejected at the discretion of the Employer keeping in view the interest of the JPDC.
- All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of EMD in the form of CDR/FDR/Bank Guarantee only from any Nationalized/Scheduled bank only pledged to Executive Engineer (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi, JPDC. No Interest shall be payable on Earnest Money deposited with the Department.
 - Hard Copy of original instrument of EMD shall be demanded from the successful bidder(s) after the opening of the Financial e-Bids.
 - The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site <http://jktenders.gov.in>. This is conveyed to the technically qualified Bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids shall be opened accordingly online on the same Web Site.
- The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of Bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the venue, date and time mentioned in the above table. An authority letter of Bidder's/OEM representative will be required to be produced.
- The JPDC reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e-Bid process without assigning any reason thereof if any major lapse/deviation is found. The decision of the JPDC, will be final and binding.
- In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being declared a holiday for JPDC office then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the appointed time and place.
- All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidders electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD.
- To participate in e-bidding process, Bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.

Hard Copy of Cost of Tender Document must be delivered to the Office of the Executive Engineer (Distribution), Electric Division Reasi, JPDC Jammu, in sealed cover at least one day before the scheduled date of opening of the commercial and technical e-Bids. The sealed cover shall be super scribed as "**COST OF TENDER DOCUMENTS AGAINST e-NIT NO: e-NIT No:11 of 2024-25 Dated 05-07-2024**"

Executive Engineer
Electric Division Reasi
(Distribution) JPDC,
Jammu

DIP/J-1132-P/24
Date: 18-7-24

EDITORIAL

Assessing decline in vote share

The recent Lok Sabha elections have delivered a jarring wake-up call to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), particularly in the Jammu province. Despite retaining both Lok Sabha seats, the party's vote share has plummeted from a robust 46.2 percent in the last election to a concerning 24.36 percent. This sharp decline, nearly halving their previous performance, signals deeper underlying issues that the party must address urgently. In response to this electoral setback, the BJP leadership has demanded detailed reports from all senior leaders regarding the polling booths in their localities. From Mandal presidents to state office bearers, each leader is required to submit comprehensive data on the total votes cast and the number of votes secured by the party candidates. This move underscores the leadership's intent to scrutinize and understand the reasons behind the dismal performance at the grassroots level. The party's dissatisfaction extends to the performance of many senior leaders. Several high-ranking officials, including state office bearers, district presidents, and Mandal presidents, failed to secure leads for BJP candidates in their respective polling booths. The apparent disconnect between these leaders and the electorate is evident, with accusations that their efforts have been limited to social media engagements rather than substantial on-the-ground campaigning. The decline is particularly noticeable in urban seats within the Jammu district, where the BJP has historically enjoyed strong support. The erosion of votes in these areas, attributed to the complacent attitude of senior leaders, poses a significant challenge. The Congress candidate, Raman Bhalla, managed to secure leads in key segments like Jammu-South and Suchetgarh, further highlighting the BJP's vulnerabilities. In the newly formed Bahu Assembly seat, a former part of the Gandhi Nagar segment, the vote count between BJP and Congress was nearly identical, reflecting a loss of the commanding lead the BJP once held. Comparing the current results to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections paints a stark picture. Jitendra Singh's vote share dropped from 61.38 percent to 51.28 percent, and Jugal Kishore Sharma's from 58.02 percent to 53.46 percent. These figures not only mark a decline but also hint at a possible disillusionment among the voters, who may be seeking alternatives. With the Assembly elections on the horizon, slated to take place before September 30, the BJP's local unit is under immense pressure to reassess and revitalize its strategies. The party must recognize that social media presence cannot substitute for genuine grassroots connection and engagement. The leadership's insistence on detailed booth-level reporting should be the first step towards a comprehensive introspection and reorganization. The decline in vote share is not merely a statistical anomaly but a reflection of the party's current standing with the electorate. It is imperative for the BJP to address the issues raised by this election result promptly. Ensuring accountability, enhancing grassroots outreach, and rebuilding trust with the voters will be crucial as the party gears up for the upcoming Assembly elections. This election result serves as a critical reminder that complacency can be costly. The BJP must learn from this experience, rectify its course, and work diligently to regain the confidence of the electorate. Only through sincere efforts and a robust strategy can the party hope to reverse its fortunes and secure a stronger mandate in the future.

PRAFULL GORADIA

It is difficult to understand, especially since parliamentarians, appeared to overlook an essential of their vocation. That is, that the legislature usually does not take much time. The rest of the session is the opportunity for the opposition to demonstrate their talent and commitment through television. The ruling party or parties do not need the legislature except to have bills passed and enacted into law. If there are no laws that need to be passed urgently, the government and ruling party can do without the legislature virtually for an entire year. Of course, there remains the presenting and passing of the Budget, which can be legitimized only by the legislature, particularly the Lok Sabha. What has been stated hitherto has been well demonstrated by the state assemblies in India. They pass the odd bill once in a while, and the annual

budget is the other essential item of business during the year. Most state legislative assemblies meet for three or four days at a time. Otherwise, for the few times they have to statutorily meet, each session is seldom for more than three or four days. However, the members of the legislative assemblies (MLAs) draw their pay and perks for the entire term of the legislative body.

This applies to Parliament too, although it has the budget, monsoon and winter sessions, which are long enough. In short, to restate, most of the time the legislatures can work for the benefit of the opposition members, who can display their skills, knowledge, familiarity and touch with their constituencies. With the advent of full-time coverage by television channels—Sansad TV being a prominent one—a great advantage has fallen into the hands of the Opposition. This is a boon for them; it is a free and con-

stant medium to, as it were, communicate with their constituencies.

This institution was introduced around the time I was in Parliament. Back then, most Members who spoke made full use of the television channels by speaking for as long as possible. During the question hour between 11 am and 12 pm, only five or six questions and their answers could be completed, instead of all twenty. The reason was that those who had asked the questions spent as long a time as possible over asking their supplementary question, which was a privilege to the Member(s).

The ruling party/parties have a better opportunity of exposure than opposition parties generally get. Yet, the opposition mindlessly throws away a lot of the session time by walking out, protesting otherwise, compelling the Speaker to adjourn the House for several hours or even the rest of the day. July 2 was another

example when the Prime Minister rose to thank the President for her inaugural speech. For well over two hours, groups of opposition members took turns shouting slogans in an attempt to drown the Prime Minister's address to Parliament, or perhaps even to prevent him from speaking. Little do they realize that most television channels were telecasting his speech live, duly cutting out the sloganeering.

The only people who could hear the PM's speech being disturbed by slogans were the Members of the Lok Sabha. All that the slogan-shouting Members gained was a reputation of being wasters, as members who cost the taxpayer a lot, merely to put in negative effort to try and prevent the Prime Minister from being heard. Each session and day of Parliament cost several crores of rupees. Each Member of Parliament costs several lakh rupees a year to serve the country and its people, and

not to prevent Parliament from functioning. There are many better ways of protesting, such as, such as wearing black bands on one's sleeves, sometimes wearing black caps, or sometimes, dressed fully in black. Members can also refuse to take their seats for the entire day, instead, occupying the adjacent aisles for the duration of the session, as a mark of protest, but let the work go on. This would assure all the people, including their constituents that they are spending money on the functioning of Parliament with its thousands of employees constructively and in the interests of the nation.

They should realize that the British departed from India long ago, and such negative activities have no place in our country anymore. Let it be borne in mind that being elected to Parliament (or the state legislative assemblies) is a national duty more than the privilege it has come to

be mistakenly understood. What we have witnessed over the two days of July 2 and 3 portends ill for the institution of democracy, which everyone, from the opposition parties to the media and academia, not to forget their cheerleaders overseas, keeps shouting is "under threat in India". But where is the real threat to democracy coming from? This needs to be clearly understood. No democracy can be threatened because its electorate gives a clear mandate for stable governance for a developed economy and a better future. It is the cavalier fashion in which certain parties—and political families living in a sense of entitlement—treat Parliament and its protocols and rules that are emerging as the real threat to democracy.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

Parliament: Duty over disruption

Focus on employment, innovation and skill

DINESH SOOD

The upcoming Union Budget on July 23 will shed light on initiatives that may reshape economic priorities under the Modi 3.0 government. Amid various expectations and commitments, the government's focus on skills, employment, and innovation emerges as a key strategy in addressing current challenges and shaping future opportunities. The decision to rename the Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development to include livelihood emphasizes a shift to provide employable skills to the most vulnerable 67 per cent of the country's underprivileged population.

Placing skill development ahead of employment underscores a proactive approach to addressing the issue of a shortage of skilled workforce, especially in the health & wellness, manufacturing, and technology sectors. This not only recognizes the immediate need for a trained workforce but also positions skill development as a key driver for sustainable employment generation.

As the Budget approaches, stakeholders across sectors eagerly await concrete measures that go beyond mere promises and lead to tangible out-

comes. The effectiveness of these initiatives in translating into job creation, technological innovation, and sustainable economic growth will be carefully scrutinized.

The government's steadfast commitment to enhancing skills holds the promise of unleashing India's potential as a global economic powerhouse in the years ahead.

The rebranding and revitalization of the 15-year-old National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) as the Skill India Mission under PM Narendra Modi has sparked concerns about the effectiveness of the ambitious Skill India program. This program has received support from two governments over 15 years – first the UPA and then the NDA. India is in the midst of an urgent unemployment crisis due to an employment deficit. Issues such as the delayed implementation of PMKVY 3.0 and lack of placement support are exacerbating this problem. The latest data underlines the severity of India's unemployment crisis, making it crucial to prioritize employment generation to confront the challenges facing the Indian economy, especially with a significant number of young people entering the working age each month.

In July 2015, PM Modi stated that "Skill India aims to build self-confidence among the underprivileged, rather than just providing jobs". However, nearly a decade later, the youth's interest in the program seems to be waning. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has implemented strict attendance monitoring and centralized student information. Unfortunately, this has led to a decline in student retention, with many dropping out due to the rigid attendance requirements. Skill India was designed to attract unskilled young people and equip them for the job market, but unemployment rates remain high. Data from the International Labour Organization reveals that the proportion of educated unemployed individuals has risen sharply from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2023. Established in 2014, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship absorbed the NSDC and other programs to train 300 million people by 2024. Despite partnering with various organizations and raising awareness, the programs have not been as effective as envisioned.

Experts argue that even traditional degrees do not guarantee employment, and the education system is outdated and not job-focused. Only a small percentage of candidates certified by the PMKVY program have found jobs, indicating a fundamental challenge with the current skilling initiatives. Boosting skilling programs and industry partnerships is an urgent necessity to create ongoing skilling avenues and improve employability for school dropouts, and unskilled, or semi-skilled workers who need to secure a livelihood.

Although the announcement of setting up 75 skilling e-labs for simulated learning in the 2022-23 Union Budget is a positive move, we must recognize that our problem is far-reaching. API-based trusted skill credentials and discovery layers to find relevant jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities won't suffice beyond a certain point, necessitating an urgent need to skill the masses and empower the country's youths. We must acknowledge that over 40% of Indians aged 15 to 24 are neither in edu-



education, employment, or training, which is significantly higher than the South Asian (30%) and global (24%) averages. Indian firms report substantial skill shortages compared to other countries, and they assess only about 46% of graduates as employable.

The majority of students lack the necessary skills, and the skills they do possess are not aligned with the needs of their employers. Every year, more than 12 million young people in India become employable, yet we are unable to absorb them into the workforce. Many of these individuals hold higher education degrees, but they lack the necessary employable skills.

