

**DENGUE WARNING SIGNS**

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

**Watch out for dengue warning signs!**

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

- Severe and continuous abdominal pain
- Persistent vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Dizziness
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool, urine or vomit
- Redness

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 11 | ISSUE NO: 243 | PAGES: 12 | PRICE: Rs 2/- | RNI NO: JKENG/2013/49471 | POSTAL REGD. NO. JK-497/22-24 | dailyjindrahimages.com/Epaper.php | jindrahimages123@gmail.com

## SWEARING IN CEREMONY TODAY

# Omar set to become first CM of J&K UT

**- Sakina, Masoodi, Surinder, Saifullah, Rather, Sagar, Rana, Satish, Karra among probable Ministers**

**- CM to chair meeting of Administrative Secretaries at Civil Secretariat post Swearing in ceremony**

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15

Stage is all set for high profile swearing in ceremony of Jammu and Kashmir UT's first Chief Minister and the council of ministers at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar today (Wednesday).

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah will be sworn in as the first CM of J&K



UT while there is a possibility that eight to nine ministers will also be administered the oath by the J&K's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

Reliable sources told news agency that while Omar will take oath as the first CM of the UT, those who would be sworn in as the ministers include Sakina Itoo, the woman face of NC, Justice (Rtd) Hasnain Masoodi, Abdur Rahim Rather, Ali

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Akhilesh Yadav congratulates people of J&K for trusting in democracy

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15 (UNI)

Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir for trusting in democracy and forming their government.

Yadav reached Srinagar on Tuesday to participate in the oath-taking ceremony of Chief Minister designate National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Wednesday, who has been invited by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to form his government after staking claim for it.



"Congratulations to the people for saving the Constitution by participating in the elections" Yadav told media persons in Srinagar on Tuesday.

He said this step should move forward and the

next step is to give them (J&K) full statehood.

"I congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir for trusting democracy and forming their own government", Yadav emphasised.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said "We hope the people who participated in the elections will get full statehood soon".

Yadav also congratulated National Conference President Farooq Abdullah for his party's victory.

"Many congratulations to Omar Abdullah for becoming the

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Global institutions must work collectively to combat threats of "Cyber Crimes": PM Modi

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Taking note of rising cyber crimes and its impact on general public, India on Tuesday asked global institutions to come forward and recognize the significance of "global governance" and act collectively to combat the threats arising from misuse of technology.

Inaugurating the India Mobile Congress (IMC) and World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), Prime



Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the importance of establishing a global framework for digital technology.

He emphasized that this topic was raised by India during its G-20 Presidency and

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Amit Shah interacts with the IPS Probationers of 2023 Batch (76 RR) in New Delhi

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah interacted with the probationers of the 2023 batch (76 RR) of the Indian Police Service (IPS) in New Delhi today. During the interaction, trainee IPS officers shared their experiences related to training with the Union Home Minister. Many dignitaries including Union Home Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Director, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA)



were present on the occasion.

During the interaction, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit

Bharat in 2047 would be a terror-free and drug-free country, having internal security, and will ensure protection of human rights and rights of citizens. Shri Amit Shah said

that the trainee IPS officers should contemplate and reflect on the time at which they have become IPS officers. He said that the trainee officers should contemplate because the

batch that will emerge as IPS officers this time will have a bigger responsibility than the previous 75 batches. Shri Shah added that the trainee officers should reflect because it is completely up to them and the batches coming after them whether our country will change the scale and enter the next generation of policing or not.

Shri Amit Shah said that as the Home Minister of the country, he can definitely say that now no one has the courage to insult our borders and our army. He said that we have

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# EAM in Islamabad, shakes hands with Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif ahead of SCO dinner



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, OCT 15 (UNI)

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is in Islamabad for the SCO Summit, on Tuesday evening attended the dinner

ceremony hosted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in honour of the heads and delegates of member countries attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# INDIA Alliance leaders to attend Omar's swearing in ceremony in Srinagar

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15

As the Omar Abdullah led National Conference-Congress alliance is all set to form the next government on Wednesday, several INDIA Alliance leaders have confirmed to attend the swearing-in ceremony where Omar Abdullah will be taking oath as the first chief minister of the union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The oath taking ceremony will be held at SKICC here. The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will administer oath to the new members of assembly.

Jammu and Kashmir would witness the first elected government after the erstwhile state was downgraded to the Union Territory on August 05, 2019 when the BJP-led government in centre revoked the Article 370 and 35A.

NC Spokesman, Imran Nabi Dar while talking to the news agency said that several INDIA bloc leaders have been invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

However, he said only a few including Member of Parliament and President Samajwadi Party Akhilesh Yadav, Kanimozhi Karunanidhi from DMK have confirmed their participa-

tion in the meeting. He added that the further confirmations are expected to be received by late evening.

Pertinently, NC had sent invitations to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, MK Stalin, Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Arvind Kejriwal, and D Raja.

General Secretary CPI (M) Prakash Karat will also be attending the ceremony. Karat has arrived in Srinagar today to participate in the ceremony tomorrow, sources said.

Moreover, Congress leader Ravinder Sharma

has confirmed to KNO that All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Mallikarjun Kharge will be attending the ceremony while there was no confirmation about Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's participation till yet.

KNO has also learnt from the sources that Supriya Sule from Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Sukhbir Singh Badal from Shiromani Akali Dal will be attending the oath taking ceremony tomorrow.

It has been learnt that 50 top leaders will be among the dignitaries who will be attending the swearing-in ceremony.

# SCs community concerned for having no representation in new J&K Govt

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, OCT 15

Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony for new government formation in Jammu & Kashmir, the Schedule Caste (SC) community expressed concern over its representations and hoped that the NC-Congress alliance would adjust the community in the government or send its members to Rajya Sabha.

For the first time in recent years, the Chief Minister and cabinet in Jammu and Kashmir took oath without any representative from Schedule Caste community as all seven SC-reserved seats

of Jammu and Kashmir clinched by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in recently concluded assembly polls that won 29 seats out of 43 from Jammu province.

As per new delimitation of assembly segments, all seven SC reserved seats namely Akhnoor, Bishnah, Kathua, Marh, Ramghar, Ramnagar and Suchetghar of J&K falls in Jammu, Kathua, Samba and Udhampur districts of Jammu province where BJP clean swept the polls and won 22 out of 24 assembly segments.

Sham Lal Basson, State President, All J&K Dalit Chetan Manch said that

it's very disturbing for the entire SC community that none of its members are eligible to be inducted as ministers in the new government.

He said all seven reserved seats went in the kitty of BJP, which is likely to sit in opposition.

Basson said that earlier the community got ministry and membership on advisory boards. He hoped that the NC-Congress coalition government work-out some mechanism to accommodate SC members.

Another member of Schedule Caste, Saryara community, Romesh

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Congress appoints G A Mir as new CLP leader of J&K

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15

A day ahead of the government formation in Jammu and Kashmir, Congress on Tuesday appointed G A Mir as the CLP leader of the party.

As per an order available with the news agency, G A Mir was appointed as the new CLP leader of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is to inform you that following the unanimous resolution of the members of the legislative assembly, Jammu & Kashmir, authorizing the honourable Congress President to appoint

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Er Rashid's bail extended till October 28

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15

In a major relief for Awami Ittehad Party (AIP), the interim bail of Er Rashid, the Member Parliament North Kashmir Lok Sabha seat was today extended up to October 28.

Confirming this to the news agency, AIP chief spokesman Inam-un-Nabi said that the interim bail of Er Rashid has been extended up to October 28 by the Patiala House Court, New Delhi. "We hope to see Er Rashid out on permanent bail soon," he said.

Er Rashid was released on September 11 after



serving five and a half years imprisonment in New Delhi's Tihar Jail. He was arrested in connection with a terror-funding case. He was granted bail till Oct 4 initially and that was

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

# Kishtwar Blaze 'LG Administration directs immediate relief efforts for villagers affected by fire'

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCT 15

A massive fire broke out in Malwarwan village of Kishtwar district, ravaging nearly 70 residential houses and around 30 cow sheds. The devastating blaze, which started around 2 PM yesterday, spread rapidly through the village, leaving widespread destruction in its wake.

Fortunately, no human casualties have been reported, though there are indications that some

animals have been affected by the fire.

As per reports Indian Air Force has deployed a helicopter to assist with rescue and relief operations in the area.

District officials, including Deputy Commissioner Doda, are closely monitoring the situation, ensuring that those affected receive immediate aid.

Speaking on the incident, a senior official told news agency KINS, "The fire spread quickly, leaving little time for residents

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4



## Sensitization workshop under J&K Startup Policy 2024 held at Kupwara

JI NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, OCTOBER 15

Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) in collaboration with District Administration Kupwara Tuesday conducted a sensitization workshop under J&K Startup Policy 2024 at DC office Kupwara.

The workshop was presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman. Officers and officials of various government departments, besides, young entrepreneurs from district Kupwara attended the event.

The workshop, specifically designed for government departments, seeks to enhance understanding and implementation of startup friendly policies along with facilitating a conducive startup ecosystem in the district.



Addressing the workshop, the ADC emphasized the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in addressing major challenges like the unemployment crisis. He impressed upon the concerned departments to extend their helping hand to the budding entrepreneurs in the district so that they can materialise their potential which will further boost the employment generation. He asked them to involve more and more youth in the district so that the trend of job seeking gets changed into job giving.

On the occasion, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Kupwara, Arif Ahmad Khan gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation to raise awareness among the participants regarding various startup initiatives of the Government in nurturing entrepreneurship in the J&K UT.

During the workshop, special emphasis was put on the need for collaboration from all the stakeholders including line departments for proper hand holding and necessary support to the budding entrepreneurs in the district. The event featured a series of presentations and interactive sessions led by officials of JKEDI. The discussions focused on key aspects of the startup ecosystem including funding opportunities, regulatory frameworks and the role of government in fostering a supportive environment for startups.

Parvinder Singh, District Informatics Officer, NIC Poonch, informed the Deputy Commissioner that several key government offices, including the District Court, SSP Office, GP Fund Office, District, and Sub Treasuries, rely on the NIC's connectivity. Currently, there are approximately 120 Local Area Network (LAN) connections spread across various government offices in District Poonch.

## DC inaugurates 100 Mbps Leased Line Connectivity at NIC District Centre Poonch

JI NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, OCTOBER 15

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal inaugurated 100 Mbps Leased Line Connectivity here today at the National Informatics Centre (NIC) District Centre Poonch. The newly established connectivity is managed by Railtel, significantly enhancing the district administration's internet infrastructure.

Earlier, the NIC District Centre Poonch operated on a 34 Mbps leased line provided by BSNL. The new 100 Mbps leased line will ensure smooth operations and consistent connectivity.



The Chief Technology Officer Net Tech Pvt. Ltd updated the Deputy Commissioner on the establishment of an additional RF (Radio Frequency) Link at NIC Poonch. This link will serve as a backup in case of failure of the optical fiber connection, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity.

After the inauguration, the DC urged Railtel authorities to ensure that the leased line remains reliable, particularly during winters and rainy seasons, when connectivity failures are more common. He emphasized the importance of this infrastructure, as many government departments depend on it for their daily operations.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik and other officers.

## LMD fines Private Hospital for Ambiguous Billing, Overcharging

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

In a significant move to ensure compliance with the Legal Metrology norms and protect consumers from fraudulent practices of erring traders, the Legal Metrology Department (LMD) has taken action against a Punjab-based Jammu private Hospital chain based in Jammu at Greater Kailash.

The Hospital, claiming specialization in orthopedic surgeries and bone related treatments, has been fined by LMD for conducting transactions using non-standard unit of measurement which is not in consonance with the law. The hospital was found guilty of violating provisions of the Legal Metrology Act, which mandates a set of accurate information, and the use of standard units of measurement in all commercial transactions, including medical devices.

The instant case came to light following a special inspection conducted by

a team of Legal Metrology Department Jammu District on the directions of the Controller Legal Metrology Department J&K, Anuradha Gupta for regulating commercial transactions in the healthcare sector as well and to enforce the compliance of the Legal Metrology Act/rules to protect against fleecing of the consumer by the Hospitals, ensuring fair trade practices.

During the investigation, it was discovered that the hospital was using non-standard units of measurement in its billing for medical services and devices. Discrepancies were particularly noted in transactions related to the quantity (in terms of weight, measure, or number) of surgical materials or dressing supplies used during the surgical procedures, and as reflected in the patient billing.

Upon registration of case for breach of relevant provisions of the Legal Metrology Act, the Hospital management pleaded guilty to the violation and

opted for departmental compounding of the case by paying a fine of Rs. 20,000.

In a recent hand-out, the Legal Metrology Department J&K stressed that medical services, including transactions related to medical devices, now fall under the purview of the Legal Metrology Act, and as per the standing norms, pre-packaged commodities must not be sold at prices exceeding their Maximum Retail Price (MRP). Consumers are advised to remain vigilant and carefully examine bills issued by the Hospitals, and in case of discrepancies, such as over-charging, aggrieved consumers can approach the Legal Metrology Department for timely resolution. The Controller of Legal Metrology also appealed to the traders and service providers, including hospitals, to voluntarily adhere to the prescribed Legal Metrology standards while making any transactions, ensuring that patients receive fair and transparent billing.

## VC SKUAST-Kashmir inaugurates state of art - Administrative cum Laboratory Block at KVK Gurez

JI NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 15

The Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai inaugurated the State of art - Administrative cum Laboratory Block at KVK Gurez (Bandipora-II).

The event was attended by Director Extension, Prof Dil Mohammad Mukhdomi, Director Research Cum Director (P&M), Prof Haroon Rashid Naik, Estates Officer, local administration, officers of the Development Departments, progressive farmers, trainees and entrepreneurs besides Head and all scientific/supporting staff of KVK Gurez and MAR&E, Izmarg

The Vice-Chancellor while inaugurating the infrastructure located under the foothills of famous Habba-Khatoon Hill at Dawar informed that the given set-up will serve as the centre of excellence to train the farmers in frontier areas, inculcate skill and knowledge to rural youth through capacity building programmes and serve as the model for various demonstrations in respect of agriculture and allied sectors at Gurez valley.



We are committed to keep Gurez pesticide free and promote sustainable Agriculture, promote the Niche crops including Kala Zeera, Potato, Buckwheat, Rajmash, Honey etc and preserve local biodiversity including Gurezi Sheep, informed the Vice-Chancellor.

He further added that the Gurez is the brand for organic produce and, therefore, utmost care must be taken for the treatment and control of insect, pests or diseases through organic approaches and prototypes designed by the University to promote quality of life and ensure profitability in Agriculture.

The chief guest witnessed that the group has come-up with designing of different products developed from local Gurezi sheep and suggested for further improvement, fine tuning, desired dimensions to develop more attractive products to earn a good market and also desired for identification and preservation of local germplasm of niche crops to facilitate revival programmes.

On this occasion, an Extension folder entitled, "Promotion of High Value Vegetable crops to Enhance Nutritional Security and Income Generation in Gurez Valley" was also released by the chief guest.

Thereafter, the Vice-Chancellor also had a brief meeting with the Commanding officer, 20 Battalion, Rana, Izmarg (Gurez) to discuss the bilateral support for growth and development of Agriculture & Allied sectors in the area.

At the end, the Vice-Chancellor directed for more synergy with the Line Departments for overall growth and development of the agriculture sector in Gurez valley.

Similarly, the power supply to Kaghote, Pinger, Bainsta, Sia Mehri, Chaka, Basantgarh, Gothla, Dehari, Jallow, Rang, Balandh, Kheen, Nimbla, Gundian, Ghordi, Nallah Mallian, Nalla Ghoran and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 17 from 12 noon to 1 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Batote, Boon Bari, Ramban Town, Ramsoo, Karool Maitra, Digdole, Sarbangi, Beta, Chakka, Chreel, New Nowgam and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 16 and 19 from 9 am to 1 pm.

## Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway

## DC resolves issues to facilitate fast tracking of work in Reasi district



JI NEWS SERVICE  
REASI, OCTOBER 15

In a decisive step towards expediting the completion of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the Deputy Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan today chaired a meeting with stakeholders, including National Highway Authority of India functionaries.

The discussions focused on addressing the pending issues related to Package 17 of the expressway project falling Reasi District. The DC assured them of every possible

help in removing all hindrance to facilitate expeditious completion of the project.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the urgent need to resolve any bottlenecks that could hinder the progress of this strategically important project. He issued clear instructions to NHAI officials to fast-track all pending matters, ensuring the work proceeds without further delays.

He further assured the NHAI team of the administration's full support in facilitating smooth

operations. "The district administration will extend all possible assistance to ensure the project moves ahead swiftly. We are committed to working closely with NHAI to remove any hurdles," he added.

The Deputy Commissioner also urged all stakeholders to maintain coordination to prevent any disruptions in the work schedule. Meeting was attended by Project officer NHAI, PIO NHAI Udhampur and other NHAI officials.

## Workshop on AFP, MR Elimination, VPD Surveillance & AEFI held at GMC Anantnag

JI NEWS SERVICE  
ANANTNAG, OCTOBER 15

In a significant initiative to strengthen immunization efforts and disease prevention, the Departments of Community Medicine and Pediatrics at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag organized a comprehensive workshop focusing on Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP), Measles-Rubella (MR) elimination, Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) surveillance, and Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) surveillance.

The workshop was organised in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) NPSN Kashmir and the Directorate of Family Welfare, Maternal and Child Health (DFW, MCH).

The event brought together a distinguished panel of healthcare

experts, including Principal GMC Anantnag Prof. Rukhsana Najeeb; Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Anantnag Dr. M.Y. Zagoo; WHO Surveillance Medical Officer Dr. Ashiq Rashid; District Immunisation Officer Dr. Syed Masood Ahmad; as well as heads of various GMC departments, faculty members, and representatives from the WHO State Office in Srinagar.

The event was introduced by Dr. Hadiya Javid, a Postgraduate in Community Medicine, while Dr. Fouzia Nazir, HOD of Community Medicine, welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of collaboration in hosting such events to enhance immunization outcomes and surveillance effectiveness.

