

**DENGUE WARNING SIGNS**

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Increased and continuous abdominal pain
- Disseminated bleeding
- Persistent vomiting
- Severe joint and muscle pain
- Severe headache
- Severe fatigue
- Severe restlessness
- Severe skin rashes
- Severe bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## PM Modi to attend Silver Jubilee of Kargil War in Dras on July 26

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 22

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to attend Silver Jubilee, 25th anniversary, of the Kargil war in Ladakh on July 26, officials said here on Monday.

Top officials told the news agency that PM Modi will pay tribute to war heroes at the War Memorial and interact with war widows. The grand celebration to mark the 'Rajat Jyanti' of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1999 war is scheduled to be conducted in Dras from July 24 to 26.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan, Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari and Navy chief

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## Undemocratic attempt made to throttle voice of PM: Modi slams opposition

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Asserting that Parliament is not for 'dal' but for 'desh', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hit out at the opposition, saying that some parties have practised "negative politics" and "misused" Parliament to hide their political failures.

Speaking with the media ahead of the start of Parliament session, Modi said the Union Budget, which will be presented on Tuesday, will set the direction for the journey of the next five years and lay the foundation for fulfilling the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047.

Modi said people have given their verdict in the Lok Sabha polls and now all political parties must fight together for the country for the next five years.

"I want to tell all MPs, they may be of any party,



that from January onwards we fought a pitched electoral battle, we conveyed to the people what we wanted to convey, some showed the way while others misled, but that period is over now. The people have given their verdict," he said.

"Now it is the responsibility of all elected representatives and that of all political parties that we have fought for our respective parties and now for the next five years, we

have to fight for the country and strive for it," Modi said.

The prime minister urged political parties to rise above party lines and make use of the platform of Parliament for the next four to four-and-a-half years.

"In January, 2029, when it will be an election year, then you can go into the poll field, even make use of Parliament for it. Play the games you want to for those six months but till

then, work for empowering the poor, farmers, youth and women by building a movement of people's participation to fulfil the dream of 2047," Modi said.

"I say with a lot of sadness that after 2014, some MPs were elected for 5 years, some for 10 years, but many MPs did not get a chance to talk about their constituency and share their views in Parliament because of the negative politics of some parties that misused Parliament to hide their political failures," he said.

Modi urged all parties to give a chance to first-time MPs to speak in Parliament and give opportunities to them.

"You would have seen that in the first session of this Lok Sabha. An undemocratic attempt was made to throttle the voice of the government

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## LG reviews preparations for celebration of Independence Day-2024

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JUL 22

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Monday chaired a high-level meeting with the Deputy Commissioners, and senior officers of Civil and Police administration to review the preparations for Independence Day Celebration.

The meeting was attended by Sh Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Sh Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Sh RR Swain, DGP; Sh Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Ecology and Environment Department; Sh Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home Department; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners; Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, HODs and senior officials of Security forces, Civil and Police Administration, in person and through virtual mode.

The Lt Governor direct-



ed the District Administrations and the line departments to ensure all arrangements for hassle-free and smooth conduct of the Independence Day events across the UT.

He emphasized the importance of all stakeholders working together to facilitate people's active participation and meticulous planning of activities and events to honour freedom fighters, unsung heroes and the martyrs.

The Lt Governor directed for organising Swachhta Pakhwada from August 01 to August 14, 2024. He also directed the stakeholder departments to launch a 15-day campaign 'Ek Ped Shaheedo Ke Naam' at prominent public places and memorials.

"This campaign, paying respect to martyrs by planting trees, should become a mass

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## J&K Police issues alert on JeM propaganda video, asks people not to share it

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 22

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday issued an alert about a propaganda video by the pro-Pakistan banned terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), cautioning people against sharing it as it may attract charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The JeM has produced a 5 minute and 55 second video with a poster of the Bollywood movie Phantom.

The police said in a statement the clip

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## Army thwarts terror attack on soldier's residence in Rajouri

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 22

Alert soldiers thwarted a major terrorist attack on a home of a soldier in Budhal-Khawas area of Rajouri, an official said Monday.

Officials told news agency, terrorists opened fire at one of temporary army posts, which was operational near the house of a VDG member Parshotam Kumar, a Village Defence Guard (VDG) member in Gundha - a remote village of Rajouri district at around 3:10 hrs and the fire was promptly retaliated by security personnel," official said,



adding, "The attack was given appropriate retaliation by alert security personnel."

Sources said that an army trooper was injured in a brief exchange of fire between terrorists and hospitalized, but there has

been no official confirmation on the same.

This attack follows two high-level meetings chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi in Jammu on Saturday, when they

reviewed the security situation in response to the recent surge in terror attacks in the region. According to sources, security forces initiated a cordon and search operation (CASO) in a village in the Budhal area of Rajouri district after suspected terrorists opened fire at a security picket/post early in the morning.

"Two to three terrorists attempted to assault gallantry soldier Kumar, who was recently awarded the Shaurya Chakra for his bravery several months ago when he killed one terrorist and injured another during a previous

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## Amarnath Yatra sees record-breaking turnout, over 4 lakh pilgrims visit shrine in three weeks

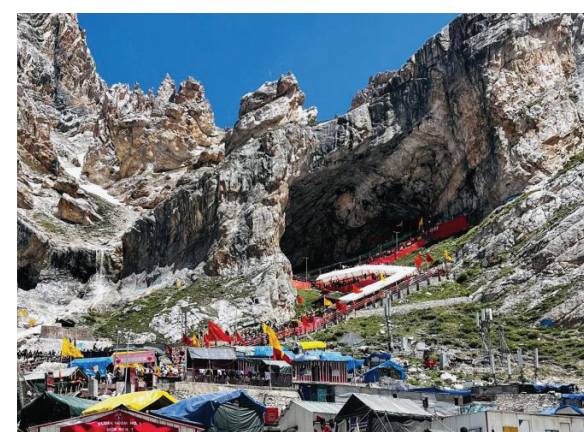
**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JUL 22

More than 4 lakh pilgrims have undertaken the Amarnath Yatra so far this year, surpassing last year's figures with nearly a month still to go before the pilgrimage ends, officials said.

Officials informed the news agency that the 52-day Amarnath Yatra, which began on June 29, has seen a record-breaking turnout, with over 4 lakh pilgrims visiting the Amarnath cave so far.

"Today, 11,755 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine, bringing the total number of visitors since the yatra's start to 407,734. Among the 11,755 pilgrims, there were 7,230 males, 2,597 females, 160 children, 170 Sadhus, one Sadhvi, and 1,597 security forces personnel," they said.

Officials added that a fresh batch of 3,471 pilgrims departed from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri



Niwas early this morning. The convoy, consisting of 114 light and heavy vehicles, travelled towards the twin base camps under tight security.

This batch included 2,620 men, 720 women, three children, 93 Sadhus, 34 Sadhvis (female Sadhus), and one transgender person. Of these, 1,073 pilgrims left for the Baltal base camp at 3:00 AM, and 2,398 headed to the Pahalgam base camp at 3:45 AM. From these base camps, they will continue their journey to

the holy cave. Officials are hopeful that this year the number will surpass half a million in the coming days.

Since the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) assumed control of the yatra in 2001, the number of pilgrims has varied each year: 1.91 lakh in 2001, 1.10 lakh in 2002, 1.70 lakh in 2003, 4 lakh in 2004, 3.88 lakh in 2005, 3.47 lakh in 2006, 2.96 lakh in 2007, 5.33 lakh in 2008, 3.81 lakh in 2009, 4.55 lakh in 2010, 6.21 lakh in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## GoI working on 'mission mode' to explore, produce Lithium in J&K: Reddy

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 22

Union Minister for Geology and Mining Kishan Reddy today said that the government of India is collaborating with J&K State Government to explore and produce Lithium deposits identified in Reasi district of Union Territory.

Responding to a query raised by Shiv Sena MP from Mumbai South Lok Sabha Constituency in Maharashtra, the Union Minister informed the Rajya Sabha, as per news agency, that Geology and Mining department is collaborating with J&K State Government to further explore the lithium deposit identified in J&K.

Earlier, in February 2023, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) discovered 5.9 million tonnes of lithium in the Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi district in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## J&K's budget to be unveiled in Parliament today

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JUL 22

Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory's budget for 2024-25 would be unveiled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

As per news agency, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would present a statement of estimated receipts and expenditure of Jammu & Kashmir for

2024-25 today (Tuesday) shortly after presenting the Union budget for the ongoing fiscal.

On February 5 this year, Rs 59,634 crore interim budget for J&K was presented in the Parliament by Niramala Sitharaman.

Sources told KNO that the total budget estimates for J&K are expected to be Rs 1.18 lakh crore. Of which the revenue expen-

diture is estimated to be Rs 80 lakh crore and capital expenditure is likely Rs 38 lakh crore. This would be the fifth consecutive budget of Jammu & Kashmir in the Parliament after imposition of Central rule in the erstwhile state. The budget document is being presented in the Parliament as J&K is currently without its own Assembly. Since June 19, 2018 when

BJP withdrew support to Mehbooba Mufti-led government, J&K is without an elected government.

After the collapse of the PDP-BJP government, the budget for 2019-20 was approved by then J&K Governor as head of the State Administrative Council. After downgrading of J&K into a UT in August 2019, its budgets were presented in the Parliament.

## One person dies, three injured in house collapse in Reasi

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 22

One person died and three others were injured when a Kucha house collapsed suddenly in Reasi District on Monday.

Official sources said that at about 1730 hours, a newly constructed Kacha house belonging to one Kewal Krishan son of Shankar Dass collapsed at Sujandhar Bhomag, resulting in the death of



one person namely Narinder Singh son of Hans Raj, a local. Further, they said, three more local residents were injured. They have been identified as Kuldeep Singh son of Hans Raj, Mohd Akram son Mohd Yousaf and Purab Singh son of Shambu Nath. Injured persons were shifted to District Hospital Reasi for treatment.

A senior police officer said that a case has been registered in this regard.

## Chlorine Gas leaks at MES Filtration Plant in Udhampur, no casualties reported

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JUL 22

A chlorine gas leak occurred at a Military Engineering Services (MES) filtration plant in the Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday. No casualties were reported so far in the incident.

As per reports available with the news agency, the leak occurred near the School and Karan Nagar locality.

Fire and Emergency Department Udhampur, Jammu and

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## Only BJP will form next govt in J&K: Raina

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JULY 22

Only BJP will form the next government in Jammu & Kashmir, said BJP President Ravinder Raina, while he was addressing the party's Kissan Sammelan at Hiranagar.

Ravinder Raina, President, J&K BJP, along with Dr. Nirmal Singh, former Deputy Chief Minister, was the chief speaker in the Kissan Sammelan, held at Kunde Chak in Hiranagar Assembly Constituency under Kathua District. Former MLA Kuldeep Raj, President Kissan Morcha S Sarabjit Singh Johal, Abhinandan Sharma, Rachpal Verma, Rajinder Bakshi, Rahul Hans, Rajesh Mehta, Karan Attri, Raj Singh, Ravi Kumar Sharma, Bikram Singh, Diwaan Singh were the



other prominent present. Taking a jibe at the leaders, who failed to perform in the recently held Parliament elections, Ravinder Raina said that residents of Jammu & Kashmir approve of the policies of Modi government and stand united in favor of BJP. He said that the voters have fully cleared their intentions to support BJP in the upcoming elections and that only BJP will form the next government in

Jammu & Kashmir. Ravinder Raina said that during the last 10 years, Modi government has reached the house of the needy people to help them bail out of their neglected and oppressed position due to the wrong policies of NC, PDP, and Congress. He said that people no longer trust these parties now, and have negated the family-based politics of these parties in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

## DC Kupwara reviews progress in implementation of PM Vishwakarma Scheme

J I NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JULY 22

In order to review the progress in implementation of PM Vishwakarma scheme, launched to uplift traditional Artisans and Craftspeople, a meeting was held here today under the chairpersonship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan.

The DDC took a first-hand appraisal about the progress made so far with regard to registration of Artisans (Vishwakarmas), verification process, onboarding, capacity building of stakeholders and monitoring & evaluation mechanism in place.

On the occasion, the DC was apprised that as of date, as many as 15610 applications have been received in the District at Gram Panchayat and ULB zone level for registra-



tion under Vishwakarma scheme. 10588 applicants have been recommended at Stage-1, 5329 applicants recommended at stage-2, and similarly 4041 applicants have been approved at stage-3.

It was given out in the meeting that capacity building of 1400 artisans is going on at different Polytechnic colleges and NCDC approved centers across the district.

It was revealed in the meeting that 543 appli-

cants/artisans applied for loan and loans in favour of 190 artisans were sanctioned.

The chair also took stock of the different technical issues on PM Vishwakarma Portal and directed the concerned officers to establish communication channels with MSME.

On the occasion, the DDC impressed upon the officers to clear all pendency within a timeline of 10 days to ensure coverage of the artisans.

She asked the Officers of all line Departments to be more practical in successful implementation of the scheme so that the target group is benefitted for their overall socio-economic development.

Pertinent to mention that PM Vishwakarma scheme offers a range of benefits including toolkit incentive of Rs 15,000, training to artisans, Rs 500 per day during training, collateral-free credit support up to Rs 1 lakh (first tranche) and Rs 2 lakh (second tranche) at a concessional interest rate of 5%, incentives for digital transactions and marketing support.

ADDC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmed Bhat; ACP Kupwara, General Manager DIC, LDM, BDOs, Superintendent ITI Kupwara, CSC Manager and other concerned were present in the meeting.

## DC Kathua reviews progress in weeding out ineligible NFSA beneficiaries

J I NEWS SERVICE  
KATHUA, JULY 22

In a concerted effort to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiary data, Deputy Commissioner Kathua Dr Rakesh Minhas chaired a meeting today at the DC Office complex to review the progress in the ongoing exercise of weeding out of ineligible beneficiaries. The meeting held in the conference hall was attended by ADDC Kathua Surinder Mohan, ACR Kathua Vishav Pratap Singh, ACD Akhil Sadotra, AD FCS & CA, AC Kathua, Tehsildars, BDOs and TSOs.

Dr. Minhas took a first-hand appraisal of the achievements made so far in the purification of the NFSA beneficiary list and the elimination of ineligible beneficiaries as notified by the government. He emphasized the importance of coordination between the officers of the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) department, BDOs and Tehsildars in conducting thorough door-to-door



surveys. "These surveys are essential for the accurate identification and subsequent removal of ineligible names from the NFSA data", he added.

The DC highlighted the crucial roles Panchayat Secretaries and Patwaris will play in ensuring the campaign's success, aiming to achieve error-free data. During the meeting, it was revealed that data from over 1.5 lakh families would be authenticated in this process, with the target completion date set for July 28th. The proactive involvement of all stakeholders is crucial for meeting this deadline.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the officials to ensure the exclusion of all government

employees and other ineligible categories from the NFSA beneficiary list, as per the government's notification. He stressed that this is essential to prevent any misuse of benefits and ensure that the scheme's resources are utilized efficiently and effectively, reaching only the genuine beneficiaries.

To ensure a seamless and efficient execution, Deputy Commissioner entrusted ACR, ACD and AD FCS&CA Kathua with the responsibility of fostering synergy among all field functionaries. By working in harmony, this collaborative effort will guarantee the accuracy and integrity of NFSA data, ultimately benefiting the district's rightful beneficiaries.

## DC Srinagar reviews arrangements for celebration of Independence -Day, 2024

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

In order to ensure smooth celebration of forthcoming Independence-Day, 2024 in the District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Monday convened a meeting of Officers from Civil and Police Administration at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, here.

At the outset, the DC reviewed in detail the arrangements/preparatory activities to be put in place by the respective Departments for seamless celebration of the national event, as Srinagar is hosting the main event on August 15, 2024 across Jammu and Kashmir.

The DC emphasized the importance of National event and instructed that adequate sensitization of staff, pertaining to the significance and protocol of the day, particularly the flag code is imparted to their staff by District Officers.

He highlighted the need for meticulous planning and seamless execution of all arrangements to ensure a grand celebration of Independence Day-2024.

On the occasion, the DC directed the Officers of all concerned Departments to work out a comprehensive plan in order to ensure all necessary preparations are made well in advance with regard to the March Past Parade, Cultural programmes, commentary proceeding



on the event, Dais flowering and other related arrangements and proper synchronization of events.

The DC also took stock of the arrangements and other facilities to be put in place with regard to Seating arrangements, Transport & Parking facilities, Electricity & Water supply, Medical & First Aid, Fire and Emergency services, installation of PAS, erection of hoardings, catering arrangements, installation of LED screens and their proper positioning, hoisting of National Flag and Illumination of Government Buildings.

Besides Media management, Security related matters, issuance of security passes, and entry of VVIPs, VIPs and other participants were also discussed threadbare.

The DC strictly directed all the sectoral and District Officers to ensure necessary arrangements for flag hoisting at their respective offices, besides in schools, colleges, universities and other institutions. Concerned from KPDCL were advised to ensure illumination of Government buildings and prominent places.

With regard to invitation cards and seating arrangements, the DC asked the Officers to conduct a comprehensive exercise to make sure that invitation cards are delivered to all invitee dignitaries well in advance, besides proper seating arrangement made in accordance to the precedence of protocol.

The DC stressed on making fool-proof security arrangements in and around the Stadium to ensure hassle-free celebrations of the function.

He also assessed the parking facilities for the dignitaries and other participants coming to attend the function, besides for vehicles used to ferry participants to the main venue.

Similarly, the SMC authorities were tasked to ensure better arrangements for sanitation and cleanliness in and around the stadium particularly on full dress rehearsal and on the occasion of the main event of Independence Day-2024. He also emphasised that all washrooms are functioning properly, besides establishing mobile toilets

at the venue on August 15.

The DC also stressed on making elaborate arrangements to tackle weather vagaries, if any caused on the occasion of full-dress rehearsal proceedings and the mega event on 15th August.

He asked for making adequate transport arrangements for ferrying of participant school students, cultural artists, NCC cadets, contingents and other persons on August 15, in addition to their boarding and lodging facilities.

During the meeting, the DC instructed the concerned to organise essay writing and other competition on Independence Day.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Zahoor Ahmad Mir; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria; GM JKRTC, Nodal Principal Colleges Kashmir, RTO Kashmir, Joint Commissioner SMC, SDM (East), Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Director Information (PR) Kashmir, Deputy Director Protocol, S.E M&HE Deptt Srinagar, SP T Com Kashmir, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, MS SKIMS, MS SMHS, Ex. Engineers of PHE, KPDCL (ED II & ED III), Officers of R&B, PHE, PDD, Revenue, Sports, Culture Academy, Fire Services, FCS&CA, AA&CL, security and traffic besides other line Departments participated in the meeting.

## DC Jammu reviews Cooperatives, Blocks development initiatives

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 22

Deputy Commissioner, Sachin Kumar Vaishya chaired a review meeting on the development of cooperative societies in Jammu district, focussing on the operational status and performance of cooperative societies.

Deputy Registrar Cooperatives, Jammu, provided a presentation detailing the current state of cooperatives. The DC inquired about the number of functional and non-functional cooperatives and emphasised the necessity of auditing these societies to ensure transparency.

