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“Awaam Ki Awaaz”

Lt Governor pays homage to bravehearts of Kargil War

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 21

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha paid tributes and dedicated this month's edition of 'Awaam Ki Awaaz' programme to Kargil War Heroes.

“Kargil Vijay Diwas is the saga of magnificent heroism, indomitable courage and the spirit of supreme sacrifice of our brave soldiers. I pay homage to the martyrs and express my gratitude towards valiant soldiers for keeping the nation safe on the road to progress,” the Lt Governor said.



recalled the valour and supreme sacrifice of Jammu's Maj Ajay Singh Jasrotia, Sub Bahadur Singh and Hav Madan Lal; Kathua's Sep Rajinder Singh; Sopore's LNK Ghulam

Mohammed Khan; Kupwara's Ravinder Singh and Mohammad Khan, and countless other brave hearts of Kargil War.

“Let us bow our heads in gratitude for those valiant jawans and officers of J&K who fought bravely in the inhospitable terrain and conquered the enemy. Their bravery will forever live on in our hearts and inspire us,” the Lt Governor said.

Sharing the inspirational stories of changemakers, the Lt Governor commended Ganderbal's Bilal Bhatt for his selfless service and awareness campaign on vital issues at the grassroots level in empowering citizens. Bilal Bhatt is seen as a beacon of hope and agent of change by the community members, he said.

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Nirmala Sitharman set to make history with 7th consecutive budget

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JUL 21

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman is set to create history when she presents her seventh straight Budget on Tuesday for the fiscal 2024-25, surpassing the record of former prime minister Morarji Desai.

Sitharman, who will turn 65 next month, was in 2019 appointed as India's first full-time woman finance minister when Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a decisive second term. Since then, she has presented six straight budgets, including an interim one in February this year.



The full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024 to March 2025) will be her seventh straight. She will better Desai's record, who presented consecutive five full budgets and one interim budget between 1959 to 1964.

This year will witness two budgets - an interim one in February and a full one this month. This is because an incumbent government cannot present a full Budget just before general elections. The presentation on

July 23 will be the first Budget by the BJP-led NDA government since it was re-elected last month.

Here are some facts related to Budget presentation in Independent India:

FIRST BUDGET: The first-ever Union Budget of independent India was presented on November 26, 1947, by the nation's first finance minister RK Shanmukham Chetty.

MOST NUMBER OF BUDGETS: Former Prime Minister Morarji Desai holds the record for presenting the most budgets. He has presented a total of 10 budgets during

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LG releases Mushtaque Barq's books “Zarf Zargar” & “Exploring Vimal's Rahi”



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 21

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today released “Zarf Zargar” and “Exploring Vimal's Rahi”, the translated books of the original works of promi-

ent poets Ahad Zargar and Rehman Rahi, by Mushtaque B. Barq, at Raj Bhawan.

The Lt Governor congratulated Sh Mushtaque Barq and all those associated with the

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DG BSF reviews operational readiness of troops deployed along IB in Jammu sector

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

BSF Director General Nitin Agrawal on Sunday reviewed the operational readiness of the troops deployed along the International Border in Jammu sector, an official of the force said.

Agrawal arrived here on a two-day visit on Saturday to assess the security situation along the International Border and attended a joint security review meeting along with Special Director General BSF, Western Command, Y B Khurania and Inspector General, BSF, Jammu



frontier, D K Boora.

The joint security review meeting at the police headquarters, chaired by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi and attended by heads of other paramilitary forces

and intelligence agencies, was convened to review the security situation in the wake of recent spike in terror activities and cross-border infiltration. The BSF chief also called

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5 killed, 7 injured in two separate road accidents in J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Five people, including a father-son duo and a mother-daughter duo, were killed and seven injured in two separate road accidents in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and Reasi districts on Sunday, officials said.

A taxi carrying eight people and proceeding towards Lam from Thandikassi fell off a hilly road near Chalan village in Rajouri in the morning, they said.

The driver of the vehicle, Arun Kumar (32),



a resident of Lam, was found dead by the rescuers at the spot, while Mohammad Din (65) and his son Mohammad Aslam (40) succumbed to their injuries at the Nowshera

Sub-District Hospital and Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) in Rajouri respectively.

Aslam's wife Shahida (40), sons Atif (10)

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Over 3.86 lakh perform Amarnath Yatra in 22 days

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Over 3.86 lakh devotees have performed the ongoing Amarnath Yatra so far as another batch of 3,113 pilgrims left Jammu for Kashmir on Sunday.

Officials said that over 3.86 lakh devotees had 'darshan' inside the holy cave shrine during the last 22 days since this year's Yatra started on June 29. Over 11,000 pilgrims had darshan on Saturday.

“Another batch of 3,113 Yatris left Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu in two escorted convoys for the Valley today. The first



escorted convoy left at 2.56 a.m. carrying 1,153 pilgrims in 48 vehicles for the North Kashmir Baltal base camp. The second escorted convoy left at 3.41 a.m. carrying 1,960 pilgrims in 75 vehicles

for the South Kashmir Nunwan (Pahalgam) base camp. Both escorted convoys are expected to reach the Valley before noon today,” officials said. The cave shrine houses an

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‘Matter of joy and pride’: PM Modi applauds India’s record performance in Maths Olympiad 2024

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed happiness over India's exceptional performance in the International Maths Olympiad (IMO), where the country secured its best-ever 4th place finish.

Taking to the micro-blogging site on X on Sunday, the Prime Minister posted, “It's a matter of immense joy and pride that India has come in 4th in its best-ever performance in the International Maths Olympiad.”

“Our contingent has brought home 4 golds and one silver medal. This feat



will inspire several other youngsters and help make mathematics even more popular,” read the post by the Prime Minister.

A six-member student team from India secured its best performance in the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) 2024.

The Indian team came in fourth globally, securing four gold medals, one silver medal, and one honourable mention at the just concluded 65th IMO held in Bath, United Kingdom.

This is the best performance by an Indian in IMO since the country's debut in 1989, both in terms of the number of gold medals won and rank achieved.

India's previous best rank achieved until 2024 was rank 7 at IMO 1998 and IMO 2001.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi also extended greetings to countrymen on the holy festival of Guru Purnima.

Supreme Court to hear today pleas related to NEET-UG 2024

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, NEET-UG 2024, which was held on May 5.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) had on Saturday released city- and centre-wise results of the medical entrance exam, which is riddled with accusations of paper leak and inordinate inflation of marks.

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Spike in terror attacks won't be justification to delay assembly polls in J&K: Omar Abdullah

JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA/JAMMU, JULY 21

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the spike in terrorist attacks in the recent past would be no justification to delay assembly elections, which were held even in 1996 when militancy was at its peak in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Some people are saying the situation has deteriorated and hence, there should be no elections. What happened to



you? Are we so weak or the situation worsened so much that there are no chances of holding elections? We held elections in 1996 and you have to agree that there is a difference of heaven and earth between the situation at that time

and today,” he said. “Those who do not want to hold elections (in J&K) should tell that we are bowing before the gun-toting forces and are accepting defeat, besides ignoring the sacrifices of our forces. You tell our

enemies that we will lay down without fighting,” he said.

“If you want to bow before such forces then don't go for the (assembly) elections. We have no objection because this election is taking place on the orders of the Supreme Court which has set a deadline of September 30.

“You say in the Supreme Court the situation is not conducive for holding assembly polls and we are bowing before the forces who over the past

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Insults to Sanatan Dharma won't be tolerated: Rana

JI NEWS SERVICE
NAGROTA JULY 21

Taking strong exception to unabated bashing of Sanatan Dharma and Sanatanis to appease vote-bank and divide the extended Hindu society, Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today asserted that such insults won't be tolerated.

“If the evils of this era think that they can get away with taunts and insults to the oldest and greatest civilization of the universe they better know that the Hindu Samaj is resilient enough



but it can bounce back in true spirit of Bhagwad Gita that teaches fight till last for Dharma”, Mr Devender Rana said while speaking at a huge congregation held to commemorate Bhagwat Gita Saptah at Pangali in Nagrota.

He said the Sanatan

adding that this civilization has withstood the onslaught during the eras of Mughals and Britons. Repetition of the trend of foreign invaders by the Congress and its ilk from east to west and north to south will make them lick the dust and the day is not too far, he maintained.

Devender Rana said that spreading canards against Sanatan Dharma and dividing Hindus on caste basis is a deep rooted game-plan of decades with Jaichands across the

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Natrang presents stirring performance of "Reed-Rahit" based on Chekhov's "Nincompoop"

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Natrang presented an impressive performance of "Reed-Rahit", a play in Hindi based on Russian writer Anton Chekhov's "Nincompoop" here today at its Studio Theatre in Sunday Theatre Series. The play was directed by Neeraj Kant and in its own style, the play inspires us to stand for our rights.

The play 'Reed Rahit' opens in the house of one landlord who wanted to settle down his account with the instructor of his children, whom has not paid the salary for the last two months. In the play the Landlord tries to teach a lesson of self-respect and



dignity of labour to the competent but gullible instructor. In this context, he created a drama in reality and he started debating on the amount to be paid to him, he tells him that he has to pay just Rs.1, 100/- to him, after ridiculously forged deductions, against the expected and promised amount of Rs.8,000/-.

Very submissive by nature, he just sits there, without saying a word in support of her genuine payment and accepts the money with gratitude. Aggravated by such kind of nincompoop/spineless behaviour of her, landlord bursts into an indignant rage and tells him that he should speak up for his rights and

shall not allow anyone to exploit him, if we remain silent, no one will come to our support, thus we have to speak boldly and fight righteously for our rights. At the end, the landlord pays her Rs.8, 000/-, putting an end to his human experiment. Thus, a lesson was given to all those who are too submissive to stand for their rights and allow others to take benefit of the same.

Natrang actors who acted in the play included Aadesh Dhar, Kushal Bhat and Mihir Gujral. Lights were operated by Neeraj Kant while Priya Kumari presented the show before the audience. The show was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

SMVDU Students shine at Forbes Marshal Outstanding Project Award 2024-2025

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Mechanical Engineering students of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) have won the coveted Forbes Marshal Outstanding Project Award 2024-2025. This competition, which honours innovative in engineering and technology projects, saw outstanding participation from the students of SMVDU. The Forbes Marshal Outstanding Project Award is a prestigious competition that attracts top engineering minds from around the globe. It provides a platform for young innovators to present their projects to industry leaders and gain recognition for their groundbreaking work. This year's competition saw a plethora of innovative projects, making the achievements of SMVDU students even more commendable. A cash prize of 50,000 INR and 25,000 INR was also declared for the winning and the runner up team by Forbes Marshal.

Hriday Vasudeva, a



standout member of the winning team, played a pivotal role in the project titled "Advanced Analytical Study on the Thermal Imprinting of Polymethyl Methacrylate for the Synthesis of Bulk Metallic Glass Moulds Aimed at Micro Lens Array Stamping." In order to create bulk metallic glass moulds, this project pushed the limits of thermal imprinting technology by showcasing cutting-edge material science and engineering techniques. The creative method developed by the team has great potential for use in micro lens array stamping, perhaps leading to improvements in precision engineering and optics. The project was overseen by Prof. Balbir Singh, School of Mechanical Engineering whose knowledge, guidance, and steadfast support were crucial to the

team's accomplishment. Prof. Singh's extensive knowledge and supportive nature encouraged the team to investigate novel areas in their research, which greatly enhanced the quality of the project. The Project was carried out under the co-supervision of Prof. Soham Mujumdar from IIT Bombay.

Apart from the winning team, the SMVDU Runner Up team also left a big impression. Haroon Fayaz, Jasmeet Singh Azrot, Vishal Pandita, and Vishal Samal received recognition for their outstanding project, "Effect of Heat Treatment on 3D Printed PLA (Biomimicking Prismatic Structure of Human Teeth Enamel and Collagen Tissue in Plants)." The study demonstrated excellent strength-to-weight ratios and effective packing materials

with optimised weight-to-strength properties, offering useful insights for applications requiring strong and lightweight materials in 3D printing. The team's success was largely due to the committed mentorship and technical direction provided by Dr. Mir Irfan Ul Haq, Assistant Professor, SME who oversaw the project. The initiative was successful in large part because of Dr. Haq's involvement and expertise in 3D printing and materials. Dr. Yatheshth Anand, Head School of Mechanical Engineering congratulated the students and the faculty guiding the students. Prof. Pragati Kumar (Vice Chancellor, SMVDU) has also conveyed his best wishes to the winning teams and encouraged all students to take up such innovative projects so as to cater to real world problems.

"Chalo Panchayat" Program Showcases Grassroots Engagement and Youth Empowerment in Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 21

The Jammu and Kashmir Youth Congress launched the "Chalo Panchayat" program in Ramban, led by Fairoz Khan, former Youth Congress Working President J&K and former National President NSUI. This event underscored the Youth Congress's commitment to grassroots engagement and community development, drawing significant participation from local youth and key leaders. The program focused on addressing the issues and aspirations of the people at the panchayat level. This initiative also centered on the upcoming state elections, aiming to mobilize and engage the youth to actively participate in the electoral process. By addressing 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.

Yassir Malik, former Youth Congress President, emphasized the need for immediate assembly elections and the transfer of full powers to the public, instead of the Lieutenant Governor acting as a



super Chief Minister. He expressed full support for the "Chalo Panchayat" initiative.

Pawan Kumar, Block President Gandhri, highlighted the importance of addressing unemployment issues and pledged to campaign across every panchayat to ensure the success of the program.

Kuljeet, Block President Rajgarh, praised the initiative, asserting that the people of Ramban will have their voices heard.

Saddam Bali, District Spokesperson, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the youth's demand for statehood. He committed to door-to-door campaigning, advocating for the restoration of statehood.

Dr. Shmoon Arfan, Senior Spokesperson, reflected on the critical issue of unemployment,

stating that they would fight tirelessly to address it and shape the region's future.

Ali Shan, Block President Ramban, stated, "We want to live peacefully and have jobs for the unemployed. Youth Congress will hit the streets if the situation continues."

The program was graced by the esteemed presence of the following dignitaries:- Zeeshan Bali, Ayaz Katoch, Masood Khan, Zubair Katoch, Akhter Dar, Rashid, Man Singh, Ashraf Khan, Reyaz, Waseem, Raza, Nasir, Anzar and other youth leaders

The "Chalo Panchayat" program exemplified the unity and determination of the youth in Ramban, rallying behind Fairoz Khan to drive positive change and development in their region.

BJP holds Tridev Sammelans at Assembly Constituency level

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir held Tridev Sammelans at various places across the region.

Tridev Sammelan in Jammu North District for Jammu North constituency was chiefly addressed by BJP Vice-President Yudhvir Sethi. Former MP (Rajya Sabha) Shamsher Singh Manhas, District President Omi Khajuria, Karan Singh, Praduman Singh and other senior leaders also addressed in the Sammelan.

Tridev Sammelan in Jammu North District for Marh constituency was chiefly addressed by BJP Vice-President Sham Lal Sharma.

Sham Lal Sharma, while addressing the Sammelan, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party has designated the trio of Booth President, woman and the youth activists of the booth as 'Tridev'. He said that the trio will ensure the reach of party policies and public welfare schemes to every home in their booth. He said that these will form the basic team of BJP to work at the ground level and will coordinate with the senior functionaries of the party for the implementation of party policies, programmes and public welfare schemes.

AM BAJAJ Unveils the Biggest Pulsar Ever: New NS 400Z 2024

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

AM Group, a leading name in the automotive industry, has launched the much-anticipated "THE BIGGEST PULSAR EVER - New NS 400Z 2024". The unveiling ceremony was graced by the Honourable Chief Guest Mr. Ashish Kohli (J K Media Senior Journalist), in the presence of ASM Mr. Kamran Sayeed and Mr. Deepak Verma from Bajaj Auto Ltd. The entire team of A M BAJAJ Rehari was also present to celebrate this milestone.

The event was further enhanced by the presence of Chairman AM Group, Mr. Jatinder Gupta, MD AM Group, Mr. Sanjay Mahajan, and Directors Mr. Sanjeev Mahajan, Mr. Ankur Mahajan, Mr. Akshay Mahajan, Mr. Aryan Mahajan, and Mr.



Adhyan Mahajan, adding to the grandeur of the occasion.

The Pulsar NS 400Z is powered by a robust 373 cc engine, inspired by the Dominar 400, producing 40 BHP and 35 NM of torque. Its six-speed transmission ensures efficient power delivery to the rear wheel.

Advanced features include a ride-by-wire throttle for precise control and a switchable traction control system that

adapts to different road conditions. Riders can choose from four distinct ride modes - Sport, Rain, Road, and Off-road - to suit various riding preferences and environments.

The Pulsar NS 400Z also boasts full LED lighting for better visibility, a modern digital instrument cluster with a dedicated turn-by-turn navigation display, and seamless Bluetooth connectivity for added convenience and connectivity

Uppal gives important tips to students, Interaction program organised by IMCSD

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

In its ongoing effort to offer students exposure through a summer internship program, the Institute of Mass Communication and Skill Development (IMCSD) conducted a special interaction session with Tarun Uppal, Chairperson of Nirbhay Bharat Foundation J&K, held at Talab Tillo Jammu. Uppal shared valuable insights with the students, emphasizing the significance of media as the fourth pillar of democracy. He highlighted the pivotal role of the media in fortifying democracy and upholding accountability, particularly of the ruling political parties. Staying current in the field is crucial, staying informed about the latest global events. Maintain curiosity by asking questions like "Why did this occur?" or "How did this transpire?" Embrace the fundamental principles of "5Ws" journalism: "Who, what, where, when, and why."

Uppal provided in-depth information about his NGO



to the students, expressing his vision of advocating for a drug-free India. Currently, through his organization, Nirbhay Bharat Foundation, he is dedicated to empowering the youth of Jammu & Kashmir by creating opportunities for them to excel in sports, education, and cultural activities on both national and international platforms.

Uppal motivated the students by highlighting the vast opportunities available in their chosen field. From newspaper sections to electronic channels, reporting, editing, graphic design, 24-hour news coverage, and entertainment channels, each sector

offers ample prospects. Additionally, cinema, OTT platforms, PR roles, and communication officer positions in both government and private sectors are eagerly anticipating their talents. In attendance at this special gathering were Janvi Sharma, Monica Bangotra, Palak Rajput, Ridhima Sharma, Chandni, Raghavi Sharma, Anandita Gupta, Mansha Sharma, Marish Akhtar, Rudraksh Vaidya, Gayatri Kapoor, Riya Chalotra, Niharika Sharma, Chahat Dabgotra, Shalu Devi, Sneha Sharma, Sneha, Baljeet Kaur, along with senior journalists Naveen Kaul, and Vicky Verma.

