

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 headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool, urine or vomit

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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2 porters, 2 soldiers killed in terror attack in Gulmarg, 3 injured

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

Two porters and two Army soldiers were killed in a terror attack near Nagin area of Botapathri along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Gulmarg in Baramulla district on Thursday evening.

An official told the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the attack occurred on Thursday evening when the terrorists targeted an Army party.

In the attack, two porters and two army personnel were killed, while three others were injured,



who have been shifted to the hospital for treatment.

Following the attack, a massive search operation has been launched by

security forces to locate the attackers.

Notably, this is the second major terror

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LG Sinha chairs UHQ meet, asks Security Grid to wipe out terrorism, its ecosystem from J&K soil

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday chaired a crucial Unified Headquarters (UHQ) meeting in Srinagar to devise a fresh strategy to combat fresh threats, especially attacks on the vital infrastructure projects and non-J&K workforce. The LG directed the security grid of J&K to go all out against the terrorism and its eco-system in the UT so that peace remains intact.

News Agency was the first to report on Wednesday



day that LG Sinha would chair a UHQ meeting in Srinagar in the backdrop of Gagangeer, Ganderbal attack on Sunday that left a doctor and six labourers dead and several others

injured. Sources said that the heads of all security agencies were seen in a huddle at Rajbhawan this morning as LG chaired a crucial UHQ meeting. Among

those who attended the meeting were Director General of Police J&K Nalin Prabhat, Northern Army Commander M V Suchindera Kumar, GoC of Srinagar based 15 Corps

Lt General Prashant Srivastava, ADGP J&K Vijay Kumar, ADGP Jammu Anand Jain, IGP Kashmir V K Bhirdi, IG BSF, IGs of CRF and the Director Intelligence Bureau. From the administration Chief Secretary Atal Duloo and Principal Secretary Home also participated in the meeting.

Sources privy to the meeting said that the LG took serious note of the recent attack at Gagangeer, Ganderbal and sought feedback from the heads of security agencies as to how terrorists

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CM Omar meets PM Modi in Delhi

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to present a cabinet resolution seeking restoration of Jammu & Kashmir's statehood.

Sources told news agency that Omar met the PM today and handed over the cabinet resolution to him.

The resolution, cleared by the J & K cabinet in its first meeting on October 17, seeks restoration of J&K's statehood in its original form.

Sources disclosed that the security situation and development works in



Jammu & Kashmir also came up for discussion during the meeting, which lasted for nearly 30 minutes.

In a brief statement, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said that the chief minister of Jammu

and Kashmir Omar Abdul-

lah met the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today.

"CM of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri @OmarAbdullah met PM @narendramodi," the Prime Minister's handle on

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Lt Governor addresses 'Akhil Bhartiya Kavi Sammelan' at Raj Bhawan

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha addressed the 'Akhil Bhartiya Kavi Sammelan' at Raj Bhawan, today.

The event marked the culmination of three-day long literary Festival 'Jashn-e-Sangam', organised by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor extended his felicitations to the acclaimed litterateurs, poets participating in the Kavi Sammelan and



emphasised the vital role of writers in the progress of society and nation building.

The Lt Governor also lauded the important

contribution of poets and writers in shaping of ideas and promotion and preservation of rich artistic and cultural heritage.

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Separate budget provisions for J&K Police is in consonance with Reorganisation Act: Centre

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

The Government of India has revealed that the proposal of separate budget provisions for Jammu & Kashmir Police is in consonance with the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019.

In response to an application filed under the Right to Information Act-2019, a copy of which is in possession on news agency, the Union Home Ministry has disclosed that the proposal of separate budget provisions for Jammu and Kashmir

Police (JKP) is in consonance with Section 32 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

Under section 32 of The Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, the Legislative Assembly can legislate on all matters in the State List except "public order" and "police". Both these subjects fall under the purview of the Central Government.

For the first time after reorganization of J&K, J&K Police's budget for the ongoing financial year figured in the grants of the Ministry of the

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Cop injured as grenade goes off accidentally in Baramulla

BARAMULLA, OCT 24

A policeman got injured after a grenade went off accidentally in a court complex in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday afternoon, officials said. An official told news agency, the grenade went off accidentally inside Malkhana court complex, resulting in injuries to a cop. He said that cop was immediately shifted a nearby hospital for treatment. The police also advised people not to pay heed to any rumours.

