

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:

- Headache and continuous fever above 102°F
- Joint and muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Present vomiting
- A rapid rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool, urine or vomit
- Redness on the skin

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Polls after a decade: Last Phase ends with over 68 percent voting, overall percentage in 3 phases 63.45 percent: Officials

Chamb constituency in Jammu tops list at 76.10 per cent voting

Gurez Assembly Constituency in Kashmir records highest voter turnout at 75.89 per cent

Deepening of democracy to echo in pages of history: CEC Rajiv Kumar

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 01

The Election Commission of India Tuesday said that the phase-3 polls in Jammu and Kashmir recorded a historic turnout of 68.72 (tentative) per cent.

The figure is highest compared to previous two phases that saw 61.13 and 57.31 percent voted in the first and second phases respectively.

Officials in the Election Department told news agency, the three phased Assembly Elections in J&K have concluded today. "Election Commission of India, had issued a formal schedule on 16th August 2024. Poll for 24 Assemblies was held on



18th September, second phase for 26 Assemblies on 25th September and last phase was held today for 40 Assembly Constituencies. Poll percentage in 1st phase was 61.38%, in 2nd phase it was 57.31% and in the last third phase poll percentage was 68.72% (tentative). Overall poll percentage comes to 63.45% (tentative)," the Officials said.

They said that district wise Voter Turnout for UT of J&K in previous phases suggest that District Kishtwar recorded the highest poll percentage (80.20%) followed by Udhampur (75.87%) then Samba (75.22%) and Reasi (74.68%). "As far as poll percentage in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Congress says it will bring back Article 370 but never mentions reclaiming PoJK: PM Modi



AGENCIES
HARYANA, OCT 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched an attack on the Congress party, reviving the "urban naxal" accusation and saying that while Congress claims it will restore Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir (J-K), it has never said that it will reclaim Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Addressing a public rally in Haryana's Palwal, PM Modi alleged that Congress is against the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and

has never fully implemented the Constitution in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We will vote for the safety of our daughters, employment, good infrastructure, and roads... Congress has only one agenda: the 'urban naxal' agenda. They (Congress) say they will bring back Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir but have never mentioned reclaiming PoJK. This does not come out of their mouths. Congress has fragmented Kashmir. They don't discuss bringing back PoJK but want to restore

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Valmiki, Gorkha communities vote for the first time



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 01

Members of the Valmiki and Gorkha communities expressed immense joy after casting their votes for the first time in the

Jammu & Kashmir assembly elections. Following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A, these communities, along with West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs), became

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

No repoll recorded in J&K assembly Polls: EC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

The Election Commission said no repolls have been recorded so far in the three-phased Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls which concluded on Tuesday.

It also noted that despite an increase in the number of assembly seats from 83 in 2014 to 90 in 2024, the elections were completed in three phases this time as against five in 2014.

No major law and order incidents related to the elections were reported, a significant

improvement from 2014 when over 170 incidents were reported, including 87 on polling days, it said.

There also have been no complaints pertaining to arbitrary preventive detention of political functionaries in these elections which is "unprecedented", the poll authority said.

The Election Commission (EC) had also strictly instructed against clubbing of polling stations just before the poll day, and accordingly, people voted at their actual polling station location as opposed to 98 polling

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First-time voters in Jammu excited to get finger inked

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 1

Thrilled first-time voters made their voices heard today by contributing to the election of 24 members of the Legislative Assembly across Jammu, Samba, Udhampur and Kashmir districts.

According to the news agency, despite adverse weather and heavy rains, excited young voters flocked to their polling booths early in the morning. After getting their fingers inked, many were seen taking selfies and creating social media reels at booths specially



decorated by the district administration.

As per the latest electoral rolls, 3,918,220 voters are eligible to cast their ballots in this phase, including 2,009,033 male voters, 1,909,130 female voters, and 57

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Nalin Prabhat takes over as 18th J&K DGP



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 01

An IPS officer Nalin Prabhat on Tuesday took over as 18th Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir at police headquarters in Srinagar and replaced R R Swain.

A police spokesman in a statement issued to the news agency, Nalin Prabhat was received by senior officers, also top officials were present on the occasion.

A 1992 batch IPS officer

Prabhat is considered as having great expertise in insurgency in Kashmir, and earned goodwill within the security forces during his postings to J&K in the past. "He has already served as Deputy Inspector General, South Kashmir, Ops Range, and in the Srinagar Sector of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He also served as Inspector General, Kashmir, Ops Sector, CRPF."

His work earned
CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Transparent, Free and Fair Assembly Polls 2024 will be written in golden letters in the history of J&K elections: Lt Governor

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 1

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has extended hearty congratulations to the voters of the third phase of Assembly Elections for the record turnout. In a social media post, the Lieutenant Governor said, the great enthusiasm among voters in all three phases to exercise their



franchise is a testimony to vibrant democracy in J&K and people's faith in democratic values.

The Lieutenant Governor posted on X:

"Congratulations to the people for a record turnout in final phase of Assembly Elections. I applaud the tireless efforts of election officials, district admin, JKP & our security forces for successfully conducting multi-phased polls & strengthening the pillars of democracy.

Great enthusiasm among voters in all

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Jammu votes for return of Statehood

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 01

With polling for the last phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir has come to close, the biggest issue which remained talk of the town was return of statehood to the Jammu and Kashmir and every political party tried to touch this issue.

Besides statehood, unemployment, nationalism and addressing concerns of traders, who have immensely suffered



due to various reasons, remained some major issues during these elections.

As per the news agency, the return of statehood to J&K was on every lip and

leaders across party lines tried to touch the issue as majority of people wanted J&K to be a state instead of a Union Territory (UT).

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Icons, Social Media Influencers play pivotal role in JK Assembly Election

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 1

In an era of information technology and ever growing social media impact, the Icons and Social Media Influencers have proved to be the biggest assets in the Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The J&K Election Office appreciably utilized the social media influenc-

ers and several icons as ambassadors as a strategy for voter appeal which is a powerful approach towards increasing the voter engagement and voter turnout.

The voter awareness video appeals by the Icons with views in tens of thousands kept multiplying with every passing day, their reliability, familiarity, celebrity influence, shade identity,

cultural and lingual relevance contributed a lot in motivating, educating and empowering the electors to cast their vote and strengthen the democracy. The digital reach of the icons/influencers had a strong presence in social media which increased the digital footprint of election related campaign and SVEEP activities to the tech-savvy young generation.

The role of PWD Icons received overwhelming response as they were able to strike an immediate chord with the voters through their motivating and humane voter participation appeals. Celebrity sportspersons, accomplished musicians, distinguished academicians, social media influencers and media personalities that had huge following on their respective social

media handles gave the much needed impetus to the SVEEP campaign in the UT.

"Influencers are incredibly instrumental in encouraging the voter participation as it is the easiest and most effective way to reach all the voters through various Social Media Apps" opined the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K.

The Election Commis-

sion of India's theme, 'No Voter to be Left Behind' and the slogans like 'Your Vote Your Right' became the much talked topics about election mantra and resonated on different information dissemination platforms. Apart from their personal initiatives, the Icons regularly appeared on radio shows and public events to garner support for

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Lt Governor greets people on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 1

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, which will be celebrated tomorrow.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor has said, "On the occasion of the 155th birth anniversary of our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, I extend my greetings to the people and pay my humble tributes to him.

Gandhi Jayanti is an occasion for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the ideals and values of Pujya Babu on peace, truth, sacrifice and non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi had said that non-violence is a power which can be wield-

ed equally by all-children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. Through his message and work on cleanliness, Gandhi Ji guided the nation towards swachhhta and nation building. Taking inspiration from Babu, our students in every school in J&K are adopting a local water body, local park or a local heritage site to undertake cleanliness drive twice every month.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti let us take a pledge to follow the path of truth, sacrifice, non-violence, selfless service and cooperation and dedicate ourselves towards promoting peace and harmony in the society."

Assembly Elections-2024

DEO Srinagar imparts training to Counting Supervisors, Assistants, Micro-Observers for counting Postal Votes

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 01

The District Election Office Srinagar conducted an exhaustive training session for Counting Supervisors, Counting Assistants and Micro-Observers on Tuesday whose services will be utilised for counting of Postal Votes in Srinagar which is scheduled on October 08, 2024 (Tuesday). The training session was held on the directions of District Election Officer (DEO), Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex where Master Trainers carried out a detailed training sessions to prepare skilled and competent manpower for the counting of Postal Votes for eight Assembly Constituencies in Srinagar. During the sessions, the participating employees



were taken through sensory training particularly on procedure and safety measures to be taken during the process of counting of Postal Votes. In addition to this, they were also trained how to handle emergencies, maintain discipline and to address issues of security and privacy on the day of counting. Coordinator Trainings, Dr. Manzoor Reshi, while delivering his session, stressed on strictly following the rules and procedures established by the Election Commission of India (ECI) during the counting of Postal Votes

in district Srinagar. While dividing the participants in different groups, a Mock Exercise was conducted for counting ETBPS/Postal Votes, visualising the entire process of counting Postal Votes. The employees were also oriented towards holding free and fair counting while strictly following the on-going Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in the district. The employees were also given instructions for effectively managing and handling Postal Voting Documents and other Stationary items for transparent counting of votes.

DC Kishtwar reviews arrangements for Navratra, Mahanavami and Dussehra



J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 01

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting of officers from line departments and representatives of religious organisations to review the arrangements for the celebration of Ramnavami, Mahanavami and Dussehra festival. In the meeting, representative of religious organisations put-forth various demands which includes uninterrupted drinking water and power supply, water tanker facility

in Chowgan Ground, traffic management, parking facility, installation of stage and proper barricading at the venue, cleanliness and hygiene in all temples of the town. The Deputy Commissioner assured them that all the arrangements are put in place well in time. He said that sufficient deployment of security Personnel enroute and at the venue shall be ensured. Meanwhile, the DC gave necessary directions to all the HODs and asked them to work in close coordination to ensure timely and adequate arrangements

during the festival. SSP Abdul Qayoom informed the meeting that alternative routes shall be activated on the occasion so that normal traffic is not hampered and Jhanki is taken out in hassle free manner. ADDC Ghulam Rasool, ADC Pawan Kotwal, ACR Idrees Lone, CEO Development Authority Dr Rishi Kumar, ACD Phulail Singh, NT, Executive Engineers of PHE, PDD, officers and officials of various departments besides the representatives of socio-religious organizations attended the meeting.

Approach wall of Kulangam Bridge develops minor cracks, BEACON authorities rectify

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, OCTOBER 1

The approach wall of Kulangam (Handwara) bridge has developed minor cracks on the intervening night of Sep 30 and Oct 1st. On the directions of District Election Officer (DEO) Kupwara, Beacon authorities swung into action and rectified the cracks overnight making it motor-able.

District Administration has clarified that bridge is in workable condition as yet; still commuters have been advised to take alternate routes in case of any exigency.

Kupwara based commuters who want to travel to Handwara, to and fro, have been asked to take Wudhpora-Magam route, and commuters who travel from Handwara to Sopore to and fro have been asked to take Unisoo bridge route.

DLSA Budgam advocates for Cleanliness, Swachh Bharat

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, OCTOBER 01

In a remarkable display of commitment to the principles of cleanliness and sustainable living, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam, under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority spear-headed a stellar 'Swachhata Abhiyaan' at District Court Complex, Budgam.

Under the leadership of Chairman DLSA, Budgam, O.P Bhagat and under the guidance of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Budgam, 'Swachhata Abhiyaan' witnessed enthusiastic participation of dedicated staff members of DLSA, Budgam, members of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC), Penal Lawyers, devoted Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) and diligent officials from the Municipal Committee Budgam.

The event commenced with an inspiring cleanliness drive within the District Court Complex



Budgam, setting the tone for a cleaner and greener environment. Participants in a collective effort to clean and beautify their surroundings took up brooms to sweep away the debris of neglect, breathing new life into the surroundings. Speakers on the occasion emphasized that cleanliness is not just a virtue; it is a way of life. "It reflects our commitment to a healthier and more sustainable future. This initiative is a testament to the indomitable spirit of our community and our

unwavering commitment to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi", they said. The speakers also said that it is a reminder that the path to a cleaner and greener world begins with each one of us. "We must prioritize waste segregation and efficient management as part of our daily lives, for it is through these small steps that we can make an enormous impact," they added. The participants also took pledge that they shall take keen interest in keeping their surroundings neat and clean.

Assembly Elections-2024: DEO Rajouri reviews counting arrangements

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, OCTOBER 01

District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today convened a meeting to review the arrangements put in place for counting of votes on October 8 for the Assembly Elections, 2024.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajouri, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Rajouri, Returning Officers (ROs), District Informatics Officer (DIO) NIC, and other senior officers of the district administration.

During the meeting, the DEO emphasized the importance of strict adherence to the guidelines of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure a smooth and transparent counting process. He directed the Returning Officers to promptly



inform candidates and their representatives about the date, time and venue of the counting process. Clear signages must be displayed and the rooms for counting should be properly notified in advance. The DEO also stressed the need for a separate entry point for candi-

dates and counting staff to avoid any confusion or overcrowding. The District Informatics Officer (DIO) NIC was instructed to ensure robust communication facilities at the counting centers, with a backup leased line in place to prevent any disruptions. A separate room will be designated for Gen-

eral Observers, equipped with communication facilities to assist them in their duties. Further, the DIO was tasked with setting up a dedicated Media Centre, ensuring the provision of a public address system and making arrangements for media passes. An LCD screen will also be installed to display real-time results during the counting process.

The DEO directed that the law and order be strictly monitored throughout the counting process to avoid any untoward incident. He emphasized that no unauthorized victory processions will be allowed and any celebration must comply with the law.

In addition, a pedestrian zone will be declared within 100 meters of the counting center to enhance security and control the flow of people in the area.

The DEO directed that a

three-tier security arrangement be established around the counting centers. Barricading of paths and strict entry protocols will be enforced. Additionally, sufficient Group B staff will be deployed and only individuals of high integrity and accountability will be assigned to counting duties.

Counting Supervisors and Micro Observers will be deployed to oversee the process and videographers will be present to ensure proper videography of the entire event. The DEO further emphasized the need to maintain an account register for postal ballots and Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS), ensuring their accurate and transparent handling.

The DEO concluded by stating that all arrangements must be in line with the guidelines of the Election Commission of India, ensuring a smooth and efficient counting process.

Div Com reviews arrangements for Kashmir Marathon

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 01

The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today convened a meeting here to review the arrangements for the historic Kashmir Marathon event.

Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Sarmad Hafeez; Commissioner, SMC, Dr Owais; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din; Director Floriculture, Saleem ul Rehman; Director Tourism, Raja Yaqoob; Director JKTD, Director Health Services Kashmir, SSP Srinagar, SSP Traffic, officers of R&B, Sports Council, PHE besides Chewang MoTup (Padma Shri Awardee) were present in the meeting. The meeting held threadbare discussion on the arrangements at the Starting & Closing venue of Marathon at Polo Ground, Srinagar and along the route to facilitate participants.

On the occasion, Div Com directed the health department to make comprehensive arrangements of critical care ambulances at Polo Ground, deploy medical teams with necessary equipment at the venue and other stations along the route.

Besides, he directed for a dedicated centre to be established at SMHS Srinagar for the Marathon



Day to cater serious medical emergencies and looping other adjacent health institutions. He also instructed LCMA & NDRF for deployment of water ambulances to remain prepared to provide medical assistance in exigency. He also exhorted the Director Tourism to involve the services of

volunteers at different stations for the success of Kashmir Marathon. VC, LCMA was instructed to ensure operation of fountains while R&B and SSSL departments were asked to ensure smooth & clean surface of the roads by filling up potholes, removal of debris and coloring of speed breakers. Div Com issued direc-

tions to KPDCCL to ensure lighting of the venue and uninterrupted supply of electricity to ensure time reading devices and other equipment function free. He instructed the Director Tourism for establishing the Control Room at TRC for effective communication and close coordination among different departments for the smooth conduct of Marathon. Further, Bidhuri issued slew of directions for the operation of shuttle service for participants, measures to control the crowd, involvement of local stakeholders of tourism, establishment of stalls by Handicraft, Agriculture & Horticulture departments, designation of Nodal Officers, Media Passes, decoration at venue, besides security arrangements and traffic management.

Assembly Elections-2024: ECI establishes 240 Special Polling Stations established in Phase III



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 1

With an aim to ensure that every eligible voter exercise his democratic right, the Election Commission of India has established 240 special polling stations in third and final phase of Assembly Election in Jammu and Kashmir.

"To conduct free, fair and peaceful elections under the guidance of Election Commission of India amid numerous challenges, varying geographical, social and political conditions across Jammu and Kashmir, it was essential that the voters are fully conscious about their rights and obligations as electors and are made fully aware of the statutory provisions under which the election machinery operates. This necessitated the establishment of these special polling booths in the UT



which had really significant impact in the whole election process", maintained the J&K Chief Electoral Officer, Pandurang K Pole. The CEO asserted that these special polling stations are theme-based, and in some areas, efforts were made to go the extra mile to reach voters and maximize participation. The decorated booths, fundamental to the entire election process, play a significant role in making the festival of democracy a success, he added. He said that these innovative polling stations, such as

women-managed, youth-managed, Green Polling Stations, Model Polling Stations, Border and Unique Polling Stations, were designed to cater specifically to women, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), promote eco-friendly practices, ensure inclusive and accessible election and accommodate the voters of different kinds in the region.

"During all the three phases of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Election, a total of 504 special polling stations had been

established", added the CEO.

Furthermore, the ECI's commitment towards environmental sustainability has been showcased through the implementation of green practices at these polling stations. Every aspect is meticulously designed to minimize environmental impact and promote a greener future.