Highlighting the importance of eco-fertilisers, he stressed promoting sustainable practices within the fertiliser production sector and expanding Jan Aushadhi Kendras for



affordable medicines.

The discussion also touched upon creating and sustaining Farmer Producer Organisations with the DC urging efforts towards building profitable and sustainable cooperative ventures.

In a subsequent meeting addressing rural development, Sachin Kumar, alongside Block Development Officers, reviewed progress across various blocks. Assistant Commissioner Panchayat Shahzada Noor-ul-Ain presented a detailed report. The DC called for innovative ideas from BDOs, particularly in

areas such as block development, water conservation, rainwater harvesting and eco-tourism.

The meeting also prioritised plastic waste management and establishing Community Sanitary Complexes.

Other attendees included Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Dr. Vikas Sharma, Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer Vinod Kundal and DHO Dr Samina Nazir besides other concerned officers.

## DC Bandipora chairs meeting to address Revenue matters

J I NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, JULY 22

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel Ur Rehman on Monday convened a meeting to address various revenue related matters, including the ongoing digitization of land records, freezing of Jamabandies, Issuance of Fards and other revenue services in the district.

The primary focus of the meeting was to assess the progress of digitization of land records, particularly freezing of Jamabandies, Issuance of Fards, etc, and addressing the critical gap issues and bottlenecks. The DC emphasised the need for swift resolution of pending issues related to digitization and land acquisition issues. Furthermore, the DC urged Tehsildars to expedite the digitisation of land records, a critical step in modernizing and streamlining land-related processes.

Additionally, he urged the Assistant Commissioner Revenue to identify and report any potential



bottlenecks that may be impeding the progress of the updation of land records.

This meeting underscored the commitment of the local administration to ensure the timely and efficient completion of the modernization of land records and providing all revenue related services

within PSGA timelines.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Umar Shafi Pandith; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Shabir Ahmed Wani; Tehsildars of Bandipora, Sumbal, Hajin whileas Sub Divisional Magistrates of Sumbal and Gurez joined through virtual mode.

District Adm  
Kishtwar condoles  
demise of Bharat  
Singh Manhas,  
Secretary JKAACL  
J I NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, JULY 22

The district administration Kishtwar today convened a condolence meeting in honour of Bharat Singh Manhas, Secretary Jammu Kashmir Academy for Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL), who died after a prolonged illness.

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Dr. Devansh Yadav, ADC Kishtwar Pawan Kotwal, CPO Kishtwar Shahnawaz Bali, ACD Kishtwar Phulail Singh, AD FCS&CA/DIO Kishtwar Shafiq Keen and other District and sectoral officers besides officials of DC Office Complex Kishtwar offered homage and tributes to the deceased on behalf of the district administration.

The officers and officials observed two minutes of silence and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and courage to the bereaved families to move on with life.

DC Kulgam  
reviews progress  
of RDSS Works  
J I NEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, JULY 22

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today convened a meeting to review the ongoing Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) works in the district.

During the meeting, the Chief Manager of Power Grid briefed the chair on the status of projects. The DC instructed concerned departments and other stakeholders to cooperate with the executing agency to ensure timely completion and implementation of the scheme.

During the meeting it was informed that with a project cost of Rs 126.9 crore, the RDSS scheme aims to install 900 new distribution transformers and 500 km of LT ABC, aiming to reduce AT&C losses in District Kulgam.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, Bashir Ahmad Wani; JDP, Zahid Sajjad; ACR, Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, Tehsildars, Ex. Engineer KPDCL, Senior General Manager of Power Grid as well as representatives from R&B, NHAI, PMGSY, I&FC and others concerned.

Power  
shutdown  
J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 22

Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to Industry Bhagthali and its adjoining areas will remain affected on July 24 from 6 am to 12 noon.

## DDC Rajouri reviews implementation of FPO scheme



J I NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, JULY 22

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

During the meeting, he emphasized the impor-

tance of FPOs in promoting sustainable agriculture practices, improving market access, and enhancing farmers' livelihoods. He stressed that FPOs are crucial for reducing production costs, increasing productivity, and facilitating better market linkages to enhance farmers' income.

The DDC directed the CBBOs to adopt a comprehensive approach to support farmers and ensure

successful FPOs in the district. He emphasized proper handholding of farmers, doubling farming income, and directed CBBOs to ensure effective functioning of FPOs.

He also instructed CBBOs to calendarize activities for farmers' welfare, create awareness about schemes implemented by different departments for farmers and work diligently to provide proper training

to farmers. Moreover, the DDC also stressed upon utilising the services of KVK in the district for conduct of various agriculture related training programs.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, Sohan Singh; District Development Manager NABARD, Chander Bhagat; Lead District Manager, Sanjeev Bhasin and the representatives from the CBBOs.

## Food Safety Officer Ramban conducts inspection of Langers

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 22

In order to ensure the safety and quality of food served to pilgrims during Shri Amarnathji Yatra, Food Safety Officer Block Ramban, Balbeer Singh and Food Analyst MFTV Javed Haseeb today conducted a thorough inspection of langers at Chanderkote.

During the inspection, the Food Safety Officer checked the hygiene and sanitation conditions of the langers, and also ensured that all food handlers have undergone proper medical checkups and are wearing proper uniforms and gloves.

They collected and tested 40 Food samples through MFTV (MOBILE Food testing van) all samples were found to confirm the standard under FSSR. Imparted training programs and awareness programe regarding Food safety, Good manufacturing practice/Good Hygiene practice and Save food share Food.

Additionally, the Food Safety Officer in presence of Mukesh Sharma Nodal Officer Langers conducted training sessions for the Sevadars (volunteers) on proper food handling, preparation, and serving practices to prevent food contamination and ensure food safety. The inspection and training aim to provide safe and wholesome food to the pilgrims and ensure a healthy and safe yatra experience.

Moreover, the Food safety team also tested 10 samples through MFTV in the Chanderkote market out of which one sample was found sub standard. The Food Safety officer lifted two enforcement samples and one Surveillance samples for Analysis.

## Shabnam Kamili convenes Public Outreach Programme in Ganderbal

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDERBAL, JULY 22

As part of government's ambitious public outreach program, Secretary ARI and Trainings Department, Shabnam Kamili, today visited Ganderbal and convened a Public Darbar to assess and address the issues and grievances of the people.

The event, held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Manigam, saw substantial public participation, including DDC member Lar and delegations from various adjoining areas. These delegations presented their grievances and demands, seeking speedy redressal.

Key issues and demands raised by the participants included timely completion of ongoing water schemes, widening of Beehama Pandach road, macadamization of Chattergul Bala road, identification



of new tourist spots in the district, additional accommodation for High School Waliwar, establishment of a bank branch at Theeru, drainage for irrigation purposes, upgradation of Baba Canal, lift irrigation for Arhama and Manigam areas and completion of various developmental projects in the district.

Several representatives thanked the administration for timely completion of several vital projects in the district.

The camp was attended by Additional District

Development Commissioner, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gulzar Ahmad; ACR, GM DIC, ACD, CPO, Executive Engineers of various engineering wings, Tehsildar Lar, and other officers from the district administration.

The Secretary commended the locals for their participation in the public darbar and assured them that the current administration is working tirelessly to ensure their socio-economic empow-

erment.

After giving a patient hearing to the grievances and demands, she sought immediate response from the concerned District Officers present during the Grievance Redressal Camp.

In her address, Shabnam Kamili assured the participants that their grievances and demands would be taken up with the concerned authorities for appropriate action. She also encouraged the officers to engage actively with the public, providing more accountable and responsive governance at their doorstep.

The Secretary suggested that minor issues should be raised in Gram Sabhas and resolved at the district level whenever possible saying that the BDOs should prepare a development plan from the grassroots level, involving locals.

## MSME DFO organises one-week Management Development Program with special focus on GeM Portal

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Field Office Branch MSME DFO Srinagar, in collaboration with Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF), NIT Srinagar, commenced a week-long specialized Management Development Program from today.

The program, aimed at enhancing Business Marketing Management skills with a focus on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Portal, witnessed enthusiastic participation from MSMEs in both manufacturing and service sectors, along with several start-ups.

In his welcome address, Shahid Abbas Mir, CEO of GIF, emphasized the critical need for innovation in today's business landscape and highlighted GIF's ongoing efforts in mentoring start-ups.

Dr. Saad Parvez, Principal Investigator at GIF, underscored the significance of academia-industry collaboration, citing successful implementations of MSME schemes over the past seven years and notable innovations like the saffron processing machine at MSME Incubation Centre.

Assistant Director



MSME, Saheel Alaqband in his keynote address stressed the importance of MSMEs familiarizing themselves with various marketing tools, particularly highlighting the indispensable role of the GeM Portal.

He outlined the tailored nature of the training for MSMEs, which includes topics such as Digital Marketing, SEO, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). He also delivered a detailed presentation on the strategic importance of IPR in the global market.

Afaq Qadri, President of the Industrial Association at Integrated Textile and Handicrafts Park urged MSMEs to embrace adaptability in the face

of industry changes and emphasized the need for GIF to extend its facilities and consultancy services to the broader industry. He acknowledged the exceptional infrastructure at NIT Srinagar and called for its accessibility to all MSMEs in a streamlined manner.

The training session was led by Aijaz Amin, who conducted an in-depth session on navigating the GeM Portal, providing practical insights into its utilization for business growth.

The meeting concluded with recognizing the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in fostering innovation and strengthening the capabilities of MSMEs in the region.

## DC Kulgam reviews progress & implementation status of PM-KUSUM scheme



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KULGAM, JULY 22

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan Monday chaired a meeting to review the progress and implementation of Prime Minister Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Uthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) in the district. During the meeting, the DC emphasized the importance of extending the benefits of the PM-KUSUM scheme to the maximum number of

farmers.

He instructed the stakeholder departments to receive applications and documents of beneficiaries promptly, and additionally directed them to identify a village for 100 percent saturation under the PM-KUSUM scheme, ensuring comprehensive implementation and maximum benefit for the local farming community.

The meeting was attended by JDP Zahid Sajjad, DAO, LDM and other officers.

## DC Kathua reviews execution of works under District Capex Budget-2024-25



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KATHUA, JULY 22

Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas chaired a District Capex budget 2024-25 review meeting held in the DC office complex today.

At the outset of the meeting, CPO Kathua asked each BDO to complete the estimation of all projects at the earliest so that administrative accords and subsequent tendering of all the projects and plans can be completed at earliest possible time.

The DC said this year focus of Capex Plan was to make substantial development assets, especially in the Health and Education Sector and timely

execution of the works will help in achieving tangible goals. The DC asked the CPO to identify locations one in each block for new handpumps in consultation with respective BDOs. He further asked the BDOs to keep budget of Rs 50000 out of BDC grants for the repair of defunct handpumps.

The DC further directed BDOs to draft plans related to Ground water and PDD projects in consultation with respective departments so that proper allocation of funds besides their completion can be achieved in current fiscal.

Among others XEN REW, BDOs, and other district officers and officials attended the meeting.

## Empowerment initiative in Ramban under Mission Shakti

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JULY 22

Under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, and the supervision of DSWO Rahul Gupta, a pivotal empowerment initiative was executed as part of Mission Shakti. This program, designed to elevate awareness and provide critical support to women and children, witnessed substantial local participation. The initiative's core objective is to

reinforce education, health, and safety in alignment with the goals of the Department of Social Welfare. The event showcased activities aimed at fostering a protective and nurturing environment for women and children, emphasizing the administration's commitment to community development. The DSWO highlighted the importance of utilizing available resources and support systems, urging the community to engage in this transformative process. His leadership

is instrumental in driving the district towards exemplary social welfare standards. Gender Specialist Muzaima played a crucial role in ensuring gender perspectives were integrated into the program, contributing significantly to its success. This empowerment initiative marks a milestone in Ramban's journey towards becoming a model district in social welfare, reflecting the administration's resolve to foster a secure and progressive community.

## Ensure there is no shortage of drinking water: DC Bandipora

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
BANDIPORA, JULY 22

In wake of the prevailing dry weather conditions in the Union Territory of J&K, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman today directed officers of Jal Shakti, Irrigation and Flood Control and Mechanical Irrigation departments to take all necessary measures to ensure adequate supply of drinking water across district Bandipora.

Chairperson, District Development Council, Bandipora, Abdul Gani Bhat, and Deputy Commissioner Bandipora jointly convened a meeting today at VC Room of Mini-Secretariat, Bandipora, to assess the current situation regarding the



availability of drinking water and irrigation facilities across the district.

In the meeting, DC said he had received complaints from various villages about insufficient drinking water supply and lack of irrigation facility for the crops.

The DC instructed Ex. Engineer PHE Bandipora/Sumbal to hire 10 additional water tankers for the augmentation of drinking

water supply across the various water stressed areas of the district. It was given out that Five tankers each have been approved for Sub Division Sumbal and Sub Division Bandipora under SDRF component to mitigate the shortage of drinking water in various areas like Malangam, Pethkoot, Guzarab, Nowgam, Shilvat and other areas, as and when required.

He asked Sub Division-

al Magistrates, Executive Engineers of PHE, MID, I&FC to review the situation regularly and address all drought-related complaints, assuring them there is no dearth of funds to address issues related to drinking water supply.

He said officials must work in close coordination to ensure effective management of the situation and be proactive in addressing the public demands and concerns.

The DC also instructed officials of the Mechanical Irrigation Department to use Mobile irrigation pumps for watering the crops and ensure regular supply of irrigation facilities. He directed for the lifting of water from the nearby sources by using gen sets and assured that

fuel requirements in this regard shall be provided by the district administration.

The concerned departments were also told to cover all abandoned or defunct bore wells so as to avoid any untoward incidents.

He stressed that only clean and fresh sources of water should be used to maintain the hygiene and to prevent water-borne diseases.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Umar Shafi Pandith; ACR, Shabir Ahmed Wani; Ex. Engineers of PHE and I&FC, CPO Bandipora and virtually by Chief Engineer Jal Shakti, SDM Sumbal, SDM Gurez, besides other officials.

## YSS Ganderbal hosts series of Sports Activities

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDERBAL, JULY 22

The Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Ganderbal is championing a vibrant sports culture throughout the district with a series of dynamic events.

The department successfully organized a zonal level football competition for girls under 17 at MM Stadium, Ganderbal today.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from all zones of the district, culminating in a thrilling final where Zone Ganderbal defeated Zone Kangan with a 2-1 score, securing the trophy.

A similar football competition for girls under 19 was held at GCOPE Gadoora, Ganderbal. In this event, Zone Ganderbal once again emerged victorious, defeating Zone Kangan with a decisive 2-0 victory.

Meanwhile, interschool zonal level cricket competitions for boys under 17 were organized by Zone Ganderbal, Zone Kangan, and Zone Tullamulla. Zone Ganderbal hosted the event at MS Fatehpura, while Zone Kangan conducted Pool A at BMS Prang and Pool B at the Zonal Office Ground in Kijpara.

Zone Tullamulla successfully organized their event at BHSS Safapora. Today marked the successful commencement of these events in the respective zones, with the remaining matches scheduled for tomorrow. YSS Ganderbal remains committed to fostering a robust sports culture among the youth. The department strives to involve every school child in sports activities, promoting an active lifestyle and holistic development.

## DLSA Ganderbal organizes Legal Awareness Program for Prisoners



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDERBAL, JULY 22

On the directions of Justice Tashi Rabstan, the Chief Justice (Acting), High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal today organized a legal awareness program for prisoners at the Subsidiary Jail Dignibal, Ganderbal.

The program was aimed to educate the prisoners on their legal rights and procedures.

The programme was held under the supervision of Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary, J&L Legal Services Authority and Ritesh Kumar Dubey, Chairman DLSA (Pr. District & Sessions Judge)

Ganderbal, and under the guidance of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Ganderbal.

Tanveer Ashraf, Assistant LADC, Ganderbal, a legal expert, imparted awareness, clarifying doubts and providing valuable insights to the prisoners.

He explained the process and benefits of plea bargaining to the prisoners, enabling them to understand the option of negotiating with the prosecution. The prisoners were made aware of their fundamental rights, including access to legal aid, medical facilities, and humane treatment. He also informed them about the bail provisions and the role of Under Trial Review Committees in expediting the trial process.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
For and on behalf of President of India, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Northern Railway, DEMU Car Shed Budgam invites Single Tender through e-tendering system from OEM i.e. Medha Servo Drives Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad for the under mentioned work.	
Name of the Work	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for IGBT Based 3-Phase MEMU at DEMU car Shed Budgam for a period of two years.
Estimated Cost of Work (Approximate)	₹61,17,120/- (Rs. Sixty One Lakh Seventeen thousand One Hundred and Twenty only)
Tender Security Amount (Earnest Money Deposit)	₹1,22,400/- (Rs. One Lakh Twenty Two Thousand Four Hundred Only)
Tender document available for sale on website	22.07.2024
E-Tender closing Date & Time	12.08.2024 at 15:00 hrs.
Date and time of opening of E-Tender on IREPS website	12.08.2024 at 15:15 hrs.
Contract Period	24 Months
Type of Tender	Single Tender (Single Packet System)
Validity of Tender	60 Days from the last date of submission of tender
Website	https://www.ireps.gov.in/
Tender No.: 05-2024-DEMU BDGM Dated : 22.08.2024	2220/2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

## Successful Yoga session organized by HUDCO at PM SHRI KV No.1 Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 22

Today, the students and faculty of PM SHRI KV No.1 Jammu experienced a refreshing and enlightening Yoga session organized by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO). The event, held in the school's auditorium, was marked by the enthusiastic participation of more than 250 students.

The session began with a warm welcome from Ms. Sandhya Sharma, the venue teacher, who set a positive tone for the day and extended a special welcome to the esteemed guests, including the Chief Guest for the day, the Regional Chief, and the Guest of Honour, Mr. Amit Walter, Venue Principal.

The event commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Chief Guest, symbolizing knowledge and enlighten-



ment. This was followed by a green welcome of the dignitaries.

The highlight of the event was the yoga session conducted by Dr. Latika, a renowned yoga instructor. Dr. Latika guided the students and faculty through various yoga postures and breathing exercises, promoting relaxation and mindfulness. The session was both invigorating and calming, leaving the participants feeling rejuvenated.

The event concluded with heartfelt thanks extended to the Chief

Guest, Guest of Honour, the Principal, and all the teachers for their support and presence. The students were also commended for their enthusiastic participation, and everyone was encouraged to carry the calm and positive energy from the session into their daily lives.

The Yoga session organized by HUDCO was a resounding success, leaving a lasting impact on all participants. PM SHRI KV No.1 looks forward to more such enriching events in the future.

## SOTTO J&K organizes Poster Competition on Organ Donation in Kashmir division

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 22



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JULY 22

In the Organ Donation month of July 2024, Jammu and Kashmir Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (SOTTO) with message "Angdaan Jan Jagrukta Abhiyaan" organized a Poster Making Competition at Florence Paramedical and Nursing Institute, Nai Basti in Anantnag.

