

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Severe and continuous abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Severe ten pain or more, head or joint, pain or loss
- Redness

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 11 | ISSUE NO: 173 | PAGES: 12 | PRICE: Rs 2/- | RNI NO: JKENG/2013/49471 | POSTAL REGD. NO. JK-497/22-24 | dailyjindrahimages.com/Epaper.php | jindrahimages123@gmail.com

Lolab gunfight day 2: Terrorists, soldier killed, says official



JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

A terrorist and an army soldier were killed during an ongoing anti-terror operation in the Lolab area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district, which entered its second day on Wednesday, officials said.

He said security forces have intensified search operations in the surrounding areas to prevent any escape attempts by terrorists.

An official informed the news agency that the

operation was launched based on specific intelligence inputs, with a joint team from the Indian Army and Jammu & Kashmir Police searching in the general area of Kowut (Trimukha Top) in Lolab, Kupwara.

The search operation led to a firefight, during which contact was established with the hiding terrorists. In the ensuing gunfight, a terrorist was killed, and a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), identified as

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Poonch Gunfight

Rich tributes paid to fallen Soldier in Jammu



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

Senior Army, civil and police officers on Wednesday joined a wreath-laying ceremony to pay rich tributes to the soldier who lost his life in a gunfight with terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district.

Lance Naik Subhash Chander sacrificed his life during a gunfight in the Battal area of Krishna Ghati sector early Tuesday as the Army scuttled an infiltration attempt by a group of terrorists from across the border.

The wreath-laying ceremony to pay homage

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Will avenge every drop of blood spilled by foreign terrorists in Jammu: LG Manoj Sinha

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

Stating that the adversary was trying hard to revive terrorism in Jammu, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that admin and the security forces are committed to avenge every drop of blood spilled by the foreign terrorists in the region.

Addressing a function at Rajbhawan after releasing the Postage Stamp of Late Wazir Muhammad Hakla Poonch, the LG, as per news agency, said that the neighbouring country is trying hard to revive the terrorism in Jammu. "Families that are taking part to strengthen peace in the region are being targeted in Poonch, Rajouri, Kathua and Reasi. "We will avenge every drop of blood spilled by for-



foreign terrorists in Jammu region."

Jammu region has been in news for the past few months about the spate of attacks on the army in Poonch, Rajouri, Doda districts of Jammu. The growing security concerns in

Jammu have sent security agencies into a tizzy with a series of meetings taking place in New Delhi and Jammu. Recently, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi chaired a high level security review meeting to roll out a fresh strat-

egy of the security grid against foreign terrorists operating in the region.

Reaching out to Gujjars and Bakerwals, the LG said these communities are the first line of defence on borders and LoC.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

LG lays wreath, pays homage to Naik Dilwar Khan

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha laid wreath and paid homage to Naik Dilwar Khan, who laid down his life during an anti-terror operation in Kupwara.

"I salute the indomitable courage of our braveheart, who made supreme sacrifice for the nation. His valour and sacrifice will never be forgotten. The entire nation stands firmly with the family of the martyr in this hour of grief," the Lt Governor said.



Rs 3,694 crore allocated for ongoing railway projects in J&K: Railway Minister

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said this year, Rs 3,694 crore has been allocated for the ongoing railway projects in Jammu and Kashmir, while the "dream project" Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) is nearing completion and will be inaugurated soon.

Addressing media in Delhi, the minister, as per news agency said that new projects are also being taken up and detailed project reports (DPRs) are being prepared.



He said work on Baramulla-Uri railway line, two other lines, developing four terminals from Budgam to Baramulla section, and four new stations, including Budgam, Jammu Tawi, Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Udhampur station is underway.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

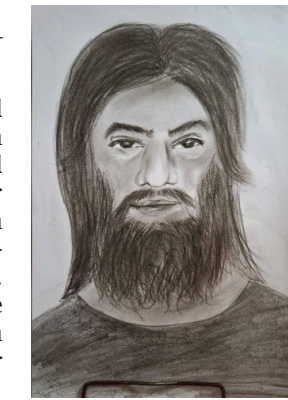
Punjab police, army conduct search ops after 7 'suspicious' men spotted in Pathankot

AGENCIES
PATHANKOT, JUL 24

The Punjab Police and Army personnel on Wednesday conducted a search operation after a woman spotted seven "suspicious" men in a village in Pathankot district. A sketch of one of the suspects has also been released, said a senior police official.

The woman informed the police that seven "suspicious" men came to her house in Fangtoli village and demanded water from her and left after some time.

Pathankot Senior Superintendent of Police



Suhail Qasim Mir said the search operation was conducted by police along with the Army in the area. "We are maintaining high alert," Mir said. The Pathankot district

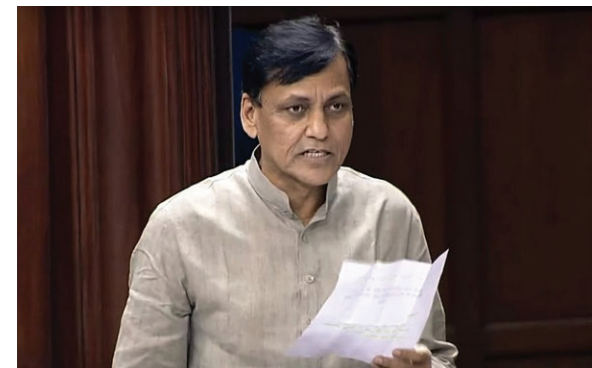
CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

900 terrorists killed in J&K after abrogation of Article 370, 28 killed in recent days: MoS Home

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

The government of India has zero tolerance towards terrorism and it will be wiped out from Jammu and Kashmir very soon, the Minister of State for Home Affairs said on Wednesday.

Replying to a question of Congress MP Promod Tiwari, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, as per the news agency said that the only places for terrorists is



either hell or jail and very soon terrorism will be wiped out from J&K. The minister also

underscored the govern-

ment's commitment to restoring peace in the region. "Prime Minister

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Narendra Modi has zero tolerance towards terrorism. Violence will be completely eradicated in the Union Territory," he said.

He said 900 terrorists have been killed in J&K after the abrogation of Article 370 and 28 have been killed in recent days, while the number of soldiers killed in this period is very less that is condemnable.

Rai acknowledged the recent increase in the attacks on security

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

18 killed as plane crashes after takeoff at Kathmandu Airport, Pilot survives

JINNEWS SERVICE
KATHMANDU, JULY 24

A Nepalese private plane crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a child, and seriously injuring the pilot - the only survivor.

The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8



IGP chairs joint security review meeting at Nunwan Base Camp, Pahalgam

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

In the midst of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, V.K. Birdi, convened a joint security review meeting at Nunwan Base Camp, Pahalgam.

The meeting was attended by a range of stakeholders, including Police officers, Army, CAPF forces, NDRF, SDRF, MRT, Base Camp directors, Security, Traffic, Fire Services, and intelligence agencies, a



police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency.

IGP Kashmir directed all security agencies to work in close coordination

to ensure a safe and secure Amarnath Yatra.

Emphasizing the importance of collective effort and coordination, he stressed the need to prevent any potential threats, address emerging challenges, and ensure the safety of Pilgrims.

During the meeting, IGP Kashmir reviewed the current security scenario and discussed measures to ensure a secure environment for Yatris, tourists, and locals alike.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

J&K braces up for severe heat wave for next 4 days

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

With the record breaking temperatures at multiple places across Kashmir, there is a forecast of severe heat wave in some parts of the valley while some previous records may also get surpassed for the next four days.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has recorded the second highest maximum temperature in the month of July in the last

one decade as the mercury continues to record an upward trend across the Union Territory.

According to the news agency, for the third time in the ongoing month, Srinagar has recorded a maximum temperature of 35.6 degree Celsius, which was 5.7 degree Celsius above the normal temperature.

Interestingly, the maximum temperature in Srinagar and Jammu city was similar as both the places recorded a day

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Over 1 crore tourists visit J&K till June this year: Centre

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JUL 24

The Centre on Wednesday said that over one crore tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir till June this year while several measures have been taken that led to significant improvement in the tourism sector.

Replying to a question of MP Dinesh Sharma, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, as per the news agency, said that the tourism sector in

J&K has witnessed unprecedented growth post-abrogation of Article 370.

He said that 34,70,834 tourists visited J&K in 2020, 1,13,14,884 in 2021 followed by 1,88,64,332 in 2022, 2,11,24,874 in 2023 and 1,08,41,009 till June this year so far.

"Due to improved law and order, Jammu and Kashmir recorded a footfall of 2.11 crore tourists in 2023. Foreign tourist arrival has increased by 2.5 times.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Heat wave: No change in school timing in twin districts of Doda, Kishtwar so far

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JUL 24

Since the heat wave has gripped whole Jammu and Kashmir and all the three districts of Chenab valley, Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar, are the worst hit in this union territory, the education department has shown least interest in giving some relief to students.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Weekly Block Diwas:

DC Srinagar convenes Public Outreach Programme at Zainakote

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

In a significant step towards addressing public grievances and enhancing grassroots governance, a public outreach programme as part of Government's ambitious weekly Block Diwas initiative was on Wednesday convened at Zainakote area of Srinagar City.

The event, presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat witnessed active participation from Officers from various government departments, local representatives, and public from all walks of life, including youth and senior citizens.

Local representatives and senior citizens from Zainakote and other adjoining areas raised various issues including macadamization of roads, operationalisation of Trauma Hospital at Lawaypora, addressing issues related to drainage at Zainakote, Khushi-



pora and Gund Hassibhat, construction of Marriage Hall, Ground for Hr. Sec. School, improvement of School infrastructure and other issues of public infrastructure development, healthcare, education, and other public utilities.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that Block Diwas is an initiative aimed at promoting direct interaction between the administration and the public, providing a platform for the public to voice their concerns and seek redressal.

He assured the public that their concerns would be addressed promptly and effectively, and issued

on-the-spot directions for resolving various issues of immediate nature. He also directed the concerned officers to take immediate action and ensure regular follow-ups.

Dr Bilal on the occasion reiterated that the District Administration is committed for overall development of the district. He said that the issues related to common people stand on priority, and no stone shall be left unturned for the development of people.

On spot directions were given by the DC to the concerned Departments for the urgent priority development of a playfield for the students in the area.

Director Agriculture visits Harwan area, interacts with farming community

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Mohammad Iqbal today toured Harwan area of district Srinagar, visited the farms of different progressive farmers and interacted with the farming community members of the area.

While interacting with the farmers, the Director Agriculture highlighted the importance of an integrated farming system and said that the integrated farming concept being adopted by the farmers has started bearing fruits of success.

He said that the department is working on a strategy where farmers are educated to adopt an integrated approach for their farms so that they could get maximum output in terms of business and profit.



Director Agriculture assured the farmers of every possible technical support from the department whenever and wherever they need it.

He said they are working for the transformation of the farming sector, and transformation does not mean increasing productivity only, but socio-economic transformation and empowerment as well.

"We are endeavouring to convert our farmer into an agri-preneur," he added.

Earlier Director Agriculture visited farms of some progressive farmers of Harwan. He also inspected PP Store Harwan and held interaction with the concerned staff.

Director Agriculture was accompanied by senior officers of the Department.

DC Samba chairs Block Divas at Panchayat Salmeri

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SAMBHA, JULY 24

District Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma, chaired the Block Divas at Panchayat Salmeri today, aiming to address the grievances of the local populace at the grassroots level.

At the outset of the event, keys of passenger vehicles were handed over to beneficiaries under the Mumkin Scheme, and trees were planted in the premises of Panchayat Ghar Salm-eri.

During the session, numerous issues were raised by the public, including the removal of encroachments around Amrit Sarovar and the construction of a retaining wall, disbursement of payments to pensioners, release of payments under the SMAS scheme, construction of a culvert and a playground in Panchayat Sangwal,

water supply issues in Amwal and Cheer Khar, the road from Barori to Barikhar, a land dispute at Supwal, street damage in Panchayat Salmeri, a non-functional tubewell in Panchayat Sangwal, water overflow in Chandra due to NHAI activities, and the deployment of a doctor at Gurha

Slathia. DC Abhishek Sharma, after attentively listening to the grievances, issued several directives. He called for the formation of a team to remove the encroachments and include the construction of the retaining wall around Amrit Sarovar in the development plan. He instructed the Executive Engineer (Exen) of PWD to visit all the concerned sites and submit a report to expedite the development works.

He also ordered the prioritization of Aadhaar linkages for pensioners to facilitate the release of their payments, expedited the supply of water to residents of Cheer Khar, included the Barori to Barikhar road in the development plan, directed the patwari to resolve the land dispute, and called for the rationalization of doctors and inclusion of crate work in the plan.

Additionally, the status of grievances addressed in previous Block Divas sessions was reviewed.

The event saw the participation of DDC Member Vijaypur, ACD, SDM Vijaypur, ExEns, Tehsildar, BDO, and other district and sectoral officers.

Block Diwas Programme held across Doda District

J1 NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JULY 24

The district administration of Doda, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, organized Block Diwas events at various locations across the district to address public issues and grievances.

The main event was presided over by the District Development Commissioner Harvinder Singh at Higher Secondary School (HSS) Chilly Paen, Block Chilly Pingal. During this public outreach program, all district and sector officers accompanied DC Doda to facilitate grievance redressal and raise awareness about various individual and community welfare schemes.

In addition to the primary event, similar programs were held at the sub-divisional level. These events were presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs) and Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) in their respective areas. The Block Diwas events are part of a broader initiative to ensure that the administration is responsive to the needs of the public and actively works



towards resolving their issues.

The Block Diwas events were held at multiple locations, including Bhaderwah at Panchayat Ghar Dradhoo Block, Thathri at Community Hall Thalella, and Assar at Panchayat Ghar Chill Block Assar. These events saw active participation from the local populace, who voiced their concerns and received information on various government schemes aimed at improving their quality of life.

The weekly Block Diwas was also successfully held at Dradhoo, Bhaderwah, chaired by the ADC Bhaderwah, Sudershan Kumar, bringing together key officials and local representatives to address public issues and

streamline development activities in the area.

During the public outreach program, DC Doda directed the health department to ensure that the availability of doctors should be maintained in the health centres. The Deputy Commissioner also assured that all the issues and grievances would be resolved in a stipulated time. The DC also had positive interactions with the students of Higher Secondary School Chilly.

The DC also visited the newly constructed building of Higher Secondary School Chilly along with staff and officers. During the event, a pledge regarding the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan was conducted.

DC Jammu chairs Block Diwas at Jhiri

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya chaired Block Diwas at Yatri Niwas, Kalyanpur Jhiri in block Marh today.

The event was marked with prominent participation of DDC Chairman Jammu Bharat Bhushan and DDC Vice Chairman Suraj Singh, among other officials and public representatives.

During the public meeting, several issues and grievances were raised by the attendees including the maintenance of power lines, provisions pertaining to ration cards, the development of lanes and drains, and the need for a playfield in the area.

DC Sachin Kumar Vaishya took meticulous note of all the grievances and concerns raised. He gave special consideration to border security suggestions put forth by the public. In a significant



engagement, the DC met with representatives of a female-only Self Help Group, inquiring about their operations and assuring full support for their progress and growth.

Acknowledging the interrelation between power and water supply, the DC emphasised the importance of addressing these issues holistically. He reminded the public that Block Diwas is a vital platform for raising both public and individual grievances, highlighting the government's commitment to reaching the public's doorstep to facilitate them.

DDC Chairman Bharat Bhushan highlighted that a significant portion of the Jal Jeevan Mission works had been completed,

urging for the remaining works to be finished promptly. He suggested maintaining standby machinery to handle any emergencies related to JJM projects.

The Chairman also addressed the need for repairs to kuhl heads and road projects, echoing the public's request for their development and maintenance.

Deputy Director Employment Mukhlis Ali provided special awareness regarding various self-employment schemes offered by the UT government. The event saw the presence of CPO Uttam Singh, ACD Dr. Vikas Sharma, SDM Marh Manu Hansa, and other district officers and public representatives.

Weekly Block Diwas Programs held across Ramban at 7 Locations

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 24

The District Administration, Ramban, today organized Block Diwas programs at 7 locations across the district, aiming to bring governance closer to the people. The programs were held at High School Perhinder for Block Ramsoo and Ukhral; Chamalwas (Near Health and Wellness Centre) for Block Banihal and Khari; Block Headquarter Gandhri; Chanderkote (Opposite Naib Tehsildar office) for Block Ramban; Block Headquarter Batote; Block Headquarter Rajgarh; and SDM Office Gool for Block Sangaldan, Gool, and Gundi-Dharam.

Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, along with ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak, SDM Banihal Rizwan Asgar, CPO Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, ACD Srinath Suman, ACP Ashfaq Khanji and other district officers presided over the program at remote village Chamalwas where he interacted with the public, listened to their grievances, and assured timely redressal.

People from adjoining villages of various panchayats, including Chamalwas Lower A & B, Chaknarwah, Thachi,



Zanchous, Kralchihal, Chaknarwah, Halla Wagan, Amkoot, Libra, Aara, Batdar, and Mamma, highlighted their issues of public interest across departments.

The Deputy Commissioner passed on-the-spot directions to concerned officers to resolve all genuine issues on a priority basis.

Responding to issues, the DC asked locals to provide land in consultation with the concerned SDM and Tehsildars for the construction of a Veterinary Centre, Playground, and Completion of road projects and other public utility infrastructure required in the areas.

The ZEO was directed to take necessary action on relevant school issues. Ex Ens of JPDC, PWD, and PMGSY were directed to focus on the augmentation of road and power

infrastructure in the areas. The CMO was directed to deploy a doctor at the Health Centre Chambalwas once in a week for the convenience of the public. The BMO was directed to organize health camps in inaccessible areas to provide health services to people.

Directions were also passed on demands such as roads for Gujjar Basti, upgradation of school and power infrastructure, and playgrounds. He also directed to start a centre under the skill development program in Shabanwas.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner also launched a plantation drive by planting saplings at Chambalwas.

En-route, the Deputy Commissioner also visited various villages, including Rattanwas and Wagan to listen their issues.

SKUAST-Jammu organizes Workshop on "Management of Post-Partum LLP Reproductive Disorders in Farm Animals"



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

Under the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) B. N. Tripathi, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-Jammu), the Division of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, R S Pura, successfully organized a one-day workshop on "Updates on Management of Post-Partum Reproductive Disorders in Farm Animals."

The workshop was conducted under the NAHEP-IDP project and saw active participation from 60 undergraduate and postgraduate veterinary students.