The India Skills Report (ISR) 2024 highlights that only 50.3% of graduates from higher educational institutions are deemed employable. A skill gap study conducted by the NSDC during 2010-14 indicates that by 2025, India will need nearly 109.7 million additional skilled workers across various sectors. While the government's interventions in promoting skill development are commendable, more needs to be done to bridge the skill gaps. Wish List: In the 2024-25 Union Budget, it is crucial to prioritize upskilling initiatives for gig workers, due

to the eight-fold increase in young people's participation in the gig economy from 2019 to 2023, the majority of these youth come from Tier-I and Tier-II cities and rural areas.

While the government is working to make employable skills more accessible through public-private partnerships, there is a need to facilitate and incentivize the establishment of more skill development universities to steer the youth, especially undergraduates towards skills. This will help align the skill courses with global standards and significantly enhance the youth's skills, contributing to the nation's workforce development. I strongly urge a significant budget allocation to provide employable skills, particularly to school dropouts on a priority basis. This will not only empower them but also significantly contribute to the growth of the Indian economy, aiming to reach \$7 trillion by 2030 and position India as the world's third-largest economy.

(The writer is Co-Founder and MD, of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres. Views expressed are personal)

Defying the Western pressure, India prioritises national interests

KSTOMAR

Despite a concerted campaign by the US and Western countries to isolate Russia following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, several nations, including India, have prioritized their national interests. This has allowed President Putin to bolster Russia's economy, with India's \$65 billion worth of crude oil imports playing a crucial role in mitigating the impact of US-imposed sanctions.

India maintains close strategic ties with the United States, yet it has become the second-largest importer of Russian crude oil after China. This alignment with Russia serves as a counterbalance to US influence. In recognition of this support, President Putin awarded Prime Minister Modi the Order of St. Andrew.

The US, as expected, reacted by urging India

to ensure that any resolution to the Ukraine conflict respects the UN charter and Ukraine's territorial integrity. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller emphasised the importance of these principles in international engagements with Russia.

In this context, experts view Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Moscow through multiple lenses, highlighting significant gains for India on strategic, economic, and diplomatic fronts:

India's geopolitical strategy significantly revolves around balancing China's rising influence. Strengthening ties with Russia serves as a counterbalance to China's aggressive posturing in the region. The visit underscored mutual interests in ensuring a multipolar world order, acting as a strategic buffer against unilateral actions by any major power, including



China.

Strategic Gains:

A key highlight of Modi's visit was the reinforcement of India-Russia defense ties. Historically, Russia has been one of India's most reliable defense partners. Discussions around the S-400 missile defense system and potential future collabora-

tions in defense technology were central to the visit, enhancing India's military capabilities and contributing to regional stability.

Western sanctions against Russia have led it to seek stronger ties with non-Western countries, including India. Both India and Russia advocate for a multipolar world order, balancing US influ-

ence. Modi's visit reflects India's independent foreign policy, maintaining strong ties with both the US and Russia.

Energy security is a cornerstone of India's economic policy, and Russia plays a critical role with its vast oil and natural gas reserves. Modi's visit focused on long-term supply agree-

ments, investments in energy infrastructure, and collaboration in nuclear energy projects, ensuring a stable and diversified energy supply for India. Boosting bilateral trade and investment was another focal point. Despite historical ties, trade volumes between India and Russia have not reached their full potential. The visit aimed

to address this by exploring new trade avenues in sectors like pharmaceuticals, information technology, and agriculture, promising long-term benefits for both economies.

Modi's visit signifies a reaffirmation of traditional alliances. Reinforcing ties with Russia offers India a more balanced foreign policy amidst the US's increasingly transactional approach.

The visit likely included discussions on expanding cooperation in space exploration and nuclear technology, fostering innovations that benefit both nations. Cybersecurity is crucial in the digital age. Modi's visit likely explored collaboration in these fields, ensuring both nations can safeguard their digital infrastructures and harness economic benefits.

(Writer is a political analyst; views expressed are personal)

Union Budget: Experts for boosting digital health infra, higher GDP allocation

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

Higher GDP allocation for healthcare and advances in digital health infrastructure is imperative, said experts ahead of the Union Budget.

The Union Budget 2024 is slated to be presented on July 23 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"There is an urgent need to advance digital health infrastructure, particularly in tier II and III cities and rural areas, to enhance health coverage and support existing facilities," said Jyotsna Govil, Chairperson Indian Cancer Society.

Govil also called for



boosting reforms in cancer care by prioritising funding for personalised medicine and immunotherapy.

This, she noted, will make the therapies more accessible to a large number of patients.

While India's current public healthcare spending remains low with just

1.6 to 1.8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the experts stressed the need for higher allocation.

"A higher percentage of GDP allocation to healthcare is obviously a long pending demand, I hope it will be met in good measure in this budget," said Dr. BS Ajaikumar, Execu-

tive Chairman, Health-Care Global Enterprises.

He noted that over the years, the government has taken many measures towards making healthcare affordable and accessible for the deprived sections of society.

"However, schemes like Ayushman Bharat are unflinchingly focused on subsidised treatment; the quality aspect is yet largely ignored," Dr. Ajaikumar said.

He also called for an "effective universal health care model" that can bring out real transformation in the health sector.

In the interim budget, in February, the government had encouraged

vaccination for girls in the age group of 9 to 14 years for prevention of cervical cancer.

Dr. Ajaikumar urged for bringing down the cost of vaccinations to prevent cervical cancer.

Health expert Dr. Sameer Bhati stressed the need to provide more facilities for manufacturing medical equipment in India.

"Medical equipment like CT Scan to a large extent, are imported. It will be better if these are manufactured in India," Bhati said.

He said that boosting digital health can play a big role in better health services in villages.

How this common chemotherapy drug can raise risk of severe damage to heart

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

US researchers have uncovered how the most common chemotherapy drug doxorubicin causes severe cardiac damage.

The study, published in the journal Nature Cardiovascular Research, shows that doxorubicin activates CD8+ cytotoxic T-cells, which then migrate to the heart and cause inflammation and fibrosis, leading to stiffness of the heart and impaired function.

This mechanism was observed in mice, dogs, and human lymphoma patients. The team at Tufts University found that these T-cells, typically involved in combating viruses, mistakenly target



heart tissue after doxorubicin treatment.

Blocking T-cells from entering the heart could potentially prevent this damage.

Future research will explore ways to inhibit T-cell migration without affecting doxorubicin's cancer-fighting efficacy and investigate chemokines as biomarkers to predict cardiac damage.

"I'm really excited about this paper because it's something completely new in a very old field. It's difficult, but I hope it motivates more people to look at a stack of literature and not be scared to add anything on top. Science is too difficult to say we've figured everything out," Abe Bayer, a doctoral student in immunology programme at Tufts said.

IIT Mandi team conducts comprehensive life cycle assessment of solar cell technologies

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi conducted a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of five solar cell technologies to determine the most sustainable and profitable options for solar energy production in India.

The study, published in the Journal of Environmental Management, is crucial for improving the environmental performance of solar technologies in India, especially following disruptions in the solar supply chain caused by COVID-19.

From 2010 to 2020, India made significant strides in clean energy, driven by initiatives like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.

However, post-COP-26, the focus shifted to green solar manufacturing to



enhance supply chain reliability, energy security, and decarbonisation.

Understanding the pros and cons of various solar technologies is essential for establishing effective solar power systems tailored to Indian conditions.

The researchers assessed five solar technologies: Mono-silicon, Poly-silicon, Copper Indium Gallium Selenide (CIGS), Cadmium Telluride (CdTe), and Passivated

Emitter and Rear Contact (PERC).

Using the life cycle assessment tool, they performed a cradle-to-gate analysis considering eighteen environmental impact categories, including global warming, ozone depletion, human toxicity, and particulate matter formation.

The study found that CdTe technology had the lowest environmental impact among the five

technologies, with the least carbon dioxide emissions, ozone depletion potential, human health effects, and particulate air pollution. CIGS PV cells followed closely.

"The Life Cycle Assessment of solar module technologies can help identify the most sustainable technology that balances economic, social, and environmental benefits," said Dr Satvasheel Ramesh Powar, Associate Professor, School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering, IIT Mandi.

"Our findings can guide policymakers to promote the most sustainable technologies, boosting the low-carbon economy and reducing the environmental impact of solar energy production," he added.

These findings offer valuable insights for investors and policymakers aiming to improve solar technology sustainability in India.

Novel medication more effective for patients with relapsed blood cancer

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

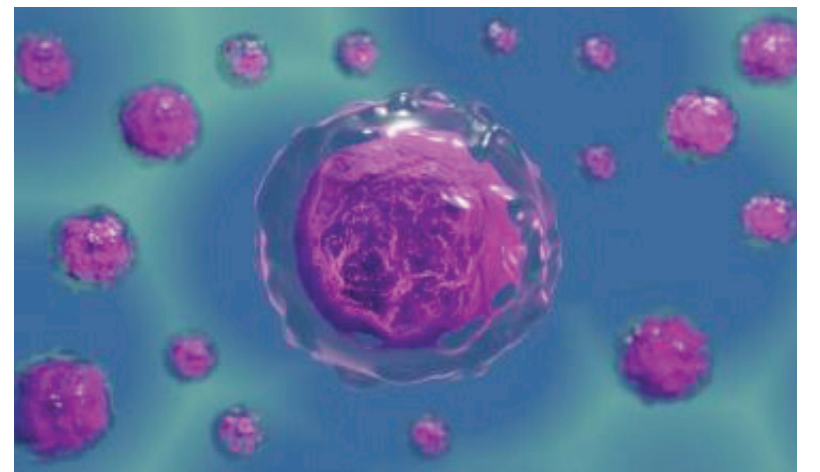
The hematopoietic cell transplant team at Osaka Metropolitan University Graduate School of Medicine has developed a novel technique based on a new drug combination that has shown considerable anticancer activity with low toxicity for relapsed/refractory acute myeloid leukemia (AML) patients.

Furthermore, the precise immunological study demonstrated how a novel medicine increased anticancer activity via altering immune cells.

Relapsed/refractory acute myeloid leukemia, also known as blood cancer, has an extremely poor prognosis due to resistance to anticancer medicines and the patient's organ function. Allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation is a method of anti-tumour immunotherapy that can have an anti-cancer impact but is associated with substantial toxicity.

It is frequently used for patients who are difficult to treat with chemotherapy but still relapse.

In research published in the



Nature-affiliated Blood Cancer Journal, the researchers describe their clinical observational analysis of 12 patients with AML who relapsed following allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation and were treated with venetoclax and azacitidine.

Venetoclax, an oral medication approved by the FDA in October 2020 for AML, shows promising results in older, untreated AML patients by inhibiting the BCL-2 protein to promote cancer cell death.

A study by OMU researchers

demonstrated significantly better one-year survival rates for the venetoclax combination therapy group (66.7 per cent) compared to a control group (27.3 per cent). Immunological studies revealed that venetoclax-induced immune cell alterations enhanced anti-tumour activity.

Dr Mitsutaka Nishimoto highlighted the potential of this novel therapy to improve the prognosis of relapsed/refractory AML and reduce treatment burdens, aiming for safer and more effective treatments.

With AIIMS Delhi set to train surgeons in face transplant, a look at the procedure & risks involved

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18:

A team of plastic and reconstructive surgeons at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, India's premier health facility, is gearing up to offer face transplants, one of the rarest surgeries performed anywhere in the world.

Face transplantation is a highly sophisticated procedure that has the potential to transform the life of a person with severe face deformities. It involves replacement of all or part of the face with donor tissue from someone who has died or is brain dead.

The world's first partial face transplantation on a living person was carried out in France in 2005 while the first full face transplant was completed in Spain in 2010.

But so far, under 50 successful face transplantations have been carried out globally, and only select hospitals in the US, France, Spain, and Turkey – the only Asian country on that list – offer the complex surgery.

Sources in AIIMS, New Delhi, told ThePrint that surgeons from the institute will start undergoing training this year by performing dummy face transplants. This may be



three to four years before the institute starts offering the service to actual patients.