Students from various Nursing Colleges of Kashmir Division namely Florence Paramedical and Nursing Institute, Nai Basti; SET Paramedical and Nursing Institute; Bij Behara, Anantnag; Government Nursing College/GNM, Pulwama; South Kashmir Paramedical and Nursing College, Kulgam; Institute of Nursing, University of Kashmir, South Campus, Fatehgarh

Anantnag; Government Nursing College, Anantnag and Dolphin Nursing College, Pulwama, painted creatively a message of organ donation through their art.

Dr Sanjeev Puri, Joint Director SOTTO J&K provided insights into the National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP) by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to promote organ donation and transplantation in India.

Mr. Irfan Ahmad Lone, Transplant Coordinator SOTTO encouraged the audience to actively participate in the organ donation pledge drive under Ayushman Bhav.

Dr Manzoor Ahmad Mir, HOD Bio Resources, University of Kashmir, Srinagar and Dr Saima Jeelani, Assistant Professor, Govt. Nursing College

Anantnag motivated the students to help others in this noble act, so that someone can live a life of happiness.

Sana Sofi from Florence Paramedical and Nursing Institute, Nai Basti, Dist Anantnag secured first position, Mehak Majeed from Dolphin Nursing College, Pulwama secured second position and Syed Andleeb from Institute of Nursing, University of Kashmir, South Campus, Fatehgarh Anantnag secured third position in the competition.

Mrs Aisha Akhter Principal Florence Paramedical and Nursing Institute, Nai Basti, Dist Anantnag managed the event and thanked the dignitaries, faculty and students from the participating colleges for such competition on this social cause.

## Indian Army organizes Guidance Meet with Agniveer Aspirants at Peda, Rajouri



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, JULY 22

The youth of remote areas of Peda, Rajouri showed great inclination towards joining the Armed Forces, however lack of guidance & awareness of Agniveer Scheme is proving to be an impediment in enabling these youth to join the Armed Forces. The purpose of the meet was to motivate & educate the youth to get them selves

enrolled through Agniveer Scheme. This event was a noble undertaking by the Army Camp to train & motivate the youth of the area, thereby, further strengthening the bond between Indian Army and Awam. To make the event more fascinating, a friendly cricket match was organised followed by an interactive session for the young Agniveer aspirants. A total of 60 young aspirants participated in the said event.

## NCC 'C' Certificate Examination for Cadets of Ladakh Region conducted

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
LADAKH, JULY 22

The NCC 'C' Certificate Examination for the training year 2023-24 for cadets of 1 Ladakh Bn NCC was successfully conducted at EJM College, Leh, on 20 Jul and 21 Jul 24.

The examination was conducted in two parts, practical exam was held on 20 Jul 24 and written exam on 21 Jul 24. The practical exam included tests in drill, weapon training, map reading, communication and in field & battle craft. The written exam was a three-hour paper that assessed the theoretical knowledge of the cadets.

This significant event marks the culmination of three years of rigorous NCC training for the cadets, providing them



with a valuable certification that enhances their employment prospects.

Brigadier Deepak Sajjanhar, SM, Gp Cdr, oversaw the conduct of these exams and provided invaluable guid-

ance and motivation to the cadets. This year, the NCC 'C' Certificate Examination saw participation of 30 boys (SD cadets) and 54 girls (SW cadets) from the Ladakh region.

## Indian Army organizes Volleyball Match at Lam, Rajouri

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, JULY 22

Indian Army organised a spirited 'Volleyball Match' at Lam drawing healthy participation from enthusiastic youngsters. The match highlighted the importance of recreational activities in promoting physical fitness and mental well-being amongst civilians and soldiers. Spectators witnessed thrilling display of skill, teamwork and had created electrifying atmosphere resonated with the spirit of unity and cooperation. Indian Army



through initiative like these reaffirms its commitment to engaging with civilians in

constructive way thereby building trust and promoting mutual understanding.

## Indian Army organizes Kargil Vijay Diwas: Cultural Program with Gujjars, Bakarwals at Belyan

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JULY 22

Indian Army organised a cultural pgme with Gujjars/Bakarwals so as to nurture a deep and close connect with our brethren. The pgme was organised with an aim to build strong and healthy relation with Gujjars/ Bakarwals as they have occupied their dhoks in Belyan. The pgme was organised by children, on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas. A total of 130 Gujjars and Bakarwals attended the interaction from all the baihks, wherein they were

told to maintain normalcy in the area and report on any unwanted activity. They were also briefed to encourage their youth towards positive engagement in sports and education. They were also ensured that they will be provided medical assistance and security for their families.

In the end, the Gujjars/ Bakarwals conveyed that they are extremely satisfied and extended their gratitude and support to Indian Army for taking care of them and their family at such a far flung place.

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

### Undemocratic attempt...

that had been ordered by 140 crore Indians to serve. For two-and-a-half hours, attempts were made to scuttle the voice of the prime minister and such a thing has no place in democratic traditions. They have no remorse over it," Modi said.

His remarks were an apparent reference to the incident in the last session when Modi delivered his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address amid vociferous protests and sloganeering by the opposition that was demanding that both MPs from Manipur be allowed to speak.

"People have sent us here for desh not dal. This Parliament is not for 'dal (party)' but for 'desh (country)'. This Parliament is not limited to MPs but it is for 140 crore people of the country," he asserted.

Modi hoped that all MPs will contribute to the debate. He said there was nothing wrong with opposing views but it was the negative views that are wrong. The country does not need negativity, he said.

"We have to take the country forward with the ideology of development and progress," Modi said.

He also said that the Monsoon session is an important destination in our democracy's proud journey.

"It is a matter of immense pride for me personally as well as for all of our colleagues that after nearly 60 years a government has come back for the third time and has got the privilege of presenting the first budget of the third term. The country is seeing this as a very proud event in the glorious journey of Indian democracy," he said.

Modi said his government is moving forward to implement on the ground the guarantees he has given to the people.

"We are moving ahead with the aim of gradually realising the guarantees that I have been giving to the people of the country. This budget is an important budget of Amrit Kaal. We have got an opportunity of five years and this budget will determine the direction of our work for those five years and also lay a strong foundation for fulfilling our dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047, when we will celebrate 100 years of independence," he said.

He highlighted that India is the fastest growing country among the major economies with about eight percent growth in the last three consecutive years.

Today, opportunities are at the peak due to positive outlook, investment and performance, he said.

The prime minister expressed the belief that all members of Parliament will contribute towards fruitful discussions.

Modi also expressed confidence that this temple of democracy will be used to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of the common citizens. (Agencies)

### LG reviews preparations...

movement, all over J&K UT. Every individual, family, eminent personalities from various walks of life must come together to make the campaign a success," the Lt Governor said.

### Army thwarts terror attack...

encounter," an official said. On July 5, President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Shaurya Chakra upon SgCt Saifullah Qadri (posthumously), DySP (now SP) Mohan Lal, SI Amit Raina, SI Feroz Ahmad, Constable Varun Singh of J&K Police, and Purshotam Kumar, a Village Defence Guard member, at Rashtraapati Bhavan.

Sources added that additional reinforcements were quickly dispatched to the area, and a search operation has been initiated to locate the hiding terrorists.

This incident follows another attempted terror attack on a Territorial Army (TA) battalion post in Galuti Patrara village of Manjakote, Rajouri district, on July 7. An Army sentry deployed at the post sustained injuries during the initial exchange of gunfire, which lasted for half an hour on Sunday morning. The Terrorist attack was thwarted as fire was retaliated with equal calibre by the army.

Meanwhile, Jammu based defence spokesperson said that a major terror attack on Army picket in remote village of Rajouri was thwarted. He informed that the operation is in progress.

### Amarnath Yatra sees record...

2011, 6.35 lakh in 2012, 3.54 lakh in 2013, 3.72 lakh in 2014, 3.52 lakh in 2015, 2.21 lakh in 2016, 2.60 lakh in 2017, 2.85 lakh in 2018, 3.43 lakh in 2019, 3.04 lakh in 2022, 4.50 lakh in 2023.

The yatra was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Chhari Mubarak of Amarnath Yatra was taken to Pahalgam on Sunday from its abode at the Dashnami Akhara building by Mahant Deependra Giri, the custodian of the Chhari Mubarak, for various rituals to mark Ashadh Purnima, the start of the religious aspects of the annual pilgrimage.

### Chlorine Gas leaks...

Kashmir State Disaster Response Force (JK SDRF) and Jammu and Kashmir Police Udhampur responded swiftly to the incident and immediately began evacuation procedures.

School children and locals were moved to a safe distance from the leak site. Efforts are underway to contain the leak. The cause of the incident is still under investigation.

Meanwhile, Assistant Director, Fire and Emergency Department Udhampur-Reasi Command, Sarvesh Langer said that the gas leak was contained successfully.

"Chlorine gas has leaked and our team contained the leak very effectively. Evacuation has been done from the nearby areas," he said.

### Only BJP will form...

the last elections by defeating 2 previous chief ministers of the state.

Dr Nirmal Singh spoke on the development works and the projects being undertaken by the BJP MP for the socio-economic welfare of the people. He said that only BJP is committed to the welfare of the people and unprecedented development has taken place in the last 10 years of Modi government.

Meanwhile, Vibodh Gupta, General Secretary, J&K BJP was the chief speaker in the Kissan Sammelan, held at Louri Chak, Marh in Marh Assembly Constituency under Jammu North District.

Vibodh Gupta emphasized on the farmer related welfare policies and schemes initiated by Modi government mentioning their long-term impact in strengthening the socio-economic status of the farmers in the entire country, while significantly benefitting the farmers in Jammu & Kashmir. Sangeeta Bhagat, DDC Vice-Chairperson was the chief speaker in the Mahila Sammelan, held at Ramban in Banihal Assembly Constituency under Bani District. BJP District President Ramban Rajeshwar Kumar and others were present in the programme. Reema Padha was the chief speaker in the Mahila Sammelan, held at Krishna in Marh Assembly Constituency under Jammu North District. Mahila Morcha State President Sanjita Dogra, Arti Koul, Vaishno Devi, Anjali Sharma and others were amongst the prominent present.

### PM Modi to attend Silver...

Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi are also expected to

attend the Silver Jubilee function.

The officials said that Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Brigadier BD Mishra will visit Dras on July 24 to review the arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit on July 26. They said that after reaching Dras, PM Modi will participate in wreath-laying ceremony followed by the visit to Wall of Fame.

"He would inspect the museum of Kargil War artefacts and will be briefed on the Kargil war by top Army commanders."

They said that PM Modi is also scheduled to inaugurate Shinku La tunnel virtually and address the gathering before departing from the Kargil War Memorial. Kargil Vijay Diwas is held every year at Dras War Memorial on July 26 to mark India's victory over Pakistan at the Kargil heights after nearly three months of war in which around 500 Indian soldiers lost their lives.

Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier BD Mishra held a meeting at the secretariat to discuss the arrangements for PM Modi's visit to the Kargil War Memorial on July 26.

### J&K Police issues...

was released around 2 PM.

"Under no circumstances should this video be forwarded. It should be remembered that possessing and forwarding content of this nature is an offence under sections 13 and 18 of the UAPA," J&K Police said on X.

The police asked people and officials to ensure the video is not forwarded to anyone in any manner.

"Second, they should report via a message from whom they received this propaganda video, including the telephone number and the date and time of receipt of the video," the police said.

It said police personnel are required to report it to their supervisory officers, and civil officers should equally report it to their supervisory officers via a text message.

Terrorist outfits and the Pakistan army have waged psychological information warfare against the country by flooding social media with fake videos for propaganda against security forces in J&K, the police said.

### GoI working on...

Jammu and Kashmir. This was India's first discovery of lithium, a critical raw material used in electric vehicle batteries, solar panels, and mobile phones. Officials say the lithium reserve in Reasi is of high quality.

## Chairperson, DDC Shopian convenes meeting on District Capex Plan

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, JULY 22

In a pivotal move towards advancing district development, a comprehensive meeting was on Monday held by District Development Council (DDC) Shopian to discuss the District Capital Expenditure (Capex) Plan.

The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Shopian, Bilquees Jan. Other participants present included the VC, DDC; DDC members, Chief Executive Officer (ADDC), DDC; ACD, CPO, Executive Engineer (REW), and all Block Development Officers (BDOs).



The session commenced with the Chairperson addressing the attendees, emphasizing the significance of the Capex plan in shaping the district's future. The meeting proceeded with an in-depth discussion of the Capex plan, ensuring a thorough examination of each aspect.

Members of the council put forward various suggestions and recom-

mendations, which were meticulously deliberated upon. This inclusive approach ensured that the Capex reflected the diverse needs and priorities of the district.

The CEO outlined the priority areas for the district, highlighting key sectors that require immediate attention and investment. These priority areas include infrastructure

development, healthcare, education, and rural development.

The CEO stressed the importance of allocating resources efficiently to maximize the impact of the Capex plan.

The ACD Shopian and Executive Engineer (REW) provided technical insights and feasibility reports on proposed projects, ensuring that all plans were realistic and achievable within the given timeframe and budget.

In her concluding remarks, the Chairperson expressed gratitude to all members for their active participation and constructive input. She reiterated the council's commitment to the holistic development of Shopian.

## DC B'la takes review of developmental works under R&B sector

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
BARAMULLA, JULY 22

To assess and accelerate the developmental works in the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Monday chaired a meeting with concerned officers at the meeting hall of DC office here to review the progress of various projects under the execution of the Roads and Buildings (R&B) sector.

At the outset, the meeting was provided a comprehensive overview of



the current status of all developmental works undertaken by the R&B Department during the current year.

The DC meticulously examined the progress of projects including ongoing macadamiza-

tion works and other works falling under various schemes, including District Capex, NABARD and other government sponsored schemes. The review encompassed a wide array of initiatives aimed at enhancing the

district's infrastructure and connectivity.

During the meeting, the DC directed the officers present to ensure timely completion of all the projects undertaken by the department for the financial year 2024-25 and effectively commission them for the public service.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Superintending Engineer R&B, Executive Engineers and other officials.

## Secy RDD inaugurates two-day refresher training program of SBM-G in Srinagar

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, on Monday inaugurated a two-day refresher training program for master trainers on the implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) Phase II at Jammu and Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (JKIM-PARD) here.

Director General Rural Sanitation, Anu Malhotra, Superintending Engineer REW Kashmir, Er. Aamir Ali, Deputy Director Rural Sanitation, Sana Khan, master trainers, and other officers attended the workshop.

The program is aimed to enhance trainers' skills and knowledge for effective SBM-G Phase II implementation through interactive sessions, discussions, and practical exercises.

While addressing a gathering, Dr Shahid emphasized the importance of behavioural change for achieving sustainable sanitation in Kashmir.

He highlighted the need to move beyond infrastructure development and focus on altering people's attitudes towards sanitation.



Secretary also emphasized that while toilets and common facilities have been constructed, achieving true Open Defecation Free (ODF) status requires a shift in mindset.

He outlined three key components for successful implementation: adequate government infrastructure, well-trained departmental staff, and active community participation.

Dr Shahid stressed the need for a multi-pronged approach, involving government, trained staff, and community participation to achieve sustainable sanitation.

He urged participants to focus on identifying infrastructure shortcomings and capacity-building needs, emphasizing the importance of effective training and community engagement.

Secretary emphasized the importance of long-term and impactful work, rather than short-term

cosmetic efforts. He called for a collaborative approach between government officials and the community to achieve the desired outcomes.

Director General Rural Sanitation, Anu Malhotra emphasized the crucial role of comprehensive training in achieving the goals of the Swachh Bharat Mission-G.

She highlighted the progress made in J&K, noting that it has achieved the status of ODF (Open Defecation Free) Model Plus. However, Malhotra pointed out existing gaps that need to be addressed to ensure sustainability.

Anu Malhotra said that this refresher course is not just about learning; it's about implementing what you've learned on the ground.

DG Rural Sanitation outlined the steps needed to make the Swachh Bharat program sustainable, stressing the importance of self-sustaining business

models.

She also encouraged participants to visit successful projects such as the Baltal Base Camp to learn from their waste processing and composting models.

She urged the trainees to take full interest in the training, become role models, and ensure that the revenue spent is used effectively.

Laxmikant Shinde, a Resource Person from PriMove Mumbai, gave a detailed presentation on participant introductions, participant expectations, and training overview, including objectives, ground rules, and the pre-training evaluation questionnaire.

Other trainers gave presentations on various topics including an introduction to SBM (G) II - the concept of ODF Plus villages and its declaration criteria, biodegradable waste management - village level planning, implementation, and technology options, GOBAR-DHAN - technology, process, and O&M, and plastic waste management - technology options and rollout.

The program was also attended by ACP Srinagar, Altaf Hussain, Dr. Shafia Wani, a faculty member at IMPARD and others.

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

In a significant move towards fostering unity and understanding, leaders and representatives from both Shia and Sunni sects including members of Waqf Board, came together today in a meeting convened by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, aimed at promoting solidarity, mutual respect, and cooperation.

The meeting, held at DC office Srinagar, highlighted the shared values and commonalities between the two sects, emphasizing the importance of unity in addressing contemporary challenges. Unity is not just a necessity but a divine commandment. We must rise above and work together for the common



good of community.

The meeting was attended by notable scholars, religious leaders, and community representatives who unanimously expressed their commitment to work towards Unity and to thwart any attempt of sectarian divisions.

The religious scholars and other stockholders expressed their opinion and unanimously stressed

on maintaining unity and harmony among all Muslim sects for overall betterment of the community.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the religious scholars and imams (clerics) to play a constructive role in maintaining unity, brotherhood, besides respect for each other and among the various sects, as the way forward

for the peace, progress, tranquility and for the harmonious future of the whole Community. We all must show the determination to continue the efforts in bridging divides and building a stronger and more cohesive community.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria and other senior Officers of District Administration were present in the meeting.

## Chairperson NCW chairs 5th monitoring committee meeting of Special Cells for Women

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

The fifth Monitoring Committee meeting of Special Cells for Women within Police system, supported by National Commission for Women and implemented by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai was held today at Banquet Hall, Srinagar.

Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Rekha Sharma, chaired the meeting of the Committee constituted under "Violence Free Home - A Woman's Right" project - demonstration of 22 pilot Special Cells for Women in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh located in all districts of both the UTs.

While chairing the meeting, Rekha Sharma appreciated the work of Special Cells in Jammu & Kashmir and invited the representatives from each department to share their work progress and challenges regarding their work on violence against women. She emphasized on increasing the outreach of Special Cells on ground to reach maximum survivors of violence.

Further, the Chairperson had a detailed discussion on proposal of institutionalisation of Special Cells for Women, J&K with Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Sheetal Nanda.

The members of the Committee suggested that there is a need for further sensitization of Police and other departments on gender related issues.

During the meeting, work progress on Special Cells for Women of both



the UTs from 1st January to 30th June 2024 was presented by Balwant Singh, Coordinator, RCI-VAW, TISS to the committee. He also highlighted the measures initiated by the social workers on ground for effective functioning of the Special Cells in J&K and Ladakh. During this period, the Special Cells have reached out to 2192 women survivors of violence to provide psycho-social support.