Dr. Ashwani Kumar Singh, Professor at GAD-VASU, Ludhiana delivered an expert lecture on the diagnostic use of ultrasonography (USG) in postpartum reproductive problems. His session provided valuable insights into advanced diagnostic techniques and their practical applications in veterinary practice.

The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Utsav Sharma, Head of the Division of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics. Additional expert lec-

tures were delivered by Dr. Sanjay Agarwal and Dr. Sudhir Kumar, who shared their knowledge and expertise on topics relevant to the management of postpartum reproductive disorders.

A hands-on practice session on the application of implants for the treatment of anestrus in dairy animals was conducted by Dr. A. K. Pandey, Professor and Co-coordinator of the programme. This practical training provided students with essential skills and techniques that are critical for addressing reproductive issues in farm animals.

During the valedictory session, Prof. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor of SKUAST-J, emphasized the importance of updating students' knowledge through such training programs. He highlighted the role of continuous education in enhancing the competence of future veterinarians. Dr. M.S. Bhadwal, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, underscored the significance of minimizing reproductive problems to maintain production efficiency. The workshop was also attended by various heads of departments and faculty members of the veterinary faculty, who contributed to the success of the event.

Director SWD Jammu presides over awareness programme on NMBA

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JULY 24

The Kathua unit of Social Welfare Department today organised an event on Nasha Mukat Abhiyan at Town hall here at Tehsil Headquarters Nagri.

Director Social Welfare, Jammu Dr. Bharat Bushan presided over the function as Chief Guest. CMO Kathua and EO PR Sangra were the guest of honour.

DSWO Kathua Varun Kumar Choudhary formally welcomed the guests

Speaking on the occasion, the Director Social Welfare Bharat Bhushan spoke on the ill effects of Drugs and apprised the people of steps people



shall take at individual level and societal level to curb the menace.

DSWO Kathua in his address threw light on how menace of drug breaks the individual first, then the family and finally the society.

During the event students of Govt. HSS Nagri were felicitated who have performed a theme based skit depicting importance of stakeholders role in implementing Nasha

Mukat Bhartha Abhiyan.

Earlier, Director Social Welfare Department flagged off a Rally organised by students of Govt. Higher Secondary School Nagri aimed at spreading awareness against Drug Abuse. AD Administration (SWD) Pallvi, AD Scheme (SWD) Shivani Gandotra, TSWO Kathua Vishav Bandhu sir Sharma, staff of DHEW and CHC were also present during the event.

Weekly Block Diwas: DC Bandipora presides over Mega Public Outreach Program at Charwan Ajas

JI NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 24

As part of Weekly Block Diwas initiative of the Government, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel-ul Rehman today presided over a Mega Public Outreach Program organized by the District Administration at Charwan Gujarapati of Ajas Bandipora, to actively engage with the community, address their grievances, and listen to their demands/grievances first-hand.

DDC member Hajin-B Ghulam Mustafa, Additional Deputy Commissioner Umar Shafi Pandith, ACR Shabir Ahmad Wani, Ex. Engineer PHE, Ex. Engineer PDD, BDO Hajin, Tehsildar Ajas and officers from the concerned departments, public representatives and a large number of locals from villages of Charwan and Ajas areas participated in the Diwas.

Throughout the program, community members and their representatives voiced their grievances and demands concerning development and administrative matters, emphasizing the need for immediate attention from the Deputy Commissioner



and district administration for speedy resolution of their concerns.

The public demands mainly included macadamization of inner links, main road to Gujar Basti, road for PHC Ajas, posting of staff at Tehsil office Ajas, upgradation of electricity lines, installation of additional transformers in overloaded habitations and supply of drinking water for the Gujar Basti from the existing filtration plant.

Shakeel-ul Rehman, while addressing the gathering, said that the visit to this far-flung place is to take stock of essential amenities, progress of developmental works and the issues faced by the general public of Ajas area.

He directed concerned officers present at the block diwas to resolve all the genuine issues and demands in a time-bound manner on a priority basis.

Block Diwas is aimed to

ensure good governance at the door steps and to address public issues on the spot within the public, he added. He asked officers of Jal Shakti department to explore the water resources in consultation with the locals at the far-flung and hilly areas for the proper storage and harvesting of water resources as a long term solution to the anticipated drinking water crises in future.

He directed Ex. Engineer R&B Bandipora to take into consideration the macadamization of the inner links of Charwan and Ajas. He also directed Ex. Engineer PHE to ensure the supply of drinking water to the inhabitants of Gojjar Basti at Charwan.

Later, the DC inspected the filtration plant at Charwan and Power Grid Station at Ajas. He took detailed feedback about the working and the catering capabilities of these stations.

Startup & Entrepreneurship Initiatives: JKEDI signs MoU with GPC Samba, MIET Jammu, FICCI FLO-JKL

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

In a significant step towards fostering a robust startup ecosystem and promoting entrepreneurial activities in the UT of J&K, the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) today signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Government Polytechnic College, Samba, Model Institute of Engineering and Technology (MIET) Jammu, and FICCI FLO-Jammu-Kashmir & Ladakh (JKL).

The collaborations aim to leverage the strengths of each institution to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurship development and innovation in the region.

The MoUs were signed by the representatives of JKEDI and the partnering institutions, marking the beginning of a series of joint initiatives and activities.

The MoU with Government Polytechnic College Samba focuses on entrepreneurship skill-based training, education, research, and the promotion of startup innovation culture. Both institutions



will cooperate in curriculum design, industrial training and visits, internships, research and development, skill development programs, guest lectures, and faculty development programs.

This partnership aims to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of students and faculty, providing them with valuable industry exposure and training.

The collaboration between JKEDI and MIET is aimed at advancing mutual interests in entrepreneurship development and startup-related services. The parties will work together to provide quality education and training programs, focusing on the effective utilization of intellectual capabilities, industrial training, internships, research activities, and skill development.

The MoU outlines the scope of cooperation, including curriculum customization, industry inter-

action, guest lectures, and the strengthening of the Institutional Innovation and Incubation Center at MIET.

JKEDI's partnership with FICCI FLO, Jammu-Kashmir & Ladakh (JKL), a pan-India women-centric industry forum, is dedicated to furthering entrepreneurship development and promoting prominent topical causes of interest to the broader ecosystem in the region. The collaboration will involve entrepreneurship awareness sessions, workshops, mentoring, training, competency-building programs for women entrepreneurs. This initiative aims to empower women entrepreneurs and foster a supportive environment for their growth.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajinder Kumar Sharma, Director JKEDI, emphasized the importance of these collaborations in nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit

among the youth and women in the region. He expressed confidence that these partnerships would significantly contribute to the economic development of Jammu & Kashmir by creating new opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ruchika Gupta, Joint Director of MIET and Chairperson of FICCI FLO JKL, highlighted the role of women entrepreneurs in the economic growth of the region and welcomed the opportunity to work with JKEDI in empowering women through targeted training and development programs.

Er. Neelanjana Manwati, Principal of Government Polytechnic College (GPC) Samba, echoed the sentiment of collaboration and expressed their commitment to providing quality education and practical exposure to their students, preparing them for successful entrepreneurial ventures.

The MoUs signed between JKEDI, Government Polytechnic College Samba, MIET, and FICCI FLO JKL mark a significant milestone in the journey towards building a vibrant startup ecosystem in Jammu & Kashmir.

District Election Office Ramban conducts Orientation Program for BLOs on SSR of Photo Electoral Roll

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 24

The District Election Office, Ramban, under the leadership of District Election Officer, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, today conducted a one-day orientation program for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) on the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of the Photo Electoral Roll with respect to July 1, 2024, as the qualifying date.

The program aimed to familiarize BLOs with the procedures and guidelines for the revision process, ensuring accurate and comprehensive updates to the electoral roll.

It was informed that special camps at all polling stations have been planned by Chief Electoral Officer J&K, on every Saturday and Sunday henceforth upto August, 04, 2024. During the camps on upcoming Saturdays and Sundays, Supervisors and BLOs shall remain present on the booths along with Farm 6, 7, 8 and other related documents to receive the claims for error free Photo Electoral Rolls.

DEO Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, in his message has emphasized the importance of the revision process in ensuring the integrity of the electoral roll.

Div Com Jammu reviews power supply status in Jammu Division

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar today reviewed the status of Power Supply in the districts of Jammu Division.

MD JPDCL, Deputy Commissioners of the Districts of Jammu Division, Chief Engineer JPDCL, Chief Engineer JPTCL and concerned sectoral and district officials of PDD were present.

The Div Com was apprised about the to-date details of the Distribution Infrastructure of JPDCL and the functioning of Grid stations and power supply networks in Jammu Division.

MD JPDCL, Vikas Kundal, apprised the Div Com on the status of Power supply, meeting peak demands, load



management and consumer grievance redressal mechanism. The Div Com directed the officials of PDD for ensuring better Power supply in all the regions, especially in 100% smart metered areas. He further asked the officials for minimum response time for repair and replacement of damaged transformers.

Directing the officials of Power department for minimizing Power curtailments, the Div Com asked them to resolve the bot-

tlenecks in transmission and distribution network, if any. The Div Com took appraisal of the Power Supply situation in all Districts of Jammu Division from the Deputy Commissioners who apprised him on the power supply, curtailments schedules and response time in their respective districts.

He also reviews the supply of Power supply for agricultural purposes and in the remote and far flung areas of the Division.

DC Kathua holds Block Diwas Program at Dinga Amb, assures redressal of public grievances



JI NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JULY 24

Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, presided over a Block Diwas program at PWD Rest House, Block Dinga Amb, to address public grievances and concerns.

The program was attended by Ex-PRIs, social activists, and individuals who highlighted various issues, including upgradation of HS Dinga Amb, unscheduled power cuts, shortage of manpower in Jal Shakti and PDD departments, separation of Ration Cards, early completion of PMGSY Roads and others.

Dr. Minhas assured the public that all genuine issues would be addressed with the active interven-

tion of concerned departments. He directed the CEO to prepare a proposal for upgradation of HS Dinga Amb and instructed the XEN PDD to plan for reducing unscheduled power cuts. He also appealed to the masses to install electric meters at their homes.

The DC informed the public that gun license renewals and new licenses are now done online. He assured that necessary arrangements would be made to fill the vacant posts of MBBS doctors in PHC Dinga Amb within days.

Regarding the demand for creation of VDGs and VDCs, the DC stated that work has begun and gun licenses will be issued in due course. He asked the AEE PMGSY to note all

issues and address them according to fund feasibility.

SDM Hiranagar informed the public that Dinga Amb is the first block in Kathua with maximum government offices functioning in a single complex, facilitating timely grievance redressal.

The DC planted four chinara tree saplings as part of a targeted 700 plants to be planted in Dinga Amb Block. DDC Marheen Karan Attri and DDC Dinga Amb Rimmi Charak emphasized public participation in implementing schemes.

Among others present were Chief Planning Officer, ACD, XEN PDD, XEN PWD Hiranagar, CEO, CAO, and other district and sectoral officers.

Block Diwas: DC Kulgam chairs Public Darbar at D. H. Pora

JI NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JULY 24

As part of the government's ambitious weekly Block Diwas programme and with an aim to strengthen the grievances redressal mechanism in the district, the District Administration Kulgam today organized public outreach programmes in three blocks of the district viz. D.H Pora, Kulgam and Devsar to take appraisal of the public issues, grievances and demands.

To take firsthand appraisal of public grievances and demands, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan presided over a public darbar at D.H.Pora.

The grievance redressal programme witnessed participation of people from Hallan, Ahmadabad, Tangmarg, D.H.Pora, Nagam and other areas of the Block D.H Pora.



The visiting delegations and individuals flagged-off various demands including establishment of bank branch at Ahmadabad, construction of bypass at D.H.Pora, Augmentation of staff at Hospitals, repairs and proper restoration of Aharbal irrigation canal, repairs of Chimner D.H.Pora road besides other developmental issues and demands.

Officers and heads of departments responded to the queries and grievances of the people pertaining to their departments. They also informed them about various welfare schemes

and ongoing developmental projects.

The DC after giving patient hearing to the public addressed some of the immediate nature of grievances on the spot.

He also instructed officers of executing agencies to ensure timely completion of developmental projects in the area.

Meanwhile, the officers of District Administration also held outreach programmes at Devsar and Kulgam and listened to the issues and grievances of people assuring time bound redressal.

DDC Ganderbal chairs DLRC/DCC meeting

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JULY 24

To review the performance of banks and other financial institutions under various Government initiatives and sponsored schemes, a meeting of District Level Review Committee/ District Consultative Committee (DLRC/DLC) was held today under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Ganderbal, Shyambir, in conference hall Mini Secretariat, here.

At the outset, the LDM presented the achieve-



ments vis-a-vis Annual Action Credit Plan 2023-24, and informed the house that Banks operating in the district have recorded a very satisfactory CD Ratio of 94%.

The deposits and the

loans and advances figure stood at Rs 2022 and Rs1898 crores as on 31 March, 2024 respectively.

The Credit dispensation in priority sector and Non-priority Sector lending under Various Finan-

cial Credit Schemes has been posted at Rs 654.27 and 550.42 crores against the target of 654.44 and 224.62 crores respectively.

The Chairperson emphasized on furthering the scope of lending especially under various Government Sponsored Schemes in Agriculture and MSME sectors to mitigate the Unemployment and to make the District self-reliant.

The DDC appreciated the coordinated work done by the Banks and the line departments that has been instrumental in

efforts to provide government services at the doorstep of the general public.

He directed the concerned officers to take immediate measures to mitigate the problems highlighted during the camp. He also assured the participants that the best possible efforts are being made to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries are covered under various government schemes as per the guidelines of the schemes.

The DC exhorted upon the officers to work with zeal, devotion and dedication to provide facilities at the doorstep of the public.

The public outreach camp was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Koteranka, Dil Mir; ACP, Sheraz Chowhan; CMO, Dr Manohar Rana; CEO Education, Mohammad Mushtaq; DSWO, Abdul Raheem; EXEN Jal Shakti Rajouri Ashwini Sharma; EXEN PWD (R&B) Koteranka, Sardar Khan; EXEN PMGSY Budhal Intiaz Mir and other district & sectoral officers.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the dedication of the district administration for the development and its

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Lolab gunfight day...

Dilawar Khan, was injured and later succumbed to his injuries, he said.

The operation was paused overnight and resumed at the first light of the day.

The Indian Army's Chinara Corps posted on the social media site 'X', saying, "Based on specific input regarding the presence of terrorists in the general area Kowut, Kupwara, a Joint Search Operation was launched by #IndianArmy & @JmuKmrPolice on days leading up to 23 July 24."

It added, "On 24 July, suspicious movement was observed and challenged by vigilant troops, in response to which terrorists opened indiscriminate fire. In the ensuing firefight, one terrorist has been eliminated. The operation is in progress."

In addition to the ongoing operation, security forces have intensified searches in the peripheral areas, including the Sopore woods, to prevent terrorists from escaping from Lolab to Sopore.

Trimukha Top, a forest area, serves as a critical link connecting Lolab with Baramulla and Bandipora districts and is often used by terrorists to move between districts after infiltrating from across the Line of Control (LoC).

The operation is still ongoing, with additional reinforcements called in to assist, the official said, adding that further updates will be provided as the situation develops.

Rich tributes paid...

to the deceased was held at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station here this afternoon before the mortal remains of the braveheart were sent to his home town in Uttar Pradesh, officials said.

General Officer Commanding of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lieutenant General Navin Sachdeva led the wreath-laying ceremony which was also attended by IAF officers.

Anand Jain, Additional Director General of Police of Jammu zone, Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and other senior civil and police officers also laid down wreaths and saluted the soldier, officials said.

There has been a spurt in terror activities in Jammu in recent months, raising fears about the revival of militancy in the region.

Will avenge every drop...

"They are the real warriors and we salute their courage and bravery. Administration is committed for the further upliftment of these communities," he said.

The LG said that security forces should get accurate information about the presence of terrorists in the Jammu region. "Dismantling the terror and drug network has to be the prime responsibility of all. It's time for a collective fight against destroying the terror ecosystem and the network involved in distributing drugs," he said.

The LG released the Postage Stamp of prominent Gujar leader from Poonch, late Wazir Muhamamad Hakla Poonchi, who worked hard for the Gujar empowerment. He was the first personality from District Poonch who participated in the first ever Gujar Conference at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh when the Government conferred Scheduled Tribe status upon the Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh. While addressing the audiences from all over the country, Poonchi had demanded that the Scheduled Tribe Status should also be conferred upon the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir. The movement started at that time proved fruitful in the year 1991.

Rs 3,694 crore allocated...

Regarding USBRL, he said the project is almost complete with only a 17 km section (Tunnel T1) between Katra and Reasi under construction. The minister said that Chenab bridge and railway line up to Sangaldan section has already been made operational.

"Sangaldan to Reasi section has also been completed, and commission of Railway safety certificate has also been received. The project is a dream come true and will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi very soon," he said.

Punjab police, army...

borders the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Last month, the police were put on high alert after a villager claimed to have spotted two suspicious men in a village here.

Punjab has seen twin terror attacks – one at Dinanagar in Gurdaspur in 2015 – and second at Pathankot air base in 2016.

900 terrorists killed...

forces, leading to the loss of soldiers. However, he emphasized the government's robust anti-terrorism measures, noting that 28 terrorists have been neutralized in recent operations.

"The number of killed soldiers is significantly lower compared to the terrorists killed," Rai stated.

Minister added that stone-pelting incidents have ceased entirely since the abrogation of Article 370. Despite these improvements, the region continues to face challenges. As of July 15, 2024, 10 security personnel and 14 civilians have lost their lives due to terrorist activities this year.

The minister said that from 2004-2014, J&K witnessed 7217 terror related incidents and 2259 from 2014-2024. "2829 security forces and civilians were killed in J&K from 2004-2014, while 941 security forces and civilians were killed from 2014-2024."

He said that the number has come down by 67 per cent since 2014 and there is also a reduction

of 69 per cent in terror incidents and 80 per cent reduction in killing of civilians and security forces.

He said that the overall law and order scenario in the UT of J&K has seen remarkable improvement after the abrogation of article 370.

In 2018, 1,328 stone pelting incidents have occurred while no such incidents have been reported in 2023 and 2024 so far besides that there were 52 incidents of organized hartal while no such incidents have been reported in the last two years.

He said that 238 terrorists initiated incidents in 2018 while it reduced to 46 in 2023 and 11 such incidents this year so far. There were 189 encounters/CT operations in 2018 that went down to 48 in 2023 and 21 this year till 15 July.