In her address as chief guest, Principal GMC Anantnag, Prof. Rukhsana Najeeb, expressed strong



support for WHO's efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, endorsing the workshop as the beginning of a meaningful partnership between GMC Anantnag and WHO to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases from the region.

Dr. Showkat Hussain Tali, HOD of Pediatrics, provided an insightful overview of VPD surveillance, stressing its critical

role in public health. In his address, CMO Anantnag, Dr. M.Y. Zagoo, highlighted the vital importance of immunization and the need for vigilant post-immunization surveillance.

Dr. Ashiq Rashid Mir, WHO Surveillance Medical Officer, presented an extensive review of VPD, AFP, and MR surveillance operations in Jammu and

## Power shutdown

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Medical, Chatha, Satwari, Toph, Shakti Nagar, Co-Bagh, Canal, Talab Tillo, Trilokpur, Bohri, Udheywala, Machelian, Marh, Gajansoo, Gho Manhasan, Katra, Rajouri, Draba, Surankote, Lassana, Bhata Durian, Mandi, Khour, Pahariwala, Jogwan, Laxmipuram, Swarn Vihar, Bharat Nagar, Ganga Nagar, Bantalab, Radio Station, BSNL, CRPF, Ayush Hospital, Kot, Bhalwal, Karwanda, Ghaink, Sehri, Barn Patta, Marjali, Central Jail and other parts of District Rajouri, Reasi and Jammu will remain affected on October 17, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27 from 8 am to 2 pm.

Meanwhile, the Superintendent Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to PHE utilities and its adjoining areas will remain affected on October 16 and 17 from 8 am to 3 pm.

However, Superintendent Engineer, O&M Circle-III, JPDCL Batote has informed that the power supply to Phangyal, Rathian, Jorjan Talab, Nagrota, Battal Ballian and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 17 from 12 noon to 1 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Kaghote, Pinger, Bainsta, Sia Mehri, Chaka, Basantgarh, Gothla, Dehari, Jallow, Rang, Balandh, Kheen, Nimbla, Gundian, Ghordi, Nallah Mallian, Nalla Ghoran and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 16 and 18 from 8 am to 12.30 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Batote, Boon Bari, Ramban Town, Ramsoo, Karool Maitra, Digdole, Sarbangi, Beta, Chakka, Chreel, New Nowgam and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 16 and 19 from 9 am to 1 pm.

Kashmir, reflecting on significant milestones achieved in the region.

The workshop featured specialized sessions, including a scientific talk by Dr. Mahbooba Rasool, Associate Professor of SPM, who covered essential aspects of AFP surveillance.

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Najar, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, discussed surveillance of Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus, while Dr. Junaid Ahnagar, Assistant Professor of Pharmacology, shared insights on AEFI surveillance practices.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr. Showkat Hussain Tali, HOD of Pediatrics, who acknowledged the contributions of all participants and the ongoing commitment of GMC Anantnag and WHO in ensuring a healthier future for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.



## DDC reviews implementation of Self-Employment Schemes, HADP



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
REASI, OCTOBER 15

District Development Commissioner Reasi Vishesh Mahajan today led a comprehensive meeting aimed at expediting decisions on cases related to self-employment schemes and the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). The discussion focused on the swift approval of pending cases to foster economic growth through local businesses and entrepreneurship. A detailed review of the applications submitted for various self-employment schemes was conducted. The DDC also interviewed the Applicants under various schemes. These schemes

are vital for encouraging individuals, particularly the youth and unemployed, to take up entrepreneurial ventures.

The DDC stressed the importance of facilitating financial assistance to eligible applicants in a timely manner, allowing them to establish and expand their businesses. By removing bottlenecks and expediting approvals, the district administration aims to create more employment opportunities and boost local economic activities. In addition to reviewing self-employment cases, the DDC also highlighted the need for innovations especially in the Priority sector like Renewable energy, agro technology. The DDC urged officials

to align self-employment initiatives with the broader objectives of HADP, ensuring that the benefits of these programs are extended to disadvantaged groups, rural areas and the district's most vulnerable populations.

The DDC also emphasized transparency and accountability in the selection and approval processes, calling on the officers to ensure that genuine candidates receive the benefits without delays. Meeting was attended by ADDC Sukhdev Samy, ACD Pardweep Kumar, AD Handicraft Ujwal Sambyal, AD employment Annie Vaid, Deputy Registrar Bhawani Attri, CAO, DSHO and other officials.

## DDMA Udhampur hosts Disaster awareness events to mark IDDRR 2024

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 15

District Disaster Management Authority Udhampur commemorated the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) 2024 by organizing two impactful disaster awareness and capacity-building programs here today under the guidance of Chairman DDMA Saloni Rai.

These programs aimed at enhancing community preparedness and resilience, in alignment with the global objectives of IDDRR, which is observed annually on October 13 to promote disaster risk awareness and reduce vulnerabilities, following the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In collaboration with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and Civil Defence, DDMA Udhampur organised a program at Government Higher Secondary School, Garhi Udhampur. The event witnessed the participation of around 250 individuals, including students and staff, who were trained in essential disaster management skills such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), first aid, the Civil Defence/Disaster Management Act of 2005, evacuation procedures, and earthquake



safety protocols. This hands-on session aimed to equip participants with the skills to manage emergencies effectively.

Simultaneously, DDMA Udhampur, in partnership with Fire and Emergency Services, hosted another program at Government Higher Secondary School, Ballian, Udhampur. Around 250 participants, including students and staff, attended the session led by the Consultant from DDMA Udhampur and Sarvesh Langer, Assistant Director, Fire & Emergency Services, Command Udhampur/Reasi. This interactive program focused on fire

safety, providing insights into different types of fires, prevention methods, and fire control techniques, culminating in a practical fire safety demonstration.

Both programs highlighted the critical importance of disaster preparedness and rapid response.

In her concluding remarks, Saloni Rai, Chairman DDMA Udhampur, emphasized the need for continued efforts to build resilience at the community level, empowering the younger generation with the knowledge and skills necessary to face disaster-related challenges.

## DC Kulgam reviews progress of new and ongoing health infrastructure works & irrigation projects



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KULGAM, OCTOBER 15

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting of officers at Mini Secretariat here to review the progress of ongoing health and irrigation projects in the district. During the review, the DC passed instructions of expediting work on District Hospital including extension of casualty, additional block for maternity and child health, renovation and upgradation of main District hospital building, New Ticketing area, Upgradation of X Ray plant, Dialysis centre, Anesthesia workstations and autopsy room. These works have been taken up this year in the District Hospital by the District Administration with an aim of major upgradation

of District Hospital infra. The DC reviewed the status of the NTPHC buildings at Devsar and Kulgam. The pending works of these two NTPHCs have been taken up under the District Capex. Target of completion by November 30th has been given. It was apprised that tenders have been floated and work will commence from the last week of this month.

He also reviewed the status of the Sub District Hospital Building Qaimoh. Directions were passed to R&B for immediate completion of electrical and mechanical works. In addition, the work on opening of the old hospital road was also reviewed.

The DC also reviewed the progress of SDH DHpora the new building of which is under construction.

## DC reviews healthcare infrastructure in Poonch

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, OCTOBER 15

Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of healthcare functionaries, here today at the District Hospital.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of achievements under Health Sector Schemes, functioning of Health Institution, infrastructure up-gradation and the healthcare facilities being extended to patients.

The DC also took the first hand appraisal from respective Medical Superintendents about the working of Hospitals in different parts of the District. He inquired about the healthcare facilities being extended to the patients and works being executed for infrastructure up-gradation and procurement of machinery. The DC asked the Medical Superintendents to submit details of requirements so that necessary interventions are taken to resolve the issues at the earliest to further strengthen the patient care system



in the District. A threadbare discussion was held on the physical status of projects, financial implications, Healthcare achievements, Patient care facilities, enrollment under various projects like PMJAY Ayushman Bharat, Jan Ayushadhi Kendras, TB free scheme and other related issues.

The DC instructed the health care functionaries to come up to the expectations of the patients and focus on quality assurance, accessible, affordable health care in the District.

Stressing on utmost coordination among the Health functionaries and concerned line Departments, the DC emphasised on expediting works taken up for upgradation of healthcare infrastructure in the District.

The meeting was attended by ADC Poonch, Medical Superintendent, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Planning Officers, Programme Officer ICDS, District Social Welfare Officer Executive Engineer R&B, Executive Engineer PDD, Civil society workers and others concerned.

## JKMSCL organizes workshop on Strengthening Public Health Supply Chain Management at Jammu

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL) successfully organized a State-Level Training of Trainers (ToT) program aimed at strengthening the public health supply chain management across the region. The training initiative brought together key stakeholders from the healthcare sector, focusing on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain for essential medical supplies and equipment.

Managing Director, JKMSCL, Kapil Sharma emphasized the importance of a robust supply chain in ensuring the availability of quality healthcare services to the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir. In his address, Sh.



Kapil Sharma highlighted the critical role that the trained personnel will play in optimizing the management, storage, and distribution of medical supplies to improve patient outcomes.

The training program saw participation from Directorate of Health Services, Jammu, various Regional Drug Warehouses of JKMSCL, senior officials, pharmacists, and supply chain managers from various health facilities across Jammu Division.

Renowned experts from PATH, served as resource persons, sharing their insights and practical knowledge with the attendees. The sessions included hands-on training, case study discussions, and real-world problem-solving exercises.

The ToT program was met with positive feedback from the participants, who appreciated the in-depth sessions and interactive approach. The newly trained personnel are expected to play a piv-

## KU organises workshop for aspiring women entrepreneurs of Bandipora

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15

To encourage community development and capacity building, particularly in uplifting marginalised groups through skill-based training programmes, the University of Kashmir (KU), recently organised a workshop for aspiring women entrepreneurs from the Upskilling Centre for Cutting and Tailoring, Bazipora, Bandipora.

The daylong event, organised by KU's Centre for Capacity Building and Skill Development (CCBSD) and held in collaboration with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), aimed to connect the trained participants with various district welfare departments and schemes to support their entrepreneurial journeys. 25 participants, who had undergone training under the CCBSD's 'Upskilling Programme on Cutting and Tailoring', attended the workshop conducted at Boys' Middle School, Bazipora.

## KU's North Campus observes 'Int'l Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2024'

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
BARAMULLA | SRINAGAR, OCT 15

To instill a sense of responsibility and preparedness among the young students by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to effectively respond to emergencies, the NSS Wing of the North Campus, University of Kashmir (KU), Tuesday observed the 'International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction'.

Themed 'Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future', the programme witnessed active participation from students, staff and NSS volunteers from various departments, aiming to encourage disaster preparedness and resilience among the youth.

On the occasion, Director, North Campus, KU, Dr Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad, emphasised the crucial role of the young



generation in building a resilient future.

"Empowering the next generation to envision a resilient future is not just about disaster preparedness; it's about instilling a mindset of safety, innovation and proactive measures in our youth," he said.

He further elaborated on the importance of adhering to building codes to construct smart earth-

quake-resistant structures and discussed various fire-safety measures essential for disaster risk reduction.

A documentary on disaster risk reduction was screened during the event, highlighting the impact of natural calamities and the significance of youth-led initiatives in mitigating such challenges.

To reinforce the practical aspects of disaster management, a live

demonstration on using fire extinguishers was conducted. Participants were trained in employing disaster risk reduction measures while the students received hands-on experience in using fire extinguishers to put out fires.

Programme Officer, NSS Wing, North Campus, Bilal A Kaloo, coordinated the event.

## 298 JJM water supply schemes coming up in Rajouri District

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, OCTOBER 15

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri, Raj Kumar Thapa, chaired a high-level review meeting today to assess the progress of water supply schemes being executed in the district under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

The ADC reviewed the status of the 298 water supply schemes planned for the district. It was reported that 33 schemes have been completed, while the rest are at various stages of execution.

A detailed component-wise review was conducted, with the ADC assessing the progress of various infrastructure elements critical to the success of the mission. These included Borewells, Rapid Sand Filtration Plants (RSFP), Dug Wells, Overhead Tanks (OHT), and the



laying of pipe networks across different blocks. Each of these components plays a key role in ensuring the uninterrupted supply of clean drinking water to rural and urban households alike.

Executive Engineers from the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department, Rajouri and Nowshera, presented their respective progress reports. They provided updates on the physical and financial status of each scheme and discussed challenges such as topographical difficulties, material shortages, and

the need for better coordination between executing agencies. The officials assured the ADC that efforts were being made to address these bottlenecks and that all resources were being mobilized to expedite the work. The ADC stressed the importance of regular monitoring and field inspections to ensure that the work is being executed according to the established standards. He directed the PHE Department to submit weekly progress reports and maintain close coordination with the district administration.

the need for better coordination between executing agencies. The officials assured the ADC that efforts were being made to address these bottlenecks and that all resources were being mobilized to expedite the work. The ADC stressed the importance of regular monitoring and field inspections to ensure that the work is being executed according to the established standards. He directed the PHE Department to submit weekly progress reports and maintain close coordination with the district administration.

Upon completing the training, each participant was provided with a sewing machine to help them start their own small businesses.

In her message, KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan, expressed her appreciation for the efforts to uplift the aspiring women entrepreneurs of Bazipora.



## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

## Swearing in...

Muhammad Sagar while as Jammu region will also be given representation in the form of Javaid Rana, Surinder Choudhary and Satish Sharma. Sources said from the Congress which is the alliance partner of NC, J&K PCC chief Tariq Hameed Karra may be included in the council of ministers as well. This way, there will be eight ministers in the Omar led cabinet.

It may be recalled that Omar had staked claim on government formation after presenting the letters of support to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday. Omar presented the letters of support from 42 MLAs of NC, four independents, six Congress legislators and one CPI(M).

On Sunday, President Droupadi Murmu issued a notification revoking the president's rule in J&K and paving way for the elected government to take the reins of J&K. On Monday, LG Sinha invited Omar for government formation on October 16. LG conveyed his decision by sending his Principal Secretary to Omar's Gupkar residence.

Omar was unanimously elected the leader of the NC Legislature Party on Thursday, setting the stage for his second term as chief minister. His first term, from 2009 to 2014 when Jammu and Kashmir was a full-fledged state, was also under an NC-Congress coalition Government.

Meanwhile, after the culmination of the swearing-in ceremony, the chief minister will be chairing a meeting of all Administrative Secretaries on 16-10-2024 (Wednesday) at 03:00 PM in the Meeting Hall, 3rd Floor, Civil Secretariat, Srinagar, a document available with KNO reads.

Accordingly, all the Administrative Secretaries are requested to kindly attend the meeting on the scheduled date, time and venue.

## Global institutions...

urged global institutions to recognize its significance for global governance. "The time has come for global institutions to accept the importance of global governance", Modi stated.

Stressing the need to create a "Do's and Don'ts" for technology on the global level, the Prime Minister highlighted the borderless nature of digital tools and applications and urged for international collaboration in combating "cyber threats" and collective action by global institutions.

He drew parallels with the aviation sector which already has well-established frameworks. PM called upon the WTA to take a proactive role in creating a secure digital ecosystem and safe channel for telecommunication.

"In an interconnected world, security cannot be an afterthought. India's Data Protection Act and National Cyber Security Strategy reflect our commitment to building a safe digital environment", Modi noted. The Prime Minister urged the members of the assembly to create standards that are inclusive, secure, and adaptable to future challenges, including ethical AI and data privacy standards that respect the diversity of nations.

Modi emphasized the need for a human-centric dimension to the ongoing technological revolution, calling for responsible and sustainable innovation. He said that the standards set today will determine the direction of the future, stressing that principles of security, dignity and equity should be at the center of our discussions.

He said our goal should be that no country, no region and no community is left behind in this digital transformation and underscored the need for innovation balanced with inclusion. The Prime Minister urged to ensure that the future is technically strong as well as ethically sound with innovation as well as inclusion.

This is the 8th edition of IMC and coincides with WTA. The event will facilitate discussion on the standards set for new age technologies like 6G, AI, IoT, Big Data and cybersecurity among others.

Over 190 countries and 3000 industrialists and experts are participating in the 10-day long event being held here.

Modi also pointed out the pace at which technological developments have happened in India in the last decade. He stated that there are over 950 million internet users in India, and 40 percent of the real time digital transactions happening in the country.

Addressing the gathering Bharti Airtel Chief Sunil Mittal advocated for satellite connectivity in the country saying this will help reaching out to the unserved areas.

Reliance Jio Chairman Akash Ambani urged the government to expedite the update of 2020 draft Data Centre Policy and asked the department to work on it to ensure that India's data can remain within the country.

He said that India will lead the world in the 6G telephony.

Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that India is now prepared to lead the world in the development of 6G technology stating that due to India's remarkable achievements in the telecom sector over the last 10 years, the country has become a global leader in innovation and technology.

## Er Rashid's bail...

simultaneously extended up to October 15. "Today, we feel relieved that Er Rashid's bail has been extended till October 28," said Inam.

Meanwhile, Er Rashid has been extensively touring the North Kashmir Parliamentary constituency to review the pace of developmental projects. He is also visiting hospitals and meeting people for the immediate redressal of their issues.

## LG Administration directs...

to save their belongings. We are working to ensure that everyone affected receives prompt assistance."

The Lieutenant Governor's administration has directed all concerned agencies to be on the ground to provide help and relief to the villagers.

"The administration is doing everything possible to assist those impacted by this unfortunate incident. Our priority is to make sure people are safe, and their

immediate needs are taken care of," an official from the LG's office stated.

With no casualties reported, the focus now shifts to rehabilitating the displaced families and assessing the damage to livestock and property in this remote village. (KINS)

## SCs community...

Lal Saryara, said that the government should think over inclusivity and suitable representation for all sections of society including Schedule Caste.

He said that the NC should think over sending a member of SC community to Rajya Sabha from Jammu, which would not only give them representations but also expand the footprints of the government in Jammu.

Earlier, in Jammu and Kashmir SC ministers reached to the top offices which included Congress party's Tara Chand, who represented the SC community and held important offices including the chair of deputy chief minister, education minister and speaker.