The meeting was attended by members of the Monitoring Com-

mittee including Rajiv Omprakash Pande, DIG, Central Kashmir Range;

Dr. Trupti Jhaveri Panchal, Member Secretary of Committee; Harvinder Kaur, Mission Director, Mission Shakti, Social Welfare, J&K; Farhan J. Naqash, representative of ADGP-Ladakh; Qazi Qayoom, Joint Director Prosecution; Dr. Shazia Manzoor, HoD, Department of Social Work, University of Kashmir; Dr. Vinay Kumar, Department of Social Work, Central University, Jammu;

Ananya Singh, Counselor, (Legal) Suo-Moto Cell, NCW; Sameena Mir, Gender Specialist, Social Welfare, J&K; Saima Shah, Coordinator, Special Cells, Kashmir Division and Priksa Sharma, Coordinator, Jammu Division

Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, J&K; Tashi Dolma, Director, Social & Tribal Welfare Ladakh; Vishal Manhas, representative of ADGP-Jammu Division; Dr. Yangchan Dolma, Assistant Professor, University College, Leh participated through video conference.

Additionally, DySP-HQs (Nodal Officer of Special Cells at district level), In-charge of Women Police Station/Cell, DLSA officials, OSC Centre Administrators, Department of Health & Mission Poshan, representatives were part of the meeting in-person and online. They shared their experiences and suggestions to strengthen the coordination on the response to violence against women.

## MD Poshan inaugurates Training programme under Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi at Handwara

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, JULY 22

The Mission Director (MD) Poshan J&K, Rubina Kousar today inaugurated the training programme of Anganwadi Workers under the banner of 'Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi' at Environment Hall Handwara. Hakeem Tanveer Ahmad, Programme Officer Kupwara; CDPOs of district Kupwara (SLMTs) and Anganwadi Workers undergoing training were present on the occasion.

All Anganwadi Workers of Mission Poshan J&K are undergoing three days training programme in different batches at different venues in entire UT of J&K, and in border district Kupwara it started from today. The MD while interacting with Anganwadi Workers and CDPOs of district Kupwara highlighted the need of capacity building of grassroots level Workers of the department.



of training is to develop the capacities of Anganwadi Workers with a basic understanding of the ECCE curriculum and pedagogical approach to enable them to provide high quality play based ECCE at the last mile and reinforce AWWs understanding on nutrition including Poshan 2.0 and Saksham Anganwadi, innovations in Poshan Tracker, feeding

practices, SAM/MAM management and micronutrient deficiencies and for smooth implementation of new initiative of Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi for physical and mental development of children enrolled in Anganwadi Centres.

The MD highlighted the necessity of capacity building of Anganwadi Workers to ensure they adopt modified play way

techniques of teaching in Anganwadi Centres. The department is committed to organise regular capacity-building programmes for all field level Workers, she said adding that the initiative aims to increase awareness about the latest techniques practised through Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi initiative.

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**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
**JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RAVI CANAL**  
**CONSTRUCTION LOWER DIVISION HIRANAGAR**  
E-mail ID: xenrcclowerhiranagar@gmail.com

### NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of general Public, that due to less precipitation in the current monsoon Season, the water level in Ujh River has decreased due to which the discharge in Mai Ravi Canal is very low and there is no adequate availability of irrigation water. As such Farmers, PRI Members and Head of Kissan Unions are requested to kindly cooperate with this office as per the schedule of warabandi (already issued) until the water level increases in river.

No.: 864-65  
Dated: 20-07-2024

DIP/J-3175/24  
Date: 22-7-24

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
RCC Lower Division  
Hiranagar

## EDITORIAL

## Neglect of religious shrines in Billawar

The Mata Sukrala and Mata Bala Sundari shrines in the Billawar area of Kathua district are not just places of religious significance but also draw a large number of pilgrims every year. Despite this, the infrastructure and facilities for these pilgrims remain woefully inadequate. This situation reflects a deep-seated neglect that has persisted despite establishing a Shrine Board intended to oversee their management. In 2013, an Act was enacted to manage these shrines better, and subsequently, a Shrine Board was formed under the leadership of the Divisional Commissioner Jammu. The primary aim was to enhance facilities for pilgrims, manage endowments effectively, and address longstanding issues such as litigation concerning shrine administration. However, more than 11 years since the Board's formation, little progress has been made on the ground. Pilgrims, year after year, face difficulties ranging from the lack of basic amenities like public conveniences to inadequate boarding and lodging facilities. Even a simple shelter where pilgrims can rest after paying their respects is absent. The condition of the nine-kilometer road from Billawar Bus Stand to Mata Sukrala Shrine further exemplifies the apathy of the administration. Potholes, sinking patches, and damaged parapets mar the journey, creating unnecessary hardships for visitors. The non-functionality of the official website launched earlier this year adds to the dismay of pilgrims who seek information before planning their visits. This online platform was supposed to facilitate interaction between devotees and the Shrine Board, yet its current state of disrepair reflects poorly on the commitment to transparency and accessibility. The issue of litigation between the administration and Baridars, the previous caretakers of the shrines, continues to hinder progress. Despite more than a decade passing since the formation of the Shrine Board, efforts to resolve these legal disputes have been lukewarm at best. This bureaucratic inertia has severely hampered the implementation of development plans and the provision of necessary facilities. It is disheartening that the Shrine Board, which was envisioned as the apex body for decision-making on developmental activities, has not convened a meeting in over two years. This neglect of duty raises serious questions about the Board's effectiveness and the commitment of its members towards fulfilling their mandate. In conclusion, the situation at Mata Sukrala and Mata Bala Sundari shrines is a stark reminder of administrative failure and the urgent need for corrective action. The authorities must prioritize the welfare of pilgrims by swiftly addressing infrastructure deficiencies, resolving legal impediments, and ensuring transparency in governance. The pilgrims who visit these revered places deserve better, and it is incumbent upon the authorities to deliver on the promises made over a decade ago. Only through proactive measures and genuine efforts can the sanctity and accessibility of these shrines be restored, ensuring a fulfilling pilgrimage experience for devotees now and in the future.

## What Joe Biden just did is utterly extraordinary

BY FRANK BRUNI

In the hours and days to come, many political observers will say that President Biden was backed into a corner and had no choice but to end his re-election campaign. His limitations had been laid painfully bare. He'd lost the confidence of the Democratic Party. And he was staggering toward an increasingly ugly revolt within it or a potentially harrowing defeat by Donald Trump. Bowing out wasn't an act of grace. It was a saving of face.

All correct. But that's not the whole truth. Not the full story. It misses the bigness of what Biden just did – its historical rarity, its emotional agony, its fundamental humility.

Yes, his decision to abandon his aspirations for a second term and let another, younger Democrat seek the presidency came weeks later than it should have, after too much secrecy, too much arrogance, too much denial. He pushed wishful thinking to the limit, scoffing at polls, sniping at the news media and claiming omniscience in a manner that eerily echoed Trump's populist bluster. ("I'm getting so frustrated by the elites." "Look at the crowds.") But that doesn't erase the enormous impact and extraordinary example of relinquishing his candidacy.

His exit from the presidential race creates a kind and magnitude of uncertainty about who one of the major party's nominees will be – and what sort of late-stage, rushed operation that person can put together – that has no real precedent in modern American politics. Maybe his endorsement of Kamala Harris and the vice-president's traditional status as heir apparent will amount to her speedy anointment. Maybe not. She has doubters aplenty, and many promi-

nent Democrats crave a real competition, not a segue from obligatory indulgence of Biden to forced allegiance to Harris.

This is terra incognita. While Republicans in 1964 and Democrats in 1968 began their summer conventions without clarity about the outcome, the candidates in the hunt for the nomination had been making their pitching and jockeying for position for much of the year. They weren't in a mad dash after a mid-July swerve that has many Americans reeling.

Nor was their party puzzling over what to do in a climate of panic this intense. Democrats aren't simply thinking and talking about the best way to beat Republicans; they're thinking and talking about the sturdiest bulwark against a second Trump administration that they rightly consider a dire threat to American democracy itself. And they're confronting a version of Trump, with his wounded ear and his swollen claims of divine mission, as confident of victory and in command of his followers as he has ever been.

But Biden's exit also scripts a compelling message for his Democratic successor and everyone else in the party. They can – they must – talk about the differences between what Biden is doing now, no matter how reluctant he was to do it, and Trump's titanic selfish and epically destructive behavior in 2020, when he sought to stay in power by undermining the entire electoral process. They must emphasize the contrast between a president and party that finally dealt with uncomfortable truths and a president and party that have never stopped spinning unconscionable lies. While Trump and many of his fellow Republicans remain at war with reality, Biden and Democrats surrendered to it.

I wish they'd done it a whole lot sooner; I and many other Americans would think better of them if they had. But it matters that they finally got there. It matters a great deal.

I'm not saying that there's no self-preservation in Biden's self-effacement. He's guaranteeing a legacy and remembrances more flattering than the ones that would have been written if he'd remained in the race – against so many Democrats' urgings and in contradiction of so many signs that he was doomed – and had come up short, the deluded midwife to Trump's disastrous return to power. He may still be blamed if Trump wins in November, given how little time he left for Plan B, given his breach of trust with voters who were misled about his physical condition, given the mess for Democrats to clean up. But the recriminations won't be as scathing.

And that's just. However grudging, Biden's withdrawal is a remarkable reckoning and a historical anomaly. It runs counter to human nature, or at least to the nature of humans who have known the exhilaration of being on top. Rulers cling to their gilded stations. When they're threatened, they cling tighter. History is lousy with guests who wouldn't leave, not once they'd experienced the fluffiness of the pillows and the fawning of the help.

How many senators, Mitch McConnell among them, have minimized their physical declines and their inability to work as forcefully as they once did? How many Supreme Court justices? How many presidents, for that matter? At various points, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan – to name just three – faced very real questions about their fitness. They or the people around them made excuses, made do and

muddled through.

Those are imperfect analogies. Biden isn't saying – nor is the principal complaint against him – that he struggles to do the job of president in real time. He's accepting that four more years, or at least voters' willingness to grant him that, are a wager too risky, an ambition too grand. And those other presidents could more easily veil their vulnerabilities and mask their flaws; they didn't inhabit a media environment as intrusive as today's.

"My fellow Democrats, I have decided not to accept the nomination and to focus all my energies on my duties as president for the remainder of my term," he said in a social media post on Sunday afternoon. In a separate post, he wrote: "It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your president. And while it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and focus entirely on fulfilling my duties as president for the remainder of my term."

None of Biden's predecessors in the White House provide a point of reference that tidily illuminates or presages current circumstances. Only a minority of American presidents didn't seek another term for which they were eligible. The last was Lyndon B. Johnson more than a half-century ago. He demurred in 1968. As with Biden, the worry that he'd be defeated and the determination that he could better serve the country by bowing out were very much in the mix. But the timing and the context were strikingly different. He'd just nearly lost the New Hampshire primary to Eugene McCarthy. It was the end of March, not the middle of July. The Democratic convention wasn't a mere month away. And Johnson hadn't com-

pleted a nomination contest during which the party's voters had vetted and validated him anew.

Over the past four tumultuous weeks, Biden repeatedly referred to that contest to insist that despite his shockingly unsteady performance in a June 27 debate against Trump and metastasizing doubts about his health, he should press on. "We had a Democratic nominating process where the voters spoke clearly," he said when he called in to the hosts of MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on July 8. "I won 14 million of those votes."

In speeches, interviews and a raply watched news conference, he defensively, even angrily, touted his many first-term successes, casting them as all the proof that anyone could possibly need of his vim and vigor. He cavalierly shrugged off the proposal that he have a new, thorough neurological exam; the presidency, he smugly proclaimed, was a daily test, which he was passing with flying colors.

At times he sounded peeved. At times he sounded hurt. Where, he seemed to wonder, was the richly earned appreciation? The proper respect? And he returned to what was becoming a favorite refrain: He'd been counted out during the 2020 Democratic primaries, yet he'd prevailed. He'd been told two years later that Democrats would take a pummeling in the midterm elections; they didn't. Why should he believe the naysayers now? Why did anybody else?

Those questions ignored shifts in the political landscape and the passage of time, whose toll on him was obvious in his murmured sentences and mangled facts. Those questions were a shield against the harsh truths spoken to him by the few Democratic leaders who

had the guts for candor and could breach his tiny inner circle. Those questions bolstered his defiance.

And they make his deference now all the more remarkable. All the more poignant, too. If it was easy for so many of us to see how transformed Biden (and the country) was, it was even easier for him to tell himself that nothing important had changed – and he had plenty of enablers, in his family and in his employ, to whisper whatever he wanted to hear.

I keep thinking back to a phrase he used again and again in his interview on July 5 with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News. "I'm the guy," he said. "I'm the guy." It was the boast of someone who had been underestimated not only in recent years but throughout his long political career. Someone who'd waited so long to realize a destiny that admirers began speaking of and he began dreaming of more than five decades earlier. Someone who'd known enough heartbreaking loss to trash against the suggestion that he part with something so dear to him and so affirming. Someone diminished not by errors within his control but by biological dynamics beyond it. Someone being asked to acknowledge frailty in a milieu and at an altitude where that infrequently happens. Someone prodded to humble himself in an unhumane era. He will not be the guy leading the Democratic ticket in November, and that's cause for renewed optimism in a party that has many talented comers and the opportunity, as it chooses among them, to grab voters' attention, demonstrate that it isn't hostage to any one leader and emphasize its forward-looking gaze. Biden is the guy allowing that to happen, by ceding the stage in a manner as exceptional as it is imperative.

## The Importance of Workplace Etiquette

SAKSHI SETHI

Manners are essential in the workplace for several reasons, as they contribute significantly towards the overall functioning and atmosphere of the work environment. The transition from being a student to a working professional comes with its own set of challenges, including the need to adapt to workplace etiquette.

Much talked about, the term 'Workplace etiquette' is simply the anticipated behaviour and actions of a person in a workplace and society which includes being respectful to others and always

keeping a well-mannered behaviour thereby creating a comfortable environment for everyone. It is a guide for actions in different situations and how to deal with those situations while being courteous to the employer and co-workers. It varies from one workplace to the other and serves as a map to every organization.

It is often said that first impressions are everlasting and in a professional setting, they can significantly influence perceptions and opportunities. Being punctual, wearing appropriate dress and polite greetings help create a positive first impres-

sion. When the employees exhibit these behaviours, they demonstrate respect for their colleagues and the organization thereby setting a tone of professionalism from the outset. This event fosters a cooperative environment where employees feel valued and are more likely to work together productively.

For a few, this can even open doors to new opportunities, promotions and career advancements. Employers value individuals who contribute positively to the work environment and represent the company well. There is no denying the fact that respect and trust are the foundations

of any successful professional relationship.

Adhering to workplace etiquette such as active listening, avoiding interrupting others and acknowledging contributions, fosters an environment of mutual respect. This respectful behavior builds trust among colleagues, facilitating smoother collaboration, and harmonious and efficient teamwork. An organisation that promotes and expects proper etiquette is seen as more professional and reputable. This can attract top talent, clients as well as business partners who want to be associated with a respectful

and well-mannered organization. It is often said that trust, once established, enhances communication and encourages open sharing of ideas, thereby leading to innovative solutions and better decision-making. Utilizing etiquette in the workplace can ensure that everyone feels comfortable while being productive.

Maintaining workplace etiquette goes a long way in ensuring that one commands the respect of co-workers and superiors and that the individual's professional image remains unblemished. Remember, an employee will be a much more valuable staff member if they stay

alert, tune into conversations around them and contribute to the general discourse. Undoubtedly, in any workplace, conflicts are inevitable, but proper etiquette can help resolve them. Approaching conflicts with a calm and respectful demeanour, listening to all perspectives and seeking mutually beneficial solutions prevent escalation and help in maintaining a positive work environment. Escalation should be the last resort but one shouldn't shy away if needed.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## India's bold climate leadership amidst global heatwave concerns

SOURYABRATA MOHAPATRA

This year's record spell of an intense heatwave in Delhi, during which temperatures touched 50°C, highlighted concerns over the adverse effects of climate change globally. India remains a beacon of hope through its actions as part of the global efforts to stem climate change. Through myriad initiatives, the country has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability.

India's journey toward climate action began in 2009 when the country voluntarily pledged to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20-25% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels. Impressively, India achieved a 24% reduction within the stipulated timeframe. In alignment with the Paris Agreement, India submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to

the UNFCCC in 2015, setting forth eight ambitious targets for 2021-2030, further reinforcing its commitment to combating climate change.

Tree plantation and forest conservation are at the heart of India's environmental efforts. Through programs like the National Mission for Green India and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), India encourages the use of barren land for tree plantations.

The country ranks third globally in net forest area gain, with 21.71% of its geographical area covered by forests. Initiatives like the Green Credit Program further incentivize tree plantation and forest restoration. India's commitment to wetland conservation is equally impressive, with 80 designated Ramsar sites. The Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) aims to promote and con-

serve mangroves, which are vital for carbon storage and marine biodiversity.

The country has implemented the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, banning the use of single-use plastics. Renewable energy is another area in which India excels. The National Green Hydrogen Mission, launched in January 2023, aims to position India as a leader in green hydrogen technology. The country ranks fourth globally in renewable energy capacity.

India's environmental initiatives extend beyond its borders. The country plays a pivotal role in global platforms such as the Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency. India has made notable strides in addressing climate change, earning a commendable 7th place in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), up one spot from last year, making it one of the highest

performers globally.

India's high ranking in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories underscores the country's efforts to manage its environmental impact despite its large population. Notably, India's per capita emissions remain relatively low, aligning with global benchmarks aimed at limiting temperature rise to well below 2°C above the pre-industrial average.

However, the path forward is complex, and critical areas still require focused attention and accelerated action. India continues to rely heavily on coal, oil, and gas to meet its growing energy demands. This dependence is a major contributor to GHG emissions and severe air pollution, especially in urban areas. While there is a slight positive trend in the adoption of renewable energy, the pace of this transition is too slow to meet urgent climate goals.

Despite high marks in

emissions and energy use, India receives a medium rating in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy. The country has clear long-term policies focusing on renewable energy, including the domestic manufacturing of renewable energy components. Yet, the implementation of these policies needs to be more effective.

The COP26 announcement by Prime Minister Modi, setting a net-zero emissions target for 2070, has been criticized by experts for lacking ambition. The call for a faster phase-out of coal, reduced reliance on gas, and a significant expansion of renewable energy is strong.

India's heavy reliance on coal presents a significant challenge. Despite high taxes on petrol and diesel, consumption has not decreased. Some experts view these taxes as effective, while others highlight the government's dependence on the revenue they gener-

ate. The rephrasing from 'phase-out' to 'phase-down' for fossil fuels, championed by India and China at the last COP, was a setback for global climate commitments. Large-scale renewable energy projects in India have also faced criticism for negatively affecting local communities through land grabs and unequal resource distribution. Policies have been largely mitigative rather than transformative, often overlooking adaptation and disaster risk management. There is a growing call for policies that incorporate ecosystem-based solutions and prioritize equity, ensuring that climate actions benefit all segments of society. India needs a more bottom-up approach to policy implementation, incorporating the needs and demands of tribal and rural communities.