Congress protests against surge in terrorist attacks across Jammu Region

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Congress in Jammu North today staged a protest against recent surge in terrorist attacks across the Jammu region.

The protest was organised by Surinder Kumar Vice Chairman JKPC SC Department.

The protesters headed by Uday Bhanu Chib, General Secretary Indian Youth Congress, assembled at High Court Chowk, Janipur, Ward No. 34, in the Jammu North Assembly, voiced their concerns over the increasing terror attacks and criticized the central government for its perceived failure to ensure the safety and security of the region's residents.

Talking to media persons, Uday Chib lambasted the central government, accusing it of implementing hollow policies that have led to the escalation in terrorist activities. "Jammu has witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks due to the ineffective and insubstantial policies of the central government," Chib stated. He further questioned the Bharatiya



Janata Party's (BJP) continued silence on this critical issue, accusing them of neglecting the pressing security concerns of the region.

Uday Chib also criticized the BJP government for what he termed as the weakening of the democratic framework in Jammu and Kashmir by centralizing more power with the Lieutenant Governor. "The BJP government has undermined the democratic setup in Jammu and Kashmir by augmenting the powers of the Lieutenant Governor, which has diluted the role and effectiveness of local governance," Chib asserted.

Raising concerns over the lack of basic amenities

in the region, Chib highlighted the daily struggles of the people. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir are crying out for basic amenities, yet their pleas continue to fall on deaf ears," he said.

Uday Chib reiterated the Congress party's demand for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing that this move is crucial for the region's political and economic stability. "The BJP government must restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that the people have a rightful say in their governance and future," he demanded.

In a stern warning to the BJP, Chib stated, "The BJP should not take the people of Jammu and Kashmir for

Khajuria raises alarm over inflated power bills in Miran Sahib; calls for enquiry

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Pt Ashok Khajuria, the Convener of the BJP Sharnarhi Cell (JK), has raised serious concerns over the rampant issue of overcharging and inflated billing in the smart-metered areas under the Sub-division office of the Power Development Department (PDD) in Miran Sahib. This issue, as reported by numerous affected residents, involves the issuance of excessively high power bills, causing significant distress among the local populace. He highlighted that officials at the PDD Sub-division office in Miran Sahib are reportedly overcharging the public with inflated power bills. When individuals approach the office to complain about these inflated bills, the officials allegedly waive off the charges but harass the complainants by taunting them about their electoral choices, specifically for voting for the BJP.

"This behavior is a blatant violation of the Service Rules and regulations for public servants. Such conduct from officials is unacceptable and goes against the very principles of public service," stated Pt. Ashok Khajuria.

He has called for a thorough investigation into this scandal to uncover any underlying corruption and to hold those responsible accountable. "The harassment and injustice faced by the common public must end. It is imperative to ensure transparency and fairness in the billing process," he added.

Additionally, Pt. Khajuria has demanded a waiver of power bills up to 250 units for Below Poverty Line (BPL) connections and 300 units for refugee families and other lower-middle-class connections. "This measure will provide much-needed relief to the economically weaker sections of society who are already burdened by high living costs," he emphasized.

BJP holds Morcha Sammelans at Assembly Constituency level

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir held Morcha Sammelans at various places across the region.

J&K BJP General Secretary (organization) Ashok Koul, accompanied by Minority Morcha President Ranjodh Singh Nalwa, District President Rekha Mahajan and others addressed the Minority Morcha Sammelan at party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

BJYM Sammelan in Jammu North District for Jammu North constituency was chiefly addressed by former Dy CM Kavinder Gupta. J&K BJYM President Arun Prabhat and others also addressed the Sammelan.

SC Morcha Sammelan for Jammu East Constituency in Jammu District was chiefly addressed by DDC Chairperson Bharat Bhushan Bodhi and SC Morcha President Neelam



Langeh. BJP District President Parmod Kapahi, Jaidev Rajwal, Morcha District President Chaman Lal Bhagat and others addressed the Sammelan.

OBC Morcha Sammelan for Suchetgarh constituency in District Jammu Border was chiefly addressed by former Dy Mayor JMC Baldev Singh Billawaria. BJP Vice-President Choudhary Sham Lal, DDC Prof Gharu Ram Bhagat, District President Sunil Shastri, OBC President Sunil Prajapati, Seh-Prabhari HS Pammi, Krishan Lal Suverwal President Vishkarama Sabha, District president OBC Morcha Ashok Birdi and others also addressed the

Sammelans.

BJP Mahila Morcha Sammelan for Kishtwar constituency in Kishtwar District was chiefly addressed by DDC Vice-Chairperson Sangeeta Bhagat. District president Chuni Lal, senior leader Brij Mohan, Raj Badyal, Mahila Morcha district president Anjali Chauhan and others also addressed the Sammelan.

Ashok Koul, while addressing the Sammelan termed the Morchas as the most important part of the organization. He said that the Morchas are the eyes and ears of our organization, which are aware of all the developments in the society. He said that

the Morcha activists are directly living in their communities and hence have the first hand knowledge of the issues of their communities and hence have the invariable capacity to project their issues within the organization as well as on the other appropriate platforms for the redressal. He also termed the Morchas as the front line warriors who extend the base of the party into the communities and hence aid in the strengthening of the organization.

Kavinder Gupta in his address focused on the Modi government's priority to improve the socio-economic conditions of various communities and said that the 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas' approach of Modi sarkar along with the dedicated work by party's Morchas has been instrumental in the growing popularity of Modi government which resulted into the formation of third successive Modi government at the centre.

Stop Corporatisation of Apple Industry and Put 100% Import Duty

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 21

The two days National Coordination Committee Meeting and Public meeting of Apple Farmers Federation of India successfully concluded at Chawalgam, Kulgam today. The meeting was presided over by Rakesh Singha, the National Co-coordinator and Former MLA from Himachal Pradesh. Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, National Coordinator placed the Report. Members from Jammu Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand attended.

The report adopted demanded immediate as well as policy solutions to prevent corporatisation of Apple Industry and protect Apple farmers by reducing cost of production and ensure remunerative price.

Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami while addressing the public meeting accused the Jammu Kashmir Administration for not preventing spurious pesticides and fer-

tilizers and allowing huge profiteering by hiking the price of such inputs. He also flayed the Union Government for giving Controlled Atmosphere Stores (CAS) on rent to corporate companies including Adani group and demanded to provide storage facility at subsidized rate directly to farmers. Govt.is giving 50% subsidy to Corporate Companies to build CAS to run at commercial rent.

Rakesh Singha accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi for signing agreement with US President Biden to reduce the import duty from 70% to 50% thus facilitating import of Apple. He said Modi Govt. has been pauperising the farmers by increasing cost of production and denying remunerative procurement price and facilitating corporatisation of Apple Industry. In the domestic market the price of Apple ranges between Rs.250 to Rs.500 while the procurement price of farmers is in the range of Rs.30 to Rs.60. Due to Cor-

poratisation of Apple Industry common people are unable to consume Apple. He demanded a price policy to ensure 50% of the retail price as the procurement price for farmers.

P Krishnaprasad, AIKS Finance Secretary and former MLA from Kerala congratulated Apple farmers of Kashmir for building Federation at village level and for their massive participation in the public meeting. He appealed to build vibrant farmers Federation in all villages since farmers can fight and win their rights if they are united based on their burning issues. He said the historical farmers struggle in Delhi borders was a game changer and the consistent struggle of farmers as well as workers on livelihood issues have been major factor in the remarkable set back suffered by the BJP- NDA in the recent Lok Sabha election.

Zahor Ahmad Rather, the President of Jammu Kashmir Apple Farmers Federa-

tion demanded full cover insurance in the Public Sector for Apple farmers. He also demanded to quarantine the Hybrid plants to prevent diseases in the domestic plantation.

The NCC meeting decided to submit Memorandum to the Prime Minister and Union Minister of Agriculture through Members of Parliament and to the respective Chief Ministers and to the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu Kashmir to resolve the immediate and policy demands of Apple farmers.

The meeting also decided to enrol 56500 membership for the year 2024-25 and convene Village level conventions in the month of August- September.

The public meeting was also addressed by Onkar Sha, Sucheta Sharma , Sohan Singh Takur, Bhoo-pal Singh Rawat, Ramesh Bhat, Abdul Rasheed, Md Afzal, Md Yakub, A Rasheed Pandit, Basheer Ahmmed etc. Shubjojet Dey placed vote of thanks.

Tony, DSP Nikhil kick-start tree Plantation Drive at Haripur in Suchetgarh

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SUCHETGARH, JULY 21

In a remarkable initiative aimed at fostering environmental sustainability, Taranjit Singh Tony, General Secretary of the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee and DDC Suchetgarh, today inaugurated a large-scale tree plantation drive organized by the Garuda Welfare Society at Panchayat Haripur, Suchetgarh.



The event saw the active participation of prominent personalities including SDPO R.S. Pura Nikhil Gonga, Garuda Welfare Society President Parveen Kumar, General Secretary Khem Chand, Secretary Inderjit Singh, and Joint Secretary Ashwani Kumar. Their collective presence underscored the significance of the drive and highlighted the community's commitment to environmental conservation.

In his address, Tony

passionately appealed to politicians, students, and the broader community to engage in tree plantation activities in their respective areas. He stressed the urgent need to combat climate change and contribute to the global effort of creating a healthier planet.

"Our motto, 'Green and Clean India,' is a clarion call for all citizens to come together in the service of our motherland. It is not just a campaign but a

pledge to safeguard our environment for future generations. I urge every politician, student, and community member to take up this noble cause and plant trees in their neighborhoods," he said.

DySP Nikhil Gonga also addressed the gathering, highlighting the critical role that such initiatives play in maintaining ecological balance. "Tree plantation is a vital step towards preserving our environment and ensur-

ing a sustainable future. It is heartening to see community leaders and citizens come together for this cause. Let us continue to work collectively to make our surroundings greener and healthier," he remarked. The presence of local leaders such as Sarpanch Fateh Chand of Banota, Sarpanch Sham Lal Bhagat (Ex-Sarpanch of Chakroi), and Sarpanch Gurdoyal Singh of Gharana further bolstered the event's impact, as they pledged their support and participation in future drives. The event concluded with the planting of hundreds of saplings, symbolizing a collective step towards a greener and cleaner India. The Garuda Welfare Society, under the leadership of its President Parveen Kumar, expressed gratitude to all participants and reiterated its commitment to organizing more such events in the future.

Amarnath Yatra: DG Rural Sanitation J&K, Inaugurates Nukkad Natak Show at Baltal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BAL TAL, JULY 21

In a significant move to promote safe sanitation practices during the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, Ms. Anoo Malhotra, Director General Rural Sanitation, Jammu and Kashmir, inaugurated a Nukkad Natak show at the Baltal Base-camp. The event aimed to educate pilgrims and locals about the importance of maintaining hygiene and sanitation throughout the Yatra.

The Nukkad Natak, a popular street play format, was organized to engage the audience in an interactive and impactful manner. Through captivating performances, the artists conveyed crucial messages on the proper use of sanitation facilities, the importance of hand-washing, and responsible waste disposal practices. The initiative is part of the broader Information,



Education, and Communication (IEC) strategy designed to ensure a clean and hygienic environment during the pilgrimage.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Anoo Malhotra emphasized the significance of community involvement in maintaining sanitation standards. "It is imperative that we work collectively to uphold the sanctity of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra by adhering to safe sanitation practices. This

Nukkad Natak is a creative way to engage with the pilgrims and impart essential hygiene messages," she stated.

Following the Nukkad Natak, Ms. Malhotra visited the Waste Management Facilities operated by Urban Enviro Waste Management Ltd. at Domail camp. The site visit aimed to review the functionality of the sanitation facilities and ensure they are equipped to handle the

influx of pilgrims. During her inspection, she interacted with the staff and assessed the operational efficiency of the waste management systems in place. Malhotra expressed satisfaction with the measures implemented by Urban Enviro Waste Management Ltd. "The facilities at Domail camp are crucial in our efforts to manage waste effectively and maintain a clean environment for the pilgrims. It is encouraging to see the commitment and diligence of the team in ensuring the success of these initiatives," she remarked.

The Directorate of Rural Sanitation, in collaboration with various stakeholders, continues to prioritize the well-being of pilgrims through comprehensive sanitation strategies. These efforts are pivotal in achieving the goal of sustainable sanitation and a zero-landfill pilgrimage experience.

Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi & Er G A Khatana felicitate human rights contributors at Srinagar



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Chairperson J&K Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi today attended the National Felicitation Ceremony by Global Human Rights Trust, a reputed human rights organization as the Chief Guest. This event was held at Tagore Hall Srinagar in which Engineer G A Khatana, Member of Parliament also graced by ceremony as the guest of honour. Awardees from whole of India got the honours for their exemplary contribution in different spheres of life. Keynote and welcome address was given by the Chairman of the Trust Dr H R Rehman while as the proceedings were by the Executive of the Trust Paramjeet Singh.

MP Engineer Khatana congratulated the award winners and lauded their contribution. In her presidential address Dr Darakhshan Andrabi thanked GHRT for choosing Kashmir for their investiture ceremony this year. "I have myself witnessed the working of this organization at the national spectrum for some years now and I happy that they are making impressive contribution in protection, facilitation and promotion of human rights throughout the country. Together we all can make a just society where human rights and human dignity stands ensured", said Dr Andrabi. She said that she was pleased to learn that this organization of repute will be enhancing its activities in J&K manifolds in the days to come.

IIM Jammu Awarded First Prize for Excellence in Management Studies at Government Achievements & Schemes Expo 2024, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, under the exemplary leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, was awarded the first prize for Excellence in Management Studies at the prestigious Government Achievements and Schemes Expo 2024. The event, organized by NNS Media Group, is being held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 20th July to 22nd July 2024, and saw participation from various reputed organizations, educational institutes including IIMs ranging from IIM Amritsar and IIM Raipur. IIM Jammu emerged victorious among all the participating IIMs in the expo, clinching the first prize and showcasing its unwavering commitment to excellence in education and national development.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, expressed his happiness at the achievement, stating that the award is a recognition



of the institute's relentless efforts towards achieving educational excellence and aligning with the national development goals. He emphasized that it reflects IIM Jammu's dedication to fostering an environment that nurtures future leaders who are equipped to contribute significantly to the nation's progress. The IIM Jammu team, represented by Dr. Jai Kamal and Dr. Ramba Lavuri, faculty, IIM Jammu, supported by Shri Shashank Mishra and Shri

Arvind Kumar, staff, IIM Jammu garnered significant attention from school children, parents, aspiring college students, and entrepreneurial enthusiasts. The stall highlighted the institute's comprehensive layout and its pivotal role in nurturing future leaders. The wide footfalls and enthusiastic engagement of visitors were a testament to IIM Jammu's dynamic presence and its contributions to the field of management education. The Government

Only Congress can fulfill expectations of people of J&K: Vijay Sharma



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Congress Seva Dal held a meeting with members in Baderwah in Doda district with the aim of expediting the preparations for the upcoming assembly elections. Presiding over the meeting, Jammu Kashmir Congress Seva Dal President Vijay Sharma Babbi said that assembly elections are going to be held in Jammu and Kashmir after 10 years. Congress has a golden opportunity. People's sympathy is with Congress. After the problems faced by the people due to BJP rule, it has become necessary for the Congress party to come to

power. Vijay Sharma said that Congress is getting very good response from the people in Jammu and Kashmir as well as in the entire country. People have come to know that during the 10 years of rule, BJP leaders have only worked to fool them. Congress is the only party which takes people of all religions together. He called upon the party workers to be prepared and reach out to the people to tell them about the policies of the Congress Party and the success of the government. Naresh Gupta, Kuldeep Kumar, OP Bhagat, Kaushal Parihar Riaz and other members were present in the meeting.

DC Shopian directs for effective measures for destruction of Cannabis, Poppy



JNEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JULY 21

Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Faz Lul Haseeb today held a crucial inter-departmental coordination meeting today to review the ongoing efforts for the destruction of Cannabis and Poppy in the district.

During the meeting, Haseeb emphasized on concrete measures to curb the drug abuse and destruction of Poppy crop across the district.

and plan of action was discussed for proper and effective implementation.

The meeting was informed that 450 kanals of land under Cannabis cultivation or plantation has been marked for destruction.

On the occasion, DC directed the officials to deploy adequate and well equipped teams to ensure the thorough destruction of identified Poppy crop. He also directed for inter-departmental coordination to effectively combat the menace.

The meeting was attended by SDM Zainapora, Additional SP, Tehsildars, Excise and Taxation Officer (ETO) and other officers.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Visits Far-Flung Wevan Area of District

JNEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 21

The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman, on Sunday visited the far-flung Wevan- the remotest Village of Tehsil Bandipora to have interactions with the locals and to take spot assessment of the functionality of basic public amenities.

The visit was also aimed to take a firsthand appraisal of the challenges faced by the public and to provide immediate administrative interventions wherever required.

Among the concerns highlighted by the locals were electricity shortages, network connectivity problems, road alignment issues, and other matters of public importance.

The need for a 24/7 operational first-aid health center for the area.

Interacting with the public, the Deputy Commissioner said that residents voiced legitimate concerns and that the administration is committed to addressing them swiftly and effectively. He



said ensuring the well-being and convenience of the general public is the priority of the administration.

The DC gave on-the-spot directions for the redressal of various issues and urged officers of the concerned departments to prioritise grievances based on urgency and impact on the general public.

During his visit, the DC also inspected the under-construction Ath-

watoo-Wevan road. He reviewed the progress of the work and emphasized the importance of timely completion to improve connectivity for the residents of Wevan. Pertinently, with the completion of ongoing road, the village will get first-time ever all weather road connectivity. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Executive Engineer PMGSY Naib Tehsildar and other concerned officers.

Guru Purnima Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Visits Shardha Mata Mandir Kaloosa



JNEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 21

On the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman, today visited the Shardha Mata Mandir Kaloosa Bandipora. This significant Hindu festival, dedicated to honoring spiritual gurus, saw vibrant celebrations attended by numerous local devotees, including

members of the religious community.