Speaking on this milestone initiative, Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Pandurang K Pole, said that establishment of these unique polling stations underscores our unwavering dedication towards fostering inclusivity and sustainability in the electoral process. He added that the ECI believes that every citizen should have equal access to exercise their democratic right, and these polling stations represent a significant step towards achieving that goal.

SWD, DLSA Bhandarwah celebrate International Day of the Elderly with health check-ups, legal awareness



JI NEWS SERVICE
BHADERWAH, OCTOBER 01

Social Welfare Department (SWD) in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bhandarwah today celebrated the International Day of Older Persons at Community Hall Bhandarwah. Observed annually on October 1st, the day aims to honor the contributions of older persons and promote their rights.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from NCC students from Degree College, alongside a large number of senior citizens across the district. This

year's theme emphasized valuing the wisdom and experience of older adults while advocating for their rights. Esteemed guests included Secretary Tabraiz Qazi Ahmed, Pooja Kotwal, Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC), and Babu Ram, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer, who addressed the audience along with community members and stakeholders.

The celebration featured comprehensive health check-ups for the elderly, conducted by a dedicated medical team. These assessments covered vital parameters such as blood pressure, dental

health, eyesight, and overall well-being.

Tabraiz Qazi Ahmed highlighted the importance of societal support for older individuals, stating, "As we celebrate this day, let us reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that older individuals are treated with dignity and respect."

Pooja Kotwal spoke about the critical role of legal services in safeguarding the rights of older persons, while Babu Ram shared insights into ongoing social welfare initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of life for senior citizens.

Archives Deptt facilitates visit of specially abled children to SPS Museum Srinagar

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 01

In a first of its kind initiative, the department of Archives, Archeology and Museum under the supervision of its Director, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, today facilitated an extensive visit of specially abled children of Abhinandan Home to SPS Museum Srinagar to acquaint them with the rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir.

The programme was themed around the tag line "I am Special" to make these children feel special and unique. The department organized the tour for nearly 120 children along with their staff and interpreters. The children and the staff of Abhinandan Home were provided with specially designed caps as a memento with tag line printed on these 'I am Special'. The Director elaborated



that the objective behind organizing this visit was to convey to the children that they are in no way lesser than a normal child but they have been gifted with special virtues and qualities which makes them unique. The specially abled children presented a cultural programme by singing National Anthem in sign language and playing Rouf and song (Mere Papa) to the best of symphony without music or any beat but by simply listening to the beats and rhythms of their souls. It

is also a message to the society and the parents to fully support, encourage and handhold these children towards better future and the institutions associated to roll out special initiatives and programmes for such children.

The Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums, J&K appreciated the efforts of the Principal and staff of Abhinandan Home in shaping these children in a wonderful manner and helping them to evolve their embedded qualities.

'International Day for Older Persons' celebrated at Senior Citizen Home Ganderbal



GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 01: The Senior Citizen Home Ganderbal celebrated the International Day for Older Persons with enthusiasm, with inmates actively participating in various sports activities such as chess

and carrom. The event also marked the plantation drive during which inmates planted trees. The event fostered a sense of community and well-being among the inmates and volunteers.

GCOE celebrates Gandhi Jayanti

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 01

In a series of vibrant events, Government College of Education (GCOE), M.A. Road, Srinagar celebrated the 155th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, marked as Gandhi Jayanti with a grand Declaration Contest, an On-Spot Painting Competition, and Quiz Competition.

Organized by the Nodal Principal for Kashmir Division Colleges, these activities honored Gandhi's legacy and explored the relevance of his philosophy in today's world.

The day began with a Declaration Contest, held in the college's auditorium, centered on the theme, 'Truth and Non-Violence: Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in Contemporary Times.' The contest brought together top orators from various colleges, who had previously secured first-place positions in their respective lead college competitions.

The event was inaugurated by the Nodal Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz, who emphasized the relevance of Gandhian principles in addressing modern challenges such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation.

The chief guest, Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director of Colleges, encouraged the youth to uphold Gandhi's teachings of truth and non-violence in



their lives.

Participants eloquently highlighted how Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence continues to inspire modern movements for justice and civil rights, while others reflected on the significance of truth in today's era of misinformation. The judging panel, comprising distinguished professors from various institutions, selected the top three winners: Ayaan Ajaz from GDC Boys Anantnag, Amana Muzaffar from A. S. College, Srinagar, and Seerat Bhat from GDC Boys Baramulla.

Simultaneously, the Art Lab at the Government College of Education buzzed with creativity as students took part in an On-Spot Painting Competition, with themes centered on the Dandi March and Quit India Movement. Participants, all top-ranking students from previous contests, depicted these pivotal moments in India's independence struggle through various artistic mediums.

The competition celebrated Gandhi's leadership in the non-violent resis-

tance movements against British rule. The paintings portrayed symbolic moments such as Gandhi's iconic Salt March and the fervor of the Quit India Movement. Mehran Nisar from GDC Boys Anantnag secured first place, followed by Ayman Zehra from GDC SAM Budgam and Tasaduq Nazir from GDC Handwara.

To cap off the celebrations, a Quiz Competition was held, testing students' knowledge of the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. The quiz featured several rounds covering Gandhi's early life, his role in the Indian freedom struggle, and his guiding principles of Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence).

The competition saw fierce participation from top-ranking students, with the top three winners—Aqsa Javaid from GCW M.A. Road, Bazila Farooq from GDC Shopian, and a joint third-place team of Naveed ul Islam from GDC Kupwara and Ab. Basit Sheikh from GDC Dooru—emerging victorious.

Assembly Elections-2024 First randomisation of counting staff held in Poonch



JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, OCTOBER 01

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal today conducted the first randomization of counting staff ahead of the counting of votes for Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections.

The process is designed to ensure transparency and fairness in the upcoming counting of votes for the three Assembly Constituencies—Surankote, Haveli and Poonch.

The counting of votes is scheduled to be held on October 8, 2024, at Deenanath Rafiq Memorial Model Girls Higher Secondary School, Poonch. The randomization involved selecting 219

Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants, along with 88 Micro Observers, who will oversee the counting process.

The event held at DC Office Poonch, was attended by senior district officials, including Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Poonch, Tahir Mustafa Malik; Saleem Ahmed, Deputy DEO; Parvinder Singh, Joint Director NIC Poonch and other senior officials.

The randomization process was conducted through dedicated software in accordance with the prescribed guidelines of the Election Commission of India, ensuring fairness and impartiality in the selection of polling staff.

Gandhi Jayanti celebrations held at GDC Khansahib

JI NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, OCTOBER 01

On the eve of 'Gandhi Jayanti', which is also observed as the International Day of Non-Violence, the NSS unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Khansahib today organised a seminar on the theme 'Gandhism and the Contemporary World.'

The program began with an introductory address presented by college Principal, Dr. Nargis Bano. She highlighted various techniques adopted by Gandhiji during his struggle against colonialism and racism.

Dr. Sajad Padder, NSS

Program Officer presented a paper on Gandhism and the Contemporary World. He spoke on the relevance of Gandhiji's teachings in dealing with the modern world problems.

In his speech, he said, 'Gandhiji's influence transcends national boundaries. From the Dalai Lama to Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, all of them employed Gandhian techniques in fighting against injustice and discrimination. Non-violence is not an act of cowardice but a weapon of the strong. In the Gandhian scheme of things there is no place for violence, prejudice, hate or poverty.'

GDC Kastigarh commemorates Gandhi Jayanti with diverse activities



JI NEWS SERVICE
DODA, OCTOBER 01

In celebration of Gandhi Jayanti, the Government Degree College Kastigarh organized a series of engaging activities that honored the principles and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. The activities included seminar, bhajan singing, essay writing, slogan writing and reel-making competitions, all aimed at promoting the values of truth, non-vio-

lence, and simplicity that Gandhi Ji stood for.

The events were organized under the guidance of the college Principal, Prof. Koshal Kumar Mangotra, who emphasized Gandhi Ji's profound contribution to the field of education and the importance of adhering to his philosophy of truth and non-violence in daily life. The participants enthusiastically showcased their talents, reflecting on Mahatma Gandhi's ideals and the

relevance of his teachings in today's world. The seminar focused on Gandhi Ji's vision for a self-reliant and harmonious society, while the bhajan singing competition allowed students to connect with the spiritual aspect of his philosophy. The essay and slogan writing competitions further provided a platform for students to express their understanding of Gandhi's values, encouraging them to embrace these principles.

Assembly Elections-2024

DEO Poonch inspects Counting Centre, issue directions for smooth counting of votes on Oct 8

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, OCTOBER 01

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal today conducted a thorough inspection of the Counting Centre at Girls HSS Poonch, ensuring that all necessary arrangements are in place for counting of votes on October 8.

All arrangements have been put in place for all the three Assembly Constituencies (Surankote, Haveli and Mendhar) to ensure that the process of counting runs smoothly.

During the inspection, the DEO reviewed all sections of the Counting Centre, including seating arrangements for candidates, agents and other personnel involved



in the process. The DEO ensured that proper provisions were made not only for candidates and their agents but also for officials, media representatives and other essential staff. A three-tier

security system has been established at the Counting Centre to prevent any untoward incident and ensure maximum security. The DEO inspected this setup, which includes multiple layers of personnel

deployed to safeguard the process, with strict access control measures in place to maintain the integrity of the proceedings.

The DEO also focused on the setup of the counting halls, handling of EVMs and overall infrastructure to ensure an efficient process. Specific directions were issued to ensure that all procedures adhere strictly to Election Commission guidelines, with an emphasis on continuous monitoring.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Tahir Mustafa Malik, Deputy DEO Poonch, Saleem Ahmed, RO Poonch Qadeer Ul Rehman, Tehsildar Haveli and other senior officials also accompanied the DEO during inspection.

DLSA Budgam for identification of 'MACT & Matrimonial Cases' to be listed in Lok Adalat on October 19

JI NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, OCTOBER 01

As per plan of action/Lok-Adalat calendar for the year, 2024, issued by J&K Legal Services Authority, the District Legal Services Authority Budgam is scheduled to conduct Lok-Adalat on 'MACT & Matrimonial Cases', on 19th of October, 2024 at District Court complex Budgam.

The said Lok Adalat shall be held for amicable settlement of MACT & Matrimonial Cases, pending in the courts at various levels. In this connection, all concerned Ld. Advocates as well as persons/parties who desire to get their MACT & Matrimonial

cases to be settled through the said Lok-Adalat may approach concerned courts, for referring their aforementioned nature of cases to the said Lok-Adalat for their amicable settlement by or before 14-10-2024.

NORTHERN RAILWAY		
E-Auction Notice		
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division.		
Catalogue No.	Auction Start date/time	Name of work
EAFZR-SLR24-57	16.10.2024 at 11:00 Hrs	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 12014/F1, 14028/F1, 14630/F1, 12242/F1, 14730/F1, 14036/F1, 14505/F1, 14028/F2, 14730/R1, 14624/F1, 14630/R1, 14028/R1, 14730/F2, 14036/F2 & 14036/R1.
EAFZR-PRKG24-6	16.10.2024 at 11:00 Hrs	Allotment of Parking lot (Mixed) on contract at PATHANKOT CANTT Railway station.
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in		
No. 179-C/E-auction/FZ/24 Dated: 01.10.2024 3042/2024		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE		

Of the total 32 lakh defence pensioners, 30 lakh have been successfully linked to SPARSH portal: Raksha Mantri

JNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

“Out of a total of 32 lakh defence pensioners, 30 lakh have been successfully linked to the SPARSH {System for Pension Administration (Raksha)} portal,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh during the 277th Annual Day celebrations of Defence Accounts Department (DAD) at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on October 01, 2024. While commending DAD’s focus on technology adoption, the Raksha Mantri asserted that despite numerous challenges, the department has been successful in the implemen-

tation of this web-based system, which processes pension claims and credits the pension directly into bank accounts of defence pensioners without any external intermediary.

SPARSH Audit Manual was among the publications of DAD launched by Shri Rajnath Singh to mark the day. Other publications and initiatives include Comprehensive Statistical Handbook on Defence Expenditure (COSHE) 2024, Market Intelligence Report 2023-24 and Defence Travel System 2.0.

The Raksha Mantri commended the efforts of DAD towards modernisation & strengthening of

the country’s defence ecosystem through optimum utilisation of resources, efficiency & transparency in accounting and adoption of latest technologies. He lauded the department for focusing on every little detail, which leads to necessary improvements in defence related policies and proposals.

Reflecting on the progress achieved in the defence sector in the last few years, Shri Rajnath Singh stated that there was a time when acquisitions were mainly dependent on imports, and the positive impact of defence expenditure on the economy was very limited. He added that due to Prime

Minister Shri Narendra Modi-led Government’s efforts to attain self-reliance, India is today seen as a defence exporter.

The Raksha Mantri urged DAD to prepare a roadmap to make the department a ‘Centre of Excellence’ in the field of defence finance and economics. He also batted for establishing a robust and comprehensive data management system that gives analytical reports to the government on the impact of defence expenditure on the country’s economy, such as the contribution of defence vendors in revenue generation and employment generation. This will prove to be help-

ful in establishing a holistic policy regime, which would develop a sense of ‘Whole of the Government approach’, he added.

Rajnath Singh exhorted DAD to remain innovative in its thinking, and continue exploring new frontiers in defence accounting & financial management. He emphasised that every individual would have to contribute to realise the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘Viksit Bharat by 2047’.

The Raksha Mantri highlighted the vital role DAD plays in supporting the Ministry of Defence’s vast network of organisations, including the Armed Forces, Indian Coast Guard and Border Roads

Organisation. “There are over 50 lakh personnel associated with the Ministry, and the budget is larger than the GDP of many small countries. DAD is a link which connects all the units of the Armed Forces and civilian organisations. Whether it is our resolve of self-reliance, the efforts to encourage the participation of MSMEs and startups or issues related to the three Services, all these different dimensions, all these different dimensions ultimately come to DAD,” he said.

SPARSH Audit Manual ‘System for Pension Administration {Raksha} (SPARSH) is an initiative of

the Ministry of Defence for automating the defence pension ecosystem. The system is embedded with numerous automated checks and controls, with Operational Decision Manager-based rule engine which incorporates over 500 rules and 1,000 on-screen validations. In order to ensure integrity, efficiency and accountability of the system, Internal Audit is essential and helps improve the functionality of SPARSH. It also ensures that necessary controls are in place for integrity and accuracy of pension management processes.

The SPARSH Audit Manual is a departmental

publication to guide the officers and staff of DAD to keep a constant watch on various system processes and outputs generated through application to ensure uniform applicability of rules and regulations for Defence pensioners.

COSHE - 2024 The office of the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) is publishing COSHE-2024 which provides a broad perspective on the expenditure by Defence Services in the last several years. The book provides data on the Defence Budget, trends in expenditure from Financial Year 2010-11 onwards, and legacy data from 1992-93 onwards.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Polls after a decade...

Assembly Constituencies is concerned, highest poll percentage has been recorded in Inderwal (82.16%) followed by Padder- Nagseni (80.67%) and Shri Mata Vaishnodevi Katra (80.45%),” the Officials said.

They said that the polling for the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections concluded today in a peaceful and celebratory atmosphere. Scenes of voters patiently waiting in lines at polling stations, set against the scenic backdrop of the region, highlighted the people’s strong faith in democracy,” an official statement issued by the Election Commission of India, an official statement read. “The festive mood and enthusiastic participation were evident across all districts that went for polls in three-phased elections, underscoring a renewed spirit of civic participation and hope for a new era with people deciding their own future.”

It said that CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar along with ECs Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu have delivered on their promise of ensuring democratic resurgence in Jammu & Kashmir.

Voting across 40 ACs in the third and final phase which commenced at 7 AM today was held peacefully without any incidents of violence. As of 7 PM, a voter turnout of 65.58% was recorded at the polling stations.

The 2024 GELA in J&K has seen a 7% increase in the number of candidates contesting from assembly elections in 2014. “Hearteningly, women candidates made a significant leap, increasing from 28 to 43 in the corresponding period, while independent candidates saw a 26% rise, further contributing to the expanding electoral landscape and grassroots political participation. Post delimitation exercise in J&K, for the first time in history, 9 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST) in J&K resulting in a more inclusive & participative election,” the statement said. “Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) also demonstrated a remarkable 71% increase in participation from 138 in 2014 to 236 in 2024. For campaigning by various parties, a total of 330 requests were received for pre-certification of campaign content by State MCMC as compared to 27 in 2014 LA elections.”

The statement said that the provisional voter turnout figures of 65.58% as of 7 PM will continue to be updated AC wise on the Voter Turnout App by the ROs, as and when the polling parties formally close the poll and return from the polling stations based on the geographical/logistical conditions and after scrutiny of statutory papers and consideration of repolls, if any.

As per the Assembly constituency wise turnout, Akhnoor (SC): 76.28%, .Bahu: 57.07%, .Bandipora: 62.00 %, Bani:71.24%, Baramulla:47.95%, Basohli:67.24%, Billa: 69.64 %, Bishnah (SC):72.75%, .Chenani:73.79%, Chhamb:77.35%, Gulmarg:64.19%, Gurez (ST):75.89%, Handwara:69w.06%, .Hiranagar:71.18%, .Jammu east:60.21%, Jammu north:60.79%, Jammu west:56.31%, Jasmota:71.79%, Karnah:66.30%, Kathua (SC):71.49%, Kupwara:59.68%, Langate:59.81%, Lolab:61.22%, Marh (SC):76.10%, Nagrota:72.94%, .Pattan:60.87%, .RS Pura - Jammu south:61.65%, Rafiabab:58.39%, .Ramgarh (SC):73.10%, Rannagar (SC):70.38%, Samba:71.16%, Sonawari:65.56%, Sopore:41.44%, Suchetgarh (SC):68.02%, Trehgam:62.27%, Udhampur east:74.07%, Udhampur west:73.20%, Uri:64.81%, Vijaypur:73.05% and Wagoora-Kreeri:56.43%.