He said that 91 security forces were killed in 2018, 30 in 2023 and 10 this year so far while 55 civilians were killed in 2018, 14 in 2023 and 14 this year so far

"Post abrogation of Article 370, the UT of J&K has witnessed an era of peace, progress and prosperity. Schools, Colleges, Universities, hospitals and other public institutions are functioning efficiently without any strikes or any kind of disturbances during the last four years. The earlier practice of daily hartals, strikes, stone pelting and bandhs are things of the past now. With record voting, the people of Jammu and Kashmir participated enthusiastically in the recently held Lok Sabha elections," he said.

The minister said that J&K has seen a new dawn of development as jobs are being created, schools are opened and all facilities are being enhanced.

He said people are now living peacefully and everyone visiting there is safe that is why crores of tourists have visited J&K last year.

18 killed as plane...

members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time).

"Shortly after takeoff from runway 02, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said a statement issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

It said rescue operations were initiated immediately and fire was brought under control.

"One injured person (Captain Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 People were found dead," it added.

The aviation authority identified one of the passengers as a child named Adhiraj Sharma, who was the son of Manu Raj Sharma, a technician of Saurya Airlines.

Sharma's wife Priza Khatiwada and their four-year old son Adhiraj died in the crash.

A statement issued by the airline said that Priza and her son were initially identified as employees of the company, but it was later revealed that they were passengers.

Videos posted online showed the plane being enveloped in fire and smoke. Fire engines and ambulances were rushed to the spot after the incident.

The deceased were identified as co-pilot S Katuwal and employees of Saurya Airlines and a Yemeni national (Aref Reda). Pilot Captain Manish Shakya, 37, is undergoing treatment at Kathmandu Model Hospital.

Of the deceased, 15 died on the spot while three died during treatment at a local hospital, authorities said.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Home Minister Ramesh Lekh separately visited the accident site to gather details about the incident and provide necessary directives.

Oli said he was deeply saddened by the tragic deaths in the crash and was at the site to inquire about the cause of the air crash with the Civil Aviation Authority's officials. He urged all for patience at this hour of grief.

According to Tribhuvan International Airport chief Jagannath Niraula, the plane flying from Kathmandu to Pokhara turned in the wrong direction.

"As soon as it took off, it turned right instead of turning left," Niraula was quoted as saying by the BBC News Nepal.

However, "the cause of the accident has not been revealed yet," he said.

The accident happened less than a minute after the plane took off, Niraula said.

The aircraft "suffered a runway excursion and burst into massive flames immediately", the Search and Rescue Centre of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal earlier said.

The aircraft, manufactured by the Canadian company Bombardier in April 2003, was the sixth of its kind purchased for use in Nepal, according to information from planespotters.Com.

Following the accident, services at the Kathmandu airport were halted briefly before being resumed, the airport authorities said.

According to the company's website, Saruya Airlines operates flights to five tourist destinations within Nepal, with a fleet of three Bombardier CRJ-200 jets.

Nepal has been criticised for its poor air safety record in recent years but the reasons also include partly sudden weather changes and partly airstrips located in hard-to-access rocky terrains apart from human error.

According to Nepal's civil aviation body, 914 people have died in air crashes in the country since the first disaster was recorded in August 1955.

In January last year, all 72 people on board, including five Indians, were killed when a Yeti Airlines aircraft crashed in the resort city of Pokhara. The crash was attributed to a human error.

Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing

on January 15, 2023, which was the 104th crash in Nepali skies and the third biggest in terms of casualties.

The only incidents in which more people were killed took place in July and September 1992. Those crashes involved aircraft of Thai Airways and Pakistan International Airlines and left 113 and 167 people dead, respectively.

On May 29, 2022, all 22 people on board, including four members of an Indian family, were killed as a Tara Air plane crashed in Nepal's mountainous Mustang district.

In 2016, all 23 people aboard were killed when a plane of the same airline flying the same route crashed after takeoff.

In March 2018, a US-Bangla Air crash occurred at the Tribhuvan International Airport, killing 51 people on board. (PTI)

IGP chairs joint...

The meeting also focused on strategies to counter terrorism and maintain law and order in the Pahalgam axis.

The meeting was attended by GOC Victor Force Balbir Singh; IG CRPF G.K. Verma; PYO DIG Sujit Kumar, DIG SKR Javed Matoo, DIG CRPF Deswal; SSP Anantnag, Dr. G.V. Sundeep Chakravarthy; SSP Kulgam and Commandants of CRPF, ITBP and BSF.

The review meeting underscored the commitment of all stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of the Amarnath Yatra pilgrims.

J&K braces up...

temperature of 35.6 degree Celsius.

Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, has recorded the third all-time highest temperature today at 34.2 degree Celsius while the all-time highest temperature was recorded on July 11, 1988 at 34.5 degree Celsius. However, the second all-time highest was recorded this year on July 03 at 34.4 degree Celsius.

As per the details, the other parts of Kashmir also recorded a rise in the mercury with Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination recording a maximum temperature of 29.3 degree Celsius.

Kupwara in north Kashmir has recorded a maximum temperature of 35.0 degree Celsius.

In Jammu's Katra, a maximum temperature of 31.9 degree Celsius was recorded today while in Banihal, it settled at 31.4 degree Celsius.

Moreover, there is a forecast of severe heat wave conditions in some parts of Kashmir for the next three to four days.

As per an Independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng, the weather models have further lowered the probability of rain in Kashmir region over the next 3-4 days, adding that the weather models have adjusted to forecasting only a severe heat wave in Kashmir region over the period.

He said it is possible that some temperature records may break during the next four days, adding that dry weather is expected to continue for the next four days.

However, Director of Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad told KNO that there was no red alert as the mercury will settle around 35 to 36 degree Celsius.

"There is no need to panic as a relief is expected after July 28 as there will be a drastic decline in the day temperature from July 28 onwards," he said.

Over 1 crore tourists...

This harmonious law and order situation has helped the government to initiate and implement socio-economic development," he said.

"The government of Jammu and Kashmir has reported that several measures have been taken that led to significant improvement in the tourism including Tourism Policy 2020 and status of industry to the tourism sector for availing incentives under the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021," he said.

Heat wave: No change...

Not a single order regarding change of school timing anywhere in Doda and Kishtwar districts has come so far whereas the education department is waiting for representations from parents in this regard.

According to the news agency, both in Jammu plains (summer zone) and in Kashmir valley, education department has given relief to students by changing the school timing from 8 am to 1 pm whereas the staff members have to be present in the school from 8 am to 2 pm.

But in two districts of Doda and Kishtwar, the education department, be it the chief education officers or the head of the institutions, who were authorized to a call regarding change in timings, is in silent mode and not even on vibration mode.

"We haven't received any representation from parents from anywhere to change the school timings in this head wave. Not even the HUIs have put forth any such demand in changing the school timing. I have been receiving dozens of calls from principals on a daily basis but none of them raised the issue with me," Prakash Lal Thapa, Chief Education Officer (CEO) Doda told the KNO.

Some time ago, the CEO Doda, after consultation with Deputy Commissioner Doda, had changed the school timings in Doda town from 8 am to 2 pm, in soft zones of rural areas of Doda Tehsil from 9 am to 3 pm and in hard zones the timing was kept unchanged.

The DC had authorized the CEO and HUIs to take the call on changing the timing according to the head wave and their areas but the education department seems to be waiting for a bad thing to happen to wake up from the deep slumber.

DC B'la holds Block Diwas in border village of Salamabad Uri

J1 NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA, JULY 24

In an endeavour to bring the whole administration at the door steps of the local population, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today visited border village of Salamabad Uri and presided over a Block Diwas programme organized by the District Administration Baramulla.

The Block Diwas was attended by the Sub Divisional Magistrate Uri, Javid Ahmad; Chief Education Officer Baramulla, other district officers, public representatives, concerned citizens and a large number of people from border village of Salamabad and other adjacent villages.

Throughout the programme, community members and their representatives voiced their grievances and demands which included construction of dispensary near border village Soura and upgradation of road connectivity to the village, renovation of government school building at Basgran, inflated electricity bills in non metered areas, tapping of tourism potential in the Uri Sub division among others.

Additionally, the progressive farmers from the Uri Sub-division also spoke during the occasion, enlightening the participants with their expertise to grow efficiently and for their self-sustenance.

During the program, Minga Sherpa individually responded to all the queries raised during the block diwas programme and issued on-spot directions to the concerned department heads for the speedy redressal of the highlighted grievances and demands.

The DC further emphasized that the district administration would work in a time bound manner towards tapping border tourism potential of Uri Sub-division.

Additionally, the DC highlighted that under HADP (Holistic Agriculture Development Programme) 24,000 applications were received out of which 8000 applications were approved, thereby providing eligible beneficiaries new income avenues with highly subsidized projects.

Additionally, Minga Sherpa distributed various department sponsored smart-tablets, certificates and sanction letters among eligible beneficiaries during the block diwas.

Earlier, Minga Sherpa inspected multiple stalls set up by various departments, including Education, Agriculture, Health, ICD among others showcasing a range of government schemes, services, and facilities aimed at benefiting the public.

DC Budgam chairs Block Diwas at Khag Beerwah

J1 NEWS SERVICE

BUDGAM, JULY 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today chaired a Public Darbar at Tehsil Hq. Khag in Beerwah Sub- Division.

During public outreach programme, locals from Sugan, Zoogyari, Malpora, Khag, Bathipora and adjacent villages raised their suggestions and demands with the DC.

After giving patient hearing, the DC assured them that all their genuine demands shall be taken up with the relevant quarters for prompt redressal.

Locals appreciated District Administration Budgam for completion of old projects and work on new projects which they said would open ample livelihood opportunities for locals.

The DC said that feasibility of all other roads including inner links in all adjacent areas shall be checked for upgradation/ restoration/ macadamization.

He also assured that the improvement works related under Jal Shakti, KPDC, Health and Education sectors have been duly noted and shall be taken up under relevant heads for redressal.

The DC directed the concerned sectoral officers to conduct special awareness cum registration camp under HADP and PM Vishwakarma, and urged locals to participate and take maximum benefits under both the government schemes in the area.

The DC also visited PHC Khag and assessed healthcare facilities.

He took stock of availability of machinery, staff, infrastructure and medicines at the hospital.

Instructions were given to CMO Budgam for proposing relevant works for providing better healthcare services at Khag.

Among others, CPO, SDM Beerwah, CMO, CEO, Tehsildar Khag & all District and Sectoral officers were present on the occasion.

VC, SDA conducts review meeting & Scrutiny of Suggestions & Objections on Master Plan-2035

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, JULY 24

The Vice Chairman (V.C) Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Dr. Owais Ahmed today chaired a review meeting focused on analyzing objections and suggestions received from the general public regarding the Master Plan-2035, at the SMC Headquarters, Karan Nagar.

The meeting was attended by the Senior officers from SDA, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Town Planning Organization (K), and Lakes Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), highlighting a collaborative and inclusive approach to shaping the future of Greater Srinagar.

Discussions revolved around ensuring that the Master Plan aligns with the evolving needs and aspirations of the residents of District Srinagar.

The Vice Chairman stressed the significance of incorporating diverse perspectives and public feedback into the development process, emphasizing a commitment to transparency and participatory governance. The meticulous scrutiny of objections and suggestions demonstrated SDA's dedication for crafting a plan that mirrors the collective vision for Srinagar's future.

Acknowledging the active participation of the general public, the Vice Chairman expressed gratitude for their valuable contributions in shaping the Master Plan-2035. The SDA reiterated its pledge to adhere to the highest standards of urban planning and development, with the goal of establishing the Master Plan-2035 as a sturdy framework for sustainable growth and progress.

Furthermore, the chair directed the organization to conduct stakeholder consultations and detailed field visits to validate the feasibility of public representations received in alignment with the Master Plan-2035. This proactive approach underscores SDA's commitment to robust urban development practices and ensuring the plan resonates with the ground reality of Greater Srinagar.

The chair directed all line officials to finalize the draft recommendations at an earliest so that the same would be forwarded to the Government without any further delay.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi conducts Block Diwas in the remote area of Block Thuroo, Panchayat Budhan



JINNEWS SERVICE
REASI, JULY 24

Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan, conducted Block Diwas in the remote area of Block Thuroo, Panchayat Budhan.

The Block diwas witnessed the active participation of district and sectoral officers from various line departments, showcasing a united front in addressing public concerns.

During the Block Diwas, Deputy Commissioner engaged with the residents

of Thuroo Block, listening attentively to their grievances and ensuring on-the-spot resolutions.

DC Mahajan conducted a comprehensive review of various sectors, including Education, Agriculture, Social Welfare, Revenue, Public Health Engineering (PHE), and Power Development Department (PDD).

In the education sector, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of improving the quality of education. He instructed teachers to conduct weekly tests to

monitor and evaluate student progress, aiming to enhance educational standards and outcomes.

Addressing the agricultural sector, he stressed the importance of crop rotation to enhance soil fertility and recommended the use of High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) to increase farmers' income. He directed the Agriculture Department to commence a survey immediately and initiate necessary actions to support these practices.

Furthermore, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the Block Development Officer Thuroo and the local community to focus on creating durable assets rather than merely developing lanes and drains.

He also directed the departments of PWD, PHE and PDD to efficiently cater to the needs of the local residents, ensuring that essential services are delivered effectively and promptly.

PO Poshan Mohammad Anwar Bandy, ACD Pardeep Kumar, SDM Dharmari Tariq Aziz, XEN JPDCL and PWD, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer and other district officers were present.

DC Budgam reviews progress under District Capex Plan



JINNEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JULY 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the progress of works under the District Capex Plan. The DC emphasized the need for efficiency in the project lifecycle, exhorting officials to expedite the estimation and tendering processes within the shortest possible time. He stressed on timely completion of all developmental works, so as to prevent any public inconvenience and to ensure optimal utilization of resources available.

The DC directed the officers to strictly adhere

to the established timelines to ensure that all projects planned for the current financial year are completed within the stipulated period.

He underscored the importance of efficient tendering, optimal utilization of funds, and the timely & transparent execution of developmental projects.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Superintendent Engineer R&B, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, BDOs, Executive Engineers from all wings, AEEs, JES, and Executive Officers of Municipal Committees.

Health Deptt holds Mega Medical Camp in remotest Panchayat Bhatni

JINNEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JULY 24

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Ramban Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, under the 'Outreach Programme', the Department of Health and Medical Education under the aegis of its Director, Dr Rakesh Mangotra and supervision of Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Kamal Jee Zadoo, today organised a mega medical camp in Bhatni which is the remotest Panchayat of Ramban district, bordering Udhampur and Reasi districts.

As many as 880 patients besides students of three schools were examined and given free medicines during the Mega Medical Camp. Medical Camp was inaugurated by the Block Medical Officer, Batote, Dr Opinder Singh. A team



of seven doctors including Ortho Consultant, Dr. Balvinder Singh examined the patients.

On the occasion, free spectacles were distributed among 75 patients under the National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment after testing their eyes.

Dr. Ankula exam-

ined students of three local schools under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakarm (RBSK).

According to BMO, Dr. Opinder Singh, under the Family Planning Programme 4 Copper-T were inserted and two Copper-T were removed besides distributing 420 condoms and Mala-D tablets among 36 women.

Justice Tashi chairs State Level Consultation on Child Protection 2024 focusing on Persons with disabilities meeting

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

In a significant move towards strengthening child protection mechanisms in UTs of J&K and Ladakh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice (Acting), High Court of J&K and Ladakh, and Chairperson, Juvenile Justice Committee presided over a crucial meeting today that aimed at finalizing the date, venue and all other allied arrangements for organizing the State Level Stakeholders Consultation for the year 2024 focusing on the welfare of persons with disabilities.

The meeting was attended physically by Additional Director General of Police Anand Jain representing the Police Department, UT of J&K and virtually by Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, UT of J&K and incharge Women and Child Development;

Dr. Shahid Iqbal, Secretary, Rural Development Department; Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary, Health and Medical Education, UT of J&K; Iqbal Lone, Commissioner Disabilities, UT of J&K; Ghulam Nabi Bhat, Additional Secretary, School Education, UT of J&K, Ashok Sharma, Director School Education, Jammu; Tassaduq Hussain, Director School Education, Kashmir; Padma Angmo, Commissioner Secretary, Women & Child Development and Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, UT of Ladakh; Amit Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, UT of Ladakh; Tashi Angmo, Director Social Welfare, UT of Ladakh; Shahzad Azeem, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh; M. K. Sharma, Pr. Secretary to Chief Justice; Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Author-

ity as well as Juvenile Justice Committee; Spalzes Angmo, Member Secretary, Ladakh Legal Services Authority; Prem Sagar, Secretary, HCLSC; Hilal Bhat, Incharge, UNICEF and Manoj Gupta, Director, AIVC.

Justice Tashi Rabstan emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to ensure the success of the upcoming State Level Conference. During meeting, the venue for the conference was finalized to be at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) Srinagar. The consultation is tentatively scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 03, 2024.

The discussions highlighted the roles and responsibilities of various departments and organizations involved in the consultation. Notably, Commissioner Secretaries from the Social Welfare Department, UT of J&K, and the Social & Tribal

Affairs Department, UT of Ladakh, assured their full support for the event. Additionally, the Incharge UNICEF voluntarily accepted to bear all the financial liabilities relating to the conference, including boarding and lodging of the resource persons, providing refreshment to the participants, making IT arrangements and other incidental expenses.

A consensus was reached for the nomination of minimum 10 participants from each participating department along with a nodal officer to ensure success of the event. The meeting concluded with a resolve to work in collaboration to ensure the success of the State Level Stakeholders Consultation on Child Protection, reflecting a unified commitment to the Child Welfare and Protection across the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh focusing on persons with disabilities.

DC Bandipora visits Ajas, inaugurates Water Supply Scheme at Matipora

JINNEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel-ul-Rehman today visited Matipora Ajas and inaugurated an augmented Water Supply Scheme.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Umar Shafi Pandith; ACR, Shabir Ahmad Wani; Ex. Engineer PHE, and officials of Jal Shakti Department were present on the occasion.

During the visit, the DC inaugurated the Matipora Water Supply Scheme, a crucial project executed under NABARD with a cost of Rs 446.00 lakhs. This scheme will provide clean drinking water to 8913 souls across various villages, including Chimpazpora, New Colony, Potu Mohalla, and other critical public establishments.

On the occasion, the DC urged Jal Shakti Department to ensure regular checks and tests for ensuring clean drinking water supply to the inhabitants of the area.

Animal Health Camp held at Highland Pastures of Churkhudan, Gulmarg



JINNEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JULY 24

The Sheep Husbandry Department, Baramulla today organized animal health camps at high alpine pasture Churkhudan and adjacent Bahaks, catering to the veterinary healthcare needs of local pastoralist viz., Chopans, Bakarwals, and Gujjars rearing livestock on alpine meadows such as Churkhudan, Anganpathri, Chormargi etc.