These dummy surgeries may involve transplanting a face from a cadaver to another.

"Even though we are a government institute, tremendous work is happening at our centre in terms of offering complicated cosmetic procedures. Moreover, face transplant is something that we are keen to start in the coming years," a senior doctor in the department of plastic, reconstructive and burns surgery told ThePrint.

"It will, however, take rigorous training before the procedure is offered to a patient as face transplant requires profound skills and coordination

among team members," the doctor said, adding that surgeons may need to visit specialised centres abroad in order to receive training for the procedure.

ThePrint explains the procedure, who can benefit from it, and the risks involved.

A patient who has faced heavy facial disfigurement due to burn, accident or birth defects can undergo face transplantation with donated facial tissue from a deceased person.

Face transplantation is part of a field called vascularised composite allotransplantation. It involves the transplantation of facial skin, nose and the nasal structure, eyes and eyelids, lips, arteries and veins, mus-

cles required for facial movement, nerves that provide sensation, or parts of bones supporting facial features.

However, it does not cause the patient receiving the transplant to acquire a new facial identity as in most cases, the facial tissues are grafted on the existing bone structure. Also, the procedure has the potential to aid a person's life by restoring functions such as swallowing, chewing, seeing, talking, smelling, and sensation in the face, as well as enhancing appearance and overall quality of life.

It is different from facial reconstruction which usually involves moving a patient's own skin from a different body part – such as the thigh, back or chest

– to the damaged parts of the face through a series of surgeries, and is aimed at restoring functionality of the face.

In case of a face transplantation, the donor, like other types of organ transplants, has to match immunologically with a recipient but there are other matching criteria as well. These include gender, ethnicity and skin colour.

Surgeons often use imaging technology before and during the surgery to create a model of the donor's face, map out the finer details, develop a plan to achieve maximum aesthetic and functional results, and to guide the procedure step by step.

As part of the procedure, surgeons first remove parts such as arteries, fat, nerves, muscles and skin from a donor's face, and then preserve and prepare them to use.

The recipient then undergoes the first part of the surgery during which their damaged skin and tissues are removed.

A crucial part of the procedure is connecting the recipient's numerous blood vessels using tiny surgical needles. Following this, nerves and muscles are grafted. Connecting cartilages and bones is the next step and finally,

soft tissues and skin are stitched together.

The procedure, depending on the requirement of every case, may take 10 to 36 hours. Sometimes, it takes tens of surgeons working together.

Due to meticulous donor-recipient matching, preparation and planning ahead of the procedure, the survival rate of partial and full face transplant is very good (nearly 89 per cent), according to scientific information available.

However, the procedure is considered high-risk and unpredictable, especially in terms of the final appearance of the recipient. Also, transplant surgeons, as of now, are not in a position to predict the response of the recipient's immune system to the new face.

Evidence suggests that surgical and post-surgical complications in such procedures are common and many patients have been reported dead because of an infection or graft rejection during or after the surgery.

For those who survive, immunosuppressant drugs and follow-ups, like in other types of organ transplants, are required for the rest of their lives.

These drugs come with an increased risk of kidney damage, cancer, diabetes and other serious health conditions.

Study shows birth outcome of freezing eggs as effective as regular IVF



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

Success rates of freezing eggs are comparable to those obtained by normal in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and are subject to the same variables of female age and embryo quality, according to a study.

When compared to other similar large-scale research conducted on egg freezing in other countries, the findings of this 15-year-long study based on nearly 30,000 frozen eggs revealed an overall live birth rate of 26 per cent per embryo transfer, as per the study published in the peer-reviewed journal Reproductive Biomedicine Online. This varied depending on the age at which the eggs were frozen, with a lower rate in the over-35s and only 5 per cent in the over-40s.

After transferring all embryos developed from thawed eggs, the total live birth rate was 34 per cent, which increased to 45 per cent in women who had frozen their eggs before the age of 36, according to the study.

"These are results comparable with those nationally recorded in routine IVF," said Professor Nick Macklon, senior author of the study and Medical Director of the London Women's Clinic.

The number of women seeking egg-freezing treatment has increased from 150 in 2015 to over 800 in 2022, yet only 14 per cent return to thaw their eggs. Out of 2,171 patients, 299 returned, completing 332 thaw cycles. The cumulative live birth rate is 36 per cent, rising to 57 per cent for those who froze eggs under age 35. "Freeze-all" cycles had a 30 per cent live birth rate, improving to 40 per cent with chromosomal screening (PGT-A). All live births in women aged 40+ were from screened embryos.

Despite some scepticism, these results indicate that egg freezing and thawing offer a viable path to pregnancy, akin to IVF. The study noted that "egg freezing and thawing can provide a very real opportunity for women to achieve pregnancy and live birth."

NEET: SC tells NTA to publish city, centre-wise results

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The Supreme Court on Thursday said a re-conduct of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Under Graduate 2024 can only happen if there are sufficient grounds for it and directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to publish by Saturday the full city and centre-wise results on its website while masking identities of students.

Hearing a batch of petitions concerning grievances related to NEET-UG 2024 and prayers to cancel the exam due to malpractices, a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Justice J B Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Mishra told the senior advocate Narendra Hooda, appearing on behalf of the petitioner students, "You have to

show us that the leak was so systemic and affected the entire examination to warrant the cancellation of the entire exam."

At the time of ordering publication of results, the Apex Court was unwilling to defer the counselling for selected students which is scheduled to begin from Monday.

The CJ said, "If we accept your wider submission, we would like your assistance on the lines on which the investigation must happen."

The CJ said that an investigation is going on. If what the Central Bureau of Investigation has told us is revealed, it will affect the investigation. "People will become wise."

Hooda said there is a five-fold increase in the scores. "This is one of the red flags."

He said that the handicap is that they have not

declared the entire results. The Union Public Service Commission declares the entire result of all the people. At least, NTA should have declared the results of the one lakh people who would get admission.

CJI then asked Hooda, "How many seats are there in government medical colleges?"

Hooda said there are 56,000 seats.

And how many seats in private colleges, the CJ asked.

"There are 52,000 seats in the private colleges," he said.

So a total of 1.08 lakh seats. If a re-exam happens, the total number is 1.08 lakh and not 23 lakh, the CJ asked.

It is a problem with that argument. Merely because out of 23 lakh only 1 lakh will get admission, we cannot order a re-exam-



ination. Re-examination has to be on a concrete footing that the entire exam is affected, the CJ said.

Hooda said that the stake is of only one lakh people, not 23 lakh and segregation of untainted is not possible.

The CJ said, "Conceptually, if you can establish that, then the whole exam will go."

Justice Pardiwala asked, "We would like to know, out of the 1.08 lakh, how many petitioners are

before us?"

CJI asked the NTA counsel, "Tell us how many students are involved in the petitioner."

Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde appearing for NTA said some who are within the top 1.08 lakh group are also before the court since they want government seats.

CJI asked the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta what was the minimum mark received by the petitioners.

Solicitor General replied

that 131 students are not falling within 1.08 lakh segment which wants a re-test and there are 254 who are falling within 1.08 lakh group and are opposing the re-test.

The CJ then asked NTA, "What is the cut-off mark for the 56,000 (government seats) and the 1.08 lakh?"

Hegde replied anybody above the 50 percentile qualifies. 164 is the cut-off mark.

About half the petitioners have the qualification to be allotted a seat. Admission is a dynamic process, some may not opt for medicine, and some may go for Indian Institute of Technology. The figures may come down.

The Central government informed the Apex Court that the data analysis conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras on the results of

NEET-UG 2024 showed no abnormalities and there was very little likelihood of any malpractice.

Hooda said, "I have a handicap. I do not have the results. Because of that, I cannot have the data analytics."

"If data analysis is to be run for 23 lakh, at what stage, if 10,000 or 20,000 people have sneaked into it, you cannot detect any abnormality. The correct procedure was to apply this process to 1.08 lakh," Hooda said.

Hooda said that the IIT Madras's analytics based on 23 lakh students' performance was not reliable, alleging a conflict of interest since IIT Madras Director was a member of the governing body of the NTA.

Hooda said, there are 571 cities. They say toppers are evenly spread. But the data they give is of only

17 students. Why are they shying away? If they have run it for the top 100, they should give the top 100 details and not just 17.

SG said this chart shows out of students who got first 100 ranks...

Hooda asked, Why give only for 17?

CJI then told the SG that if you have a break-up of the top 100 ranks, you can give. Which are the cities from which they are?

NTA counsel said that the NTA affidavit has annexed the details of the top 100 ranks.

NTA counsel Naresh Kaushik then showed a table consisting of a list of top 100 rankers.

The court later ordered the publication of entire results as petitioners pleaded that doing so would increase public confidence in the NTA.

The hearing is likely to continue on Friday.

Maha Police kill 12 Maoists in jungle bloodbath; north Gadchiroli freed from rebel grip

AGENCIES
GADCHIROLI (MAHARASHTRA), JULY 18

Dealing a crippling blow to the armed Maoist movement ahead of the Maoist Week, the Gadchiroli Police gunned down 12 insurgents including five women rebels, in the jungles near Wandoli Village on the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border, top officials said here on Thursday.

The deep forest encounter in pouring rain led to the recovery of a cache of arms and ammunition, eliminating three top-ranking functionaries and has practically cleansed north Gadchiroli of armed Maoist activities, said a beaming Superintendent of Police, Neelotpal on Thursday afternoon.

Among those who were shot dead include three Divisional Committee members, five Area Committee Members of the banned CPI(Maoist), plus four Dalam Members, coming barely days ahead of the Naxal Week from July 28-August 3.

Three police officers - Satish Patil, Shankar Potavi and Vivek Shingole

sustained bullet injuries in the cross-firing with the armed Reds. They were immediately evacuated in a helicopter mid-way during the encounter, flown to Nagpur where they are undergoing treatment in a hospital and their condition is stable.

"All the deceased were wanted for various heinous crimes and carried a collective bounty of Rs 86 lakh on their heads... With this operation, the Local Organisation Squad of the entire Korchi-Tipagad and Chatgaon-Kasansur region has been wiped out and complete north Gadchiroli cleared of armed Maoist groups," said Neelotpal.

He was flanked by the top brass which guided and strategised the major operation comprising Sandip Patil, Ankit Goyal, Yatish Deshmukh, Kumar Chintha, M. Ramesh, Vishal Nagargoje and crack commandos and personnel of the Anti Naxal Operation (ANO).

The post-encounter combing operations reaped a cache of arms and ammunition comprising seven automatic weapons like one car-



bine, one SLR, two INSAS, three AK-47s, explosives, detonators, lots of Maoist literature, and other personal belongings of the slain Maoists in the vicinity.

Neelotpal said that a tip off was received on Wednesday morning that around 12-15 Maoists of the Korchi-Tipagad and Chatgaon-Kasansur LOS were camping in the forests near Wandoli on the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border, with plans to carry out subversive activities during the forthcoming Naxal Week.

Immediately, seven units of the C-60 squad led by Nagargoje were rushed to the area for a combing operation, crossing the dense wilderness, strad-

ling streams and rivers, when they suddenly faced indiscriminate firing by the Maoists hiding in the vicinity.

The intermittent firing lasted for around six hours after which it stopped and the surviving rebels are believed to have escaped into the jungles in the darkness.

After a search of the encounter spot, the security forces came across the bloodied bodies of the slain Maoists - all facing serious cases of murder, abductions, arson, encounters, planting mines, etc., and having a combined bounty of Rs 86 lakh for their capture/killing, and the arms cache they left behind.

By Thursday morning they were identified as three DVCs each with a Rs 16 lakh bounty on their heads --- Yogesh D. Tulavim 36 with 67 cases lodged; Vishal Atram, 43 with 78 cases filed; Pramod Kachlami, 31 with 58 cases registered.