The Deputy Commissioner participated in the festivities organized by local community members. In his address, the Deputy Commissioner commended the enthusiastic involvement of the attendees and highlighted the crucial role of spiritual and cultural practices in fostering unity and harmony.

The Deputy Commis-

sioner praised the dedication of the participants in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage, noting that such events play a vital role in maintaining the rich traditions and fostering a sense of togetherness among the community.

The members of the community hailed the gesture of Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, in joining them during the auspicious occasion.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Lt Governor pays...

The Lt Governor appreciated the Keegam Youth Trust, an initiative by 180 youngsters from Shopian, for silently transforming Swachh Abhiyan into a Jan Abhiyan. With a strong grit and determination, these youngsters have managed to garner unprecedented support from the community, he added.

The Lt Governor made a special mention of Sandeep Singh Chib of Ramban who is on a mission to nurture promising boxers and inspiring the youth to chase their dreams and become champion along the way.

He extended his best wishes to Shariq Yasir of Kulgam, one of the youngest shining stars in J&K's sporting arena, for a stellar sporting career.

During this month's programme, the Lt Governor also shared the inspiring journey of Srinagar's first female e-rickshaw driver Kounsar Jan, Anita Devi from Rajouri, Pulwama's Rubina Bano and Kupwara's Shahida Khaliq.

Srinagar's first female e-rickshaw driver Kounsar Jan is rewriting the rules. Her unprecedented feat inspires others in breaking barriers and overcoming obstacles to pursue their dreams, the Lt Governor said.

He lauded the efforts of Anita Devi and her all-women self-help group, who have encouraged the women-related enterprises and steered change in Rajouri.

The Lt Governor highlighted the contribution of Rubina Bano of Pulwama in reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape in the district. He said the foray of Rubina Bano in the dairy sector is generating buzz among entrepreneurs.

Young librarian Shahida Khaliq is leaving a lasting impression on the youth of twin towns of Kupwara and Handwara. Her dedication would empower every citizen, especially the youth to enjoy the real fruits of education, the Lt Governor said.

The efforts of Retired Havildar Raj Kumar from Reasi towards environmental conservation, and the endeavour of Kashmir's Sabzar Ahmed and Syed Nadeem in providing necessary training to women from rural areas for entrepreneurship and empowering them as equal stakeholders in the UT's economy received a special mention from the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor highlighted the valuable suggestions received from Jammu's Ishtiaq Ahmed and Kulgam's Idrees Ahmed; Shabnam Singh from Kathua; Rayees Ahmad Bhat from Anantnag and Kathua's Radhika Mahajan pertaining to the segregation in waste collection and management, bringing behavioral change towards waste management, formulating anti-drug committee in the villages and urban wards and linking digital activism and women's empowerment.

He also assured necessary intervention on the suggestions received from Colonel B. D. Sharma from Jammu and Inspector Sohan Singh from Udhampur, on various strategies to promote literature on war heroes.

Nirmala Sitharman...

his tenure as finance minister under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and later under Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

He presented his first budget on February 28, 1959, and presented full budgets in the following two years before presenting an interim one in 1962. This was followed by two full budgets. After four years, he presented another interim budget in 1967, followed by three full budgets in 1967, 1968, and 1969, presenting a total of 10 budgets.

SECOND HIGHEST NUMBER OF BUDGET: Former finance minister P Chidambaram presented the budget on nine occasions. He first presented the Budget on March 19, 1996, during the United Front government led by Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda. He presented another budget under the same government next year and returned to the hot seat when the Congress-led UPA came to power in 2004.

He presented five budgets between 2004 and 2008. After a stint as Union Home Minister, he was back in the finance ministry and presented budgets in 2013 and 2014.

THIRD HIGHEST NUMBER OF BUDGETS: Pranab Mukherjee presented eight budgets during his tenure

as finance minister. He presented budgets in 1982, 1983 and 1984 and five straight ones between February 2009 and March 2012 in the Congress-led UPA government.

MANMOHAN SINGH: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented five straight budgets between 1991 and 1995 when he was finance minister in the P V Narasimha Rao government.

LONGEST BUDGET SPEECH: Sitharaman holds the record for the longest budget speech when her presentation on February 1, 2020, lasted two hours and 40 minutes. At the time, she cut short her speech with two pages still remaining.

SHORTEST BUDGET SPEECH: Hirubhai Mulljibhai Patel's interim Budget speech in 1977 is so far the shortest at just 800 words.

TIMING: The Budget was traditionally presented on the last day of February at 5 pm. The timing followed a colonial era practice when the announcements could be made in London and India at the same time. India is 4 hours and 30 minutes ahead of the British Summer Time, and so presenting the budget at 5 pm in India ensured that it was happening in the daytime in the United Kingdom.

The timing was changed in 1999 when the then finance minister Yashwant Singh in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government presented the budget at 11 am.

DATE: The Budget presentation date was in 2017 changed to the 1st of February to allow the government to complete the Parliamentary approval process by March-end and allow implementation of the Budget from the start of the fiscal on April 1.

Presenting the Budget on February 29 meant that the implementation could not start before May/June after accounting for 2-3 months of the parliamentary approval process. (Agencies)

LG releases Mushtaque...

publications. He lauded the efforts to carry forward the rich legacy of the great poets like Ahad Zargar and Rehman Rahi through translation of their illustrious literary works.

The book "Zarf Zargar" released today by the Lt Governor is the anthology of selected Sufi poems by prominent poet of Kashmir Ahad Zargar, translated into English by Mushtaque B. Barq.

"Exploring Vimal's Rahi" represents the English translation of Jnanpith Award Recipient Rehman Rahi's poems, initially translated into Urdu by Dr Satish Vimal.

Sh Mushtaque B. Barq; Dr Satish Vimal; Sh Khurshid Ahad Zargar, son of the poet Ahad Zargar, and Sh Sheikh Mohammad Waseem, publisher of the anthologies were present on the occasion.

DG BSF reviews...

on Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who held a separate meeting with senior officers on counter-terrorism operations.

On Sunday, a BSF spokesman said the DG reviewed the operational readiness of the troops deployed at the Jammu border area and discussed operational aspects with unit commandants.

Earlier, Khurania, Boora and other senior officers interacted with DG BSF immediately after his arrival in Jammu on the prevailing security scenario.

The BSF Jammu IG briefed the DG about the crucial aspects of border security and the BSF's strategies for maintaining domination along the Jammu border, the spokesman said.

The BSF DG, during his visit, also interacted with troops and commended their dedication and professionalism.

5 killed, 7 injured...

and Raza (5), daughter Asiya (7) and sister Zareena (36) are undergoing treatment at the GMCH and their condition is "serious", the officials said.

In another accident, a Mahindra Bolero car with four members of a family rolled 200 feet down into a gorge

at Bidda village in Reasi district at around 3:30 pm, resulting in the death of Guddi Devi and her daughter Shobha on the spot.

Devi's son Mukesh Singh and his minor daughter were rescued and shifted to a hospital in a critical condition, the officials said. (Agencies)

Over 3.86 lakh perform...

ice stalagmite structure that wanes and waxes with the phases of the moon. Devotees believe that this ice stalagmite structure symbolises the mythical powers of Lord Shiva.

The cave is situated at an altitude of 3,888 metres above sea level in the Kashmir Himalayas. Devotees approach the cave shrine either from the traditional South Kashmir Pahalgam route or the North Kashmir Baltal route.

The Pahalgam-Cave shrine axis is 48 km long and takes Yatris 4-5 days to reach the shrine. The Baltal-Cave shrine axis is 14 km long and takes one day for the pilgrims to have 'darshan' and return to the base camp.

This year's Yatra will conclude after 52 days on August 29 coinciding with Shraavan Purnima and Raksha Bandhan festivals. (Agencies)

Supreme Court to...

According to the cause list of July 22 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra would hear more than 40 pleas, including those filed by the NTA seeking transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts on the NEET-UG row to the Supreme Court to avoid multiplicity of litigations.

An analysis of data released by NTA indicated that the candidates who allegedly benefitted from the paper leak and other irregularities did not do well. Some centres, however, showed high concentration of well-performing students, it revealed.

The voluminous data of over 32 lakh candidates from 4,750 centres was not released in a cumulative format but in a drop-down menu for each centre. The data was released on the direction of the Supreme Court which is hearing several petitions over the alleged irregularities as lakhs of aspirants await a final verdict on the fate of the exam.

The performance of the candidates from the centres under the scanner – such as Oasis School, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, Hardayal Public School, Jhajjar, Haryana, Jay Jalaram International School in Godhra, Gujarat – were comparatively much below par.

On July 11, the top court had adjourned till July 18 the hearing on the pleas, including those seeking cancellation of the exam, re-test and probe into alleged malpractices in the conduct of NEET-UG 2024, as the responses of the Centre and the NTA were yet to be received by some parties.

The bench had observed that it had received a status report from the Central Bureau of Investigation on the progress made in the probe.

In an additional affidavit filed in the apex court last week, the Centre said data analysis of the results of NEET-UG 2024 was conducted by IIT-Madras, which found there was no indication of "mass malpractice" or any localised set of candidates scoring abnormally high marks.

While hearing the pleas on July 8, the top court had observed that the sanctity of the NEET-UG 2024 has been "breached".

Saying that a re-test may be ordered if the entire process was affected, the bench had sought details from the NTA and the CBI, including the timing and manner of the alleged paper leak, besides the number of wrongdoers to understand the extent of irregularities claimed by the petitioners.

More than 23.33 lakh students had taken the test on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including in 14 cities overseas.

The Centre and the NTA, in their earlier affidavits filed in the apex court, had said that scrapping the exam would be "counterproductive" and "seriously

jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of any proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in Government and private institutions across the country. (Agencies)

Spike in terror...

(three) years martyred our 55 bravehearts. If you want to ignore and waste their sacrifices, we will bear the decision silently as there is nothing else we can do," Abdullah told reporters on the sidelines of a public rally at Gurha Slathia in the Samba district.

He said there are such forces across the neighbouring country which do not want friendly ties between the two countries.

"We know they won't desist from their activities but somehow we were also found off-guard," he said, criticising Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for delaying the joint high-level meeting held in Jammu on Saturday to chalk out a strategy to tackle growing terror incidents.

Omar said the meeting should have been called a long time after the first terror incident. "Why he waited for so long? It was only after we started raising the concern, the meeting was convened," he said.

Earlier, addressing a gathering, Omar said, "We have to face these forces bravely but this is not expected under their rule."

"When they took over from us in January 2015, the situation was altogether different as we had cleared all areas of Jammu region of the scourge of terrorism. Despite their claims post (August) 2019 (when J&K's special status was revoked and the erstwhile state was bifurcated into two Union Territories), there is no place which is not facing the looming threat of terror attacks," he said.

"Not only they failed to ensure the development of J&K, but our security has also been compromised, which is evident from the attacks, resulting in loss of precious lives of our brave personnel. They are least bothered about all these," he said.

Omar said from Kathua to Reasi and Rajouri to Doda, there hardly passes any day when there is no news of a terror attack on the forces.

Insults to Sanatan...

country taking centre stage in furthering the radical and left-liberals global agenda. This nefarious and sinister conspiracy to weaken India is destined to explode very soon, he said, adding that the political dwarfs promoting anti-Sanatan narratives will certainly face the Waterloo. Sanatan Dharma has been, is and will remain till eternity to guide humanity and strengthen the peace and harmony in the true spirit of Vasudeva Kutumbakam.

"Karma will return to take the toll of the Sanatan abusers", Mr Rana said and urged the devout not to lose patience but to work towards betterment of the society, irrespective of religion, region, caste or continent. He cautioned those targeting Sanatan and said the more they indulge in Hindu bashing, the more Dharma will flourish with its pristine glory. He said the history is replete with instances of how the persecutors of Hinduism perished.

Several other speakers in their discourse dwelt upon the rich ethos of Sanatan Dharma, emphasizing this stands for universal brotherhood, peace and amity.

Later, Mr. Rana also attended Guru Purnima celebrations at Jagdebay Temple (Jagti) and ancient Ram Temple Purani Mandi, Jammu.

Prominent among others who were present on these occasions included Maha Mandleshwar Mahant Rameshwar Dass ji Maharaj, Dr Satya Narayanji, Jeevan Shastri Ji, Som Nath Khajuria, Harsh Sharma, KD Singh, Sumit Singh, Raju Sharma, Kaushal Sharma.

Youth Congress to Highlight Youth-Centric & People-centric Goals of Congress party: Sawhney

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Assembly Youth Congress Jammu East held a meeting today at Congress office Jammu to discuss upcoming elections, visit of Sh. Krishna Allavaru, AICC Secretary Incharge Indian Youth Congress to J&K and other important issues. The meeting was chaired by IYC Coordinator Paramjeet Singh Pammi and State General Secretary PYC Anirudh Sawhney. Youth leaders from various parts of Jammu East Constituency were present.

In the Meeting along with Paramjeet Singh and Anirudh Sawhney, State Vice President Adv. Ranjot Singh, State General Secretary Rahul Tandon, SuperShee incharge Sameena Kosar, District President Vankul Jamba, Suhaib Manhas, Anmol Kohli, Mehul Abrol, Sajid Khan, Yawar Malik, Mohd. Anzar, Jibran Khan, Haris Sheikh, Abhisht Gupta, Amit Kumar, Goutam Kumar and others were present.

Addressing the meeting, Paramjeet Singh Pammi guided the members on the upcoming preparations and strate-



gic planning, urging the youth Congress leaders to work diligently on the grass roots level for the ensuing elections. He stressed that involvement of youth faction is extremely important in the coming elections to bolster party support and amplify party's ideology and policies to the common people. He further advised the members on Ward Chalo and Panchayat Chalo programmes which will be held during this phase as outreach programmes. Youth Congress activities during this period should be aimed at maximizing awareness and mobilise support. He further highlighted local issues troubling the people in the Jammu city ranging from electricity to other major infra-structural issues, PHE

issues among others. The sewage system in the old Jammu city is completely distraught and people have observed complete negligence from the administration and lack of efforts in this direction. Also speaking during the meeting, Anirudh Sawhney State General Secretary PYC further elaborated on youth programmes which are going to be conducted in coming months in lieu of elections. "We need to reach out to people in all wards so that people, especially youth, are made aware of Congress party's people centric and youth centric goals for the region as well as highlight the failures of BJP govt. in protecting the youth from unprecedented unemployment and corruption in recruitment and educa-

tion", he said. He also discussed responsibilities of various office bearers for the electoral strategy and said that inputs from representatives of wards will be considered in chalking out strategy as we move forward. He added that there are many local issues Congress party wants to direct its energy and attention towards as Pammi Ji mentioned. Securing victory in elections is the first step in moving towards Congress party's goals. He said that people are weary of many problems in their everyday lives. Some prominent issues include that of Smart meters which are causing a lot of inconvenience, electricity, water issues and other where are focus is most needed in amplifying people's voices, he said.

On Guru Purnima, Kaith and others pay obeisance to Guru Gyagi

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Today on Guru Purnima, Sri Guru Gyagi Foundation' Special Secretary R.L.Kaith and many others paid obeisance to Sri Guru Gyagi Ji at various places.

Kaith said, Guru Purnima is a sacred and significant day dedicated to honoring and expressing gratitude towards Guru who leads others from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, and from confusion to clarity. Guru, in many traditions and also in ways of life, is often seen as a source of wisdom, guidance and inspiration, and helps people on the path to spiritual growth and enlightenment, helping them overcome the obstacles in the path which may come in the form of ignorance, ego and the likes, he added.

The Woodstock launches its first One-Stop-Shop for Modular kitchen in Jammu



JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

The Woodstock modular kitchen company has launched its first studio at Keelkattalai in Chennai.

Situated at First Floor of J&K Building, Marble Market, Extension Trikuta, Jammu, the studio was inaugurated by Inder Parkesh Abrol, father of owner Akshay Abrol and Ankur Abrol. The one stop shop offering a range of modular kitchens, wardrobes and display units including multi-brand products of

branks like 3M Water Filtration, REHAU, Labacha, Asiatique Salice, Dextarte, Hettich, Titus+, Windows, Greenlam, Luropa, AIS, IndauX, Treelam, Higold, Blum and other. The studio is developed under the company's 'One-Stop-Shop' format.

Speaking on the occasion after inauguration of the showroom, Inder Parkesh Abrol said that considering the latest trends and growth potential for the modular kitchen market in Jammu. He said have launched our first studio and custom-

ized product range in the city. The modular kitchen segment is on the rise in India and foresees immense growth potential across the country in the coming years. And, some of the key factors responsible for its growth are an upsurge in real estate development and sales, urbanization and formation of new tier II cosmopolitan demand, nuclear family living, changes in consumer behaviour and acceptance to pay a premium for better products and services.

SGWF Conducts Mega Plantation Drive at Badyal Kajian under "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

The Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation (SGWF) recently organized a mega plantation drive at Badyal Kajian, R.S. Pura as part of their "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative. The campaign, aimed at honoring mothers and promoting environmental conservation, saw active participation from key members of the foundation and the local community.

Dr. Sonia Verma, Director/CEO of SGWF, Mrs. Reeta Verma, National President, and Mr. Sandeep Sharma, Treasurer of the NGO, led the event, demonstrating their commitment to ecological preservation and community welfare. The drive witnessed the enthusiastic involvement of numerous locals who came together to plant trees, symbolizing growth, care, and sustainability.

Over 300 saplings of diverse native species were planted during the drive, contributing to the biodiversity and ecological balance of the region. The event saw the active



participation of local residents, school children, and volunteers who were educated about the importance of trees and how to care for them. An interactive sessions was conducted, highlighting the crucial role of trees in combating climate change, reducing air pollution, and maintaining soil health.

Dr. Sonia Verma expressed her gratitude towards the participants, stating, "This initiative is a tribute to mothers, who are the epitome of nurturing and selflessness. By planting trees, we are not only honoring them but also contributing to a greener and healthier environment for future

generations. The overwhelming response from the community is truly heartening."

Mrs. Reeta Verma highlighted the importance of such drives in raising environmental awareness. She said, "Each tree planted today represents our collective effort to combat climate change and protect our planet. We are grateful for the support of the local community and encourage everyone to continue such efforts in their own capacities. The knowledge shared today will empower individuals to take proactive steps towards environmental conservation."

Mr. Sandeep Sharma

emphasized the role of the community in the success of the initiative. "The participation of locals is crucial in making a significant impact. We are delighted to see the community come together for this noble cause and hope to see more such collaborations in the future. The trees planted today will stand as a testament to our collective commitment to safeguarding the environment."