Man succumbs day after being hit by vehicle in Budgam

BUDGAM, OCT 24

A man, who was injured on Wednesday evening after being hit by a tipper in Narbal area of central Kashmir's Budgam district, succumbed to his injuries at Srinagar's JVC hospital on Thursday. An official told news agency that the vehicle hit the man near Jawharpora Narbal, leaving him grievously injured. He said that the man was later shifted to Srinagar's JVC hospital for treatment, where he succumbed to his injuries today. The deceased has been identified as Tariq Ahmad Mir (30) of Dalwash Qazigund. Police have taken cognisance of the incident.

If Gagangeer type attacks would stop, only then Statehood can be restored: BJP leader Ashok Koul

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

J&K BJP's General Secretary Ashok Koul Thursday said that if Gagangeer, Ganderbal type attacks would stop only then a final call about restoration of statehood in J&K can be taken.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Home Minister are on record about restoration of Statehood to J&K at an appropriate time. Now it's the Agencies and the Centre that would take a



call on whether Statehood needs to be restored," Koul told reporters in Sri-

nagar on the sidelines of a party function organised to pay tributes to Pandit Prem Nath Dogra, as per news agency.

He said that if Gagangeer type attacks would stop only then the call for restoration of Statehood will be taken. "Perhaps the timing of the attack was wrong at Gagangeer, otherwise there would have been casualties of hundreds of workers," he said.

He said that NC chief Dr Farooq Abdullah has already condemned

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Pedestrian killed in Sgr accident

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

A pedestrian was killed in a road accident after he was hit by a vehicle on National Highway near Lawaypora area of Srinagar outskirts, officials said. An official told the news agency that a pedestrian was killed after being hit by a vehicle in the Lawaypora area of Srinagar outskirts late evening. He said the man was later identified as Nazir Ahmad, son of Habibullah, a resident of Bandipora. He was shifted to the nearest hospital, where he was declared dead upon arrival. Meanwhile, investigations have been initiated.

Jammu traders hopeful of Statehood restoration, Darbar Move

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 24

Since the elected government has been formed in Jammu and Kashmir, a hope has generated among the traders across Jammu to get back the lost glory which Jammu and Kashmir was enjoying before August 2019.

As per the news agency, the first relief they are expecting is the restoration of Darbar Move practice, which was going on in Jammu and Kashmir since Dogra rule.

"We are eagerly wait-

ing for the day when the darbar move practice is restored. The government saving the money on the darbar move has only widened the gap between Jammu and Kashmir regions. Jammu people have suffered a lot in the absence of Statehood and Darbar Move," said a trader of Raghunath Bazar Jammu, who believes that this practice must be restored without any further delay.

Another trader from Apsara Road Gandhinagar said, "Not

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Cabinet approves major rail projects in Bihar and Andhra at a cost of Rs 6,798 cr

J I NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

In a big push to infrastructure development in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday cleared two rail projects with an estimated cost of Rs 6,798 crore.

The projects are scheduled to be completed in five years and provide connectivity, facilitate ease of travel, minimise logistics costs, reduce oil imports, and lower carbon emissions.



The two rail projects are doubling the Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur sections, covering 256 km in Bihar,

and construction of a new line between Errupalem and Namburu via Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, covering 57 km.

The doubling of the

Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur sections is expected to strengthen the connectivity to Nepal, north-east India, and border areas.

The new rail line project Errupalem-Amaravati-Namburu traverses through NTR Vijayawada and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Khammam district of Telangana. It will provide direct connectivity to Amaravati, the proposed capital of Andhra Pradesh, and improve mobility for industries and the

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Incomplete Statehood for J&K unacceptable to Congress: Tariq Karra

J I NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCT 24

On a day when Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah met Prime Minister Modi to hand over the resolution passed by his Cabinet urging the Centre to restore the Statehood, alliance partner of Congress on Thursday said that the incomplete and conditional statehood was unacceptable to the party.

In an exclusive interview with news agency, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hameed Karra was



unequivocal in demanding the full restoration of statehood, warning against any partial or conditional measures. "We demand complete statehood, not an incomplete version where key departments such as Home or Finance remain under the Centre's con-

trol," he said.

The JK Congress Chief elaborated that restoring statehood in its "complete" form means reinstating the region's authority without any amendments or central control. "We are for complete statehood, not for any arrangement that leaves vital departments under the Government of India's direct control. That would be unacceptable to the Congress party and to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Karra said when asked about Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's ongoing Delhi visit.