Mula Ram and Suman Lata Bhagat (Congress), Bali Bhagat and Dr Devinder Kumar Manyal (BJP), Babu Ram Paul (National Conference), Yash Pal Kundal (JKNPP) remain ministers in J&K government since 2002.

## J&amp;K records...

In previous elections, separatist elements—often with ties to Pakistan or local militant outfits—actively disrupted the process. Terrorist incidents were a grim reality during every election cycle, including deadly attacks, political killings, and cross-border shelling.

The elections from 1996 to 2014 were particularly turbulent:

1996: Numerous attacks left many dead, with several political workers targeted.

2002: Violence claimed around 700 lives, including 80 political workers and several candidates.

2008: Terrorist attacks at the homes and rallies of candidates from the NC, PDP, BSP, and Congress resulted in multiple casualties.

2014: Dozens of attacks took place, and Pakistani forces violated the ceasefire 300 times along the Jammu border during the election period.

A key reason for the absence of violence this time was the participation of former separatists and individuals linked to groups such as the Hurriyat Conference. In previous elections, these groups had called for boycotts and orchestrated attacks to disrupt the democratic process. "Their involvement as candidates transformed the electoral landscape, significantly reducing tensions. We have seen how the boycott parties in the past would campaign asking people to desist from voting. That also used to be a signal to the violent elements and this would usually cause fear- psychosis among the people who actually wanted to exercise their franchise during the polls. Now, this time when the same people jumped into the electoral fray, that fear vanished in thin air," says a senior journalist based in Kashmir wishing not to be named.

Analysts believe this shift is unprecedented. "The participation of these elements in elections removed the traditional triggers for violence. It is a turning point for democracy in the region," said a senior defense expert.

Chief Minister", Yadav said and added, "I am confident that Omar will fulfill his responsibility towards the people and lead the state towards prosperity".

In reply to a question the Samajwadi Party Member Parliament said "The whole country was watching towards the Jammu and Kashmir and the Samajwadi people well understanding their aspirations"

"The country will be happy only when Jammu and Kashmir will move forward on the path of prosperity", Yadav asserted.

He said all the states living near the Line of Control (LoC) will get special attention so that they will further progress.

## Congress appoints...

a new CLP leader, the honourable Congress president said has appointed Shri G A Mir as the new CLP leader of Jammu & Kashmir," the order issued by K C Venugopal reads.

done a lot to provide tight security to our borders and the rest is being done. Shri Shah added that earlier Jammu & Kashmir, North East and Left Wing Extremism affected areas were the three sores, but now we have succeeded in reducing violence by 70% in these three places. He said that today Indian agencies have complete dominance in these three hotspots. Shri Shah said that now the culture of making both demands and aspiration for change through democratic process has reached the bottom, due to which the big protests that were seen earlier have now ended.

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah said that now the time has come that the police system should come forward to protect the fundamental rights of our citizens, the police system should be alert to minimize the crimes happening within the borders of the country and the time has come that we should be able to give justice to the citizen in the shortest possible time.

Amit Shah said that today through Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), 99% of the police stations of the country have become online, online data has been generated and radical changes have been made in many provisions through three new laws. In the new laws, emphasis has been laid on timely justice, increasing the proofs of conviction and maximum use of technology. Because we have made scientific evidences mandatory, the prosecution need not produce multiple witnesses, and now guilt can be proved on the basis of scientific evidences.

The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that the judicial process has been made time-

## ADDC B'la chairs DLSC meeting under PMMSY 2024-25



JINNEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, OCTOBER 15

The Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Baramulla, Syed Qamar Sajad Tuesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Steering Committee (DLSC) to accord approval to the selected beneficiaries for various initiatives by the Fisheries Department under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) 2024-25.

These welfare initiatives include the construction of carp fish ponds, trout raceways, live fish vending centres and the provision of e-rickshaws to enhance fish farming, marketing and transportation.

Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Javaid Ahmad, Additional Director Fisheries, Baramulla, members of the DLSC, and

others attended the meeting. During the meeting, the chair was informed that the Fisheries Department had received applications for various individual categories, and after a thorough evaluation, 15 applicants were deemed eligible, and their selection was finalized through a draw of lots.

Following a thorough review of the applications and through a draw of lots, approval was granted to 7 eligible beneficiaries, which includes 2 for the construction of carp ponds, 3 for trout raceways designated for ST/ women beneficiaries, 1 for a live fish vending center and 1 for an e-rickshaw.

During the meeting, the ADC instructed the officers to expedite the induction process, ensuring that the benefits are promptly delivered to the eligible beneficiaries.

bound in the new laws. In 5 years, the new laws will be fully implemented in every police station across the country, including installation of technology, development of software and training. After that, the process of justice will be completed within 3 years after the FIR is registered. Shri Shah said that the new laws have incorporated the latest technology and these laws have been made keeping in mind the changes that will take place in technology in the coming 100 years. Giving the example of e-summons, he said that provisions have been made in it to incorporate the technology of the coming 100 years. Provision has been made for the Director of Prosecution and Forensic Science Lab (FSL) has been made compulsory. No one can favour anyone because even if an officer compromises on his duties, due to the scientific evidences, he will not be able to do anything in front of the court. The FSL report will go directly to the court and a copy of it will also come from the police.

Amit Shah said that we have also secured the rights of citizens in the three new laws. The number of people in police custody will have to be declared online. Chargesheet will have to be filed within 90 days and videography of search and seizure will have to be done. Along with the fingerprint data on National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), data on terrorism and narcotics has been generated separately. National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) is also managing all the CCTNS data in a different way. The work of creating a data bank at the national level has been done with a lot of data. He said that now the Home Ministry team is also working to simplify your work by building software using artificial intelligence which will help in analysis.

The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that the security of the nation does not mean only the security of the border. The nation is made of its citizens. The security of the citizen is the basis of the security of the nation. He said that when he talks about security, it is not limited to the security of life and property, but the security of the rights given to the citizens by our Constitution also comes under it. The Constitution has given equal rights to the poorest of the poor as are enjoyed even by the Prime Minister of the country, and police officers have a lot of responsibility to protect their rights.

Amit Shah said that after 75 years, the time has come for us to focus on our core work. Now is the time to protect the rights of citizens and make efforts to prevent atrocities against them. The Union Home Minister said that protecting the rights of the poor, children and women are of prime importance.

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah told the probationers that there is no work that cannot be improved and there is no work that is less important. If they keep this in mind, they will be away from many disappointments in life. He said that the biggest medal for any police officer posted as SP in his youth will be that he is remembered by the people of his district for his good work for many years to come. Shri Shah said that all the young officers will have to work with a ruthless approach to eliminate anti-national activities. While doing police work, the security of the nation should always be in our mind and our eyes should always be open to ensure the security of the nation.

## EAM in Islamabad...

The Pakistan Prime Minister and the EAM shook hands and exchanged courtesies at the beginning of the dinner interaction.

This visit by the EAM is the first by an Indian foreign

## ADC Handwara conducts surprise inspection of schools in Vilgam zone



JINNEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, OCTOBER 15

The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Aziz Ahmad Rather today conducted a surprise inspection of various schools of Vilgam Education Zone of Sub Division Handwara to assess the quality of education, punctuality of staff/ students, hygiene and other important requirements for the safe, smooth and hassle free functioning of the schools.

The ADC inspected the classrooms and other facilities available in the schools and also checked the attendance record of both students and teachers. Attendance sheets were thoroughly checked to scrutinize the accuracy of records. This step aimed to promote regu-

lar attendance among students and punctuality among teachers.

During the visit, the ADC interacted with the school staff, teachers, and students. He encouraged the teachers to focus on their teaching methodologies and gave valuable suggestions to improve the learning environment.

He also motivated the students to actively participate in learning activities and maintain discipline within the school premises.

The schools inspected include Government Secondary School Haftrada, Government Boys High School Haftrada, KGBV Haftrada, UPS Hachmarg, Government Primary School Chechi Molalla, Sochayalari and Government Boys Middle School Schoyalari.

## 2 Erring medical shops closed down in Mohammadpora area of Kulgam for violating conditions of licences



JINNEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, OCTOBER 15

Acting swiftly on a specific complaint against medical shops at Mohammadpora, a team of Drug officials closed down two medical shops for non maintenance of records of Scheduled/ Narcotic drugs and have been found to flout the norms wrt conditions of licenses and Rules as per Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940. Time and again it has been reiterated to all chemists to strictly maintain Narcotic drug sale records and any

discrepancy in the same is dealt with strictly given the propensity of misuse of habit forming drugs.

This exercise is a part of large scale drive initiated against the erring persons who indulge in such unscrupulous activities.

Earlier in the day one medical shop was closed down at Badragund Qazigund for violating the conditions of licenses.

20 Drug samples were also lifted from the area to ascertain their quality parameters and to ensure quality medicine reaches the end consumers.

minister to Pakistan in nearly a decade.

Both leaders greeted each other at the dinner. Earlier, EAM Jaishankar arrived at Islamabad's airbase shortly before 3:30 pm and was presented with bouquets of flowers by children in greeting.

Jaishankar was received at the Nur Khan airbase by Foreign Office Director General (South Asia & SAARC) Ilyas Mehmood Nizami.

The Indian EAM is among a dozen leaders participating in the summit, which is scheduled to hold its main events on Wednesday.

EAM has made it clear that he is visiting Islamabad only to attend the SCO summit as a member, thereby ruling out any bilateral interactions.

The SCO summit, taking place from October 15 to 16, aims to bolster multilateral cooperation among member states, focusing on pressing issues such as counter-terrorism, economic collaboration, and climate change. The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus – with 16 more countries affiliated as observers or "dialogue partners".

Pakistan became a full member of the SCO at its 2017 summit in Kazakhstan, which was attended by ex-PM Nawaz Sharif, who recently also expressed the hope for reviving ties with India.

In his capacity as the current Chair of the Council of the Heads of Government (CHG), Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the summit.



**Samba: DM imposes prohibitory orders on movement in 02 Km area from International Border**

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, OCTOBER 15

District Magistrate Samba, in exercise of powers vested under section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, ordered that no person/group of persons shall move in the areas up to 02 Km along the International Border in district Samba from 2200 hrs to 0500 hrs. (10:00 PM to 05:00 AM). In case the movement is necessary, the person/persons shall produce their valid ID-cards to the BSF/Police authorities. Any person found violating the order shall be dealt with in accordance with the law. This order shall come into force with immediate effect and shall remain in force for a period of Sixty Days from the date of its issuance, unless withdrawn/rescinded earlier.

## Director JKEDI reviews functioning of district centres

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

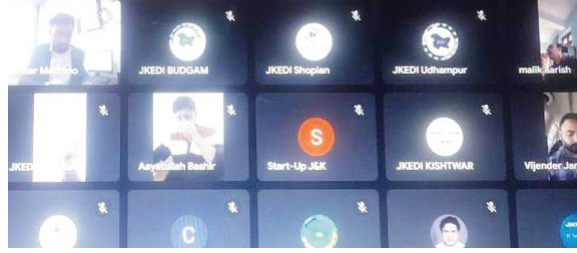
Director Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) Rajinder Kumar Sharma on Tuesday chaired a review meeting of the 20 district centres of the institute here at Bari Brahmana.

The Director reviewed the overall functioning of the district centres and different program verticals of the institute, especially the progress made regarding recovery of loans under different self-employment schemes and the upcoming Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) under Hausla 2.0.

The meeting was attended by the concerned Range Officers, District Nodal Officers of JKEDI and in-charges of the concerned sections and program verticals.

During the meeting the Director applauded the top performing district teams and pressed upon the others to enhance their efforts and complete the recovery targets in designated time.

The Director gave a thorough analysis of recovery data, highlighting the



progress achieved in all the districts of J&K. He said the all round review of the recovery and repayment status underscores the institute's dedication to transparency, accountability and sustainable growth.

He pressed upon all the District Nodal Officers to follow a dynamic approach to deal with the defaulters and realise the government money disbursed as soft loans under different schemes, and follow the due process especially the issuance of demand notices well in advance.

The DNOs were briefed

about the upcoming training programs scheduled under Hausla 2.0 initiative in the coming days along with the registrations on the Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR) portal. Hausla 2.0 seeks to enhance financial inclusion among women in Jammu Kashmir by promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating market access.

The Director highlighted the importance of a unified approach among JKEDI employees to guide youth towards establishing successful ventures as envisioned in the institute's mandate.

## JMC imparts awareness to work animal owners

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

An awareness-cum-registration programme was organized today by the Veterinary section of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) for work animal owners operating within JMC limits.

The main motive of the programme was to aware the owners of Marriage buggies/ Horse cart/ horses/ Pony/ Mule/ Camel/ Donkey and other work animals regarding benefits of registration of their work animals in accordance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Draught and Pack Animal Rules, 1965 and J&K Municipal Corporation Act, 2000.

Commissioner JMC, Dr. Devansh Yadav along with Deputy Director Research, AHD Jammu Dr. Rakesh



Koul, MVO, JMC Dr. Jaswant Singh, VAS, JMC Dr. Divya Sharma, besides Lab officers DDR Lab Dr. Abhimanyu Chauhan and Dr. Ashwani Bassan were present in the programme.

The Commissioner interacted with the stakeholders regarding the importance of registration of their work animals with JMC and benefits as such. The team of the Veteri-

nary section informed the stakeholders regarding the importance of health and fitness status, duration of their working hours, capacity of load on animals and various animal welfare issues of these work animals. As many as 30 registration certificates were issued on-spot after RFID tagging and blood sample examination. Free vaccines for rabies and

tetanus were provided to 50 animals.

Veterinary section of JMC is carrying out various drives within JMC limits to curtail the incidences of cruelty towards work animals as well as plying of these animals by their owners without obtaining proper licensing from Jammu Municipal Corporation.

## Judicial Officers of District Srinagar felicitate Justice Tashi Rabstan for elevation to Chief Justice

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15

The Judicial Officers of District Srinagar under the guidance of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar today paid a visit to the Justice Tashi Rabstan to felicitate him for elevation to the coveted and prestigious post of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of High Court of J&K and Ladakh.



The Judicial Officers congratulated Justice Tashi Rabstan for assuming the charge of the highest seat of Justice in the UT's of

J&K and Ladakh and praised his leadership, exceptional services and unwavering dedication to the cause of Justice.

Justice Tashi Rabstan welcomed Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar and other Judicial Officers whole heartedly and gave patient and compassionate hearing to them. He assured every support

to the Judicial Officers to raise the bar of the District Judiciary in meeting the expectations of the general public.

At the end Pr. District & Sessions Judge Srinagar along with all other Judicial Officers extended their best wishes to Justice Tashi Rabstan for success for this vital role and look forward to the positive impact of his leadership on the judiciary and the judicial fraternity.

### Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu

e-mail: [xennorth@gmail.com](mailto:xennorth@gmail.com)

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
e-NIT No. 166 of 2024-25

For and on behalf of Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Jammu, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from the reputed/registered firms/Sole Prop. for the below mentioned work:-

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (in ₹)	Cost of document/ tender fee (in ₹)	Earnest money (in ₹)	Validity of Rates	Bid validity
1.	Providing, installation, testing and commissioning of 1.10 lakh GPH x 30 mtr head non-clog raw water submersible pumpset along with allied works at Collection Channel Sitlee under UT Capex Budget.	10,00,000/-	500/-	30,000/- in the shape of CDR / FDR	180 days	180 days

Position of AAA: Accorded  
Position of TS: Sanctioned

**Date of Publishing : 12-10-2024 (02.00 pm).**

- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 12-10-2024 (02.00 pm).
- The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 17-10-2024 (02.00 pm) to 24-10-2024 (02.00 pm).
- The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktenders.gov.in>. A pre-bid meeting shall be held in the office of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu on 15-10-2024 (02:00 pm) for any clarification and other information required by the bidders who intend to participate in the tender.
- The Technical bids received shall be opened online on 25-10-2024 (02.00 pm) or any other subsequent date in the office of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Mech. Division North Jammu.
- The Financial bid of the bidders shall be opened online after scrutinizing the technical bid in the office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

JSMDNJ/2989-91  
Dated: 11-10-2024

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti Mech. Division North  
Jammu

DIP/J-5574/24  
Date: 15-10-24

### Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu

e-mail: [xennorth@gmail.com](mailto:xennorth@gmail.com)

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
e-NIT No. 164 of 2024-25

For and on behalf of Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Jammu, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from the reputed/registered firms/Sole Prop. for the below mentioned work:-

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (in ₹)	Cost of document/ tender fee (in ₹)	Earnest money (in ₹)	Validity of Rates	Bid validity
1.	Providing, Installation, testing and commissioning of 50000 GPH x 250 M head HC pump set of Lohar unit No. 1 and other allied works at CPS Sitlee under UT Capex Budget.	44,00,000/-	500/-	1,32,000/- in the shape of CDR / FDR	180 days	180 days

Position of AAA: Accorded  
Position of TS: Sanctioned

**Date of Publishing : 11-10-2024 (05.00 pm).**

- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 11-10-2024 (05.00 pm).
- The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 17-07-2024 (02.00 pm) to 24-10-2024 (02.00 pm).

No. JSMDNJ/2973-75  
Dated: 11-10-2024

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti Mech. Division North  
Jammu

DIP/J-5530/24  
Date: 15-10-24



## EDITORIAL

## World Food Day – Building a Future Without Hunger

Every year on October 16th, the world comes together to observe World Food Day, a reminder of both our collective progress and persistent struggles in achieving food security. Spearheaded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, this day serves as a clarion call to address hunger, ensure sustainable food systems, and reaffirm our commitment to the 2nd Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2): Zero Hunger.

Despite significant strides over the past decades, global hunger has once again risen, worsened by climate change, conflicts, and economic disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the FAO's latest reports, over 735 million people suffer from hunger, with malnutrition threatening the futures of children in developing countries. These statistics represent more than numbers—they reflect lost potential, unnecessary suffering, and widening inequalities.

While hunger devastates millions, nearly 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted globally each year. In a world capable of producing more than enough food for everyone, this paradox exposes systemic flaws in how food is grown, distributed, and consumed.