(The writer is a NCAER faculty; views are personal)

## Economic Survey links mental health disorders with 'significant productivity losses'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

In a first, the economic impact of mental health was discussed in the Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled by the Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Monday.

The Survey talks extensively about mental health, its significance, and implications on policy recommendations. It also associated mental health disorders with "significant productivity losses".

It is because the condition leads to "absenteeism, decreased productivity, disability, increased healthcare costs, among others".

Citing the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) 2015-16, the Survey noted that 10.6



per cent of adults in the country suffered from mental disorders. However, the treatment gap for mental disorders ranged between 70 per cent and

92 per cent for different disorders. It also showed a higher prevalence of mental morbidity in urban metro regions (13.5 per cent) as compared to

rural areas (6.9 per cent) and urban non-metro areas (4.3 per cent).

The Survey also pointed out poverty as a reason for increasing mental health issues among people. It showed that "stressful living conditions, financial instability, and a lack of opportunities for upward mobility contribute to heightened psychological distress".

It also highlighted an increasing prevalence of poor mental health among adolescents exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Citing the NCERT's Mental Health and Well-being of School Students Survey, it showed that 11 per cent of students reported feeling anxious, 14 per cent as feeling extreme emotion, and 43 per cent experiencing mood swings.

The Survey noted key initiatives and poli-

cies such as the National Mental Health Programme and National Tele Mental Health Programme by the government to tackle the rising burden of cases. It also informed of increasing mental health professionals by sanctioning 25 Centres of Excellence to increase the intake of PG students.

The government also provisioned mental health services for 22 AIIMS, also provided online training courses via digital academies to general healthcare medical and paramedical professionals.

The Survey stresses important policy recommendations including redoubling efforts to increase the number of psychiatrists, and sensitising mental health at the preschool, and at the Anganwadi level to provide precious early identification of disorders.

## Lack of proper sleep could lead to brain-related problems, warn doctors

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, JULY 22

People must never ignore sleep to meet deadlines, and it's never appropriate to waste time on the Internet over a proper good night's sleep, advise healthcare professionals on World Brain Day.

Recommending a seven-hour sleep to help the brain function better, they warned that lack of proper sleep could lead to brain-related problems.

Commenting on the importance of sleep and the adverse effect on the brain due to lack of it, Dr. S Ramesh, Consulting Neurosurgery, Kamineni Hospitals said, "Sleep is one of the most important components in the daily routine of an individual. Sleep is important for a number of brain-related functions, like the communication between neurons/nerve cells. "People must be made aware that without

proper sleep, the required pathways in the brain to create new memories and new response systems, will get adversely affected."

"It is a known fact that the brain controls the human body and functions and emotions. It is important to know that sleep affects every aspect and every organ in the human body, especially the brain.

"While a good sleep will have a positive impact, irregular sleeping habits could affect almost every type of tissue and system like the brain, the heart, and even the lungs. Many people complain about mood swings, and this has a direct connection with the quality of sleep and its impact on the brain," observed Dr. Ch Vijay, Consultant Neurologist, KIMS ICON Hospital, Vizag.

On the occasion of World Brain Day, the focus is on promotion of brain health. Dr. A Rampapa Rao, Chairman, Uchvas

Transitional Care, stated "I understand the biggest risk for a healthy brain is 'Hypertension' apart from other etiological factors and in itself is a manifestation of altered lifestyle mainly being deprivation of optimum number of daily sleep hours in young and middle years of life.

"I appeal to everyone to take measures and focus on getting at least seven hours of qualitative sleep on a daily basis irrespective of the occupation they are engaged in. "We strongly believe that a healthy sleeping habit is the single most significant factor in maintaining healthy brain and its optimum functioning." Though the World Federation of Neurology was founded on July 22, 1957, it was only in 2013 that the Public Awareness & Advocacy Committee of the Federation proposed its founding day be designated as the World Brain Day.

## How insulin resistance affects brain

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Insulin resistance, a significant health concern, is increasingly recognised for its profound effects on brain function, potentially contributing to neurodegenerative diseases, experts say.

Insulin resistance is a phenomenon in which cells ignore the hormone insulin, causing high blood sugar. The condition causes metabolic changes in glucose and lipids, which contribute to illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension. In addition, this also gives rise to fatty liver and hormonal abnormalities.

Dr Parth Lalcheta, MCH (Neurosurgery) at HCG Hospitals, Rajkot, emphasised the need for targeted strategies to protect brain health.

"Insulin resistance affects brain function, contributing to cognitive decline and neurode-



generative diseases. This highlights the importance of developing strategies to safeguard brain health and enhance overall well-being," he told IANS.

Experts say that brain insulin resistance hampers the capacity of the brain to function effectively, leading to a decline visible in the form of behavioural issues.

Dr Darshan Doshi, Consultant Neurology at P. D. Hinduja Hospital and Medical Research Centre, explains how the recognition of insulin resistance's

implications on the brain is important.

"Brain insulin resistance causes neurodegeneration, leading to cognitive decline and behavioural issues. Understanding this response is essential for developing effective strategies," he told IANS.

The prevalence of insulin resistance, often linked to conditions like type 2 diabetes and obesity, is rising globally. This disorder hampers the body's ability to use insulin effectively, leading to various

health complications, a common symptom among them headaches, which are common in many neuro conditions.

Dr Shailesh Rohatgi, HOD of Neurology at DPU Super Speciality Hospital, Pimpri, Pune, explained that insulin resistance can also be associated with headaches.

"Headaches are common in many diseases. They can be primary, like migraines, or secondary, indicating underlying brain pathology. Timely consultation with a neurologist is crucial for diagnosis and treatment," he told IANS.

Experts stress the need for awareness about insulin resistance's impact on brain health and the importance of preventive measures.

Healthy lifestyle choices, like weight management, and good blood sugar control can help mitigate adverse effects and promote well-being.

## Lesser Googling and more naps may help reduce dementia

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

People can reduce their risk of age-related dementia by exercising their brains through simple daily habits instead of just relying on smartphones and Googling, according to a report on Monday.

Professor Mohamed I. Elmasry, a professor at the University of Waterloo, in his new book titled iMind: Artificial and Real Intelligence, emphasises nurturing real intelligence over artificial intelligence (AI), saying that the focus has shifted from the former to the latter and it can have far-reaching, debilitating consequences.

He says in iMind that "none comes close to duplicating the capacity, storage, longevity, energy efficiency, or self-healing capabilities of the original human brain-mind. The useful life expectancy for



current smartphones is around 10 years, while a healthy brain-mind inside a healthy human body can live for 100 years or longer".

Smart devices, while increasingly advanced, cannot duplicate the human brain's storage, longevity, or self-healing abilities. The book is inspired by his personal losses to dementia.

He contrasts the brain's long-lasting power with

the limited lifespan of smartphones, noting that a healthy brain can last over 100 years if nurtured.

Daily brain exercises like memory workouts, developing an associative memory, moderating alcohol, using rest days and regular naps help enhance brain health.

Elmasry feels healthy aging is a critical but underpublicised issue compared to climate change.

## Hyderabad: Mahavir opens renovated Cardiology wing

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, JULY 21

Mahavir Hospital and Research Centre, a Bhagwan Mahavir Memorial Trust unit, here on Sunday announced the opening of its newly renovated Cardiology wing.

The cardiology wing was renovated with donors' donations, the cardiology wing was formally inaugurated by KIMS Group of Hospitals Chairman and Managing Director Dr B. Bhaskar Rao along with Guests of Honour B. Balakrishna, Commissioner of Income Tax (Exemptions) and Amit Kumar, Assistant Commissioner Income Tax (TDS).

Balakrishna, said Mahavir Hospital has been providing quality care at affordable cost.

## Healthy lifestyle, awareness key to combat rising brain stroke, diseases: Experts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

A healthy lifestyle, with proper diet and exercise along with increased awareness, is crucial to tackle the rising cases of brain strokes and other related diseases in the country, said experts on World Brain Day on Monday.

World Brain Day is observed every year on July 22 to amplify awareness and shed light on crucial aspects of brain health. The theme this year is 'Brain Health and Prevention'. Neurological disorders include stroke, headache disorders, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, Alzheimer's

disease, and other dementias, brain and central nervous system cancer, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neuron diseases, and other neurological disorders.

"There's a concerning rise in brain strokes among the young population in India, with a 25 per cent increase in cases over the past five years. This surge is predominantly seen in people aged 25-40. The factors that contribute to the rise are majorly sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, smoking, and high-stress levels associated with urban living," Dr Vikram Huded, HOD and Director & Clinical Lead, Interventional Neu-

rology, Narayana Health told IANS.

The doctor also pointed at the prevalence of hypertension and diabetes in increasing the risks. In addition, genetic predispositions, even sleep disorders, or undiagnosed heart conditions, high stress levels, and environmental factors like pollution also significantly contribute to this alarming rise.

"It's imperative for youngsters to adopt healthier lifestyles, engage in regular physical activity, and manage stress effectively to avoid these risks. Early intervention and lifestyle modifications are crucial in combating this alarming trend and safe-



guarding the health of our younger population," Dr Huded said.

As per the estimates of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), neurological disorders contribute 10 per cent of the total disease burden in India. The growing burden in the country is mainly

attributable to the ageing population.

"With advancing age, especially after 50 years, neurodegenerative changes occur in brain areas due to less dopamine secretion in the brain," Dr AK Sahani, Director and Chief of Neurology, at Indian Spinal Injuries Centre,

New Delhi told IANS.

He noted that "chronic anxiety may lead to persistent neuroinflammation, linked to Parkinson's pathogenesis.

Dr Arindam Ghosh, Consultant Neurologist, Narayana Hospital, Kolkata called for increasing "measures such as avoiding head trauma, eating a balanced diet rich in nutrients and antioxidants, avoidance of smoking, measures to relieve stress like meditation, exercises or walking and taking adequate care of comorbidities including diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and dyslipidemia".

These simple measures may go a long way in pre-

venting or delaying the progress of several debilitating neurological illnesses, the doctor told IANS.

In India, approximately 185,000 strokes occur annually, translating to one stroke every 40 seconds and one stroke-related death every 4 minutes.

Despite these alarming figures, many Indian hospitals lack the necessary infrastructure for effective stroke treatment or there is a lack of stroke-ready hospitals in the country. Neurologists emphasise the importance of people adopting healthier lifestyles to prevent strokes and other brain disorders.

"There is a need to strengthen neurology ser-

vices and experts call for effective curative actions. Neurological treatments are highly individualised, depending on the patient's condition. Common therapeutic approaches include rehabilitation, assistive devices, and self-care strategies," Dr Rajul Aggarwal, Director Neurology, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Delhi, told IANS.

"Recent technological breakthroughs, such as advanced imaging techniques, brain-machine interfaces, and deep brain stimulation, are transforming diagnostics and treatments, offering new hope for those affected by complex neurological disorders," he added.

## Odisha: Bike Ambulances ferry trauma victims to nearest medical facility

AGENCIES  
BHUBANESWAR, JULY 22

Hindered by challenging terrain, the interior and remote blocks of tribal dominated Mayurbhanj district have received Bike Ambulances, crucial for emergency healthcare.

This unique initiative will overcome geographical barriers, ensuring medical services reach to serve the most remote communities. It will also save the golden hour in

case of ferrying victims of trauma to the nearest medical facility.

Supported by the Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) under the state government, Bike Ambulance service, launched in 2021, is currently active in Rairangpur, Jashipur, Kusumi, and Bijatala blocks.

Each block has one ambulance dedicated to it which operates under the Zilla Swasthya Samiti, ensuring residents have

access to emergency medical services.

So far, Bike Ambulance have assisted over 5,000 patients, serving senior citizens, pregnant women, children & road accident victims till March 2024.

This initiative bridges the gap where traditional ambulances struggle to operate. Living in an area marred by geographical barriers, regular ambulances struggle to reach us. Thus, the Bike Ambulance has been a real lifesaver,"

says Saunru Marandi from Sanjharan village, Bijatala block.

Stationed at nearby Community Health Centers (CHCs) with designated drivers, the Bike Ambulances are facilitated by local ASHA workers in times of emergency.

This initiative ensures residents have timely access to necessary medical care as four wheeler Ambulances often struggle to reach remote locations during emergencies.

But, the OMBADC supported Bike Ambulance has been a blessing, allowing us to reach those in need swiftly and efficiently, says Meena Mahanto, an ASHA worker from Sanjharan village.

In addition to addressing emergency healthcare needs, the Bike Ambulance's service exists alongside Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances in Mayurbhanj District.

## Malnutrition remains significant issue in Pacific: UNICEF

AGENCIES  
SUVA, JULY 22

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pacific Representative Jonathan Veitch said while under-5 mortality rates in the Pacific are generally stable, there are concerning trends as malnutrition remains a significant issue among countries.

Veitch made the remarks while addressing the critical issues of malnutrition and health among children in Fiji and the broader Pacific region, reported Fiji Broadcasting Corporation on Monday.

Children can be vulnerable to early death if they don't get proper nutrition at the early age of life, he said, noting that it is "com-

pletely avoidable." Veitch said UNICEF is working closely with the Fijian Ministry of Health to combat these challenges.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said educating parents about proper nutrition and ensuring that children receive the necessary nutrients are vital steps in addressing this problem.

# No case made out for granting special category status to Bihar: Govt in Lok Sabha

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

The government on Monday cited an inter-ministerial group report prepared in 2012 to assert that a case for granting special category status to Bihar is not made out; a stand which came a day after the BJP's allies from Bihar demanded the status for the backward state.

RJD supremo Lalu Prasad slams Nitish Kumar after Centre rejects JD(U)'s demand for special category status for Bihar

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha on the first day of the Monsoon session, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said special category



status was granted in the past by the National Development Council (NDC) to some states which were characterised by a number of features necessitating special consideration.

These included hilly and difficult terrain, low population density or sizeable share of tribal population, strategic location along

borders with neighbouring countries, economic and infrastructural backwardness and non-viable nature of state finances, he said in reply to a question asked by JD(U) member Rampreet Mandal.

The decision was taken based on an integrated consideration of all the factors listed above

and the peculiar situation of a state, the minister said.

"Earlier, the request of Bihar for Special Category Status was considered by an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) which submitted its Report on 30th March, 2012. The IMG came to the finding that based on existing NDC criteria, the case for Special Category Status for Bihar is not made out," the minister said.

The Congress-led UPA was in power at the time.

JD(U) leader Sanjay Kumar Jha had voiced his party's demand for the status at an all-party meeting on Sunday. The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), also a BJP ally, and the opposition RJD echoed

the same demand at the meeting.

The JD(U), though, has already conveyed to the Centre that it is willing to settle for a special financial package in case the status cannot be granted to the state.

The BJD and the YSR Congress had made the same demand for Odisha and Andhra Pradesh respectively in the meeting.

The government has in the past also argued that the 14th Finance Commission report has ruled out the possibility of any more states being granted the status, which includes tax relief and higher central funding for the beneficiary states.

# India has 26.52 cr students in schools, 4.33 cr in higher education: Economic Survey

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

India has 26.52 crore students in schools and 4.33 crore in higher education institutions, according to the Economic Survey 2023-24, tabled in Parliament on Monday. The document was tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a day ahead of the Union Budget announcement.

According to the Survey, India also has "more than 11 crore learners in skilling institutions".

"These sweeping figures put into perspective the enormity of the challenge and the inherent ambition of the New Education Policy 2020 to transform India's educational ecosystem", the document showed.

The policy aims at "efforts towards strengthening institutional capacity to embed lifelong learning in the education and skills ecosystem".

Further, the survey showed that the rise in enrolment in higher education has been driven by underprivileged sections such as SC, ST, and OBC, with a faster growth in female enrolment across sections.

"Female enrolment in higher education increased to 2.07 crore in FY22 from 1.57 crore in FY15, that is., a 31.6 per cent increase since FY15. The growing equity in higher education implies better employment opportunities for the hitherto backward sections," it added.

As per the Survey,

the NEP 2020 is leading "across-the-board transformation" in the education sector "focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy for every child passing the third standard".

Its "Poshan bhi Padhai bhi programme" for early childhood education aims to develop the world's largest, universal, high-quality preschool network at Anganwadi Centres".

The Survey also noted that to sustain an economic growth rate over a quarter century, India "has to educate and skill its youth to stay ahead of the curve".

This can help them to "work with emerging technologies while overcoming the accumulated education and skill deficits, accentuated by the pandemic".

# SC asks IIT Delhi panel to give opinion on contentious Physics question in NEET-UG exam

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

The Supreme Court on Monday asked IIT Delhi to form an expert panel to give its opinion on the decision of the National Testing Agency (NTA) to treat two options as the correct answers to a Physics question in the NEET-UG examination.

A bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, said: "We request the Director of IIT Delhi to constitute a team of three experts of the subject concerned. The expert team is requested to formulate its opinion on the correct option and to remit its opinion to the registrar of this court by 12 noon on July 23."

The bench, also comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, directed that a copy of its

order may be forwarded on Monday itself to the Director, IIT Delhi for expeditious action.

In the batch of petitions alleging irregularities in the conduct of the NEET-UG exam, petitioners questioned the award of grace marks in respect of a contentious Physics question, adding that as many as 44 candidates were able to secure full marks on account of the ambiguous question. They contended that the NTA's decision to award compensatory marks contradicts its own instruction asking students to follow the latest NCERT textbook.

The matter will be taken up for further hearing on Tuesday. In the previous hearing, the apex court had sought a copy of the report of Bihar Police and its Economic Offences Unit

(EOU) in relation to the NEET question paper leak case. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta undertook that he will place on record the copy of the report filed by Patna police as well as the report filed by EOU of Bihar Police.

The NEET question paper leak case was cracked by Patna police on May 5, the day of the examination and an FIR was registered at the city's Shastri Nagar Police Station. The case was later transferred to the EOU of Bihar Police for investigation. On June 23, the Centre decided to transfer the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The SC also asked the NTA to release on its website centre-wise results after redacting personal information, including

the roll number of the candidates. During the hearing, the apex court had asked the petitioners to illustrate that the leak was so systematic that the exam must be cancelled in its entirety and conducted afresh. It reiterated that if tainted cases cannot be segregated from untainted ones, the entire examination has to go.

Earlier, the top court had directed the NTA to make full disclosure regarding the nature of the paper leak, the places where leaks took place, and the lag of time between the occurrence of the leak and the conduct of the examination. It also asked the CBI to file a status report indicating the status of the investigation and the material collected during the course of the probe.

# PM should make CMs aware of 'raj dharma', says Cong after SC stays 'nameplate' orders

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Congress party on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's interim stay on the 'nameplate' display order along the Kanwar Yatra route in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and said that the Apex Court has rightly halted the 'communal' agenda of BJP-led governments.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera, in a video message, said, "We are very happy that the SC has given such a strong order and I hope that the Prime Minister makes his Chief Ministers aware of their Raj Dharma."

"We welcome the stay given by SC on the unconstitutional and illegal orders by Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand

and MP, where they asked eatery owners to display nameplates outside their shops," he further stated.

The Supreme Court, hearing a batch of petitions on the 'eatery name display' directives by the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments, stayed the orders, till further hearing. The Apex court also issued notices to UP, Uttarakhand and MP governments and fixed July 26 as the next date of hearing.