The five ACs each with Rs 6 lakh reward on their scalps are Maharu Gawade, 31, facing 20 criminal cases; Anil Darro, 28, with 16 cases; Sarita Parsa, 37, facing 26 cases; Rajjo Gawade, 35, with 21 cases; and Viju whose details are awaited.

The Dalam Members each with Rs 2 lakh bounty on their heads include Sita Hawke, 27, with seven criminal cases; Chanda Podyam, Roja and Sagar, whose details are being investigated.

Neelotpal said that in the last three years, 80 dreaded Maoists were killed in different encounters, another 102 were arrested from their lairs and 29 have laid down arms before the Gadchiroli Police.

Wednesday's encounter now ranks among the biggest of its kind in the past seven years in Maharashtra, even as the police

renewed their appeal to the rebels to surrender and join the national mainstream.

Prior to this, on April 22-23, 2018 when the combined security forces had carried out a massacre of 40 Reds in the Gadchiroli jungles, comprising four commanders and several other dreaded rebels carrying bounties of varying amounts on their heads.

Later, on May 21, 2021, the security forces eliminated 13 ultras lurking in the Pyadi-Kotmi jungles in Etapalli region in a pre-dawn swoop followed by huge cross-firing on a Maoist camp.

Subsequently on October 11, 2021 another encounter took place in the Kosmi-Kisnela forests of Dhanora region on the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border, in which five Maoists were shot dead.

In March 2020, the security forces had carried out a successful Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) against the Maoists on the district borders and busted a secret arms manufacturing unit in the jungles.

K'taka BJP protests demanding resignation of Siddaramaiah in Tribal Welfare Board case

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 18

Karnataka BJP on Thursday staged a massive protest at the Freedom Park in Bengaluru and also tried to lay siege to the Vidhana Soudha demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Tribal Welfare Board case.

After the BP leaders tried to lay the siege and raise slogans against the state government police swung into action and arrested the protesters.

Before attempting to lay siege to the Vidhana Soudha, a protest was staged at the Freedom Park under the leadership of BJP State President BY Vijayendra and Opposition Leader R Ashoka.

"As soon as it was discovered that funds meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were misappropriated, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah should have resigned," Vijayendra said.

He said that there is information that former minister Nagendra, who is in ED custody, has revealed that funds were misused based on the orders of prominent leaders.

"Siddaramaiah, Shi-



vakumar, and ministers are worried about their government. This government can fall anytime," he said.

He said that the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister are haunted by the fear that Nagendra in ED custody might name them.

"They have transferred SEP and TSP funds elsewhere. Funds meant for the development of SC/ST communities have been transferred," he said.

Vijayendra said that the funds from the Valmiki Development Corporation has been looted, adding that the wealth of Siddaramaiah has been exposed through the MUDA case in Mysuru.

He also alleged that they have allotted 14 plots, meant for the poor, to the

family members of Siddaramaiah.

"Siddaramaiah has lost the moral authority to be the Chief Minister. The curse of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes will not him. The BJP is not doing politics but fulfilling its duty," Vijayendra said.

He said that there is no question of fearing the police and by laying siege to Vidhana Soudha, the Chief Minister should be compelled to flee from Vidhana Soudha.

"If Chief Minister has any conscience left, he should have resigned by now. This is not a hollow protest. Our fight will continue until the corrupt Congress government is brought down and Siddaramaiah resigns. Everyone should lay siege to Vidhana Soudha," he said

Tribals from different states gather in Rajasthan demanding Bhil Pradesh

AGENCIES
JAIPUR, JULY 18

The Rajasthan tribal community has demanded the creation of a new state called 'Bhil Pradesh', a demand which the state government has already rejected.

The tribal society has demanded the formation of the new state by combining 49 districts of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. There is also a demand to include 12 districts out of the old 33 districts of Rajasthan in the new state.

Thirty five organizations including Adivasi Parivar, the largest organization of Bhil society, had called a mega rally on Thursday. Maneka Damor, founder member of the Adivasi Parivar Sanstha, said at the rally that tribal women should not follow the instructions of the Pandits.

Tribal families do not apply sindoor, do not wear mangalsutra. Women and girls of the tribal society should focus on education. From now on, everyone should

stop fasting. We are not Hindus, she said.

The Adivasi Parivar Sanstha is spread across the four states. Bharat Adivasi Party (BAP) MP Rajkumar Roat from Banswara said "the demand for Bhil Pradesh is not new. The BAP is raising this demand strongly. After the mega rally, a delegation will meet the President and the Prime Minister with the proposal."

Apart from Rajasthan, tribal people from Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra gathered for the meeting held at Mangar Dham in Banswara. The security agencies of the state were on alert over the meeting and the internet was also shut down in the area of the mega rally.

The demand for Bhil Pradesh includes 12 districts of Rajasthan and 13 districts of MP

Tribal minister Babulal Kharadi said a state cannot be formed on the basis of caste.

If this happens, other people will also make demands. We will not send a proposal to the Centre.

Two killed, several injured as Chandigarh-Dibrugarh express derails in UP's Gonda

AGENCIES
GONDA, JULY 18

At least two passengers were killed and several others seriously injured when the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh express derailed in Motiganj area of Gonda district in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, a senior police officer said.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Vineet Jaiswal said that around 10 to 12 coaches of Chandigarh-Dibrugarh express derailed and of which two overturned in Motiganj area.

He said "two passengers have died and six others sustained serious injuries, who are being treated at the hospital."

The SP said that some others also sustained injuries and have been sent to the community health centre for first aid. "After getting information the senior administration and police official reached the spot and a rescue and relief operation was launched immediately. Those who were trapped in coaches were taken out immediately," he said.

He said that all the coaches were checked twice by the police team



and the rescue team of the railways twice and no passenger is trapped inside it right now.

Police sources said that the incident took place around 2.30 pm when coaches of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh express derailed five km before Mankapur railway station. According to eyewitnesses, the passengers somehow came out of the derailed coaches, they said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognizance of the train accident in Gonda district.

He directed the officials to reach the spot immediately and expedite the relief work.

Yogi also directed to ensure proper treatment of the injured.

The CM has directed the district administration officials to provide all possible help. On the directives of the CM, all

hospitals, CHCs, PHCs of nearby districts were put on alert mode. SDRF team was also instructed to reach the spot and expedite the relief work.

Meanwhile, helpline numbers have been issued by the Railways for the help and other information of railway passengers. These include Gonda 8957400965, Lucknow 8957409292, Siwan 9026624251, Chhapra 8303979217, Deoria Sadar 8303098950, Gorakhpur 05512209169 and Varanasi Control 9794843966.

The route of 10 trains has been changed after the incident. Amrapali Express will go to its destination via Mankapur Junction-Ayodhya Dham-Barabanki, whereas Guwahati-Jammu Tawi Amarnath Express will run via Mankapur Junction-Ayodhya Dham-Barabanki.

Six more killed, over 150 injured as quota unrest intensifies in Bangladesh

AGENCIES
DHAKA, JULY 18

Six more persons were killed and more than 150 injured in widespread clashes between quota protesters and the police in Bangladesh on Thursday.

Rail and Communication links between the capital Dhaka and the rest of the country remained snapped during a "complete shutdown" called by the agitators.

The toll in clashes sparked by the protests, that began earlier this month, has now gone up to 12, with hundreds of people injured across the country. The protesters, mainly comprising students, are seeking an end to the quota system for recruitment in Bangladesh civil services and government jobs, set fire to buses and a state-run television station and disrupted metro rail services even as the government offered to hold talks, media reports said. "Government has agreed to hold talks with the quota reformists," Law Minister Anisul Huq told journalists at the premises of the Jatiya Sangsad - parliament.



There were reports of violent clashes between the protesters and law enforcement agencies across the country with Dhaka was on the boil.

In Dhaka, at least four people were killed in Uttara, a student died in Savar, and a man perished in the Badda-Rampura areas during clashes between quota protesters and police. The Daily Star reported. Over 100 others, mostly private university students, were injured in Badda-Rampura.

In parts of Dhaka, streets seemed deserted, as fear gripped people following students' enforcement of the dawn-to-dusk "complete shutdown" across the country.

Police lobbed tear gas shells after violent clashes broke out between school

and college students and the lawkeepers in the Dhanmondi area of the capital.

Police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells to control the rampaging students at Bahaddarhat in Chhatrogram City, around 250 kms from the capital city Dhaka.

In Dinajpur town, around 330 kilometres from Dhaka, 50 people were injured during sporadic clashes between quota protesters and activists of the country's ruling Awami League and its student wing Chhatra League.

Meanwhile, Dhaka's rail link with most of the country was snapped as students blocked the Mohakhali level crossing here, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Dhaka Metro rail ser-

Indians in Bangladesh advised to avoid travel amid violent student protests

AGENCIES
DHAKA, JULY 18

The Indian Embassy in Bangladesh on Thursday issued an advisory urging Indian students and nationals residing in the country to restrict their outdoor movements in the wake of ongoing massive student protests throughout the country, which has resulted in at least six deaths so far.

"In view of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Indian community members and the Indian students residing in

Bangladesh are advised to avoid travel and minimise their movement outside their living premises," the advisory stated.

The advisory has also issued a 24-hour emergency helpline number and urged Indian nationals to reach out to the High Commission in Dhaka and Assistant High Commissions for any need or assistance as most of the country observed a complete shutdown on Thursday.

Student demonstrations in Bangladesh have taken a violent turn as

anti-quota protesters clashed with members of the ruling Awami League party's student wing across the country, local media reported.

Reports cited that as many as six people, including a child, have been killed in the clashes between the protesters and the security officials in Dhaka's Shonir Akhra area.

Incidents of fires and vandalism have been reported, with protesters setting off tyres, wooden logs, motorcycles and toll plaza booths ablaze across the country.

Outraged by the high unemployment rate in the country, students in Bangladesh are demanding the quashing of the 30 per cent reservation quota for the families of veterans of the 1971 Independence War.

The quota system in government jobs was scrapped in 2018 after a major student movement but was reinstated by a court in June.

On Wednesday, during an address to the nation, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asserted that there is an opportunity to resolve the

issue through a legal process as the government has already appealed to the apex court against the court's verdict, and a hearing date has been fixed in the Appellate Division.

"It is a matter of sorrow that some vested quarters started making different kinds of statements and engaged in terrorist activities to gain their ambitious intentions centring on this movement. As the matter has been brought before the top court, I call upon all to keep patience," said the Bangladesh PM.

vices were disrupted from Pallabi to Shewrapara as protesters set fire to a police box at Mirpur 10. The police box was engulfed in flames, spreading rapidly and emitting thick smoke plumes from the scene, The Dhaka Tribune reported.

Protesting students torched the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) Centre in Rampura here, while two offices of the

Awami League were vandalised in Dinajpur district.

At least five to six police personnel were injured as they tried to stop the protesters from torching the two Awami League offices.

Five police personnel were among six injured in clashes between quota protesters and Chhatra League activists in Natore.

Given the current situation, the government has

blocked mobile internet services in the country, said Zunaed Ahmed Palak, state minister for telecom and ICT, according to The Daily Star.

Outgoing Ambassador of the European Union to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley called for a quick resolution of the present situation. "All friends and partners of Bangladesh want to see a quick resolution of the present situation and

the avoidance of further violence and bloodshed," he said.

The US embassy here has issued a "demonstration alert" for its citizens living in Dhaka and across the country saying the situation is extremely volatile.

The unrest began on July 1, when university students hit the streets demanding the scrapping of quotas in government jobs. Last month, the High

Court reinstated a rule that provides for reservation of 30 percent of the posts for children and grandchildren of those who took part in the country's liberation war against Pakistan in 1971. According to reports, around 56 percent of government jobs are now reserved for various categories of citizens in the South Asian nation which has a high unemployment rate.