Climate change is becoming a major disruptor of global food production, with extreme weather events—droughts, floods, and heatwaves—endangering crops and livestock. Many small-scale farmers, the backbone of food production in regions like Africa and Asia, are increasingly vulnerable to shifting climates and economic instability. Without swift action, food shortages and price volatility could deepen inequality and force millions into poverty.

On this day, we must recognize that food security and environmental sustainability are inextricably linked. Sustainable agriculture is not just a luxury—it is essential for the survival of future generations. We need food systems that respect ecological limits, reduce waste, and protect biodiversity while promoting healthier diets.

World Food Day isn't merely a call for charity but for empowerment and innovation. Long-term solutions require supporting local farmers, investing in technology, and fostering resilient food systems. Governments, civil society, and the private sector must work together to address systemic issues like poverty, access to education, gender inequality, and market instability—all of which are intertwined with hunger.

Moreover, there is an urgent need for policy shifts. Subsidizing sustainable farming practices, implementing policies that minimize food waste, and encouraging climate-smart agriculture are some steps toward a more resilient food system. Consumers also play a vital role. Conscious choices—like reducing food waste and supporting fair-trade products—can amplify global efforts. The theme for World Food Day this year—"Water is Life, Water is Food. Leave No One Behind"—highlights the importance of water as a vital resource for food security. It reminds us that in our interconnected world, progress will remain incomplete if vulnerable communities continue to struggle for basic needs.

World Food Day is more than just a symbolic occasion; it is a reminder that hunger is a solvable issue. But achieving Zero Hunger requires a shift in mindset: food is not just a commodity but a basic human right. No child should go to bed hungry, no family should be forced to choose between food and other essentials, and no farmer should struggle to grow crops on barren lands. On this World Food Day, let us all reflect on the role we can play—from advocating for policy change to reducing our food waste at home. The journey to a world free from hunger is not easy, but with global solidarity, innovation, and determined action, it is achievable.

The future of food belongs to all of us—and so does the responsibility to ensure no one is left behind.

## Why RBI should not look at food inflation

UTTAM GUPTA

On October 9, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the decisions taken by the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its fourth bi-monthly meeting of the current financial year (FY). It has kept the policy rate (the interest rate at which the RBI lends to banks) unchanged at 6.5 per cent. However, it has altered its policy stance from "withdrawing of accommodation" to a neutral stance. In 2016, the Union Government put in place an institutionalised framework to enable the MPC to formulate monetary policy and determine the key interest rates including the policy rate for inflation targeting. It mandated the RBI to fix the policy rate in such a manner as to maintain the Consumer Price Index or CPI (it corresponds to a basket that includes food, fuel, manufactured goods and select services) within the target range of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent). The RBI decides the policy rates once in two months during each FY.

The mandate initially given for five years ending March 31, 2021, has since been extended till March 31, 2026. The other crucial policy instrument the

banking regulator uses for targeting inflation is Liquidity - a jargon for the quantum of credit available in the banking system. Pumping more liquidity along with a reduction in the policy rate represents a scenario which in jargon is described as an 'accommodative' policy stance. The terminology was coined by Das in June 2019 when he started going for aggressive cuts in the policy rate and an increase in credit availability. Since June 2022 the RBI changed its stance to "withdrawing of accommodation" and has since stuck to it till date.

From October 9, 2024, it has decided to go for what it terms a "neutral" stance. A "neutral" stance connotes that the RBI has vowed to keep its options flexible meaning it will neither squeeze liquidity by restricting credit availability and keeping policy rates high nor go for unrestrained lending at low interest rates.

At the time of taking charge in December 2018, Das was confronted with a legacy of policy rate at a peak of 6.5 per cent, courtesy of a tight stance taken by his predecessor Urjit Patel. In February 2019, he initiated a process of aggressive cut that led to its plummeting to a low of 4 per cent by May 2020. It stayed at that level for over two years.

Beginning May 2022, the RBI delivered a hike of 1.4 per cent during the first half of FY 2022-23 and another dose of 1.1 per cent during the second half.

A total hike of 2.5 per cent thus restored the policy rate to its earlier peak of 6.5 per cent by February 2023. Since then, the rate has remained unchanged to date.

Why hasn't RBI reduced the rate? Look at the trajectory of the CPI inflation. It had scaled to a high of 7.8 per cent in April 2022. During FY 2022-23, it hovered around 8 per cent. In the following FY, it started decreasing from 7.4 per cent in July 2023 to 5 per cent in September 2023, 4.8 per cent in October 2023 and 5.1 per cent during January/February 2024. For the whole of FY 2023-24, it was 5.4 per cent. During the current FY also, the CPI inflation has kept low; 5.08 per cent in June 2024 and 3.54 per cent in July of 2024. During FY 2024-25, the RBI expects the CPI inflation to be 4.5 per cent. Given the above, from the third quarter of FY 2023-24, the CPI inflation has remained well within the target range of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent). Moreover, as per RBI's assessment, this position will be sustained till the end of the current FY.

There was thus a strong case for reducing the repo rate. This would have given a boost to economic growth besides helping millions of borrowers reduce their EMIs and helping industries, especially MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) reduce the cost of servicing their loans. Yet, the RBI remains unfazed and has stuck to its stance of 'not reducing the policy rate'.

This has to do with a mindset that was reflected in Das's observation while announcing the first bi-monthly policy of the current FY. He had said "The elephant has now gone out for a walk and appears to be returning to the forest. We would like the elephant to return to the forest and remain there on a durable basis." Put simply, he meant there was no need to start reducing interest rates until inflation reached the target of 4 per cent and stayed at that level. If, that figure of 4 per cent was so sacrosanct, then why keep (+/- 2 per cent)?

The short point is the RBI is clamoring for a scenario that is unlikely and even if it is reached, it won't be possible to stay there for long. A potent reason for this is food inflation which has a weight of around 40 per cent in the overall CPI and is impacted predominantly

by supply side/seasonal factors whereas monetary policy instruments work on the demand side.

Invariably, food inflation maintains an upward trend even as a small disruption in supply caused by seasonal factors can lead to spiralling prices. This, in turn, lifts the CPI inflation more so because of its high weight of 40 per cent. In July 2023, food inflation was 11.8 per cent which led to CPI inflation of 7.4 per cent. In October 2023, the former decreased to 6.6 per cent, and so did the latter to 4.8 per cent. At the start of the current year, food inflation spurted to around 8 per cent and by June 2024, it had further moved up to 9.4 per cent.

As long as food (whose prices are fundamentally affected by supply-side factors) remains a part of the CPI basket, inflation targeting will always remain a problem. There is an urgent need to exclude it while setting benchmark interest rates, an idea that was mooted by the Chief Economic Advisor in the Economic Survey (ES) for 2023-24. The CEA argued that monetary policy has no bearing on the prices of food items, which are dictated by supply-side pressures. For instance, during 2021-22, wheat output was affected

by unusually high temperatures. During 2022-23, rains accompanied by hailstorms acted as a spoiler. During the first half of FY 2023-24, food inflation went up due to a spike in the prices of vegetables caused by seasonal factors. The current inflationary trend in food prices also has to do with supply-side pressures only. The RBI can achieve little to control them by keeping the policy rate high.

The RBI should take the idea mooted in the ES - 2023-24 on board. Meanwhile, it should consider reducing the weight of food inflation in CPI to reflect the contemporary reality. The current 40 per cent weight is based on the Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) of 2011-12 whereas Summary Statistics from the 2022-23 CES point towards a significant reduction. While formulating its monetary policy, the RBI's prime responsibility is to ensure macro-economic stability its pivotal focus being on keeping inflation within reasonable bounds. However, it can't be oblivious of the dire need to support economic growth which could be adversely impacted if it keeps the interest rates high.

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

## Laapataa Ladies: India's Oscar entry poised to captivate the world

CHAITANYA K PRASAD

India is ready to stun the world once again, not only with its glamorous presence but also with its captivating storytelling at the 2025 Oscars. With Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies* chosen as India's official entry for Best International Feature Film, the global stage is about to witness a film that exemplifies the power of Indian cinema where tradition meets modernity, and women's stories are told with gradation, strength and authenticity.

From the grand stages of Cannes and TIFF to the prestigious halls of the Oscars, India's cinematic journey continues to break boundaries, capturing hearts across the globe. The selection of *Laapataa Ladies* stands out as a justified move that speaks volumes about the direction the Indian cinema will take in the future.

It signifies not just a bold statement but also a deeper narrative that India aims to convey to the world. The decision has

stirred passionate discussions about the nature of Indian cinema, the evolving landscape of global filmmaking, and the art of storytelling that resonates universally. It signifies not just a bold statement but also a deeper narrative that India aims to convey to the world. One characterised by powerful storytelling and emotional depth, laced with cultural authenticity that delves into the unique yet universally relatable experiences of women.

Kiran Rao's return to the director's chair after more than a decade has proven to be nothing short of a cinematic triumph of her evolution as a filmmaker.

'*Laapataa Ladies*' offers more than a film, it's an experience that beautifully blends humour and poignant social commentary and a fresh perspective on the complexities of Indian womanhood. Set against the backdrop of rural India, the story revolves around two brides mistakenly swapped due to their veils, igniting a whirlwind of confusion and iden-



entity crisis. But beneath the surface, the film tackles deeper societal themes, portraying the often unspoken struggles women face while navigating tradition and personal identity. Rao's masterful storytelling elevates this from a simple narrative to a cultural dialogue, one that resonates with both Indian and global audiences. It's this jugalbandi of emotion, drama, and humour that makes '*Laapataa Ladies*' stand out as a universal story about women's empowerment.

The film doesn't just reflect the plight of Indian women, it taps into the global consciousness of gender roles, the subtle acts of defiance, and the resilience required to reclaim one's identity in a patriarchal society. By sending '*Laapataa Ladies*' to the Oscars, India is presenting the world with a film that balances entertainment with a serious undercurrent. This is the kind of storytelling that Hollywood needs to see an authentic narrative that reflects the socio-cultural realities of a nation while

remaining universally relatable. With well-written characters, immersive performances, and a storyline that oscillates between lightheartedness and gravitas, '*Laapataa Ladies*' will serve as a testament to Indian filmmaking talent. The performances of Nitanishi Goel and Pratibha Ranta shine, their portrayals brimming with vulnerability and strength, making their characters relatable on a universal scale. This film is not just a story about two women but about the entire spectrum of Indian womanhood—its beauty, complexity, and contradictions.

The landscape of global filmmaking is undergoing a revolution.

The world is slowly waking up to the storytelling brilliance that many nations like South Korea, China, Turkey and India have always possessed but are now showcasing with greater confidence and finesse. India's selection of '*Laapataa Ladies*' is part of this global wave of cinema that is redefin-

ing the narrative structure, giving voice to local stories with universal appeal. Much like South Korea's *Parasite*, which used the backdrop of class disparity to tell a universally compelling story, '*Laapataa Ladies*' uses rural India's traditions to explore gender, identity and empowerment in a way that transcends cultural boundaries. As '*Laapataa Ladies*' makes its way to the Oscars, it carries with it the hopes of millions who believe in the power of authentic storytelling.

The film's emotional depth, paired with Rao's visionary direction, is set to make waves on the international stage, showing Hollywood and the world what Indian cinema is truly capable of. With '*Laapataa Ladies*', India has not just sent a film—it has sent a message.

(The writer is a former additional DG, DFF, and festival director at IFFI. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan; Views are personal)

## Transforming Healthcare in India: The impact and promise of Ayushman Bharat PMJAY

VINOD K PAUL

Raju (name changed), aged 18 years, felt breathless and tired, even while normally walking around. In 2017, chest pain led to the diagnosis of a serious heart condition. His father sold the family livestock and land, plunging into a debt of over five lakhs to fund an endless search for treatment. In 2019, they received a letter from Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) but overlooked its import. In 2022, Raju's condition worsened, requiring urgent surgery. Desperate and out of options, a hospital staff member asked the family to check about PMJAY and confirmed his eligibility, and Raju underwent life-saving surgery there costing around Rs. 1.83 lakhs. After 67 days in the hospital, he was finally discharged to live a new life.

This story of hope, health and happiness is one among countless others, woven around the lives of beneficiaries of AB PMJAY.

With approximately 7.8 crore hospital admissions authorized under the scheme over the last six years, PMJAY has improved and saved millions of lives and, at the same time, prevented respective families from plunging into impoverishment and suffering due to hospital costs. The scheme stands as a testament to India's commitment to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister.

PMJAY has touched the very base of healthcare delivery across government and private hospitals by providing free healthcare of upto Rs 5 lakhs for secondary and tertiary treatment per beneficiary family. This amount may appear small compared

to the whopping numbers promoted by private health insurers, but the impact of this amount for millions of families is life-changing and life-saving given the design and scale of the scheme. Analyses show that, in general, almost all the annual inpatient care requirements of a family are met by this coverage.

By design, PMJAY is for inpatient secondary and tertiary care, and outpatient services are not a part of the scheme. The latter component of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is being addressed through the equally ambitious comprehensive primary health care mission under which over 1,75,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs), earlier called Health and Wellness Centres, have been established where free consultations, and many medicines (upto 172) and diagnostics (upto 63) are being provided free. Stronger two-way

convergence and continuity of care across the two systems is currently the focus of government effort. Bharat's UHC model is based on publicly-funded comprehensive primary healthcare. Health policy and services need to be seen in totality and not in isolation.

Over the course of scheme implementation, the procedures and prices under Health Benefit Package (HBP) have been revised and rationalised. From 1393 HBPs in 2018, the number now stands at 1949 since 2022. A concept of differential pricing has been introduced, to account for regional variation in the costs of healthcare services. Currently, States and UTs have been given additional flexibility to further customize the HBP rates to local context.

To ensure seamless delivery of services and mitigate scope of abuse in

the system, PMJAY is inherently technology-driven, and paperless as well as cashless. There is no provision of reimbursement or co-payment. Though most claim settlements are timely, intense efforts are being made for further improvements in partnership with the states.

The scheme's success and the government's commitment to public welfare have led to two major initiatives this year to expand its coverage. In the interim budget, the government extended the scheme to approximately 37 lakh families of ASHA and Anganwadi workers and helpers.

Second, in the wake of India's rising life expectancy, another major development is the government's decision to extend PMJAY coverage to all citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of the socio-economic status. This would benefit 4.5 crore families with 6

crore such senior citizens. The National Sample Survey (NSS) 75th round report on Health in India shows that the hospitalization rate for this age group exceeds a high 11%. The Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASD) 2021 report reveals that 75% of the elderly have one or more chronic diseases, 40% have some form of disability, and 1 in 4 suffers from multi-morbidity. Notably, 58% of the elderly population are women, with 54% being widows. Unlike many private insurance products for senior citizens, PMJAY does not exclude anyone because of a pre-existing illness; nor does it impose any waiting period of year(s) before the benefits are allowed. By addressing the healthcare needs of senior citizens, the scheme empowers them to lead healthy and dignified lives. PMJAY connects the public and private health sectors into

one-nation, one-system. As on date, PMJAY has a pan India network of more than 29,000 empanelled hospitals including about 13,000 private ones. Further, around 25,000 hospitals of these are situated in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. The proportion of hospital admissions authorized in private sector by count and amount are 57% and 67%, respectively, indicating significant participation of this sector. Beneficiary has the choice to pick the empanelled hospitals, public or private, as per the state guidelines.

The scheme has also significantly impacted service delivery in public sector hospitals across many states. These hospitals have utilized funds reimbursed under the scheme to enhance their amenities and infrastructure. With increasing pace of coverage and reach, PMJAY has the potential to spur growth of private

hospitals in tier 2 and 3 cities by creating a market where there was previously unmet demand due to lack of paying capacity.

A recent study by an eminent economist (based on unit-level data from Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23) concluded that the bottom 50 per cent of our population has become significantly less vulnerable to medical expenditure-related shocks in the past 10 years; and this trend is closely associated with PMJAY. Many more people are accessing healthcare services today and, at the same time, preserving their assets and savings. Ayushman Bharat PMJAY is poised to play a pivotal role in building a Viksit Bharat. Good health, after all, is the very foundation of wellbeing, national productivity and prosperity.

Dr Vinod K Paul is Member (Health) NITI Aayog.



# DOCTORS URGE WOMEN TO LOOK BEYOND LUMPS FOR BREAST CANCER SYMPTOMS

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

While the most common presentation in breast cancer is a lump in the breast, it can occur even without any noticeable symptoms, said doctors on Tuesday while urging for self-examination and screening.

October is celebrated as breast cancer awareness month.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in India. With a high mortality rate, it is a major public health concern in the country.

As per a recent ICMR study, breast cancer cases and deaths are expected to rise in India by 2045.

However, the key is to detect the cancer in its early stages to help boost treatment outcomes as well as survival rates, said the experts.

"Although most common presentation in breast cancer is lump in the breast, it can also present as swelling or lumps under the arm or near the collarbone, nipple discharge (clear, bloody, or yellowish), changes in skin over breast (dimpled, thickened, or appear like an orange peel)," Dr. Abhishek Shankar, Assistant Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital at AIIMS, Delhi, told IANS.

"Redness or rash over skin over breast or nipple, inverted nipple, changes in breast size and shape and pain in breast" are also symptoms of the deadly cancer, the doctor added.

As per ICMR, breast cancer cases account for 28.2 per cent of all female cancers in India in 2022.



The five-year survival rate for breast cancer in India is 66.4 per cent.

Breast cancer can be early detected and early diagnosed. It can be early detected with screening tests and mammography is the standard recommended screening test that gives mortality advantage.

As per the United States Preventive Services Task Force updated guidelines

in 2024, it is recommended to start at 40 years of age after every 2 years.

"One can have breast cancer even without any noticeable symptoms. That is why the role of screening through mammograms or breast MRI is important, as it has been shown to reduce mortality by over 30 per cent," Dr. Divya Sehra Consultant - Gynaecologic Oncology,

Manipal Hospital Dwarka, New Delhi, told IANS.

Common signs and symptoms, apart from breast lumps, include changes in the shape or contour of the breasts, making mirror examinations useful.