CEC SPEAKS: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Rajiv Kumar said that J&K Assembly elections have marked a significant deepening of democracy which will echo in the pages of history and continue to inspire a democratic spirit of the region for years to come. He dedicated these elections to the people of J&K acknowledging their determination and belief in the democratic process.

“The peaceful and participative elections are historic, wherein democracy is taking root more profoundly than ever before, driven by the will of the people of J&K. The elections were a resounding statement in favour of democracy,” Kumar said.

Democracy deepened - Increased political Participation

The ECI statement said that J&K has seen a 7% increase in the number of candidates contesting from assembly elections in 2014. Hearteningly, women candidates made a significant leap, increasing from 28 to 43 in the corresponding period, while independent candidates saw a 26% rise, further contributing to the expanding electoral landscape and grassroots political participation. “Post delimitation exercise in J&K, for the first time in history, 9 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST) in J&K resulting in a more inclusive & participative election. Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) also demonstrated a remarkable 71% increase in participation from 138 in 2014 to 236 in 2024,” the statement said, adding that “For campaigning by various parties, a total of 330 requests were received for pre-certification of campaign content by State MCMC as compared to 27 in 2014 LA elections.”

Embracing democracy over boycott

These elections have witnessed a significant increase in voter turnout in areas which have been infamous for militancy and boycotting democratic processes. “Polling percentage has increased by 12.97% in Pulwama AC in the Legislative Assembly Elections 2024 compared to the corresponding elections held in 2014. Zainapora AC in Shopian saw a 9.52% increase while Eidgah AC in Srinagar registered a 9.16% increase, reflecting growing confidence in the electoral process. Democracy in remote corners and at the frontiers,” the ECI statement said.

“In the mountainous landscape of J&K, the Commission in its resolve to leave no voter behind setup polling stations (PS) at even the most remote locations. 469 unique polling stations were set up near the Line of Control (LOC) and International Border with 106 PS in phase 2 and 363 PS in phase 3, ensuring voters in remote and sensitive areas could exercise their democratic right,” the ECI statement said. KNO

Valmiki, Gorkha...

eligible to participate in the electoral process.

According to the news agency, the atmosphere in the Valmiki Colony in Gandhi Nagar and Gorkha Bast in Bahu Fort was vibrant, with a large number of first-time voters eagerly lining up to exercise their franchise.

For the first time in 67 years, the Valmiki and Gorkha communities gained the right to vote and access professional courses. Approximately 6,500 members of Valmiki families and around 900 Gorkha families are now eligible to cast ballots in Jammu. Previously, these communities lacked domicile rights and were excluded from various opportunities, including voting in assembly elections.

Garoo Bhati, president of the Valmiki community, described the feeling of voting as inexpressible. “I cast my first vote at the age of 45, and I can’t put my feelings into words,” he said. “We were previously deprived of this democratic right, but now we are hopeful that the coming government will do justice for the Valmiki community.”

Another voter, Eklavya, said: “Our parents were denied voting rights by successive governments in the past. Now we have been empowered by the Constitution of India to exercise our rights. We are eagerly looking forward to participating in the festival of democracy by choosing our public representatives.”

Swarn Singh, a first-time voter from the Gorkha community, also expressed his happiness. Displaying his inked finger, he said that the feeling of voting is unmatched and comes with great responsibility. The Gorkha community celebrated their first vote with a lively procession, arriving at the polling booth accompanied by a band and traditional drums to honor the occasion.

According to official sources, over 39.18 lakh voters will be exercising their right to vote across 40 assembly segments. The Election Commission of India has deployed more than 20,000 polling staff across seven districts in Jammu & Kashmir. KNO

No repoll recorded...

stations shifted in 2014 at the eleventh hour. The role of money and muscle power has been curtailed to a “significant extent”, it said.

These assembly polls have seen a seven per cent increase in the number of candidates contesting as compared to the assembly elections in 2014.

Women candidates made a significant leap, increasing from 28 to 43 in the corresponding period, while independent candidates saw a 26 per cent rise.

Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) also demonstrated a remarkable 71 per cent increase in participation from 138 in 2014 to 236 in 2024, the EC said.

First-time voters...

third-gender voters. The role of youth in strengthening democracy is underscored by the fact that 194,000 young voters aged 18 to 19 are eligible to participate in this third phase of the assembly election.

First-time voters displayed smiles and confidence at the polling stations.

Komal from Samba expressed her excitement, “It was my first vote, and I was thrilled for the past week, especially since the BLO delivered my voting slip at home. This morning, I came here with my cousin to ensure my name was on the list. I hope that with my first vote, a government will be formed that works for farmers and youth.”

Nidhi Bharti, a voter from Bahu Fort in the Bahu constituency, said, “I was really excited for this day. I’ve seen my parents vote, but after getting my finger inked, I now understand the value of one vote and the responsibility it carries.”

Neeraj Kumar, who voted in Samba Gagwal, said,

“We voted for a better future and more employment opportunities.”

Meghna Matto, a member of the Valmiki community voting for the first time, said this is a significant moment, particularly after the community gained voting rights following the abrogation of Article 370. “This opportunity is incredibly important for us,” she said.

Meetakshi Chib from Samba said voting for the first time is both a great feeling and a responsibility. “I’m excited to cast my first vote for the development of my area,” she said.

Some voters, despite being in their mid-20s, were also voting for the first time.

Akanshi Sharma from Basholi recalled, “I was just over 17 during the Lok Sabha elections and was upset my name wasn’t on the list. This time, I made sure it was included, and I’m thrilled to have that indelible ink mark on my finger.”

After casting his first vote in Udhampur, Ashish Kumar said: “I voted for a candidate I believe can work for the development of our district and the country.”. KNO

Transparent, Free and...

three phases to exercise their franchise is a testimony to vibrant democracy in J&K and people’s faith in democratic values. Transparent, free & fair assembly polls 2024 will be written in golden letters in the history of J&K elections”.

Jammu votes for...

Talking to KNO, people were vocal about statehood but at the same time kept talking about nationalism. “Voting is our right and we are exercising it to be part of this democratic process. Those who get elected should work to get statehood back for J&K as it is necessary to keep our interests intact,” said Rohit Kumar, a resident of Udhampur.

During this last phase of Assembly elections, 40 seats of seven districts Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara went to poll and people in large numbers came out to vote for their candidates. In this phase, 24 seats of four districts of Jammu region went for the polls and from young boys and girls to aged people, everybody came out to vote.

Youth were also vocal about their participation and issues concerning their day to day life.

“Whosoever forms the government, they should create jobs for the youth, control inflation, especially in terms of vegetables and fruits and should provide a clean atmosphere by fogging as the threat of dengue is looming large,” said Ayesha Mahajan, a female voter from Jammu west Assembly constituency.

Another voter from Jammu North Assembly constituency, Ankush Khajuria said, “We are voting for the holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir as it lags behind many states in the country. We want better infrastructure, more jobs, better healthcare facilities and a secured environment.”. KNO

Icons, Social Media...

the SVEEP campaign.

In Jammu and Kashmir, around 62 icons at district level and 18 at UT level had been designated for mass awareness of general public. The icons had been designated for all categories like General Icon, Icons for Women, Icons for PwD and Transgender. The icons played a great role in voter education and increasing voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir by promoting their audio/video messages on social media.

Some of the famous icons were Subedar Chain Singh, gold medalist in 7th Asian Air Gun Championship Kuwait and 2016 South Asian Games, Sherlin Seth, Miss India 2017, Sadia Tariq, 3rd Open India Taekwondo champion, Javed Ahmad Tak, Padmashree awardee, social activist, Parveez Rasool and Umran Malik, International Cricketer, Faisal Ali Dar, an Indian martial arts coach, Chanddeep Sudan, Indian Athlete, 2nd Time’s World Para Taekwondo champion, Kabul Bukhari, renowned singer and musician, Ankush Sabharwal, Tech Entrepreneur and AI (Artificial Intelligence) expert.

Introduction of icons in SVEEP campaigns had a significant impact on voters in various ways. The use of popular public figures like actors, sportspersons or social activists as icons resonated with the local people. When voters see someone they admire or identify urging them to vote, it inspires them to participate in elections. Social Icons, being from the local region, make the message more relatable and culturally relevant to the voters, helping bridge the gap between the Election Commission’s outreach and the local population, he added.

Congress says it will...

Article 370. Pakistan’s government has supported the Congress party. Congress is the most deceitful party,” the Prime Minister said.

He labelled Congress as the “biggest anti-Dalit party” in the country and alleged that it intends to end reservations, with Haryana serving as their “test state.”

“The Congress has planned to end reservations... Haryana is their test state. But no one can end reservations as long as Modi and the BJP are here. They abuse me and (Haryana Chief Minister) Saini ji day and night,” he added.

PM Modi claimed that Congress has polarised people for votes and aims to end reservations for Dalits and backward classes.

“Congress has only one agenda: maximum appeasement for votes. Today, Congress is claiming that it will end reservations for Dalits and backward classes. This is what they did in Karnataka. As soon as the Congress government was formed there, they snatched reservations from Dalits and backward classes and gave them to their vote bank by declaring universities and institutions as minorities,” he alleged.

Referring to the Hooda family, he criticized the opposition party for its alleged infighting within the state unit.

“The people here can see the conflict within Congress in Haryana. The angriest against Congress are from the Dalit, backward, and deprived communities. The Dalit community has decided that they will not become pawns to further the politics of the father and son,” he added.

He further said that Haryana has a history of forming the same government in the state as the one in power at the centre.

“You formed the BJP government in Delhi for the third time, and now you people have decided to form the BJP government here in Haryana for the third time as well,” he said.

Haryana will go to the polls on October 5 to elect its 90-member state legislative assembly, with counting set to take place on October 8. In the 2019 elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party, securing 40 seats, while Congress won 30 seats. (AGENCIES)

Nalin Prabhat takes...

him the Antrik Suraksha Seva Padak, and the Police (Special Duty) Medal and Bar in J&K.

The outgoing DGP, Swain, an Indian Police Service (IPS) from 1991, took over the top position in 2023. Swain also served as Special DG CID and the Intelligence Chief of Jammu and Kashmir in June 2020. KNO

BHOG AND ANTIM ARDAAS

With profound grief and sorrow we wish to inform you the sad demise of our beloved **Sdn. Ravinder Kaur Gandhi** W/o S. Swatanter Singh Gandhi on 29th September 2024 at Delhi.



MRS. RAJ LAKSHMI RAZDAN (DEDA)

Antim Ardaas will be held as per program at Gurudwara Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Chand Nagar (Opp. Hotel Fortune Inn Riviera)

Aarambh Shri Akhand Paath Sahib on Wednesday, 2nd October 2024 at 10:30 a.m

Bhog Shri Akhand Paath Sahib on Friday, 4th October 2024 at 10:30 a.m

Kirtan from 10:30 a.m -12.00 Noon, followed by **Guru Ji Ka Langar**

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Vineet Raina (Vinny) & Lalit Raina

(**Daughter & Son-in-Law**)

Jasleen Kaur & Randeep Singh Gandhi (Rinnu)

(**Daughter-in-Law & Son**)

Sisters-in-law & Brothers-in-Law:

Smt. Rajni & Shri Bharat Gandhi (Ex-MLA)

Sdn. Sarabjeet & S. Vijay Gandhi

Smt. Akshi & S. Prakash Gandhi

Sdn. Manpreet & S. Purn Singh Gandhi (Retd. Chief Engineer)

Sister AND Brother -in- Law:

Smt. Vigyan Bharti Kaila & Advocate Dogra Harish Kaila (Retd. AIR)

Bhabhis & Brothers:

Sdn. Rajinder Kaur & Lt. S. Kulbir Singh

Sdn. Parvinder Kaur & S. Sujinder Singh

Sdn. Manjeet Kaur & S. Manvinder Singh

Sisters & Brothers-in-law:

Lt. Pupinder Kaur & S. Pritam Singh

Sdn. Harjinder Kaur & Lt. S. Jasjit Singh Sachdeva

Sdn. Jatinder Kaur & S. Baldev Singh (Advocate)

Sdn. Manjeet Kaur & Lt. S. Harjit Singh

Grand Daughter:

Sanvi Raina

Contact no. 941911239; 8825065356; 7889357105

Samsung launches Galaxy S24 FE in India

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 02, 2024

Samsung India's largest consumer electronics brand today announced the launch of Galaxy S24 FE, the latest addition to the Galaxy AI ecosystem that delivers premium mobile experiences to more users.

Galaxy S24 FE, powered by the AI-based ProVisual Engine and Galaxy AI's Photo Assist features showcases an enhanced camera setup that empowers users to be more creative. It's the perfect device for gaming on the go with a 6.7-inch[i] Dynamic AMOLED 2X display, a long-lasting 4,700mAh battery, and a powerful Exynos 2400 series chipset. The Galaxy S24 FE offers premium Galaxy AI tools and ecosystem connectivity to enhance communication, productivity and creativity – all housed

in an iconic design and protected by robust Samsung Knox security.

Galaxy S24 FE's premium camera setup features a 50MP wide lens and 8MP telephoto lens with 3x optical zoom – both supported by optical image stabilization (OIS) – plus a 12MP ultra-wide lens and a 10MP selfie camera.

Making its debut in the FE series, ProVisual Engine features vastly improved technology that leverages advanced AI algorithms to deliver breathtaking detail and remarkably subtle textures: Nightography with AI image signal processing (ISP) to improve low light performance, enabling beautiful night portraits; Works with the wide camera's 50MP Adaptive Pixel Sensor to enable optical-quality performance at zoom levels from 2x in addition to the optical 3x zoom. AI zoom also

provides the enhanced image quality at distances between digital zoom lengths; Object-Aware Engine to recognize scenes and optimize colors in Super High Dynamic Range (HDR), ensuring vibrant and lifelike photos and videos.

When it is time to edit, Photo Assist features breathe life into ideas. Since its introduction with the Galaxy S24 series devices, Galaxy AI has become invaluable for editing images and expressing creativity.

The powerful Exynos 2400 series chipset enables an uncompromised gaming experience compatible with cutting-edge features such as Ray Tracing. In the world where every bit of speed and efficiency counts, the Galaxy S24 FE utilizes several key features to stay ahead of the competition.

The Galaxy S24 FE incorporates the same advanced AI experience as the Galaxy S24 series. Designed to enhance work, simplify communication, and increase connectivity, Galaxy AI on the S24 FE offers tools that unlock new possibilities.

Every Galaxy AI-enhanced experience becomes even more useful when the Galaxy S24 FE is connected to Samsung's expansive mobile ecosystem. It seamlessly transfers files, quickly sets up extended displays, and effortlessly executes complex creative ideas through intuitive inputs. In this hyper-connected Samsung Galaxy ecosystem, Galaxy S24 FE enables experiences that increase productivity, creativity, and efficiency.

Building on the innovative legacy of the S series, the Galaxy S24

FE is fortified with strong security. Samsung Knox, Galaxy's multi-layer security platform that safeguards critical information and protects against vulnerabilities with end-to-end secure hardware, real-time threat detection and collaborative protection.

As a continuation of the S24 series tradition of sustainable design, the Galaxy S24 FE has been made to do more with less when it comes to the planet's resources. It features a wide variety of recycled materials, including recycled plastics, aluminum, glass, and rare earth elements in both internal and external components. It also features seven generations of OS upgrades and seven years of security updates, and comes in a packaging box made from 100% recycled paper material.

Indian Army conducts Sports, Cultural Festival at Banj Rajouri

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI: 01 OCT 24

Indian Army at Samote in District Rajouri (J&K) organised Sports & Cultural Festival at Banj to reach out to Gujjars and Bakkarwals who had migrated to higher reaches of Pir Panjal Ranges, moved across to Kashmir Valley and now returning back. Considering the hardship being faced by Gujjars & Bakkarwals every year, Indian Army organised a 'Sports & Cultural Festival' at Banj on 30 Sep 2024. Banj is located six kilometres North of Budhal in District Rajouri. The sole motto of this event is to provide a healing touch to the poor and backward Gujjar & Bakkarwal community, which resides in the higher reaches of Pir Panjal Mountain ranges. In order to promote customs and traditions of



Gujjars and Bakkarwals, local traditional sports events of Volleyball Girls, Volleyball Boys, Tug of War, Solo Song, Patriotic Group Song, Group Dance, Solo Dance & Elocution (Speech) were also carried out, which

was over overwhelmingly enjoyed by the local spectators. During the Sports & Cultural Festival, Indian Army also provided medical care to Gujjar and Bakkarwal community and their livestock. An approximate strength of 390 people (200 x men, 40 x women & 150 x children) witnessed the event. Village elders, Sarpanchs, Panchs & prominent locals thanked and expressed their profound gratitude towards the Indian Army for organizing such a unique and special event for Gujjars and Bakkarwals at Banj. This initiative of Indian Army will go a long way in overall development of the society and further cementing the existing strong bond between Indian Army and Awam.

NDA organizes Swachhta Hi Seva cleanliness drive at Rajesh Public High School, Bishnah



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 1

Nations Development Association (NDA), affiliated with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Jammu, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, successfully organized a Swachhta Hi Seva cleanliness drive at Rajesh Public High School, Bish-

nah.

The event, held under the My Bharat campaign and Swachh Bharat Mission, aimed to raise awareness among students and school management on the importance of sanitation, hygiene, and waste management.

Sushil Singh Charak, Founder of NDA, led the initiative, educating participants on the sig-

nificance of maintaining cleanliness and promoting sustainable practices.

Rajesh Sharma, Principal of Rajesh Public High School, praised Sushil Singh Charak's efforts, saying, "Sushil Singh Charak is doing great work for our society." The event aligns with NDA's commitment to community development and environmental sustainability.

Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin becomes first woman to take over as DG, Armed Forces Medical Services

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, on October 01, 2024, became the first woman officer to take over as the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAfMS). The DGAfMS is directly responsible to the Ministry of Defence for overall medical policy matters which relate to the Armed Forces. Prior to assuming the appointment of 46th DGAfMS, the Flag Officer held the coveted appointments of DG Medical Services (Navy), DG Medical Services (Air) and Director & Commandant of Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune. She is an alumna of AFMC, Pune and was commissioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services in December 1985. She is an MD in Radiodiagnosis from AFMC, Pune and Diplomate National Board in Radiation Oncology from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, complemented with training in Gamma Knife Surgery from University of Pittsburgh.

In a career spanning 38 years, the Flag Officer has held prestigious academic and administrative appointments including



Professor & Head, Radiation Oncology, Army Hospital (R&R) and Command Hospital (Southern Command)/AFMC Pune, Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini, Command Medical Officer in the Indian Navy's Southern and Western Naval Commands.

The Flag Officer has the rare distinction of serving in all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces, having served as Lieutenant to Captain in the Indian Army, from Surgeon Lieutenant to Surgeon Vice Admiral in the Indian Navy and as an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force.

In recognition of her dedication to patient care with utmost loyalty and supreme commitment, the Flag Officer has been

awarded Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2024 and Vishist Seva Medal in 2021. She has also been conferred with Chief of Army Staff Commendation (2017), Chief of Naval Staff Commendation (2001) and General Officer Commanding -in-Chief Commendation (2013) for distinguished service.

The Flag Officer has been recently appointed as a member of the National Task Force by the Supreme Court to formulate safe working conditions and protocols for medical professionals. She has been at the forefront of motivating young women to join the Armed Forces and is a shining icon for the Nari Shakti initiative of the Government.

Skipper Joshitha, Niranjana's brilliance helps Kerala register Super-Over win over formidable Punjab

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJKOT, OCT 1

Leading from the front, skipper Joshitha VJ salvaged a sinking ship by scoring magnificent 45 not out and resulted in two crucial run-outs and along with Niranjana helped Kerala to stop roaring Punjab and register a thrilling Super-Over win in the ongoing Women's U-19 T20 Trophy ended in a tie at Sanosara Cricket Ground-A Rajkot today.

Niranjana bowled a superb over for Kerala to concede just 5 runs in the Super Over and helping her side script an emphatic victory.

Earlier, chasing a fighting total of 133 runs, Punjab eves began with caution and aggression and the opening batter Harsimranjit scored brisk 31 runs off just 25 balls with 5 delectable boundaries, giving her team a solid foundation. However, Joshitha's agility, anticipation, sharp reflexes and a pair of safe hands resulted in two run-outs in the form of Divya and Sukhmanat Kaur to put Punjab under pressure and finally restrict them to 133/8 in 20 overs, thus the scores levelled and

the match was decided via Super-Over. Harsimranjit top scored with 31 runs, while Shruti Tiwari, Alisha and Vanshika Mahajan contributed 30, 23 and 16 runs to the total respectively. Niranjana N and Ashima Antony took 2 wickets each for Kerala, while Isabel claimed one wicket. Three Punjab batters fell short of making the crease.

Earlier, winning the toss and electing to bat first, Kerala after early hiccups, rode on the batting brilliance of their charismatic skipper Joshitha VJ and came back strongly to post a good total of 133 runs in the stipulated 20 overs, losing 7 wickets in the process.



Losing early two wickets with just one run on the board, Kerala were struggling at 34/5 in 9.2 overs with almost all their top and middle-order back to the pavilion.

However, a brilliant batting display by Joshitha, Isabel and Manasvi guided the team to post a formidable total.

Joshitha remained unbeaten on power-packed 45 runs off 27 balls studded with 6 fours and one six, while Manasvi and Isabel contributed 21 runs each.

For Punjab, Parineeta Saroha took 3 wickets by conceding 23 runs in her 4 overs, while Mohini Rana, Surbhi, Harma and Akshita Bhagat claimed one wicket each.

NILM NGO hosts School-Level Painting Competition on Environmental Conservation at Guru Nanak Public School



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 1

The National Incredible Literacy Mission (NILM) organized a school-level painting competition at Guru Nanak Public School Gole Gujral Road, Jammu centered around the theme of "Environmental Conservation." The event aimed to engage students in creative expressions that promote awareness of environmental issues.

Over 26 students participated, showcasing their artistic talents while addressing crucial topics

such as pollution, climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable practices. The artworks submitted were a testament to the students' understanding of the importance of protecting our planet. This competition was organized by NILM NGO to aware the school children about green wealth and need of conservation of forest, water and other need full environment resources. "This year many students learned the values of environment and water conservation through painting" Thakur KD Kurhan

Chairman NILM said.

In her opening remarks, Manjeet Kour Saini the principal of Guru Nanak Public School, highlighted the significance of art in advocating for environmental issues. "Through art, we can inspire change and encourage our young minds to become stewards of the environment," she stated. Neelam Kumari school P.E.T teacher also actively participated in the event. All participants received certificates recognizing their efforts and creativity.

Headquarters, IDS celebrates its 24th Raising Day



J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) celebrated its 24th Raising Day on October 01, 2024. Chief of Integrated Defence Staff Lt Gen JP Mathew laid a wreath at the National War Memorial New Delhi in remembrance of the fallen heroes, on behalf of All Ranks of the 'Purple Fraternity'.

HQ IDS plays a pivotal role in coordination, integration and providing policy inputs for force structures, modernisation, and development of equipment of the three services, based on the anticipated threat perception. HQ IDS is critical to the efforts of the Defence Services in the preparation of joint plans for threats requiring a tri-service response, technology management, information assurance and utilisation of space assets, consolidating defence intelligence and promoting military diplomacy.

The HQ IDS also plays a significant role in formulating joint doctrines for strategic and joint operations, enhancing joint training exercises, specifically Ex INDRA, Ex Tiger Triumph and Ex Bright Star, for assured interoperability have been conducted.

Specific efforts have been undertaken for achieving Atmanirbharta in Defence with a well defined indigenisation roadmap, under the Joint Services Indigenisation Centre. A high level Defence Indigenisation Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of Positive Indigenisation list and pursue Innovation in Defence programme. The HQ IDS was raised on October 01, 2001 to provide an institutional framework for managing defence at a higher level, and integrate the three Services and other relevant elements in the quest of credible and comprehensive national power. It remains at the forefront of multiple initiatives aimed at furthering the Integration and Jointness among the Services, duly living up to its motto 'Victory Through Jointness'.

under progress, and adoption of Common Maintenance and Support Infrastructure are the key milestones under the aegis of HQ IDS. During the last one year, several key initiatives like the Joint Commanders Conference 2024, three Tri-Services Commanders Conferences at the apex leadership level and two Parivartan-Chintan Shivirs with Service Chiefs and all components of IDS were undertaken.

IDS has played a significant role in strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships with Friendly Foreign Countries; 18 new Defence Wings are under creation in various countries and five new wings have been set up within India. A large number of Joint Staff Talks to address national security concerns have been carried out. Joint training exercises, specifically Ex INDRA, Ex Tiger Triumph and Ex Bright Star, for assured interoperability have been conducted.

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EDITORIAL

A milestone for democracy in J&K

The completion of the three-phase assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir marks a significant milestone in the region's political landscape. As the last phase concluded today, the Elections Commission of India is reporting a tentative overall voter turnout of 63.45%. This figure reflects not only a robust engagement from the electorate but also the successful orchestration of a peaceful electoral process after a decade-long hiatus. The elections, announced on August 16, 2024, spanned 24, 26, and 40 assembly constituencies across three phases held on September 18, September 25, and October 1, respectively. The turnout statistics tell a compelling story: 61.38% in the first phase, 57.31% in the second, and an impressive 68.72% in the final phase. Districts like Kishtwar, with an outstanding 80.20% turnout, showcased a vigorous democratic spirit among voters, demonstrating their desire to participate in shaping their governance. What makes these elections particularly noteworthy is their occurrence in a post-abrogation context. For the first time since the revocation of Article 370, political parties campaigned freely across both Jammu and the Valley, highlighting a palpable shift in the political environment. The high voter turnout reflects a renewed engagement from the public, spurred by pressing issues such as the restoration of statehood and local identity protection. The contrasting narratives of the main political parties were evident throughout the campaign. The BJP lauded the benefits of Article 370's abrogation, emphasizing peace and national integration. Conversely, the Congress, along with regional parties like the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), campaigned vigorously for the restoration of statehood and safeguarding of local interests. This vibrant political discourse underscores a healthy democratic process, despite the region's historical challenges. Credit must be given to the meticulous planning and execution by the Election Commission, local authorities, and security agencies. The smooth conduct of these elections, particularly in areas usually considered sensitive due to their proximity to the Line of Control and International Border, is a testament to the effective coordination and intelligence-gathering efforts of local law enforcement. The peaceful and incident-free nature of these elections also signals a hopeful future for democracy in J&K. It showcases that, despite the challenges, democracy can not only survive but thrive in this region. Voter enthusiasm was palpable, driven by well-structured election arrangements that encouraged widespread public participation. As we reflect on this electoral exercise, it is essential to recognize the broader implications it has for governance in J&K. The successful completion of these elections reinforces faith in the democratic process and encourages a renewed commitment to development and representation in the region. These assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir have not only been a testament to the resilience of its democracy but have also illustrated the importance of a coordinated approach in maintaining peace and order during crucial political events. This milestone deserves acknowledgment and appreciation for all those involved, reaffirming that the spirit of democracy can indeed endure against all odds.

The World Wants To Make In India

BY PIYUSH GOYAL

In 10 years, the 'Make in India' initiative has revitalized India's industrial landscape, attracting investments, boosting manufacturing, and creating millions of jobs, positioning India as a global manufacturing hub, writes the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry. On September 25, the country observed 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's game-changing 'Make in India' initiative, which is transforming India's industrial landscape by encouraging job-creating investments and giving many ordinary citizens the confidence to become wealth creators.

It has been a remarkable 10-year journey, which has injected renewed vigour into industrial sectors, turning them into engines of growth that meet domestic demand and contribute to exports. This exciting journey began at a difficult time when domestic investors were disheartened by policy paralysis and poor governance under the

indecisive Congress government. The economy was down, confidence was shattered, headlines were dominated by corruption scandals, inflation was soaring, interest rates were high, and the rupee's outlook was uncertain.

To end this feeling of doom and gloom, the Indian voters decisively voted for PM Modi, who came with a vision for India. He wanted to ensure that India would become a global superpower, provide jobs and opportunities for youth, and recognise that manufacturing was critical to India's success story. This is when the PM launched the 'Make in India' initiative.

These 10 years have been remarkable, but they would not have been possible without the multidimensional and transformative changes made by the Modi government. Key initiatives include the implementation of GST, the Bankruptcy Code, and numerous other reforms. To improve the ease of doing business, 42,000 compliance requirements were eliminated, and

3,700 provisions for criminal penalties for minor offences were removed from various statutes to protect small businesses from harassment. As a result, India significantly improved its rank in the World Bank's Doing Business report, rising from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019.

The government's Startup India initiative has encouraged many job seekers to become job creators. This initiative has led to the recognition of 1,40,803 startups as of June this year, bringing in investments and creating more than 1.5 million jobs. These startups are driving the country's innovation ecosystem, working on solutions to pressing issues in areas such as sanitation, space navigation, reducing food wastage, improving access to healthcare, and empowering women.

The development of 11 industrial corridors is another area of government focus. Twenty industrial smart cities are being developed under this program, which will help make these corridors the

backbone of India's manufacturing growth. Four of these smart cities have already become magnets for investment, with infrastructure and clearances available for manufacturing units to be set up. A potential investment of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore has already been committed, which will provide direct employment to 80,000 people and indirect employment to many more.

The government's PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) schemes focus on critical sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles, and medical devices, aiming to create ecosystems in these sectors for sustained growth and ensure their global competitiveness. PLI schemes have resulted in Rs. 1.32 lakh crore in investment and a significant boost in manufacturing output, amounting to around Rs. 11 lakh crore. More than 8.5 lakh jobs have been created directly and indirectly through this initiative.

The Prime Minister's focus on infrastructure development has also bol-

stered Indian manufacturing. Infrastructure not only generates demand for goods and services but is also a key facilitator of industrial activity. Today, India boasts an extensive and growing network of expressways and highways. New, world-class railway stations are being built, and new freight corridors are emerging.

India is increasingly being seen as an attractive destination for investment, offering the 4D advantage:

Decisive leadership of PM Modi,

Demographic dividend of our youthful, talented, and skilled Indians,

Demand generated by 140 crore Indians,

Democracy, which ensures the safety and security of investors and the rule of law, preventing discrimination against any group.

This 4D advantage is a compelling case for attracting manufacturers to India. Domestic and international investors today find a golden opportunity to grow their businesses. There is a flurry of activity in the investor community,

with delegations visiting India, eager to invest and participate in the Indian growth story. Foreign governments and global CEOs are keen to seize opportunities in India, and many countries are eager to sign trade deals.

The world now views India as a manufacturing destination, thanks to its competitive advantage and robust economic fundamentals. Today, inflation is under control, economic growth is strong, and the Modi government is following strict fiscal discipline. This is particularly commendable given the current global situation, which is marked by conflict and uncertainty.

PM Modi's initiatives have helped India rise from being regarded as one of the "Fragile Five" in the world in 2014 to being one of the top five economies today. Initiatives like 'Make in India' have made the past decade a transformational one—a quantum leap from the lost decade under Congress rule.

The writer is the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry

Revive shallow aquifers for urban water woes in India

SVISHWANATH AND ISHLEEN KAUR

In India, groundwater plays a critical role in meeting urban water demands. These aquifers, found at relatively shallow depths, have served as vital sources of water for centuries. At a time when transporting water across long distances was inconceivable, communities turned to shallow aquifers to meet their water needs.

Found at accessible depths, they offered a cost-effective and reliable water supply for the growing populations. The dug wells and step wells, still standing today, are reminders of a time when water scarcity was addressed by harnessing rainwater to recharge shallow aquifers. However, as modern cities grew, the humble dug wells, once a ubiquitous part of the landscape, began to vanish. These wells have now largely been replaced by deep bore wells tapping into groundwater reserves at alarming depths.

India is the world's largest user of groundwater, consuming more than the United States and China combined.

Urban areas, in particular, have increasingly relied on groundwater to supple-

ment their needs, leading to a significant depletion of shallow aquifers, and for too long, groundwater management has been sidelined in urban planning. However recent climate challenges—unpredictable rainfall, flash floods, and urban water crisis—have sparked renewed interest in groundwater management. Increasingly, rainwater harvesting and urban waterbody rejuvenation projects are turning toward these natural underground reservoirs as a solution.

Aquifers are now being studied for their potential to store excess rainwater and mitigate flooding. The launch of AMRUT 2.0 in 2021 marked a paradigm shift in water management, with groundwater finally being prioritized at the 'urban' scale. The mission recognised the need for cities to not only rely on groundwater but to actively manage and protect it.

Under the mission, the Shallow Aquifer Management (SAM) pilot project was initiated in 2022 in 10 cities. This initiative aimed to raise awareness among city officials and communities about the importance of shallow aquifers and demonstrate effective recharge structures to tackle critical issues like

groundwater depletion, contamination and urban flooding. It sought to create an environment where cities could integrate shallow aquifer management into broader water strategies.

By emphasising both simple and scientifically sound recharge methods, it aimed to revive approaches that have been overlooked in the pursuit of modern infrastructure. The project has yielded valuable insights for cities on effective shallow aquifer management.

This initiative has led to the development of 12 unique approaches and designs for recharge structures, tailored to local aquifer conditions. These ranged from the revival of existing wells and step wells in Dhanbad, Hyderabad, and Bangalore to catchment treatment of areas showing high recharge potential in Pune.

Cities such as Gwalior and Rajkot have undertaken detailed mapping of aquifer systems, and groundwater depths, and created an inventory of recharge structures at the city scale, facilitating informed groundwater management decisions. The project has also shown promising results in showcasing the sustainable use

of these recharge structures to supplement water needs for local communities.

In Kanteerava Nagar, Bangalore, a dug well retrofitted under the project is now supplying water to around 500 households with up to one lakh litre of water being pumped every day for non-potable use. Similarly, in Thane's Yeoor Village, tribal communities are benefiting from water sourced from desilted and retrofitted wells. In Dhanbad and Rajkot, where peri-urban areas heavily depend on shallow wells, the initiative has begun to expand beyond its pilot phase.

Rajkot Municipal Corporation has initiated work on constructing more than 100 additional recharge structures city-wide based on the SAM mapping, showing the renewed awareness and commitment to scale up shallow aquifer management. The project has been able to draw the attention of larger voices in the climate resilience and water security space.

Bangalore's Climate Action Plan has now incorporated groundwater management as a vital aspect of making Bangalore climate resilient.

Pune has even estab-

lished a dedicated groundwater cell in the municipal corporation to ensure that shallow aquifer management remains a priority in the city's future water plans. In FY 2024-2025, the Pune Municipal Corporation has allocated a dedicated budget of INR 1 crore for aquifer recharge structures, showing significant action in this direction. Despite the progress made through the SAM project, much work remains.

Cities need to acknowledge that deep aquifers hold vast reserves of water accumulated over centuries and must be typically reserved for emergencies, such as droughts.

In contrast, shallow aquifers hold immense potential as the first line of defence for daily water needs, making them essential for urban areas. However, as cities grow, the natural processes that recharge these aquifers are being disrupted.

In the current situation, where urban development is increasingly characterised by impermeable surfaces, inhibiting rainwater infiltration and preventing natural recharge, cities need to make conscious interventions towards artificial recharge of shallow aquifers including rejuve-

nation of lakes, wetlands and river floodplains.

India's groundwater crisis is complex, but the solution may lie beneath our feet. By managing shallow aquifers, cities can foster a more resilient and sustainable future. The SAM project provides a blueprint for this approach, but its lessons must be scaled up and implemented nationwide.