UK seeks to reset relations with EU at major summit

AGENCIES
LONDON, JULY 18

Some 50 European leaders gathered in the United Kingdom (UK) on Thursday for the fourth meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) as the UK aims to reshape ties with Europe amid global challenges.

Hosting the first major UK-led summit of its premiership, Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed the leaders to Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, the birthplace of former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Xinhua news agency reported.

Among his priorities, Starmer tries to reset the UK's strained post-Brexit relations with Europe as the region faces "generational challenges."

Addressing the opening plenary, the UK prime minister said that under his leadership, Britain will be a "friend and a partner to Europe, ready to work with you... not focused on the differences between us, but on the values that



we share."

The UK government will use the summit to discuss closer collaboration to tackle illegal immigration and greater security cooperation with its European counterpart, among other issues, according to a statement by Downing Street ahead of the meeting.

For the first time at a meeting of the EPC, NATO, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe will be in attendance.

The EPC, which began with the opening plenary, will be followed

by three roundtables on such issues as migration, energy, and connectivity, before ending with a closing plenary.

Starmer will also have a bilateral meeting with Irish Taoiseach Simon Harris and French President Emmanuel Macron, respectively, according to Downing Street.

However, it remains to be seen whether Starmer will be able to change the political climate overnight.

According to observers, Starmer will be seeking a deal to stop food being delayed at borders, but he has insisted that he will not take the UK back

into the EU, single market, customs union, or the free movement regime, seen as a huge obstacle to improving ties with the EU.

The EU, for its part, has always resisted anything it regards as "cherry picking" and is expected to demand a heavy price for any deal that significantly improves the UK's access to the EU single market. President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen is not coming to the UK to attend the EPC herself, which is not seen as a good sign.

The brainchild of Macron, the EPC serves as a platform for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and countries in its neighborhood to address issues of common interest.

The EPC held its inaugural meeting in Prague, the Czech Republic, in October 2022, followed by a second meeting in Moldova in June and a third in Spain in October last year. The fifth EPC will be held in Hungary in November this year.

S Korea: Over 10,000 trainee doctors likely to end up leaving hospitals

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 18

Despite many months-long efforts by the medical community and the government for a breakthrough, over 10,000 striking trainee doctors were presumed to leave hospitals as they have decided not to withdraw their resignations, the health ministry said on Thursday.

More than 90 per cent of around 13,000 junior doctors walked away from their jobs in February in the form of resignations against the government's plan to sharply raise medical school admissions, Yonhap news agency reported.

The government has presented a set of measures to convince them to return to work but a majority of them have remained off their jobs.

"The government is reviewing the lists submitted by hospitals of trainee doctors who will finally resign. It was unfortunate that most of them are not



likely to return," Health Minister Cho Kyoo-hong said during a meeting regarding the strike.

The ministry has demanded that hospitals complete accepting their resignations by Monday, while vowing not to suspend the medical licenses of the strikers, regardless of whether they return to hospitals or not, and offering special measures for returnees on their training and earning specialist licenses.

"After confirming the vacancy, the government will begin a process to recruit trainee doctors

for the second half," Cho said, stressing that the junior doctors can get a chance to earn specialist licenses if they apply for the upcoming session.

"The government will enhance monitoring of the medical scene and further beef up the emergency system in an effort to minimise the medical service vacuum," Cho said.

The walkout has disrupted the healthcare system, as most of the major hospitals have significantly reduced treatments, surgeries and other services for patients.

The minister also vowed

"fundamental reform" of the medical system to reduce major hospitals' excessive dependence on trainee doctors.

Despite strong opposition from doctors, the government has already finalised an admissions quota hike of some 1,500 students for medical schools for next year in an effort to address problems stemming from the shortage of doctors.

Doctors have urged the government to revisit the decision, claiming that medical schools will not be able to handle the increased enrollment, which will compromise the quality of medical education and ultimately the country's medical services.

The health ministry, meanwhile, said that it has referred 18 doctors, medical students and others to the prosecution for a probe into their alleged involvement in drawing up or releasing a list of junior doctors who returned to hospitals following their walkout.

Cambodian PM says landmines, ERWs still pose risk to over 1 mn people

AGENCIES
PHNOM PENH, JULY 18

Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Thursday that more than 1 million people in the country still live in areas contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

Speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony for a museum of antiquities in northwest Siem Reap province, Hun Manet said from 1992 to date, Cambodia had cleared approximately 3,000 square km of landmine and ERW-contaminated areas, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Yet, another 1,700 square km of land have not yet been cleared of landmines and ERWs, posing a risk to more than 1 million Cambodian people who live in those areas," he said in a speech live broadcast on the official news channel TVK.

Cambodia is one of the countries worst affected by landmines and ERWs. An estimated 4 million to



6 million landmines and other munitions have been left over from three decades of war and internal conflicts that ended in 1998. According to Yale University, between 1965 and 1973, the United States dropped some 230,516 bombs on 113,716 sites in Cambodia.

A Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) official report showed that from 1979 to June 2024, landmine and ERW explosions had claimed 19,830 lives and either injured or amputated 45,242 others.

Hun Manet said war had not only cost human lives, but also jeopardized cultural properties, adding that numerous Cambodian ancient statues and objects at various temples had been damaged, stolen, and illegally trafficked to other countries during the past decades of war and internal conflicts.

According to the prime minister, since 1996 to date, the Southeast Asian country has reclaimed 1,098 looted antiquities from 15 countries, including the United States, Britain and Thailand.

Palestine rejects proposal to reopen Rafah crossing without Israeli withdrawal

AGENCIES
RAMALLAH, JULY 18

Palestine has rejected an Israeli-US proposal to temporarily reopen the Rafah border crossing, calling instead for an Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of Palestinian sovereignty, said an official source.

A meeting was held last week involving representatives from Palestine, the United States, and Israel to explore the possibility of operating the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, according to the source who requested anonymity, Xinhua news agency reported.

The Israeli side proposed that six Palestinian employees participate in managing the crossing without uniforms or police, and without raising the Palestinian flag, said the source in a statement.

The source explained that the proposal was rejected because it aimed to open the crossing temporarily without Palestinian sovereignty, which contradicts the Palestinian position and international agreements.

According to the source, the Palestinian stance is in line with the 2005 agreement on the Rafah crossing, which requires Palestinian sovereignty, European participation, and a full Israeli withdrawal from the crossing.

The meeting concluded after the Israeli-US proposal was rejected by the Palestinians, and there has been no further dialogue following the meeting, said the source.

The meeting is considered the first between Israel and representatives of the Palestinian Authority to discuss the future of Gaza after the ongoing conflict.

UN chief urges renewed focus on political resolution to Gaza crisis

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 18

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged a renewed emphasis on a political resolution to the persistent crisis in Gaza.

"We must refocus on finding a political solution that will end the occupation and resolve the conflict in line with international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions," Courtenay Rattray, chef de cabinet of the UN secretary-general, told the Security Council debate on Gaza, on behalf of the UN chief.

Rattray highlighted the severe circumstances in Gaza, characterised by ongoing conflict and lawlessness, and raised concerns about the escalating regional instability and the significant crisis in Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported.

Rattray provided a sombre update on the situation, stating, "In recent



weeks, Israeli military operations and fighting intensified across Gaza. Rockets continue to be launched by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israeli population centres."

"Rafah is in ruins -- and the Rafah crossing remains closed, further hampering humanitarian operations," he added.

He noted the massive displacement within Gaza, where "almost 2 million people have been displaced -- nearly the entire population of Gaza -- and many of them multiple times."

Highlighting the breakdown in public order and

the increasing threat of a regional spillover, Rattray reiterated the UN's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the "immediate and unconditional release of all hostages."

He stressed the critical need for consistent access to humanitarian aid across all crossing points to ensure the survival and well-being of the civilian population.

Rattray stressed the importance of immediate action to address these crises, stating, "We must change course. All settlement activity must cease immediately."

Union Budget: Indian startups seek more emphasis on AI, advanced tech

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

As India AI Mission takes concrete steps towards making the country a global artificial intelligence hub, startups founders on Thursday said increased investment in policies that simplify doing business and empower startups and emerging technologies, such as responsible AI, is essential for a boost to the sector.

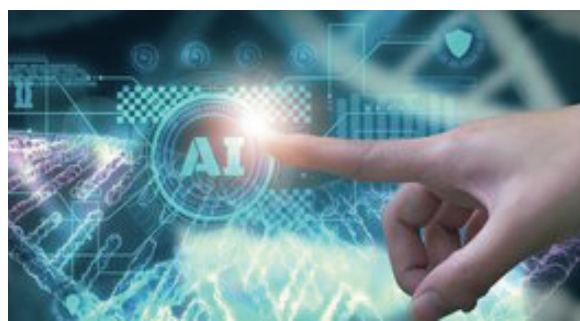
As AI continues transforming sectors like healthcare, finance, manufacturing, and education, implementing proactive measures to ensure its responsible development is crucial, they emphasised.

The India AI Mission has been approved with an

outlay of Rs 10,372 crore and out of this, Rs 2,000 crore would be utilised towards supporting the Indian startup ecosystem to develop indigenous AI-based solutions.

"Future AI guidelines should emphasise safety, ethical standards, and societal welfare while fostering innovation. Designing AI with a human-centred approach - emphasising fairness, transparency, and accountability can address ethical concerns and mitigate risks associated with AI misuse, like deepfake technology and job displacement," said Varun Babbar, Managing Director-India and SAARC, business analytics platform Qlik.

Nitya Sharma, Founder and CEO of fintech start-



up Simpl, said that the budget should be focused on adding higher disposable incomes in the hands of consumers, driving consumption, and reducing the cost of operations for businesses. "Additionally, it should help create a level-playing field for homegrown brands through simpler financing options, offering a boost to their manufacturing capa-

bilities by providing sops to establish units within specialised manufacturing zones and further simplify the ease of doing business," Sharma added.

The government can play a role in fostering innovation in the fintech sector by establishing AI Centres of Excellence or providing grants for research and development. "This will help

create a more robust and competitive fintech industry," said Nilay Patel, Managing Director and Founder, Easy Pay.

According to Paritosh Prajapati, CEO of telecom gear-maker GX Group, India stands at the edge of a telecom revolution, driven by visionary investments and homegrown innovation.

"Our government's commitment, exemplified by the Telecom Technology Development Fund, is empowering our companies, startups, and academic institutions to pioneer cutting-edge telecom solutions. This isn't just about technology; it's about self-reliance and reducing our dependence on foreign technologies," Prajapati added.

The spending on AI and Generative AI (GenAI) in India is projected to reach \$6 billion by 2027, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 33.7 per cent, according to the latest IDC report.

"While other nations are busy building their AI infrastructure, India must prioritise how to use AI to its maximum potential. This could include training AI/ML models for improving our defence and intelligence posture, to reduce cyber crimes," said Tarun Wig, CEO and Co-Founder, Innenu Labs.

"Adding government support for R&D initiatives to proven companies in the private sector and not just academia would create a win-win situation," he added.

Infosys posts 7 per cent increase in q1 net profit at Rs 6,386 crore

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

Infosys on Thursday reported 7.1 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 6,386 crore for the April-June quarter of the current financial year compared to the same period of 2023-24.

India's second-largest IT company registered a 3.6 per cent increase in revenue from operations to Rs 39,315 crore during the first quarter, the company said in a regulatory filing.

The IT major has also raised its revenue growth guidance by 3 to 4 per cent for 2024-25.

Infosys retained the guidance for its EBIT (earnings before interest and tax) margin or the operating margin at 20-22 per cent for the current financial year.