"Skin changes, such as redness and pain, are common when the tumour grows towards the skin. Generalised symptoms like unexplained weight loss, back pain, or pain in the upper right side of the abdomen may be present in metastatic cancers," Sehra said.

Shankar noted that breast self-examination and clinical breast examination can help to diagnose breast cancer at an early stage.

Clinical breast examination is being adopted for community-based breast cancer screening under the National Programme

on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Disease (NP-NCD).

How to prevent the risk? Breast cancer is a disease of women in which risk prevention is possible by modifying the risk factors like late age of marriage, late age of childbirth, no children, and use of oral contraceptive pills.

"In high-risk individuals, chemoprophylaxis with hormonal tablets can help to reduce the risk but it is not advocated in general as it's not cost-effective and also has side effects," Shankar said.

The experts also recommended genetic testing in case of family history.

Other ways to prevent the risk include maintaining a healthy lifestyle, with a diet rich in fibre and antioxidants, while avoiding alcohol and red meat.

## Centre announces 3 CoEs for AI in healthcare, agriculture & sustainable cities

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The Union government on Tuesday announced the establishment of three Centres of Excellence (CoE) for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare, agriculture, and sustainable cities.

The CoEs in AI, to be built with a total financial outlay of Rs. 990.00 Crore over the period of FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28, is aimed to further boost the start-up ecosystem in the country. "The three AI-CoEs would emerge as temples of global public good, and also emerge as solution providers of the world," said Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education.

"AI-CoEs will create a new generation of job creators and establish new paradigms of global public good," the minister said.

The three AI CoEs are

aimed at realising the vision of "Viksit Bharat," and will be led by top educational institutions, with industry partners and startups. They will conduct interdisciplinary research, develop cutting-edge applications, and create scalable solutions in these three areas, said the Ministry of Education.

It noted that the initiative aims to galvanise an effective AI ecosystem and nurture quality human resources in these critical fields. Further, the CoEs are not just institution-based but are designed to serve the entire country, said K. Sanjay Murthy, Secretary of the Department of Higher Education.

Stressing the importance of interdisciplinary research, he mentioned that with the right kind of collaboration among like-minded resources, optimum results can be achieved.

## Indian healthcare, pharma sector sees highest quarterly deal volumes in 3 years

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The healthcare and pharma sector saw an overall 64 deals, valued at \$2.8 billion in Q3 of 2024, marking the sector's highest quarterly volumes in three years, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report by Grant Thornton Bharat showed that mergers and acquisitions, and private equity deal volumes increased significantly, with 59 deals worth \$2.2 billion, the highest since Q4 2021.

However, Q3 2024 saw a 47 per cent decline in deal values compared to Q2 2024.

The decline was mainly



due to fewer high-value deals, with only two deals worth \$1.8 billion.

In contrast, Q2 2024 had 11 high-value deals (over \$100 million) total-

ing \$3.4 billion.

Healthtech, Pharma, and biotech and wellness segments led the deal volumes collectively with a 66 per cent share, while

Pharma and biotech led the deal values with a 79 per cent share.

"Overall, the pharma and healthcare sector witnessed increasing investor interest, driven by strong consumer demand focused on healthy living, innovation, and a focus on high-growth areas like biologics and specialty care," Bhanu Prakash Kalmath S J, Partner and Healthcare Services Industry Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat.

"We anticipate the deal momentum to continue as companies position for growth both domestically and globally," he added.

The report said that Q3 2024 saw 26 merger and acquisition deals valued

at \$1.9 billion, achieving record-high quarterly deal volumes.

Deal volumes also increased 44 per cent from Q2 2024, and deal values rose by 39 per cent to \$1.9 billion.

Further, Q3 2024 saw 33 private equity/venture capital deals valued at \$246 million. Deal values declined 91 per cent from Q2 2024 due to the absence of big-ticket transactions.

The Q3 2024 also saw two IPOs valued at \$459 million, among the largest in the sector for 2024, while three QIPs raised \$214 million, marking a significant increase in activity.

## Fourteen of 25 districts in Arunachal Pradesh eligible for malaria-free certification

AGENCIES  
ITANAGAR, OCT 15

Arunachal Pradesh has made significant progress towards malaria elimination as 14 of the state's 25 districts are presently eligible for malaria-free certification, a senior Health official said during the inauguration of State review meeting on vector-borne diseases at Naharlagun on Tuesday.

The meeting, organized by the NCVBDC, State Health Society, Arunachal Pradesh, focused on evaluating the state's efforts towards malaria elimination and reviewing the progress in combating vector-borne diseases.

Providing a comprehensive overview of

Arunachal's current malaria status, Deputy Director of Health Services cum State Programme Officer, National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC), Dr KT Mulung said, "14 out of 25 districts in Arunachal Pradesh are now eligible for malaria-free certification, which marks a significant milestone in the state's ongoing efforts to eliminate the disease." Additional Senior Regional Director of the Regional Offices of Health & Family Welfare, Shilong & Guwahati, Dr Juliana Lyngwa commended the remarkable reduction in malaria cases across the state, attributing this achievement to the dedication of health officials and field staff.

She also stressed the importance of proper documentation to ensure smooth progress towards receiving malaria elimination certification.

State's Family Welfare Director Dr Amping Perme, recognizing the hard work and continuous efforts of all staff involved in vector-borne disease control, reiterated the department's commitment to achieving a malaria-free Arunachal Pradesh shortly.

NHM Mission Director Marge Sora assured that he would oversee the proper district fund allocation for vector-borne disease control programmes, while encouraging the staffers to continue their hard work to achieve malaria elimination in the state.

## Cancer, dementia can accelerate death risk in sepsis patients: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Cancer and dementia are the major risk factors that increase the risk of mortality among patients with sepsis admitted to the emergency medical department, according to a study on Tuesday.

Sepsis is a life-threatening emergency caused by a dysregulated host immune response to an infection that claims millions of lives globally each year.

The study led by a team of Danish researchers found that age and heart disease were the other reasons that can raise the risk of death in sepsis patients within two years.

"We found that certain factors increased the risk of death after sepsis, including, not surprisingly, advanced age," said Dr. Finn E. Nielsen, a senior scientist in the Depart-



ment of Clinical Epidemiology at Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark.

"Additionally, conditions such as dementia, heart disease, cancer, and previous hospitalisation with sepsis within the last six months before admission also elevated the risk of dying during a median follow-up period of two years," Nielsen said.

In the paper, presented

at the European Emergency Medicine Congress in Copenhagen, the team examined deaths over a long follow-up period in a prospective study of 714 adult patients admitted to the emergency department with sepsis between October 2017 and the end of March 2018.

The team found that after a median of two years, 361 (50.6 per cent) of the patients with sepsis

had died from any cause, including sepsis.

Older age increases the risk of death by 4 per cent for every additional year of age.

Furthermore, a history of cancer more than doubled the risk (121 per cent), and ischaemic heart disease (a condition in which the arteries supplying blood to the heart narrow or become blocked by a build-up of fat) increased the risk by 39 per cent, dementia increased the risk by 90 per cent, and previous admission with sepsis within the last six months increased the risk by 48 per cent.

"Recognising that sepsis is a serious illness with high mortality is crucial," Nielsen said.

As the study was carried out in a single centre, further research in larger, prospective studies is needed, the team said.

## New Lancet study shows how countries can reduce premature death by half

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Childhood immunisations and low-cost prevention and treatments combined with new health technologies may help reduce premature deaths by 50 per cent, according to a new study published by The Lancet Commission on Tuesday.

The report laid out a roadmap for every nation that chooses to do so to cut the chance of premature death for its citizens in half by 2050.

"The goal of '50 by 50' is achievable", argues the report. If every country achieves the goal, then, a person born in 2050 would have only a 15 per cent chance of dying before age 70, down from 31 per cent for someone born in 2019.

It suggested measures such as "expanding child-



hood immunisations and low-cost prevention and treatments for common causes of preventable death, combined with scaling up financing to develop new health technologies".

Since 1970, about 37 countries have cut the probability of their citizens dying before they reach age 70 in half -- a milestone that signals the remarkable progress many countries have made in preventing and treating

disease.

"Today, the case is better than ever for mortality reduction," said Gavin Yamey, director of the Duke University Center for Policy Impact in Global Health (CPIGH), who led the writing of the commission report.

"It's a prize within reach. It will have extraordinary health, welfare, and economic benefits. Reaching '50 by 50' would reduce mortality and morbidity, help grow econo-

mies, and alleviate poverty," Yamey added.

The report urged countries to prioritise the 15 health conditions that cause most premature deaths -- including tuberculosis and respiratory infections, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and other issues such as accidents and suicide.

The researchers said that significant gains can be made in public health by "subsidising the costs of essential medicines, diagnostics, vaccines, and that address these 15 conditions."

The report also called for increased taxation on tobacco products, unhealthy foods and drinks, and fossil fuels, which the researchers said would both reduce illness and death attributable to those products and raise revenue that can be reinvested in health systems.

## India strengthens drug testing network: Health Minister Nadda

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

India's network of drug testing labs, which includes 8 central labs, 38 state regulator labs, and 8 mini labs at key ports for rapid import testing, ensures the annual testing of over 100,000 samples, reinforces the country's commitment to public health and regulatory excellence, Union Health

Minister J P Nadda said on Monday.

The Union Health Minister who inaugurated the five-day 19th International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities organised by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), said collaboration across borders, sectors and disciplines is essential for creating lasting health solutions.

He underlined India's

commitment to meeting the increasing demand for pharma products while adhering to global quality standards.

The event is being hosted for the first time in India by the CDSCO, Union Health Ministry in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), brings together regulatory authorities, policymakers, and health officials from over 194 WHO member states.

Nadda also pointed out that in order to make drug supply chain robust, it has been made mandatory to provide bar code or quick response code (QR Code) on top 300 brands of drug products.

Similarly, QR code is mandatory on all API packs, either being imported or manufactured in India.

Noting that India emerged not only as a global leader in

health resilience and innovation but also reaffirmed its role as the pharmacy of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister said the country rapidly expanded its healthcare infrastructure and scaled

"The successful roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme covering over a billion people is a testament to the robustness of our healthcare

system and the dedication of our healthcare workers and soundness of our policies," Nadda stated.

"Guided by the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', we extend our support to more than 150 countries providing life saving drugs and vaccines during the pandemic. This spirit of international solidarity is the heart of India's approach to global health," he said.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO, who virtually joined the conference, commended India for hosting this crucial global regulatory forum and highlighted the importance of global cooperation in drug regulation, particularly in light of challenges such as antimicrobial resistance, the post-pandemic world, and the safe use of AI in healthcare.



# Global telecom standards should ensure security, dignity and equity: PM Modi

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

There is a need for a human-centric dimension to the ongoing technological revolution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, stressing that principles of security, dignity and equity should be at the centre of global telecommunication standards.

Inaugurating the historic International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) 'World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024' in the national capital, PM Modi said that standards set here will determine the direction of the future.

"Our goal should be that no country, no region and no community is left behind in this digital transformation," said the Prime Minister, underscoring the need for innovation balanced with inclusion.

"The time has come to accept the importance of a

global framework for digital technology. We have to ensure that our future is both technically strong and ethically sound," PM Modi told the gathering.

PM Modi also inaugurated the 8th edition of the 'India Mobile Congress 2024', saying that while WTSA's objective is to work on global standards, the role of the 'India Mobile Congress' is associated with services and both the events "bring global standards and services on a single platform".

Discussing telecom sector reforms, the Prime Minister noted India's efforts in lowering data costs. The cost of internet data in India is now as low as 12 cents per GB compared to many countries in the world where one GB of data is 10 to 20 times more expensive.

"Today, every Indian consumes about 30 GB of data on an average every month", said PM Modi.



Today, the country has a mobile phone user base of 120 crore, 95 crore internet users and digital transactions of more than 40 per cent of the entire world in real-time.

"India had showcased how digital connectivity had become an effective tool for last-mile delivery," said PM Modi.

"India's mobile and telecom journey in the 21st century is a subject of study for the whole world. Telecom is not just

a medium of connectivity but also a medium of equity and opportunity in India," the Prime Minister emphasised.

The four pillars of Digital India --- low-priced devices, extensive reach of digital connectivity to every nook and corner of the country, easily accessible data and goal of 'Digital First', are leading to robust results.

The Prime Minister also underscored the remarkable advancements in

infrastructure, including the rapid installation of Wi-Fi facilities at public places like railway stations and the connection of islands like Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep through undersea cables.

"In just 10 years, India has laid optical fibre which is eight times the distance between Earth and the Moon", said PM Modi, adding that the country is already progressing towards 6G technology, ensuring a future-ready infrastructure.

India democratised digital technology and created digital platforms where innovations on these platforms created millions of new opportunities. The transformative power of the JAM Trinity—Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile—has laid the foundation for countless innovations.

PM Modi said that Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has provided new opportunities for many

companies and ONDC is revolutionising digital commerce.

"In an interconnected world, security cannot be an afterthought. India's Data Protection Act and National Cyber Security Strategy reflect our commitment to building a safe digital environment", noted PM Modi.

It is for the first time that the ITU-WTSA is being hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific. The global event has brought together more than 3,000 industry leaders, policy makers and tech experts from over 190 countries, representing telecom, digital and ICT sectors.

Union Minister for Communication Jyotiradiya Scindia, Minister of State for Communication, Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasan, and Secretary General of ITU, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, were also present at the inaugural session.

## Cong raises concerns about integrity of upcoming Maha, Jharkhand polls

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Congress leader Rashid Alvi on Tuesday raised concerns about the integrity of the upcoming Assembly elections in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, in the wake of allegations made by ally JMM against the Election Commission.

"Can elections be conducted honestly in Maharashtra and Jharkhand? We saw in Chhattisgarh where even the BJP admitted that the Congress would form the government. We witnessed the same in Madhya Pradesh and recently in Haryana, where all exit polls predicted a Congress win. Where did things go wrong?" Alvi told IANS.

"As long as elections are conducted using EVMs, it will be very difficult to defeat the BJP, I have been saying this repeatedly," he added.

Citing the example of Israel, the Congress leader remarked: "If Israel can target and injure people in Lebanon from a distance of 600 kilometres using

papers and walkie-talkies, then what power does an EVM hold?"

Noting that PM Modi has good relations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he said "Israel is an expert in these matters".

He further emphasised that the opposition must push for elections to be conducted via ballot papers, adding, "I doubt the integrity of elections if they continue with EVMs."

In addition, Alvi criticised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, claiming that he has no concern for law and order.

He highlighted incidents in Amethi, "where children were killed after intruders entered homes, and in Bahraich, where law and order are being disregarded as people create disturbances under the influence of alcohol", adding: "The administration has completely failed."

The Congress leader also attacked UP CM for introducing laws that, in his view, are being used to imprison innocent people.

## SC refuses to halt Punjab gram panchayat polls

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to pass any interim order staying the gram panchayat polls in Punjab.

A bench headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud observed that the apex court will not stall the election process once it has begun and passing a stay order at the present stage would result in "complete chaos".

However, the CJI Chandrachud-led Bench agreed to consider the prayer for urgent listing of the petition challenging the elections on the grounds of alleged irregularities.

A large number of petitions were filed before the



Punjab and Haryana High Court alleging that nomination papers for the post of sarpanches were rejected in "an arbitrary and illegal manner".

After the High Court dismissed the petitions, along with the prayer for a stay of panchayat elections,

polling for approximately 1.05 lakh candidates contesting for the posts of panch and sarpanch in Punjab began on Tuesday with voting happening through ballot boxes.

A total of 3,798 candidates have been unanimously elected for the

position of sarpanch, while 48,861 candidates have been selected for the panch. Elections in 28 gram panchayats have been cancelled, and one has been halted. As a result, voting will now take place for 9,398 gram panchayats.

Candidates have been barred from using symbols of political parties, in keeping with the Punjab Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2024, passed last month by the Legislative Assembly.

The election is underway amid tight security arrangements despite calls for postponement by the Congress over alleged irregularities in nominations.

On Monday, a Congress

delegation, led by Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, met with the Punjab State Election Commissioner, seeking a three-week postponement of the panchayat elections.

Bajwa said there were "massive irregularities" in the nomination process, with several candidates' names being "wrongfully" rejected. He said many Opposition-backed candidates were denied the necessary no-objection certificates during the filing of nominations.

The Congress has also raised concerns over the use of the voters' list from January 1, 2023, instead of the updated list from January 1, 2024, which was used during the Lok Sabha elections.

## NDA and INDIA bloc gear up for poll battle in Jharkhand

AGENCIES  
RANCHI, OCT 15

The Election Commission of India will announce the dates for the Jharkhand Assembly elections on Tuesday, officially kicking-starting the electoral contest between the NDA and the INDIA bloc.

However, both coalitions have already begun laying the groundwork for what promises to be a fierce battle for power in the state.

Jharkhand's current coalition government, led by Hemant Soren, is the first non-BJP government to complete a full five-year term.

Though Soren was temporarily removed from office for five months following his arrest by the



Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress-RJD alliance maintained its hold on power.

In the 2019 elections, the BJP-AJSU alliance, under Chief Minister Raghuvar Das, was expected to retain power, having governed the state for a full term. Confident of a second victory, the BJP

coined the slogan "Abki Baar 65 Paar" (This time, over 65 seats). However, the JMM-Congress-RJD coalition, led by Soren, secured 47 of the 81 Assembly seats in 2019, ousting the BJP-AJSU alliance, which faltered largely due to its failure in the tribal-dominated constituencies, winning only 25 seats, while AJSU managed only two.

## India's inland waterways transport offers robust growth opportunities via PPPs

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The Indian inland waterways transport (IWT) sector presents significant opportunities for growth through public-private partnerships (PPPs), and the government is eyeing expansion of the PPP model to drive development, according to a report on Tuesday.

The focus on expanding PPPs and offering financial incentives, such as discounts up to 35 per cent on freight transported via key national waterways (NW), aims to further attract private sector participation, according to the report by Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics.

A subsidy scheme is being formulated for NW-1, NW-2 and NW-16, which traverse key states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Assam, to promote the use of inland water-



ways for freight transport, the report mentioned.