Dr Verma informed that SGWF plans to extend the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative to other regions, with an aim to plant over 30,000 trees in the coming year. The foundation also intends to organize regular follow-up sessions to ensure the healthy growth of the planted saplings and to involve more communities in similar green initiatives. Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation is dedicated to social welfare, environmental conservation, and community development. Through various initiatives, SGWF aims to create a positive impact and improve the quality of life for individuals and communities.

Kesri demands immediate widening of Kalyana Bridge to stop frequent accidents

JNEWS SERVICE
ARNIA, JULY 21

Shiv Sena Hindustan (SSH) J&K President Pt Rajesh Kesri today led a strong protest at village Kalyana in RS Pura Block demanding immediate widening of Bridge of Kalyana village which has been delayed despite availability of funds and despite bridge being very narrow, frequent accidents take place in the area. Addressing media persons, Kesri said that despite its strategic value, the bridge is also marked by potholes and is without proper light-

ing which makes it difficult to pass through the area during night. He further said that the Roads and Building Department has failed to keep the bridge in good condition. "It is very unfortunate that no step has been taken to carry out the necessary repairs on the bridge. The administration should give due consideration to the road infrastructure in rural areas," the Shiv Sena leader said adding that the Bridge is also used by security forces to reach border areas. A bus passes from here with great difficulty. Every year,

buses and small vehicles fall here, said Kesri. Kesri further said that hundreds of villagers including school going children go to the city from here which makes this bridge even vital. But whosoever leaves village Kalyana, feels uncomfortable and frightened while crossing this bridge as the bridge is very narrow and also potential cause of accidents in the area. Kesri further said that just 4 months ago, a bus fell from here and 40 people were injured here, out of which 10 people were badly injured and they

have not received any compensation from the government till now. He demanded from the government to give compensation to the people whose who were victims of bus accident and even some of them are still under treatment in hospital. Prominent among those present on the occasion include Balveer Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Balwant Fauji, Prince Jagjivan Kumar, Basant Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Lalchand, Sanjeev Kumar, Darshana Devi, Rajni Devi, Neeru Devi, Usha Devi, Vaishno Devi.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION NAGROTA
Email:- nagrotadivision@gmail.com

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Short e-NIT No. 10 of 2024-2025/Nagrota Dated 18-07-2024

For and on behalf of the **Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** 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	Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time Allowed for complete-on	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Rendering of Service for Soil Investigation, Architectural Drawing, Structural Drawing, Duly Vetted through DIQ/IT/WIT/GCET, incl. Providing and Detail Estimate for Technical Sanction and BOQ for Tendering of Various Works in PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota..	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	3.11	600	2% of Advertised Cost	Upto March 2024-25	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
2	Extension / Repair of Deck Hut at Hole No 16 at Jammu Tawi Golf Course Sidhra.	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	14.61	600	2% of Advertised Cost	Upto March 2024-25	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
3	Laying of Approach Slab at 12.00 M Span Vented Causeway and Extension of approaches on Both Side at Malori Kupper Road Bajalta Jammu.	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	4.99	600	2% of Advertised Cost	01 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
4	Improvement/Upgradation of road from PMGSY road to Kabir Bandhana Ashram Nagrota (under Non-Plan 2024-25). (2nd call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	3.19	600	2% of Advertised Cost	01 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
5	Maintenance & Repairs of the Office of the Additional Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Jammu. (Under MH 2425 Co-operative Society)- (5th call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	0.48	600	2% of Advertised Cost	01 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
6	Stage Contract for day to day Maintt./General upkeeping during the financial year 2024-25 upto March 2025 on Inspection Hut Bajalta, Divisional store Nagrota, inspection Hut Bamyal (Under Non-Plan 2024-25)- (3rd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	2.47	600	2% of Advertised Cost	Upto March 2024-25	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class
7	Stage contract for day to day maintt / general up-keeping during the Financial Year 2024-25 upto march 2025 on Upper Talab to Kanger SC Basti, Raipur Internal Links and allied links (under Non-Plan). (2nd call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	4.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	Upto March 2024-25	(1300 Hrs) on or after 27-07-2024	A, B, C & D Class

Position of AAA : Accorded.
The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, 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	18-07-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 19-07-2024 to 26-07-2024 upto 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	XXXXXXXX at XXXX Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota
4	Bid submission Start Date	19-07-2024
5	Bid Submission End Date	26-07-2024 upto 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	27-07-2024 on or after 1300 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **e-challan through Treasury**
No :- EE/ND/2024/2327-36
Dated :- 18-07-2024

Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division
Nagrota

DIP/J-3119/24
Date: 20-7-24

EDITORIAL

Varsities are independent, autonomous institutions!

Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti-led Peoples Democratic Party has done it again to incite passion in the name of religion. This time, they chose to foment trouble in the region by raking up the issue of the appointment of Vice Chancellor for Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) Rajouri where the government has asked the aspirants to submit a copy of the online application form to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU)—a move that has brought sharp criticism from the PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, activists and scholars in other universities. The notification reveals that the process for appointment of Vice-Chancellor BGSBU has to be routed through SMVDU which has been objected to by the PDP and other scholarly people in Kashmir Valley. ‘The appointment process of the Vice Chancellor for Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, under a distinct act, raises questions as their VC nomination papers are submitted to Mata Vishnodevi University. This is a concerning instance of undermining the autonomy of the institution,’ the PDP said in a social media post. Following the PDP criticism, scholars add, ‘‘This is shocking and unacceptable when the leaders of Pir Panjal will wake up. They are trying to snatch the only Higher Education Institute we have. How can SMVDU appoint a VC for BGSBU? Very soon BGSBU will be treated as an offsite Campus of SMVDU’’. A careful study of the notification showed that the process for the appointment of VC BGSBU would be operated from SMVDU. The notification inviting applications for the post of VC BGSBU has been issued by the Registrar SMVDU. The aspiring candidates have been asked to submit the hard copy of the online application form along with supportive documents to the Registrar SMVDU (on behalf of the Search Committee) Kakryal, Katra. The search committee constituted by the Chancellor of the University is seeking applications for the position of Vice Chancellor, BGSBU with an intent to widen the search process’’. It further states, ‘‘The VC being the academic as well as administrative head is expected to possess the highest level of competence, integrity, morals and institutional commitment and be a visionary with proven leadership qualities and reputed academician with proven administrative acumen and ability’’. The government has also started the process for the appointment of vice-chancellors in two cluster universities—Cluster University of Jammu and Cluster University of Srinagar. The application for the post of Vice Chancellor should reach on or before January 15, 2024’’. The appointment of VC CUJ would be made from a panel of names recommended by the Search Committee constituted under the provisions of the Srinagar and Jammu Cluster Universities Act 2016. The incumbent Vice Chancellor of CUJ, Professor Bechan Lal was appointed to the post on January 25, 2021, for a three-year term while Professor (Dr) Qayyum Husain was appointed V-C Cluster University Srinagar on April 1, 2021, for a three-year term. The political parties and activists need to remember that institutes of higher learning hold full-fledged autonomy and they need to function independently. Any move to play politics would only affect the normal functioning of these institutions which, in turn, further lead to degradation of education quality.

The critical role of family planning in women's health

SUDHA SHARMA

World Population Awareness Fortnight, starting from July 11th, brings attention to the fact that India is the most populous country in the world, having surpassed China last year. According to UN projections, India's population is expected to peak at 1.7 billion in 2064, beyond which it will decline. Out of 4 births each second across the world, one birth occurs in India. It is important to understand what can be done to balance the resources with the requirements of the population in the country. With only 2.4% of the world's land, India supports 17.76% of the world's population.

Nowhere is a discussion on contraception and mother and child health services more relevant and meaningful than here. Demographers use a parameter called Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which is the number of children a woman has in her lifetime. The TFR, which should be 2.1 for the population to remain steady, has already dipped below 2 in 2022. But keeping it within that range will require constant efforts to increase the awareness of the youth and adolescents towards these matters. Moreover, family planning offers many more benefits beyond the prevention of pregnancies. Uttar Pradesh ranks first among the states in India with a population of 257 million and a TFR of 2.18 (2015-16). It is relevant to mention here that our country was the first to launch an official family planning

program way back in 1952. In the decades that have followed, the options have increased and so have the availability and accessibility.

With the basket of contraceptive choices available at all government hospitals free of cost, social marketing of contraceptives, and home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs in rural areas, accessibility to these methods has improved. This has translated to an increase in the Couple Protection Rate by 13%, which is 67% at present, and a decrease in unmet need for family planning of 3.5%, which now stands at 9.4%. The country has made substantial progress in the delivery of family planning services across the country. The reach of family planning services has extended from target couples to eligible couples to all women and adolescent girls and should extend to all men of reproductive age.

Their share in decision-making and supporting women in using these methods makes it imperative for them to have this information as well. They can make an important contribution. If the present discussion gives a message that each couple should be forced to use a contraceptive to limit family size to stabilize the population, that is not true.

Family planning methods should help to fulfil the unmet needs of 9.5% of couples and help many others plan pregnancy at a proper time. According to the Guttmacher Institute, India Country Profile, 2022, between 2015 and 2019, there were a total of 485 lakh pregnancies annu-

ally in India, of which 44% were unintended. Of these, 2/3rd of these unplanned pregnancies ended in abortion. It is these couples who are in dire need of contraception.

These abortions could have been avoided had they received counselling and proper contraceptive measures at the right time. Contraception is not just a method of preventing unwanted pregnancies. It is a means to provide freedom to couples to exercise their reproductive rights. The freedom to choose when to plan a pregnancy. It essentially allows responsible voluntary decision-making based on correct knowledge, the right attitude, and access to quality services, which together promote the welfare of the family unit and contribute to the social development of the country. Contraception prevents unwanted pregnancies and many more unwanted situations that follow.

For married couples, it allows them to time their pregnancies and help determine the number of children in the family. It also helps in timing the births, particularly the first and last, about the age of the mother, which is particularly important because teenage pregnancies and pregnancies at a maternal age of 35 years or more carry their risks. Each of these aspects is very important for the welfare of all family members. So, family planning has to emerge from whispers in private quarters to a basic human right and an important aspect of family health and social welfare. Contraceptives are primary

prevention for pregnancy and primordial prevention for high-risk pregnancies.

These high-risk pregnancies, if not detected in time and managed properly, can lead to serious complications and even deaths. At the individual level, the morbidity and mortality of the mother and newborn associated with an unplanned pregnancy can be avoided. If all couples had access to family planning services, it would help reduce maternal deaths by 25% and infant deaths by 20%.

Apart from deaths, the diseases associated with HRPs (20-30%) are also prevented. High-risk pregnancies are those pregnancies where the mother/baby has an increased risk of adverse outcomes. This could be due to anaemia, high BP, or high sugar levels during pregnancy. Pregnant women with obesity, twin or breech pregnancy, history of preterm labour, or cesarean section are also HRPs. This is particularly true for teenage and elderly pregnancies because they have a higher share of morbidity. Moreover, pregnancies beyond the age of 35 have a high risk of congenital anomalies. So, preventing these births improves the quality of the population and reduces the burden on parents in particular and society in general. It also reduces early and late fetal deaths.

Women's health also benefited from the improvement of nutritional status and the reduction of complications by addressing modifiable risk factors before the next conception, like weight

reduction, management of medical illnesses, and allowing a reasonable gap of at least 3 years between two deliveries. Proper use of contraceptive methods would also reduce the need for abortions and thus decrease abortion-related complications like septic abortions and even death.

This issue is most sensitive for unmarried girls who are forced to seek abortion services at unrecognized centres and are unable to seek normal pregnancy care. This also calls for greater awareness about emergency contraceptive pills. Good health of the infant and siblings, proper care, nutrition, and reduced vulnerability to diseases are all seen in families with a limited number of children. Hence, contraceptives play an important role in the overall well-being of the family. Thus, the importance of contraception for the health of women and children is clear and government facilities, NGOs, and private providers are all working to offer and improve family planning services.

The availability of better client-friendly methods, from daily pills to once-a-week pills, lactational pills, self-administered three-monthly injections, devices working for 10 years, along good follow-up facilities, have made modern women's lives easier. What remains is to connect the dots so that maximum benefits can be reaped from the services. What also needs to be worked upon is the change in attitude of not only the clients but also the caregivers. The clients need

to work upon the hesitation in accessing these services and the caregivers need to refrain from underscoring the importance of family planning services. Let us all reflect on our roles as stakeholders in this solvable problem which is so important for our health and progress. In conclusion, the discourse on contraception and maternal health underscores the critical need to prioritize reproductive rights and access to family planning services.

As we bridge the gap between rights and reality, it is imperative to foster an environment where informed choices and comprehensive education empower individuals and couples. Collaborative efforts among government bodies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and the community are essential to ensure that family planning services are accessible, acceptable, and utilized effectively.

By doing so, we not only enhance maternal and child health but also reduce the risk to women arising from unplanned pregnancies, high-risk pregnancies, and abortion-related complications which are entirely preventable. So, let us all contribute to the broader socio-economic development of our nation. The journey towards a healthier, more informed society begins with each of us advocating for and embracing the significance of contraception in our collective well-being.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine in MLB Medical College Jhansi UP. Views are personal)

Transcending Daily Trifles

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Ravindra Nath Tagore prays for strength to raise his mind high above daily trifles. Why does such an exalted personality do so? Because daily trifles do capture our minds. Aren't we, souls, small, ignorant, helpless and unsafe in absolute terms? The word trifle is defined as something of little value. Trifles are matters that are not very important and those that do not merit a lot of consideration. Still, we are defeated repeatedly by them. Why? Because, as stated earlier, we are small, very small in the overall context, whatever we may feel we are. Sure enough, daily trifles bring us down. We go in cyclic

thinking. Our minds drag us to small matters.

What is the solution? The first step is to accept that this happens and is very common. What we consider important may appear insignificant to others, but they are very important to us. Then, as our role model did we must pray for help. It makes a lot of sense for us as small entities. And help is available. We are not helpless in absolute terms; God is there to help. But we have to take His shelter; God will not force Himself on us. Why? Because that will be a violation of our free will. Then, we must avoid cyclic thinking. Can thinking of the same thing repeatedly provide solutions? Solutions come from other sources, mostly

from God, if we step outside ourselves. We must not lose to our minds, which unfortunately, are our worst enemies, as warned by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Geeta, ‘‘One should uplift self by self; shouldn't degrade self, because otherwise self will be enemy of self.’’ (6.5) Control over the mind requires practice and detachment. (6.35) These are general instructions.

Let me take up some of the most common daily trifles. Someone is not well in the family. Surely, one would be disturbed. But one must go beyond it. There will be duties like getting medical help. What more can be done? Many of us do pray, but the prayer should be more for guid-

ance than just cure. Why? Because major sicknesses are the results of our impious/sinful past acts. God will not act interfere in it, but God can guide us to deal with it effectively. God does also help if one is a devotee of God. Are we? There is nothing to despair, guidance is a great help. The next matter which keeps the mind occupied is financial trouble. Mostly, it is a paucity of funds, which hurts. The ‘Karamphala Principle’ is very clear. We get parents, birthplace, minds, looks, intelligence, wealth and lifespan according to what we deserve based on our ‘Karmas’ in our past lives. Can anyone explain otherwise about someone getting richer by billions in a short period? If it

was hard labour, this was impossible. So we have to accept this reality and try to manage with what we have. Yes, wastage in showing off, etc. can be surely avoided. The third trifle, if we can call it as such, is being in trouble.

We should swear to ourselves not to act foolishly from now onwards. Troubles will still come but they will be less. Here also God can help, but, as pointed out earlier, we must take shelter from God. Then, not only any trouble but God promises to get us out of all troubles. (18.58) But again there is a rider. We must not continue to act in wrong or bad ways. The fourth problem that gets almost all of us is getting attached to results. This is illogical because what can

we control? Is God not the sole controller? We have been advised by Lord Krishna to strictly stick to our role, i.e. to act dutifully. (2.47) Because what we will end up with is not just based on what we have done recently, but earlier like last life. I have given just a few examples, but the underlying philosophy is to act properly from now onwards and remain in shelter in God. Then, daily trifles will not bother me so much. We will be able to get over them soon. What do I do? I seek guidance and help from God for anything that bothers me. Surely, God has taken charge of my life. Yes, God is micromanaging it.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

History from below: The tragedy of a slave revolution

GURUCHARAN GOLLERKERI

Today, we take it for granted that history is not merely the story of great men and the elites from which they arise; that the underlying narratives of gender, class, exploitation, and rebellion add true context and insight to our understanding of the past. But this was not always so. The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (TBJ) was one of the earliest, defining examples of how ‘‘history from below’’ ought to be written. It is a fascinating narrative of the world's only successful slave revolution, in which Toussaint is the tragic hero. Born a slave, he transforms into the most significant revolutionary leader in the age of revolutions. ‘‘Yet Toussaint did not make the revolution. It was the revolution that made Tou-

saint,’’ writes C L R James in his timeless classic of subaltern history.

Born in 1901 in Trinidad, then a British Crown colony, C L R James was the son of a schoolteacher. During his career, James lived in different countries and was variously a journalist, historian, and activist. He was also a committed Marxist philosopher. Noted for his influence on post-colonial studies, James lived for some years in the United States, but was deported in 1953 for his communist views. He eventually settled down in England and died in London at the age of 88.

James wrote TBJ, his best-known work in 1938, and it would later be seen as a foundational text in post-colonial studies. The book's opening is spectacular: ‘‘Christopher Columbus landed first in the New World at the island of San Salvador, and after praising God enquired urgently for

gold. The natives, Red Indians, were peaceable and friendly and directed him to San Domingo, a large island (nearly as large as Ireland), rich, they said, in the yellow metal. He sailed to San Domingo. One of his ships being wrecked, the native Indians helped him so willingly that very little was lost and of the articles which they brought on shore not one was stolen.’’

The Spaniards, the most ‘advanced’ Europeans at the time, annexed the island, called it Hispaniola, and took the ‘backward’ natives under their protection. They introduced Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, and hitherto unknown diseases. These and other requirements of the higher civilisation reduced the native population from an estimated half-a-million to 60,000 in 15 years.

By the late 18th century, and by then a French

colony, San Domingo was the richest in the Caribbean. The sugarcane plantations based on the slave economy generated the surpluses, appropriated by the Europeans. Large numbers of slaves were transported from the West Coast of Africa to these islands in voyages of unimaginable cruelty. Once there, they were worked, most often to the death. Women rarely reproduced, because their bodies were typically too weak from the suffering inflicted by their masters.