As India faces the dual challenges of urban growth and water scarcity, it is time to embrace the wisdom of our ancestors and integrate it with the science of hydrogeology.

By restoring shallow aquifers and making them a part of an integrated urban water management ecosystem, cities can ensure that this invaluable resource remains a dependable source of water for generations to come. In the words of Kabir: 'The well is one, and the water is the same. Let us remember that the water we draw today must sustain us tomorrow.'

(S. Vishwanath is co-founder Biome Environmental Solutions, Bengaluru and Ishleen Kaur is senior environment specialist, National Institute of Urban Affairs, Delhi; views expressed are their own)

The spiritual meaning of zero

RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJJI

Zero is the number people often feel, more so than one, isn't it true? Because more zeroes means more prosperity. However from a spiritual perspective, zero is the point from which all other numbers spring forth. Even visually the number zero is symbolic of a seed, womb or egg from which pure potential emerges. Since the zero also visually resembles a circle, it symbolises eternity, evolution, and infinity. Like an atom is to the physical world and a soul to the spiritual world, the zero is symbolic of both worlds.

Pythagoras viewed the sign of the zero as the container for all things and the birthing place of all other values. The discovery of zero changes the way we calculate, compute and communicate. All these

tasks affect almost all fields of human activity today. Zero is counted as an even number along with positive and negative integers. It is important in the number-value system because it defines the value and place of a digit in a number as a thousand, hundred, ten or a million. In a way, it is a symbol that defines nothingness.

While zero is valuable in terms of its contributions to the myriad spheres of human life, it has been used to describe mystical concepts in religious and spiritual philosophies. In Hindi zero is called 'shunya' meaning a void, the supreme state of awareness where everything comes to nothingness. Spiritual seekers perceive this state as 'mukti' or nirvana in which the soul is restored to its original state free from all impressions, influences and impurities of the earthly life. Zero looks like



an elliptical circle representing infinity the eternal cycle of creation. Everything returns to zero or nothingness before being created anew. Hence, most spiritual teachers emphasise attaining the zero state i.e. emptying the mind of all worldly thoughts and

detaching from the awareness of the physical body to attain liberation and peace.

The egg shaped symbol of the Soul or Supreme Almighty as a point of light surrounded by an oval aura also resembles a zero. In its original state,

every soul is like a zero & it has no worldly identity or role but like a seed, it has infinite power and qualities merged within, which manifest when the soul enters the field of karma in this world.

The Supreme Almighty is the eternal seed who always exists in the zero state of awareness, detached from everything yet filled with infinite divine qualities and powers that support the whole creation. It is from this supreme state of nothingness that HE creates a perfect new world whenever the creation becomes degraded and old. Like zero, the soul essentially has an even or positive character. Just as the negative of 2 is - 2 which means lacking in 2, the lack of awareness of positive qualities manifests as negative or odd traits in the soul.

The number zero has very special functions in

the calculation. Anything added or subtracted to zero remains unchanged. Any number multiplied by zero gives zero while any number divided by zero gives infinity. Interestingly, when we add zeros after a number, its value grows ten times. These specialities can be ascribed to the Almighty Supreme who remains unchanged in the cycle of eternity.

He does not enjoy the fruits of karma and nothing can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided from his powers. When we multiply our powers by linking ourselves with him, we too become a zero like him filled with all divine virtues. So let us try our best to remain in the Zero state and achieve a higher state of consciousness to live a life that is minus all worries, tension & stress.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Voluntary blood donation low in India, mandatory NAT test may ensure safety: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

While India continues to face a deficit in blood donation, making Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) mandatory may ward off the risk of infections to those requiring regular blood transfusions, said experts here on Tuesday.

National Voluntary Blood Donation is celebrated on October 1 every year to raise awareness about the importance of blood and the need for voluntary blood donation. India has consistently fallen short of the World Health Organization's recommendation that 1 per cent of the population donate blood. This is despite having a potential donor base of 402 million people.

While the country needs 14.6 million units of blood annually, it faces a deficit of around one mil-



lion units.

Myths and misconceptions about contracting infections like HIV, and lack of awareness, are the major reasons for the lack of volunteer blood donations in India, said the experts.

"Voluntary blood donation in India has seen growth, yet there remains a significant gap in meeting the national demand majorly due to lack of awareness," RishiRaj Sinha, Transfusion Medi-

cine Specialist, AIIMS Delhi, told IANS.

"People probably do not know that there are so many people out there who need blood regularly. That is why there is no motivation to give blood voluntarily, a reason why there is so much demand-supply gap," added Anubha Taneja Mukherjee, Member Secretary of the Thalassemia Patient Advocacy Group.

Further, safe blood supply to needy patients,

such as those who require repeated blood transfusions is also a concern, said the experts. This can be eased by making Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) mandatory.

"No blood is donated to any patient across India, without proper testing. But, NAT is extremely beneficial as the highly-sensitive method of testing blood can detect even the lowest amount of virus in the blood," Sinha said.

NAT test improves the safety of donor blood for transfusion, V. K. Khanna, Director, Institute of Child Health Preeti Tuli Thalassemia Unit at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told IANS.

"When compared with routinely performed tests on donor blood, NAT test reduces the chances of transmission of certain infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C by early detection of these infections in donor

blood," he added.

The expert explained that the implementation of NAT testing on donor blood would benefit everyone who receives a blood transfusion, especially those patients who receive repeated blood transfusions such as patients of thalassemia, sickle cell disease, haemophilia, aplastic anaemia, cancer, kidney disease, and others conditions.

Mukherjee told IANS that safe blood is a huge challenge, especially for patients with thalassemia who need blood every 15 to 20 days.

"Because we do not have much voluntarily donated blood, if screening is stringent, then probably that will take care of the safety aspect at least," she said, urging the government to make "NAT testing mandatory throughout India, at least in government hospitals".

Indian-origin scientist finds cancer therapy safe for patients with HIV & TB

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

In a significant breakthrough to help patients battling both HIV and tuberculosis (TB), a study led by an Indian-origin scientist found a cancer therapy that can help control TB and not interfere with combined antiretroviral therapy (cART).

cART is a treatment that uses a combination of three or more drugs to treat HIV infection.

While many cases of TB can be controlled with months of antibiotics, the infection can return in people who are immunocompromised as a result of HIV. A resurging TB infection -- responsible for more than 1.3 million deaths worldwide -- can often be deadly to these individuals.

"This is an important hurdle that this host-directed therapy had to help



patients battling both HIV and TB," said Professor Smriti Mehra, from Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed).

In the study, published in the peer-reviewed journal JCI Insight, the scientist and her team focussed on the protein, called IDO (short for Indoleamine-2,3-dioxygenase) -- a therapy currently used in cancer.

The host-directed therapy, already approved by the US FDA, blocks or inhibits an immune system protein naturally found in the body.

The team showed that IDO normally suppresses the immune system, pre-

venting it from causing excessive inflammation and organ damage.

Blocking IDO for short intervals led to more successful cancer treatments.

Mehra's team previously showed that the same approach improves control of TB in conjunction with antibiotics.

They experimented with the therapy in the current study in nonhuman primates with both TB and simian immunodeficiency virus -- the non-human primate version of HIV.

The results showed the IDO inhibitor does not interfere with cART and is safe for patients with HIV.

Animals given cART and the IDO inhibitor showed no "increase in viral load" compared to those with only cART.

The scientist also called for longer-term studies to confirm there are no unintended side effects.

Intermittent fasting may boost health of people with heart disease, diabetes

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Finding it hard to manage blood sugar levels? Take heart, limiting your food consumption to a 10-hour window daily may keep your diabetes in check, according to a study.

Following the 10-hour eating window, a type of intermittent fasting, can also help you manage metabolic syndrome -- a group of medical conditions that can lead to heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.

Risk factors attributing to the syndrome include elevated blood sugar, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol -- key factors for poor heart health.

Researchers led by the University of California San Diego and Salk Institute in the US said the findings may help people looking to address their metabolic syndrome and reduce their risk for Type 2 diabetes.



In the trial, published online in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 108 adult patients with metabolic syndrome were randomised into either a time-restricted eating group or a control group.

Both groups continued to receive standard-of-care treatments and underwent nutritional counselling on

the Mediterranean diet.

In the time-restricted eating group, each person had to reduce their eating window to 10 hours per day, which began at least one hour after waking up and ended at least three hours before going to sleep.

After three months, patients who had com-

pleted the time-restricted eating regimen showed significant improvements in key indicators of heart health.

Satchidananda Panda, a professor at the Salk Institute explained that the time of day plays an important role in human bodies' processing of sugars and fats.

When people limit their eating window, they "re-engage the body's natural wisdom and harness its daily circadian rhythms to restore metabolism and improve health".

The routine also helped people lose body weight, maintain proper body mass index (BMI), and manage abdominal trunk fat -- a type of fat closely linked to metabolic disease, the researchers said. Importantly, participants did not experience significant loss of lean muscle mass, which is often a concern with weight loss.

Sleep apnoea: How Apple Watch Series 10 can spot the risk as cases rise in India

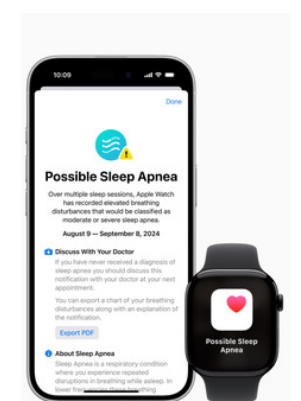
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is on the rise globally and India is also seeing a surge in the sleep disorder. More than 104 million, working-age Indians suffer from OSA, of whom 47 million have moderate-to-severe OSA, making it a major public health problem in the country.

In sleep apnoea, breathing momentarily stops during sleep, preventing the body from getting enough oxygen. The condition is estimated to impact more than 1 billion people worldwide, and in most cases, goes undiagnosed.

If left untreated, it can have important health consequences over time, including increased risk of blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and cardiac issues.

Now, 'Breathing Disturbances' is an innovative new Apple Watch metric that uses the accelerometer to detect small movements at the wrist associated with interruptions to



normal respiratory patterns during sleep.

According to the tech giant, every 30 days, Apple Watch Series 10 will analyse breathing disturbance data and notify users if it shows consistent signs of moderate to severe sleep apnoea so they can speak to their doctor about next steps, including potential diagnosis and treatment. Users can view their nightly Breathing Disturbances in the Health app on iPhone, where they are classified as elevated or not elevated.

The 'Breathing Distur-

bances' tool can also be used to assess restfulness of sleep. It can be influenced by alcohol, medications, sleep position, and more.

Those wearing the device can view their nightly Breathing Disturbances in the Health app, where they are classified as elevated or not elevated, and can be viewed over a one-month, six-month, or one-year period.

As a next measure, users can send a PDF to their doctors that shows when sleep apnoea may have occurred, three months of breathing disturbance data, and additional information.

Apple Watch Series 10 is available in both aluminium and titanium, in an array of stunning colors and finishes. Jet black is a new polished aluminum finish that is distinctively reflective and sleek, while new titanium cases -- available in natural, gold, and slate -- have a spectacular jewellery-like shine.

The wearable is nearly 10 per cent thinner than

Apple Watch Series 7, Series 8, and Series 9, and offers all-day 18-hour battery life. The larger display offers up to 30 per cent more active screen area.

The company has released watchOS 11, bringing powerful health and fitness insights, along with even more personalisation, intelligence, and ways to stay connected.

Moreover, the Smart Stack and Photos face use intelligence to offer a more individualised experience, and Check In, the Translate app, and new capabilities for the double tap gesture come to Apple Watch for more convenience and ways to stay connected.

It has new S10 chip engineered to achieve a thinner profile, and designed for performance, power efficiency, and intelligence. The S10 SIP and built-in 4-core Neural Engine allow for intelligent features users rely on every day, including the double tap gesture, on-device Siri, dictation, and automatic workout detection.

IIT Madras study shows mild laser heating can boost drug delivery for eye treatments

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, OCT 1

Drugs injected in the human eye can be better delivered to the target region through convection caused by mild laser heating, said researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras on Tuesday.

In their research, published in the peer-reviewed *Wiley Heat Transfer* journal, the team used simulation and modelling studies to analyse the efficacy of various types of treatments on the human eye, focusing on heat and mass transfer.

In patients who have undergone retinal laser surgery, most of the original gel-like vitreous humour could become replaced by body secretions that are less viscous than the original gel.

After surgery, drugs are often injected directly into the vitreous region to treat the retina. To reach the retina, the drug must move through the liquid. Natural diffusion is a slow process, and the drug may take several hours to days to reach effective levels at the target location.

Prof. Arunn Narasimhan, Department of Mechanical Engineering,

IIT Madras, designed an experiment using a glass eye mimic geometrically similar to the human eye, water, and silicone oil for the vitreous liquid and a heater to simulate laser heating.

The researchers injected a dye as a drug mimic at specific points in the vitreous region of the eye, and measured concentrations at different retinal locations with and without heating the vitreous liquid.

"While with natural diffusion alone, the drug mimic took 12 hours to achieve effective concentration at the target region

of the retina, heating the vitreous liquid reduced it to just 12 minutes," said Shirinvas Vibuthe, Graduate Student, at IIT Madras.

With nearly 11 million individuals afflicted by retinal disorders in India, indigenous original research of this nature holds promise for the development and advancement of laser-based treatments for various eye diseases, the study showed.

Laser-based retinal treatments are increasingly being used to treat diseases like retinal tears, diabetic retinopathy, macular oedema, and retinal

vein occlusion.

Since the retina is the region of the eye that contains blood vessels and nerves, such treatments must be performed carefully and with precision, the team said.

"Using glass-eye experiments and bioheat simulations to analyse invasive treatments in the human eye, we have shown that mild targeted heating can enhance drug delivery to the retina.

The medical community needs to take this further and implement it in treatments of retinal diseases," Narasimhan said.

Chief Minister Lalduhoma inaugurates a state-of-the-art 3D Dental Laboratory

AGENCIES
AIZAWL, OCT 1

Chief Minister Lalduhoma inaugurated a state-of-the-art 3D Dental Laboratory at Serchhip College in central Mizoram on Tuesday, marking a significant boost to dental services in the state, particularly for patients needing dentures. The facility has been funded under the PM DevINE scheme.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Minister lauded the efforts behind the project and emphasized the laboratory's role in improving healthcare accessibility for local residents. "This facility rep-

resents a leap forward in healthcare accessibility," he said, adding that the laboratory will not only serve Serchhip but is also part of a broader initiative to establish similar facilities across all northeastern states, interconnected through AMTRON in Guwahati. He highlighted the potential of telemedicine and health technologies using 5G connectivity. During the event, the Chief Minister inaugurated a Mobile ECG Device and a Drip Monitoring System at the District Hospital, further enhancing patient care. He noted that construction of the new hospital, funded at a total cost

of Rs 71 crore -- including Rs 21 crore from PGCIL -- was progressing smoothly. The event also saw the presentation of certificates to 15 Serchhip youths who recently completed a 45-day hospital-ity training programme at IHM Delhi under the NEC digital tourism project.

The gathering included technical insights from Ashish Anand, Adviser to AMTRON, on the potential of 3D and 5G technology. Dr. A.S. Lorho S. Pfoze, former Vice Chairman of the NE MPs Forum, and Sherry Lalthangzo, Economic Adviser to NEC, also shared their perspectives.

CanKids KidsCan & NRS Medical College organise childhood cancer survivor meet

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, OCT 1

On the occasion of childhood cancer awareness month, CanKids KidsCan, the National Society for Change for Childhood Cancer in India, organised a survivor meet in collaboration with the Hematology Department of NRS Medical College and Hospital,

here on Monday. The occasion also saw the launch of Passport2Life Survivorship Services in Bengal. The Passport2Life program is designed to sensitise and educate survivors about late side effects, health impacts and long term fall out of their treatment through clinics, forums and workshops. The program creates an online and offline pass-

port for survivors to access their own records, manage their late effects as well as a community portal for support and reintegration back into society. Childhood Cancer survivors from CanKids shared their inspiring journeys with the audience emphasizing the need for a holistic approach which goes far beyond just medical treatment.

Public spending on health overtakes out-of-pocket expenditure in India: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

In a first, public spending on health has overtaken the out-of-pocket expenditure in India, according to the Union Health Ministry's National Health Account (NHA) estimates for India 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The report, recently released by NITI Aayog, showed that the share of out-of-pocket expenditure out of total health expen-

diture declined to 39.4 per cent in 2021-22. It was 64.2 per cent in 2013-14.

At the same time, the share of Government Health Expenditure (GHE) in the overall GDP of the country surged significantly to 48 per cent in 2021-22, from 28.6 per cent in 2013-14.

The historic shift in health policy is driven by increased public spending. It will ease the financial burden on families, the

report said.

This will also "ensure financial protection and boost universal health coverage for citizens", it added.

"For the first time in Indian History public spending on #Health overtakes out-of-pocket expenditure proves PM @narendramodi govt commitment to Healthier Citizens per capita govt expenditure on #healthcare tripled from 2013-14 to 2021-22,"

said Prof Shamika Ravi, Member Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, in a post on X.

Further, in terms of per capita, GHE tripled -- from Rs. 1,108 to Rs. 3,169 between 2014-15 to 2021-22. "The government spending on health between 2019-20 and 2020-21 increased by 16.6 per cent, while between 2020-21 and 2021-22, it grew by an unprecedented rate of 37 per cent," the estimates

showed.

As per the estimates, Total Health Expenditure increased to 8.7 per cent in 2021-22 from 5.7 per cent in 2014-15.

The report also noted a marked increase in Social Security Expenditure (SSE) on healthcare -- which includes government-funded health insurance, medical reimbursement to government employees, and social health insurance programmes.

MAHAYUTI WILL RETURN TO POWER; WORK FOR SOLO BJP GOVT IN MAHA IN 2029: HM SHAH

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 1

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday expressed confidence that the Mahayuti (grand alliance) comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP will come back to power after the forthcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra.