Since the government's strategic shift in 2016, the number of operational waterways has increased from just three in fiscal 2014 to 26 by fiscal 2024, driven by substantial budgetary support and key initiatives like the Jal Marg Vikas Project.

Launched in 2018 with a financial outlay of Rs 5,369.18 crore, the project aims to enhance the capacity of National Waterway 1 (NW), spanning 1,390 km along the

Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system.

"India's inland waterways are witnessing significant revitalization driven by targeted investments and policy reforms. The cost advantage is clearly benefiting this mode of transportation, transporting 1 tonne of freight by waterways is approximately Rs 1.06 per km, notably less than Rs 1.36 per km by rail and Rs 2.50 per km by road," the report argued.

The resurgence in the sector has resulted in a marked increase in cargo

volumes, surging from 18.1 million tonnes in fiscal 2014 to 132.9 million tonnes in fiscal 2024, with the government setting ambitious targets of 200 million tonnes by fiscal 2030 and 500 million tonnes by fiscal 2047.

Digital innovations have played a key role in improving efficiency in the IWT sector. Platforms such as the IWAI Vessel Tracker, PANI Portal and Car-D Portal provide real-time navigation information, updates on cargo tracking, and efficient management of cargo and passenger data.

Water transport also produces lower emissions, less noise and consumes less energy, making it an environmentally-friendly alternative to the traditional road and rail transport.

Waterways are suitable for moving bulk commodities such as coal, iron ore, iron ore fines, sand and minerals.

## Naqvi dismisses JMM's claims of ECI bias, says BJP doesn't rest after victory

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Tuesday that the party does not rest on its laurels after one victory or lose heart after a setback, but stays with the people continuously.

Naqvi said this to IANS when asked that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has said the BJP already knew about the election dates.

A Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader has alleged that the BJP got information about the dates on Monday. The JMM in a post on X wrote: "Has the Election Commission of India become a puppet of BJP?"

To this Naqvi said, "The BJP doesn't stop working hard after passing one exam, nor does it sulk if the performance in one exam isn't good. We continuously stay in touch with people through communication, inclusive



development, and empowerment, which is why, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are consistently receiving the public's mandate and blessings," said the BJP leader.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) will announce the schedule for Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly elec-

tions on Tuesday. The Commission will hold a press conference at 3.30 p.m. at the Plenary Hall of Vigyan Bhawan in the national capital.

The term of the 288-seat Maharashtra Assembly will end on November 26 and that of the Jharkhand Assembly, with 81 seats, will end on January 5, 2025.

The whole poll process has to be completed before that as per the rules.

Around 50 bypolls are also due and the ECI is likely to also announce the election dates for these.

Separately, the Kerala Legislative Assembly has passed a bill opposing the Waqf Bill. On this, the BJP leader remarked that some people are busy boycotting the JPC (Joint Parliamentary Committee), while others are passing bills in Assemblies.

He pointed out that those passing such bills in Assemblies should be aware of the constitutional division of powers, stating, "Our Constitution clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Parliament and State Assemblies."

What should be done in Parliament is being attempted in the Assemblies, while what should be done in Assemblies is being ignored."

## Chennai records 6.9 cm rainfall in 24 hours, waterlogging in several areas

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, OCT 15

Heavy rain was lashing several areas of Chennai, with the city recording an average of 6.9 cm in the last 24 hours.

The rainfall volume was recorded from 8.30

a.m. on Monday to 8 a.m. Tuesday. The Regional Meteorological Centre reported that Ennore, in North Chennai, recorded the maximum rainfall, followed by Manali, Kolathur, and other areas.

Ennore received 10 cm of rain, while Manali and

Kolathur reported 9 cm. The Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC) of the Greater Chennai Corporation stated that in one hour, from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m., the Ayyapakkam area recorded 3.3 cm of rain, followed by Mugavilakkam in the Alan-

dur zone with 3.09 cm. The heavy rainfall has resulted in waterlogging in several areas, including Kolathur, Vyasarpadi, Pulianthope, and Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR).

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has

deployed staff to pump out stagnant water using motor pumps.

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin said that the government was prepared to handle monsoon-related issues and prevent a recurrence of the prob-

lems faced in previous years.

He added that the issue of water stagnation was being addressed and that the staff at the Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC) was closely monitoring the situation throughout the day.

In the early hours of the morning, Udhayanidhi Stalin inspected areas around Narayanapuram Lake, between Pallikarainai and Kovilambakkam. Minister for HR&CE, P.K. Sekar Babu, and Chennai Corporation Mayor R. Priya, also accompanied

him during the inspection.

Stalin also visited the canal on Ambedkar Road, which diverts surplus water from Kilkattalai Lake to Narayanapuram Lake and interacted with residents to understand their concerns.



# President Murmu calls for stronger India-Algeria economic ties at Forum

AGENCIES  
ALGIERS (ALGERIA), OCT 15

During the India-Algeria Economic Forum, President Droupadi Murmu has called for deeper economic cooperation between the two nations.

While addressing the forum, President Murmu said on Monday, "It is time to further strengthen our partnership and impart new momentum towards a new era of cooperation."

The event, the first of its kind, was jointly organised by the Algerian Economic Renewal Council and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), with participation from both countries' business and government leaders, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Monday.

In her speech, President Murmu praised the reforms led by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's leadership, acknowledging the positive changes taking place in the country.

"I commend the trans-

formative reforms that have been introduced by the Algerian government under his able leadership," she said, adding that Algeria's commitment to inclusive growth and democracy is praiseworthy.

President Murmu highlighted the historical ties between India and Algeria, recalling their shared values.

"India had extended strong support to the Algerian struggle for freedom, and today, India and Algeria are committed to embark on the path of peace and prosperity," she remarked.

She emphasised the growing importance of India-Africa relations, noting that India is now the fourth-largest trading partner of Africa, with bilateral trade amounting to \$84 billion and investments exceeding \$75 billion.

Referring to Algeria's rapid progress, she pointed out its four per cent GDP growth and the registration of 9,000 investment projects over the



past two years, encouraging Indian companies to explore these opportunities.

"I encourage our companies to remain engaged and invested in the opportunities that the Algerian economy offers," she said, according to an MEA statement.

Addressing the India-Algeria trade, which currently stands at \$1.7 billion, President Murmu acknowledged that there is untapped potential for further collaboration.

She identified key sectors like energy, construction, automobiles, fertilisers, and pharmaceuticals where ties could be strengthened, while also urging the exploration of new avenues for trade and

investment.

President Murmu highlighted India's progress as a \$4 trillion economy and mentioned recent reforms such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme and the India Semiconductor Mission, which have improved the business environment.

"In today's uncertain global environment, India's rapid rise stands out. India, currently a \$4 trillion economy, has made impressive progress in the last few years due to political stability, policy predictability and a reform-oriented economic agenda that has ensured the ease of doing business. The sustained growth rate of 8 per cent, skilled talent pool programs such as

production linked incentive scheme, India Semiconductor mission and establishment of 12 smart industrial cities have opened up new opportunities. Many other reforms to boost the manufacturing sector like goods and services tax are in place. This has made it easy for businesses to establish and grow in India," she said.

Inviting Algerian businesses to participate in India's initiatives, she said, "I invite Algerian companies to join our Make in India and Make for World initiatives. India has achieved many accomplishments in areas such as science and technology, fintech, pharma, space, startups and renewables. We would be happy to share our experiences in these areas with our Algerian partners..."

President Murmu also expressed India's willingness to share its achievements in fields such as science, technology, IT, and renewable energy with Algeria, underscoring the potential for collabora-

tion.

Additionally, she commended the Indian community in Algeria for its contributions to various developmental sectors, describing it as a bridge between the two nations.

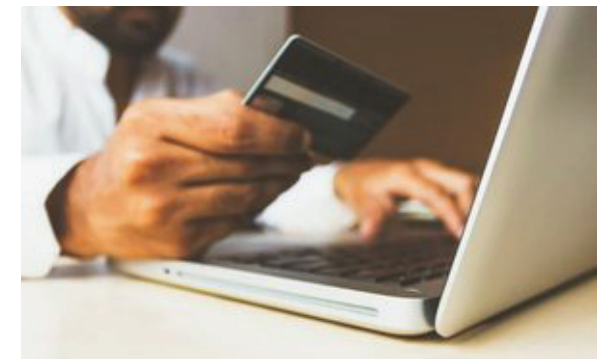
In her concluding remarks, President Murmu reiterated the commitment of both India and Algeria to further strengthening bilateral relations, saying, "President Tebboune and I firmly believe that it is time that we further strengthen this partnership and impart momentum towards a new era of cooperation between our two countries."

President Murmu is on a three-nation tour of Africa, visiting Algeria, Mauritania, and Malawi from October 13 to 19.

She called on the Speaker of the Council of the Nation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Earlier on Monday, she met and held talks with President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria, at the El Mouradia Palace.

## Australian government flags move to ban card payment surcharges



AGENCIES  
CANBERRA, OCT 15

The Australian government has announced a crackdown on card payment surcharge fees.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Finance Minister Stephen Jones announced that the government is prepared to ban debit card surcharge fees at the point of sale from 2026 subject to further work by the central bank the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA).

In the meantime, they committed 2.1 million Australian dollars (US\$1.4 million) in funding for consumer watchdog the Aus-

tralian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to tackle excessive surcharges.

According to the RBA, which is responsible for regulating payment systems, Australians lose a combined 960.2 million AUD (US\$645.6 million) every year in card payment surcharges, Xinhua news agency reported.

"My government's number one priority is to ease the cost of living for households and businesses, and this is another step to protect Australians," Albanese said in a statement on Tuesday.

The RBA is currently conducting a review of merchant card payment costs and surcharging.

# UN peacekeepers to stay in positions in Lebanon: Peacekeeping chief

AGENCIES  
UNITED NATIONS, OCT 15

UN peacekeepers will stay in all their positions in Lebanon despite the calls made by Israeli authorities to vacate the positions that are in the vicinity of the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel, the UN Peacekeeping Chief said.

"The decision was made that UNIFIL (UN Interim Force in Lebanon) would currently stay in all its positions in spite of the calls that were made by the Israel Defense Forces to vacate the positions that are in the vicinity of the Blue Line," said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN under-secretary-general for peace operations, after briefing the Security Council on Monday on the situation in Lebanon.



"I want to emphasise that this decision still remains," he said, adding that the decision was confirmed earlier on Monday by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and was carefully considered based on "a number of elements and criteria".

"Of course, the safety and security of the peacekeepers is a paramount priority," said Lacroix as reported by Xinhua news agency.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council on Monday expressed its strong concern over the ongoing hostilities across the Blue Line.

"Against the backdrop of the ongoing hostilities along the Blue Line, the members of the Security Council expressed their strong concern after several UNIFIL positions under fire in the past days," said Pascale Baeriswyl, president of the Security Council for October and permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations.

"Several peacekeepers have been wounded," she said in a statement after closed-door Security Council consultations.

The members of the Security Council urged all parties to respect the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and UN premises, reiterating their support for the mission,

and underscoring its role in supporting for regional stability, she added.

Baeriswyl noted that the council members expressed their deepest concern over civilian casualties and sufferings, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and the rising number of internally displaced people.

They called on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, called for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701, and emphasised the need for "diplomatic endeavours that would bring a durable end" to the conflict and allow civilians on both sides of the Blue Line to return safely to their homes, she added.

## Millions of Australian households experiencing food insecurity: Report

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY, OCT 15

Millions of Australian households are experiencing severe food insecurity, according to a report published on Tuesday by hunger relief charity Foodbank Australia.

The report said 3.4 million households across the country experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. Of those, 2 million households experienced severe food insecurity.

Food insecurity is defined by the Australian government as whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain.

The annual Foodbank report found that 97 per



cent of severely food-insecure households skipped meals or cut meal sizes and that half of adults experiencing severe food insecurity went entire days without eating due to affordability, Xinhua news agency reported.

Over 80 per cent of food-insecure households cited the rising cost of living as a factor.

"More than half of food-insecure households are

now at the severe end of the food insecurity spectrum. For these families, it's not just about cutting back, it's about missing meals entirely, sometimes for days," Brianna Casey, chief executive of Foodbank Australia, said.

"This is no longer a crisis of temporary hardship but a prolonged, systemic issue affecting millions of Australians," she said.

# ITALY TRANSFERS FIRST MIGRANTS TO CONTROVERSIAL ASYLUM CENTRES IN ALBANIA

AGENCIES  
ROME, OCT 15

Italy has begun transferring migrants to two controversial new facilities in Albania, local media reported.

On Monday, the Italian navy ship Libra was transporting the first group of asylum-seekers to one of the reception centres located in the Albanian towns of Shengjin and Gjiade, reports Xinhua, quoting Ansa news agency reported.



The migrants will undergo identification procedures and remain at the centres until the Italian authorities can process their asylum requests.

In early November 2023, the Italian government signed a five-year deal with Albania to create the two centres.

The facilities will accommodate migrants who have been rescued within Italy's search and rescue area in the Mediterranean by the Italian navy

and coast guard and who intend to seek asylum in Italy.

Transfers to the centres will involve migrants from countries of origin that Italy considers safe, but not minors, women, elderly or otherwise vulnerable people, according to the Italian authorities.

However, the project has caused controversy at the domestic and European level.

The centres have been criticised by centre-left

and left-wing political forces and human rights groups, who are concerned that asylum seekers' rights will not be sufficiently protected in Albania.

On the other hand, right-wing political forces in Italy and Europe view the project as a possible model for managing irregular immigration.

In an interview with La Stampa newspaper on Sunday, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piant-

edosi confirmed that the two centres had become officially operational and were ready to receive their first intake this week.

Piantedosi also said that the Albanian centres are "similar to those in Italy", and will operate under a "light detention regime".

The project will be managed by the Italian Interior Ministry, and the centres will be run by Italian staff. Meanwhile, Albania will provide security on the perimeter.

## NASA-SpaceX's Europa Clipper off to explore Jupiter's ocean world

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

SpaceX on Monday launched NASA's Europa Clipper mission to explore the potential for life on Jupiter's icy moon Europa.

The \$5 billion spacecraft launched atop a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre (KSC) in Florida, at 12:06 p.m. EDT (9.36 pm IST).

"Liftoff, @EuropaClipper!" NASA Administrator Bill Nelson wrote in a post on X.

"Today, we embark on a new journey across the solar system in search of the ingredients for life within Jupiter's icy moon. Our next chapter in space exploration has begun," he added.

NASA's Europa Clipper is the first mission to conduct a detailed science investigation of Jupiter's moon Europa.

As per scientists, the Jovian moon Europa has a salty ocean beneath its icy crust that potentially could hold the ingredients necessary to sustain life.

"The mission will help



scientists better understand how life developed on Earth and the potential for finding life beyond our planet," NASA said.

Although the flight controllers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory operations centre reported an apparent venting issue with the probe's propulsion system, they later added that the system was still performing as expected.

Six hours post-launch the spacecraft will deploy its solar arrays, which span more than 30 metres and weigh nearly 6,000 kg.

Jupiter is on average some 480 million miles from Earth. The spacecraft will travel 1.8 billion miles over more than five years to reach the Jovian system in April 2030.

It will use "gravity

assists" of two other planets -- Earth and Mars -- to help it accelerate towards Jupiter.

The team aims to understand the nature of the ice shell and the ocean beneath it, along with the Moon's composition and geology.

The spacecraft will orbit Jupiter and fly by Europa about 50 times.

The findings will help scientists better understand the astrobiochemical potential for habitable worlds beyond our planet.

Meanwhile, the launch was also the 11th overall for the Falcon Heavy and its second interplanetary mission.

It was also the first Falcon Heavy launch to require the full expenditure of the vehicle's three first-stage boosters.

## South Korea's export volume grows for 13th month in September

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, OCT 15

South Korea's export volume grew for the 13th successive month in September due to strong demand for locally-made oil and tech products, central bank data showed on Tuesday.

The export volume index gained 3.9 per cent in September from a year earlier, continuing to expand since September last year, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

In terms of volume, outbound shipments for computers, electronic and optical devices, including semiconductors, increased 5.7 per cent in September every year, keeping an upward trend for the 14th straight month.

Export volume for coal and oil products advanced by 9.7 per cent, but those for chemical products, electrical equipment and machinery were reduced by single digits, Xinhua news agency reported.



## International telecom standards must be inclusive and democratic: Centre

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The international telecommunication standards must be inclusive and democratic, reflecting the needs of all regions and encouraging active participation from developing countries, the government has emphasised.

Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, said that India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has achieved unprecedented transformation which is now globally recognised.

Addressing the 5th Global Standards Sym-



posium (GSS-24) in the national capital, the minister said "the standards we establish are more than just technical standards, but they are moral compasses, guiding us towards a future of shared global progress".

"India is ready to take this journey not alone, but with all of you as part-

ners," he told the gathering.

The landmark symposium, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and hosted by Department of Telecommunications, brought together 1,500 leading policymakers, innovators, and experts from around the world to

discuss the future of digital transformation and the critical role of international standards in enabling the next wave of emerging technologies.

The symposium addressed the critical need for a cohesive and forward-looking approach to the governance and standardization of emerging technologies.

GSS serves as a high-level forum, offering a platform for discussion and coordination on the most pressing issues in technology and standardisation.

It called for collaboration on international standards, paving way for sustainable development of emerging digital technologies standards to focus

on positive outcomes for humanity

In his inaugural address, Union Minister of Communications and Development of the North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, emphasised India's role as a global hub for telecommunications and digital innovation, citing the country's record of being a land of science, innovation & rules aiding in the prosperity of the world.

The outcome document of symposium lays the foundation for discussion at the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24), which is taking place from October 15-24 in New Delhi.

## Indian fintech startups secure \$778 million in Q3, 2nd globally after the US

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

The Indian fintech startup ecosystem secured \$778 million in funding in the July-September period, reaching second spot globally after the US in terms of fintech funding raised in the third quarter, according to a report on Tuesday.