In August 1791, after two years of the French Revolution and its repercussions in San Domingo, the slaves revolted against the profoundly brutal slave regime. The slaves defeated in turn the local whites and the soldiers of the French monarchy, a Spanish invasion, a British expedition of some 60,000 men, and a French expedition of similar size under Napoleon Bonaparte's brother-

in-law. Led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, the revolutionary struggle lasted 12 years and resulted in the establishment of the independent state of Haiti.

James transformed the way we look at colonial history. James places the enslaved people at the centre of their own story, demonstrating that their freedom came out of their collective mobilisation, and not as a result of the goodwill of the abolitionists. He focusses on the achievements and political personality of Toussaint, whose remarkable leadership brought about the end of slavery in Haiti. James explodes the myths surrounding abolitionism, arguing that it was financial self-interest that motivated the desire to end slavery. The British, James argues, were alarmed by the phenomenal wealth the Saint-Domingue colony brought their rivals, the French, and sought to cut-off the

supply of enslaved people to the island with the aim of ruining the economy.

‘‘With the tears rolling down their cheeks for poor suffering blacks,’’ writes James, ‘‘those British bourgeois who had no West Indian interests set up a great howl for the abolition of the slave-trade.’’

Read TBJ. It challenges the reader to think critically about history. It celebrates the commitment, courage, and righteousness of the slave revolution. But good does not triumph over evil. After Napoleon reconquered Haiti, Toussaint L'Ouverture was tricked into a meeting and arrested. He was sent to France, where he was imprisoned and died of pneumonia and malnutrition in 1803. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world today and presents a classic case of the past in the present. A tale not of unfortunate tragedy, but of deliberate human destruction.

Study shows how cancer cells evade drug treatments

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

US researchers have found during a study how cancer cells manage to evade despite treatment. Published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the study delves into the cellular processes that allow cancer cells to proliferate even when targeted by anticancer drugs.

Cancer cells exploit cell cycles to multiply rapidly, a process known as proliferation. Cancer drugs aim to halt this growth by initiating a complex sequence of genetic and cellular events. However, these treatments often yield mixed results.

The team led by Jean Cook of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at University of North Carolina, Chapel



Hill, identified a crucial enzyme that plays a key role in stopping cancer cell proliferation, particularly during treatment with anti-cancer drugs.

This enzyme's function varies among individuals. The researchers also discovered mechanisms through which cancer cells evade therapies designed to inhibit them.

Cells regulate protein expression by turning genes "on" and "off".

Some proteins ensure precise and effective cell division, akin to musicians in an orchestra guided by a conductor.

Cells can deactivate these regulatory proteins, allowing uncontrolled division and DNA replication. To explore protein deg-

radation's role in halting cell growth, Cook and graduate student Brandon Mouery treated cultured human cells with palbociclib, a metastatic breast cancer drug.

Using microscopy, flow cytometry, and proteomics, they found that the enzyme APC/C, which targets proteins for degradation to regulate the cell cycle, enhances the effectiveness of palbociclib. This finding suggests that APC/C levels in tumours could help predict patient responses to palbociclib and similar drugs. Reduced APC/C activity might indicate poor treatment response or a higher relapse risk.

The researchers also observed that both cancerous and non-cancerous cells can bypass drug-induced proliferation arrest.

These escapee cells struggle to replicate DNA independently, likely delegating DNA replication to proteins that initiate cell division later in the cell cycle.

This indicates that cells can use alternate pathways for uncontrolled growth.

"Cell proliferation has been intensively studied for decades, yet we can still be surprised," Cook noted. "Sometimes our textbook understanding is still quite incomplete, so we need to keep an open mind and continually challenge paradigms."

These findings could lead to new interventions that induce long-lasting proliferation arrest by exploiting this escape mechanism and cancer-associated DNA replication errors, potentially forcing cancer cells into a "self-destructive" growth mode.

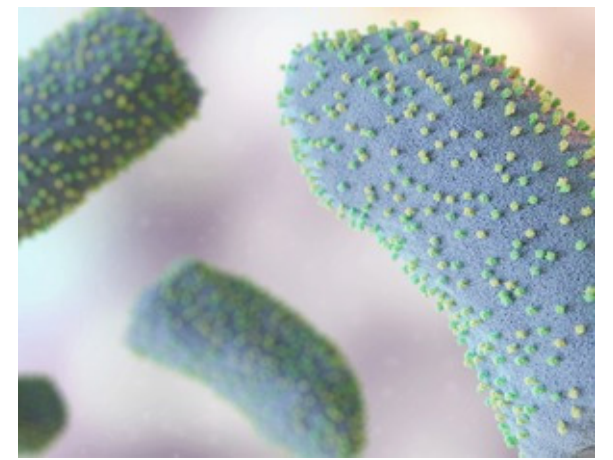
Vector control, hygiene & awareness key to control Chandipura virus: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Experts have said that vector control, hygiene and awareness are the key measures against the Chandipura virus and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) cases in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

In Gujarat, symptoms of Chandipura virus were found in kids which has caused some scare.

Professor Atul Goel, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Union Health Ministry, and Director of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), along with experts from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital, and National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS) reviewed the Chandipura virus and AES cases. They concluded that



infectious agents contribute to only a small proportion of AES cases across the country, said the Ministry of Health.

They emphasised the need for comprehensive epidemiological, environmental, and entomological studies of the AES cases reported in Gujarat.

"A multidisciplinary central team from NCDC, Indian Council of Medi-

cal Research, and Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) is being deployed to assist Gujarat with these investigations," said the Ministry.

Chandipura Virus (CHPV) is a member of Rhabdoviridae family known to cause sporadic cases and outbreaks in western, central, and southern parts of the Country, especially during the monsoon season.

Even partial vision losses before age 10 can impact hearing abilities: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Children who partially lose vision before age 10 may be at risk of developing hearing issues, according to a study led by an international team, including from India.

Researchers from Sankara Nethralaya Eye Hospital in Chennai included 52 participants under 33 years old, who took part in 480 separate trials.

In the trial, they were exposed to sounds that were emitted from distances ranging from 1.2m to 13.8m away and also varied between speech, music, or noise.

Participants had to estimate the distance the sound came from.

The results showed that children who experience partial vision loss found it more difficult to accurately judge the location of a sound than those who lose sight later in life



They tended to judge that sounds played from close distances, up to five metres, were actually coming from further away.

This, the researchers said, may impact their general day-to-day living while path planning, safe navigation, and avoiding collisions.

Further, the team found that distance judgments were not found to be significantly different between the control group and those with late-onset vision loss.

The study, published in the journal Optometry and

Vision Sciences, is the first to compare how people with early (before the age of 10) and later onset vision loss judge the distance of sound, said lead author Professor Shahina Pardhan, Director of the Vision and Eye Research Institute at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU).

She noted that the findings can help when "assessing the healthcare needs of people who suffered partial vision loss early in life, such as at birth or in childhood, who tend to be reliant on their other sensory abilities".

Experts stress need for boosting preventive health as lifespan is set to increase

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

There's an urgent need to boost preventive health to prevent a large burden of diseases, even as a recent study showed an increase in lifespan by 2050, said experts on Saturday.

According to the latest findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) 2021, published recently in The Lancet journal, global life expectancy is expected to increase by 4.9 years in men and 4.2 years in women by 2050. This is despite the geopolitical, metabolic, and environmental threats.

However, people are expected to spend more years in poor health with cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes.

"Unless we take preventive health more seriously, our health systems will not



be able to cope with the huge burden of the disease," said Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist and Epidemiologist, P. D. Hinduja Hospital and MRC, Mahim.

"Historically, as countries prosper, nutrition gets better and vaccination programmes get robust, infectious diseases tend to decline. However, with prosperity comes the dietary and lifestyle changes that can harm," Pinto said.

The study predicted

that like today, ischemic heart disease will continue to be the number one cause of mortality globally. Strokes will continue to be the number two cause of mortality, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease will be the third most common cause of mortality worldwide even in 2050. As far as the Indian population is concerned, the study predicted an increased burden of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) -- a common lung disease.

"India is one of the leading producers and consumers of tobacco in the world, and COPD, often associated with smoking, is likely to manifest strongly as the population gets older," Pinto said, while adding air pollution, use of indoor biomass fuels and poor lung development in childhood as added risk factors.

"Overall chest disease burden in India will be much higher than what the West because we continue to struggle with the earlier problems of infectious diseases, including tuberculosis, and we have started seeing a massive increase in the new age diseases like lung cancer," said Arvind Kumar, Chairman, Institute of Chest Surgery, Chest Onco Surgery and Lung Transplantation, Medanta Hospital, Gurugram. He said, "COPD burden overall may be much higher than what this report has predicted".

The report also predicted the increased risk of ischemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease.

This leads to "obstructive blockages in the artery due to deposition of atherosclerotic plaques. The reduced blood supply to the heart muscle results in angina as a warning signal. A sudden blood clot formation on top of these blockages can result in a heart attack", said Atul Mathur, Executive Director, Interventional Cardiology & Chief of Cath Lab, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Okhla Road, New Delhi.

He said that a sudden blood clot formation on top of these blockages can result in a heart attack.

The experts thus stressed the need for increasing preventive measures including healthy eating, regular exercise, and good control of hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol.

Low Vitamin D levels remain a pressing concern among women: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Low Vitamin D levels, also known as the sunshine vitamin, are vital for bone health and remain a pressing concern among women, who are more prone to osteoporosis, arthritis, or other bone-related issues, said experts on Saturday.

Vitamin D is essential to help prevent thinning of the bones. It is also known to have anti-inflammatory effects and can protect against arthritis in women.

Osteoporosis, characterised by weakened and

brittle bones, often finds its roots in insufficient levels of Vitamin D. It is not uncommon for individuals to solely rely on calcium supplements to support bone health, overlooking the crucial role of vitamin D in calcium absorption.

"We are frequently seeing women who have problems with their bones that are related to low vitamin D levels.

This essential nutrient is necessary for the absorption of calcium, which keeps bones strong. Sadly, a lot of women do not get enough vitamin D, which increases the risk of osteo-

porosis and fractures," Akhilesh Yadav, Associate Director - Orthopaedics & Joint Replacement, Max Hospital, Vaishali, told IANS.

Bone development, bone repair, and muscular function all depend on vitamin D. Women's vitamin D deficiency is caused by several reasons, including age, which decreases the skin's capacity to synthesise Vitamin D and inadequate sun exposure.

"Maintaining adequate levels of vitamin D is paramount for optimal bone health, yet it remains a pressing concern, particularly among women. This deficiency can lead to serious health implications, with osteoporosis emerging as a significant concern, especially among women post-menopause

due to hormonal changes," Sagar Hingrajya, Consultant Orthopaedic, Bhailal Amin General Hospital, Vadodra, told IANS.

Vitamin D acts as a carrier, facilitating the transportation of calcium from the gut to the bones. Without adequate vitamin D levels, calcium absorption is hindered, rendering calcium supplementation ineffective in combating osteoporosis.

"Regular monitoring of vitamin D levels is crucial, particularly for women over 40 who are at higher risk of developing osteoporosis. Persistent low levels of vitamin D necessitate intervention, often in the form of prescribed supplements tailored to individual needs. However, indiscriminate supplementation without

medical guidance can lead to adverse effects, underscoring the importance of seeking professional advice," Hingrajya said.

To ensure adequate vitamin D, the experts advised spending 10-30 minutes in midday sunlight several times a week, with activities such as a brisk walk or gardening, balancing sun exposure with skin protection.

Hingrajya said contrary to common belief, the best source of vitamin D is not the gentle morning or evening sunlight but "rather the midday sun between 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m".



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New protein to help fight ageing-related diseases, prolong human lifespan

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

An international team of researchers conducted a mice study that showed that targeting the production of a key inflammatory protein can extend lifespan, and reduce old age-related diseases.

The team from the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Medical Science (MRC LMS), Imperial College London in the

UK, and Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore investigated the effects of inflammatory proteins IL-11 by generating mice with the IL-11 (interleukin 11) gene removed.

This increased the mice's lifespan by more than 20 per cent on average, revealed the study, published in the journal Nature.

They also gave 75-week-old mice, equivalent to around 55 years in

humans, an injection of an anti-IL-11 antibody, a medicine that inhibits the effects of IL-11 in the body.

Mice treated with an anti-IL-11 drug from 75 weeks of age had their median lifespan extended by 22.4 per cent in males and 25 per cent in females, with an average lifespan of 155 weeks compared to 120 weeks in untreated mice.

The treatment reduced cancer deaths, fibrosis, chronic inflammation, and poor metabolism, with minimal side effects.

Professor Stuart Cook highlighted the potential for similar effects in humans, stating, "The treated mice had fewer cancers and were free from the usual signs of ageing and frailty."

This research, though conducted in mice, opens possibilities for extending healthy ageing in humans.

High stress in pregnancy may raise depression, obesity risk in kids later

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

High stress among women in pregnancy may get passed on to the foetus and raise the risk of depression and obesity among children later, finds a study.

Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis and Dartmouth College conducted a small study of 46 mothers and 40 toddlers and discovered



a link between toddler hair cortisol levels -- a long-term stress biomarker -- and maternal prenatal depression.

Published in the American Journal of Human Biology, the study suggests that a child's long-term stress physiology may be influenced by conditions experienced in

uterus. Co-author Theresa Gildner highlighted that hair cortisol, which is

less invasive than blood tests and more useful than saliva tests, can assess cumulative cortisol exposure over extended periods.

"By understanding the long-term effects of maternal stress on her offspring and when these effects are especially pronounced during pregnancy, we can better determine when interventions to support parents and reduce stress are most needed," Gildner explained.

The body's stress management system, the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis, releases cortisol in response to stress.

BSF on high alert along India-Bangladesh border

AGENCIES
AGARTALA, JULY 21

The Border Security Force (BSF) troopers are on a high alert in view of the grim situation in Bangladesh, officials said here on Sunday.

Tripura Frontier Inspector General (IG) of the BSF Patel Piyush Purushottam Das said that the current law and order situation in Bangladesh due to anti-reservation agitation is causing security challenges for the border force.

"With 856 km border, the security challenges also exist in Tripura as the state is surrounded on almost all sides by Bangladesh," the IG told the media, adding that one of the prime concerns right now is the safe return of Indian students studying there.

"Senior BSF Commanders are keeping a close watch on the prevailing border situation. Additional BSF forces were also deployed along the border to maintain the highest

vigil. BSF troops are on high alert to deal with any situation that might arise due to the prevailing disturbances in our neighbouring country," the IG said.

BSF is fully committed to securing the boundaries of the country in the bordering state of Tripura and fully prepared to deal with any challenges that the current situation might throw up, the IG further said.

The senior IPS officer said that the number of Indian students in Bangladesh is believed to be close to 8,000 and most of them are enrolled in the medical colleges in Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Dhaka.

Till Saturday evening, 365 students belonging to various Indian states have entered Tripura through the four check posts, including Integrated Check Posts in Agartala in West Tripura district and Srimantapur in Sepahijala district.

Das said that the BSF has made all arrangements



at these check posts and ICPs for the safe arrival of the students and provided refreshments, food packets, transportation, and medical assistance.

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) helped a lot to facilitate the students to enter India while BSF officials have maintained close coordination with the local administration and other agencies so that the entire process takes place without any glitch.

"I have given clear directions to my officers

to personally supervise the arrival of these students through the check posts/ICPs so that no inconvenience is faced by them," the BSF IG said.

He said that the BSF has been very thankful to BGB, which in spite of the law and order situation and its heavy commitment, has helped the students by providing transportation and safe passage up to the Agartala border for around 36 stranded students who were studying in Brahmanbaria Medical College, about 40 km from

Agartala border.

"This is a testimony to the cooperation and good relations that exist between BSF and BGB," the IG said.

The BSF official said that they are expecting more students to cross over in the coming days and BSF is fully prepared to provide all assistance and ensure their safe return to home.

He said: "We are fully seized of the situation and have beefed up the security so that criminal elements from across the border don't take advantage of the current situation."

The External Affairs Ministry in Delhi said that the High Commission in Dhaka and the Assistant High Commissions in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna are available on helpline numbers for any assistance required by the Indian nationals.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in Delhi that around 15,000 Indian

nationals, including 8,500 students, reside in Bangladesh.

He said that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is monitoring the situation, while the High Commission in Dhaka will provide regular updates on the situation there.

Meanwhile, the External Affairs Ministry has urged Indian nationals in Bangladesh to follow the advisory issued by the High Commission in Dhaka and to be in touch with the High Commission.

Bangladesh has announced the imposition of a curfew and the deployment of military forces after police failed to quell days of deadly unrest that has spread throughout the country.

Violence erupted in the country after protests by students demanding reforms in the quota system for government jobs.

The clashes between student demonstrators and police have killed at least 133 people so far.

NEET 2024: Candidates who were not from tuition hubs also figured in toppers' list

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Amid the ongoing controversies over NEET-UG results, the National Testing Agency (NTA) released a data which shows that the students who got 700 or more marks appeared at 1404 centres spread across 276 cities and 25 States/UTs. A total of 23.33 lakh students appeared in NEET 2024, out of them, 2321 students got 700 or more marks out of 720. These students were spread across 1,404 centres in the entire country and abroad. Such a large spread shows that many candidates who were not from the traditional tuition hubs also came in the toppers' list in NEET 2024.

However, many students who appeared from traditional tuition hubs like Sikar, Kota and Kota managed to score 700 or more marks.

But, the silver lining is that many students appearing from other

cities were also able to come within this bracket.

For instance, 35 students from Lucknow, 27 students from Kolkata, 25 students from Latur, 20 students from Nagpur, 19 from Faridabad, 18 from Nanded, 17 from Indore, 16 each from Cuttack and Kanpur, 14 each from Kolhapur, Noida, Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, 13 each from Agra and Aligarh, 10 each from Akola and Patiala, eight from Davangere, seven from Banaskantha, etc, were able to score 700 or more marks.

As per the result data, similar observations are available for other mark ranges as well. For example, in NEET 2024, candidates scoring between 650 and 699 are spread across 509 cities and 4044 centres; candidates scoring between 600 and 649 are spread across 540 cities and 4484 centres; candidates scoring between 550 and 599 are spread across 548 cities and 4563 centres.