However, he gave an ambitious target to the BJP workers to muster a grand victory for the party in the 2029 Assembly elections and form a solo BJP government in Maharashtra. In his address at the interactive meeting with party functionaries at Dadar in north central Mumbai, HM Shah said, "That the Mahayuti government is retaining power in the state is quite certain. Only governments that do good work win elections. We have formed the third

government in a row at the Centre. No party has the strength to stop the Mahayuti from coming back to power again in the state."

HM Shah asked the party functionaries not to think of pre-poll surveys. His message to the party workers was to step up outreach with voters and increase booth-wise voting percentage for the victory of Mahayuti in the state.

"As there is a government, there will be resentment against it. Try to remove the resentment against the Corporators, Legislators and MPs. We need ten workers at each booth. From Dussehra till the end of the campaign, these activists will continue to move in their given booths.

"Get like-minded voters to vote. Make at least 20 people BJP members at each booth. Do not ask for



votes while making them party members. After becoming a member, they will automatically understand the importance of voting," said HM Shah.

He asked the BJP workers to implement the election plan that the Maharashtra BJP will come up with.

"Deliver that plan at Mandal and Ward level. Victory will be yours," he claimed.

"For the first time in the history of the last 60

years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the record of forming the government for the third time in a row. Maharashtra Assembly election is an election that will change the state and direction of the country and it will be won by the Mahayuti," he said.

He further asked the party workers to increase voting by 10 per cent.

"I rose from an activist to the post of National President. So I am very happy when I interact with

workers. Some elections determine the direction of politics in this country. Speaking from my experience, the election of Maharashtra will change the direction and condition of the country's politics. No political party has won three times in a row in the past," said HM Shah.

He said that the BJP was not in power to merely rule but to work on ideology, adding that the party came to power to construct the Ram temple and scrap Article 370.

"After winning the election in Maharashtra, the Uniform Civil Code will be implemented in the country. No one can stop us from bringing the Uniform Civil Code if we come to power in Maharashtra," HM Shah added.

He told party workers that Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

was quite capable of solving the problems in Maharashtra.

"Terrorism and Naxalism were eliminated in the last ten years after the BJP came to power. Due to the leadership of PM Modi, the prestige of Indians in the world has increased," he opined.

"Despite the BJP winning only two seats in the Lok Sabha, not a single worker had left the party. This is our history. The activists of the 1980s knew that they were going to lose the elections but they did not care. We have come to build a great India in politics, not for Prime Minister or any other post. Governments come and go. Parties leave policies and ideas. Our government lasted for ten years. But we have not given up thoughts or policies," claimed HM Shah.

Green budget will be presented in Rajasthan from next year: Deputy CM

AGENCIES
JAIPUR, OCT 1

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari on Tuesday announced that the green budget will be presented in Rajasthan from next year.

She also expressed her happiness as 710 forest guards were imparted training out of a total of 1450 forest guards and said that women's power is attaining success in different fields.

"In today's era, ecotourism is also important along with tourism. The Rajasthan government is working with determination to promote ecotourism and wildlife tourism," she said while addressing the 119th Forest Guard Basic Training Session Inauguration Ceremony organised under the joint aegis of Forestry Satellite

Training Institute, Rajasthan Forestry and Wildlife Training Institute, Jaipur and Rajasthan Police Academy, Jaipur.

The Deputy Chief Minister added that women's power is scripting success in every field.

"Out of 1450 forest guards, in this forest guard basic training, 710 are women forest guards which is a matter of pride," she said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also motivated the forest guards to receive three-month training and said that preventing deforestation, preventing hunting of wildlife, providing security to wildlife, expanding forests, using modern techniques, protecting forests from fire, preventing encroachment on forests, and other such responsibilities should be fulfilled promptly.

Ahead of Haryana polls, controversial godman Ram Rahim gets parole, third this year

AGENCIES
CHANDIGARH, OCT 1

Ahead of the Assembly polls in Haryana, controversial Dera Sacha Sauda sect chief Gurmehar Ram Rahim Singh, who's serving a 20-year jail sentence for raping two of his disciples, on Tuesday got 20-day parole, the third time this year.

However, he has been barred from staying in the state. This will be Ram Rahim Singh's 11th parole or furlough in the last four years.

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini cleared his parole application and forwarded to the Prisons Department, which forwarded it to the Divisional Commissioner of Rohtak.

He will be released soon after getting the mandatory clearance from the local administration in Uttar Pradesh's Bagpath, where he will stay during the parole. Ram Rahim was patronised by politi-



cal leaders and parties in Punjab and Haryana for nearly two decades due to his ability to influence the votes of his followers.

He had sought parole, citing the death anniversary of his father Maghar Singh on October 5, which is observed as Parmarthi Diwas, as the reason for the grant of parole.

It is learnt that the Election Commission on Monday approved the parole petition with three conditions: He is prohibited from entering Haryana during this period, he cannot engage in any political activity, and he must refrain from participating in election-related activities even through social media.

After the Election Commission permitted the state government to "consider" Ram Rahim's plea, the state Home Department forwarded the permission to caretaker Chief Minister Saini for approval.

Objecting to the grant of parole, Anshul Chhatrapati, son of slain journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati, for whose murder Ram Rahim is serving a life sentence, in a communication to the Election Commission, had said on six occasions, out of 10 paroles and furloughs, Ram Rahim was released just before an election.

"For the first time, he got 21 days of furlough in February 2022 before the Punjab Assembly elections. Then he got 30 days of parole in June 2022 before the Haryana municipal corporation elections. After that, in October 2022, he again got 40 days of parole before the Adampur Assembly by-election in Haryana.

PRASADAM ROW: PAWAN KALYAN BEGINS HIS JOURNEY ON FOOT TO TRIUMALA TEMPLE

AGENCIES
TIRUPATI, OCT 1

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday evening began his journey to Tirumala temple on foot. After performing puja at Alipiri Padala Mandapam, he began his journey to the famous hill shrine.

He will end his 11-day 'Praschit Deeksha' (penance) for alleged adulteration of animal fat in Tirupati laddu after darshan at Sri Venkateswara temple, also known as Balaji temple, on Wednesday.

A large number of leaders and workers of Jana Sena and its allies Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) reached Alipiri to welcome the actor-politician.

The Jana Sena chief began his foot march amid tight security by the police and Tirumala Tirupati



Devasthanam (TTD).

After darshan, Pawan Kalyan will also visit Anna Prasadam centre, where devotees are offered free meals.

Pawan Kalyan began the 'Deeksha' at the Sri Dasavata Vankateswara Swamy temple in Nambur, Guntur district on September 22 after performing puja and rituals conducted by the priests.

The actor-politician said after the Deeksha, he would seek the blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy in Tirumala to pray to God to give him the strength to cleanse the sins committed by past rulers.

The Deputy Chief Minister said he was personally pained over the use of ghee adulterated with fish oil and animal fat for Laddu Prasadam and hence

he undertook the 'Praschit Deeksha'.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had claimed on September 18 that ghee adulterated with animal fat was used in making laddu prasadam during the YSR Congress party regime.

The state government also constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations.

However, on Tuesday, Director General of Police Dwaraka Tirumala Rao announced that SIT was temporarily suspending its probe following the Supreme Court order.

The Supreme Court had said on Monday that there is currently nothing to show that animal fat was used in the preparation of Tirupati laddus during the previous YSR Congress regime led by (former Chief Minister) Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

It verbally asked SIT to "hold its hands" till October 3, the next day of the hearing.

The apex court said Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu should have 'kept the gods away from politics' before rushing in to make public statements based on unsure facts that lard was used to prepare the laddus in the previous regime.

Headed by Guntur range Inspector General of Police (IG) Sarvashreshth Tripathi, the SIT conducted probe for last three days. On Monday, it inspected the ghee tankers and the lab at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD).

The SIT spoke to TTD officials concerned about the method they adopt to check the quality of the materials they procure. They enquired about the quality check procedure followed in respect of ghee.

Why Mayawati's nephew Akash Anand looks fit for BSP's CM face in 2027 UP elections

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati, a political heavyweight and a formidable player in Uttar Pradesh politics till a decade ago, is facing an existential crisis on the back of the party's worst-ever performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and also consistent decline in the Hindi heartland.

Today, the Dalit-centric party faces an uphill task of not just regaining its lost clout and foothold in Uttar Pradesh but also saving itself from the ignominy of losing its national party status.

The party which once commanded 15-20 per cent vote share in Uttar Pradesh saw a drastic drop of about 10 per cent in both 2024 LS polls and 2022 Assembly elections. Today, the party doesn't have a single MP in Lok Sabha and has a lone MLA in the UP Assembly.

As the BSP supremo looks to revive the party's sagging fortunes, the meteoric rise of her nephew Akash Anand, since his political debut in 2017 holds much significance. Barring a few setbacks including his sacking as national coordinator



during the 2024 General Elections, he has carved himself a place in the party as Mayawati's 'sole' political heir.

Besides being the nephew of the BSP chief, the 29-year-old leader is seen by the people and the political watchers as the frontrunner for the party's Chief Ministerial candidate in the 2027 UP Assembly polls.

Many recent developments show his rising stature in the party and also earning the de-facto successor tag of Mayawati, especially at a time when the party battles against the odds and strives for survival. Akash Anand was sacked in May and reinstated as BSP national coordinator in June this year, with the BSP supremo also urging party leaders to 'give him more respect

than earlier'.

His fiery and vitriolic campaign against the ruling party in 2024 was seen as the reason behind his 'momentary' shunting but today, he is back at the helm as the party's most bankable and vocal leader and star campaigner during elections, after Mayawati. He has been spearheading the party's campaign, countering the political rivals and also occupying enough media space with his exploits.

Party insiders say that Akash Anand's close coordination with senior leaders including Kanshi Ram's associates as well as young Turks alike, has helped him garner goodwill within the party. He has infused fresh energy into the party's rank and cadre and his 'positive politics' on issues of Dalits

and marginalised classes has only gone to strike the right chord with the masses.

As the BSP faces a tough challenge from the Bhim Army and its chief Chandrashekhar Azad in seizing the Dalit vote bank nationwide, the vigour and vitality of young Akash Anand becomes all the more important. Chandrashekhar Azad's rising clout in Uttar Pradesh, as he won the Nagina Lok Sabha seat in 2024 polls, will only call for greater consolidation of BSP's support base under Akash Anand.

The signals emanating from BSP brass also shed light on Anand's towering stature within the party.

In Uttarakhanda Assembly by-polls, Akash Anand was one of the party's star campaigners. For the upcoming UP by-polls, slated towards the end of the year, the party has expressed its willingness to contest on all 10 seats. This assumes importance in light of the fact that the BSP has, conventionally never given weightage to by-elections, to date.

In the ongoing Haryana Assembly elections, Mayawati's nephew is leading from the front. He has hit the hustings and is holding a series of poll rallies to

enthusiasm the party workers. He is personally meeting and greeting party leaders and workers and seeking to garner a moderate share of votes by striking a deal with the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), led by former Haryana Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala.

On the ground, he is working to increase the appeal of BSP leaders for better resonance with the voters. Given that he commands the confidence and trust of the BSP supremo, he also has the wherewithal to bring out desired changes in the party.

Besides elections, previous instances at the party organisation level also hinted at his likely bigger role soon.

Having debuted in politics in 2017, Akash Anand has often accompanied Mayawati on most important occasions. He shared the stage with Mayawati in a 2019 joint press conference, which she addressed with bete noire SP president Akhilesh Yadav to announce their pre-poll alliance for the 2019 LS polls.

He was featured among the party's star campaigners along with Mayawati and party general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra in that election.

JD-U's K.C. Tyagi supports Centre's move to detain Wangchuk ahead of Gandhi Jayanti

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Senior Janata Dal-United leader K.C. Tyagi on Tuesday supported the Centre's move to detain environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk and his supporters, saying that it would be illegal for any organisation or person to protest or gather at Rajghat ahead of Gandhi Jayanti.

The detention has received criticism from the Congress and AAP.

Wangchuk, along with his supporters was detained at Delhi's Singhu border while marching to Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. The activist and over 100 people from Ladakh were headed to the national capital to demand Sixth Schedule status for the Union Territory.

Talking to IANS, Tyagi said, "Gandhi Jayanti is on October 2. On that day, President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and politicians from various parties will come to pay tribute to Gandhi. In such a situation, it would be illegal for any organisation or person to protest or gather there."



Tyagi asserted that for the above reason, the Central government has stopped Wangchuk and his supporters.

Meanwhile, several opposition leaders, including Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal strongly criticised the BJP government for detaining the environmentalist.

Kharge also described the action against Wangchuk as "cowardly" and "undemocratic".

"The arrogance of the Modi Govt consumed in power has detained a group of citizens from Ladakh peacefully marching to Delhi. This is nothing but a cowardly action and is deeply undemocratic in nature. In Ladakh, there is a growing wave of public support, with widespread calls for safeguarding tribal communities under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Instead, the Modi Govt wants to exploit the ecologically sensitive Himalayan glaciers of Ladakh to benefit its crony friends. This incident tells us that the fight against Modi Govt's brazen despotism is far from over," Kharge said on X.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also criticised the BJP on X and said that the BJP would not gain anything from it.

"Those who are afraid of peace are scared from within. The BJP government cannot achieve anything by obstructing the peaceful Delhi visit of environmentalist and Ladakh well-wisher Sonam Wangchuk. If the Centre does not listen to the voice of the border, it will be called political deafness," Yadav stated.

Kejriwal shared Wangchuk's video on X saying: "Sometimes they stop farmers from coming to Delhi, sometimes they stop people from Ladakh. Is Delhi the property of one person? Delhi is one country's capital. Everyone has the right to come to Delhi. This is completely wrong. Why are they afraid of unarmed peaceful people?"

South Korea displays 'monster' Hyunmoo-5 missile for 1st time

AGENCIES
SEOONGNAM, OCT 1

South Korea showcased its most powerful missile for the first time on Tuesday as it marked Armed Forces Day in an apparent warning against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

Two mobile missile launchers carrying the Hyunmoo-5, a centerpiece of South Korea's retaliation plan against a major North Korean attack, were among military equipment displayed at a ceremony at Seoul Air Base in Seongnam, just south of the capital, Yonhap news agency reported.

The ground-to-ground ballistic missile, dubbed a monster for its size, had been shrouded in secrecy due to its strategic importance. It is known to be able to carry a warhead weighing about 8 tons and capable of destroying underground bunkers.

South Korea has developed a series of Hyunmoo missiles, including ballistic and cruise-type ones. It unveiled the Hyunmoo-4



during last year's Armed Forces Day ceremony. That missile, however, can only deliver a payload of about two tons in comparison.

During this year's ceremony, the 9-axled transporter erector launchers crawled across the tarmac, each of them carrying a canister estimated to be about 20 metres long, apparently housing the "high-power" and "high-precision" missile known to be able to target anywhere in North Korea.

In another show of

force, a US B-1B heavy bomber flew over the air base, alongside two F-15K jets, in a display of the US security commitment to South Korea. North Korea earlier warned of taking a "corresponding" measure against the deployment of US strategic assets.

Some 5,000 troops and hundreds of pieces of military equipment were gathered for the ceremony, marking the 76th founding anniversary of the country's armed forces this year.

Special operations

troops showed off their infiltration skills as they jumped out of a transport aircraft over the air base, while Apache attack helicopters fired flares and demonstrated evasion manoeuvres as Richard Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" blasted in the background.

The military also showed off various air assets, including the KF-21 fighter currently under development and F-35A stealth jets, while the Air Force's Black Eagles aerobatic team performed a

series of air manoeuvres. Later in the day, the country held a military parade in downtown Seoul for the second year in a row.

During the parade, K2 tanks, K9 self-propelled howitzers and other military hardware moved in formation from Sungnyemun Gate to Gwanghwamun Square in central Seoul, while various aircraft, including the Apaches and the F-35As, flew over the procession.

Spectators lined the traffic-controlled Sejongno Street running through downtown Seoul to watch the waves of troops and military equipment.

It marked the second parade of its kind under the Yoon Suk Yeol government. The country held one last year in time for Armed Forces Day for the first time since 2013.

This year's ceremony came as North Korea has ramped up tensions in recent weeks ahead of the upcoming US election, disclosing its uranium enrichment facility, launching ballistic missiles and flying

trash-carrying balloons across the border.

The defence ministry said Tuesday's event was organised to show its "overwhelming" capabilities to powerfully retaliate against potential enemy provocations, backed by the country's three-axis deterrence structure.

The three-pronged system refers to the Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation, an operational plan to incapacitate the North Korean leadership in a major conflict; the Kill Chain preemptive strike platform; and the Korea Air and Missile Defence system. Officials said this year's ceremony also mobilised an expanded lineup of assets that require the teaming of manned and unmanned operations, such as quadraped robots as well as an unmanned submarine and surface vehicle. The country has usually marked its military founding anniversary in time for Armed Forces Day, which commemorates the service of military personnel and falls on October 1.

Malaysia plans to create national cloud policy, AI regulatory framework

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 1

Malaysia plans to create a national cloud policy and artificial intelligence (AI) regulatory framework, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Tuesday.

The national cloud policy will focus on four core areas, namely boosting public service innovation and efficiency, promoting economic competitiveness and growth, strengthening user trust and data security and empowering citizens through digital inclusivity, he said at a ground-breaking ceremony for Google's new \$2 billion data centre and cloud region in the country.

"We aim to position Malaysia as a hub for generative AI and investments from tech partners will be critical in building a robust and secure digital infrastructure," Anwar said.

In line with efforts to

position Malaysia as a competitive player in the global AI landscape, he said the government is establishing the National AI Office to coordinate all initiatives related to AI technology.