This growth can be credited to government initiatives such as the promotion of digital payments through UPI, with over 14 billion transactions processed in May, the JAM-Trinity initiative integrating Aadhaar with bank accounts and mobile numbers, and the allocation of Rs 2,600 crore in incentives to support fintech startups.

This also marks a 66 per cent increase from the \$471 million raised in Q3 last year and an impressive 165 per cent surge from the \$293 million raised in Q2 this year, according to the report by Tracxn, a SaaS-based market intelligence platform.

The third quarter also saw two startups attaining IPO status along with one company turning unicorn. "The resurgence in funding for the Indian fintech industry signifies a pivotal moment in our journey towards becoming a global fintech hub," said Neha Singh, Co-founder of Tracxn.

With rising digital adoption and supportive government policies, we are positioned for sustained growth, she added.

According to the report, India now ranks fourth in all-time funding for the fintech sector, following the US, China and the UK.

The top-performing sectors included alternative lending, investment tech and payments. The alternative lending segment raised \$517 million, a 49 per cent increase from \$348 million in Q3 2023 and 199 per cent growth from \$173 million in Q2 2024. Investment tech secured \$109 million in Q3 2024, reflecting a 58 per cent decline from \$257 million in Q3 2023, but a significant 356 per cent surge from \$23.9 million in Q2 2024.

In September, lending management platform Moneyview achieved unicorn status.

## 85 million EVs expected on roads globally by 2025, India to see 5 lakh EVs

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

At least 85 million electric vehicles (EVs) are expected to be on the roads globally by the end of 2025, with India clocking 500,000 EVs in the same time-frame, driven by various government incentives, according to a report on Tuesday.

Despite several hurdles affecting the EV market over the past few months, Gartner projects the number of EVs in use globally to total 64 million units in 2024 and increase 33 per cent in 2025.

"Many companies over-estimated how quickly the switch to EVs would occur. This caused those companies to delay launching new EV models," said Jonathan Davenport from Gartner.

Globally, battery elec-



tric vehicles (BEVs) in use are forecast to total almost 62 million units by the end of next year, an increase of 35 per cent from 2024.

Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) are expected to grow at a slightly slower rate and reach an installed base of 23 million units in 2025, up 28 per cent from 2024.

"In India, 500,000 EVs are expected to be on the road by the end of 2025.

BEVs in use are expected to total 370,000 units, while 129,500 PHEVs are forecast to be on the road by the end of 2025," the report mentioned.

The number of EVs on the road in India will achieve a high growth, increasing 51 per cent in 2025.

"Economic incentives like the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME)

scheme are making EVs more affordable than petrol or diesel cars," said Davenport. "Indian customers are increasingly willing to make procurement decisions that will result in improving air quality levels."

By 2030, Automakers will enable the recycling of 95 per cent of batteries from EVs to mitigate the risk from raw material shortage.

With EV sales expected to rise year-over-year, a shortage of raw materials will not be easy to resolve.

"A robust recycling effort to take advantage of materials in spent batteries and scrap from the manufacturing production process, which, together with EU efforts to mandate battery recycling, could reduce the need for more mineral excavation," said Davenport.

## IBM acquires Bengaluru-based Prescinto for renewable energy asset management

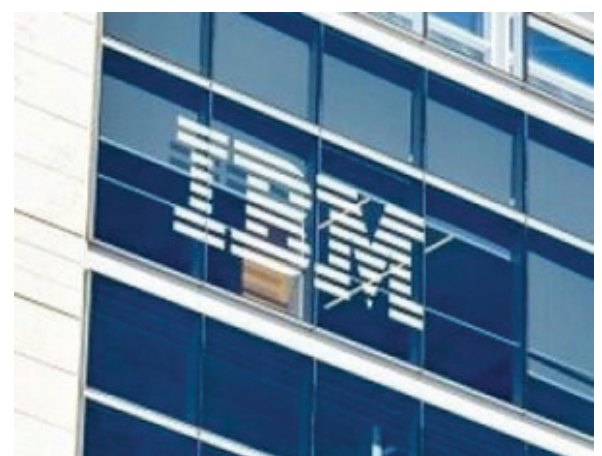
AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

Tech major IBM on Tuesday announcing it has acquired Prescinto, a leading provider of asset performance management (APM) software-as-a-service (SaaS) for renewables, for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition will enhance the capabilities of IBM Maximo Application Suite (MAS), the company's solution for asset lifecycle management.

Moreover, it will further IBM's leadership in the energy and utility space, an industry undergoing significant transformation and seeking solutions to manage and optimise wind, solar, and other renewable energy storage assets, the company said in a statement.

According to Allied Market Research, the



acquisition will further enable IBM to support clients' sustainability initiatives and net-zero goals, allowing users to track and monitor the performance of solar, wind and energy storage assets in near real-time, identify root causes for underperformance, and recommend actions to optimise generation.

Founded in 2016 and headquartered in Bengaluru, Prescinto works with services global customers across 14 countries with 16 GigaWatts under management. Its APM capabilities help organisations simplify operations and maintenance to maximise ROI.

According to the IDC worldwide asset life-cycle management applications market share report, IBM is ranked number 1 for 2023 market share in ALM with a share of 10.8 per cent in 2023.

value of the global utilities asset management market is expected to grow from \$4.3 billion in 2022 to \$12.4 billion in 2031, with a CAGR of 11.3 per cent.

"Prescinto's capabilities leverage AI to enable advanced monitoring, analytics, and automation to streamline renewable energy operations and manage clean energy and

storage assets," said IBM.

Globally, firms are turning to alternative energy sources like wind, solar, and energy storage to help reduce emissions and lower energy costs.

According to the company, water, natural gas, oil, nuclear, and other energy and utility enterprises globally already utilise IBM MAS.

## Record 2.25 lakh housing units sold in India in Jan-Sep, equity investments surge

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The Indian housing market saw over 225,000 units being sold during the first nine months of the year, demonstrating strong performance in absolute terms, according to a new report.

The sustained positive sentiment in the housing market has encouraged developers to launch new projects and additional phases, resulting in approximately 215,000 new units entering the market in the first nine months of 2024, according to a report by real estate consultant CBRE.



"Given the strong performance in H1 2024 and the sector's tendency to peak during the festive season, we forecast both sales and new launches of

residential units to remain elevated," the report mentioned.

In addition, the report expected the high-end/premium categories (Rs

1 to 2 crore and Rs 2 to 4 crore, respectively) to witness strong demand.

Notably, the traditional mid-end segment-dominated markets such as Noida, Bengaluru, Pune, and Chennai are expected to continue gravitating increasingly towards high-end developments.

Meanwhile, equity investments in the Indian real estate sector surged 46 per cent to \$8.9 billion during the January-September period.

According to Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO-India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa at CBRE, sustained capital inflows are expect-

ed in both traditional and emerging sectors in the upcoming quarters, while institutional and collective vehicle investors, along with developers, are expected to drive the overall capital flows.

Domestic investors took the lead with around 79 per cent share in equity capital inflows in July-September 2024.

A rebound in the office leasing market, strong disposal incomes and an unprecedented risk appetite for consumer spending and home buying have led to a record flow of investments in the first nine months of 2024, said the report.

## Room AC sales surge to record high of 12.5 million units in India: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

The sales of room air-conditioners in India have surged to a record high of 12.5 million units in India in FY2025, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report by credit rating agency ICRA estimates the room AC industry sales volumes to grow by 20-25 per cent YoY.

Factors like rising temperature levels, increasing need for the number of room ACs per household, rising urbanisation levels, improved dispos-

able income, and favourable consumer financing options are expected to drive the growth in the next few years.

Further, increasing replacement demand with a rising preference for energy-efficient models amidst increasing usage and higher energy costs augur well for the industry. "The domestic room AC industry surpassed the pre-Covid peak levels of sales volumes in FY2024, aided by changing climatic conditions and favourable consumer trends. The number of average

heat wave days/year over the last three decades has been steadily rising and CY2024 is likely to report the highest ever thus boding well for room AC demand," said Srikumar Krishnamurthy, Senior Vice President and Co-Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA.

"This was observed in the recently concluded summer season wherein most of the original manufacturers (OEMs) reported robust volume growth of 40-50 per cent YoY during this period," Krishnamurthy added.

## 99pc Indian business leaders believe GenAI is important for success: Report

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

A whopping 99 per cent of C-suite leaders across India consider generative AI as an important factor, highlighting a major shift towards AI-driven transformation within the corporate landscape in the country, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report, based on a survey of over 300 C-suite leaders by enterprise software major Salesforce survey, indicated that 60 per cent of leaders from large organisations already have a well-defined generative AI strategy. About 32 per cent organisations are in the process of developing one.

This growing commitment underscores the urgency for businesses to adopt generative AI technologies to remain competitive, the report said.

The business leaders ranked generative AI as a top business priority for customer expectations for faster, more personalised experiences (56 per cent), boosting productivity and efficiency (55 per cent) and employee demand for generative AI tools (49 per cent).

However, they also cited significant barriers to adoption like accessibility and inclusivity issues (38 per cent); concerns about inaccurate outputs (34 per cent); incomplete customer and company data

(32 per cent), and lack of governance (30 per cent).

"In the Indian business landscape, the pressure on leaders to speedily and effectively integrate generative AI is more pronounced than ever," said Arun Parameswaran, Managing Director - Sales, at Salesforce India.

"Our focus is guiding businesses through the roadmap of responsible AI innovation, ensuring they can unlock the full potential of this technology. By enhancing productivity and accelerating growth, we aim to empower Indian organisations to meet and exceed the evolving expectations of their customers and employees," he added.

## Rs 27,870 crore Hyundai Motor India IPO opens with high hopes for Dalal Street

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, OCT 15

The initial public offering (IPO) of Hyundai Motor India opened for retail investors on Tuesday. The company aims to raise up to Rs 27,870 crore, making it the largest-ever IPO of the Indian equity market since 2022, when Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) raised Rs 21,000 crore.

Open till October 17, the IPO price band has been fixed at Rs 1,865 to Rs 1,960 per share. One lot of Hyundai Motor India's IPO has seven shares.

After the subscription window closes, the share



allotment is expected to be finalised on October 18. The shares will be credited to demat accounts on October 21. Hyundai Motor India shares are likely to debut on stock exchanges on October 22. The maiden share sale will be a pure offer for sale (OFS).

It is the first offer from an automaker to list in India in over two decades and the entire proceeds will go to the promoter.

Hyundai Motor India raised approximately Rs 8,315 crore from anchor investors on Monday, ahead of its IPO. The com-

pany allotted 4.24 crore shares at Rs 1,960 apiece to 225 anchor investors, according to the company statement.

Hyundai Motor India held 14.6 per cent market share in the domestic passenger vehicle (PV) market in Q1 FY25, second to Maruti Suzuki which has 41 per cent share in this category. However, Hyundai is the market leader by volume in the mid-size SUV segment with around 38 per cent share as on June '24. It is also India's second-largest exporter of PV from April '21 through June '24.

In the last financial year, the company sold 7.77 lakh

vehicles, of which 21 per cent was exported to countries like Africa, Middle East, Europe and Latin America.

The company has 1,366 sales outlets and 1,550 service outlets in the country. Hyundai Motor India's revenue in the financial year (FY) 2023-24 was Rs 69,829 crore. During this period, the company had made a profit of Rs 6,060 crore and the company's margin was 13.1 per cent.

The company's revenue in the first quarter of FY 2024-25 was Rs 17,344 crore. During this period, the company made a profit of Rs 1,489 crore and the margin was 13.5 per cent.



## He had a swelling on his knee, don't want 'undercooked Shami' in Australia: Rohit

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

India skipper Rohit Sharma provided a fresh update on Mohammed Shami's recovery and said it is difficult to make a call on the senior pacer's return to the mix for the Border Gavaskar Trophy as he had developed a "swelling on his knee", which "put him back a little bit in his recovery".

Shami suffered an injury during last year's ODI World Cup and had undergone surgery. The 34-year-old quick was India's highest wicket-taker with 24 wickets in seven matches at an average of 10.70 and strike rate of 12.20 at the marquee tournament. He has not played any form of cricket since the defeat in the final to Australia at the Narendra Modi Stadium back on November 19.

"It is pretty difficult



for us to make a call on whether he will be fit for this series or the Australia series. He recently had a setback - he had a swelling on his knee, which was quite unusual," Rohit told reporters, on the eve of India's first Test against New Zealand, in Bengaluru.

"He was in the process of getting fit, getting close

to 100 percent and he had a swelling in his knee. That put him back a little bit in his recovery, so he had to start again fresh. Right now, he is at NCA - he is working with the physios, and the doctors at NCA," he said.

Shami was included in the Test squad against South Africa last December but his availability

was subject to fitness. The BCCI later stated that he had not been cleared by the medical team and the fast bowler was then ruled out of the two Tests.

After the home Test series against New Zealand, the Rohit-led side will head to Australia for the five-match Border Gavaskar Trophy series, and the management don't want to risk taking Shami to Down Under when he is not 100 percent fit.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed. We want him to be fit; we want him to be 100 percent. More than anything else, we don't want to bring an undercooked Shami to Australia. That is not going to be the right decision for us. He has not played any cricket for over a year. It is quite tough for a fast bowler to have missed so much of cricket and then suddenly to come out and be at his

best. It is not ideal. We will want to give him enough time to recover, and be 100% fit," the opener added.

Shami underwent a successful surgery on his heel to repair his Achilles tendon in the UK in March this year.

"The physios, the trainers, and the doctors have set a roadmap for him. He is supposed to play a couple of games before he plays international cricket. We will see where he is at after this New Zealand series, and then take a call at what stage of the Australia series he will be fit for us," said Rohit.

India, who are top of the World Test Championship (WTC) standings, have eight Tests left in the current cycle. After a three-match series against New Zealand, they will travel to Australia for five Tests starting November 22.

## He's got good head on his shoulder, understands the game well: Rohit on Bumrah's vice-captain role

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

India captain Rohit Sharma expressed confidence in premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah's leadership capabilities after his appointment as Test vice-captain for the three-match New Zealand series.

Bumrah hasn't had much captaincy caps to his name in his international career but Rohit shared that he was part of the leadership group and also led India occasionally in the past.

"Bumrah has played a lot of cricket. I've played a lot of cricket with him. He understands the game pretty well. He's got a good head on his shoulder. When you talk to him, he understands the game," Rohit told reporters in the pre-match press meet after rain hampered



India's training session.

"Tactically, I can't say much because he has not captained much. He was captain in one Test match and a couple of T20s, I guess," he added.

Bumrah was appointed captain of the Ireland T20I series last year on his comeback after the injury before the Asia Cup. In 2022, he also led India

in the rescheduled Test against England.

"He understands what is required. When you are in a situation where you need a leader to step up, I think Bumrah will be one of them. So, over the past, he's always been in our leadership group," said Rohit.

The opening batter added that Bumrah is defacto mentor for the young pacers in the squad. "Whether it is speaking to the bowlers who have just come into the squad, whether it is getting internally with the team to discuss about how to move forward as a team, he's always been part of that leadership group. So, it's probably the right thing to just have him around and speak to the bowlers and internally discuss how to take the team forward," Rohit said.

## France and Germany beat fierce rivals in Nations League

AGENCIES  
BRUSSELS, OCT 15

France and Germany had stand-in forwards to thank for wins over fierce rivals in the Nations League.

With Kylian Mbappé again absent, Randal Kolo Muani started up front for France and scored in each half in a 2-1 victory away to neighbor Belgium.

The Belgians must be sick of the sight of Kolo Muani, who also netted in a 2-0 win in the reverse fixture in Lyon last month. It was also the Paris Saint-Germain striker's shot that deflected into the net when France beat Belgium 1-0 in the last 16 at the European Championship during the summer.

On his debut for Germany, Jamie Leweling had



a second-minute strike ruled out after a video review but had more luck with a rasping drive in the 64th to seal a 1-0 triumph over the Netherlands in Munich.

Leweling, a forward for Stuttgart, was one of four players making their first starts for Germany on a night fans paid tribute to four players - Toni Kroos,

Manuel Neuer, Thomas Muller and Ilkay Gundogan - who recently retired from national-team duty. Neuer, Muller and Gundogan were at Allianz Arena to receive the acclaim of Germany fans.

There were also victories for Italy, which beat Israel 4-1, and Hungary, a 2-0 winner in Bosnia, in the top-tier League A.

## WT20WC: Thrilling Group B finale with semi-final berth online

AGENCIES  
DUBAI, OCT 15

The last semi-finalists will be decided at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup on Tuesday when unbeaten England do battle with the West Indies.

While England currently sit pretty at the top of Group B, a loss here could see Heather Knight's side drop to second place in the pool or even miss out on the knockout stages completely.

It's come down to this, with the final game of the group stage to determine the last semi-final spot and the match-ups for the knockout stages.

England are in the box seat to feature in the semis, but need a victory over the West Indies to guarantee their place in the final four.

The stakes are high, as the West Indies too need a



win in this clash if they are to sneak into the knockout stages.

A narrow triumph for the West Indies could see both them and England qualify and put an end to the tournament for South Africa following their second-placed finish at the event last year, an ICC report said.

While England will deservedly go in favourites to keep their unbeaten status intact and defeat the West Indies, the Caribbean

side are a dangerous outfit with plenty of match-winners at their disposal.

Skipper Hayley Matthews showed some good signs with the bat when contributing a quickfire 34 against Bangladesh last start, while the West Indies will be hoping former captain Stafanie Taylor has shaken off her knee concern and is fit for the crucial contest.

It will be a battle between England's spin-heavy bowling attack and

the West Indies' powerful batting line-up and there should be plenty of fireworks in this clash.

England opener Maia Bouchier said, "We talked a lot about what's in the present and focusing on each game and no matter what comes up we'll be focusing on what's happening then. I think we could think about who we're going to play and what's going to happen, but I think that's going against our thought processes and going into the next, whatever it could be, whoever we play, we're just looking to play on the day."

West Indies captain Hayley Matthews said, "The girls have done a great job of just being able to bounce back and really have that attitude and that fight within them. We're obviously going to try to take that into the next

match against England. We know how crucial that is and how big of a match it is but we want to try to have the same attitude even against better teams as well."