The SC observed that the directives by state governments are contrary to constitutional and legal norms as prevalent in the country.

The halt to the 'eatery name display' order in BJP-ruled states triggered reactions from many parties. Most of the Opposi-

tion parties had decried these orders, issued a week ago and called it 'biased, lopsided and driven by malice'.

Pawan Khera also appealed to the PM in his video message and asked him to ensure that his Chief Ministers don't indulge in passing such unconstitutional orders.

KC Tyagi, JD (U) spokesperson, told newsmen that he welcomes the SC order as "such decisions create division and rift in the society." He however added that there should be a ban on shops selling non-vegetarian food on the Kanwar Yatra route."

Imran Pratapgarhi, Congress MP, said that the Supreme Court's stay on the UP government's directive sends out a clear

message that the country will be run as per laws laid in the Constitution and not on the basis of the state governments' diktats.

"BJP governments are unnerved over Rahul's Mohabbat ki dukaan and hence are resorting to such tactics for dividing the communities on sectarian lines," he further said.

Notably, the controversy broke out after Muzaffarnagar Police asked the owners of dhabas, eateries, and food outlets to display the names of their owners and staff members outside their shops to avoid 'confusion' for the Kanwar Yatra, along the Yatra route. This was later extended all across the state and also in adjoining states Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.

# Bengal Gov warns two Trinamool MLAs of fiscal penalty on attending Assembly session

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, JULY 22

The office of West Bengal Governor, CV Ananda Bose, on Monday, shot off letters to the two new Trinamool Congress legislators Sayantika Banerjee and Reyat Housen Sarkar cautioning them of financial penalties if they take part in the proceedings of the House.

After taking oath administered by Speaker Biman Bandyopadhyay, the two MLAs reached the Assembly premises to participate in the Monsoon Session that started from Monday.

However, they received emails from the office of the Governor asking them to clarify who had administered their oath.

The notice reminded the two MLAs that as the oath was administered by the Speaker instead of the Deputy Speaker of the House who had been nominated by Governor Bose to do so, the oath is

unconstitutional.

Article 193 of the Indian Constitution gives the power to the Governor to impose a financial penalty on the two MLAs if they participate in the proceedings or even occupy the chair allotted on the floor of the House, without the approval of the constitutional head of the state.

"If a person sits or votes as a member of the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council of a State before he has complied with the requirements of Article 188, or when he knows that he is not qualified or that he is disqualified for membership thereof, or that he is prohibited from so doing by the provisions of any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of the State, he shall be liable in respect of each day on which he so sits or votes to a penalty of five hundred rupees to be recovered as a debt due to the State," reads Article 193.

# HM Amit Shah's verbal assault on Pawar-Thackeray evoke strong reactions from MVA, NCP

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JULY 22

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's strong attack on Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray evoked sharp reactions from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) as well as the ruling ally Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

At a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) meeting in Pune on Sunday, the Home Minister unleashed a verbal assault on Pawar Sr. and Thackeray that left political circles shocked and mystified.

Kicking off the BJP's campaign for the October 2024 Assembly elections, Amit Shah termed Sharad Pawar as 'the biggest fountainhead of corruption' and Thackeray as 'the chief of Aurangzeb Fan Club'.

Hitting back, NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule said that the statements were 'laughable' as it is the same BJP regime

which had honoured Sharad Pawar with the Padma Vibhushan (2017).

"For the BJP, without taking the names of Sharad Pawar or Uddhav Thackeray, their speeches don't make headlines... They don't see that the government had honoured him with the Padma Vibhushan," said Sule, taking a swipe.

Sule pointed out how the Home Minister was seen with another leader Ashok Chavan, whom the BJP used to label as corrupt, "but now 90 per cent of the people in the BJP are there because of its washing machine."

SS (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said that Amit Shah and the BJP have lost the right to call others corrupt when it has admitted the tainted leaders of all other parties, misusing the central investigation agencies.

"Amit Shah is the perfect example of what a Home Minister should not be and we feel ashamed that he is holding the post. The BJP has not yet digested its defeat in the Lok



Sabha elections and they make such wild statements against others," said Raut sharply.

NCP (SP) National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto said while Amit Shah accused the Opposition of allegedly institutionalising corruption, "it's actually the BJP which legitimised corruption in the country."

"The truth is BJP has legitimised corruption. They accuse political lead-

ers of graft but once they join the BJP, they all get a clean chit... This is how they are condoning corruption," said Crasto.

SS (UBT) Deputy Leader Sushma Andhare said Shah's comments reveal clearly, "That for BJP, the biggest challenge in Maharashtra is Uddhav Thackeray."

"However, we don't give credence to someone who has a stamp of disgrace (externed) on

his persona. They cannot make their speeches heard without uttering Thackeray-Pawar," said Andhare sarcastically.

On the other side, the ruling MahaYuti ally NCP appeared to be in turmoil with different notes emanating from Shah's comments.

On Sunday, Ajit Pawar said that, "Pawar Saheb is like a God to me", but when categorically asked for his views, he retorted with 'no comments, no comments' to the media persons.

While NCP Minister Dhananjay Munde supported Amit Shah saying, "he will not speak without some truth in it," his party's Pimpri (in Maval Lok Sabha) MLA Anna D. Bansode said that the "comments were not proper coming from a person like Shah." "Sharad Pawar is like our Guru and he is one of the tallest leaders in the country, people have the highest regard for him and such criticism must stop," urged Bansode.

Another ruling NCP ex-MLA Vilas V. Lande has

shot off a letter to the BJP slamming the comments and pointed out that in his entire life, Sharad Pawar has never faced a single blot of corruption.

Ruling MahaYuti ally and Prahar Janshakti Party chief Omprakash B. Kadu, alias Bachchu Kadu mocked the government saying, "If this is what Amit Shah speaks of Sharad Pawar, then people will want to know what is Ajit Pawar."

Taking umbrage, Raut said that Home Minister Amit Shah called Thackeray as the "chief" of the Aurangzeb Fan Club, "But we were not part of the Jinnah club... We never went to visit Jinnah's grave in Pakistan or go to celebrate Nawaz Sharif's birthday there."

"There's nothing wrong in taking the side of nationalist Muslims in the country... They have contributed a lot and many were sacrificed during the Independence movement. They (BJP) just want to create communal problems," said Raut.

# Ladki Bahin Yojana: July-August dole to be given jointly for rakhi, says Ajit Pawar

AGENCIES

PARTNER (MAHARASHTRA), JULY 22

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who on Monday launched a statewide tour to reach out to women in the run up to the Assembly elections, announced that those eligible under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana will get dole of Rs 3,000 (Rs 1,500 per

month) for July and August together due to Rakshabandhan on August 19.

The money will be deposited directly in their bank accounts through DBT, said Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) National President Ajit Pawar.

He chose to launch his statewide tour from Parner where the NCP(SP) nominee Nilesh Lanke was elected to the Lok Sabha, defeating the BJP candi-

date Sujay Vikhe-Patil.

Ajit Pawar asked the women to elect the Mahayuti government so that the welfare schemes announced in the budget would continue to be implemented.

Ajit Pawar said that their vote to re-elect the Mahayuti government was crucial and claimed that if the Opposition came to power they might discontinue the schemes.



He criticised the Opposition for terming these

schemes as "chunavi jumla" saying that they

should have welcomed them.

Ajit Pawar, who celebrated his birthday by cutting a cake and seeking his mother's blessings, later at the interactive session with women claimed that the government was firm on its commitment to provide financial assistance not just under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana but also through the Mukhya-

mantri Annapurna Yojana (giving three cylinders free annually) and providing free higher education to girls.

"Ha Ajitdada Wada ahe (This is Ajitdada's promise)," he said.

"The government will deposit Rs 1,500 per month through DBT in the accounts of eligible beneficiaries. The government will pay for July and August together. Those

who have not filled the forms, I would like to say that even if you fill them in the month of August you are eligible for this scheme, you will be paid from July onwards. So don't worry. The scheme is meant to help poor women with an annual family income of Rs 2.50 lakh," said Pawar.

He added that women from all communities will get the benefit of this scheme.



## 14 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks in Khan Younis: Health authorities

AGENCIES  
GAZA, JULY 22

At least 14 Palestinians were killed, including six children and four women, while 36 others were injured in Israeli attacks in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis on Monday, the Gaza-based health authorities said.

The Nasser Medical Complex in the city has called on locals to "urgently donate blood, for the benefit of the wounded and sick inside the complex, given the severe and major shortage of blood units", the health authorities said, Xinhua news



agency reported. Israeli warplanes launched an intensive bombardment on the eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis after the issuance of immediate evacuation orders. The eastern areas began to wit-

ness mass displacement towards the city's west, especially Al-Mawasi, the Palestinian official news agency Wafa reported.

The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement on Monday morning that it "is about to forcefully

operate against the terrorist organisations and therefore calls on the remaining population left in the eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis to temporarily evacuate to the adjusted Humanitarian Area in Al-Mawasi".

"The calls for the temporary evacuation are being communicated to the residents through SMS, phone calls, and media broadcasts in Arabic," it added.

On Sunday, the Gaza-based health authorities said the Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 38,983.

## Typhoon Prapiroon brings rainstorms, strong gusts to China

AGENCIES  
BEIJING, JULY 22

Many parts of south China witnessed rainstorms and gusty winds from Sunday to Monday morning due to Typhoon Prapiroon, the fourth typhoon of the year, according to local meteorological authorities.

From 8 a.m. local time on Sunday to 10 a.m. on Monday, torrential rain hit eastern, central, and western Hainan.

A total of 12 cities and counties in the island province of Hainan, including the provincial capital Haikou, saw rainfall exceeding 100 mm, Xinhua news agency reported.

The coastal areas and waters off Hainan experienced widespread gusts, with the strongest recorded in Wancheng Town in Wanning City, reaching 38.2 metres per second.

After making landfall in Wanning City around 1:30 a.m. (local time) on Monday, the typhoon moved into the eastern waters of the Beibu Gulf by 10 a.m. (local time)

The meteorological observatory of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region raised the emergency response level for a major meteorological disaster (typhoon) from Level IV to Level III at 9:30 a.m. (local time)

on Monday and maintained the yellow alert for a typhoon.

China has a four-tier emergency response system for flood control, with Level I being the most urgent response and a four-tier, colour-coded weather warning system, with red representing the most severe warning, followed by orange, yellow, and blue.

Eight cities in Guangxi experienced strong winds, with the maximum wind speed recorded in the Weizhou Town of Beihai City, reaching 24.8 metres per second.

During the period, torrential rains hit 19 townships across nine cities

in the region, with the maximum rainfall reaching 38.3 mm in the Qixue Township of Donglan County, according to the regional meteorological observatory.

According to the weather forecast, the centre of the typhoon will move northwestward at a speed of around 15 km per hour, possibly making a second landfall between the Guangxi city of Qinzhou and the Vietnamese city of Haiphong.

The cities of Beihai, Qinzhou, Fangchenggang, and Chongzuo are expected to see an accumulated rainfall of up to 200 mm from Monday to Wednesday due to the typhoon.

## Japan-US to hold 2+2 talks in Tokyo

AGENCIES  
TOKYO, JULY 22

Japan and the United States will be holding Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (Japan-US 2+2) talks and the Japan-US Ministerial Meeting on Extended Deterrence during the two-day visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Tokyo starting July 28, the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced Monday.

Blinken and Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa, along with US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin and Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara, will also align their views on the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific

region during the '2+2' meeting.

The four ministers will take into account the outcomes of security and defence cooperation during Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to Washington in April this year besides discussing future cooperation toward realising a 'free and open' Indo-Pacific. "The four ministers will hold a Japan-US Ministerial Meeting on Extended Deterrence, and will discuss bilateral cooperation to continue to strengthen US extended deterrence, which is enhanced by Japan's defence capabilities, taking into account the progress of discussions centered on the Japan-US Extended Deterrence Dialogue," it said.

## Pakistan army says 'organised political mafia' spreading misinformation about new military operation against militants

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD, JULY 22

The Pakistan army on Monday said that an "organised political mafia" was spreading misinformation about a planned new counter-terrorism operation, 'Azm-e-Istehkam', aimed to flush out militants and foster economic growth and stability.

Army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif addressing a press conference in Rawalpindi talked about various pressing issues, including the launch of the operation.

"A massive illegal, political mafia rose to sabotage the operation and the first move of that mafia was to make the operations controversial through false and fake arguments," he said.

Referring to Pakistan's earlier major military operations, Operation Zarb-e-Azb and Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, which resulted in large-scale displacements, a reporter inquired if similar displacements would occur during the current operation, Azm-e-Istehkam.

"This is not a military operation but a comprehensive counter-terrorism initiative aimed at fostering economic growth and stability," he said.

He referred to the previous military operations and said, "Our issue is that we make every important issue ... a joke because of our politics".

The army spokesperson said the problem is that "we are sacrificing even very important issues on the altar of politics and



Azm-i-Istehkam is one such example of this".

He also clarified that it was only for the purpose of "reinvigorating the already in-place National Action Plan (NAP)", which was launched in 2014 to eliminate militancy.

He said efforts already underway would be "augmented" by law enforcement agencies empowered by effective legislation, as

per the original announcement of the operation.

The spokesperson said a "very strong lobby" did not want the objectives of NAP to be fulfilled "because the stakes in (sabotaging) operation are very high and it's not based on any ideology but involves a lot of money".

Pointing to the NAP's 14 points, he said kinetic operations were "under-

way in a splendid manner" with "four to five operations underway every hour".

Sharif said NAP decided in 2014 to set up counter-terrorism departments at the provincial levels and they would be responsible for leading operations against terrorism.

He said it was also decided to register all the religious seminaries but only 16,000 out of about 32,000 seminaries have been registered so far.

Providing updates on the counter-terrorism operations so far this year, he said 22,409 intelligence-based operations were conducted against terrorists and their facilitators.

He said over 112 operations were being conducted daily by the mili-

tary and law enforcement agencies against terrorism.

To a question about the Bannu protest case, he said that the protesters became violent, raised anti-state slogans and looted an army supply depot.

He accused the provincial government of failure to stop the protesters. The spokesperson also talked about fake news and propaganda which was targeting the armed forces and other institutions of the state.

"The purpose of this press conference is to clarify the army's stance on some important topics," he said, adding that there was some "increase in organised propaganda, false, wrong and concocted news" against the armed forces in recent times.

## Israel remains America's 'indispensable ally' regardless who becomes next US President: Netanyahu

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM, JULY 22

As he left for a significant diplomatic visit to the United States, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday said that his country will remain America's "indispensable and strong ally in the Middle East" irrespective of who wins the 2024 US presidential election.

Highlighting that he is leaving on a "very important trip" to the United States, Netanyahu said that he will be addressing the both houses of Congress on Wednesday at a time when Israel is fighting on "seven fronts" and there's "great political uncertainty" in Washington.

"I will seek to anchor



the bipartisan support that is so important for Israel. And I will tell my friends on both sides of the aisle that regardless of who the American people choose as their next President, Israel remains America's indispensable and strong

ally in the Middle East," the Israeli PM said in his remarks before departing for Washington.

Sending a strong message, Netanyahu addressed the media with Noa Argamani, an Israeli hostage freed from Hamas

last month, standing by his side.

Netanyahu made it clear that achieving the release of all Israeli hostages, defeating Hamas and ensuring that all Israel citizens return safely to their homes, remains his major goal.

"I plan to see President Biden, whom I've known for over 40 years. This will be an opportunity to thank him for the things he did for Israel in the war and during his long and distinguished career in public service, as Senator, as Vice President, and as President... In this time of war and uncertainty, it's important that Israel's enemies know that America and Israel stand together today, tomorrow, and always," he said.

## Chief Russian Prosecutor visits North Korea for first time

AGENCIES  
PYONGYANG, JULY 22

In a first, Russia's Prosecutor General is visiting North Korea as the two countries continue to bolster ties following the summit meeting between their top leaders last month.

Igor Krasnov arrived in Pyongyang on Monday and will meet with his counterpart and discuss bilateral cooperation with other officials during his visit, his office said in a statement.

Krasnov received a warm welcome from the representatives of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office upon his arrival at the airport in the North



Korean capital.

A major highlight of his visit will be the signing of a cooperation programme between the Prosecutor General's offices of Russia and North Korea for 2024-2026, along with an updated agreement.

"This visit marks a significant milestone in the

relations between the prosecutors' offices of both countries, which have maintained constructive ties over the past decade based on a Cooperation Agreement signed in 2010," stated the Russian Prosecutor General's office.

On Sunday, representa-

tives from the supervisory agency and the Military University of the Russian Ministry of Defence delivered a series of lectures in Pyongyang which majorly covered the main directions and specifics of the activities of the Russian prosecutor's office.

Moscow believes that Krasnov's visit also highlights the ongoing efforts to enhance cooperation and mutual understanding between Russia and North Korea in legal and prosecutorial matters.

Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang - his first trip to North Korea in 24 years - at the invitation of the country's leader Kim Jong-un.

## S Korea, Albania discuss ways for stronger security cooperation, new techs

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JULY 22

South Korea and Albania discussed ways to enhance cooperation on security, new technologies, and the overall economy, Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Monday.

South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with his Albanian counterpart, Iglj Hasani, in Seoul to discuss bilateral relations.

During the meeting in Seoul, Cho expressed hope for stronger relations with Albania on a wide range of issues, such as cyber security, artificial intelligence, and other

advanced technology sectors, as South Korea is working to boost cooperation with the major European nations in the arms industry and nuclear sectors, among other fields, Yonhap news agency reported.

Cho also called for the two nations to work more closely on joint responses to growing cross-border security threats.

Hasani noted the importance of bilateral relations, particularly in terms of economy and information and technology, and voiced expectations for brisk business-to-business exchanges and stronger ties in the culture and tourism

industries.

Cho stressed the need for stronger unity of the international community to sternly deal with the military ties between North Korea and Russia in violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions that ban arms transfers to North Korea.

According to Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hasani pledged to join global efforts for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

The Albanian Minister arrived here on Sunday for a five-day stay, marking the first official visit by the European country's top envoy since 2011.

## Flood victims in central Myanmar receive aid from donors

AGENCIES  
YANGON, JULY 22

As devastating floods sweep through central Myanmar, thousands of affected residents are receiving badly needed aid, including food, clothing and shelter, from donors and rescuers.

The water level of the Ayeyarwady River in several towns in the Magway region has exceeded the warning marks in recent days, according to the country's Meteorology and Hydrology Department, Xinhua news agency reported.

"I have experienced flooding in the past. But this year's flooding saw the water level rise quicker than in previous years.



Rescue teams are helping us move our belongings, and generous donors are providing us with clothes, food, and shelter," said Hnin Nwe Soe, a resident of Magway township in the Magway region.

"I have three children. I didn't want to risk their safety, so I moved to the

road quickly before the situation became more serious," Soe said, adding that she had not been to work because transportation had been difficult since the water level started rising.

Myat Mon, 35, another resident of Magway town, said this is the second time she had encountered

flooding, the first being five years ago.

Mon, who currently stays in a temporary tent on the road with her family members, said she survived because of the food, clothes, and money provided by the donors.