Oppn raises Kanwar Yatra issue, NDA allies seek special status for Bihar at all-party meet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Centre on Sunday in the all-party meeting urged the parties to ensure the smooth functioning of Parliament even as the opposition raised the Kanwar Yatra row and two NDA allies made demands for special status for Bihar.

The meeting, chaired by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, was held a day ahead of Parliament's Budget Session.

During the meeting, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies -- Sanjay Jha from Janata Dal(United) and Union Minister Chirag Paswan from Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) demanded special state status for Bihar. JD(U) stated that if there are difficulties in granting special state status, then Bihar should be given a special package.

Additionally, the special status demand for



Bihar was also raised by the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

The issue of recurring floods in Bihar was also raised by the JD(U), urging the Centre to take steps and discuss the issue with Nepal.

Meanwhile, the YSR Congress raised the issue of law and order in Andhra Pradesh, demanding presidential rule in the state. The party also sought a special state status for the state.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha also demanded a special status for the state in the all-party meeting,

along with discussing the issue of law and order in the Lok Sabha.

In the meeting, Congress raised the issue of the appointment of a Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha and said that this post should be given to the Opposition.

Congress also demanded a discussion on the NEET paper leak issue in the Lower House.

Gaurav Gogoi from Congress, Sanjay Singh from AAP, Ram Gopal Yadav from SP, Asaduddin Owaisi from AIMIM, leaders from Left parties and several other political

parties raised the issue of the Yogi government's decision requiring food establishments along the Kanwar Yatra route to display the names of their owners.

After coming out of the all-party meeting, NCP MP Praful Patel spoke to the media, demanding the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh to withdraw the decision regarding nameplates.

The Centre aimed to use this all-party meeting to brief all political parties in the House about its agenda and the bills to be discussed during the session. The Central government also requested cooperation from opposition parties to ensure the smooth functioning of Parliament.

Leaders from several other political parties were also present, though no leader from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) attended the meeting.

Sharad Pawar is 'mastermind' of corruption, Uddhav Thackeray 'chief' of Aurangzeb fan club: Amit Shah

AGENCIES
PUNE, JULY 21

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused NCP SP President Sharad Pawar of being the "mastermind" of corruption while also accusing Shiv Sena UBT Chief Uddhav Thackeray of being "chief" of the Aurangzeb fan club.

"Sharad Pawar institutionalised the corruption. He is the biggest mastermind of corruption in the country's political landscape while Uddhav Thackeray is the chief of the Aurangzeb fan club. He (Thackeray) joined hands with those who supported Kasab and the Popular Front of India," the Home Minister said while addressing the BJP's state convention.

Sounding poll bugle for the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly election, the Home Minister asked the BJP cadres not to get disheartened as the party



could not get a majority on its own, saying they could make up the deficit in seats by winning a bigger victory in the upcoming Assembly election in Maharashtra.

"Don't be confused and don't get misled by the opposition's narratives and false promises. Work with unity not just for the victory of 'Kamal' (lotus) but also for the allies (Shiv Sena and NCP) for the formation of the MahaYuti government," the Home Minister said.

He asked the workers to tell the voters that the Modi-led government has made the country "safe"

and "secure" and similarly, it is the MahaYuti government which will make Maharashtra "safe" and "secure."

He attacked Sharad Pawar, saying that it was the BJP government which gave the reservation to the Maratha community during its rule between 2014 and 2019.

"When the Sharad Pawar government came to power, the Maratha quota was scrapped. After the MahaYuti government assumed power, the Maratha community was provided with the reservation. Therefore, the BJP-led NDA/MahaYuti govern-

ment should come back to power so that the Maratha quota will remain in place. If the Maha Vikas government comes to power again, they will scrap the reservation again," the Home Minister said.

Amit Shah slammed Sharad Pawar also for accusing the BJP-led NDA government of importing milk powder.

"How can he spread lies? He is targeting the government based on an old government notification. I asked Minister Piyush Goyal, who clarified that it was not the BJP-led NDA government's decision but taken during the UPA government when Sharad Pawar was the minister," the Home Minister said. He said that the people should not get confused as the Narendra Modi government has not imported a single gram of milk powder in the last 10 years and the milk powder won't be imported again in the next five years.

BJP will emerge as single-largest party after Assembly polls in Maharashtra: Devendra Fadnavis

AGENCIES
PUNE, JULY 21

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday exhorted the BJP leaders and cadres

to work with the sole target of re-election of the MahaYuti government in Maharashtra like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who pursued his goal to achieve 'Hindvi Swarajya' and also like Arjuna's unwavering focus on fish's eye.

Addressing the party's state convention in Pune, he also asked the party

leaders, office-bearers and workers to give a befitting reply to the opposition's charges without waiting for any directive every time.

He instructed the members to refrain from speculating about the next Chief Minister.

He also asked them to effectively counter the Opposition's allegations without waiting for instructions from the party.

However, Fadnavis insisted that the party should come together to



face the Assembly election and avoid "negative talks". "BJP alone has won 1.50 crore votes in the past, and

during the Assembly election, it will win 1.75 crore votes," he claimed.

He strongly defended

the party's decision to form the government with Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde, a true follower

of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's thoughts, and later allying with Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

"The questions were raised about how to cohabit with NCP when BJP had conflict with it in the past. However, when the target is fixed, we have to go two steps forward, and two steps backwards and make a pact. BJP brought the MahaYuti government

to power so that Maharashtra can remain with Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has transformed the country and is working

hard to bring more changes for the development," he said.

The leader criticised the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), accusing it of halting all development and welfare schemes initiated by the MahaYuti government.

He claimed that efforts are being made by the MVA activists to derail the much-ambitious 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana' but declared that the government is committed to its implementation to honour the women.

He claimed that MVA's

victory in the general elections was due to spreading fake narratives about change in the Constitution and an end to reservation.

On the ongoing protests for Maratha and OBC reservations, Fadnavis said he would not comment on the fresh agitation launched by pro-Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil.

However, he dared the MVA to declare whether it would provide the reservation to the Maratha community by reducing the existing quota of the OBC community.

Govt, oppn should ensure smooth conduct of Parliament, says Rajnath Singh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The government on Sunday urged the opposition to cooperate and ensure smooth conduct of proceedings in the Parliament's Budget session, noting the disruptions in both Houses during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the previous session were not upto parliamentary traditions.

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, after the conclusion of the all-party meeting, said that smooth con-

duct of the Parliament is the responsibility of both the government and the opposition. He said that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh appealed to all political parties to allow the Parliament to function smoothly, highlighting that the disruptions and protests by opposition parties during the Prime Minister's speech in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in the last session were "not in line with parliamentary traditions".

"When the Prime Minister speaks, the House and the country should listen.



Every MP should be heard when they speak," he added.

Rijiju mentioned that a total of 55 leaders from 44 political parties, including the BJP, attended the all-party meeting, where they

presented their respective issues.

Assuring that the government is "open to discussing all issues," the Union Minister said: "Discussions will be held in the House according to the decisions taken in the BAC meetings of both Houses, in consultation with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha."

He said that the Economic Survey will be presented in the House on July 22, and the Budget will be presented on July 23.

Hoping that the Budget

session proceeds smoothly, Rijiju said: "The government will bring a good budget, and everyone is waiting for it. First, there will be a discussion on the Budget, and then the government will bring the bills."

At the meeting, the Centre briefed all political parties in the House about its agenda and the bills to be discussed during the session.

Moreover, the demands for special status for Bihar, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh were also raised during the meeting.

Turkish military neutralises 19 'terrorists' in Syria, Iraq

AGENCIES
Ankara, July 21

The Turkish military neutralised a total of 19 "terrorists" in operations in northern Iraq and northern Syria, the country's Defence Ministry said.

The Turkish forces killed 15 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Hakurk and Asos regions in northern Iraq, said the ministry in a statement, without specifying the time frame of the operations, Xinhua news agency reported.

Turkish authorities often use the term "neutralised" in their statements to imply the "ter-



rorists" in question surrendered or were killed or captured.

Late Friday, the ministry announced that one Turkish soldier was killed in northern Iraq.

In a separate operation in northern Syria, the

its source," said the statement.

The Turkish army launched Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016, Operation Olive Branch in 2018, Operation Peace Spring in 2019, and Operation Spring Shield in 2020 in northern Syria to create a YPG-free zone along its border with the neighbouring country.

Turkey sees the YPG group as the PKK's Syrian branch.

The PKK, listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, has rebelled against the Turkish government for more than three decades.

Turkish forces killed four members of the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the ministry said in a statement.

"We will continue to fight with proactive and uninterrupted operations to eliminate terrorism at

Don't doubt Israel's determination to defend itself on every front, says Netanyahu

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV, JULY 21

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has issued a stern warning to the country's "enemies" telling them not to doubt Israel's determination to defend itself on every front.

In a televised address, Netanyahu said, "All those who seek to harm us will pay a very heavy price for their aggression".

Israel's strikes on the key port to target Houthis in Yemen on Saturday came in "direct response" to Iran-backed rebels' drone attack in Tel Aviv on Friday in which an Israeli civilian was killed.

He said that the port tar-



geted was not an "innocent port".

"The port was used as their entry point for weapons that are supplied by Iran to its Houthi terrorist proxies. The Houthis

have used those weapons to attack Israel, to attack Arab states in the region, to attack many others" he added.

But the aggression of the Houthis goes well

beyond that single attack. Because for the past eight months, the Houthis have launched hundreds of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones against Israel, he said.

Netanyahu said the "only reason those attacks have not caused a greater loss of life has been the defensive measures taken by Israel and its allies, which together have intercepted hundreds of projectiles".

"But the drone attack that struck Israel in the early morning hours yesterday shows that more than defensive action is needed to curtail the Houthis. Offensive action is also needed.

Pakistan lodges protest with Germany over attack on its consulate in Frankfurt

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD, JULY 21

Pakistan on Sunday registered its strong protest with Germany, condemning the "failure" of the German authorities to protect the "sanctity and security" of the premises of its consulate in Frankfurt, after it was targeted by protesting Afghan nationals.

On Saturday, the Afghan nationals, who took out a protest rally in Frankfurt, attacked the Pakistani consulate, pelted stones and desecrated the Pakistani flag.

The video being shared on social media depicts the protesters forcefully entering the Consulate, throwing stones, and removing the Pakistani flag.

Reports also suggested that Afghan protesters also attempted to burn the Pakistani flag.

As per reports, at least 8 to 10 Afghan nationals were involved in the attack on the Pakistani consulate, who fled after removing the Pakistani flag.

According to the latest reports, German authorities have already made some arrests, while the German Foreign Office

has assured of providing complete security, investigation, and cooperation to the Pakistani diplomats.

On the other hand, the German Consulate in Pakistan's Karachi city has been temporarily closed amid security threats and suspected counterattacks by protesters in Pakistan.

Pakistan has stated that ensuring the security of foreign diplomatic missions is the responsibility of the German government, calling on the international community to take note of the issue.

"We condemn the reprehensible vandalising act

on the Pakistan Embassy in Germany by miscreants. We are in contact with German authorities to ensure such a situation does not arise again and the miscreants face legal consequences. We appeal to our community to be patient and calm," stated the Pakistan Embassy in Germany.

The incident highlights the anger that prevails in Afghanistan against Pakistan, especially with Islamabad issuing warnings to the Afghan Taliban regime to take action against terror groups operating from Afghan soil to

spread chaos and unrest in Islamabad.

Pakistan has accused the Afghan Taliban regime of facilitating, harbouring, funding and even supporting anti-Islamabad groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to spread terror across Pakistan.

Under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963, it is the responsibility of the host government to protect the sanctity of the consular premises and ensure the security of diplomats, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement

Lingering effects of IT outage to last weeks: Australian Home Affairs

AGENCIES
CANBERRA, JULY 21

Disruptions linked to the CrowdStrike global IT outage will continue for several weeks, Australia's Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil said.

The Minister on Sunday warned that it could take up to two weeks for sectors affected by the outage to get back to normal, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Microsoft Windows outage, which was triggered by a software update deployed by cyber security firm CrowdStrike on Friday, caused major

disruptions to banks, airlines and businesses around the world.

On Sunday, O'Neil convened a National Coordination Mechanism meeting, bringing together government agencies and representatives from affected industries to discuss the outage.

In a statement posted on social media after the meeting, she said it would be some time before all systems were fully operational.

"There has been a huge amount of work over this weekend to get the economy back up and running. However, it will take

time until all affected sectors are completely back online," she said.

"In some cases, we may see teething issues for one or two weeks. There is no impact on critical infrastructure or government services."

Representatives from CrowdStrike told the meeting that they were close to rolling out an automatic fix for the issue, which O'Neil said would increase the speed at which systems are brought back online.

She urged Australians to be extremely cautious of scams and phishing attempts trying to capitalize on the outage.

Capsized Iranian destroyer salvaged after nearly two weeks

AGENCIES
TEHRAN, JULY 21

The Iranian destroyer, dubbed Sahand, that had capsized off the coast of the southern port city of Bandar Abbas earlier this month has been salvaged, the semi-official Fars news agency reported. Sahand was pulled out of water Friday night with efforts by different technical and engineering units of the Iranian Navy and equipment, including 1,000-tonne marine cranes, supplied by Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex, the report said. The destroyer, belonging to the Iranian Navy, was undergoing maintenance in the port city on July 7 when it lost balance and capsized

due to the infiltration of water into its ballast tanks, it added, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to Fars, Sahand had been pulled out of water two days after the incident, but it sank again due to the breakage of the tow cable and mooring line. The report said the water had infiltrated into the ship due to a technical fault of its propeller shaft, which has been taken out for repair, adding the destroyer's tanks were being drained. Sahand is a class of domestically produced Iranian light frigates weighing 1,300 tonnes. With a length of 95 meters, it has a helicopter deck and electronic warfare systems and is armed with cruise anti-ship missiles.

Trump, Vance to address first joint rally; Biden faces more calls for exit

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JULY 20

Former US President and Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump is heading to Michigan, a swing state, for his first election rally since the assassination attempt on him along with his Vice President pick J.D. Vance, even as his Democratic rival President Joe Biden confronts growing calls from his party lawmakers to make way for a different candidate to run for the White House citing their lack of faith in his ability to win.

Trump and Vance will hold a rally in Grand Rapids, a covered venue, unlike the open-air site for the rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, where a gunman

from a nearby rooftop took a shot at him, hitting his right ear last Saturday.

The shooter was shot by a Secret Service sniper, but his motive remains unclear even after a week of investigation led by the FBI.

This will be Trump and Vance's first joint rally after the four-day Republican convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which anointed them nominees for President and Vice President, respectively.

President Biden, meanwhile, has continued to self-isolate at home in Delaware due to a Covid-19 infection, with the number of congressional Democrats calling for his exit growing to more than 35, according to a tally by The Washington Post.



He remained defiant with allies and aides, saying he was not going anywhere and intended fully to run to the finish line.

"I look forward to getting back on the campaign trail next week to continue exposing the threat of Donald Trump's Project 2025 agenda while making the case for my own record and the vision that I have

for America," Biden said recently in a statement, referring to a policy plan put together by allies for the second Trump administration if he wins.

But recent news reports indicate that Biden is "more receptive" to talk of his exit than before, giving the growing body of party leaders hope that he can be persuaded to step aside and make way

for a different candidate, which could be Vice President Kamala Harris, who has taken lead in addressing rallies and fundraisers as Biden recovers from Covid.

Trump is ahead of Biden in the national poll, although by a slim margin, but the focus is on a handful of states that are dominated neither by the Democratic party nor the Republican.

They can go either way from one election to another, unlike the other states that have remained solidly aligned with one of the two parties, and that's why they are known as swing states, also called battleground states.

They are Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Nevada, North Carolina,

Arizona, and Georgia. Trump is leading Biden by 46.7 per cent to 42.4 per cent in the RealClearPolitics average of polls.

The former President is ahead 47/4 to 41.4 in Arizona, 47.7 to 43.6 in Nevada, 46.6 to 43.3 in Wisconsin, 44 to 42.3 in Michigan, 47.9 to 43.4 in Pennsylvania, 47.2 to 41.5 in North Carolina, and 46.2 to 42.2 in Georgia.

What has really struck the Democrats as particularly alarming is that Trump is ahead also in Virginia, which was once a Republican-dominated state but voted solidly for the Democrats in recent years.

The former President is ahead, although by the slimmest of margins -- 45.8 to 43.4.

Bangladesh's top court scales back government jobs quota after deadly unrest killed scores

AGENCIES
DHAKA, JULY 21

Bangladesh's top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, in a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes between police and demonstrators that have killed scores of people.

Students, frustrated by shortages of good jobs, have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh's High Court reinstated the quotas and set off a new round of protests.

Ruling on an appeal, the Supreme Court ordered that the veterans' quota be cut to 5%, with 93% of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining 2% will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled people.

The protests have posed the most serious challenge to Bangladesh's government since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that were boycotted by the main opposition groups. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home.

The protests turned deadly on Tuesday, a day after students at Dhaka University began clashing with police. Violence continued to escalate as



police fired tear gas and rubber bullets and hurled smoke grenades to scatter stone-throwing protesters. Bangladesh authorities haven't shared any official numbers of those killed and injured, but the Daily Prothom Alo newspaper reported on Saturday that at least 103 people have died so far.

Sporadic clashes in some parts of Dhaka, the capital, were reported on

Saturday but it was not immediately clear whether there were any fatalities.

Ahead of the Supreme Court hearing, soldiers patrolled cities across the South Asian country. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the stay at home order will be relaxed from 3 pm to 5 pm on Sunday for people to run essential errands.

Meanwhile, the government has declared Sunday

and Monday as public holidays, with only emergency services allowed to operate.

Protesters argue the quota system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, saying it should be replaced with a merit-based system.

Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions in the war against Pakistan, regardless of their political affiliation.

Representatives from both sides met late on Friday in an attempt to reach a resolution and Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government was open to discussing their demands. Their demands included the reform of the current quota system, the

reopening of student dormitories shut by the police following the clashes and for some university officials to step down after failing to protect campuses from the violence.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protests, vowing to organise its own demonstrations as many of its supporters have joined the student-led protests. However, BNP said in a statement its followers were not responsible for the violence and denied the ruling party's accusations of using the protests for political gains.

The Awami League and the BNP have often accused each other of fueling political chaos and violence, most recently ahead of the country's national election, which was marred by a crackdown on several opposition figures.