Squads: England: Heather Knight (c), Danni Wyatt-Hodge, Sophia Dunkley, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Alice Capsey, Amy Jones (wk), Sophie Ecclestone, Charlie Dean, Sarah Glenn, Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Linsey Smith, Freya Kemp, Dani Gibson, Bess Heath

West Indies: Hayley Matthews (c), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilla Connell, Deandra Dottin, Shemaine Campbell (vc, wk), Ashmini Munisar, Afy Fletcher, Stafanie Taylor, Chinelle Henry, Chedean Nation, Qiana Joseph, Zaida James, Karishma Ramharack, Mandy Mangru, Nerissa Crafton.

## Leach take 2 wickets as Pakistan reaches 79-2 on 1st day of 2nd test against England

AGENCIES  
MULتان (PAKISTAN), OCT 15

Debutant Kamran Ghulam and Saim Ayub combined to rebuild the Pakistan innings after England spinner Jack Leach struck twice on a turning wicket in the second cricket test on Tuesday.

Left-handed opener Ayub was unbeaten on 40 and Ghulam, replacing rested Babar Azam at No. 4, was not out on 29 as Pakistan reached 79-2 at lunch after the home team won the toss and elected to bat.

Leach (2-35) knocked back the off-stump of Abdullah Shafique (7) in his second over and captain Shan Masood (3) fell to the trap of close-in



fielders when Zak Crawley pounced on a low catch at short mid-wicket.

England deployed both spinners Leach and Shoaib Bashir with the new ball after just five overs after Pakistan opted to reuse

the same wicket on which it suffered an innings and 47-run defeat in the first test last week.

Matthew Potts, one of the two changes made by England, and Brydon Carse, virtually found no

seam movement or swing on a dry wicket before fit-again captain Ben Stokes turned to his spinners and even Joe Root bowled two overs of off-spin before lunch.

Ghulam struck a straight six to Leach in a show of rare aggression shown by both batters and Ayub survived in the last over when he got a faint edge but the ball dropped just short of wicketkeeper Jamie Smith on the leg side.

Stokes, who missed England's 2-1 win at home against Sri Lanka and also last week's victory in Multan, replaced Chris Woakes. Fast bowler Gus Atkinson made way for Potts, who last played a test match against Sri Lanka at Lord's in August.

Pakistan, which is on an 11-match winless streak at home, made four changes after it became the first test-playing nation to lose a match by an innings after scoring 500-plus runs in the first innings.

Four senior players, including out-of-form Babar, were rested for the remaining two tests of the series. The spin trio of Sajid Khan, Noman Ali and Zahid Mahmood, who haven't played first-class cricket for nine months, were included in the playing XI with Salman Ali Agha and Ayub the other spin options for Pakistan.

Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed was ruled out of the series after he fell ill during the first test and was hospitalized.

## Test cricket is always about adaptability, it is the pinnacle of sport: Ashwin

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Veteran Indian spin bowling allrounder Ravichandran Ashwin reenvisioned the beauty of Test cricket, calling it a pinnacle of the sport, in a video released by the BCCI on their official social media handle.

The video gave glimpses of the team India's practice session in Bengaluru ahead of first Test against New Zealand, with a voice-over by Ashwin. The spinner said that in Test cricket, everyday players need to adapt to conditions and also come up with new strategies and approaches. "See, Test cricket is



always about adaptability, right? You can't start Day 5 like how you started Day 1. Every day you need to be able to adapt to the conditions. That's why they say Test cricket is the pinnacle of this particular sport," Ashwin said in the video.

After his Player of the

Series performance in a 2-0 clean-sweep vs Bangladesh last month, Ashwin, who has 527 Test wickets to his name, will be back in action in the series against New Zealand, starting from Wednesday, with the opening match to take place in M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

New Zealand had last visited India in 2021-22 for a two-match series that the hosts won 1-0. In the second Test against Wankhede, New Zealand spinner Ajaz Patel became only the third bowler after Jim Laker and India's Anil Kumble to take all 10 wickets in an innings.

## 1st Test: Gill, Jaiswal look to continue good form; Kohli, Rohit eye consistent run against edgy Kiwis

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, OCT 15

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill, the torchbearers of India's transition phase, will have to be the team's driving force in its quest to lord over an unsettled New Zealand when the two sides square off in a three-Test series, beginning here on Wednesday.

The baton has not been completely passed, but Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are certainly running their last lap and these two young superstars will have to show that they can carry forward the

legacy of the titans. Since a productive series against England earlier this year, Gill is now more familiar and comfortable with the rigours of Test cricket.

His last 10 innings contain three hundreds and two fifties, while Jaiswal's last eight outings in Test cricket feature a 214 and five fifties.

Those numbers are not to be scoffed at. But at the same time, it is important for them to build on the foundation through this series, a precursor to the much tougher journey to Australia next month.

Gill seems to have sorted his issues with the in-coming deliveries from pacers, but a trace of the old failing still remains.

In Chennai, Bangladesh pacer Hasan Mahamud troubled him with nip-backers before eventually grabbing his wicket.

Similarly, Jaiswal has a penchant to go for expansive shots against pace bowlers to get dismissed, evidenced by his three dismissals recently against Bangladesh quicks.

In all, the left-hander has fallen to pacers 12 times in 20 innings, and he would want a better



record before facing a clutch of top-class Australian pacers.

While these concerns are not deeply rooted,

they serve as cautionary points against a New Zealand attack that has capable hands in pacers Matt Henry, William O'Rourke

and the experienced Tim Southee, if he gets to play here after a sharp decline in his form.

There is another angle to the emergence of Jaiswal and Gill as the pillars of the Indian line-up, as Kohli and Rohit have not precisely set the field ablaze.

Rohit, who has played 15 innings this year, has made two hundreds but managed only one fifty in the remaining 13, totaling 497 runs in eight Tests at just over 35.

Kohli, 53 runs shy of 9000 Test runs, has not made even a fifty in six innings this year, and

while Rohit often perishes in his attempt to grab the momentum, his colleague offers a much more curious case.

The 35-year-old Kohli has not been able to convert the two starts he got this year, ending up with 46 (vs SA) and 47 (vs Bangladesh), stirring the uncomfortable memories of that great slump between 2019 and 2023.

The master batter will also have to keep an eye on New Zealand left-arm spinners - Ajaz Patel and Rachin Ravindra - the tribe which has been a thorn in his flesh in the past.

It has been a while since these two stalwarts embossed their mark across a full series, and a nervy New Zealand could be their golden chance to do so. India has only minor concerns, but New Zealand's troubles across batting and bowling departments are more pronounced. Their batsmen struggled copiously against Sri Lankan spinners recently while losing an away series 0-2, and here they will have to negate two modern-day greats in Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.



## Musical Tribute paid to Lata Mangeshkar by JKAACL, IMFA

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

The J&K Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages (JKAACL), in collaboration with the Institute of Music and Fine Arts (IMFA), Jammu, organized a soulful musical tribute to the legendary singer of the century, Lata Mangeshkar, here in the K.L Saigal Hall. The event marked a heartfelt homage on the 95th birth anniversary of the iconic Indian nightingale.

The event was graced by eminent personalities from the art and academic world. Chief Guest, Prof. B.S. Bali, former Principal of IMFA Jammu, shared his personal experiences with Lata Mangeshkar, reminiscing about her unparalleled dedication to music, her humility, and her timeless voice that continues to inspire generations. Prof Bali's insights captivated the audience as he highlighted how Lataji's voice shaped the golden era of

Indian music and left an indelible mark on Indian culture.

Guest of Honour, Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Special Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu, applauded the efforts of IMFA for organizing such meaningful programs that not only preserve the cultural heritage but also inspire young talents. He commended the initiative as a beautiful fusion of music and fine arts, creating a fitting tribute to a legend who was the epitome of both.

The program was conceived by two notable figures from IMFA: Rakesh Sharma, Head of the Department of Fine Arts, and Suraj Singh, Head of the Vocal Department. Their vision and dedication brought together music and visual art to pay homage to Lataji in a multifaceted manner.

A highlight of the event was the series of performances by students from



the vocal department of IMFA. Young talents, including Mahi, Arti, Arpana, Nirmal, Rahul, Sohail, Aradhya Sharma, Shivani, Aarav, Divansh, and Priyanshu, showcased their vocal prowess, singing melodies popularized by Lata Mangeshkar. Their performances were a testament to the fact that Lataji's music continues to inspire young artists.

The main attraction of the evening, however, was the mesmerizing performances by established vocalists, including Suraj Singh, Dr. Deepali Wattal, Roshi Samotra, Jasmeet Kour and Juhji Singh. Their soulful renditions of some of Lataji's most memorable

songs touched the hearts of the audience, transporting them to the golden age of Indian music. These vocalists were expertly supported by a talented group of instrumentalists, with Vijay Anand on Dholak, Amit Anand on Tabla, Andrew on Synth, and Aarav on Guitar, creating a perfect musical symphony. In addition to the musical tribute, the students of the Fine Arts Department paid homage to Lata Mangeshkar through an exhibition of portraits. Each portrait, thoughtfully created, captured the grace and soulfulness of Lataji, further enhancing the event's tribute to her legacy. This

was the third such program organized by IMFA, continuing its tradition of honoring great figures of Indian culture. The program was conducted by Barkat, who kept the audience engaged with insightful commentary and seamless transitions between performances. The event saw a strong turnout, with several prominent individuals from the art and cultural community in attendance, including Brij Mohan, Bahadur Singh, Sunil Raina, Kamal Sharma, Dr. Amarjeet Singh, Palak Gandotra, Rachita Dutta, Jasleen Singh and Sukhjeet Singh. The evening concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Rajeev Sharma, who expressed gratitude to all participants, guests, and the organizing team. He extended special thanks to Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL, for her unwavering support and leadership, which made the event possible.

## DC Ganderbal discusses Legal Guardianship under National Trust Act at LLC



JI NEWS SERVICE  
GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 15

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyamir today chaired a Local Level Committee (LLC) focusing on the critical issue of legal guardianship under the National Trust Act. The meeting, held in the V.C Room of the DC Office, aimed at developing an effective action plan to ensure the enrollment of all eligible beneficiaries under the National Trust scheme.

The meeting was attended by several key officials and stakehold-

ers, including the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Ganderbal, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Ganderbal, the Executive Director of Hope Centre, Technical Support Manager of Hope Centre, and other Members of the Local Level Committee.

During the meeting, a comprehensive action plan was formulated to facilitate the identification and enrollment of eligible persons with disabilities, ensuring they receive legal guardianship under the National Trust Act.

The discussions focused on improving inter-depart-

mental coordination, raising awareness about the scheme, and addressing any challenges faced by the beneficiaries in accessing the services.

The DC emphasized the importance of timely implementation of the action plan to ensure the benefits of the National Trust scheme reach every eligible person in the district.

The meeting marks a step forward in promoting the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities in Ganderbal, aligning with the broader mission of the National Trust Act.

## DCC/ DLRC meeting held at Bandipora

JI NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 15

The District Consultative Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the quarter June-2024 was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri in presence of Chairman District Development Council Bandipora, Abdul Gani Bhat.

At the beginning, Chairman DLRC commended the banks for their enrollment efforts in Social Security Schemes, highlighting that certain branches of J&K Bank had particularly excelled.

The Chairman DLRC expressed dissatisfaction over the ACP performance in the agriculture sector and instructed several public and private sector banks to intensify their efforts to achieve targets in the upcoming quarter.

The District has



achieved 15% of ACP for the F-Y 24-25 by disbursing an amount of Rs 248.87 crores against the target of 1691.29 crores, for F-Y 24-25 with both sectors contributing equally with PSI showing achievement of Rs 122 crores and NPSL showing achievement of 127 crores.

The DC directed all the banks to ensure minimum achievement of 75% against the allocated target

by December end.

He also directed the concerned to improve the number of cases under the HADP scheme, ensure 100% coverage of KCC smart cards, intensity processing of cases under AIF & AHIDF and reduce the rejection rate besides retaining cases by the banks which ultimately become huge bottlenecks in achieving targets.

He impressed upon

Agriculture and Horticulture departments to expedite the identification and sponsorship of cases to banks, ensuring the complete saturation of KCC Schemes.

The DC also instructed all banks to strengthen their lending in the social sector, and education sector by improving collaboration with stakeholders for investment in these areas.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman DLRC instructed all banks and departments to vigorously participate in jan suraksha campaign which has been started in each gram panchayat of the district for achieving saturation by enrolling maximum number of applications under SSS.

Among others the meeting was attended by ACR Shabir Ahmad Wani, LDM Shamim Ahmad, AGM RBI, DDM NABARD and representatives from all banks and departments.

## 'International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction' observed at Ganderbal

JI NEWS SERVICE  
GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 15

The 'International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction' (IDDRR) was organized by the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Ganderbal in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA).

This year the theme of the day was 'Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future'.

The event was held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Safapora, where a substantial number of students participated in the program.

The focus of the initiative was to enhance disaster preparedness among the youth through practical training in critical emergency response techniques. Participants



were educated on various methodologies, including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), search and rescue operations, and effective evacuation procedures.

This hands-on training was facilitated by the Fire and Emergency Services of Ganderbal, along with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) Ganderbal, ensuring that the instruction adhered to established safety protocols and best practices in disaster management.

The program not only aimed to raise awareness about disaster risk reduction but also emphasized the importance of equipping the younger generation with essential life-saving skills.

By engaging students in these practical exercises, the event sought to foster a culture of preparedness and resilience within the community, ultimately contributing to a more robust disaster management framework in the region.

## Vidya Devi assumes office as Principal ANMT Doda

JI NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, OCTOBER 15

Vidya Devi on Tuesday assumed the charge as new Principal Government ANMT School Doda.

This momentous occasion was marked by a formal induction ceremony, where she was warmly welcomed by the staff of CMO Office besides the staff members of ANMT Doda.

Vidya Devi has a long and illustrious career in the field of Nursing, having previously served as Principal ANMT Kathua for around two years.

Soon after taking charge, she held an introductory meeting with the staff and urged them to work with a legacy of dedication for the welfare of the better future of the student community undergoing their professional courses at ANMT Doda.

## Workshop on Strengthening Public Health Supply Chain Management organized by JKMSCL

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

The Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL) organized a State-Level Training of Trainers (ToT) program aimed at strengthening the public health supply chain management across the region.

The training initiative brought together key stakeholders from the healthcare sector, focusing on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain for essential medical supplies and equipment.

Managing Director, J&K Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd. Kapil Sharma emphasized the importance of a robust supply chain to ensure the availability of quality healthcare services to the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir. He highlighted the critical role that the trained personnel will play in optimizing the management, storage, and distribution of medical supplies to improve patient outcomes.

The training program saw participation from



Directorate of Health Services, Jammu, various Regional Drug Warehouses of JKMSCL, senior officials, pharmacists, and supply chain managers from various health facilities across Jammu Division. Renowned experts from PATH, served as resource persons, sharing their insights and practical knowledge with the attendees. The sessions included hands-on training, case study discussions, and real-world problem-solving exercises.

The ToT program was met with positive feedback from the participants, who appreciated the in-depth sessions and interactive approach. The newly trained personnel are expected to play a pivotal role in cascading the knowledge and practices

learned during the training to their respective teams, ensuring a uniform implementation of best practices in public health supply chain management across the state.

In his closing remarks, Kapil Sharma stated, "This training program marks a significant step towards building a robust healthcare supply chain system in Jammu & Kashmir. By investing in the skills and capacity of our workforce, we are ensuring that quality medical supplies reach every corner of the Union Territory, ultimately benefiting the people we serve. The certificate of participation was distributed among the participants. Around seventy Medical Officers and other officials participated during the two day workshop."

## Capacity Building Programme on GST for tax officers concludes



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 15

The two-day Capacity Building Programme for Tax Officers to strengthen human resource of State Taxes Department (STD) for implementation of Goods and Service Tax (GST) concluded on Tuesday at Excise and Taxation Training Institution, Nagrota here.

The workshop is being organised by State Taxes Department (STD), J&K in collaboration with Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

Additional Commissioner Administration

& Enforcement Jammu, Namrita Dogra, chaired the valedictory session.

All Deputy Commissioners of Tax department, Assistant Commissioner and State Tax Officers of Jammu division participated in the workshop.

Resource persons CA Ajay Sharma and CA Tarun Arora from ICAI spoke in detail about various GST laws, demands, recovery, appeals. The second session were held on E-way Bill and Enforcement process, detention, seizure & release of goods and conveyances in transit.

Speaking on the occasion, Namrita Dogra said

that the Capacity Building Programme has been initiated under the guidance of Commissioner State Taxes Department, P K Bhat.

She said that this strategic move not only enhances the productivity of tax officers of STD but also promotes significant partnership between the ICAI community for larger economic growth of the nation. She added that the training module will continue tomorrow (October 15) and resource persons from ICAI will cover topics on demand, recovery, appeals, E-way Bill and Enforcement process.

## DC Ganderbal reviews functioning of PM Shri Schools



JI NEWS SERVICE  
GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 15

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyamir Tuesday convened a comprehensive review meeting to evaluate the functioning of PM Shri Schools in the district.

The meeting, held in the conference hall of the Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, was attended by the Chief Education Officer, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Zonal Education Officers, principals, and heads of institutions of PM Shri Schools.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the holistic development of schools.

Key discussions included generating APAAR IDs for students, ensuring the proper utilization of funds, and enhancing the visibility by uploading school activities on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The meeting also

focused on strengthening the support from Vidyajali, improving monitoring mechanisms in PM Shri Schools, and promoting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digital initiatives for better learning outcomes.

Special attention was given to ensuring basic school amenities, such as drinking water facilities, functional lavatories, internet connectivity and electricity.

The DC highlighted that a conducive learning environment helps students explore their interests, learn new skills, and engage parents in promoting positive behavior among students. He also stressed the integration of technology into the teaching-learning process as a means of enhancing educational outcomes.

The DC emphasized further improving the educational standards and infrastructure of PM Shri Schools to provide students with a thriving learning environment.