"I cannot make money for a living because I cannot go to work. I feel sorrowful for this tragedy," she added.

Arr Puu Tuu and his team, donors from Yangon who helped door-to-door in the flood-affected areas, said they are helping villages near the Ayeyarwady River in the Magway region by donating rice and drinking water.

Kyaw Gyi, a member of a rescue team in the Magway region, said, "The

water started rising on July 12. During the flooding, I distributed food donated by the donors to the victims and went to the flooded areas with boats and helped in carrying things and constructing shelters for the victims."

"Due to the rising water level of the Ayeyarwady River, over 3,000 acres of beans and pulses have been submerged, while over 800 cattle have died at our village in Thayet township. Nearly 200 households in the Thayet township in Magway have been evacuated," said U. Mya Win, ward administrator of Thayet township in the Magway region.

"Additionally, there is a risk of cholera due to unclean water.

# India needs to have gradual evolution of financial market: Eco Survey

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Stressing that enhanced participation of retail investors in the Indian capital market lends stability to it, the Economic Survey 2023-2024 said on Monday that India needs to have an orderly and gradual evolution of the financial market.

Commodity derivatives turnover rose by 87 per cent in FY24, driven by an increase in turnover of options contracts of the energy segment. The number of unique tax IDs registered on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) rose from 2.7 crore in FY19 to 9.2 crore in FY24.

The Survey pointed out



that most of the new retail investors are likely young and may have a higher risk appetite.

"It is also reflected in the interest that retail investors have shown in derivatives trading,

especially expiration-day trading. While derivatives are hedging instruments, they are mostly used as speculative instruments by investors worldwide. India is likely no exception," it warned. It added

that derivatives trading holds the potential for outsized gains and caters to "humans' gambling instincts and can augment income if profitable".

"These considerations are likely driving active retail participation in derivatives trading. However, globally, derivatives trading loses money for the investors, for the most part. Raising investor awareness and continuous financial education is essential to warn them of the low or negative expected returns from derivatives trading," suggested the Survey document.

A significant stock correction could see losses that are more considerable for retail investors par-

ticipating in capital markets through derivatives. "Investors' behavioural response would be to feel 'cheated' by unseen more considerable forces. They may not return to capital markets for a long time. That is a loss to them and the economy," the Survey noted. It said that all stakeholders -- market participants, market infrastructure institutions, regulators, and the government -- must ensure that capital markets play their theoretically assigned role of directing savings to their most productive investments.

"It is not just in the national interest. It is an act of self-interest, too," said the Survey.

# India's GDP growth for FY25 to surpass Economic Survey's forecast: CII

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22



The Economic Survey 2023-2024 is positive about the India growth story, and India's GDP growth for FY25 will surpass the forecast and has the potential to reach 8 per cent, Sanjiv Puri, President, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), said on Monday.

The Economic Survey, tabled by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Parliament, projects India's GDP growth rate at 6.5 to 7 per cent for 2024-25 as it sees the economy on a strong wicket. According to Puri, the GDP growth for FY25, which is imminently achievable, is driven by excellent macro-financial management, and a facili-

tative policy environment which includes a thrust on capex and inflation control.

"CII is confident that, going forward, the Indian economy has the potential to achieve 7 per cent plus growth backed by a consensus between the Centre, states, and the private sector on the reform agenda," he said in a statement.

Labour-intensive sectors such as tourism, care economy and food processing sector have the potential to increase employment in the econ-

omy, which is critical.

"The Survey is spot-on in terms of the six key areas unveiled for Amrit Kaal namely boosting private investment, growth and expansion of MSMEs which is referred to as India's Mittelstand; agriculture as a growth engine, financing green transition, bridging the education-employment gap and building state capacity and capability," Puri emphasised.

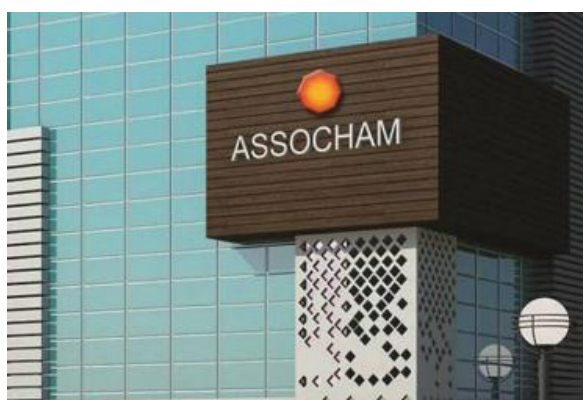
Similarly, the focus on improving the quality of life in the hinterland and emphasis on the social sector such as healthcare, would go a long way to empower the marginalised and ensure that every Indian becomes a stakeholder in New India, said the apex industry chamber.

# Creating 78.5 lakh jobs annually till 2030 signals Centre's resolve: Assocham on Eco Survey

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Terming the Economic Survey 2023-2024 a 'bold' document, leading industry chamber Assocham on Monday said the way it has emphasised the need for creating 78.5 lakh jobs annually till 2030, signals the government's resolve to leverage the fourth global industrial revolution, taking advantage of new-age technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Calling the Survey a morale-booster India growth story, projecting 6.5-7 per cent economic expansion for the fiscal 2024-25 supported by robust services sector, Assocham said it promises manufacturing and investor enthusiasm as



reflected in encouraging rise in Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF).

"The Survey's promising GDP projections for the current financial year come in the backdrop of 8.2 per cent economic growth in 2023-24. Growth is well spread across different sectors like manufac-

turing, real estate and construction," said Deepak Sood, Secretary General.

He said a stellar increase of 19.8 per cent in GFCF in the private sector non-financial corporations in FY23 would have contributed immensely to overall impressive performance in the subsequent year.

"The trend is expected to continue this fiscal as well and appears to be secular in nature," said Sood.

The chamber noted that the Survey has aptly emphasised the importance of deregulation and the catalyst role of the private sector in boosting investment. Specific stress on expanding the Indian manufacturing sector for generation of employment for "semi-skilled" workforce needs to be complemented, it added.

"The role of MSMEs and its formalisation into the economy through various government initiatives like Udyam Registration Portal, different schemes on credit guarantees has been well-recognised in the Economic Survey," said the chamber.

# India made significant progress on climate action: Economic Survey

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Recognising its position as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, India has made significant progress on environmental protection, according to the Economic Survey 2023-24, tabled in Parliament on Monday.

The document was tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a day ahead of the Union Budget presentation.

The Survey showed that the country's energy needs are expected to grow 2 to 2.5 times by 2047.

The country has "successfully reduced the emission intensity vis-a-vis its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 33 per cent

between 2005 and 2019, thus achieving the initial Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) target for 2030, 11 years ahead of scheduled time".

The country has "also committed to increasing the share of non-fossil fuel-based electricity to 40 per cent and enhancing forest cover to absorb 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030".

It showed that the country's GDP grew with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about seven per cent between 2005 and 2019. On the other hand, the emissions grew at a CAGR of about four per cent, that is, "the rate of emissions growth is lower than the rate of growth of our GDP".

"This shows that India has successfully decoupled its economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the emission intensity of its GDP," the Survey said.

As per the Survey, India's primary energy needs in 2022-23 were met with almost "84 per cent from coal, oil and natural gas combined".

With the addition of renewables, "the share of non-fossil power capacity increased to 45.4 per cent as of May 2024 from around 32 per cent in April 2014". The Survey attributed these to recent initiatives such as PM-Surya Ghar Yojana, launched in February 2024, harnessing India's 7,600 km long coastline for wind energy;

and the Green Hydrogen Mission which targets five MMT of green hydrogen by 2030.

Meanwhile, India has also led several international initiatives towards climate change mitigation and building resilience. These include the International Solar Alliance (ISA), One World, One Sun, One Grid, The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, The Infrastructure for Resilient Island States, and the goal of Net Zero, the Leadership Group for Industry Transition. To sustain its economic growth rate over a quarter century and do it sustainably, India needs to keep "the environment and climate in mind", said the Survey.

# 7 per cent GDP growth is doable for India despite global challenges: CEA Nageswaran

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Achieving a 7 per cent GDP growth rate "is doable" for India despite the global environment has become more challenging since the beginning of the year, Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran said on Monday after the Economic Survey was released.

"We were more confident of a 7 per cent GDP growth when we wrote the interim economic survey in January. Since then, the global environment has become even more polarised. Given that, we feel 7 per cent is doable, but yet we want to be not necessarily cautious but prudent," he said

on the 6.5 to 7 per cent growth rate that has been projected for India's GDP growth in the Economic Survey.

"We are not pessimistic, we are optimistic about growth. But we are mindful of challenges -- about the way the monsoon has progressed," he added.

He said that the agriculture sector still carries a huge potential to drive growth, allied sectors need to be encouraged and land consolidation is needed.

"We are facing a very challenging global environment, along with climate change, so we need to make sure we pursue all possible approaches without any ideological orientation," he said.



The Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) anticipates improved performance in the farm sector for the financial year 2024-25.

Furthermore, a widespread acceleration in industrial growth is also expected. He noted that the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are achieving significant results as of May 2024. These schemes are gaining traction and dem-

onstrating considerable progress in critical sectors like electronics and pharmaceuticals, with reported investments surpassing Rs 1.28 lakh crore. However, the idle capacity in China and low-skill manufactured goods can pose risks to India's capital formation.

There is a need to balance between the import of goods and FDI, he remarked. He was of the

view that choosing the FDI strategy "appears more advantageous than relying on trade" as it can arrest the growing trade deficit India has with China.

Nageswaran further stated that India's corporate sector needs to ensure that the deployment of technology does not hurt the labour and capital share of income. It is necessary for India's IT and non-IT sectors to find the right balance between the deployment of technology and labour, he added. He highlighted the need to create 8 million jobs per annum and formalising the workforce in the Indian economy.

He pointed out the fact that the number of patents filed per year has

gone up 17 times from 2015, reflecting the surge in innovations that were taking place in the country.

Nageswaran also mentioned the country's lopsided distribution of enterprises with too many micro industries, some large, but with a huge gap in the middle which needs to be plugged to raise the share of manufacturing in GDP. "The clue to sustaining growth lies in the nuts and bolts of deregulation in the manufacturing sector," he added.

He also said that it is no longer about big-ticket reforms, "but the ground-work, the nuts and bolts of governance that we need to get right in order to drive growth forward".

# India has well-established infra to attract FDI in renewables, telecom: Eco Survey

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

India has a well-established infrastructure to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in sectors like greenfield projects such as renewables, digital services such as telecommunications, software and hardware, and consultancy services, the Economic Survey 2023-2024 said on Monday.

Over the medium term, India is focusing on integrating its value chain with that of the West, particularly in sectors like renewable energy and advanced technology, including AI, semiconduc-

tors, and next-generation telecommunications.

The Survey said this strategy is being pursued through agreements such as the Australia-India Free Trade Agreement and the US-India Clean Energy Initiative.

"As a result, the trading patterns within these sectors are starting to develop. For example, the tariff classifications for environmentally friendly technology, such as solar water heaters, waste recycling devices, and wind turbines, show an increase in exports to the USA from \$199.2 million in FY20 to \$326.9 million in FY24," according to the Survey.

# Farm sector gets boost as Agri Infra Fund mobilises Rs 73,194 crore: Eco Survey

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) launched by the Government to spur growth in the farm sector has succeeded in mobilising an investment of Rs 73,194 crore, according to the Economic Survey released on Monday.

In addition, the Government has been implementing the Agriculture Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) to improve the extent of storage infrastructure. As of 30th April 2024, 48,357 projects were sanctioned for storage infrastructure with Rs 4,570 crore released as subsidy, and 20,878 other projects are also under progress with Rs 2,084 crore released as

subsidy under AMI, the survey points out.

The agriculture sector has registered an average annual growth rate of 4.18 per cent at constant prices over the last five years. As per provisional estimates for 2023-24, the growth rate of the agriculture sector stood at 1.4 per cent at constant prices due to the erratic monsoon.

The survey also highlights that allied sectors of Indian agriculture are steadily emerging as robust growth centres and promising sources for improving farm incomes. From 2014-15 to 2022-23, the livestock sector grew at an impressive Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.38 per cent at constant prices. The fish-



eries sector has grown at a compound annual rate of 8.9 per cent between 2014-15 and 2022-23 (at constant prices).

The government's pri-

ority has been to provide timely, cost-effective, and adequate credit that reduces the dependence on non-institutional credit and increases invest-

ment. The measures have reduced the share of non-institutional credit from 90 per cent in 1950 to 23.40 per cent in 2021-22, the survey adds.

Promotion of greater efficiency in the use of inputs and sustainable production methods through Per Drop More Crop (PDMC), a micro irrigation scheme, and the actions under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), including the use of alternative and organic fertilisers are a few examples of initiatives being undertaken to improve productivity and sustainability.

An area of 90.0 lakh hectares has been covered under micro irrigation in the country under the PDMC from 2015-16 to 2023-24 as of 6th February 2024, the survey states.

To facilitate the adoption of smart agriculture technologies, the govern-

ment has taken up digital initiatives such as the Digital Agriculture Mission and e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), with the latter allowing better price discovery.

The Digital Agriculture Mission 2021-2025 aims to modernise agriculture through advanced technologies like AI, remote sensing, drones, etc, it added.

The government has taken various measures to promote cooperatives and farmer-producer organisations. As of February 29, 2024, 8,195 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have registered under the new FPO scheme.

The economic survey also states that efforts must

be made to encourage production patterns and practices in various geographies that are consistent with their agro-climatic characteristics and natural resources. Agriculture policies must be consistent with climate imperatives and water security.

Investment in technology, production methods, marketing infrastructure, and reduction in post-harvest losses need to be scaled up.

E-NAM, promoting FPOs, and allowing cooperatives to participate in agri-marketing can improve the market infrastructure and allow better price discovery. Improving the market infrastructure by incentivising states can be explored.

# Indian women's hockey team completes intensive training session at Indian Naval Academy

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

The Indian women's hockey team has successfully completed a unique and intensive training session at the Indian Naval Academy (INA) in Kannur, Kerala, held from July 15 to 21.

The transformative camp, conducted in the disciplined environment of the INA, was aimed to enhance the team's skills and foster a spirit of unity and resilience.

The camp was designed to instill key values such as team building, mental strengthening, risk capabilities, discipline, self-defence, survival techniques, and leadership skills.

Participants engaged in challenging activities that promoted camaraderie and mutual support, emphasising the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility. Through rigorous physical and mental exercises, team members developed resilience and risk assessment abilities.

Also, the camp's structured routines enhanced focus and commitment, while practical self-

defence and survival techniques equipped individuals with essential skills for unforeseen circumstances.

Leadership qualities were honed through role-playing exercises, decision-making scenarios, and opportunities to lead teams in demanding situations, preparing participants for various life and professional challenges, as per Hockey India release.

The list of activities conducted during the camp-

1. Boat Pulling: Emphasised unity, cooperation, and perseverance as team members synchronised efforts to achieve common goals, fostering resilience and adaptability.

2. Obstacle Course: Promoted collaboration, strategic thinking, and resilience as participants navigated challenges together, encouraging creative problem-solving and effective communication.

3. Endurance Runs: Cultivated perseverance, solidarity, and strategic planning as teams navigated long distances together, fostering camaraderie and mutual support.

4. Motivational and Leadership Lectures: Military leaders and battle



survivors shared stories of courage and determination, inspiring participants to overcome adversity and emphasising the importance of leadership and strategic thinking.

5. Unarmed Combat Training: Instilled confidence, self-defence skills, and empowerment, enhancing physical fitness and mental resilience while fostering unity and mutual support among team members.

6. Swimming/5m Jumps: Promoted physical fitness, mental resilience, and adaptability, showcasing the importance of teamwork in overcoming challenges.

7. Naval Drill: Taught

discipline, coordination, and operational readiness, preparing teams to respond effectively to dynamic environments and unforeseen circumstances.

8. Tug of War: Highlighted strength, strategy, and unity, fostering camaraderie and mutual support as teams worked together to achieve common goals.

Moreover, a detailed day-wise activity program was provided and posted on the main notice board of the team's accommodation, while Lt. Hari Prakasam V M coordinated and liaised all activities.

Also, a specially designed uniform for the camp was issued to all

players and coaches upon arrival at INA, which is set against the backdrop of Ezhimala's seven hills.

Furthermore, a friendly hockey match was conducted between the academy hockey team and the Indian team, followed by an interactive session with INA cadets. This exhilarating session provided cadets with insights into the life of a national player and exposed players to the experiences of military cadets.

Speaking about the camp, Indian women's team chief coach Harendra Singh said, "Over the past week, the Indian Naval Academy has graciously opened its doors and provided unparalleled training to our Indian Women's Hockey team. The Academy's dedication to mental strengthening and team bonding has transformed these young athletes into more competitive and resilient individuals."

"Under the guidance of exemplary officers, our players have undergone rigorous training that will benefit them not only in hockey but in all aspects of their lives. The demanding

drills have pushed them beyond their limits, reinforcing the mental toughness and perseverance needed to excel.

"The skills and discipline they have acquired here are invaluable. This experience has undoubtedly prepared our team to face any challenge on and off the field with renewed confidence and determination," he added.

Deputy Commandant Indian Naval Academy Rear Admiral Prakash Gopalan said, "We were honoured to host the Indian Women's Hockey Team at the Indian Naval Academy. This training camp was designed to provide them with a holistic development experience, focusing on mental toughness, discipline, and leadership."

"The athletes engaged in various activities that tested their limits and encouraged them to work as a cohesive unit. It was inspiring to see their dedication and resilience throughout the camp. We are confident that the skills and values they have acquired here will serve them well in their future endeavours, both in sports and in life."

## Goalkeeper PR Sreejesh to retire from international hockey after Paris Olympics

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

India men's veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh said he will be retiring from international hockey after the upcoming Paris Olympics. Sreejesh made his international debut for India during the 2006 South Asian Games in Sri Lanka and has 328 caps to his name so far.

He was a member of the bronze medal-winning hockey team at the Tokyo Olympics, giving India its first-ever medal in the sport at the mega quadrennial event since 1980.

"As I stand on the threshold of my final chapter in international hockey, my heart swells with gratitude and reflection. This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am forever grateful for the love and support from my family, teammates, coaches, and fans," wrote Sreejesh in a thread on 'X'.

Sreejesh has also been a member of the 2022 Asian Games gold medal-winning side, as well as winning the Asian Champions Trophy on four occasions and winning

the bronze medal in the FIH Hockey World League Final in 2015. He was also conferred with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2021.

"From the modest beginnings at G V Raja Sports School, to this momentous journey that has defined my life, every step has been a testament to dreams, determination, and the support of my loved ones. I still remember my father selling our cow to buy my first kit. His sacrifice ignited a fire within me, pushing me to strive harder, dream bigger.

"My first international trip to Australia was filled with wonder and excitement, a young boy chasing a dream on foreign soil. The 2012 London Olympics was a harsh teacher. Losing all our matches was a bitter pill to swallow, but it was also a turning point," added Sreejesh.