Yemen's Houthi group confirms attack on Israeli city, US ship

AGENCIES
SANNA, JULY 21

Yemen's Houthi group on Sunday said it launched missile attacks on the Israeli city of Eilat and a US ship in the Red Sea, vowing further strikes unless Israel ends its offensive in Gaza.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said in a televised address that the group's operation "hit important targets in Eilat city with several ballistic missiles" and achieved a "direct hit" on the US container ship "Pumba" using a combination of missiles and drones, reports Xinhua news agency.

Earlier on Sunday, the Israel Defense Forces said a ballistic missile launched by the Houthis from Yemen was intercepted by Israel's long-range Arrow 3 air defence system, adding the surface-to-surface missile was intercepted out-

side Israeli airspace, with sirens sounding in Eilat as a precaution.

Israel launched air strikes on Saturday against the Houthi-held Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, reportedly killing three people and injuring 87, according to the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV. The strikes targeted fuel storage facilities, causing widespread damage.

Israel said the strikes were in response to hundreds of Houthi attacks over the past months. The Houthis have threatened further retaliation.

The developments come amid the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which erupted in October 2023. Since November last year, the Houthi group has been targeting ships sailing to Israel in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to show solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

India saw 54 land deals for 1,045 acres in 1st half of 2024, Bengaluru leads

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 21

India saw more than 54 new land deals for over 1,045 acres in the real estate sector in the first half of this year, against 46 deals for nearly 950 acres in H1 2023, a report showed on Sunday.

In the April-June period (Q2), the number of land deals closed, was 25 for over 325 acres, according to latest Anarock data.

Bengaluru led with nine new land deals for 114 acres in Q2 2024, followed by Gurugram with seven deals for 77.5 acres. According to Dr



Prashant Thakur, Regional Director and Head-Research & Advisory, Anarock Group, all deals in Bengaluru are proposed for residential developments.

"Gurugram followed, remaining a hot market for land deals in Q2 2024. As many as seven deals for over 77.5 acres were closed here in this period for residential development

and agriculture," Thakur informed.

Of the total land deals closed in Q2 2024, over 17 for more than 163 acres have been proposed for residential developments. Agriculture, mixed-use development, data centres, logistics parks, industrial, and retail saw one deal each.

Demand has been soaring here in the last couple of years, and developers are able to sell units in new projects very quickly post launch.

"Mumbai, which topped in land deals in the previous quarters, saw just two land deals closed in Q2

2024 -- one for industrial purposes and the other for retail development," said Thakur.

Mumbai saw five land deals for nearly 34 acres in the first half this year (H1 2024).

Hyderabad and Chennai each closed three deals for approx 63.5 acres and 48 acres, respectively.

Pune, Ahmedabad, Noida and Thane collectively closed two land deals each for about 103 acres.

Ghaziabad and Delhi closed one deal each for about 62.5 acres and 5 acres, respectively, the report mentioned.

DST, DPIIT recommend funds for Sona Incubation Foundation to nurture startups

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has recommended a grant of Rs 5 crore for the Sona Incubation Foundation (SIF) project, with a 20 per cent contribution by the Sona College of Technology, the SIF said on Sunday.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has also recommended Rs 2 crore as part of the 'Startup India Seed Fund' to the incubator.

The SIF said in a statement that it will select startups across India and fund worthy ideas, allowing SIF to have equity participation.



It is inviting applications from startups, particularly in sectors such as wearable technologies, assistive technologies, healthtech, edtech, SaaS, and industry automation.

"This initiative aims to foster innovation and position Salem as a significant player in the national and global startup ecosystem," says Sathya Murthy V, head of Sona Incubation Foundation.

Centre to sign over 70 MoUs with startups to empower the disabled

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The government is set to sign more than 70 MoUs on Monday between the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) and various startups and private organisations.

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr Virendra Kumar will preside over the MoU signing ceremony between the National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) of DEPWD and startups.

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment said that more than 70 MoUs will be signed, both physically and virtually, across multiple disability sectors, symbolising a



significant step towards fostering an inclusive society.

"These collaborations are not merely formal agreements but strategic alliances that bring tangible benefits to Divyangjan across various sectors," said the ministry.

This effort will establish milestones and make significant strides in building a society where everyone

can lead a life of dignity and fulfilment, it added.

Globally, at least 15 per cent of people have some form of disability.

More than 2.68 crore citizens in India live with a disability (as per the 2011 census).

There are some niche startups and NGOs working to empower people with disabilities (PwDs) in the country.

Union Budget: Investments in rural infrastructure key to boost new economy

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

There is a need to infuse investments in districts and rural areas both for accelerating traditional economic activities as well as the new economy especially focused on circularity, experts have said.

The rural economy in India employs almost 68 per cent of the workforce while contributing less than half of the country's GDP.

Accelerating socio-economic status in districts is key to creating inclusive and sustained growth.

Amit Vatsyayan, Leader GPS-Agriculture, Livelihood, Social and Skills, EY India, said that investments in rural infrastructure, agriculture, and non-



farm sectors have driven impressive growth.

"Initiatives like rural digitisation, financial inclusion, community institutions, and scale-appropriate technology are critical for revitalising the rural economy. New business models that allow rural communities to add value and reimagine dis-

tricts as economic corridors will be essential," he noted.

Focusing on creating rural areas as champions of circularity holds significant potential, as overall sustainability becomes a key priority.

Given that 60 per cent of the rural economy is concentrated in six

states -- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan -- it will be crucial to adopt a localised approach that addresses specific challenges while developing the rural investment strategy, said experts.

Meanwhile, women entrepreneurs are a powerful engine for economic growth and job creation in India.

With over 10 million self-help groups (SHGs) established, collectively holding an estimated Rs 7,000 crore in savings and maintaining a remarkably low non-performing asset (NPA) rate of just 2.01 per cent, there is a compelling case for investing in helping women become entrepreneurs.

Women-owned micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in India have demonstrated impressive results, hiring 11 per cent more women employees compared to male-owned MSMEs and creating one-third of all new jobs.

They have also reported a 12 per cent rise in monthly revenue and a 19 per cent increase in monthly net income, indicating better cost optimisation and income growth.

"To facilitate women's entrepreneurship in India, it is essential to invest in creating a robust ecosystem that provides access to critical business services such as finance, markets, skills, networks, and mentoring," said Vatsyayan.

Hyundai, Kia likely to post operating profit of \$5.7 billion in Q2

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 21

Hyundai Motor and its affiliate Kia are set to post an operating profit exceeding 8 trillion won (\$5.7 billion) in the second quarter on improved product mix and production adjustments, a survey showed on Sunday.

Hyundai and Kia are estimated to report an operating profit of 4.28 trillion won and 3.76 trillion won, respectively, in the three months ended in June, according to a Yonhap Infomax survey of local brokerages.

Hyundai and Kia's second-quarter operating income likely rose 1 per cent and 11 per cent,



respectively, from the same period of last year, the survey showed.

The carmakers' timely response to the electric vehicle "chasm", their focus on high-end sport utility vehicles, such as

the GV80, particularly in the US market, and a weak won likely helped the quarterly bottom line, analysts said.

The dollar rose to an average of 1,370.91 won in the June quarter from

1,314.68 won a year earlier, according to data from the Bank of Korea.

A weak won drives up an exporter's dollar-denominated income when converted into the local currency.

The two carmakers began to strengthen their gasoline hybrid model lineup early this year as the global EV market entered a stagnation phase, known as the chasm, which occurred before the widespread adoption of EVs.

Hyundai's sales are forecast to rise 4 per cent on-year to 43.99 trillion won, while Kia's are projected to increase 5.6 per cent to 27.7 trillion won during the same period.

EY likely to probe alleged assault charge against Vulcan Green Steel CEO

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

After Vulcan Green Steel (VGS), a Jindal Group company, sent a senior executive, facing charges of alleged assault by a female flight passenger, on administrative leave, sources said on Sunday that leading consulting firm EY has likely been hired by the company for the probe into the matter.

According to sources, if found guilty, Dinesh Kumar Saraogi, who is the CEO of Vulcan Green Steel, is likely to be sacked.

The Oman-based company is the steel arm of Vulcan Green, which is part of the Naveen Jindal-led group of companies. Meanwhile, based on a

complaint by the woman's parents, the Bidhannagar City Police in Kolkata on Sunday registered a case against Saraogi under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

In a statement on Saturday, Vulcan Green Steel had said they are concerned about the recent allegations involving a senior executive in our company.

"We recognise the gravity of the situation and are committed to addressing it with utmost seriousness, care, integrity, and urgency," said the company.

It further said that in line with its zero-tolerance policy and to ensure a fair and independent review, "the executive has been placed on administrative

leave".

"To maintain impartiality, we are appointing an independent credible third party to lead the investigation," said Vulcan Green Steel.

On Friday, industrialist Naveen Jindal said that the strictest and necessary action will be taken if the allegation is proven.

The woman had alleged that Saraogi sexually assaulted her on an Etihad flight from Kolkata to Abu Dhabi on Thursday. In a social media post on X, the woman shared the incident that happened with her on the Etihad flight from Kolkata to Abu Dhabi (transit to Boston).

According to the woman, she was seated

next to Saraogi.

"He must be roughly 65 in age and told me he now lives in Oman but travels frequently. He started chatting me up -- very normal conversation about our roots, family, etc. He is from Churu in Rajasthan and both sons are married and settled in the US, etc," she posted. "The conversation moved to what my hobbies are. He asked if I enjoy watching movies and I was like of course.

He then proceeds to tell me he has some movie clips on his phone. He whips out his phone and earphones to show me PORN!" she alleged in a post on X. She was left frozen in "shock and scare."

EPFO adds record 19.5 lakh new members in May as employment rises

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has added 19.50 lakh new members in the month of May this year, which is the highest ever since the first payroll data was issued in April 2018, official figures released on Saturday showed.

The total number of net additions represents a 19.62 per cent increase compared to the corresponding figure for May 2023.

The surge in membership is attributed to increased employment

opportunities, a growing awareness of employee benefits, and the effectiveness of EPFO's outreach programs.

The data indicates that around 9.85 lakh new members have enrolled during May 2024.

There is an increase of 10.96 per cent in the new members from the previous month of April 2024 and 11.5 per cent increase from the previous year, May 2023.

A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 58.37 per cent of the total new members added in May 2024.

This is in consonance with the earlier trend which indicates that most individuals joining the organised workforce are youth, and primarily first-time job seekers.

In addition, the net payroll data for the age group 18-25 for May 2024 is the highest since the first payroll data was published.

The payroll data highlights that approximately 14.09 lakh members exited and subsequently re-joined EPFO.

This figure depicts year-over-year growth of 23.47 per cent compared to May 2023.

Indian startups secured over \$200 million in funding this week

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Indian startup ecosystem saw more than \$200 million in funding this week in 25 deals -- a significant surge from nearly \$116.26 million last week.

Seed funding by home-grown startups grew by 17 per cent this week to \$9.78 million from last week's \$8.33 million.

Fintech unicorn slice secured \$30 million in debt from Neo Asset Management's Credit Opportunities Fund.

Community-led mobility app Namma Yatri



raised \$11 million (about Rs 92 crore) in a pre-Series A funding round

led by Blume Ventures and Antler, with participation from Google and other

investors. Electric Vehicle (EV) company BluSmart raised \$24 million (about Rs 200 crore) in its pre-Series B round. The new funding will help BluSmart expand its operations and build charging infrastructure and assets in key cities.

Fast fashion brand Newme raised \$18 million in its Series A round led by Accel with participation from existing investors, including Fireside Ventures and AUM Ventures.

Lenskart founders Peyush Bansal, Neha Bansal, Amit Choudhary, and Sumeet Kapahi

invested almost \$20 million (about Rs 160 crore) in the omnichannel eyewear retailer. Meanwhile, Google last week said it is working with the MeitY 'Startup Hub' to train 10,000 startups in artificial intelligence (AI), as the tech giant expanded access to its AI models and introduced new language tools for the developers in the country.

According to a new report, over 77 per cent of Indian startups now invest in advanced technologies such as AI, machine learning (ML), internet of things (IoT), and blockchain.

Women's Asia Cup: Harmanpreet and Richa fifties carry India to comfortable win over UAE

AGENCIES
DAMBULLA, JULY 21

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur hit a fine 12th T20I fifty, while wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh got her first half-century in the format to set the base for India's comfortable 78-run over UAE in their second 2024 Women's Asia Cup match at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

On a fresh pitch with wind blowing across, India were in early trouble after losing three wickets in power-play. But Harmanpreet and Richa added 75 runs off 45 balls for the fifth wicket, as India made 201/5, the first time they posted a score above 200 in women's T20Is.

It is also the highest ever score posted in the history of Women's Asia Cup in T20 format, surpassing the 181/4 which was also hit by India against Malaysia in 2022. Harmanpreet's 66 off 47 balls, laced with seven fours and a six, steadied India's ship, as well as become the second leading run-getter in women's T20Is.

Richa applied perfect finishing touches with a whirlwind 64 not out off



29 balls at a strike-rate of 220.68. Her unbeaten 64 is now the highest score by an Indian wicketkeeper in women's T20Is, as well as in the history of Women's T20 Asia Cup.

Richa's blistering knock was laced with 12 fours and a six, as India hit 37 runs off the last two overs. In reply, chasing 202 was never going to be an easy task for UAE, who ended up at 123/7, as all of India's five bowlers picked at least a wicket. India, the defending champions, have now one foot firmly in entering the semi-finals of the ongoing tournament.

Pushed into batting

first, Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma hit three boundaries collectively in the first two overs. But in a bid to loft the ball against Kavisha Egodage, Smriti mistimed her shot and was caught by mid-off in the third over.

Shafali went after UAE's bowling by slog-sweeping and slapping Kavisha for a six and four respectively, followed by collecting three more boundaries in quick succession. But while pulling on a short and wide ball against Samaira Dharnidharka in the fifth over, Shafali got the bottom edge and was caught by the keeper.

Dayalan Hemalatha fell without doing much in last over of power-play - going back to pull Heena Hotchandani, but was beaten for pace and castled. Harmanpreet got three leg-side boundaries, apart from opening her bat face late to get one through the off-side to bring up the half-century of her stand with Jemimah Rodrigues, who was constantly rotating strike.

Though Jemimah fell by lobbing a fuller ball to mid-off against Kavisha, Richa ensured that India didn't let go of its good tempo. She straightaway got into the boundary-hitting spree

by driving Esha Oza for four, followed by lofting Kavisha over long-off for six.

The big over which India were looking for came in the 15th over when Richa pierced the off-side gap, followed by driving, pulling, and square-driving to hit four boundaries in an 18-run over. Richa and Harmanpreet continued to hit boundaries easily before the latter reached her fifty in 41 balls.

Harmanpreet then took two fours and a six off Samaira in the 19th over, before being run-out in the final over. Richa unleashed her big-hitting in the last over by hitting five successive boundaries off Heena, one of which got her a maiden half-century in T20Is in 26 balls, as India also got to a 200+ total for the first time.

UAE got few boundaries in the power-play, but in the absence of strike-rotation, they couldn't get off to a blistering start. Renuka Singh Thakur took out a struggling Theertha Satish, who picked out mid-on to perfection, while Pooja Vastrakar got one to straighten past Rinita Rajith's outside edge

and hit top of off-stump.

Deepti Sharma joined the wicket-takers' list by having Samaira whip straight to mid-wicket in the eighth over. Amidst increasing pressure on UAE, captain Esha held one end aloft with her solid boundaries, including slog-sweeping Deepti for six, followed by lofting and whacking Radha Yadav for consecutive fours.

But her knock came to an end in the 13th over when debutant Tanuja Kanwer enticed her to come out for a drive, but was beaten on the outside edge and stumped by Richa, giving the left-arm spinner her first international wicket on third attempt.

From there, the result became a foregone conclusion as Radha and Deepti took a wicket each before a run-out ended UAE's innings, as India sealed a big win.

Brief Scores: India 201/5 (Harmanpreet Kaur 66, Richa Ghosh 64 not out; Kavisha Egodage 2-36) beat UAE 123/7 (Kavisha Egodage 40 not out, Esha Oza 38; Deepti Sharma 2-23, Tanuja Kanwer 1-14) by 78 runs

Para-shuttler Sukant Kadam urges French consulate to reconsider visa requests of family members



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Ahead of the Paris Paralympics, India's star para-badminton athlete Sukant Kadam has urged France to approve the visa requests of his elder brother and uncle after being rejected by the consulate general of France in Mumbai.

Kadam mentioned that despite having all the necessary documents his acquaintances' visa requests were rejected. He highlighted that the support of family members is crucial for athletes while representing the country at the pinnacle tournament.

"Heartbreaking news:

my big brother and uncle's visas were denied by the @FranceBombay, They've confirmed tickets of the event booked in well advance, and this rejection is a huge blow to their dreams.

I kindly request the consulate to reconsider, as their sole purpose is to support me at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games! @FranceIndia, @MEA-India, @MediaSAI #FamilySupport #VisaHelp @mansukhmandviya," read Kadam's post on X, formerly Twitter.

Sukant has consistently performed well and won medals for the country. In the 2023 Para-Asian Games, he clinched a bronze medal.

Italian defender Riccardo Calafiori close to joining Arsenal: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Arsenal's long chase after Italian defender Riccardo Calafiori seems to be on its final legs as the two clubs have reached an agreement for the talented 22-year old, says report.

According to a report by Sky Sports, Arsenal have reached an agreement to sign Bologna defender Calafiori. The deal is expected to be around 50 million Euro with the add-ons being finalized by the two clubs. The report further stated that the deal had stalled and Real Madrid, Juventus and one Premier League club tried to swoop in but the defender wants to join Mikel Arteta's project.

A player of Calafiori's profile is exactly the kind



of player that Mikel Arteta likes and is quite similar to Jurrien Timber.

He is a left footed center back but can also play left-back. It is expected he will be replacing Oleksandr Zinchenko and Jakob Kiwior in the side and will be slotted in alongside

Gabriel Magalhaes, William Saliba, Ben White and Jurrien Timber.

Calafiori is expected to fly to London next week and will sign the documents that will make him an Arsenal player upon completing his medical tests, the report said.

Alongside Calafiori, Arteta is also looking to bring in reimbursements in the attack and midfield with names like Euro winning duo Nico Williams and Mikel Merino being linked to the Gunners.

It is reported that Arteta is a huge fan of Williams and is his first priority for any attackers incoming. The 22-year old is expected to join FC Barcelona but Arsenal have positioned themselves for a move for him if the move does not materialize.