Infosys recorded 34

large deal wins during the quarter, the highest-ever, with TCV of \$4.1 billion, with 57.6 per cent of them being net new.

"We had an excellent start to FY25 with strong and broad-based growth, operating margin expansion, robust large deals, and highest ever cash generation. This is a testimony to our differentiated service offerings, enormous client trust, and relentless execution," Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said. "The focused Generative AI approach for enterprises is finding strong traction with clients. This is building on our Topaz and Cobalt capabilities," Parekh added.

However, the company's headcount is down for the sixth straight quarter by 1,908 in Q1. With this decline, the total headcount of Infosys stands at 3,15,332.

Indian smartphone market grows modest 1 pc in April-June: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The Indian smartphone market grew just 1 per cent in the April-June quarter (Q2), totalling 36.4 million units shipped, a report showed on Thursday.

Xiaomi reclaimed the top spot after six quarters, capturing an 18 per cent market share with 6.7 million units shipped.

Vivo closely followed, also shipping 6.7 million units, boosted by affordable 5G and mid-range models, according to market research firm Canalys.

"Samsung ranked third with 6.1 million units shipped. realme and OPPO (excluding OnePlus) rounded out the top five with 4.3 million and



4.2 million units shipped, respectively," the report mentioned.

Sanyam Chaurasia, senior analyst at Canalys, said that in the second quarter, top mass-market brands expanded their mid-high-end portfolios and will use early monsoon sales to clear inventory, making space for new models ahead of the festive season.

The market is grappling with challenges such as fluctuating demand in the mass-market segment, slow migration from feature phones to smartphones and increasing adoption of second-hand smartphones.

"As a result, brands often resort to creating unnatural demand through festive promotions," said Chaurasia.

Indian fintech industry to reach \$420 billion by 2029, target 1 billion UPI transactions per day: NPCI

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The Indian fintech industry is projected to reach \$420 billion by 2029, at a cumulative annual growth rate of 31 per cent from around \$110 billion this year, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, non-executive chairman and independent director, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said on Thursday.

Speaking to IANS on the sidelines of Assocham's second 'India International Fintech Festival' in the national capital, Choudhary said the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has gone global and the India Stack's flagship offering is now available at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Galeries Lafayette's flagship store



in Haussmann ahead of Paris Olympics and certain countries in the Middle East.

"In Singapore, nearly 26,000 can drivers are using the UPI. In the UAE, many merchants are now using the UPI mode of payment. Nepal has also started UPI.

In India, UPI payments are breaking all records and you will see exponen-

tial growth in the years to come," Choudhary told IANS.

"NPCI has also set an ambitious target of achieving 1 billion UPI transactions per day in the coming years," he added.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the event, Choudhary informed that with over 9,000 fintech entities, India ranks third globally and commands 14

per cent of startup funding in the country.

"The adoption rate of fintech in India is 87 per cent, which is much above the global average of 67 per cent," he told the gathering.

According to Anand Vijay Jha, Chairman, Assocham Fintech Council, we need to be much more focused on delivering values to attract investors to the ecosystem.

"India's strong position in digital public infrastructure is rooted in public-private partnership. With multiple stakeholders in the ecosystem, the role of policymakers and regulators assumes greater significance," said Jha.

The government's push towards a digital economy, coupled with a young and tech-savvy population, is

likely to propel the fintech sector to new heights.

According to Archana Vohra, Managing Director, Google, the UPI is not just a set of tech rails, it is an infinite amount of work to make sure that making digital payments is easily accessible.

"What brought us here will not take us ahead, so we need to be persistent, and resilient and make sure that the next 10 to 15 years help us go deeper into the fintech space," said Vohra.

Vikas Verma, COO, Mastercard said that access to credit is one of the fundamental catalysts that is propelling India towards its 'Viksit Bharat' vision and fintechs can enable access to credit for the underserved segments of our society.

LG targets over \$725 million in sales from smart factory solutions by 2030

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 18

LG Electronics said on Thursday it aims to achieve over 1 trillion won (\$725.2 million) in sales from its smart factory solution business by 2030, leveraging its artificial intelligence technologies and manufacturing expertise.

This year, the South Korean home appliance giant entered the smart factory solution market, offering technologies and services to transform traditional manufacturing

facilities into automated and digitised smart factories.

LG Electronics highlighted its extensive experience and data in the smart factory solution sector, accumulated through its production technology research lab, LG PRI. The lab has undertaken projects on production customisation and manufacturing operation development for LG affiliates, including LG Energy Solution and LG Display Co.

It is part of the South Korean tech company's

recent moves to advance its digital transformation strategy, aiming to evolve into a software-based platform company beyond its traditional hardware focus.

"This year, LG PRI is expected to secure orders worth 200 billion won from companies outside of LG Group," LG Electronics said. "We aim to expand the smart factory solution business to achieve more than 1 trillion won in sales by 2030."

The company said its customers include sec-

ondary battery producing companies, auto parts makers and logistic companies.

LG Electronics plans to accelerate its business expansion by targeting industries with rising factory demand, such as pharmaceuticals, biotechnologies, and food and beverages.

According to market research firm Precedence Research, the global smart factory market is projected to grow from \$155.6 billion in 2024 to \$268.5 billion by 2030.

Samsung acquires British knowledge graph tech startup for AI

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 18

Samsung said on Thursday it has acquired the British artificial intelligence (AI) and knowledge graph tech startup Oxford Semantic Technologies in a bid to strengthen its in-device AI capabilities. The South Korean tech giant did not disclose financial terms of the deal, reports Yonhap news agency.

Established in 2017 by Oxford University professors Ian Horrocks, Boris Motik and Bernardo Cuenca Grau, Oxford



Semantic Technologies specialises in cutting-edge knowledge representation and semantic reasoning technology.

Knowledge graph technology, which stores information as an interconnected web of related ideas, processes data similarly to human memory and reasoning. This technol-

ogy is crucial for developing sophisticated and personalised AI solutions by integrating and connecting personal data on habits and usage patterns.

Oxford Semantic Technologies has successfully commercialised its knowledge graph technology, optimising data processing and enabling advanced reasoning both in the cloud and on-device.

Its AI-centric engine, RDFox, collaborates with organisations across Europe and North America in sectors such as finance, manufacturing

and e-commerce.

Samsung said that Oxford Semantic Technologies' expertise in knowledge graphs will significantly enhance its on-device AI technology, particularly in the latest Galaxy S24 smartphone series. This integration aims to offer a more personalised user experience while securing personal data on the device.

The technology will also be applicable across Samsung Electronics' extensive product range, from mobile devices to TVs and home appliances.

Sensex, Nifty touch all-time record highs amid renewed IT stock buying

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 18

The Indian benchmark indices on Thursday saw a sharp rally over renewed buying in IT stocks, ending up for the fourth straight session while touching a new all-time high.

At the closing bell, the Sensex was up 626 points or 0.78 per cent at 81,343, and the Nifty was up 187.80 points or 0.76 per cent at 24,800. Sensex touched 81,522 and Nifty climbed to 24,837 during the intra-day trading - all-time highs.

TCS, LTIMindtree, ONGC, Bajaj Finserv, and Wipro were among the top gainers on the Nifty,

while losers included Asian Paints, Hero MotoCorp, Grasim, Coal India, and Bajaj Auto. Among sectors, bank, auto, IT, FMCG and telecom rose 0.3-2 per cent, while capital goods, metal and power stocks were down 1-3.5 per cent. The BSE midcap and smallcap index shed around 1 per cent each. According to market watchers, the front-line indices firmed up in the second half, reaching fresh highs driven by renewed buying in IT stocks. Investor optimism for the sector grew after strong performance reports from the country's leading IT firms in the June quarter, coupled with a weakening rupee.

However, the broader market lagged the major indices due to high valuations and sectoral rotation, which is influenced by anticipated improvements in private consumption, particularly in rural areas, said market experts.

Rupak De of LKP Securities said the trend and momentum remain positive, with the index staying above critical short-term moving averages. "In the short term, the trend is likely to remain positive as long as the Nifty stays above 24,500. On the higher end, the current trend might take the index towards 25,000 in the near term," he said.

Rural consumption stocks will benefit from Budget 2024: Expert

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The bull market scenario in Indian equity indices is going to end soon, said Chris Wood, Global Equity Strategist at Jefferies in a media report.

Chris Wood said that in the last 10 years, the BJP-led central government implemented several structural reforms, the fruits of which we are seeing now.

"I think the bull market is nearing its end," he said.

Chris Wood added that what is being seen in India now happened earlier, between 2002-09, which

started with a boom in the property market and even tight monetary policy did not affect it.

But the difference between the current cycle and the last one is the huge capex by the government which is seen in the current one.

"We have been in a bull cycle for the last three years, barring seven years of recession in the property market. The tightening of monetary policy has not affected this. Last year there was also an increase in private investment. I hope that the same trend can continue this year. If I am wrong then the stock

market will not do well from here," he said.

Chris Wood further said that his focus is on rural consumption stocks as this sector will benefit from the announcements made in the budget.

At present, more weightage in the portfolio is given to investment and consumption stocks. In the last one year, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) benchmark Nifty surged more than 24 per cent.

From the beginning of this year, Nifty rallied 13 per cent, 14 per cent in the last six months, and 4.40 per cent in the last one month.

Indian realty sector saw 22 deals worth \$1.8 billion in April-June: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The Indian realty sector saw 22 deals at \$1.8 billion in the April-June quarter (Q2) in FY25, an uptick in both volume and value signalling a substantial inflow of investment into the sector, a report showed on Thursday.

The quarter was characterised by the dominance of commercial development, residential development activity, private equity influence and technological integration.

Commercial development dominated the overall deal activity, accounting for 37 per cent of the volumes and an impressive

75 per cent of the values, according to the report by Grant Thornton Bharat.

"The first half of 2024 has already reached close to the total deal value of 2023 and has seen a marked increase in private equity investments and high-value transactions, reflecting renewed investor confidence and robust economic recovery," said Shabala Shinde, Partner and Real Estate Leader.

With the urban population projected to reach 600 million by 2031, the future of India's real estate market appears promising and technology-driven advancements, Shinde added.

Paris Olympics: Will go all out to get that gold medal, says Sindhu

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

India's two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu is aiming to make history in Paris as she sets the bar high for herself in the quadrennial event. The ace shuttler is eyeing to complete her medal cabinet with a coveted gold in the upcoming Olympics. Having won silver at the Rio Olympics in 2016 and bronze at Tokyo 2020, Sindhu is hoping to become the first Indian athlete to secure three individual Olympic medals.

Reflecting on her previous Olympic experiences, Sindhu expressed her excitement and determination. "That third medal at Paris definitely motivates me, and I am going all out to get that gold medal. For me, the Olympics is where I give my 200%. The jour-



neys in 2016 and 2020 were wonderful, filled with immense effort and unforgettable moments. As I prepare for Paris 2024, it's a fresh start, and I have to give my 100% no matter what," she told Jio-Cinema's The Dreamers.

Ranked among the world's top players, Sindhu draws from her past experiences to fuel her quest for gold. "There are a lot of experiences from my previous outings at the Olympics that I will take into Paris 2024, but I don't want to get overcon-

fident thinking about the medals. I hope I can fulfil the hopes of the nation and get the third medal because getting three consecutive medals is not a joke.

"My mindset is focused on winning the gold and this gives me a lot of motivation and confidence. My preparations are focused on putting in the hard work while being smart and focused on that particular day," said the 29-year-old Sindhu.

Understanding the fierce competition that

awaits, Sindhu respects the calibre of her opponents at Paris 2024. "The Olympics is extremely competitive, and all the athletes are at their peak. The top 10-15 players in the world are of the same standard, be it the likes of An Se-young, Akane Yamaguchi, Carolina Marin, or Tai Tzu-Ying.