At the 2014 Asian Games, Sreejesh stood like a wall in the final to keep Pakistan at bay in the penalty shoot-out. He has also been conferred with the Arjuna Award in 2015 and the Padma Shri in 2017.

## We wanted someone who was likely to be available more often: Ajit Agarkar on Suryakumar Yadav as T20 captain

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, JULY 22

Fitness, feedback from the dressing room and consistent availability swung the pendulum in Suryakumar Yadav's favour when it was decided to appoint him captain of the Indian T20 team ahead of Hardik Pandya, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said here on Monday.

Agarkar was addressing a media conference along with newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where the team will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs against the



hosts starting July 27.

"Fitness was a clear challenge and we wanted someone who was likely to be available more often," Agarkar said during the

joint press conference.

"He is one of the best T20 batters and as captain, he is likely to play all the games. We think he is a deserving captain and we

will see how he fits into the role."

Regarding star all-rounder Pandya, Agarkar said, "Hardik's skill-sets are difficult to find. We have got a bit more time and we can look at a few things.

"Fitness was a clear challenge and we wanted someone who was likely to be available more often," Agarkar said.

"We have taken general feedback from the dressing room also," he added.

With regard to former vice-captain KL Rahul being overlooked, he retorted, "I wasn't there when KL was superseded." The T20 series against

Sri Lanka will start on July 27, followed by games on July 28 and 30.

All the matches will be played at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium.

Suryakumar Yadav will lead a 15-member T20 squad in the three matches.

After that, the ODIs will be held on August 2, 4 and 7 at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Rohit Sharma, who retired from T20 internationals after leading India to the World Cup triumph in the West Indies last month, will return as the skipper of the one-day international team.

## Root is so special that he could eventually overtake Sachin: Vaughan

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

Former captain Michael Vaughan has lauded Joe Root for being a special batter and has predicted that he could overtake Sachin Tendulkar's record for most runs by a batter in the history of men's Test cricket. On Sunday, Root smashed 122 off 178 balls, his 32nd Test hundred, during England's 241-run win over the West Indies at Nottingham to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Root, who now has 11,940 Test runs, has also become the eighth-highest run-getter in Test cricket, going past the likes of Sri

Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene (11,814) and the West Indies' Shivnarine Chanderepaul (11,867).

"Joe Root will become England's leading run-scorer in the next few months and is so special that he really could overtake Sachin Tendulkar eventually. As the rock, Root is obviously key to that, and I love that he kept the reverse-scoop in the locker until he was past 100 and England's lead was massive.

"Against an attack like the West Indies in these conditions, you expect him to get a century. He missed out in the first innings but was so determined to put it right in the second. He was never going to make

the same mistakes," wrote Vaughan in his column for The Telegraph.

He also praised right-handed batter Harry Brook for hitting his first Test century on home soil, but advised him to do something about his issues related to facing short ball. "Then there's Harry Brook, who is going to provide spectators so many 'I was there' moments in the next few years. He will play innings and shots that just make you go 'wow'. I have seen players with time, but I'm not sure I've seen anyone with that much time to play aggressive shots looking very easy. Stillness, trigger, hands high, cocked wrist.

## Decided to dedicate Paris Olympics campaign to Sreejesh; want to win it for him: Harmanpreet

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

India men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said they will be dedicating upcoming Paris Olympics campaign to veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who announced that the quadrennial event would be his last international tournament, adding that the tagline for the same is 'Win it for Sreejesh'.

A veteran of 328 international caps since his debut in 2006, Sreejesh will be playing his fourth Olympic Games through the upcoming quadrennial event in Paris, also mark-

ing his final international tournament for India.

Sreejesh has been part of various memorable wins for India, which includes Gold in 2014 Asian Games, Bronze medal in 2018 Asian Games at Jakarta-Palembang, joint winning team of the Asian Champions Trophy in 2018, Gold medal winning team of 2019 FIH Men's Series Finals in Bhubaneswar and Silver medal winning team at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

"Paris 2024 will indeed be a special tournament. We have decided to dedicate our campaign to the legend PR Sreejesh. He has been an inspiration

for all of us and I still remember his mentorship in 2016 Junior World Cup when we lifted the title.

"It was the beginning of many of our careers in International hockey and he has shaped each one of our careers in his own way. We want to 'Win it for Sreejesh' and we are all the more encouraged to stand on the podium once again," said Harmanpreet in a Hockey India statement.

Sreejesh was one of the main architects of India's historic bronze medal win at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic



Games. He was instrumental in India's third-place finish at the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22. Last

year, he stood tall in India's Gold medal-winning campaign at the Asian Games that sealed the team's berth for Paris 2024.

Sreejesh was awarded the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2021 and is only the second sports person from India to win the award of World Games Athlete of the Year 2021. He has also won back-to-back FIH Goalkeeper of the Year awards in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

"As I prepare for my last dance in Paris, I look back with immense pride and forward with hope. This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am forever grateful for the love and support from my family, teammates, coaches, fans and Hockey India. Thank you for believing in me.

"My teammates have stood beside through the tough and the ardent times. We all want to give our absolute best here in Paris and certainly, the desire is to change the colour of our medal," said Sreejesh.

Dilip Tirkey, the former international player cur-

rently serving as Hockey India president, paid a rich tribute to Sreejesh. "Sreejesh was hardly 18 or 19-years-old when I first saw him in the Indian camp and if I recall right, he made his international debut when I was Captain of the Indian team. He is a very special player and my heart fills with joy and gratitude for his exemplary contribution to Indian hockey.

"This outing in Paris will certainly be a special one for the team and I believe Sreejesh's decision will only encourage the team further to stand on the podium yet again and make it truly special not

just for Sreejesh but for the entire hockey fraternity. I wish him and the team the very best."

Hockey India secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said, "Sreejesh is a legend, an inspiration to the entire nation and I congratulate him on a fantastic career studded with several laurels that has brought honour and pride to the nation.

"Hockey India respects his decision to retire after the Paris Olympic Games, making this a truly special tournament not just for the team but also for Indian hockey fans. I wish him and the team the best in their campaign."

## Indian Olympics will be remembered through Abhinav Bindra: Om Prakash Karhana

AGENCIES  
FARIDABAD (HARYANA), JULY 22

Former Indian shot putter Om Prakash Singh Karhana believed that Indian Olympics history will be remembered through rifle shooter Abhinav Bindra, who bring India's first individual gold medal in 2008.

Bindra made history by simultaneously being the world and Olympic champion for the men's 10-meter air rifle event. He

achieved this remarkable feat by securing victories at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2006 ISSF World Championships.

A former Asian champion, who represented India at the London 2012 Olympics and retired in 2022, wants the Indian contingent to take inspiration from Abhinav Bindra.

"The history of the Indian Olympics will be remembered through Abhinav Bindra, he is my biggest Indian Olympics

athlete and I want the Indian Paris contingent to take inspiration from his journey," said Karhana at the 'Glory of Five Rings' event on Monday.

"He is the biggest Olympic athlete to represent India in the Olympics. He brought home the first individual gold medal glory to the country," he said.

For the first time ever, India brought home three medals from the Olympics in 2008: Abhinav Bindra,

Vijender Singh, and Sushil Kumar. This made it the country's most successful Olympics to that point, with 20 medals in all. Vijender Singh won India's first boxing medal at the Olympics, while Bindra's gold was the country's first-ever solo gold medal.

The Paris Olympics will take place from July 26-August 11, with 117 athletes from India representing the country in the mega quadrennial event.

## Learned a lot from Tokyo, will not think of a medal too early in Paris Olympics: Manika Batra

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

As the Paris Olympics is on the horizon, star Indian paddler Manika Batra said she has learned from her Tokyo Games experience and would be focusing on one match at a time despite setting a target of getting into the medal rounds.

The 29-year-old believes

that India has a shot at winning an elusive table tennis medal at the Paris Olympics, scheduled from July 26 to August 11.

"I have learned many things from the last Olympics, and I am not going to make those mistakes again.

My mindset has changed since then, I am calmer and have more confidence in myself. I

have been working on my stamina and my agility, and my ultimate aim is to challenge for a medal.

"But, I will go slowly. I will try to be in that zone and give my best. I will go round by round and not think of a medal too early. I will give my best for my country," Manika said during an interview with Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT).

Manika played an instrumental role in the Indian women's team qualifying for the Paris Olympics, a first for Indian table tennis.

She also reached the quarter-finals of the WTT Saudi Smash in May by beating World No. 2 and former world champion Wang Manyu of China and World No. 14 Nina Mittelham of Germany.

## JKTPO organizes e-commerce onboarding drive at Samba

J NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, JULY 22

As part of the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) series of e-commerce onboarding initiative, a workshop was organized in Samba, in collaboration with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). This initiative was part of JKTPO's ongoing efforts to economically empower local sellers by integrating them into the digital economy.

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

The workshops aimed to provide comprehensive training to local sellers on



how to effectively utilize e-commerce platforms to expand their businesses. The participants received hands-on guidance on creating and managing online storefronts, navigating digital marketplaces, and leveraging online tools to reach a broader customer base.

Earlier, Banu Partap Singh, Vice President of Sales at MyStore, along with Prafull, Manager at MyStore, conducted virtual training sessions for the participants who were interested in register-

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

Abhishek Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Samba stated that "The products produced in Samba is of good quality and it should reach every household. Our artisans are highly skilled and produce products of excel-

lent quality and those this workshop, we want everyone to come forward and register themselves to expand their customer reach." He also emphasized the pivotal role of such initiatives in fostering economic growth and sustainable development within the district. He commended JKTPO's proactive approach in supporting local entrepreneurs, artisans, and small-scale enterprises in embracing digital transformation. Over 200 artisans,

farmers, entrepreneurs, participated in today's workshop and received hands-on training and guidance on navigating e-commerce platforms, optimizing product listings, digital marketing strategies, and managing online transactions securely. The event not only equipped attendees with essential digital skills but also fostered a collaborative environment conducive to knowledge exchange and networking among stakeholders.

Moving forward, JKTPO plans to conduct similar initiatives across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring widespread participation and inclusive growth. The organization remains dedicated to exploring new avenues that empower local communities, stimulate economic diversification, and amplify the global presence of Jammu and Kashmir's unique cultural heritage.

## DDC Kupwara chairs DLIC meeting of HADP

J NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JULY 22

The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) meeting at Mini-Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex, here to review the progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) and finalize the selection process of beneficiaries under HADP in the district.

The committee under the chairmanship of the DDC approved 4805 cases of agriculture and allied sectors. The approved cases included 2400 cases of agriculture, 669 cases of Horticulture, 876 cases of Animal husbandry, 854 cases of Sheep Husbandry, 5 cases of Horticulture Planning and Marketing and 1 case of Fisheries department.

The DDC also took stock of the progress made under HADP under vari-



ous sectors, meticulously examining advancements in key areas like Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries.

The DDC set a timeline of one week for achieving specific targets under HADP.

She said that effective collaboration is vital for ensuring proper planning, execution, and monitoring of HADP activities. She

emphasized the primary goal of the program which is to empower local farmers by equipping them with knowledge and tools that can significantly enhance their productivity and profitability.

DLIC meeting was attended by ADDC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Bhat; GM, DIC Kupwara; Chief Agriculture Officer and District Officers of line departments.

## DC Pulwama reviews arrangements for Independence Day celebrations

J NEWS SERVICE  
PULWAMA, JULY 22

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom convened a meeting of concerned officers today to review the arrangements being put in place by various departments for the smooth celebration of Independence Day, 2024, in the district.

At the outset, the DC highlighted the importance of the national event, sensitizing concerned officers from line departments about their roles and responsibilities. He directed them to make fool-proof arrangements in advance to ensure the smooth conduct of celebrations across the district with fervor and enthusiasm.

He emphasized the inclusion of various cultural activities representing the diversity of our great nation and urged the involvement of stu-



dents, youth, artists, and performers in the national event.

The review also encompassed an assessment of the infrastructure and facilities for the convenience of attendees, including seating arrangements, traffic management, and medical aid centers, as well as the arrangements to be put in place for rehearsals to the main event.

The meeting was informed that the main

function will be held at DPL Pulwama, while local administration will celebrate the national event at Sub-Division, Block, and Tehsil levels.

The DC directed the district heads of different departments to ensure their presence, as well as the presence of subordinate officers and officials, at the Independence Day function both at the district headquarters and at divisional level functions.

Arrangements for flag

hoisting, march pasts, cultural items, seating arrangements, stage setting, venue preparation, and refreshments for the I-Day celebration were discussed in the meeting. Directions were given to concerned officers to make fool-proof security arrangements and ensure adequate provision of drinking water, power supply, medical care, sanitation, transport, traffic regulation, and illumination of major government buildings in the tricolor theme. Additionally, the deployment of fire tenders, seating arrangements, and distribution of invitations were also addressed. Dr. Basharat

also impressed upon the concerned officers to make arrangements for students and artists to facilitate their participation in the Independence Day celebration, including their boarding and lodging. The DC instructed the concerned officers to ensure maximum participation of school children, NCC & NSS cadres, police, band parties, and other teams for the parade on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day.

Dr. Basharat emphasized the importance of National Flag hoisting and stressed adherence to the National Flag Code to ensure the honor and dignity of the national flag. All officers were impressed upon to acquaint themselves well with the code and procedures.

The meeting witnessed participation of District/Sectoral officers and representatives of other stakeholder agencies.

## DC Reasi inaugurates Shrawan Mahotsav at Shiv Khori Ransoo

J NEWS SERVICE  
REASI, JULY 22

Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan who also serves as the Vice Chairman of Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board (SSKSB), along with Surinder Jamwal, Member of SSKSB inaugurated the Shrawan Mahotsav at Shiv Khori Ransoo today.

The event, organized in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, marked the beginning of the month-long festivities with great fervor and participation from a large number of devotees.

On the inaugural day, a Kavad Yatra commenced from Ransoo to the holy cave, witnessing a large number of devotees paying their respects at the sacred site.

As part of the celebrations, Deputy Commissioner Reasi also released two bhajans dedicated to



Lord Shiva, one from ARJ Production and another from Pawan Production. Additionally, a captivating performance of Shiv Leela was presented by the Jackson Dance Institute Jammu, adding more spiritual flavor to the event.

Speaking at the inauguration, Deputy Commissioner expressed his delight at the start of the Shrawan Mahotsav and highlighted the significance of such events in promoting spirituality among the community especially the youth for a better society.

He said Shrawan Mahotsav began with series of religious events throughout the auspicious month

of Shrawan, catering to the spiritual enrichment of devotees and locals alike.

He extended gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor for approving helipad and alternative track for the shrine. He further expressed his gratitude to the Chairman (Divisional Commissioner, Jammu) for leading the Shri Shivkhori Shrine Board and introduction of new religious services for the pilgrims. He reiterated that the heli service and the new services like Rudra Abhishek Pooja, Hawan and Bhog Arpan shall further make the pilgrims experience more fulfilling. The DC also launched new Prasad for the pilgrims.

## DC Srinagar Chairs District Mineral Foundation Trust Meeting; Reviews Progress of PMKKKY Schemes

J NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JULY 22

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) and the efficient utilization of the District Mineral Fund for the development of mining-affected areas, a meeting of District Mineral Fund was today held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner, who is also the Chairman of the District Mineral Foundation Trust, conducted a comprehensive review of each developmental activity undertaken in the district over the last three financial years under PMKKKY using the District Mineral Fund.

The fresh proposals submitted by various Departments were also discussed for additional works to be undertaken under PMKKKY for the year 2024-25.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner approved few schemes of the District Mineral



Fund for the execution of development schemes in mining-affected areas. The chair also reviewed the progress of each developmental work carried out during the year 2023-24 under PMKKKY for the welfare of areas and people affected by mining-related operations.

Earlier, the District Mineral Officer Srinagar presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation, informing the Chair that various developmental activities undertaken in the District during the financial year 2022-23 under PMKKKY using the District Mineral Fund have been completed.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman

emphasized the need to incorporate innovative concepts in the developmental activities under PMKKKY to ensure a visible impact on the ground and benefit the target population in both direct and indirectly affected areas as per the PMKKKY guidelines. The Chair urged Officers to work with added zeal and dedication, ensuring the judicious utilization of funds, particularly in areas such as drinking water, playgrounds, and health. He also stressed the importance of accelerating the pace of developmental works under PMKKKY for their timely completion to benefit people living in mining-affected areas.

Dr Bilal directed all members to avoid duplication of works already undertaken by other sectors of District Administration and to classify the areas of the district based on different sectors to maximize the benefits of the PMKKKY schemes. The meeting was attended by the General Manager DIC, District Programme Officer (ICDS), Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development, District Social Welfare Officer, District Youth Services & Sports Officer, District Mineral Officer Srinagar, Deputy CEO, Executive Engineers of I&FC, R&B, and other concerned Officers.

## DC Kishtwar reviews Independence Day arrangements

J NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, JULY 22

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav, convened a meeting with line department officers today to discuss the preparations for the grand celebration of Independence Day 2024 in the district.

Among the attendees were SSP Kishtwar Abdul Qayoom, JKPS; ADC Kishtwar Pawan Kotwal; CPO Kishtwar Shahnawaz Bali; ACD Kishtwar Phulail Singh; AD Food/DIO Kishtwar Shafiq Keen; Tehsildar HQ; AO DC Office, along with other district officers and concerned ExEns.

The main event shall be held at Chowgan Ground, Kishtwar, with additional celebrations planned at various blocks, tehsils, and government offices throughout the district. Distinguished guests will proudly hoist the National Flag during the ceremonies.

During the meeting, detailed discussions took place regarding flag hoisting, cultural activities, dress rehearsals, and essential logistical and safety arrangements for the main program at Chowgan Ground. DIO Kishtwar and CEO



Municipal Council Kishtwar were instructed to ensure the Shahnai Vadan at the venue and MC office Kishtwar on the morning of Independence Day.

The responsibility of singing the National Anthem was assigned to GHSS Girls. A joint rehearsal of cultural programs and the troop parade will commence tomorrow onwards, with the final dress rehearsal scheduled for 13th August 2024.

SSP Kishtwar assured comprehensive security arrangements throughout the district to ensure a smooth and safe celebration of Independence Day. The March Past Practice will be overseen by SSP Kishtwar. Various other prepara-

tions were also discussed during the meeting, including venue and stage setup, installation of shamianas by ExEn PWD, floral decorations by the Floriculture Department, Public Address System by DI&PR Kishtwar, proper seating arrangements, fire tender services, sanitary facilities, lime lining by EO Municipal Council, and water and power supply by the concerned ExEns at main venue.

First aid facilities will be provided by the CMO, while designated committees will screen cultural items, and DYSSO will manage the procurement of mementos and trophies for participants.

Additionally, 14 Freedom Fighters will lead school children's Prabhat

Pheris, with one Freedom Fighter accompanying each school and sharing their freedom stories.

Furthermore, Swachta Pakhwada will be organized by BDOs from 1st to 14th August 2024 under the supervision of ACD Kishtwar.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar emphasized the importance of all concerned officers working in a synchronized manner to ensure timely arrangements for the smooth celebration of the National Day.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner issued necessary directions to concern stakeholders to ensure the successful conduct of the National Event.