He further has expressed his disappoint-

ment over the delay in restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. In a candid statement, Karra emphasized that the Government of India has failed to deliver on the promises made to the people of the region, despite assurances given at the highest levels, including by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister in Parliament.

Karra remarked that the people of Jammu and Kashmir had hoped for elections under the banner of statehood. However, the political process has unfolded without the promised

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Javed Rana reviews functioning of Jal Shakti Department

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today said that we have a collective responsibility towards welfare of people and should work towards achieving that goal in a transparent manner while involving community at the local level.

He made these remarks during a comprehensive maiden review meeting of the Jal Shakti department convened by the Minister here at Srinagar.

Javed Rana said that the government believes in establishing a transparent and accountable governance for the people who have pinned high hopes on the present dispensation. "The government is committed towards welfare and development of every nook and corner of the UT. Collaborative efforts are being ensured at all levels to move ahead in achieving the set goals",



he maintained.

The Minister said that failures arise when we shy away from our responsibilities and work without coordination. "I have confidence in the system that we will overcome the challenges. The way officers of the department are working is quite laudable and praiseworthy," he added.

Highlighting the significance of Jal Jeevan Mission, the Minister said that JJM is a prestigious mission and strenuous efforts are being made to meet the timelines set for completion of the mission. He emphasized on meticulous resource planning, judicious use of funds and mobilization of men and machinery as per the

requirements.

The Minister had district wise status of tendering/allotment/starting of works under different components of various schemes. He took strong note of the less performing areas and impressed upon the concerned officers to gear up their efforts and ensure deadlines are met, cautioning that the non performers shall not go unpunished.

He also impressed upon the officers to maintain highest level of transparency and accountability in implementation process of the schemes and emphasised on continuous monitoring for maintaining quality standards. He said that there has been

some complaints about the delay in certification, supply of substandard material which need to be properly checked and subsequent steps taken to rectify the errors, if any.

Emphasizing the significance of clean water sources in transforming communities, Rana impressed upon the officers to evolve strategies for effective tapping of natural water. He said that Government's unwavering commitment towards water conservation and sustainable development will bear fruits if we full-fill our role as responsible citizens to ensure a water secure future. He said that effective and sustainable strategies have to be developed to tackle the shortage of potable water which will be posing serious challenges in future. He also directed the officers to focus on flood control measures and soil erosion.

Earlier, Additional Chief Secretary Jal Shakti, Sha-

leen Kabra, gave a detailed presentation informing about the administrative structure, schemes, physical and financial position of the department, digital interventions besides challenges and subsequent strategies to overcome those challenges.

He informed that the department has devised a comprehensive plan to achieve the objectives in a time-bound manner. The department is carrying out third-party studies about the technical feasibility and source sustainability of schemes to double-check the parameters, he added.

Besides, ACS, Jal Shakti and Chairman JKWRA, the meeting was attended by Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission, Chief Engineers (PHE/I&FC/RTIC), Jal Shakti Department, Superintendent Engineers, Executive Engineers (Civil/ Mechanical- PHE/I&FC/RTIC) and other officers.

HADP set to revolutionise agriculture sector in J&K: Javed Dar

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Javed Ahmad Dar, today said that successful implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) will revolutionise the agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairing an introductory-cum-review meeting at Civil Secretariat, Dar emphasized HADP's potential to double farmers' income and achieve a sustainable Rs 100,000 crore agri-economy in the Union Territory in coming years. He said that the HADP aims to increase farmers' earnings through innovative and modern methodologies in agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors.

The Minister asserted that sustainable efforts would be made to establish a robust Rs 100,000 crore agri-economy, promoting economic growth and employment opportunities for the farmers.

He asked the concerned officials to deliver benefits of flagship programs and schemes directly to the



farmers, enhancing crop production and productivity through Hybrid and Exotic Plantation. He also directed them to intensify hybrid and exotic plantations, boosting economic growth and yield cultivation. Addressing human resource gaps, the Minister instructed the concerned to fill vacant posts in agricultural, horticulture and animal husbandry sectors, both gazetted and non-gazetted.

The Minister emphasized the need for aggressive awareness campaigning regarding HADP, PM Fasal Bima Yojna, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna and other schemes to achieve self-sufficiency in planting materials, seed varieties and different crop varieties.

Javed Dar directed the officials to work together to ensure successful implementation of all

schemes and flagship programs, prioritising farmer welfare and prosperity.