There are no easy points at the Olympics, and we need to play hard for every point we score against an opponent. Anything can happen at the Olympics; one small mistake can change everything."

Sindhu also shared her perspective on working with Indian badminton legend Prakash Padukone and their preparations for Paris 2024.

"This time, we have a whole new team with Prakash (Padukone) sir as my mentor and Agus (Dwi Santoso) as coach.

Our practice is focused on getting everything perfect and to the point. It is my fortune that Prakash sir is my mentor and a part of my journey, and I hope his support can help me win that medal."

Currently ranked 13th in the world, Sindhu's illustrious career boasts numerous accolades. She has won five BWF World Championship medals, including a gold, and an Olympic silver and bronze-making her the only Indian to achieve this feat.

Her Commonwealth Games achievements include gold in 2022, silver in 2018, and bronze in 2014 in the women's singles event, along with gold in 2018 and silver in 2022 in mixed teams. Additionally, she claimed silver in women's singles at the 2018 Asian Games and bronze in women's teams at the 2014 Asian Games.

Eurosport India Taps Cricket Icon Shikhar Dhawan as MotoGP Ambassador

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 18

Eurosport India has announced Indian cricket icon Shikhar Dhawan as the brand ambassador for MotoGP in India.

The partnership aims to boost the popularity of motorcycle racing in the country through a new campaign titled "Face Kar Race Kar."

Dhawan, known for his prowess on the cricket field, expressed enthusiasm about his new role. "Partnering with the prestigious MotoGP as its India Ambassador is a remarkable honour," he said. The cricketer drew parallels between his journey in cricket and his newfound connection with motorsports, reminiscing about riding bikes in his hometown of Delhi.

The announcement comes as part of Eurosport India's efforts to expand MotoGP's reach in the country. Arjun Nohwar, General Manager - South



Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery, stated, "His infectious energy and wide appeal will not only resonate with racing enthusiasts but also introduce MotoGP to sports fans in a compelling way."

In a related development, Yamaha has been onboarded as the title sponsor for MotoGP in India. Vijay Kaul, General Manager, Marketing Strategy Division, Yamaha India, expressed excitement about reviving their partnership with Eurosport India and promoting MotoGP across the country.

The 2024 MotoGP season is currently underway, with Francesco Bagnaia of Ducati Lenovo Team leading the standings by a narrow margin. The season will conclude with the BritishGP at Silverstone in early August.

Eurosport India has also extended its broadcasting rights for MotoGP in India for three years, reinforcing its commitment to delivering world-class sports content to Indian audiences.

The channel's portfolio includes various sports such as motorsports, golf, cycling, pro wrestling, table tennis, and marathon.

FIFA Rankings: India retains 124th spot, Argentina consolidates top position with Copa America title

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

The Indian football team has retained its 124th spot while Lionel Messi's Argentina consolidated the top position in the latest FIFA rankings issued on Thursday. Argentina's unbeaten run to the continental title glory strengthened their hold at the top spot.

India heaved a sigh of relief as it didn't drop any place in the rankings after descending three spots in the previous rankings updated in June after a failed 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign.

India's performance has been declining since December last year. It had ranked 99 at its highest point when it first entered the top 100 last year, but it



has since been falling. In Asia, India are placed in the 22nd spot, behind the likes of Syria, Palestine, and Vietnam.

France maintained their second spot in the rankings after making it to the semifinals of Euro 2024.

European champions Spain gained five places to finish third while finalist England moved up one place to fourth ahead of

Brazil, which dropped to fifth.

Belgium fell three places to sixth, now outside the top five, followed by the Netherlands in seventh, and Portugal, which dropped two places to eighth.

Colombia, despite a narrow loss to Argentina in the Copa America final, moved up three places to ninth, marking its return to the top 10.

A nip here, a tuck there: Jyothi Yarraji banking on tweaked technique for Olympics glory

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 18

A well-planned preparation, explosive strength, tough mental approach, do-or-die attitude, and a harmoniously rhythmic running style bolstered by a new approach, India's top hurdler Jyothi Yarraji is banking on a newly tweaked running style to produce her best performance at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Usually a smooth and rhythmic runner, Jyothi has added explosive strength to her technique to make up for the lack of aggression and tempered it with hard work and a tough mental approach. Her coach James Hillier further tweaked her style in recent months, bringing changes in her start from the blocks and speed to the first hurdle to make

her running more effective.

The 24-year-old Jyothi, who is supported by Reliance Foundation, earlier used to start on her left leg, but Hillier had made her switch to a right-leg start after the Monet Grand Prix event in Finland where Jyothi equalled the national record of 12.78 seconds despite nearly tripping off the final hurdle.

After Jyothi recovered from a hip flexor injury, Hillier also asked her to reduce the number of steps she takes to reach the first hurdle, thus making her speed up her approach. She now takes seven steps to the first hurdle instead of eight, thus improving her speed.

Hillier said the reason for the change was to fully utilise Jyothi's speed and strength and to help maintain her acceleration going

into the second and third hurdles.

"The reason why we made these changes is because she is so fast and strong that she was getting in too close to the first hurdle, and she was chopping and then basically slowing down a little bit and sort of skying the first hurdle. And then it would affect her approach to the second and the third hurdle and was ruining her acceleration a little bit," Hillier said during an online interaction from Poland.

He said they decided to explore a faster approach to attack the first hurdle.

"We talked about it and decided that it would be a good option to explore seven steps because we felt she was strong enough (to handle it) and it was good. She was good enough to help with the

seven strides to attack the first hurdle and also be able to be better at the second hurdle. So that's something we explored, and she took to it really quickly."

"It was difficult in one respect because she had to start with the other leg forward. That took a little bit of learning and getting used to, but it's definitely been something that's worked well. It's something that has helped her. She keeps improving and she keeps getting better because of this. She's a lot more consistent now. She's consistently running 12.81, 12.71, etc.

"All year she's been running that, and I believe a lot of that is because she's setting up the race better at the first and the second hurdle. That's why we made the change. And look, you've always got to

look at how you can make improvements," Hillier added.

The High-Performance director from the UK says the new approach has presented them with some pleasant problems.

"So as a coach, I'm always looking at that and as she gets stronger and faster, new problems arrive. Nice problems arrive. You know, like, at the moment, she's so fast the problem now is that she's getting close to the hurdle. Because she's so quick that, you know, when she hit the hurdle in Finland, it was a lovely problem to have. She is running so fast that she hit the last hurdle. But that happened for a good reason, not a bad reason. She didn't make a mistake. It wasn't a mistake. It was because she was running so well that it happened.

Sub junior men, women south zone hockey championship set to begin in Kollam

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

Hockey India 2nd sub junior men & women south zone championship 2024 is all set to kick off in Kollam, Kerala, scheduled from July 19 to July 26. The event will feature six teams vying for the championship title in each category.

The participating teams in the men's and women's categories are Hockey Karnataka, Hockey Andhra Pradesh, Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu, Telangana Hockey, Le Puducherry Hockey, and Kerala



Hockey.

The competition format will be a round-robin, where all teams will play against each other once. The top two teams will advance to the final, while the third and fourth-

placed teams will compete for third place in a knock-out fixture.

"We are thrilled to see the 2nd Hockey India Sub Junior Men & Women South Zone Championship bring together so

much young talent," said Hockey India president Dr. Dilip Tirkey. "This championship is not only about winning but also about learning and growing as players. It provides a crucial platform for young players to showcase their skills and gain valuable experience," he added.

"Our junior players are the future of Indian hockey, and this championship is a fantastic platform for them to shine. We believe in their potential and are committed to providing opportunities for them to excel," stated Hockey India secretary

general Bhola Nath Singh.

The opening day of the competition promises thrilling encounters, with Telangana Hockey clashing with Hockey Andhra Pradesh, Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu taking on Le Puducherry Hockey, and Kerala Hockey competing against Hockey Karnataka in the women's category.

In the men's category, the excitement continues with Hockey Andhra Pradesh facing Le Puducherry Hockey, Hockey Karnataka squaring off against Telangana Hockey, and Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu battling Kerala Hockey.

'It's essential to recognise their hard work', says Shivam Dube on honouring Harare ground staff

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

India all-rounder Shivam Dube opened up on his gesture of giving his Player of the Match Award money to the ground staff of the Harare Sports Club in the fifth and final T20I against Zimbabwe and said that 'it's essential to recognise and value their hard work.'

Dube was named Player of the Match for his all-around performance in the fifth T20I match as the Indian team defeated Zimbabwe by 42 runs. He played a crucial inning of 26 runs off just 12 balls to take India's total to 167/6.



Apart from batting, Dube also claimed two wickets for 25 runs in his four-over spell.

"The ground staff in Zimbabwe did an exceptional job, ensuring we had excellent playing con-

ditions. Their hard work and dedication often go unnoticed, so I wanted to show my appreciation and gratitude for their efforts," Dube told IANS.

"By giving away my Man of the Match award money, I hoped to acknowledge their contribution and support them in a small way.

It was a gesture to highlight the importance of every individual who makes the game possible, and I believe it's essential to recognise and value their hard work," he added.

India defeated Zimbabwe by 42 runs to win the five-match T20I series 4-1.

Kavin Quintal becomes first Indian rider to join World Superbike Championships

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JULY 18

Indian rider Kavin Quintal is all set to make a historic debut at the World SBK SSP300 competitions to become the first Indian rider to participate in a World Superbike Championship for the Irish team, "Team#109 Retro Traffic Kawasaki". Kavin's entry is accepted for the SSP event in the fourth round which begins at Most, Czech Republic on Friday.

The 19-year-old Chennai star, Kavin Quintal, will be

filling in for the Irish team's main rider, Spaniard Daniel Mogeda, who suffered an injury after leading the Supersport 300 class, in an unfortunate crash that paved the way for the Irish team to rope in Quintal.

"It is a great opportunity that I will try to learn and enjoy simultaneously. I will be able to show my maximum level together with a great team that surrounds this structure. I would like to thank the team for this opportunity," said Quintal.

Quintal, a world-class

rider, is currently competing in the European Stock Championship within the FIM JuniorGP and in the Asia Road Racing Championship. In the three rounds of JuniorGP, Kavin had a top-10 finish. As a rider who started his baby steps at 13, he was the youngest rider to earn points in the Indian National events.

He went on to win the Talent Cup twice in 2021 and 2023 in India. Later, after Asia Talent Cup events, he soon blossomed into a mature rider moving to Europe.

KIRTI programme aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments in Phase-2

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

With the Paris Olympics loading up, the government's ambitious Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme will shift an extra gear as Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) Mansukh Mandaviya, will inaugurate phase 2 of the initiative in New Delhi on Friday.

The first phase of KIRTI was launched by the previous sports minister Anurag Thakur in Chandigarh on March 12 this year.

"KIRTI aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments across



the country throughout the year to identify talent through notified Talent Assessment Centres. A scouting and assessment programme of this scale is a first in India and comes

at a time when the nation wants to become a top 10 sports nation in the world by 2036 and among the top five by 2047, as per ministry's release.

KIRTI's athlete-centric

programme is conspicuous by its transparent selection methodology based on Information Technology. Data analytics based on Artificial Intelligence are being used to predict the sporting acumen of an aspiring athlete.

In its first phase, out of 3,62,683 registrations across 70 centres, close to 51,000 assessments in 28 states and Union Territories have been made.

Maharashtra and Haryana, two states which have always done well in Khelo India meets, have had the maximum number of assessments - 9168 and

4820 -- respectively. Assam was third with 4703 assessments.

Evaluation of aspiring athletes has happened in 11 disciplines - Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Volleyball, Weightlifting and Wrestling. Maximum assessments have happened in athletics (13804) and football (13483).