Dr. Showkat Ahanger, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Baramulla, while welcoming the participants, assured every pos-

sible support & hand-holding of youth interested in setting up their own ventures in sheep farming.

He also engaged in one-on-one interaction with the participants listening to their grievance and assured timely redressal of all genuine demands. Dr. Umar Wani, SDO Uri said that the department is making every effort to provide quality service for the benefit of the livestock farming community.

Dr. Tanveer Ahmad, VAS Boniyar educated participants regarding prevention of common parasitic diseases and importance of judicious

use of anthelmintics and timely vaccination.

The camp featured the distribution of free medicine under the NADCP program to the participants. The herders expressed their gratitude to the Sheep Husbandry Department Baramulla for conducting camps in such challenging terrains and acknowledged the department's valuable services.

The event demonstrated the department's commitment to supporting livestock rearers in remote areas and promoting the overall health and well-being of their animals.

SKUAST Jammu conducts training programme on "Entrepreneurship opportunities in fodder processing"

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 24

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J) conducted a one day training programme for the entrepreneurs on the topic "Entrepreneurship opportunities in fodder processing" at Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & animal Husbandry, R.S. Pura.

The training programme was funded by NAHEP-IDP and conducted under the patronage of Prof. B.N. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu.

At the outset Prof. R.K. Sharma welcomed the participants and gave a brief overview to the young entrepreneurs about the programme and various



opportunities available for them in the animal husbandry sector and initiatives being undertaken by Gol for promotion of entrepreneurship development in the UT of J & K.

Dr. M.S. Bhadwal, Associate Dean, F.V.Sc. & A.H. enlightened the entrepreneurs and called upon them to look for the

opportunities available in the field of animal nutrition to gain remunerative avenues.

Dr. Arun Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce and Chief Guest of the programme gave an insightful talk on the various initiatives of the UT govt in the field of agriculture and allied

sectors for the young entrepreneurs and various schemes launched for their benefit. He emphasized upon converting the adversities into opportunities to develop a successful business model.

Prof. M.P.S. Bakshi, Former Professor & Head, Dept. of Animal Nutrition, GADVASU Ludhiana presented expert lectures during the training programme.

He delivered discerning lectures on ration formulation, role of minerals and UMMB blocks in the ration of the cattle and buffalo. Prof. Ankur Rastogi (Division of Animal Nutrition) delivered an expert lecture on the various innovations in the silage making and their impact on successful dairy farming.


DC B'la conducts extensive tour of Sub-Division Uri

JINNEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JULY 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today undertook an extensive tour of Sub-Division Uri to assess ongoing administrative initiatives and address grievances pertaining to the region.

The DC, accompanied by the Sub-divisional Magistrate Uri, Javaid Ahmad and various other district officers, conducted a comprehensive review of developmental works in progress.

The tour comprised visits to several border villages, including Gwalta, Nambla, Garkote and Udoosa. During these visits, Minga Sherpa meticulously examined the condition of roads and other essential facilities provided to the local population.



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

e-NIT No. 39 of 2024-25 Dated 22.07.2024

For and on behalf of the **Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** e-tenders are invited on **percentage basis** from approved and eligible suppliers/OEM registered/ Contractor "A,B,C,D" with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for the following work:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of document (in Rs)	Earnest Money	Time Allowed for completion	Class of Contractor
1.	Supply of UPS with solar system facility in Establishment of Kisan Khidmat Ghar Different places at Udhampur District (AEO Office Latti, Agriculture Centre Sudhmahadev, JAEQ Quarter Tandrar, JAEQ Quarter Kud, AEO Office Amroth, AEO Office Kaghote, Sub Divisional Store Kidnoo, AEO Office Rasli, Seed Store Ritti, Seed Store Sumari, AEO Office Tikri, AEO Office Mansar)	11.88	600.00	2% advertised rate	10 Days	"Authorized dealers / Registered supplier/ A/ B/ C/ D"

The tenders shall be uploaded **upto 1800 Hrs. on 29-07-2024** and shall be opened on the next working day in the Office Chambers of the **Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division, Udhampur** in presence of duly constituted tender opening committee of this office.

CRITICAL DATES FOR DOWNLOADING / UPLODAING THE BIDS FROM
<http://jktenders.gov.in>

1. Bid publishing date : 23-07-2024
2. Bid submission start date : 23-07-2024 from 1200 Hrs
3. Bid submission end date : 29-07-2024 upto 1200 hours
4. Technical Bid opening date : 29-07-2024 upto 1400 hours

Particulars of the articles to be supplied mentioned in the BOQ "Bill of Quantities".

No: _____
DT: 22.07.2024

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

DIP/J-3300/24
Date: 24-7-24

EDITORIAL

Upholding national security and integrity in J&K

The dismissal of four employees by the Jammu and Kashmir administration for their involvement in anti-national activities marks a crucial step in safeguarding the region's security and sovereignty. This action, carried out under Article 311 of the Constitution, underscores the government's unwavering commitment to rooting out elements that pose a threat to national interests. According to the government, these individuals were found deeply entangled in activities detrimental to the state, including links to terrorism and drug trafficking. Such revelations not only expose a breach of trust but also highlight the gravity of their actions, which directly jeopardize peace and stability in the region. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's resolute stance on maintaining national unity and sovereignty resonates with the government's broader policy shift post the abrogation of Article 370. His administration's proactive measures, including the formation of a Special Task Force (STF), signify a clear intent to cleanse the system of any elements that propagate separatism or hinder the peace process. It is indeed commendable that the administration has taken decisive steps to identify and remove employees who, despite drawing salaries from public funds, were allegedly aligned with separatist agendas. This sends a strong message that misuse of public office for anti-national activities will not be tolerated. Furthermore, the commitment to facilitate the dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits, uprooted by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism decades ago, underscores the government's holistic approach towards reconciliation and inclusivity. By returning their properties within a specified timeframe, the administration aims to rectify historical injustices and restore communal harmony in the region. The establishment of the STF, in collaboration with law enforcement and intelligence agencies, reflects the seriousness with which the administration is tackling such sensitive issues. It also reflects a comprehensive strategy to dismantle networks supporting anti-national elements and to uphold the rule of law in Jammu and Kashmir. In conclusion, the dismissal of these employees serves as a pivotal moment in asserting national security and integrity. It reaffirms that the government will not hesitate to take stringent actions against those who undermine the country's unity or engage in activities detrimental to its interests. As Jammu and Kashmir navigates towards sustained peace and development, such measures are crucial to creating a conducive environment for progress and prosperity for all its residents. The road ahead undoubtedly presents challenges, but with resolute leadership and unwavering determination, the administration's efforts to secure Jammu and Kashmir's future remain steadfast.

America's democracy goes underground

M K BHADRAKUMAR

The kaleidoscopic attributes of party politics in the United States are creating constantly changing patterns on an almost daily basis. The past week, Sunday to Sunday, literally shook the world with the assassination attempt against Donald Trump, which he promptly claimed as a sign of divine intervention. But then, the week ended with the anti-climactic man-made disaster of President Joe Biden being literally forced to give up his bid for re-election almost at the finishing line – and having had to put a brave face on it via a letter to 'Fellow Americans'.

A turn in the kaleidoscope can add to the swirl of uncertainties in the outcome of the November 5 elections. Going forward, the selection of the Democratic Party's nominee promises a thrilling finale. Democrats are left with less than a month for their convention in Chicago to present a new candidate and tell a new

story. Meanwhile, Biden remains in the Oval Office for another six months. This too is a potentially consequential scenario, since dialogue between Washington and Moscow should be expected already under the next administration. There is a controversial past circa 2015 when under Barack Obama a fake controversy about Candidate Trump's 'Russia collusion' was hatched, which literally stalked the latter's presidency. If Biden's mental acuity is no longer up to the job, shouldn't that include his job as president as well?

An embittered president with a failing memory is poised to exercise absolute political power. It is no secret that Biden is sniffling about the elite Democrats who smothered his candidacy. In a caustic op-ed, Maureen Dowd, the columnist of the New York Times wrote on Sunday, "He's still bitter that Obama pushed him aside for Hillary in 2015, so he doesn't want to hear from either of them. Obama always

seems to be leading Joe off the stage... and Joe resents it." Interestingly, Obama hasn't yet supported Kamala Harris.

In an eloquent statement giving fulsome praise to Biden's patriotism, Obama concluded, "We will be navigating uncharted waters in the days ahead. But I have extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges." The Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer and House Leader Jeffries Hakeem toed the Obama line, refraining from mentioning Harris, while praising Biden's decision to exit the race.

Suffice to say, although Harris is an increasingly likely candidate, momentum may build up for an open convention. Many Democratic party politicians have said they favour an open nominating process instead of appointing Harris by default. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez cautioned last week in a widely discussed social media post, "If you think that there is consen-

sus among the people who want Joe Biden to leave... that they will support Kamala, Vice President Harris, you would be mistaken."

An actual contested convention has no precedent in living memory. This is the first time in more than half a century after Lyndon Johnson that a US president has refused to be re-elected. A 'test vote' may even become necessary to fathom the strength of a candidate, while the 700 automatic 'superdelegates' (members of Congress, governors, state party chairs, etc.) remain the X factor.

Suffice to say, the chances are that the upcoming Democratic convention will be more contested than any in more than half a century. Therefore, the convention rules – who can vote on what ballot, how free the delegates are, and so on – are going to be the game changers. Different outcomes are possible depending on how the variables are juggled and refined behind the curtain by the movers and shakers in the party establishment. Meanwhile, what

happens to the 3,896 'pledged' delegates, chosen in primaries and caucuses representing well over 90% of the elected delegates, who had endorsed Biden? The existing rule gives these delegates the latitude "in all good conscience (to) reflect the sentiments of those who elected them." Suffice to say, these delegates are like free birds in an open cage under no obligation to follow whatever preferences Biden may express. This is where the 'superdelegates' come to assume a larger-than-life influence.

What happens at this point is up to the convention itself, which always has the power to adopt, amend or discard existing rules. It is impossible to predict the political consequences of an open convention. The paradox is, that rules are made for a desired outcome, which could potentially lead to a coalescing around Harris as next in line. When the kaleidoscope turns, however, God may dispose of what man proposes.

(M K Bhadrakumar is a former diplomat)

Income tax amendment promises relief for MSMEs

UTTAM GUPTA

An amendment to the Income Tax Act, introduced through Finance Act 2023, and effective from April 1, 2024 stops businesses from claiming tax deductions for payments beyond 45 days to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for supply of goods and services has caused much consternation. The MSMEs are ancillary units engaged in the production, manufacturing and processing of goods and commodities (mostly intermediate goods) which are supplied to large enterprises or master units. These units operate on a small scale and are further categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises depending on the 'investment' and 'turnover' threshold as defined under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006.

A micro-enterprise is one where investment in the plant and machinery or equipment doesn't exceed Rs 10 million and turnover doesn't exceed Rs 50 million. A small enterprise is an entity where investment in the plant and machinery is less than 100 million and turnover doesn't exceed Rs 500 million. For a medium enterprise, the thresholds are set at Rs 200 million for investment in the plant and machinery or equipment and Rs 1000 million

for turnover. According to the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around 30 per cent. The share of MSME manufacturing output in all India Manufacturing output is even higher at around 36 per cent.

The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has oscillated between 44 - 50 per cent during the last couple of years, according to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIIS). As for employment, according to a report released by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), MSMEs in India contribute 62 per cent to the total. Looking at the omnibus 'informal' sector – apart from MSMEs, it also includes proprietary household and partnership establishments – its contribution to employment is even higher at more than 75 per cent whereas in GDP its share is almost 50 per cent. The MSMEs thus play a predominant role in shaping the prospects of the economy more so in promoting 'inclusive' development with particular emphasis on increasing employment and income and reducing income inequalities.

Yet, they have borne the brunt of far-reaching economic decisions implemented by the Modi Government during its

first two terms such as demonetization (2016) and introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), 2017 also the devastating impact of the Corona – pandemic (2020). The government has taken several mitigation steps including a Rs 500,000 crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for businesses/MSMEs; equity infusion of Rs 50,000 crore through MSME Self-Reliant India Fund; no global tenders for procurement up to Rs. 200 crores (it bolsters their chances of securing government contract); relaxing threshold for classification of MSMEs; extension of non-tax benefits for 3 years in case of an upward change in status of MSMEs; inclusion of retail and wholesale trades as MSMEs; launch of Udyam Assist Platform (UAP) to bring the Informal Micro Enterprises (IMEs) under the formal ambit for availing the benefit under Priority Sector Lending (PSL); launch of an online Portal "Champions" to cover various aspects of e-governance including grievance redress and handholding of MSMEs and so on.

Even as all these initiatives seek to address issues of credit availability, technology infusion, market support etc., a problem haunting small enterprises has to do with delayed payment of their dues by large enterprises. When they don't receive payment for the goods supplied by

them, it results in a shortage of working capital severely impacting their 'ability to continue with production'. To address this problem, Section 15 of the MSMEs Development Act 2006, had mandated payments to micro and small enterprises within 45 days in case of written agreement (in case, there was no written agreement, the time limit was set at 15 days). In 2019, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs came up with the Specified Companies (Furnishing of information about payment to micro and small enterprise suppliers) Order that required large firms to file returns every six months even if there is no outstanding to MSME beyond 45 days.

Yet, the problem persisted forcing numerous firms to down shutters. This prompted the Union Government to look for a solution under the IT Act (1961). The Finance Act 2023, inserted Section 43B(h) in the IT Act (1961), which prescribes that if a larger company doesn't make payments to micro and small enterprises within 45 days in case of written agreements, it cannot deduct that expense while calculating the taxable income of the relevant financial year. How does it impact the large enterprises? To arrive at the profits during a financial year (FY) and hence the income on which tax is levied (known in IT parlance as

'taxable income'), a company deducts all expenses incurred on running the business from the total revenue it earns. The payments made by it for the purchase of goods from the MSMEs are an important item of expense; therefore it is deductible from the revenue.

If, it doesn't pay the small firm say Rs 5 lakh within the prescribed 45 days, Section 43B(h) will kick in and the large firm won't be allowed to deduct this amount in that FY thereby increasing its taxable income to that extent. So, it will end up paying more tax during that FY. Taking an effective corporate tax of 34.9 per cent (basic corporate tax of 30 per cent plus 12 per cent surcharge plus 4 per cent Health & Education Cess), the extra tax works out to Rs 174,500/-. This will be a deterrent strong enough to dissuade large enterprises from holding back payments to MSMEs.

It is not as if this extra tax ends up impacting the company's balance sheet forever. This additional tax paid (albeit due to delays in making payments to MSMEs) can be adjusted the following year when the company pays the supplier.

The Section thus strikes a good balance between the interests of all stakeholders. Even while creating a strong incentive for large enterprises to prioritize payments to the MSMEs thereby bol-

stering the latter's financial health and growth, it doesn't unduly penalize the former. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has also relaxed the reporting requirements under its 2019 Order. A notification issued on July 15, 2024, requires that "only those specified companies which are having payments pending to any micro or small enterprises for more than 45 days from the date of acceptance or the date of deemed acceptance of the goods or services under section 9 of the MSMEs Development Act, 2006 shall furnish the information". Earlier, they were required to furnish even if there was no outstanding to MSME beyond 45 days.

Yet, industries and businesses have asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to defer the implementation of the clause in the IT Act by a year to April 2025.

At the same time, we see reports of large enterprises arm-twisting small firms by deciding not to buy from MSMEs; instead deal with those MSMEs that are not registered with the Udyam portal (It's an online system for registering MSMEs, launched by the Union MSME ministry) or from non-MSMEs. This must be avoided. Section 43B(h) of the IT Act should be given a fair chance to succeed.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Harnessing the Power of Optimism

RACHNA LAKHPATI

The corporate world is a maze of challenges, deadlines, and pressures that often leave an employee drained and disheartened. However, amidst this complex and mostly daunting environment, there lies a strong antidote: optimism. That very saying, "The whole world runs on hope," has within itself a very deep message that can turn around professional life and make it work wonders. Optimism, not pessimism, is not some feel-good philosophy but a very practical way to build resilience, increase productivity, and foster a more positive workplace culture. Long-term optimism is the positivity of thinking toward the occurrence of good things and ultimately positive results from our efforts.

This mindset should be at the core of every work-

ing principle in a corporate setting. Projects may fail, market conditions may go for a toss, or other obstacles might impede; it is then that the optimist who views these obstacles not as insurmountable barriers but as opportunities for growth and learning.

Consider its effect on workplace morale. The optimistic frame of mind can make a lot of difference in the general feel of an office. If leaders or team members have bright, twinkling eyes and a positive outlook, this no doubt will breed others to emulate and follow in their footsteps, creating an upward spiral of sentiments. This sort of collective optimism yields openness to collaboration, increasing innovation, and a willingness to take calculated risks. A team that believes in the possibility of success is going to realize it far more



than one that is bogged down in doubt and negativity. Optimism allows for an increase in resiliency. When faced with setbacks, an optimistic person is more likely to try again and views these failures as being transitory, or conquerable.

This elasticity can prove particularly useful in business circles where observations are often what distinguish between giving up and breaking through to success. In its instance,

the optimistic approach will make individuals keep themselves motivated and move consistently toward their goals, even when the odds are not favourable. Even so, optimism needs to strike a correct and delicate balance with realism. Blind optimism that is not based on the real situation brings over-optimistic expectations with a sense of subsequent disappointment. The key here is to adopt realistic optimism: know the chal-

lenges, and uncertainties, but emphasise solving the problems and cultivating the outcomes. This balanced approach will keep one hopeful without losing sight of practical considerations.

One of the ignored facts about optimism is its relationship with the capability of stress management. The corporate world itself is a very stressful environment with great stakes and constant demands. Optimism hence acts as a defence mechanism against this stress and thus helps them cope better under pressure. Optimistic employees must, therefore, be more likely to resort to proactive coping strategies like problem-solving and seeking support than become prey to anxiety and despair.

This kind of camaraderie enhances job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates and generally creating a stable and harmoni-

ous work environment. Inculcating optimism in professional life does not mean one gets oblivious to challenges and uncertainties in a business environment. Instead, it is a manner of relating to them with hope and activity. Without attachment to the outcomes, giving it our best creates the opportunity for a whole lot of possibilities to start unwrapping. Life itself, much like work, is unpredictable. Embracing that uncertainty optimistically makes us able to move through the corporate landscape resiliently, creatively, and in high spirits. Optimists by choice can build a workplace that is productive, enriching, and supportive. This means that optimism is not merely a personal virtue; rather, it is a business asset with its key to professional success and better careers.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

582 mn people worldwide will be chronically undernourished in 2030: UN report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

About one in 11 people or 733 million people globally faced hunger in 2023, according to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report published on Wednesday by the UN agencies.