Anwar said the government aims to achieve several key outcomes in the next 12 months including to complete its AI Technology Action Plan (2026 to 2030) and the establishment of a regulatory framework to increase adoption of ethical and sustainable AI technology.

He noted the government will also expedite AI adoption in key sectors across Malaysia, as reported by Xinhua news agency.

"By leveraging partnerships with industry leaders, and strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders, Malaysia can realise these goals and establish its role as a leading AI-driven nation in ASEAN," he added.

Shigeru Ishiba formally elected Japan's PM

AGENCIES
TOKYO, OCT 1

Shigeru Ishiba, the leader of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), has been elected as the country's next Prime Minister in a parliamentary vote on Tuesday. He will succeed Fumio Kishida.

Both the lower and upper houses of the Japanese parliament endorsed Ishiba who won the LDP presidency last week. His confirmation sets the stage for a general election on October 27, despite opposition criticism over the timing of the polls, which caused a last-minute delay in Tuesday's parliamentary vote. His leadership will be marked by challenges as Ishiba will have to work hard to restore the voter



trust in the scandal-hit LDP, local media reported.

Ishiba emerged victorious in his fifth attempt at the LDP leadership, defeating Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi in a tightly contested runoff last week. Ishiba garnered 215 votes, surpassing Takaichi's 194.

Earlier on Monday, Ishiba announced plans to dissolve the lower house of the parliament on October

9, with a General Election scheduled for October 27.

His decision to call a snap election also drew a backlash from opposition parties, as they called it "disrespectful" and "unconstitutional" for him to make an announcement even before his election as the Prime Minister.

Upon winning the LDP leadership, Ishiba committed himself to restoring trust and transparency within the party, emphasising the need for humility, fairness, and adherence to rules.

His speech after the vote counting was grounded in the promise to make Japan a safer and more stable country. "I will dedicate myself to making Japan a safer country," he declared, signalling his

intent to prioritise national security in his administration.

At a press conference following his victory, Ishiba stressed the importance of gaining the trust of the public and the need for accountability within the government.

Earlier in the day, Kishida decided on the en masse resignation of his Cabinet.

"Japan is facing a critical moment both at home and abroad. I sincerely hope that under the new Cabinet, important policies that will pave the way for Japan's future will be vigorously implemented. I ask for your continued support for the next Cabinet and the new Prime Minister," the outgoing PM said in a statement.

Bangladesh extends int'l bid deadline for dozens of offshore oil, gas blocks

AGENCIES
DHAKA, OCT 1

The Bangladeshi government has extended the deadline to December for submitting bids for dozens of offshore oil and gas blocks.

The extension, announced recently by the state-owned Petrobangla (Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation), is aimed at providing international companies with a more accommodating timeline to prepare and submit proposals for 24 offshore blocks spread across 15 deep and nine shallow waters, Xinhua news agency reported.

Petrobangla in a notice said it extended the bid submission deadline to December 9, 2024 -- a three-month extension from the initial deadline of September 9.

The time extension notice posted on the Petrobangla web-



site also mentioned that all other terms and conditions of the bidding notice issued earlier will remain unchanged.

Petrobangla Chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker expressed the hope that more multinational companies will be able to join the bidding for the exploration of oil and gas in the Bay

of Bengal following the extension of the deadline for submitting bids.

In a promotional seminar on May 8 this year, Petrobangla told reporters that seven international oil companies purchased bid documents, showing their eagerness to invest in oil and gas exploration in the Bay of Bengal.

Yemen's Houthis claim drone raid on Israel

AGENCIES
SANA'A, OCT 1

Yemen's armed Houthi group said on Tuesday they launched drone strikes on "military targets" in Israel's Jaffa area and its port city of Eilat.

"We bombed a military target in the Jaffa area with a Jaffa drone, and we hit military targets in Eilat with four Sammad-4 drones," Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sare'e said in a statement aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

The spokesman said the attacks were in support of Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon, vowing to attack more, Xinhua news



agency reported.

Since November 2023, the Houthi group has been targeting Israeli cities, ports, and ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to show solidarity with Palestinians amid the Israel-Hamas war.

On Sunday, Israeli air forces struck power stations and fuel tanks in

Houthi-controlled Hodeidah in response to a Houthi rocket attack on Tel Aviv on Friday, which was intercepted, according to Israeli media.

The escalation followed last week's killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah by Israeli defence forces in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Kenya launches new health insurance scheme to improve service delivery

AGENCIES
NAIROBI, OCT 1

Kenya's Ministry of Health on Tuesday oversaw the launch of a new health insurance scheme called the Social Health Insurance Fund, with senior officials saying that it will promote equity, fairness and better service delivery.

Debra Mulongo Barasa, cabinet secretary of the Ministry of Health, presided over the launch in Kakamega County in western Kenya. She said that the new scheme will help reduce the financial burden on citizens seeking critical services such as dialysis, chemotherapy, dental care and surgery.



According to Barasa, more than two million Kenyans have already enrolled in the new scheme, which requires a minimum monthly contribution of 300 shillings (about \$2.32), Xinhua news agency reported.

"We have already begun

activation of the Social Health Insurance Fund in both public and private hospitals, ensuring that registered citizens receive quality services, including consultations, diagnosis and treatment, at affordable costs," Barasa said.

Kenya initiated the tran-

sition to the new health insurance scheme in July this year, following concerns that the previous state-managed National Health Insurance Fund had failed to distribute benefits equitably.

Under the new scheme, all salaried employees will contribute 2.75 per cent of their monthly income, while the government will subsidise healthcare costs for low-income earners and the unemployed.

Barasa said that the new health insurance scheme will pool resources to help achieve universal health coverage and reduce out-of-pocket expenses for terminally ill patients.

Primary healthcare at grassroots-level facilities

will be fully covered by the government, while advanced services like chemotherapy, dialysis, optical and dental care will be heavily subsidised through contributions from high-income earners.

Harry Kimtai, principal secretary of the State Department for Medical Services, said that the Social Health Authority, a state-run agency, will manage the new scheme, which was developed following studies and consultations with key stakeholders.

Kimtai said that monthly contributions will be based on individuals' income levels, with high earners paying up to 27,000 shillings.

Thailand's manufacturing sector expanded at slower rate in September

AGENCIES
BANGKOK, OCT 1

Thailand's manufacturing sector maintained its upturn in September but expanded at a slower rate due to lower increases in output and new orders, a survey showed on Tuesday.

The Southeast Asian country's manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) was recorded at 50.4 last month, easing from 52.0 in August, signalling an overall improvement in manufactur-



ing sector performance and marking the slowest growth in four months, according to S&P Global.

A PMI reading above 50 indicates expansion in the manufacturing

sector, while a reading below 50 reflects contraction, Xinhua news agency reported.

Despite both experiencing weakened expansion rates, new orders

rose for the third-consecutive month and output grew for the fifth straight survey. This resulted in manufacturers being cautious about purchasing volumes, while backlogs of work rose for the fifth month running, S&P Global said in a statement.

Manufacturers continued to expand their workforces at a rapid pace, with employment growth remaining close to the survey-record high set in June, said Trevor Balchin, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Uzbek President highlights priorities for expanding partnership with World Bank

AGENCIES
TASHKENT, OCT 1

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev met with Antonella Bassani, Vice President of the Europe and Central Asia Region at the World Bank, highlighting the priorities for expanding partnership, the President's press service reported.

The report discussed issues regarding the further expansion of strategic cooperation with the World Bank Group and support from the leading



international financial institution for the reform program in Uzbekistan, according to Xinhua news agency.

It was noted during the conversation that the current high level and fruitful nature of bilateral cooper-

ation was met with deep satisfaction.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has become one of the bank's largest partners, with the project portfolio increasing several times and exceeding \$12 billion, the report said.

According to the report, priorities for further expanding the partnership include poverty reduction, the transformation of state-owned enterprises and banks, decarbonisation, support for WTO accession, and others.

Particular attention was given to programs for urbanisation, comprehensive regional development, modernisation of energy and irrigation infrastructure, and support for the private sector, the press service reported.

SEBI approves new and safe asset class under Mutual Fund framework

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 1

The SEBI board has approved the introduction of a new investment product under the existing Mutual Fund framework that aims to curtail the proliferation of unregistered and unauthorised investment schemes/entities, which often promise unrealistic high returns and exploit investors' expectations for better yields, leading to potential financial risks.

According to the markets regulator, the new asset class is intended to bridge the gap between Mutual Funds and Portfolio Management Services in terms of flexibility in



portfolio construction.

As per SEBI, the new Mutual Fund product aims to provide investors with a professionally managed and well regulated product that offers greater flexibility, higher risk-taking capabilities for

higher ticket size, while ensuring that appropriate safeguards and risk mitigation measures are in place.

"For instance, safeguards for the new product will include; no leverage, no investment in unlisted and unrated instruments

beyond those already permitted for Mutual Funds and derivatives exposure limited to 25 per cent of AUM for the purposes other than hedging and rebalancing.

Offerings under the new product will be referred to as 'Investment Strategies', to maintain clear distinction from the schemes offered under the traditional Mutual Funds.

The minimum investment limit for the new product will be Rs 10 lakh per investor across all investment strategies of the new product in a particular AMC.

Meanwhile, a draft circular relating to tighter derivatives regulations are expected to be issued

soon, according to reports, as individual traders in the futures and options (F&O) market are incurring heavy losses.

According to a recent SEBI report, the aggregate losses of individual traders in the equity futures and options segment exceeded Rs 1.8 lakh crore over the three-year period between FY22 and FY24. Over nine out of 10 individual traders in the equity futures and options segment continue to incur significant losses.

SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch also mentioned at a recent event that the markets regulator is on the verge of bringing MF lite regulations and has had detailed consultations on the subject.

US now has 5,388 data centres globally, India set for next boom

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1



As rising cloud and AI adoption trigger demand for more data centres, the United States currently leads with 5,388 data centres globally, 10 times more than China and most European countries, data showed on Tuesday, as India gears up for a data centre boom.

As per data presented by Stocklytics.com, the US constitutes 70 per cent more than the next 10 largest data centre markets combined.

Germany at second spot has 520 data centres and the UK is third with 512 such facilities. China is the fourth player in the global data centre landscape with 449 listed data

centres.

Canada, France, and Australia follow with 336, 315, and 307 data centres, respectively.

As per Cloudscene data, Japan is the last country on the top 10 list, with 219 operational data centres.

The surge of AI technologies, which require significant computing power and storage, has fuelled the data centre boom, helping the market

grow by 52 per cent since 2017 and hit a \$416 billion value.

The global data centre market is likely to grow by a CAGR of 8.45 per cent in the following years and become a half-a-trillion-dollar industry by 2027.

As per Statista Market Insights, the US data centre market will generate over \$120 billion, or about 30 per cent of total market revenue, in 2024.

Kia India logs 10 pc sales growth in July-Sep, Tata Motors clocks 13 pc decline YoY

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1



Automaker Kia India on Tuesday said it registered sales of 66,553 units in the second quarter this fiscal (July-September period), marking almost 10 per cent growth over the April-June period of this year.

For the month of September, the company posted 23,523-unit sales, over 17 per cent growth (year-on-year) compared to 20,022 units sold in the same month last year.

Sonet continued as best-selling model, with 10,335 units sold, followed by the Seltos and Carens, with 6,959 and 6,217 units, respectively, the company said in a statement.

"This success is a testament to the unparalleled customer experience our team consistently delivers. We have also prioritised

expanding our touchpoints, ensuring that our best-in-class mobility solutions are accessible to all our customers across the country," said Hardeep Singh Brar, Senior VP and Head of Sales and Marketing, Kia India.

Meanwhile, Tata Motors registered sales of 2,15,034 vehicles in the domestic and international market in the July-September period (Q2 FY25), compared to 2,43,024 units during Q2 FY24 - a 13 per cent YoY decline. Total commercial

vehicle sales were 84,281 units (down 19 per cent YoY) while passenger vehicle sales stood at 1,30,753 units, (down six per cent) in the quarter. According to Girish Wagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors, slowdown in infrastructure project execution, reduction in mining activity and an overall drop in fleet utilisation due to heavy rains resulted in the HCV segment record a 25 per cent YoY decline in Q2 FY25 and the ILMCV segment register a 11 per cent decline.

Resilient domestic growth, continued policy support give India Inc a strong credit boost

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Leading credit ratings agencies on Tuesday highlighted the sustained strengthening of India Inc's credit quality, reflecting resilient domestic growth supported by the government's continued policy support.

Crisil Ratings upgraded 506 companies in the first half of the current fiscal compared to 184 downgrades, which is an upgrade-to-downgrade ratio of 2.75 from 1.79 times in the second half of last fiscal.

The annualised upgrade rate of 14.5 per cent outpaced the average of 11 per cent for the past decade, while the downgrade rate of 5.3 per cent was lower than the 10-year average of 6.5 per cent. Notably, the

rating reaffirmation rate continued to be stable at 80 per cent.

"Rating upgrades continued to surpass downgrades, reflecting resilient domestic growth, supported by the government's continued policy support towards infrastructure build, the revival of rural consumption demand and leaner corporate balance sheets," said Subodh Rai, Managing Director, CRISIL Ratings.

As many as 38 per cent of the upgrades were from the infrastructure and linked sectors.

The primary drivers include acquisitions by strong sponsors and lower-than-expected debt, particularly in the renewables sector, reduction in project risks as road projects achieve critical milestones, progressive order

execution in construction and a healthy order book in the capital goods sector, Rai explained.

ICRA said that the overall credit conditions in the corporate and the financial sector have remained conducive in the past three years, which has contributed to a much higher proportion of rating upgrades than downgrades.

The rating actions in the first half of the current fiscal (FY25) marked a continuation of these trends.

The credit ratio of ICRA-assigned ratings, defined as the ratio of the number of upgrades to that of downgrades, stood at 2.2 times in H1 FY 2025 (2.1 times in FY 2024), an outcome of the largely benign operating environment, demand buoyancy in select sectors, improve-

ment in risk profiles as assets transitioned from project-stage to operational-stage, and a broader trend in de-leveraging.

K. Ravichandran, Chief Rating Officer, ICRA said that the credit quality of India Inc remains steady, and in the past six months, there hasn't been an imperative to change the outlook on any sector.

Improving business fundamentals, and not mere industry tailwinds, has been the primary driver of rating upgrades over the years and H1 FY2025 was no exception.

Around 50 per cent of the rating upgrades were driven by the growth in profits supported by economies of scale, or the operationalisation of projects and hence the ebbing of project risks, and other business-related factors,

said ICRA.

As per CareEdge Ratings, the credit ratio remained close to the 10-year average of 1.59. The credit ratio of the infrastructure sector experienced an uptick in H1 FY25 at 3.50, driven by a significant number of upgrades in the power and construction sectors.

Sachin Gupta, Executive Director and Chief Rating Officer at CareEdge Ratings, said in the first half of FY25, Indian corporates have navigated global uncertainties with cautious optimism.

"Looking ahead, the upcoming festive season, with its potential for increased rural demand and consumer spending, could enhance the credit profile in the second half of FY25," he added.

Indian women's representation in workforce plateaued at 26pc in 2024: Report

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 1



The representation of women in the Indian workforce has plateaued at 26 per cent, with just 16 per cent of the fairer sex seen in the executive or C-level positions, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report by Great Place To Work, a workplace assessment and recognition organisation, showed that there remains an 11 per cent gap in women's representation from mid-level managers to CEOs in India.

The report also highlighted a pivotal factor for women's success in the workplace -- a strong sense of belonging. It showed that women who feel a sense of belonging are 6.2 times more likely to experience a great workplace and 3.1 times more likely to have career growth opportunities.

This positive correlation underscores the importance of fostering workplace cultures where women feel valued and empowered, helping to counteract the challenges posed by stagnant gender representation and barriers to leadership.

In recent years, significant strides have been

made in increasing women's representation across multiple industries. From 2021 and 2023, women's workforce participation steadily increased, reaching 26 per cent, but has since plateaued in 2024.

Further, the report highlighted a significant gender gap in male-dominated industries such as

technology, manufacturing, and transportation.

However, sectors like education, non-profits, and charity organisations have become shining examples, boasting nearly 50 per cent female representation.

"Despite years of progress, women's representation in the workforce has plateaued at 26 per cent, with a mere 16 per cent in executive or C-level positions.

More concerning is the declining workplace sentiment among women, signalling a growing disconnect in their work environments," said Balbir Singh, CEO, Great Place To Work India.

"Our research unequivocally shows that when women experience a sense of belonging, they are 6 times more likely to consider their workplace great. This stark statistic underscores the immense

potential waiting to be unlocked in organisations that prioritise inclusivity and equality," he added.

The report also highlighted organisations which understand that championing women isn't just about meeting quotas -- it's about cultivating a culture where everyone can thrive," Singh said.

The report also reveals a significant perception gap between women and their male colleagues, particularly when it comes to issues of fair compensation and recognition.

Despite making up a substantial part of the workforce, only 65 per cent of women feel they are receiving an equitable share of their company's profits.

This underscores the need for organisations to address such blind spots with greater transparency and fairness, the report said.

Make in India for space, geospatial sector to fuel growth by 2047: Amitabh Kant

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

The Make in India initiative in sectors like space and geospatial will drive growth in the country by 2047, said G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Tuesday.

He was speaking at a high-level seminar on 'Make in India for Space and Geospatial Sector', organised by the Geospatial World Chamber of Commerce (GWCC) in the national capital.

He emphasised India's growing leadership in the space and geospatial sectors, underscoring the opportunities for both local and international stakeholders to contribute to this vital growth.

"India, currently the world's 5th largest economy, is set to become the 3rd largest by overtaking Japan and Germany in the next two and a half years," Kant stated.

"To achieve our goal of

a \$30 trillion economy by 2047, significant breakthroughs in sectors like space and geospatial technology will be key drivers of growth," he added.

While acknowledging the challenges in opening up these sectors, Kant lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative in overcoming bureaucratic resistance.