The sports minister will lay emphasis on the project that aims to achieve 20 Lakh assessment in the FY 2024-25 by onboarding all states and treating the district as a unit of assessment.

JKTPO organises E-Commerce Onboarding drive focusing ODOP & DEH in Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 18

The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), in collaboration with District Administration and various E-Commerce platforms, organized an E-Commerce Onboarding Drive today at the Conference Hall, DAC Maitra, Ramban.

The initiative was held under the aegis of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, and focused on the One District One Product (ODOP) and District Export Hubs (DEH) programs. General Manager DIC Ramban, Ravindra Anand, presided over the program. The event saw participation from various officers and traders.

The success of this onboarding drive was ensured through the active participation of



various stakeholders, including sellers, farmers, artisans, SHG members, entrepreneurs, Self-employed youth, FPOs, besides Manager, JKTPO, Aditya Churni, DAO, Ravi Sharma, AGM Horticulture (P&M), Ramban, Raju Zutshi, Representatives from NRLM, ONDC Mysore, Handloom, Handicraft, Horticulture and other concerned depart-

ment. Addressing the participants, the GM DIC said that the primary objective of this drive was to enhance the digital presence and market reach of local artisans, manufacturing units, weavers, farmers, entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and small businesses by facilitating their onboarding onto leading e-commerce

platforms like GeM.

The ODOP and DEH initiatives have shown significant potential in promoting unique and high-quality products from each district, thus boosting local economies and providing artisans, farmers, entrepreneurs, and producers with greater market opportunities.

The drive included comprehensive training sessions on e-commerce operations, digital marketing and logistics management. Participants received assistance in registering and setting up online stores on prominent e-commerce platforms, support in listing products with effective descriptions, images, and pricing, and guidance on strategies to boost online sales through digital marketing, social media and promotional campaigns.

Awareness campaign cum rally organised against drug abuse, illicit trafficking

J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 18

Department of Social Welfare, Reasi organized an awareness campaign and rally against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at Government Higher Secondary School, Aghar Jitto.

The event was graced by Director, Department of Social Welfare Jammu, Dr. Bharat Bhushan, as the chief guest.

Students and faculty of the school participated actively, presenting insightful speeches on drug abuse. Series of activities were held including poetry, singing, and poem recitation to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

The Director emphasized the urgent need to eliminate drugs from society. He urged parents to monitor their children's



behaviour regularly and encouraged the community to report any known drug distribution activities to the district administration and police.

He also stressed to convert this campaign to mission mode so that this message shall reach a larger part of the society. He further said that it is the responsibility of all of us to accept those people who have taken the path of drug addiction and guide and counsel them so that

they can again become part of the mainstream. As part of the event, the Director also honoured newly born girl children under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme.

District Social Welfare Officer Reasi Sachin Sharma concluded the event with vote of thanks and appraised that such similar programmes shall be organized at regular intervals across the district to create awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse.

He also urged the masses especially the youths to act as beacon and render their cooperation to eradicate the menace of drugs and illicit trafficking from the society. He also added that a strong force of 50 Master Volunteers have been made and are leading Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan activities across the district Reasi, providing on-spot counselling to vulnerable and guide them to the nearest counselling and de-addiction facility.

Principal Higher Secondary School Aghar Jitto Dara Singh, SDPO Katra, Surinder Singh Billoria, Assistant Director (Schemes SWD), Dr. Pal-lavi Sharma, Assistant Director, (Administration SWD) Shivani Gotra, Block Medical Officer Katra Dr. Rashpal Bangotra, Drug Inspector Reasi, Teachers and other officers were present.

Secretary Health holds Mega Public Darbar at Bandipora; Interacts with public representatives

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 18

Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, on Thursday held a Mega Public Darbar at Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

Chairperson District Development Council Bandipora, Abdul Gani Bhat, Deputy Commissioner Shakeel ul Rehman, SSP Lakshay Sharma, Vice Chairperson DDC, Kousar Shafeeq, DDC members, ADDC Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt, ADC Umar Shafi Pandit, ACR Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Wani, CPO Mohammad Maqbool, CMO Dr. Rafi Ahmad Salathi, other senior officers of District Administration besides Civil Society Members and representatives of various delegations were present on the occasion.

The DDC members,



ex-BDC members, and representatives of civil society presented various issues to the secretary, including the augmentation of infrastructure and human resources in health, education and other sectors, besides a host of other issues of public importance including enhancement of intake capacity in Gujjar Bakerwal Hostel from 50 to 100, establishment of Women's Degree College & establishment of Mini Secretariat at Sumbal.

On the occasion, Chairperson DDC Ab Gani Bhat also raised the issues of public importance.

Responding to the

issues and grievances put forward, Dr. Abid Rasheed assured that all genuine issues would be prioritised and resolved promptly.

Secretary Health assured meticulous follow-up on all genuine issues and stated that some grievances would be resolved at the district level, while those requiring higher-level administrative intervention would be forwarded to concerned administrative departments appropriately.

Dr. Abid Rasheed emphasized that the LG Administration is committed to listening to the public at the grassroots

level and resolving grievances directly at the public's doorstep.

Later, Secretary Health also visited District Hospital Bandipora to take first-hand appraisal of health-care facilities. He toured various wards and sections, including the drug counter, Emergency ward, X-ray, ECG, and other examination units, and interacted with patients to gather feedback on the services provided. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner, SSP, and ADC.

He said all issues, like resources augmentation and infrastructural issues will be addressed on priority in coordination with district administration.

Earlier, the Secretary inspected stalls set up by different departments in the lawns of Mini Secretariat Bandipora, showcasing government schemes and programmes.

2nd quarterly meeting of UTRC held at Srinagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority, successfully convened the inaugural 2nd quarterly meeting of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) in the office chamber of the Principal District & Session Judge (Chairman DLSA) Srinagar.

The meeting, chaired by Jawad Ahmed, Principal District & Session Judge (Chairman DLSA) Srinagar, witnessed active participation from key stakeholders, including senior officials from the judiciary, police, administration, and medical fraternity. The committee reviewed the cases of 41 under trial prisoners, engaging in thorough discussions and deliberations to ensure fair and expedited trials.

Each case was meticulously examined, and after thoughtful consideration,



the committee formulated suitable recommendations tailored to the specific circumstances of each individual. The meeting aimed to streamline the criminal justice system and uphold the principles of equity and justice.

Chairman of the meeting, emphasized the paramount importance of UTRC gatherings in ensuring fair and expedited trials for under trial prisoners. He underscored the need for regular initiatives such as these to strengthen the criminal justice system

and protect the rights of under trial prisoners.

The meeting was attended by Ashish Mishra, S.S.P Srinagar; Syed Ahmad Kataria, ADC Srinagar; Sheikh Zulfikar Azad, SSP, Central Jail Srinagar; Jahangir Ahmad Bakshi, Secretary DLSA Srinagar; Meena Gowhar, Public Prosecuting Officer, Srinagar; Dr. Sheikh Athar Senior Medical Officer, Central Jail Srinagar; Saad Ganie, Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Zulfi Tasneem, Deputy Legal Aid Counsel.

No Tents will be allowed in Gulmarg without permission: GDA

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

Citing environmental concerns and illegal activities, the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) on Thursday informed that no tents will be allowed in Gulmarg without proper permission.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Gulmarg Development Authority, Waseem Raja.

In a communique said that to protect the eco-fragile zone of Gulmarg and maintain its status as a world-famous tourist destination, the installation of tents will now require prior permission from the GDA.

The directive comes in response to the increasing number of tents being set up without proper authorization, leading to issues such as littering, illegal parking on green slopes, lighting fires on greens, and law and order problems.

Employment & Industries Department conduct awareness programme at Banihal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 18

On the discretion of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, an awareness programme regarding various Self Employment Schemes under Mission Youth J&K and the Schemes of Industries Department, was conducted today at Town Hall, Banihal. The programme was conducted in coordination with District Industries and Commerce Department and Lead Bank Manager Ramban, aiming at generation of mass awareness among the unemployed Youth of Banihal Sub-Division.

DDC Member, Imtiaz Ahmed Khanna and SDM Banihal, Rizwan Asgar were present in the programme as guests of honor.

Assistant Labour Commissioner Ramban, Amit Kumar, having additional charge of Assistant Director Employment Ramban briefed about the schemes of Mission youth like MUMKIN, Tejaswini and Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiatives. He elaborated the eligibility condi-



tions, benefits and procedure of applying, in-depth. Functional Manager DIC Ramban, Sartaj Singh aware the youth about the PMEGP scheme and its benefits.

SDM Banihal addressed the youth and encouraged them to enroll in Government run Self-Employment schemes like PMEGP, Tejaswini, Mumkin, SEI under Mission Youth, etc and to avail the benefits of schemes to become self-reliant. He assured that such awareness camps shall be conducted on regular basis in the subdivision and Block level. Further, he requested the

unemployed youth of subdivision Banihal to maximize the participation in such awareness camps.

SDM in presence of ALC Ramban also disbursed the Employee Compensation Amount of 12.19 lakh in favour of dependents of the registered construction workers applicable from this financial year 2024-25.

On-the-spot renewal and registration of labourer cards was done by the DEOs and CSC operators.

Various complaints were also resolved on the spot regarding the renewal and registration of the labour card.

At the end of the program, Career Counseling Officer Ramban thanked esteemed guests and the participants.

ing the delay of processing of the cases at the bank stage. The LDM assured that the proper SOP shall be followed to prevent unnecessary delay at bank level. At the end he described the benefits/eligibility and procedure to apply under PM Vishwakarma Scheme for local artisans.

The camp was also attended by various labourers/ construction workers, to whom ALC Ramban gave detailed information about welfare schemes being provided by the JKBOCWBB. He briefed the new rates of the education assistance to be provided to the wards of the registered construction workers applicable from this financial year 2024-25.

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Stop Diarrhea campaign gains momentum in J&K, awareness drives conducted across Districts

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 18

The Stop Diarrhea campaign is making significant strides, with numerous awareness drives conducted in various districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

These efforts are part of the ongoing campaign under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), aiming to reduce diarrheal cases, improve public health, and alleviate the financial burden of medical bills on families.

The campaign, spearheaded by the Directorate of Rural Sanitation, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj J&K, under the supervision of Secretary RD&PR, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary has involved special awareness and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) drives.

These initiatives have engaged school-going children, senior citizens, social workers, SHGs, former PRI members, Block Development Officers (BDOs), and field staff, ensuring the wide-spread dissemination of crucial health information.



Interactive sessions were held in schools to educate children about the importance of hand washing, safe drinking water, and proper sanitation practices. BDOs and field staff have been instrumental in mobilizing communities, conducting door-to-door awareness drives, distributing educational materials, and engaging with residents on preventive measures.

Director General Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra remarked, "The Stop Diarrhea Campaign is essential in our mission to protect public health. By involving school children, senior citizens, social workers, SHGs and our dedicated field staff, we are making

sure that the message of hygiene and prevention reaches every household. This collaborative effort is vital in reducing diarrheal cases and improving the overall health of our communities."

The awareness drives have also included sanitation drives and highlighted the importance of timely medical intervention. The public response to the campaign has been overwhelmingly positive, with communities expressing their gratitude for the valuable information and support provided.

As the Stop Diarrhea Campaign continues to expand, the focus remains on sustaining these efforts

to ensure every child and family in Jammu & Kashmir has the knowledge and resources to prevent and manage diarrheal effectively. This initiative not only aims to reduce the incidence of diarrheal but also to improve the overall health of people and save families from the financial strain of medical bills. Pertinently, Stop Diarrhea campaign is to create awareness towards the use and promotion of 'Safe Water and Sanitation' at village/ panchayat level. The 8 weeks of campaign started from 1st July to 31st August 2024 to address root-cause of diarrheal and its associated diseases.