The report showed that this will lead to about 582 million people being chronically undernourished in 2030, a sign that the world is falling significantly short of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger. The annual report also shows that the world has been set back 15 years, with levels of undernourishment comparable to those in 2008-2009.

Despite some progress in specific areas such as stunting and exclusive



breastfeeding, an alarming number of people continue to face food insecurity and malnutrition as global hunger levels have plateaued for three consecutive years, with between 713 and 757 million people undernourished in 2023 -- approximately 152 million more than in 2019 when considering the mid-range (733 million).

Further, the report showed that the percentage of the population facing hunger continues to rise in Africa (20.4 per cent).

While it remains stable in Asia (8.1 per cent) the region still represents a significant challenge as it is home to more than half of those facing hunger worldwide.

Notably, the report showed progress in Latin America (6.2 per cent).

"We are off track on all indicators. That's clear. If we project the numbers of today, we will have up to 582 million people chronically undernourished or hungry by 2030. This is half a billion more than the target, which is 'Zero Hunger'," said Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"We need to accelerate the process and change if we want to get as close as possible to our target, which was very ambitious from the beginning. We only have six years left. Now, if I observe all the different regions and I see what has happened in South America, I see that this is possible," he added. Meanwhile, the report also highlighted that

access to adequate food remains elusive for billions.

In 2023, around 2.33 billion people globally faced moderate or severe food insecurity, a number that has not changed significantly since the sharp uptick in 2020, amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among those, over 864 million people experienced severe food insecurity, going without food for an entire day or more at times, the report said.

The report also underscored the complex challenges of malnutrition in all its forms - low breastfeeding rates, low birth-weight, wasting and anaemia.

There is "an urgent need for targeted interventions as the world is not on track to reach any of the seven global nutrition targets by 2030", the UN said.

Daily statin use may lower heart risk in HIV patients by 35 pc: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Daily use of statins, or cholesterol-lowering drugs, may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular events such as heart attacks, and strokes in people with HIV by 35 per cent, according to a study.

People living with HIV can have a 50-100 per cent increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

The research, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, showed that daily statin use could prevent one in five major cardiovascular events or premature deaths in this population.

"This research suggests that statins may provide an accessible, cost-effective measure to improve cardiovascular health and quality of life for people living with HIV," said Gary H. Gibbons, director of the



National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the US National Institute of Health.

The study involved 7,769 adults aged 40-75, who were randomised to receive either pitavastatin or a placebo. Participants who took pitavastatin experienced 35 per cent fewer major cardiovascular events and a 21 per cent reduction in deaths compared to the placebo group.

Additionally, those taking the statin saw a 30 per cent decrease in Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol or bad cholesterol levels.

Steven K. Grinspoon, a professor of medicine at Harvard University, noted that while lowering LDL cholesterol reduces risks for heart attacks and strokes, the findings suggest additional benefits of statin therapy for people living with HIV.

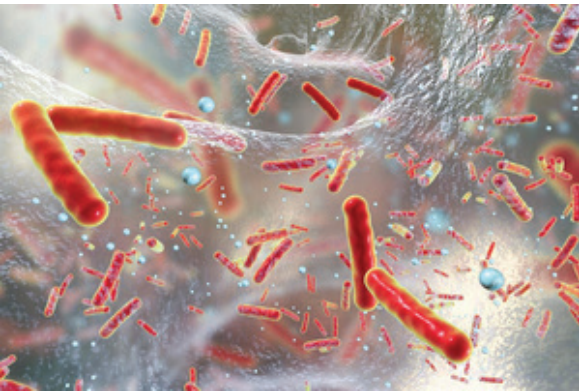
New antibiotic may make bacterial resistance nearly impossible

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

A newly discovered antibiotic that disrupts two distinct biological targets will make it 100 million times harder for bacteria to evolve resistance, according to a study.

The study from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), in the US, reveals that this antibiotic disrupts two different cellular targets, significantly complicating bacteria's ability to evolve resistance, a dangerous, unwanted side effect.

The study, published in the journal Nature Chemical Biology, focuses on a class of synthetic drugs known as macrolones. These drugs combat bacterial infections by either interfering with protein



production or corrupting DNA structure, making it challenging for bacteria to develop resistance to both mechanisms simultaneously.

"The beauty of this antibiotic is that it kills through two different targets in bacteria," said Alexander Mankin, a professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the University

of Illinois, Chicago. "If the antibiotic hits both targets at the same concentration, then the bacteria lose their ability to become resistant via the acquisition of random mutations in any of the two targets," he added.

Macrolones combine features of macrolides, like erythromycin, which block protein synthesis,

and fluoroquinolones, such as ciprofloxacin, which target the bacterial enzyme DNA gyrase.

Researchers Yury Polikanov and Nora Vazquez-Laslop at UIC demonstrated that these drugs bind more tightly to ribosomes than traditional antibiotics and are effective even against macrolide-resistant bacterial strains. "By basically hitting two targets at the same concentration, the advantage is that you make it almost impossible for the bacteria to easily come up with a simple genetic defence," Polikanov said.

This discovery underscores the importance of the integration across various scientific fields that fosters significant advancements like this one.

More lung cell types infected by SARS-CoV-2 than previously thought: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

A lot more lung cell types can be infected by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that caused the Covid-19 pandemic, and the number is higher than what was previously speculated, according to a study.

Researchers at Sanford Burnham Prebys and the University of California-San Diego in the US have discovered that the lungs can independently mount an antiviral response without immune system aid when exposed to the virus.

The team used induced pluripotent stem cells to create "mini lungs," discovering that SARS-CoV-2 can infect cells without traditional receptors.

"While many people



experience mild or moderate symptoms, Covid-19 still kills," said Sandra Leibel, Associate Professor of Paediatrics at UC San Diego's School of Medicine.

"This virus is here to stay, and we need to learn

everything we can about it so we can improve treatment and prevention," she added.

In the study, published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers found that different strains of the

virus prefer different lung cells, potentially explaining variations in disease severity. For instance, the Delta variant caused more severe pneumonia, while Omicron led to milder symptoms. The study also showed that the drug apilmod could block SARS-CoV-2's entry into cells lacking traditional receptors.

Additionally, the team discovered that the lung's surfactant protein B (SP-B) plays a crucial role in the antiviral response.

"These findings suggest not just one but two potential novel drug applications with the possible clinical use of surfactant early in Covid-19 cases," said Evan Snyder, a professor in the Human Genetics Programme at Sanford Burnham Prebys.

Complex 5-hour-long spine surgery gives Manipur boy a new lease of life

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

In a highly challenging and life-changing medical feat, a team of doctors successfully corrected severe scoliosis in a 14-year-old boy from Manipur.

The boy had been living with scoliosis -- a condition characterised by an abnormal curvature of the spine.

In a challenging five-hour procedure, surgeons successfully removed a hemivertebra, a half-formed vertebra in the spine. This intricate surgery required precise correction to align the spine properly while carefully



protecting the surrounding nerves. Several major hospitals had considered the operation too risky, citing the high potential for paralysis. The surgical team's expertise was crucial in navigating the complexities of the spine and ensuring a safe outcome for the patient.

"This surgery was

particularly challenging due to the complexity of removing a half-formed vertebra while protecting the spinal nerves," said Himanshu Tyagi, Additional Director of Orthopedics and Spine, at Fortis Hospital Greater Noida.

"Days after the surgery, the boy is walking around, climbing stairs, and showing no signs of neurological complications," said the doctor.

The patient's family expressed profound gratitude to the medical team, praising their expertise and commitment.

"This surgery has given our son a new lease of life," said the boy's father.

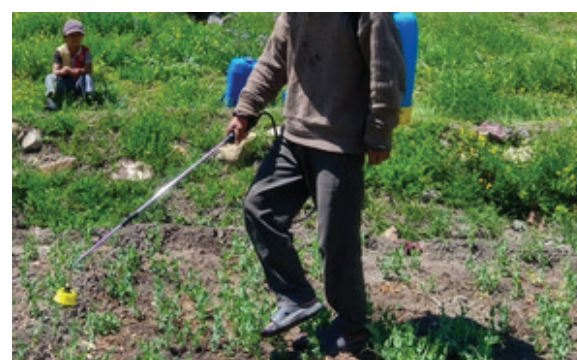
Forever chemicals flourishing in pesticides, warns study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as forever chemicals, are increasingly being added to pesticide products, contaminating waterways and increasing health risk for humans.

A team of researchers from the Centre for Biological Diversity, Environmental Working Group, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, in the US found that these PFAS are intentionally added to pesticides and can also leach from fluorinated storage containers.

Notably, pesticides contain PFAS like Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)



and Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) which are extremely dangerous and denigrate the rivers and streams frequently. Another worrying aspect is that they are used on products very commonly available like corn, wheat, kale, strawberries, insect sprays, etc, according to

the findings published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives.

Toxic PFAS have no place in our food, water, or homes, posing a serious threat to our health and environment," said David Andrews, a senior scientist at the Environmental Working Group.

"The increasing use of PFAS pesticides will lead to increasing levels of PFAS in the environment. Their presence not only endangers agricultural workers and communities but also jeopardises downstream water sources, where pesticide runoff can contaminate drinking supplies. The use of these pesticide products further illustrates why we must end all non-essential uses of these persistent 'forever chemicals,'" he added.

The study underscores a significant oversight in the regulatory framework, which fails to fully assess the risks posed by PFAS. The researchers call for immediate action to monitor this issue, including

banning the fluorination of plastic containers, identifying all inert ingredients on pesticide labels, and enhancing immunotoxicity testing for PFAS ingredients.

This is truly frightening news because pesticides are some of the most widely dispersed pollutants in the world," said Nathan Donley, environmental health science director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

"Lacing pesticides with forever chemicals is likely burdening the next generation with more chronic diseases. The Environmental Protection Agency needs to get a grasp on this fast-emerging threat right away," Donley said.

Doctors successfully remove cricket-ball sized rare vulvar tumour weighing 30 grams

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

A 35-year-old woman has been given a new lease of life after doctors successfully removed a cricket-ball-sized rare non-cancerous tumour from the outer part of her genitalia.

The tumour, known as vulvar leiomyoma, weighed 30 grams and measured 10x8 cm.

The patient had noticed a painless, slow-growing mass in the outer part of her vulva over the past 15 years.

Initially misdiagnosed as ovarian cancer at another facility, she sought a second opinion at Fortis Escorts Faridabad. Upon admission, she reported heaviness and swelling in her private parts, but there were no associated symptoms like bleeding or discharge.

Her medical history included hypothyroidism, for which she was under regular medication, and no family history of similar gynecological conditions.

A thorough physical

examination revealed a firm mass near the urethra. Pelvic examination and routine laboratory tests confirmed the non-cancerous nature of the mass, and MRI findings suggested a vulvar tumour.

Due to the involvement of blood vessels, the surgery posed risks of excessive blood loss and clot formation.

However, surgical removal was deemed the best treatment option given the circumstances.

"The procedure was challenging due to the

tumour's proximity to the urethra, raising the risk of urethral injury. Additionally, the involvement of blood vessels increases the risk of excessive bleeding.

If left untreated, the tumour could have grown further, causing urethral pressure and urinary symptoms," said Dr. Niti Kautish, Director of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the hospital.

The procedure lasted an hour, and the patient was discharged in stable condition within two days, said the doctor.

Study links kneecap shape to osteoarthritis risk

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The shape of a person's kneecap may indicate their risk of developing osteoarthritis - a common and debilitating joint disease, suggested a study.

Researchers from the Australian National University (ANU) in Australia focussed on potential differences in kneecap shape between men and women, given that women with knee osteoarthritis often experience more severe symptoms.

The team made use of CT scans to analyse the



kneecaps of healthy individuals and patients awaiting knee replacement surgery.

They employed advanced image analysis

techniques to create 3D models of the kneecaps and measured the surfaces' shapes.

While the study "did not find distinct differences in

kneecap shapes between sexes, it revealed that individuals with osteoarthritis exhibited more pronounced variations in kneecap surface shapes."

These differences became more significant with increasing disease severity, said the team led by Associate Professor Laura Wilson from ANU.

She noted the unexpected nature of the findings, highlighting that the "changes in kneecap shape varied across different joint surfaces as osteoarthritis progressed."

The study is published in the journal Osteoarthritis and Cartilage.

Outrageous allegation: Sitharaman blasts Oppn over claims of 'biased' Budget

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in a strong rebuttal to the Opposition's charge of the Union Budget being 'politically biased' towards the non-NDA states, said that all states have got equal and dedicated funds allocation.

"If any state is not named in the Budget speech, this doesn't mean that they have been left out," the Finance Minister said in Rajya Sabha.

Further, hitting out at the Opposition parties, she said that a deliberate attempt was made by parties including Congress to give an impression that nothing is being given to



states ruled by non-NDA parties.

"I would challenge the Congress party, in each of their budget speeches, have they named every state of this country. This is an outrageous allegation," Sitharaman said.

Notably, the INDIA bloc

leaders described the Budget as anti-people and discriminatory towards non-NDA states. They claimed that the Budget was not a 'BJP document' and it must cater to all states while referring to the bonanza given to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

FM Sitharaman took exception to these charges and cited the example of Maharashtra to counter the Opposition's claims of discrimination.

"The cabinet, under the leadership of PM Modi, took the decision to set up a very big port in Vadhavan in Maharashtra. Did Maharashtra get ignored because I did not mention the name? Rs 76,000 crore has been announced for the project," she said.

"If the speech does not mention a particular state, does it mean that the schemes and programmes of government don't extend to these states?" she asked.

Doubling down her attack, she said that the Congress party having

stayed in power for a very long time has presented many budgets and they know it very well that you don't get an opportunity to name every state in the Budget speech.

She said that a deliberate attempt was being made to mislead the people.

As some members of Trinamool Congress returned to the House during her speech, the Finance Minister said, "Yesterday, TMC questioned the Budget, saying nothing has been given to Bengal. Several schemes given by the Prime Minister in the last 10 years have not been implemented in West Bengal. And, you have the audacity to ask me now?"

Himachal Pradesh sees one crore tourist arrival in six months

AGENCIES
SHIMLA, JULY 24

Himachal Pradesh has witnessed a significant surge in tourism as over one crore tourists visited the state in the first six months of 2024, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Wednesday.

By the end of June, the state recorded 100,87,440 tourists at key destinations like Shimla, Manali, Dharamsala, Dalhousie, Kinnaur, and Lahaul-Spiti. Kullu and Shimla circuits emerged as top attractions, drawing 4,73,737 and 4,48,392 tourists respectively.

This trend has continued in July, aided by favourable weather conditions and open roads, allowing tourists to escape the summer heat



of the plains and enjoy the scenic beauty of Himachal Pradesh.

Chief Minister Sukhu assured the tourists that a majority of roads remain accessible. "Despite recent weather conditions affecting some roads, most of the roads across the state remain open and accessible to tourists and the public. Himachal is also witnessing an influx of thousands of tourists in

July and these numbers are promising and we expect to surpass two crore visitors by the end of this year," he said in a statement.

He emphasised the importance of tourists staying informed by checking the latest travel advisories and road conditions through the helplines of the district administration, police department and social media handles.

EAM agreed to grant request on passport offices in Garhwal: Baluni



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Anil Baluni, BJP MP from Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency in Uttarakhand, met External Affairs Minister (EAM), S Jaishankar, on Wednesday and raised the need for passport offices in Garhwal's remote areas.

"Met External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar and requested him to open passport offices in Gopeshwar (Chamoli) and Kotdwar in my Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency", said the BJP's National Chief Spokesperson Anil Baluni in a post on X.

"Given the challenging

geographical conditions, opening these offices will greatly benefit youth and people by saving them time and money", he added.

Baluni said that the EAM agreed to his request.

"Hopefully, soon we will get good news regarding the opening of these offices", he said in his post.

Due to the lack of passport offices in Gopeshwar (Chamoli) and Kotdwar, people have to travel to Dehradun, Haldwani, and other districts to get their passport-related work done, causing them great inconvenience.

"If govt is run according to political likes and dislikes, you will be isolated": Stalin tells PM

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JULY 24

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the neglect of several states in the Union Budget, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin said if Mr Modi runs his government according to political likes and dislikes he will be isolated.

In a social media post, Mr Stalin referred to the protests by the INDIA coalition MPs over the boycott of several states in the Budget and advised Mr Modi to run the government in general and not to be hellbent on avenging those who had defeated him (in the recent Lok Sabha polls).

The BJP had failed to get a majority of its own, but formed the government (for the third time) with the support of its key allies the the JD(U) in Bihar and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh. In the budget, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman loosened the

purse strings for these two states and announced an allocation of Rs 26,000 crore and Rs 15,000 to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh respectively.

Mr Stalin said the Budget will save Mr Modi's rule, but not the country.

"INDIA coalition MPs have staged a protest protesting the omission of several states in the Union budget", he said.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister @narendramodi You said, 'The election is over, now we have to think about the country.' But yesterday #Budget2024 will save your rule, but not the Indian nation", he added "Run the government in general. Don't be hellbent on avenging those who have yet defeated you",

Mr Stalin, who had announced boycott of the Niti Aayog meeting convened by Mr Modi at Delhi on July 27 condemning the Budget as there was no mention of any schemes to TN and has blatantly neglected the State, said.

It may be pertinent to



note that the DMK-led Front in Tamil Nadu swept the Lok Sabha polls winning all the 40 seats, while the BJP-led alliance drew a blank.

"I am obliged to advise you that if you run the government according to political likes and dislikes, you will be isolated. #BJP-BetraysTamilnadu", the Chief Minister said.

Yesterday, Mr Stalin, after issuing a statement terming the Union Budget as "huge betrayal" of Tamil

political reasons, he said, assailing the Centre.

While allocating funds generously for several states for political gains and ignoring Tamil Nadu for the sole reason as it continued to ignore communal politics was akin to crushing the federal principles.

"Spitting venom on States like Tamil Nadu, which was significantly contributing for the country's development tantamounts to destroying the democratic and federal principles", he said.

The BJP government's ploy to settle political scores through the Budget was saddening as it would affect the people of Tamil Nadu, he had said.

Later in a post on X, Mr Stalin said "Go to the battlefields of election in January 2029. Till then, the only priority should be the country, its poor, farmers, women, and the youth," our Hon'ble PM @narendramodi said in his address to the media ahead of the Parliament

session."