Atiqa Mir becomes first female racer to win race at Max Challenge International

AGENCIES
LE MANS, JULY 21

Atiqa Mir, the nine-year-old racing sensation created history at the famous and prestigious Le Mans Kart International circuit, by becoming the first female racer in the world to win a race in the Rotax Challenge International Trophy.

She achieved this by winning Race 2 in the Heats of the Micro Max Category.

Atiqa, driving for the championship-winning Dan Holland Racing Team in the Lando Norris kart, was in good form throughout the week. Despite it being her first visit to the legendary Le Mans circuit with no prior practice, Atiqa adapted quickly to



the new brand of kart and set the pace in the practice sessions, consistently topping the grid.

However in times Qualifying she only managed 10th place as she didn't get a clear lap. In the Qualifying Heat 1 Race, Atiqa gained 4 places up to 6th till a racing incident with another driver made her

drop to 9th position.

In race 2, Atiqa demonstrated top pace and maturity in the race, setting a series of fast, consistent lap times and made some great passes to secure first place to create history in the famous Le Mans Circuit. A total of 36 drivers competed in the MicroMax category in the series and

a total of 318 drivers representing 40 nations across all categories participated. This win places Atiqa among an elite list of drivers, including the current F1 champion Max Verstappen, George Russell, and Lando Norris, who have previously tasted success in the Max series en route to their careers in Formula 1.

"I'm so excited and happy to win the race. My first win in Europe, and we have all worked so hard for it. My team, DHR, has integrated me so well, my family has always been by my side, and all my supporters in India and other countries. Hopefully, I will keep this momentum and raise India's flag even higher," said Mir after making history.

In the final race, Atiqa unfortunately was involved in many racing incidents slowing her down and eventually finishing on 12th place, 9.497 seconds behind the leader Joshua Cooke of KR Sport who finished first. Alfie Mair finished second while Austin Oman of Sam Pollitt Racing secured third.

A win at the Le Mans has further cemented Atiqa's position as the best female karting driver in the world in her age group. Next month, Atiqa will be driving at the world-famous Kartmasters in the UK. She is also a nominee at the Iron Dames Young Talent event in Italy later in the month, one of only 11 girls worldwide, only Asian, and the youngest amongst the shortlisted candidates.

Paris Olympics: Quarterfinals first target as hockey team chases second successive medal

AGENCIES
PARIS, JULY 21

India ended a long 41-year-old drought for an Olympic medal in men's hockey in Tokyo and now face a bigger challenge of breaking a long dry spell when it comes to winning medals in back-to-back Games. India last won medals in successive Olympic Games in 1968 and 1972 -- bronze medals in Mexico and Munich.

India is the most successful nation in Olympic hockey having won eight gold medals, six in a row. But those medals came four decades back and the hockey world has changed a lot since those years and winning back-to-back medals is not that easy nowadays.

And India does face a huge challenge when they step on the synthetic turf at Yves-du-Manoir Stadium in the 12-team men's hockey competition.

The first target for Indian men



will be to finish among the top four in the group to qualify for the quarterfinals. The real battle will start after that.

The build-up for India has been quite disappointing, especially the test series in Australia and the eight Pro League matches in Antwerp and London. India lost most of these matches, which resulted in the team finishing seventh among nine teams in the Pro League. That has also resulted in India's ranking plummeting from top-five to seventh in the world in the FIH Rankings.

For the Paris Olympics, the selection committee comprising Dr. R.P Singh, Balwinder Singh, Mohd Riaz, M.M Somaya, Sardar Singh and B.P Govinda has picked

an experienced team with 11 players who were part of the team that won the bronze medal in Tokyo.

Two of them, goalkeeper P.R Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh, who was captain of the team at Tokyo, will be playing in their fourth Olympic Games while five players -- Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Raj Kumar Pal, Abhishek, and Sukhjeet Singh -- will be making their debut.

With the nucleus of the 16-member squad comprising 11 players from Tokyo, the team has the experience to help them face the challenges in Paris.

However, the issue may not be that easy as the team has undergone a transformation under

head coach Craig Fulton -- the approach has changed from a mentality of attack to defense. India have always believed in attack through aggressive Asian-style hockey.

Experts believe that the team should have a strong defense with everyone from forwards to defenders contributing to blocking the opponents' attack in their half itself. But the total defensive approach may not sit well with the players whose mentality is to be aggressive.

India will start their campaign against New Zealand in their opening match on July 27. Besides this match, the clash against Ireland will be quite crucial because winning both of these matches will at least ensure that the teams may finish fourth in their group and qualify for the quarterfinals.

In other matches, India will meet Argentina Only on July 29, face Ireland the next day, defending champions Belgium on August 1, and clash with former winners Australia on August 2.

The groupings:
Pool A: Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, France, South Africa

Pool B: Belgium, India, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand, Ireland.

India's Kush Maini promoted to top in Sprint Race in Budapest, becomes first Indian to win F2 race

AGENCIES
BUDAPEST, JULY 20

Invicta Racing's Kush Maini on Saturday became the first Indian driver to win a Formula 2 race, inheriting the top position in the Sprint Race in the Hungarian Grand Prix after winner Richard Verschoor was disqualified from the results. Following the conclusion of the FIA Formula 2 Sprint Race in Budapest, Trident's Verschoor was disqualified after a technical investigation found an irregularity in his car.

A post-race report by the FIA Technical Delegate indicated that the plank on Car #22 had a maximum thickness of 3.7mm at the most rearward scrutineering hole, below the minimum specified thickness in the 2024 FIA Formula 2 Technical Regulations, the FIA said in a statement on Saturday. It was determined that the plank fitted to Verschoor's car was indeed below the minimum thickness required, therefore breaching Article 3.4.3 of the Technical Regulations, and Car 22



was thus disqualified from the Sprint Race classification.

Campos Racing's Isack Hadjar was also promoted to the final podium position and earned the point for the fastest lap, while Juan Manuel Correa of DAMS Lucas Oil now takes the final point in eighth place. Earlier, Verschoor claimed a well-earned victory at the Budapest Sprint Race, putting in a mature performance after losing the lead early on to claim his fourth win in Formula 2. The Dutch driver was able to pull away from Kush Maini at the end on his way to the top step, with the Invicta Racing driver crossing the line in second ahead of ART Grands Prix's Victor Martins in third.

Maini has remained in

the second position as he started on the front row with pole-sitter Verschoor. Andrea Kimi Antonelli fired up his Softyres from P4 and went around the outside of the Invicta car at Turn 2, to take second.

By the end of Lap 5, Antonelli was over two seconds clear out front, while Maini was beginning to close in on Verschoor for P2, with Martins just behind on his Softys. But as the drivers set off on Lap 11, what had been a lead of over two seconds for Antonelli had now been closed to 1.6s, as the Hard tyre runners began to come into their own.

Further back, Maini had also created a gap of over two seconds to Martins, who was now defending from Dennis Hauger in the battle for P4. On Lap 13 of 28, Hadjar used DRS to get ahead of Bortoletto for P7, while Hauger had dropped back from Martins and had fallen to P6 behind Fittipaldi. Verschoor was now right on the back of Antonelli as they started Lap 16, but the PREMA driver was resisting each attack.

Chief Secretary reviews progress on establishment of KKGs across J&K, KKG Software/Portal

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 21

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review progress on establishment of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) across Jammu and Kashmir as well as development of KKG Software cum portal being developed by Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo informatics (BISAG), Agriculture Production department (APD) and SKUAST.

The meeting, among others, was attended by Principal Secretary APD, Principal Secretary Finance Department, Vice Chancellors of SKUAST-J and SKUAST-K, Mission Director HADP, Secretary Rural Development And Panchayati Raj, Director Horticulture Jammu/Kashmir, Director Agriculture Jammu/Kashmir, Director Sericulture, Deputy Commissioners of all districts and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took progress report from each Deputy Commissioner regarding establishment of KKG in their respective districts. He directed them to establish all the required IT infrastructure at the designated sites at



the earliest so that these centres can be made functional before the launch of KKG Software cum portal.

The Chief Secretary called upon all DCs to notify the list of Krishi Udhymis well in time so that the KKGs can be made functional by the designated time of first week of August.

Dulloo highlighted that the Kisan Khidmat Ghars, envisioned as farmer service centers, aim to revolutionize agricultural support mechanisms by providing a range of essential services under one roof. He added that these centers are poised to become pivotal hubs offering farmers access to agricultural inputs, information on modern farming techniques, market linkages and government schemes.

The Chief Secretary

underlined that establishment of KKGs is an innovative and remarkable step particularly for the farming community, who will have one stop solution for all of their grievances and issues in these centres. He remarked that KKG initiative is part of the government's broader strategy to empower farmers, enhance agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods in Jammu and Kashmir. He added that KKGs will play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between farmers and essential services, thereby promoting sustainable agricultural practices and economic growth in the region.

Highlighting this as a niche project under HADP scheme, the Chief Secretary called upon all the Deputy Commissioners to work tirelessly towards

successful rollout of these centers for the benefit of every farmer in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was informed by the BISAG team about the progress achieved regarding the roll out of KKG Software cum portal across Jammu and Kashmir. They informed that this system would have innate characteristics of farmer registration, sale of agricultural inputs, scheme on boarding mechanism, advisories, skilling, expert consultation, digital marketing, decision support and developing of smart phone applications.

Besides, the Deputy Commissioners also apprised the Chief Secretary of the progress achieved in their respective districts about establishment of KKGs.

J&K Judicial Academy organises 2 day sensitisation program for Judicial Officers

JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 21

Under the patronage of Chief Justice (Acting), High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Tashi Rabstan, and guidance of Chairperson, Governing Committee and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the J&K Judicial Academy organized two day Sensitization Programme on "The relevant provisions of BNSS on arrest, remand and bail with special reference to the Role of Trial Judges in ensuring just, fair and speedy trial (as guaranteed under article 21 of the constitution)".

Being held at its Srinagar Campus, Moominabad, Srinagar, the programme was organised for Judicial Officers (Sr./Jr. Division) across the Kashmir division and UT of Ladakh along with Trainee Civil Judge (Jr. Division) through physical as well as virtual mode.

The training programme was inaugurated by Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh as Chairperson of the Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, in presence of Rajiv Gupta, Member, J&K Special Tribunal, Jammu who was resource person in the opening session of the first day.

Delivering his inaugural address, Justice Sanjeev Kumar highlighted the need and significance of the training programme in view of the coming into force of the three new



criminal laws with effect from first of July 2024. He delved upon some of the salutary changes made in the relevant provisions for arrest, remand and bail.

Elaborating further, Justice Sanjeev Kumar highlighted the conflicting judgments of two coordinate benches of the Supreme Court in Anupam Kulkarni and Vikas Mishra's cases and consequent reference to the larger bench in B Senthil Balaji's case as to whether police could ask for police remand after initial fifteen days of arrest. He said that provisions of section 187 BNSS have now taken care of this question and as per new law, police can seek remand to police custody even after initial 15 days of arrest within the outer limit of first 60 days in offences punishable with death or imprisonment for life or 10 years and 40 days in other offenses.

He further emphasised that in every bail matter, court has the herculean task of balancing the conflicting interests of the three stakeholders; the accused who is facing the charge, the victim who is wronged and interest

of the society at large in maintenance of rule of law for peace and harmony.

The first session was chaired by Rajiv Gupta, who gave a detailed overview of Provisions of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023(BNSS) governing arrest, remand and bail. The learned resource person discussed various principles governing remand to Police/Judicial Custody and those amended provisions for benefit of the participants.

Director, J&K Judicial Academy, Y.P. Bourney, was the resource person in the second session. He discussed that way back in the year 1994, in Joginder Kumar versus State of U.P. emphasised that arrest shouldn't be made simply because police have the power to do so. He added that in the constitutional scheme, paramountcy is given to the liberty and power to arrest must be exercised only as a necessity. Therefore, any person facing accusation of being in conflict with law is first to invoke the bail jurisdiction of court, he added.

He emphasised the judicial approach in the light of precedents and guide-

lines including various judgments of the Supreme Court titled Siddharth vs. State of UP; Satender Kumar Antil vs. CBI, etc.

On Day 2, the working session was chaired by Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, who discussed the role and responsibilities of Trial Judges in ensuring strict compliance with the provisions for arrest and remand by assessing independently the necessity to justify such an arrest before granting a remand and not to go simply by the claim of arresting officer as gospel.

Citing from his personal experiences at bar; both as prosecutor as well as defence lawyer, he discussed various provisions incorporated in the CrPC and now in BNSS. He exhorted upon the judicial officers to adopt a proactive approach and cut the delays by getting the unnecessary witnesses struck off after having a word with the prosecutor.

He further called upon the Judicial Officers to have a meeting with the prosecutor as well as defence lawyer before actual posting of a case for trial.

All the sessions remained very interactive during which all the participants actively participated and shared their experiences, difficulties and also discussed various aspects of the subject topics. They also raised a number of queries which were answered satisfactorily by the resource persons.

Advisor Bhatnagar visits Chandanwari Base camp, reviews arrangements for ongoing holy Shri Amarnathji Yatra

JNEWS SERVICE
PAHALGAM, JULY 21

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar today visited Chandanwari Base camp to oversee the arrangements for the ongoing holy Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

During the visit, Advisor Bhatnagar took comprehensive review of all facilities and infrastructure in place to ensure a safe and smooth pilgrimage experience for devotees.

The Advisor reviewed the arrangements for accommodation, sanitation, water supply and security, directing the concerned officials to maintain highest standards. He emphasized on the



importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of the devotees.

The Advisor lauded the efforts of all stakeholders involved in organizing the Yatra and reiterated the administration's unwavering commitment to providing a memorable and spiritually enriching experience for all devotees visiting the revered Shri Amarnathji shrine.

Advisor Bhatnagar also interacted with senior officials from Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and J&K Police, reviewing the security arrangements and contingency plans in place. He commended the efforts of the officials and personnel involved in the Yatra management.

Meanwhile, Advisor

Bhatnagar also inspected the Base Camp Hospital Chandanwari and took stock of medical facilities available for the devotees.

During inspection, the Advisor assessed the medical facilities available for pilgrims and also took stock of emergency medicines available there. He also interacted with medical staff and took stock of medical equipments to ensure adequate preparedness for any emergencies that may arise during the Yatra.

He directed the staff available at hospital to keep extra stock of medical supplies and other emergency equipments available at the hospital to meet any kind of eventuality.

MVD Bandipora conducts Enforcement Drive on Srinagar-Bandipora Highway

JNEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 21

Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Bandipora, under the guidance of ARTO Bandipora, Anees Ahmad conducted enforcement drive on the Srinagar-Bandipora highway. The enforcement drive was part of ongoing efforts to enhance road safety and enforce traffic regulations in the region.

During the drive, a total of 95 vehicles were inspected. As a result, 20 vehicles were issued on-the-spot e-challans for various violations identified during the checking. Additionally, documents of 15 vehicles were temporarily retained pending verification.

In addition to enforcement actions, drivers were also sensitized about the importance of adher-



ing to road safety norms.

ARTO Bandipora reiterated the department's commitment to prioritising road safety and highlighted ongoing multidimensional efforts aimed at reducing road accidents.

He said, "We are steadfast in our mission to curb traffic violations and ensure safer road conditions for all" and added that "strict measures will continue to be enforced against any infractions to safeguard public safety."

Lok Adalat On Bank Recovery Cases held at Kulgam

JNEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 21

In pursuance to the direction of J&K Legal Services Authority, a Lok Adalat was today held in District Court Complex Kulgam, under the Chairmanship of Pr. District and Sessions Judge Kulgam and Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kulgam, Parvaiz Iqbal.

One Bench was constituted for the Lok Adalat presided over by Ab Qayoom Mir CJM Kulgam assisted by Tabassum Qadir Parray, Sub Judge & Secretary DLSA, Kulgam.

126 cases related to Bank Cases were taken up, out of which 29 cases were amicably settled and an amount of Rs.5106500 was awarded during the Lok Adalat.

Director Horticulture launches plantation drive under HADP in Reasi

JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 21

Director Horticulture Jammu, Chaman Lal Sharma today conducted an extensive tour of Reasi district. During the tour, he launched the plantation drive under the scheme Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in district Reasi by planting sapling of Litchi plant in the field of a farmer namely Bashir Ahmed at village Numain in the presence of Chief Horticulture Officer Reasi Rajinder Lochan, District Horticulture Officer, Horticulture Development Officer & farmers.

During the programme, the Director interacted with the farmers and asked them to adopt the diversification of crops in their fields so that they can earn during the whole



year. He apprised them about the incentives available under various centrally sponsored schemes particularly HADP and other UT sponsored schemes of the department.

He also urged farmers to come forward and avail the benefits on different components viz: Bore Well, Geo-tanks, Drip irrigation, Custom Hiring Centres, etc. for uplift-

ment of their socio-economic status.

Further, the Director inspected the Government Fruit Plant Nursery Dagozi Bagh of district Reasi. He instructed the staff to enhance the production of fruit plants especially Citrus plants in the nurseries so that the department may become self-reliant to meet the demand of the fruit plants of the farmers.

Further, the Director chaired a meeting of the District Officers, Horticulture Development Officers, officials and field functionaries of district Reasi.

Threadbare discussion was held about the ways and means, the department could adopt for the betterment of the poor farmers and removal of the bottlenecks in the implementation of departmental schemes especially HADP. He impressed upon all the officers and officials to expedite the works undertaken for the development of the departmental nurseries.

Earlier, at the outset, Chief Horticulture Officer Reasi, briefed the chair about the progress made under HADP, CAPEX and all other schemes being implemented in the district.

Camps organized for speedy disbursement of payments for acquired land for Border Fencing, BOP

JNEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JULY 21

Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Samba, Abhishek Sharma, two camps were organized by Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Samba, Dr. Kusum Chib, at Suchetpur and Gular in Tehsil Samba.

The objective of organizing these camps was to expedite the disbursement of payments to the rightful claimants whose lands have been acquired for border fencing (135 ft) and



beneficiaries. During the camps, necessary documents were collected from the beneficiaries and their payment formalities were completed.

Dr. Kusum Chib asked

the Lambardars and Chowkidars to inform any beneficiaries who are not currently residing in the village to submit the requisite documents. Additionally, field staff and local residents were instructed to complete the mutation of inheritance in cases where the original beneficiaries had recently passed away.

These initiatives reflect the administration's commitment to ensuring that beneficiaries receive their due payments efficiently and transparently.