"India's share in the global space economy must grow from 2 per cent to 10 per cent. The private sector, especially startups, will play a pivotal role in driving this shift, with groundbreaking firms like Skyroot and Agnikul leading the way," said the former NITI Aayog CEO.

The seminar explored how India's space and geospatial sectors are poised for tremendous growth, focusing on the 'Make in India' initiative. The event also highlighted the immense potential for foreign direct investment (FDI) in manufacturing software

and hardware products.

Kant encouraged startups to utilise vast data resources for economic disruption and satellite communications, highlighting real-time data as a key factor in improving governance and addressing rural-urban disparities.

The seminar also featured discussions on urbanisation and how geospatial technology can address future infrastructure needs. By 2050, 50 per cent of India will require urban development, and Kant emphasised the need for digital twins and advanced forecasting tools for sustainable growth.

Sanjay Kumar, CEO of GWCC and Geospatial World highlighted that the global geospatial industry, including the two crucial pillars of space infrastructure -- earth observation and the global navigation satellite system -- now represents a \$500 billion industry.

October 1: Revised transaction fee on stock exchanges, TDS rates come into effect

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 1

The Indian stock exchanges on Tuesday revised their transaction fees for cash and futures and options trading, as other changes related to TDS and government bonds came into effect. According to the National Stock Exchange

(NSE), the transaction fee for the cash market will now be Rs 2.97 per lakh of traded value.

For equity futures, the fee will be Rs 1.73 per lakh of traded value. As per the exchange, the fee for equity options will be Rs 35.03 per lakh of premium value. In the currency derivatives segment, futures will incur

a fee of Rs 0.35 per lakh of traded value. Also, options which include interest rate options, will have a fee of Rs 31.0 per lakh of premium value. In the Union Budget, the govt had announced to increase the securities transaction tax (STT) on Futures & Options of securities to 0.02 per cent and 0.1 per cent, respectively.

Interest rates of small savings scheme remains same for Q3

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

The Central government has announced that the interest rate on the various small saving schemes like PPF and SSY will remain unchanged for the third quarter (October 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024) of the financial year (FY) 2024-25. After this decision, the interest rates available on small savings schemes during the period from July to September 2024 will

continue.

"The rates of interest on various small savings schemes for the third quarter of FY 2024-25, starting from October 1, 2024, and ending on December 31, 2024, shall remain unchanged from those notified for the second quarter (July 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024) of FY 2024-25," a Finance Ministry notification said. The Finance Ministry reviews small savings schemes' interest rates every quarter. The small savings schemes comprise the Public

Provident Fund (PPF), the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS), the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY), the National Savings Certificate (NSC), the Post Office Time Deposit (POTD), the Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC), and the Post Office Monthly Income Scheme (POMIS). Among small savings schemes, the highest interest is 8.2 per cent on the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana and the Senior Savings Scheme. There is 7.7 per cent interest on the National Savings

Certificate, 7.5 per cent interest on the Kisan Vikas Patra, 7.4 per cent interest on the Monthly Income Scheme, and 7.1 per cent interest on the Public Provident Fund. The government is offering a 4 per cent interest rate on post office savings accounts, 6.9 per cent on one-year term deposit, 7 per cent on two-year term deposits, 7.1 per cent on three-year term deposits, 7.5 per cent on five-year term deposits, and 6.7 per cent on the five-year recurring deposit (RD).

2nd Test: Jaiswal's 51 guides India to series sweep as bowlers dominate in Kanpur

AGENCIES
KANPUR, OCT 1

Yashasvi Jaiswal smashed 51 runs in the chase of 95 as India beat Bangladesh by seven wickets on the fifth day and won the series 2-0 at Green Park Stadium in Kanpur on Tuesday.

Despite two rain-affected days, the Indian team gave the local crowd plenty to cheer for as both bowlers and batters played their roles to perfection.

Chasing just 95 runs for victory, India's top order began with an aggressive approach. Jaiswal and captain Rohit Sharma started the innings confidently. However, Rohit (8) fell early, caught at deep square leg attempting a slog-sweep. It was his fourth consecutive low score in the series.

Undeterred, Jaiswal continued to attack despite losing Shubman Gill (6) to a sharp delivery from Mehidy Hasan Miraz. Virat Kohli walked in with calm confidence and looked in supreme touch once again. His fluent strokeplay kept the momentum in India's favour while Jaiswal con-



tinued to be the aggressor.

Jaiswal smashed 43 balls half-century, his seventh in Test cricket but departed after trying to slog sweep Tajul Islam. He attacked the spinners throughout and scored 51 in 45 balls adding 58 runs with Virat Kohli for the third wicket. Rishabh Pant had the final say in the match as he smashed a boundary off Tajul to seal the series.

Earlier, Day 4 saw a scintillating display of aggressive batting from India after Bangladesh was skittled out for 233 in their first innings. India, eager to push for a result, came out firing. Led by Rohit, Jaiswal, Virat Kohli and KL Rahul, the Indian

lineup went on a record-breaking spree, notching up the fastest 50, 100, 150, 200, and 250 runs in Test history.

Jaiswal (72) and Rahul (68) scored half-centuries at a quick pace with India declaring at 285/9 in only 34.4 overs with a lead of 55 runs. Bangladesh spinners Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraz shared eight wickets among them.

The crowd roared with enthusiasm as the Indian batters entertained them with fearless strokes, and chants echoed around the stadium for Rohit and Kohli's dynamic show.

Bangladesh, starting their second innings on

Day 5 at 36/2, appeared determined to resist the Indian onslaught. Shadman Islam and Mominul Haque initially showed resilience but India's bowlers soon took over.

Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin, in tandem with pacer Jasprit Bumrah, launched a devastating attack on the Bangladeshi lineup. Mominul's dismissal for just 2, caught by KL Rahul off a perfectly placed delivery from Ashwin, triggered a collapse.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto fell victim to a reverse sweep off Jadeja, and soon the wickets began to tumble rapidly. Shadman, who had looked steady with a well-crafted half-century, edged one to slip, and Litton Das was caught behind off a sharp Bumrah delivery.

Within 35 minutes, Bangladesh's hopes of survival crumbled and they were reduced to 130/9. The tail-end resistance from Mushfiqur Rahim (37) couldn't save Bangladesh as Bumrah clean-bowled him with a lethal yorker to end the innings at 146.

Earlier, India had won

the toss, elected to field first and had Bangladesh at 107/3 in 35 overs when rain played spoilsport on the opening day. The game only resumed on Day 4 with India dismissing the opponents for 233, Mominul Haque scoring 107 not out and Bumrah leading the attack with 3-50.

For Bangladesh, the match felt like a missed opportunity. Their inability to build on good starts, coupled with the relentless Indian bowling, exposed the gap in skill levels.

While their spinners showed promise, India's experience and dominance with both bat and ball proved too much to handle. Bangladesh's batting, which faltered against the more potent Indian attack compared to Pakistan, couldn't withstand the pressure.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 233 & 146 all out (Shadman Islam 50, Mushfiqur Rahim 37; Jasprit Bumrah 3-17, Ravindra Jadeja 3-34) lost to India 285/9 decl. & 98/3 (Yashasvi Jaiswal 51, Virat Kohli 29; Mehidy Hasan 2-44, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 1-36) by seven wickets.

Women's T20 WC: Jemimah Rodrigues wants to 'keep it simple and help India win the title'

AGENCIES
DUBAI, OCT 1

India middle order batter Jemimah Rodrigues is all set to give her all and help the side win the title in the Women's T20 World Cup in UAE, starting on October 3.

Despite having the knowledge of playing in the Gulf nation, adjusting to the hot and humid weather of Dubai and Sharjah will be the key for the team. India defeated West Indies by 20 runs in the warm-up match on Sunday to gear up for their first encounter in the T20 World Cup against New Zealand in Dubai on October 4.

Talking about her role in the team, Jemimah is keen to put her best foot forward in the team's success. "For me, it's all about assessing the conditions and playing the situation. I just want to keep it simple and do whatever it takes to help the team win and whatever the team needs. When I put things in that perspective, it gets the best out of me and motivates me. For me, when-

ever it comes to the team, I go and give my life out there. That gets me more passionate, energetic, and enthusiastic. I want Team India to win. We, as a unit, want Team India to win. For me, it's all about keeping it in that perspective," she told Star Sports, the official broadcaster.

"The first day was tough. We weren't sure what to expect. Yesterday felt a bit like Mumbai because of the humidity, but it's very hot here. I think everyone in the team is slowly getting used to the heat. We're trying to spend more time outside to condition our bodies to the weather. Yesterday was better than the day we landed, and I believe the more we play here, the better we'll adapt," she added on the weather conditions in Dubai.

India are placed in Group A along with six-time title winner Australia, arch-rivals Pakistan, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

After the match against Kiwis, Harmanpreet Kaur-led India will take on Pakistan in Dubai on October 7 to add fuel to historic

rivalry in the field of cricket. Jemimah, who has been the furious on-field battles from the other side as well, is ready to take the expectations of the country and give her best.

"I was born in 2000, but the rivalry started long before that. What makes the India-Pakistan game so exciting and competitive is the fans. More than the players, it's the fans who make it special. The stadium atmosphere is electric, and being part of it is a dream come true for me. Growing up watching these matches on TV, you always want to be a part of it. There's an added responsibility when you're out there - to make sure Team India wins. 'That brings out the best in us,' the right-handed batter said. She also recalled her 53-run knock against Pakistan, which came in the last edition of the T20 World Cup in Cape Town, that steered India to a seven-wicket win. "First and foremost, India won. There's no better feeling than hitting the winning runs and taking your team over the line.

ISL 2024-25: Bengaluru FC's winning streak faces Mumbai City hurdle

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 1

Bengaluru FC will be keen to take their good form to the road when they take on Mumbai City FC at the Mumbai Football Arena, in what is their first away fixture of the Indian Super League season, on Wednesday.

The Blues, who have a perfect record so far in the league, are top of the table with nine points from three games, having kept three clean sheets in the process.

"We know Mumbai City FC are a good team and are under no impression that our record so far this season will help us on Wednesday. It's good to have a winning start, but we're taking each game as it comes. Right now, our focus is on doing our best against Mumbai. We want to recover well and put our best foot forward," said Blues' assistant coach Renedy Singh in a press conference on the eve of the fixture.

Renedy will be joined



by Sebastian Vega in the Blues' dugout on Wednesday, with head coach Gerard Zaragoza suspended for accumulation of yellow cards. Bengaluru will be without midfielder Shivaldo Singh, who continues his recovery from a fracture sustained in the Durand Cup. Bengaluru will bank on the form of Edgar Mendez, who was involved in every goal of their 3-0 win against Mohun Bagan Super Giant on Saturday.

"The season has just begun and there will be a lot of ups and downs, injuries and so on. Playing at home has been good, as

we have our supporters in the stands, but we also need to stick together as a group. The role of the senior players in the squad will be more important as well when we go away for these games, as they will have to guide the young ones," Renedy added.

Mumbai, who won the ISL Cup last year with a 3-1 defeat of Mohun Bagan SG in the final, have started their campaign in unceremonious fashion, drawing 2-2 against Bagan before a 3-2 loss to Jamshedpur FC ten days ago. The Islanders are placed 11th in the league, with just one point from two games.

'Rebellious kid' Shraddha Rangarh, aspiring cricketer turned martial artist, bags 4 medals at WAKO World Cup

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 1

Shraddha Rangarh, who aspired to be a cricketer, is making significant strides in the world of martial arts as she bagged four medals, including a gold and three silver, at the recently concluded World Association of Kickboxing Organisations (WAKO) World Cup in Uzbekistan.

Shraddha, playing in the open category under the age group of 18-40 years, won gold in senior female Musical Form Hard Style, followed by silver medals in Creative Form Hard Style and Female Musical Form Weapon Hard Style and Female Creative Form Weapon Hard Style.

The daughter of a shopkeeper, hailing from Faridabad in Haryana, is excelling in multiple disciplines, including kickboxing, taekwondo, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and more. She also had her fair share of struggles in her journey and also faced scepticism about her passion for



sports, especially after transitioning from cricket. The 20-year-old athlete shared that it was never for her parents to enroll her in taekwondo or any other sport.

There was no serious encouragement from her family. She feels "it was a negative experience" that

encouraged her to "do better each time".

"I was a rebellious kid from the beginning; I used to play cricket with the boys of my local area. After that I played till state level as vice-captain of the U-14 girls team. My father never liked my decision of choosing cricket and asked

me to focus more on my studies," Shraddha told IANS.

"One day while playing football in my school's playground, my taekwondo coach, master Syed Firoz asked me to join Taekwondo and from there my martial arts journey began," she shared.

"My parents thought it was just a phase and that my interest would fade away in a few days. They never interfered but every time I went out for my morning training sessions from 5 to 9 am, the judgemental stares from people around me were unsettling. Their eyes carried so much criticism about my choice to train early in the morning."

Despite being discouraged by all the people around her, be it relatives or people in society, she stood her ground and continued to pursue her journey towards excellence.

"The challenges were a part of my progress; people's taunts, relatives worrying about who

would marry me if I went off track, and my father's concern for my studies. Visitors would come to our house and say, 'Your daughter plays with boys, girls from good families don't behave like that'. Apart from all this, I suffered financially as well as mentally. There was a lack of support; a good coach, and proper infrastructure in my area. Every day was a new challenge," said Shraddha.

Shraddha, who has been doing martial arts since the age of 12, has played more than 100 tournaments in her nine-year career so far. Sharing an experience from her first international medal, bronze in the 42 kg junior femalesay International G1 Taekwondo Games in 2019, she said "It was unexpected.

I never thought I would ever be able to win a medal in my first international. It was very hard; competing with opponents ranking higher than you is a mind-blowing experience."

Athletes and sportspersons must stay away from drugs: Yogi

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, OCT 1

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said that athletes and sportspersons must stay away from drugs, emphasising that drugs lead to destruction and those who turn to drugs will not achieve anything significant in life.

Speaking at a ceremony organised at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow to felicitate athletes who brought pride to the country and UP on a global scale, the CM shared his mantra for success with the youth and athletes. He said that smartphones have become the greatest challenge for today's young generation, affecting both their time and efforts. He encouraged the youth to prepare themselves, assuring that both the central and state governments are creating suitable conditions for

their progress.

Yogi said, "Sports facilities are being developed in cities and villages across the state to integrate sports into their lives. Alongside quality training, skilled trainers are also being made available."

To motivate the youth towards sports, he shared the inspirational stories of the athletes attending the felicitation ceremony. During the event 14 Olympians and Paralympic athletes were felicitated.

During the felicitation ceremony, the CM distributed prize money of Rs 22.70 crore to these athletes who brought honour to the state and the country at large.

The event was attended by a total of 7 medal-winning Olympians and Paralympians, as well as 7 other participants from the Games.

The medal winners included Praveen Kumar, Suhas LY, Ajit Singh, Preeti



Pal, Simran, Lalit Upadhyay and Raj Kumar Pal.

Emphasising that every competition, whether small or large, provides an opportunity for athletes to progress, Yogi said, "Today, the sports environment in the country has transformed. The results of the systematic efforts made over the last decade for the promotion of sports and athletes, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are evident to everyone."

He said, "The Khelo India Abhiyan, Fit India Movement, and Sansad Khel Pratiyogita launched by Prime Minister Modi

have transformed the sports environment across the country."

Yogi highlighted that leagues have now begun at the university level and sports competitions at the village level, offering players a platform to advance.

He said that under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, UP has initiated various programs as part of the national efforts to promote sports, and significant progress is being made in this regard.

Highlighting the infrastructure development for athletes, he said, "The double-engine government is continuously focusing on this. Currently, UP has 84 stadiums, 67 multi-purpose halls, 38 swimming pools, 15 synthetic hockey stadiums and 3 synthetic running tracks ready."

The CM said that the state has developed 2 international cricket stadiums, 16 hostels, 47 state-of-the-art gyms, 20 syn-

thetic tennis courts and 19 dormitories for athletes.

"Additionally, 2 judo halls, 13 wrestling halls, 6 shooting ranges, 2 indoor volleyball courts, 12 weightlifting halls, and 14 synthetic basketball courts have been established in the state," he said.

He emphasised that the state government is working with ambitious goals to promote sports and support athletes.

"The state aims to build playgrounds and open gyms in over 57,000 gram panchayats, mini stadiums in all 826 development blocks, and stadiums in all districts. Sports facilities are being provided to athletes at the gram panchayat level," he said.

Yogi said that former athletes from international, Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth, Asian Games, and World Championships are being appointed as trainers to coach young players.

De Jong returns to Barca squad for Champions League clash vs Young Boys

AGENCIES
BARCELONA, OCT 1

Freddie de Jong is back in Barcelona FC's matchday squad for the first time in five months. The Dutchman has overcome the right ankle sprain injury he picked up in April during an El Clasico match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

He is one of a 23-player squad called up for the first Champions League home match of the season, as Swiss side Young Boys visit the Estadi Olímpic Stadium, their temporary home, while Camp Nou undergoes redevelopment.

The Netherlands midfielder had already said he was close to a return during a recent interview and has remained true to his word. So, if Hansi Flick puts him on the pitch during the Cham-



pions League matchday two fixture, it will be his debut both this season and under the German coach.

Flick will be delighted with the availability of the Dutch midfielder with the injuries to Marc Bernal and Dani Olmo, with Gavi still on the road to recovery, causing a hurdle in what has been a successful start to the season.

De Jong has played 213 competitive games since joining the Club in 2019,

placing him 19th on the all-time list for appearances by overseas players, during which he has scored 17 goals and provided 19 assists. He has also had the honour of being named one of the first team's four captains since last season and is now third captain since Sergi Roberto left the Club.

The German head coach had spoken on De Jong's return to the side during a press conference on Monday.

Long queues of voters seen during 3rd phase of Assembly Elections