"But the very next day, his government's #Budget2024 has neglected the people of Tamil Nadu.

This is unacceptable and condemnable", he said.

"While the budget includes announcements for states ruled by BJP allies, there is no guarantee these states will receive the promised funds, just as Tamil Nadu has been denied funds for the #ChennaiMetro for the past three years", he added.

"Shockingly, the words 'Tamil' or 'Tamil Nadu' do not appear even once in the entire budget speech by Hon'ble @nsitharaman, who previously began her budget speeches with 'Thirukkural', he said.

"In light of this blatant neglect of Tamil Nadu, I have decided to boycott the @NITIAYog meeting scheduled for 27th July, chaired by the Hon'ble PM. #BJPBetraysTamilnadu", the Chief Minister said.

Centre lacks 'fairness', no point attending NITI Aayog meeting: Shivakumar

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 24

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday defended Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's decision to boycott the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting scheduled in the national capital on July 27, stating that there is no point in attending the same when the Central government lacks 'fairness'.

Taking to X on Tuesday evening, Siddaramaiah said, "Despite my earnest efforts in calling for an all-party meeting of MPs in New Delhi to discuss Karnataka's essential needs, the Union Budget neglected our state's demands."

"Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who also attended the meeting,



has ignored the concerns of the people of Karnataka. We have decided to boycott the NITI Aayog meeting, which will be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 27, as a mark of protest," he added.

Commenting on the

matter, Shivakumar told mediapersons on Wednesday, "The Union Budget has not done justice to Karnataka. There is no fairness in it. Since the state did not get proper representation in the Budget, the party leaders have decided to boycott

the (NITI Aayog) meeting as a mark of protest."

Calling the Union Budget "discriminatory" and "dangerous", the Congress had also said on Tuesday that the party's three Chief Ministers -- Siddaramaiah, Revanth Reddy (Telangana), and Sukhvinder Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh) -- will not attend the NITI Aayog meeting in Delhi on July 27. When asked about the BJP's strong opposition to the Greater Bengaluru Bill tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday, Shivakumar said, "They are playing politics on this matter. I don't do anything in haste. I have presented the Bill. Let them thoroughly review and discuss it."

"Bengaluru is growing uncontrollably with a population of 1.40 crore.

So good governance is needed here. Decisions should be made considering the infrastructure and the economic system. Let the opposition parties discuss this (Bill). We have no objection to that."

The Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024, proposes to split the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) into not more than 10 city corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area.

The government maintains that the Bill has been moved to achieve effective, participatory, and responsive urban governance in the Greater Bengaluru Area. It also proposes establishing a Greater Bengaluru Authority to coordinate and supervise the development of the Greater Bengaluru Area.

ED conducting an honest investigation in Tribal Welfare Board case: BJP

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JULY 24

BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra on Wednesday said that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting an honest investigation regarding the Tribal Welfare Board case.

"It has been revealed that money was transferred out of the state, looted and used to buy mines. The ED is conducting an honest investigation regarding the case," said Vijayendra while talking to media persons at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru.

He said that any attempt to obstruct ED's investigation is an unpar-

donable crime. "More than Rs 187 crores related to the Scheduled Castes Development Corporation have been looted. If you (Siddaramaiah) are truly honest, the SIT you formed should have immediately issued a notice to the jailed former minister B. Nagendra and called him for an investigation," he said.

He added that shouldn't the investigation of the Tribal Welfare Corporation's President and Congress MLA Basanagouda Daddal have been conducted immediately.

He appealed that if the Chief Minister is honest, he should cooperate with the ED and CBI investigations. "Under Siddaramaiah's leadership, slogans were shouted and protests were conducted against the ED. The behaviour of the Chief Minister and the ministers is disheartening," he said.

He said that in the Tribal Welfare case, not only Nagendra but even the big heads will roll. "The Chief Minister is only referring to the parts of the death note that suited him," he said.

He said that the Chief Minister is also trapped in the MUDA land allotment case. "We have created awareness among the public about both the cases. As an opposition party, we have continuously fought for the people," he said.

'You are a woman, you don't know anything': Bihar CM to RJD MLA amid Assembly ruckus

AGENCIES
PATNA, JULY 24

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday sparked a fresh controversy when he made a disparaging comment on a woman MLA amid aggressive protests by the opposition members in the Assembly.

His outburst came as the opposition legislators were protesting on the issues of reservation and the special status of Bihar, and were not letting him speak. A visibly upset

CM then bust out at RJD's Rekha Devi, saying, "You are a woman, you do not know anything."

Soon pandemonium broke out and the opposition legislators, particularly those from the RJD, Congress, and Left parties raised slogans, like "Nitish Kumar Hai Hai".

Earlier, as the House assembled at 11 a.m., the opposition members started protesting in the House, demanding the state's amended reservation laws be put in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution,

to safeguard it from legal challenges.

CM Nitish Kumar attempted to address the issue, but could not as the opposition continued to protest aggressively.

He urged the opposition to sit and listen to the government's stance, suggesting that the opposition would appreciate the efforts of the government if they understood the reasoning behind them.

The opposition leaders continued to chant slogans, specifically targeting him, saying, "Chief Minister Hai Hai". In response, the CM said, "You are saying Hai Hai to me, then Hai Hai to you too."



This remark elicited laughter from the Assembly members. Despite the brief moment of humour,

the opposition remained resolute and moved to the well of the House and continued their protest, demanding special state status and the reinstatement of the 65 per cent reservation policy.

Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav expressed his displeasure over the aggressive protests by the opposition members.

He even ordered the removal of Congress MLA Munna Tiwari, which resulted in a physical altercation between the marshal and the MLA.

The marshal, acting on the Speaker's instructions, then forcibly removed a poster from Munna Tiwari's hand.

As a result of the aggressive protests, Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav adjourned the House until 2 p.m.

Following these events, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Chaudhary criticized the opposition, stating that their disruption over the reservation issue was baseless.

Vijay Chaudhary addressed the ongoing

protests by the opposition in the Assembly, stating that the government has taken steps to challenge the Patna High Court's decision in the Supreme Court.

He emphasized the government's commitment to defending its reservation policy and presenting a strong case in the higher court. However, he criticized the opposition for causing unnecessary disruptions within the Assembly, implying that their protests were not constructive.

South Korea's main opposition party urges new PPP leader to cooperate in passing special probe bill on Marine's death

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 24

The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) of South Korea on Wednesday urged the newly elected ruling party leader to show his commitment to the public by endorsing a controversial bill mandating a special counsel probe into the military's response to a Marine's death last year.

"Leader Han (Dong-hoon) said he will stand with the public at a press briefing after he was elected," DP floor leader Park Chan-dae said during a Supreme Council meeting,



stressing that the public "overwhelmingly wants to pass the special counsel probe bill."

He called on Han, elect-

ed leader of the ruling People Power Party (PPP) on Tuesday, to choose to vote in favor of the bill as the party's official stance,

Yonhap news agency reported.

The DP has been seeking to pass a bill that calls for a special counsel to look into allegations that the presidential office and the defence ministry inappropriately interfered in the Marines' investigation into Cpl. Chae, who was killed during a search mission for victims of heavy downpours in July 2023.

Speaking to reporters at the National Assembly, Han reaffirmed his position on the bill "remains unchanged."

"We are a party that respects the democratic process, and we

will explain (our stance) through such democratic process of our party," he said.

Declaring his bid for the PPP chief last month, Han said he will push for a new bill that calls for a special counsel chosen by a "third party" to investigate the case to ensure more fairness.

The DP-led bill had initially passed through the previous National Assembly but was scrapped in a revote after President Yoon Suk Yeol vetoed it. The DP proposed a similar bill after the new National Assembly came into office in late May.

18 dead, 1 injured in Nepal's plane crash

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU, JULY 24

A domestic plane crashed during take-off on Wednesday at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital, leaving 18 dead and 1 injured.

A witness said the plane nosedived into the ground, and an explosion could be heard inside the airport.

Eighteen dead bodies were recovered at the crash site, said Hansa Raj Pandey, spokesman at the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

Pandey told Xinhua that one injured person was sent to the hospital for treatment and the airport has been closed over the incident.

The Saurya Airlines flight bound for the city of Pokhara was carrying



19 people and all of them were from the airline, said Pandey.

Subash Jha, the airport spokesman, told Xinhua that the plane was going to Pokhara for "a C check," or maintenance checks.

The captain of the plane is the only survivor being treated at the hospital,

and a committee shall be formed to probe into the incident, Jha said.

A foreigner was aboard the flight, according to passenger information unveiled by the airline.

Nepali Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli called a cabinet meeting over the plane crash, press reports said.

Typhoon Gaemi pounds Philippines, killing at least eight

AGENCIES
MANILA, JULY 24

The Metro Manila Council officially declared a state of calamity in the National Capital Region on Wednesday, as rains from the enhanced southwest monsoon brought by Typhoon Gaemi caused flooding in various parts of the Philippine capital.

The widespread flooding, seven feet deep in some areas, forced the government to evacuate people from near Manila Bay and rivers to safety, besides shutting schools and offices, Xinhua news agency reported.

While Metro Manila has been placed in a state of calamity, local authorities have evacuated residents from the coastal areas in the central and southern Philippine regions.

Police said at least eight



people were killed due to the typhoon.

Four died in a landslide at Agoncillo town in Batangas province, south of Manila.

A 46-year-old man was killed in Nasugbo town in Batangas province after he was pinned down by a tree felled by strong winds and heavy rains, while another man was killed in Manila City due to electrocution.

The police reported that

two persons were killed in a landslide at Angeles City in Pampanga province, north of Manila, while two people were reportedly missing in Bataan province, west of Manila.

The flooding also caused power outages in some areas.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines said several airports in Luzon have suspended operations due to

bad weather. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 4 is closed and inaccessible due to flooding.

The Philippines' state weather bureau, PAGASA, said Gaemi will continue to dump rain on Wednesday, and "flooding and rain-induced landslides are possible".

It added that the southwest monsoon enhanced by Gaemi will bring moderate to intense rainfall in many areas in Luzon until Friday, as well as areas in the Visayas region in central Philippines and northern Mindanao in southern Philippines.

Gaemi, the third typhoon to batter the Philippines this year, is expected to leave the country by Wednesday night or early Thursday. An average of 20 typhoons lash the Philippines yearly.

Italian Air Force jet crashes during Ex Pitch Black in Australia, pilot safe

AGENCIES
DARWIN, JULY 24

An Italian Air Force Eurofighter 2000 Typhoon jet crashed on Wednesday during the ongoing multi-nation Exercise Pitch Black - Australia's biggest international air combat training activity - after encountering an "unknown issue" during a training flight.

The Australian Air Force said in a statement issued later in the day that the pilot of the aircraft is safe and has been transported to hospital for precautionary checks after ejecting from the aircraft during flying operations.

"At 10:45am (local time) on Wednesday 24

July 2024, the pilot made contact with aircrew in the area via radio. Australian Defence Force personnel in Darwin and Tindal responded immediately, coordinating the location and recovery of the pilot.

The pilot was transported to hospital in Darwin," the Australian Defence Ministry said in a statement on the incident.

Exercise Commander, Air Commodore Peter Robinson, confirmed the pilot was uninjured, safe and in good spirits.

"Our defence personnel worked rapidly and efficiently to respond to this situation and worked to help recover the pilot.

We train for these scenarios as part of all of our safety planning and I was pleased to see the integration of international personnel with our own to coordinate the search, rescue and recovery of the pilot to hospital within three hours," said Air Commodore Robinson.

An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent comprising of over 150 highly skilled air warriors including pilots, engineers, technicians, controllers and other subject matter experts, operating the formidable Su-30 MKI multirole fighters, the C-17 Globemaster and the IL-78 Air-to-Air Refueling aircraft are also participating in the exercise

which began from July 12 and will continue till August 2.

The ongoing edition of the exercise is the largest in its 43-year history, including participation of 20 countries, with over 140 aircraft and 4400 military personnel of various air forces.

"We are a few weeks into the exercise and we have all formed friendships both in the Northern Territory and internationally as we rehearse and practise these complex flying activities," said Air Commodore Robinson.

Meanwhile, the site, outside of the Darwin and Katherine flying areas, is now the subject of a safety investigation.

South Korean hospitals required to set up side rooms for dignified deaths

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JULY 24

Hospitals with more than 300 beds will be required to establish at least one room for patients near death to stay and prepare for the end of their life with dignity, the South Korean Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

Under the enforcement regulation of the Medical Act, major general and care hospitals with more than 300 beds must set up at least one separate room in which patients close to dying stay with their family members and friends, and spend their



last moments of life more peacefully, according to the ministry.

It stated that the new regulation will take effect in August, and existing institutions will have a one-year grace period.

"More than three out of every four people have

their inevitable hour at medical institutions, and such a space would help them die with dignity. The government will continue consultations with regional governments and hospitals regarding the issue," ministry official Kim Guk-il said.

All eyes on Laos as ASEAN meetings begin in Vientiane

AGENCIES
VIENTIANE, JULY 24

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers had an Interface with the representatives of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in the Lao capital of Vientiane, on Wednesday.

ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn attended the interface, which saw candid exchanges between the ministers and the AICHR representatives on human rights in the region.

The annual AICHR report was also submitted to the 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting for notation.



The Secretary-General of ASEAN also held bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) on Wednesday, aiming to exchange views

on the latest developments happening around the world as well as to explore new ideas on how to further strengthen and broaden cooperation and partnership towards

realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and beyond.

In his meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos Saleumxay Kommasith, Secretary-General Kao reaffirmed the ASEAN Secretariat's readiness to support Laos in realising its ASEAN Chairmanship's priorities and deliverables this year under the theme 'ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience'.

In his second bilateral meeting, Kao met with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Aung Kyaw Moe. Both sides discussed the ongoing work of ASEAN in its communi-

ty-building efforts.

The 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) is scheduled from Wednesday to Sunday (July 24-28) while Laos will also host the ASEAN Post Ministerial conferences, the 25th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 14th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the 31st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will also be participating in the Foreign Ministers' Meetings under the ASEAN framework in the format of ASEAN-India, East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), starting Thursday.

Hydrothermal explosion in US Yellowstone National Park damages boardwalk

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES, JULY 24

A hydrothermal explosion occurred at a thermal area in Yellowstone National Park, one of the most visited national parks in the United States, damaging a boardwalk and forcing the closure of the area.

No injuries were reported and the extent of damage is unknown at this time, said the park service in a news release, adding that park staff and staff from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) will monitor conditions and reopen the area once deemed safe, Xinhua news agency reported.

The explosion occurred



about 10:19 a.m. local time near Sapphire Pool in Biscuit Basin, located

just north of Old Faithful, a cone geyser famous for its predictable eruptions, according to the National Park Service.

Park officials said that Biscuit Basin, including the parking lot and boardwalks, are temporarily closed for safety reasons.

"No other monitoring data showing changes in the Yellowstone region. Today's explosion does not reflect a change in the volcanic system, which remains at normal background levels of activity," said the

park service in the news release.

USGS also confirmed in a news release that "numerous videos of the event were recorded by visitors" and the boardwalk was damaged.

Videos shared on social media platforms captured the hydrothermal explosion that sent visitors running away as boiling water and debris raining down over the area.

"Hydrothermal explosions occur when water suddenly flashes to steam underground, and they are relatively common in Yellowstone," the agency said. An explosion similar to that of Tuesday also occurred in Biscuit Basin on May 17, 2009, according to the agency.

Thousands of Gazans on move again, following Israel's evacuation orders: UN

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 24

After recent evacuation orders, Gazans abandoned shelter in parts of the north and the south, moving so quickly that some left without belongings, UN humanitarian said.

It was not the first time many of them were displaced.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Tuesday that more civilians fled parts of Khan Younis following Monday's evacuation order issued by Israeli authorities and the subsequent intensification of hostilities in that area, Xinhua news agency reported.

OCHA added that humanitarian colleagues monitoring population movements reported about 150,000 people left areas in Khan Younis.

The office is concerned about the short interval between dropping leaflets ordering people to leave

and the escalation of military operations, posing significant risks. The warning was about an hour before hostilities. Many civilians were seen on the move without any belongings. "The immediate escalation of hostilities in the area also resulted in many people being trapped in the evacuation area," OCHA said.

"These included people with reduced mobility and family members supporting them."

The humanitarian said that each evacuation order profoundly disrupts people's lives, with many forced to move into areas with little or no infrastructure and very limited access to shelter, health, sanitation or other life-saving humanitarian assistance.

OCHA said the area designated for evacuation on Monday included two primary health centres, two medical points, a dozen food distribution points and eight cooked meal provision points. These have

all ceased operations, with only one community kitchen still operational for those left behind.

The office also said that different parts of Salah ad Din Road have seen security incidents, including gunfire. Parts of the road, a key route for humanitarian goods, were included in Monday's evacuation directives. This forced humanitarian supplies to be rerouted to the Coastal Road, which is not a viable alternative due to congestion.

The World Health Organisation reported that Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis is coping with an influx of patients following hostilities. Some medical supplies delivered last week for 10,000 patients were diverted to treat mass casualty victims.

OCHA also said displacement continues from the northern Gaza Strip southwards and from the Al-Bureij area of Deir al Balah amid continuing hostilities.

Adani Green begins wind generation from Khavda renewable energy plant

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, JULY 24

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) on Wednesday said it has operationalised the first 250 MW wind capacity at the world's largest 30,000 MW (30 GW) renewable energy plant at Khavda, Gujarat.

With this milestone, 2,250 MW of cumulative capacity has been made operational at the Khavda plant, strengthening AGEL's leadership in India with the largest operational portfolio of 11,184 MW.

"Khavda has one of the best wind resources in India, with speeds of 8 metres per second making it an ideal location to harness wind energy. The Khavda Renewable Energy plant is equipped with one of the world's largest and most powerful onshore wind turbine generators (WTG) of 5.2 MW capacity



each," according to India's largest renewable energy (RE) company.

The 5.2 MW turbine features a rotor diameter of 160 metres and a tip height of 200 metres, equivalent to the Statue of Unity, the world's tallest located in Gujarat.

The 5.2 MW WTGs

installed at Khavda are built with superior German technology and manufactured at Adani New Industries Limited's (ANIL) integrated manufacturing ecosystem strategically located near the Mundra port.

AGEL has transformed the Khavda barren waste-

land into a hub of clean and affordable energy. The energy from the Khavda RE plant can power 16.1 million homes each year.

The world's largest renewable energy plant at Khavda, stands a beacon of accelerating the global decarbonisation efforts and India's sustainable

progress.

On Tuesday, Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay visited the world's largest RE site at Khavda in Gujarat.

Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, said he was immensely grateful to them for visiting the Khavda RE plant and Mundra Port.

The commissioning of the first 2 GW at the world's largest renewable energy plant in Khavda within 12 months of breaking ground has set a record.

Given renewable energy's growth potential, Adani Green Energy has revised its FY 2029-30 target from 45 GW to 50 GW.

In the fiscal FY24, it added 2.8 GW, 15 per cent of India's total renewable capacity addition.

6th-gen Samsung Galaxy foldables now available in India

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

South Korean giant Samsung on Wednesday announced the sale of its sixth-generation foldable smartphones along with other new devices for consumers in India.

Galaxy Z Fold6, Galaxy Z Flip6 and the Galaxy connected ecosystem products will be available across retail outlets.

The company said consumers can own Galaxy Z Flip6 at just Rs 4,250 and Galaxy Z Fold6 at just Rs 6,542 with no-cost EMI for up to 24 months, along with other benefits.

The company said that in the first 24 hours, pre-orders for Galaxy Z Fold6 and Z Flip6 jumped 40 per cent higher as compared to the previous generation foldables in India.

For Indian consumers, Galaxy Z Fold6 and Z Flip6 are being manufactured at



the company's Noida factory.

The new foldables are the slimmest and lightest Galaxy Z series devices ever, and come with perfectly symmetrical design with straight edges. The Galaxy Z series is also equipped with enhanced Armor Aluminum and Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2, making this the most durable Galaxy Z series yet.

The Galaxy Z Fold6 offers a range of AI-powered features and tools

- Note Assist, Composer, Sketch to image, Interpreter, Photo Assist and Instant Slow-mo -- to maximise the large screen and significantly enhance your productivity.

Galaxy Z Fold6 starts at Rs 164,999 (12GB+256GB), while Galaxy Z Flip6 is available from Rs 109,999 (12GB+256GB).

Galaxy Watch Ultra is priced at Rs 59,999 and Galaxy Watch7 starts at Rs 29,999 for the 40mm variant, said the company.

Apple launches watch for kids in India with easy calling, texting, activity monitoring

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Tech giant Apple on Wednesday launched its watch for kids in India that comes with easy calling, texting, and activity monitoring.

The Apple Watch for kids is functional "even if they don't have their own iPhone", said the company in a statement.

It may help parents who do not want to give mobile phones to children.

"Apple Watch For Your Kids is available in India, on cellular models of Apple Watch Series 4 or later or Apple Watch SE, paired with iPhone 8 or later running the latest watchOS and iOS," Apple said.

"It brings communication, health, fitness, and safety features of Apple Watch to kids and other family members who do not yet have an iPhone," the company added.

It can be set up through a parent's iPhone and is



easy to call and text.

Parents can know the location of their children, while all the personal data stays securely encrypted.

Parents also can approve all contacts, so kids can safely use the communication features of the Apple Watch.

Besides children, the entire family can also benefit from the important health and safety features of the Apple Watch, like Emergency SOS, while

Maps, Siri, Alarms, and the App Store provide greater independence without needing an iPhone.

"Kids using Apple Watch For Your Kids will have their own phone number through a separate cellular plan, and by using their own Apple ID," Apple said, adding that a wireless service plan for Apple Watch is required for cellular service, currently available through Jio in India.

realme unveils Watch S2's luxury design

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The 21st century has witnessed a captivating evolution in the world of watches. While smartwatches have undeniably revolutionised functionality, offering everything from notifications to fitness tracking, it's the parallel evolution of design that truly captures the eye.

Watches are no longer just instruments of time-keeping; they are statements of personal style. Modern designs embrace a breathtaking array of materials, reflecting the wearer's individuality. Classic leather and metal remain timeless choices, while contemporary silicone and even cutting-edge carbon fibre cater to those seeking a more modern aesthetic.

This diversity extends beyond the material, encompassing a spectrum of colours, shapes, and sizes. Whether it's the sleek minimalism of a digital display or the



intricate craftsmanship of a mechanical timepiece, there's a watch designed to adorn every wrist and complement every style. The modern watch, in its marriage of technological prowess and aesthetic exploration, has truly transcended its original purpose to become a powerful form of self-expression.

Reflecting this dedication to innovation, realme announces its newest smartwatch: the realme Watch S2. Built to last and designed to stand out, the Watch S2 brings a touch of luxury to the wrist with its industry-first dual-pattern, multi-plated stainless steel finish.

This meticulous process, involving 18 precision steps, achieves a premium brushed metal texture typically found only in high-end watches. In doing so, realme makes premium design accessible to all.

But the Watch S2 is more than just a pretty face. The exquisite glass cover, framed by a body that seamlessly blends advanced technology with artistic detail, is as tough as it is beautiful.

A dark metal screen printing graces the bottom perimeter, while the top features delicately laser-engraved characters, creating a look that's both personalised and endur-

ing. This intricate design extends to the sides, where a 2.8D curved surface adds a touch of elegance.

The watch's mid-frame boasts a precisely machined CO2 texture, contrasting beautifully with the end-knife brushed texture, showcasing a unique blend of artistry and craftsmanship.

Multiple layers of water plating, vacuum plating, and an anti-fingerprint oil coating create a surface that's not only wear and scratch-resistant but also fingerprint-proof and incredibly smooth.

The result is a watch that feels as luxurious as it looks, with a high-end stainless steel brushed texture reminiscent of a finely crafted industrial art piece.

Durability is more than skin deep with the Watch S2. The anti-scratch screen, tested with a 7H hardness pencil under 1KG of pressure, remains flawlessly smooth even after rigorous scratching. This ensures that your watch

face stays crystal clear, no matter how long you wear it or what life throws your way.

The Watch S2 effortlessly withstands extreme environments, remaining unfazed by temperatures as high as 55 degrees Celsius and as low as -20 degrees Celsius. It can even handle 120 hours of intense humidity and salt spray, emerging just as pristine as the day it was made.

Even the buttons demonstrate exceptional durability, having been rigorously tested with over 100,000 presses to ensure they remain responsive and reliable with every use.

The realme Watch S2 is a testament to lasting quality, ready to accompany you on every adventure. Mark your calendars for July 30th, when you can experience this accessible luxury for yourself and elevate your wrist game with the perfect blend of style and substance that can weather any storm.

Tesla's profit tanks 45 pc in Q2, Musk plans to reveal robotaxi in October

AGENCIES
SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 24

Elon Musk-run Tesla has reported \$1.5 billion in profit for the April-June period (Q2) this year, down 45 per cent from the same period in 2023.

Total revenue was up 2 per cent (year-on-year) at \$25.5 billion, but automotive revenues was down 7 per cent to \$19.9 billion, according to the electric car-maker.

"In Q2, we achieved record quarterly revenues despite a difficult operating environment. The Energy Storage business continues to grow rapidly, setting a record in Q2 with



9.4 GWh of deployments, resulting in record revenues and gross profits for the overall segment," Tesla said in a statement.

The company is look-

ing at a possibility of selling fewer EVs in 2024 than 2023. It said that global EV penetration returned to growth in Q2 and is taking share from ICE vehicles.

"We believe that a pure EV is the optimal vehicle design and will ultimately win over consumers as the myths on range, charging and service are debunked," said Tesla.

According to its CEO Musk, he will showcase Tesla's "robotaxi" prototype during an event on October 10, after scrapping a previous plan to reveal it on August 8.

"Though timing of Robotaxi deployment depends on technological advancement and regulatory approval, we are working vigorously on this opportunity given the outsized potential value," said Tesla.

Sensex trades lower amid volatility

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JULY 24

India's frontline indices opened in the red on Wednesday as heavyweights like HUL and Bajaj Finance emerged as top losers.

At 9:52 a.m., Sensex was down 280 points or 0.35 per cent, at 80,174 and Nifty was down 72 points or 0.30 per cent.

Buying is seen in the broader market. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1712 shares are in the green and 477 shares are in the red.

Midcap and smallcap stocks are performing better compared to large-caps. Nifty midcap 100 index is up 384 points or 0.68 per cent, at 56,669



and Nifty smallcap 100 index is up 248 points or 1.35 per cent, at 18,649.

Among the sectoral indices, IT, PSU Bank, Fin service, pharma, metal and media are major gainers. Auto and realty are major laggards.

ITC, Titan, Tata Motors,

NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Kotak Mahindra, Tata Steel, SBI, Asian

Paints and ICICI Bank are the top gainers in the Sensex pack. HUL, Bajaj Finance, Nestle, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech and M&M are the top losers.

The foreign institutional

investors (FIIs) turned net sellers on July 23 as they sold equities worth Rs 2975 crore, while domestic institutional investors bought equities worth Rs 1418 crore on the same day.

Deven Mehata, Research Analyst at Choice Broking, said, "Nifty can find support at 24,400 followed by 24,350 and 24,300. On the higher side, 24,550 can be an immediate resistance, followed by 24,650 and 24,700."

Most of the Asian markets are trading in a decline. Tokyo, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Bangkok and Seoul are in the red. Only the Shanghai market is bullish. The US markets had closed with a decline on Tuesday.

Experts clarify new capital gains tax regime for realty sector

AGENCIES
New Delhi, July 24

Amid the confusion over the government eliminating the indexation benefit on calculating long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) on property which led to real estate stocks nosediving, some experts tried to assuage people, saying even in property, new tax rate at 12.5 per cent (with-

out indexation) would be better than previous regime (20 per cent with indexation) if property is held longer as an asset than used just to rotate money every few years.

The LTCG on property sales has been reduced from 20 per cent to 12.5 per cent. However, the Union Budget's fine print revealed that indexation benefits on real estate have

been removed, along with gold and other unlisted asset classes.

"With the rationalisation of rate to 12.5 per cent, indexation available under the second proviso to Section 48 is proposed to be removed for calculation of any long-term capital gains, which is presently available for property, gold and other unlisted assets. This will ease com-

putation of capital gains for the taxpayer and the tax administration," the budget document read.

Indexation adjusts the purchase price of an asset for inflation, reducing taxable profits and tax liabilities. Without this adjustment, taxpayers may face increased taxes despite the lower LTCG rate.

According to experts, the whole idea is to sim-

plify the capital gains tax regime. "Interestingly, the rate for LTCG for other securities (non-listed) has reduced from 20 per cent (with indexation) to 12.5 per cent. This will be a big impetus to the sale of immovable properties as long-term capital gains tax would significantly reduce," Harsh Bhuta, Partner, Bhuta Shah and Co LLP, told IANS.

'Indexation' from mutual funds has gone away: Edelweiss' Radhika Gupta

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Radhika Gupta, Edelweiss MD and CEO of Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), said on Tuesday that the concept of indexation has gone away from mutual funds (MFs).

She summarised the changes in MFs following

the Union Budget 2024-25, saying that earlier, MFs had different taxation categories. "Some mutual funds were taxed as long term and short term. Some mutual funds were taxed with marginal rates of taxation and some mutual funds had this concept of indexation. With this Budget, all of this gets

simplified and the concept of indexation goes away," Gupta said in a video posted on X.

What the MF users are now left with are three categories of taxation. She explained that category one is for equity and mutual funds that have more than 65 per cent equity.

What the MF users are now left with are three categories of taxation.

She explained that category one is for equity and mutual funds that have more than 65 per cent equity.

IOC confirms 2025 debut for Olympic Esports Games in Saudi Arabia

AGENCIES
PARIS, JULY 24

The creation of the Olympic Esports Games has been confirmed during the ongoing 142nd Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) here, scheduled for 2025 in Saudi Arabia.

"This is truly a new era for the IOC," said IOC president Thomas Bach. "With the confirmation by the IOC Session of the creation of the Olympic Esports Games, we are keeping up with the pace of the digital revolution."

The IOC announced on July 12 that it has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia to host the inaugural Olympic Esports Games

in the country in 2025, which has been endorsed by the IOC executive board unanimously.

"The esports community, represented in our Esports Commission, has enthusiastically engaged with this initiative. This is further proof of the attractiveness of the Olympic brand and the values it stands for among young people," said Bach.

"The NOC of Saudi Arabia will bring great - if not unique - experience in the field of esports to this project. This partnership is based on the Olympic Charter and the Olympic values," he added.

HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, Minister of Sport and President of the Saudi Arabian

Olympic and Paralympic Committee, emphasized the significance of the initiative.

"Our commitment to esports is simply a reflection of the world our young people live in. We now all have the chance to write new Olympic history together," he said.

"The story of sport in Saudi Arabia is a story of transformation," added IOC member HRH Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud, who is also a board member of the Saudi Arabian Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

"With over 23.5 million gamers, many of whom are women, hosting the Olympic Esports Games in 2025 is a natural progression in our journey to

open up Saudi Arabia to the world and the world to Saudi Arabia," she said.

Saudi Arabia has quickly become a hub for esports, hosting numerous international tournaments with significant participation and global viewership in the last two years.

According to the IOC, the planning for the Olympic Esports Games will commence immediately, focusing on the selection of a city and venue, game titles, and the qualification process for participants.

Additionally, the IOC will establish a dedicated structure for the Games, distinct from the traditional Olympic model, to better address the unique nature of esports.

Bach again addressed

the Olympic Esports Games at a press conference later on Tuesday, saying that "It is clearly a milestone because we are entering a new ground, but we are entering this new ground on a very firm base."

The IOC held the Esports Forum in July 2018 following the sixth Olympic Summit in Lausanne the previous year, during which the development of Esports was brought up as a main topic.

In 2023, the Olympic Esports Week was held in Singapore, after which Bach asked the IOC Esports Commission at the 141st IOC Session in Mumbai, India to study the creation of the Olympic Esports Games.

'I cried when I got selected in Olympics squad': Hockey midfielder Raj Kumar Pal

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Raj Kumar Pal, men's hockey team midfielder is all set to represent India in the 2024 Paris Olympics. A vital cog in the Indian team, Raj Kumar first came in the spotlight when he was selected for a five-nation U-23 tournament in Belgium in 2018.

The youngest of three brothers who took to hockey, Raj Kumar's journey from the streets of Karampur is a tale in itself. His elder brothers, Jokhan and Raju, are former hockey players too, and he proudly says that there was no other sport to turn to but hockey.

Raj Kumar joined the Meghbaran stadium at age 10, where coach Tej Bahadur Singh took

an interest in all three of the Pal brothers. In 2012, he joined the SAI Lucknow hostel and was drawn towards the pace and style of Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, who had been a batchmate of Jokhan's.

Upadhyay also became his close friend when he earned his first India camp call-up. Talking about his relationship with Lalit, Raj Kumar expressed, "I was always encouraged by Lalit bhai who made me understand that it was okay to make mistakes but the most important part is to learn from those mistakes and never make them again. He has always supported me. Most of the time, after we have played a match, I used to pick his brains on what mistakes I made in the match, and where

I can improve myself and he always used to tell me very calmly."

High-performance director David John then spotted his talent at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Hostel in 2018 during the Senior National Championships and called him up for a national camp with the senior Indian men's hockey team.

Now, Raj Kumar has his attention on the Paris Olympics and he looks to take it one game at a time. "My entire focus is on Paris Olympics. I know what is at stake here and there is no room to make any mistakes whatsoever. I am taking nothing for granted and planning to take one game at a time," said Raj Kumar Pal, who has earned 53 international caps till date.

Hardik Pandya and Ben Stokes are my inspirations for being an all-rounder: Nitish Reddy

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Nitidh Kumar Reddy made a solid impact in the 2024 edition of the Indian Premier League. The 21-year-old up has revealed that he was inspired to become an all-rounder by Ben Stokes and Hardik Pandya.

"Hardik bhai sent me a message saying the intent and energy I was giving on the field was good and to keep respecting the game. He said we would talk soon. I was shocked to see his message after the IPL season, especially since he was busy with World Cup duties. Hardik Pandya and Ben Stokes are my inspirations for being an all-rounder. I replied, thanking him for his message," said Reddy to Star Sports.

Nitish heavily impressed during the course of his breakout season in 2024.



The 21-year-old played 15 games for the men in orange and was integral part of their journey to the finals of the tournament where they lost against Kolkata Knight Riders. He scored 303 runs at an average of 33.67 and strike rate of 142.92.

He also became just the second-youngest uncapped Indian to score a fifty at the tournament with his best innings coming against Rajasthan Royals when he scored 76 runs out.

The talented youngster also went on to reveal that he is a huge fan of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

"I really admire Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers. I've been a huge fan of RCB for the last 10 years. In 2023, I had the chance to meet Virat Kohli. I didn't have much to ask him; I just wanted to shake his hand and get his autograph. In 2024, I was hoping to play well against RCB so that Virat Kohli would notice my game.

Though I didn't get to bat in that match, he remembered my name during the post-match handshake. That meant a lot to me," he added.

Reddy, a resident of Vishakapatnam entered the 2023 IPL auction and went for his home franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"I was expecting to get picked in the auction but didn't expect Sunrisers Hyderabad. It's an honor to play for the home team. I called my father immediately, and he and my mother were crying happy tears. It meant a lot to me. Making my parents proud is what matters.

When I got selected for India, I called my father, and he was so proud. Though I missed out due to injury, I was happy to have made him proud. I want to make India proud as well," concluded the 21-year old.

Formula 1: Looking forward to Drivers Championship, says McLaren's Lando Norris

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Lando Norris believes he can catch up with table-topper Max Verstappen if McLaren continue their current trajectory, following a controversial second place at the Hungarian Grand Prix that cut the leader's lead to 76 points. As the Formula 1 season heads into the Belgian Grand Prix this weekend, Norris is optimistic about his chances to push Verstappen all the way.

Norris' second place in Hungary meant he took his seventh podium in the last nine races. Despite letting teammate Oscar Piastri through with three laps remaining, Norris is determined to prove his mettle in the championship race.

"I look forward to it," Norris said to Sky Sports. "I said at the end of last year that we were going to win races this year. I

said at the beginning of the year that it was not going to be an easy one for Red Bull, and all of that's come true."

Norris acknowledged the significant role his team has played in their recent success. "We've done an amazing job as a team. First of all, we have to give credit to the team for giving us a car in order to do that," he said.

"Just because we won one race and had a dominant weekend doesn't mean we're the quickest car. I think maybe two weekends this year, we've had the best car of the grid," he said.

Despite his cautious optimism, Norris is aware of the challenges ahead. "Do we have opportunities to maybe win more? Yes. Did we necessarily have the quickest car on those days? I don't think so," he added. "But when I think of what we're doing

now, what we are able to do in the future, in the short term and also long term after the summer break, and we have more days like Hungary, then of course."

If Norris were to reel in Verstappen, it would be the biggest deficit ever overhauled by a driver since the current points system was introduced in 2010. Norris has only one victory this season, at the Miami Grand Prix in May, but he has been in contention in several other races, including Canada, Spain, Austria, Silverstone, and Hungary.

Reflecting on his season, Norris said, "Had I been victorious at all those races, the gap to Verstappen would be under 25 points. However, the race is on to reel in the three-time world champion. You would be silly to say no."

Norris remains focused and motivated. "I know

a lot of people are going to say that there's no chance, but we're going to keep fighting and I'm going to give myself the best opportunity to do so," he explained. "Especially when you see Max and Red Bull, not performing so well, making mistakes, crashing. You want to make the most of those opportunities and plenty more can happen in the future."

As McLaren prepare for the upcoming races, Norris is ready for the challenges ahead. "I know it's a big stretch and optimistic, but I'm not going to say no to the challenge and definitely as a team, we won't. And psychologically, I'm happy. I'm ready."

Looking back at his season, Norris added, "I still think, if you throw back to Red Bull Ring, I did nothing wrong in this instance."

Sub-jr Men, Women East Zone Hockey: Jharkhand, Odisha, Manipur win league matches

AGENCIES
GUWAHATI (ASSAM), JULY 24

Hockey Jharkhand and Hockey Association of Odisha secured wins in the women's category, while Hockey Association of Odisha and Manipur Hockey registered victories in the men's category on Day 1 of the 2nd Hockey India Sub-junior Men and Women East Zone Championship 2024 at Maulana Md. T a y a b u l l a h Hockey Stadium.

Hockey Jharkhand took on Assam Hockey in the first match of the day and won 18-0 in the Women's category. The goalscorers for Hockey Jharkhand were Sandeepa Kumari

(3', 16', 34'), Pushpa Manjhi (8', 11', 59'), Pushpa Dang (12', 22'), Sushmita Guria (14', 47', 49', 57'), Shruti Kumari (23', 28', 42'), Sewani Keretta (44'), Rejina Kullu (46') and Ankita Lakra (58').

In the second match of the day in the Women's category, the Hockey Association of Odisha took on Hockey Bengal. Odisha won the game 15-0. For Hockey Association of Odisha, Ashika Sadam (3', 60'), Eleena Burh (11'), Priyanka Minz (14', 15', 41', 43', 60'), Sonima Goud (21', 32', 53'), Sanjana Kujur (29'), Sanjana Kiro (47', 54'), Sweetey Kujur (56') and were the goalscorers.

MLC: Calvin Savage stars in Texas Super Kings' 37-run win over Seattle Orcas

AGENCIES
DALLAS, JULY 24

Led by Calvin Savage's all round performance, the Texas Super Kings handed the Seattle Orcas a comprehensive 37 run defeat in the final league match of the Major League Cricket (MLC) 2024 at Grand Prairie Stadium.

Despite Quinton de Kock and Shehan Jayasuriya giving the Orcas a solid start in their run chase, the Texas Super Kings' bowlers, led by Ottneil Bartmann (3/20), Noor Ahmad (2/19) and Calvin Savage (2/23), dismantled the Seattle batting lineup.

With the match's conclusion, Seattle Orcas finished their campaign with six losses and a sole victory, whereas the Texas Super Kings who secured three wins and two losses

(two no results) will play MI New York in the eliminator.

Mirroring the first innings, the Seattle Orcas' run chase lost Ryan Rickleton (0) off the first ball of the innings to Ottneil Bartman. Shehan Jayasuriya (24) joined Quinton de Kock (26), and the pair took control of the run chase. At the end of the powerplay, the Seattle Orcas were placed at 47/1.

Jayasuriya eventually fell to Savage in the seventh over after a 27-ball stint at the crease. Not long after, the dangerous Quinton de Kock was also dismissed, leaving the Orcas at 59/3 in the ninth over.

Faced with a steep equation, the onus was on Heinrich Klaasen (4) and Matthew Bracewell (4) to steer the innings. However, both



batters were outfoxed by spinners and dismissed for single digit. Mitchell Santner saw the back of Klaasen, while Bracewell was trapped lbw by Noor.

Coming together with the score at 67/5 in 10.4 overs, Shubham Ranjane (16) and Keemo Paul (25) labored to keep the Orcas in contention.

However, Ranjane was run out and Keemo Paul was castled by Noor before the 17th over, comprehensively extinguishing the run chase. Ali Sheikh chipped in with a consolation knock, but the Orcas fell well short, finishing at 140/9. Bartman took two wickets in the tail to finish with figures of 3/20.

Earlier in the day, the Texas Super Kings lost opener Devon Conway (0) and Joshua Tromp (6) early in the innings, however Faf Du Plessis (37) was in fine form, smashing six boundaries and a six before he was scalped by Keemo Paul. At the end of the power play the Texas Super Kings were placed at 56/3.

Milind Kumar (27) scored a watchful knock, playing nearly a run-a-ball before he became Paul's second wicket of the day. The experienced all-rounders, Marcus Stoinis (11) and Mitchell Santner (15) both got starts, but failed to convert them into bigger scores, falling to Aryan Desai and Matthew Bracewell respectively.

Savage (45*) orchestrated the biggest partnership of the innings, joined by

Cameron Stevenson, the pair put on 43 runs in just 23 deliveries in the final phase of the innings. Stevenson (17) struck a four and six to support Savage's late innings fireworks, but was cleaned by Nandre Burger in the 18th.

Savage hammered Bracewell for two consecutive maximums in the 16th over and went on to script a 17 run over of Nande Burger's 18th over to remain unbeaten and help the Texas Super Kings finish at 177/8.

Brief Scores: Texas Super Kings 177/8 in 20 overs (Colin Savage 45 not out, Faf du Plessis 39; Keemo Paul 2-18, Ayan Desai 2-30) beat Seattle Orcas 140/9 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 26, Keemo Paul 25, Ottneil Bartman 3-20, Noor Ahmad 2-19) by 37 runs.

India U17 football team refining tactics ahead of SAFF Championship

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The Indian U17 men's team camp has been ongoing for the last two weeks in Srinagar and head coach Ishfaq Ahmed believes it's been so far, so good. The team is preparing for the upcoming SAFF U17 Championship in September and the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers in October.

"I am happy with how everything is going so far. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. We

don't have any injury issues," said Ishfaq.

There are still almost two months until the SAFF U17 Championship begins in Thimphu, Bhutan, on September 18. So, in these early stages of the camp, the primary focus is on building fitness. "We're in 'cycle one' at the moment - focussing on the fitness part for the last two weeks. These are young boys, technically very smart, and we wish to play a good and mature brand of football for

everyone to see, and for that, fitness is important.

"Soon, we'll begin cycle two, where we'll try out tactics. We are going to start playing matches also, so that they can understand and implement the tactical stuff," shared Ishfaq.

There are 32 players in the camp at the moment. Exactly half of them, 16, were part of India's SAFF U16 Championship winning team, also coached by Ishfaq, in Bhutan last year. These are the play-

ers who have any prior international experience. The stakes are higher this time out though, with tougher competitions, a longer camp and a spot at the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 up for grabs.

After the conclusion of the SAFF U17 Championship, the Blue Colts next assignment will only be four weeks away, at the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Thailand (October 23-27), where they will face Brunei Darussalam, Turkmenistan

and the hosts.

Like India, their opponents are also preparing for the qualifiers by competing in their sub-federation tournaments. Thailand finished runners-up to Australia on penalties in the recently concluded ASEAN U16 Championship, while Brunei Darussalam were eliminated in the group stage after losing all three matches. Turkmenistan will participate in the upcoming CAFA U17 Championship. "We definitely have an eye

on the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers as well. Yeah, we know that winning SAFF is important, and we did it last year too. This time, we have new players as well, with no international experience, and I want to see them in the line-up too. "We want to have more friendly matches against stronger teams, who can push us to our limits, to prepare for the Asian Cup Qualifiers. These boys are not afraid of losing matches. After the SAFF ends,

we want to utilise the gap with some good warm-up matches before travelling to Thailand," said Ishfaq. The scouting for the India U17 camp was conducted at the AIFF U17 Youth League, which was held from December 2023 to May 2024. "Even last year's SAFF U16 players were not selected directly for this year's camp, but based on their performance in the Youth League. It shows our scouting process is on the right track," said Ishfaq.

DC Kishtwar presides over Public Grievance Redressal Camp at Bimal Nag, Saroor of Block Drabshalla

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 24

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav today led the Public Grievance Redressal Camp during the Weekly Block Diwas program at famous tourist and religious destination Bimal Nag of Saroor Block Drabshalla.

The event saw active participation from ACR Kishtwar Idrees Lone, ACD Kishtwar Phulail Singh, DSWO Kishtwar Zubair Ahmed Lone, ALC Kishtwar Mamta Sudershan, Tehsildar Drabshalla Irshad Ahmed, BDO Hitesh Lona, CAO Kishtwar Amjad Hussain Malik and several other district and sectoral officials and field functionaries of RDD and other departments.

The session commenced with ACR Kishtwar updating the chair and other attendees on actions taken regarding grievances and demands raised in the pre-



vious Block Diwas program held at HSS Shirod.

He also informed the public about the upcoming 2nd Summary Revision of the Photo Electoral Roll 2024 starting on July 25th, urging new voters to register and existing voters to update their details.

Throughout the program, public delegations led by prominent local figures voiced their grievances about the need for infrastructure improvements in road, health, education, power, water supply delivery mechanisms.

The DC Kishtwar patient-

ly listened to the grievances and addressed many issues on the spot with the assistance of the convened district and sectoral officers.

Several on-the-spot directives were issued, including Establishing a Labour Room in HWC Tatani through coordination between the CEO Ratle HEP Drabshalla and CMO Kishtwar, Directing ExEN PMGSY Division Kishtwar to repair the Chalasso Tatani Road and construct retaining walls where needed, exploring the feasibility of upgrading GMS Tatani to a High School, expediting work on the Kalchanda

Road and Sirodh Tatani Road under PMGSY, taking steps to operationalize Grid Station Joshana.

Other grievances/issues such as payment to landowners, and removal of boundaries on Drabshalla to Bimal Nag road and demarcation of HSS Shirod land through proper fencing were addressed during the camp.

Further, the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Dr Devansh Yadav discussed and resolved issues of people regarding the posting of Naib Tehsildar at Tatani, enhancing water supply through additional line of Water supply from Goban Rushur to tatani, initiating an SRTC Bus Service from Kishtwar to Kalchanda, constructing a Mini Hydel project on Kuli-garh Nallah, and providing employment opportunities to the local youth of Panchayat Tatani A & B in HEPP, Ratle.

Weekly Block Diwas: DC Udhampur listens to public issues and demands at Block Parlidhar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 24

In an effort to provide governance at the doorstep and ensure a robust grievance redressal mechanism at every level, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, conducted a public outreach cum grievance redressal camp at Sub Centre Khogarmarh of Block Parlidhar.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Rajinder Singh; DDC Member Ramnagar-I, Mool Raj; SDM Ramnagar, Rafiq Ahmad Jaral; former BDC Neelam Devi; other senior officers; former PRI members; and the general public from adjoining areas attended the camp.

During the camp, former PRI members and the general public from adjoining panchayats raised numerous issues and demands. These included unscheduled



power cuts, maintenance and blacktopping of roads, upgrading High School Bainsta to Higher Secondary Level, addressing staff shortages in educational, health, PHE, and PDD sectors, resolving low voltage issues, alleviating the scarcity of drinking water, constructing a footbridge over Nallah Salain, constructing a new road from Thanda Pani to Salain, repairing the road from Dhannu to Rang, and providing

computers to High School Blandh.

The DC attentively listened to all the public's demands and assured them that all genuine issues and demands would be addressed priority.

She stressed the importance of closely monitoring ongoing works to ensure quality and adherence to timelines.

Necessary instructions were issued on the spot to the officers of the

concerned departments for the completion of ongoing works within the stipulated time frame, ensuring no compromise on quality and leaving no scope for complaints.

The DC directed all officers to work in coordination for the effective implementation of government schemes on the ground.

Experts from different departments educated the public about various government schemes and encouraged them to avail themselves of the benefits.

Later, the DC distributed 20 school bags and wristwatches to students under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme. The DC also planted various types of plants on the premises of the health centre.

SANKALP HEW, DLSA Kishtwar organise Legal Awareness Campaign on Women-Centric Legislations

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JULY 24

Under the directions of DSWO Mr. Zubair Ahmad Lone, SANKALP HEW Kishtwar in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kishtwar, successfully organized a Mega Legal Awareness campaign on Women-Centric Legislations at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Kishtwar.

The event aimed to educate women about their legal rights and the protections afforded to them under various laws.

The Legal expert from DLSA provided detailed insights and practical advice during the sessions on various issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, property rights, and access to legal aid.

The goal of the program was to empower



women by making them aware of their legal rights.

Legal awareness on women-centric legislations is crucial for empowering women and ensuring their rights and safety. Understanding these laws enables women to assert their rights, prevent

exploitation, promote equality, enhance participation and support other women.

Besides, SANKALP

Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions and seek personal legal advice from the experts present.

The event was highly appreciated by the attendees, who felt more informed and empowered by the end of the sessions.

team also held a session on various women-centric financial assistance scheme such as PMEGP, Tejaswini and PMMY.

These schemes aim to provide financial support and create a conducive environment for women to engage in entrepreneurial activities, thereby contributing to economic growth and job creation.

Providing targeted support through schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Tejaswini Scheme, and others empowers women by enabling them to start and expand their businesses. This leads to economic empowerment, job creation, poverty alleviation, innovation and diversity and a balanced growth.

The event was highly appreciated by the attendees, who felt more informed and empowered by the end of the sessions.

Revenue Department Udhampur organizes plantation drive at Devika Ghat

J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JULY 24

To mark the celebration of Van Mahotsav, the Revenue Department organized a plantation drive at Devika Ghat.

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai, who was the chief guest, also took part in the plantation drive. The event saw the active participation of Additional Deputy Commissioner Joginder Singh Jasrotia and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner lauded the efforts of the Revenue Department in organizing the event and involving various stakeholders. She appealed to the local community, members of civil society, NGOs, and other stakeholders to come forward and participate in such plantation drives.

RSGC successfully concludes FourBall Green Some Golf Tournament

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

The Royal Springs Golf Course, Cheshmashahi Srinagar successfully concluded five days 'RSGC FourBall Green Some Golf Tournament'.

The tournament that was played over five days on a knockout basis, witnessed enthusiastic participation from 36 players in a total of 16 matches.

In the finals that were played on 23rd July, 2024, Shabir Ahmad Bhat and Raja Danish Amaan succeeded in winning the RSGC FourBall Green Some Golf Tournament with their determination and outstanding skills.

The competition was tough, with many talented golfers participating. Shabir Ahmad Bhat and Raja Danish Amaan stood out with their excellent performance and strong focus, earning a well-deserved win. Dr. Mohammad Inam Zaroo and Ashiq Hussain Masoodi stood as runners-up with their impressive



performance.

"We are thrilled to congratulate Shabir and Danish on their amazing win," said Mufti M. Farid Ud Din, Secretary of RSGC. "Their hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship have been impressive, and they have

made us all proud," he added.

He also congratulated all the participants for making the tournament exciting and competitive until the very end. "Your sportsmanship and competitive spirit added greatly to the event," he said.

Addl. Comm., State Taxes Kashmir chairs review meeting of Circle I Kashmir

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

A review meeting to assess the performance of Circle I was today chaired by Additional Commissioner of the State Taxes Kashmir, Shakeel Maqbool Yatoo, here.

The meeting threadbare reviewed the growth, cash positions, sale suppression, e-way bill performance, sector-wise analysis and comparative tax growth vis-à-vis last year's same quarter.

It also held a detailed review of each taxpayer's performance. Individual discussions were held, and several key points were addressed.

In the Automobile Sector Growth, the Taxpayers showing growth in the automobile sector were directed to enhance their growth further, considering the closures of other automobile units within the jurisdiction.

Some automobile sector taxpayers cited previous VAT and GST liabilities affecting their current capital position, which led to the Additional Commissioner

expressing dissatisfaction with their cash position and instructing the STO to conduct stock checks.

Similarly in the case of Works Contractors, the Additional Commissioner sought explanations for the poor revenue performance of works contractors compared to the previous year, with delayed payments from the department for completed projects being a significant factor.

Also in the FMCG Sector, an acknowledgment was given to the good growth in the FMCG sector, as reflected in the tax revenue. However, there was an emphasis on ensuring that this growth is accurately reflected in their returns.

The general observations made on the occasion suggested that some automobile sector taxpayers reported sales declines due to customers purchasing from newly opened dealerships in other districts. The Additional Commissioner directed stock checks in these cases.

The Additional Commissioner issued directives in case of E-way

Bills, instructing the STO Circle I to address mismatches in inward and outward e-way bills of taxpayers.

He also ordered for immediate stock checking, especially in the automobile sector, with a report due within a month.

In case of Tax Evasion, a strict containment of tax evasion was emphasized, with offenders to be dealt with under GST law provisions.

He directed STO to submit reports on coal and bitumen from the respective taxpayers in Circle I.

Prominent business houses present in the meeting included Jamkash, HRCC, Peaks Auto, Jamie Power Private Limited, Kashmir Valley Motor Private Limited, KC Automart Pvt Ltd, Chainar Mobiles Pvt Ltd, LY Impex, Valley Road Construction Co., Suhail Brothers, JK Alamdaar Trading Company, Mirz Infrastructure Builders, The Bhat Impex, M/S Jamsheed Enterprises, J.K. Sales Corporation and JK Engineering Construction Company, among others.

DLSA B'pora organizes Awareness programme on BBBP & Female Foeticide



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JULY 24

In accordance with the directions of J&K Legal Services Authority for carrying out various activities under Plan of Action for the year 2024, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora in coordination with Tehsil Legal Services Committee Sumbal and in collaboration with Government High School Saderkoot Bala today organized an awareness programme on Beti Padhao Beti Bachao (BBBP) and Female Foeticide, here.

The programme was organized under the guidance of Chairman DLSA (Principal District and Sessions Judge) Bandipora and under the supervision

of Secretary DLSA Bandipora Panel Lawyers Nazia Parveen and Sheikh Ajaz Ahmad delivered lectures on the said subject.

Speaking on the occasion, the speakers including panel lawyers held detailed discussion on the importance of protecting girl children and ill effects of killing baby girls. The speakers tried to dispel the negative notion of not protecting baby girls and emphasized that in the modern world there is almost little difference between boys and girls in terms of excelling in educational and competitive fields. The programme was participated by Panel Lawyers, staff members and students of School besides PLVs of DLSA Bandipora/TLSC Sumbal.