The Minister reviewed the status of allocations and expenditure under different sectors. He asked for ensuring seamless work execution on all ongoing projects, providing both mechanizations support, expertise in installation of innovative and modern methodologies for better production as well as economic opportunities.

Javed Dar also reviewed status of saffron Mission and market linkages opportunities to farmers for apple and other products.

Earlier, Principal Secretary APD, Shailendra Kumar, through a power point presentation, gave a detailed review of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and allied sectors in J&K.

Advisor Nasir Aslam visits Batpora fire victims in Kupwara

J1 NEWS SERVICE

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 24

Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today visited the fire victims of Behremdari Batpora in Hyhama block of Kupwara. He expressed sorrow over the unfortunate fire incident that damaged several houses. The Advisor was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan.

During the visit, the Advisor shared sympathy with the fire affected families and assured every possible support from the administration.

The Advisor provided Rs.1 lakh to each family whose houses got damaged in the blaze and Rs.40 thousand for each damaged shop under Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He also announced Rs.1.25 lakh under Disaster Management to each of the affected families. Besides, Rs.1.67 lakh to each family will be sanctioned under PMAY to these families and Rs.1.25 lakh to each household for construction of cow shed under MGNREGA.

Earlier on his arrival, the Advisor convened a meeting of officers at Dak Banglow Kupwara and received detailed feedback regarding the developmental scenario of district Kupwara.

DC Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, ADC Kupwara, Mohammad Rouf Rehman and other concerned were present in the meeting.

The DC briefed the Advisor about the developmental profile including the current scenario of power, water supply, Health, Tourism, Urban Development, Sports development and Firewood position in the district.

Meanwhile, the Advisor also chaired a public darbar at Dak Banglow Kupwara in which various developmental issues were put forth by the people. He assured for time bound redressal of the same.

MLA Habakadal reviews developmental profile of constituency

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Shameema Firdous, Member Legislative Assembly (MLA), Habakadal Assembly Constituency (AC) Thursday chaired a meeting of the District Officers at Banquet Hall here to take review of the developmental profile of the constituency.

The MLA while addressing the inaugural meeting with Officers sought fullest cooperation of departments in strengthening the public service delivery.

She discussed and deliberated on various public welfare measures and sought details of ongoing activities and requirements, department wise.

Earlier, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Srinagar, S.A Kataria briefed the chair regarding completed work projects and ongoing works in the Habakadal AC.

On the occasion, MLA took stock of various



developmental issues pertaining to road widening, electricity, water supply, ration, health, sanitation and other issues of public importance.

In order to prevent traffic gridlocks on various roads leading to and from Habakadal and pertinent inconvenience to public, Shameema Firdous directed the district authorities to initiate work on road widening programme, which includes road widening of Habakadal-Babapora road, Habakadal-Kan-

ikadal road and Habakadal to Fatehkadal via Chinkral Mohalla road.

She also called for demarcation of Brarimnambal Lagoon and its cleansing process.

The MLA directed the concerned officers from KPDCL to ensure strict adherence to power schedule to ensure that consumers may not face inconvenience. The Officers from Jal Shakti department were instructed to make sure smooth supply of potable drinking water

to the consumers.

For proper sanitation practices, the MLA directed the Officers from SMC to ensure cleanliness of roads, lanes and bylanes besides garbage being lifted from households routinely.

She also directed for repairing defunct street lights and replacing the faulty ones so that the general public may not face any inconvenience during commute.

The Chief Medical Officer was directed to commence work on the upgradation of PHC Habakadal to facilitate the locals besides ensuring deployment of sufficient staff at the health institution.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ADC Srinagar, S.A Kataria, Jt. Commissioner Works SMC, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, S.E Drainage, S.E R&B Core Division, Ex. Engineers of various departments.

Power shutdown

J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Panchari, Meer, Lander, Meer Kati, Mongri, Pathi, Mansar and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 25 and 27 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Industrial Estate, Digiana, Babliyana and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 27 from 7 am to 10 am.

Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to Sarore Local, Sarore Industry and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 27 from 7 am to 1 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Bhagthali, Jarai, Taraf Sanji, Chambe Da Bagh and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 25 from 7 am to 2 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Dadwara, Bhaddu, Surara, Phinter and adjoining areas will remain affected on October 27 from 7 am to 12 noon.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer O&M Circle-III, JPDCL, Batote has informed that the power supply to Billan Bowl will remain affected on October 25 and 26 from 9 am to 12 noon.

Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan Drug De-Addiction Training imparted to Master Volunteers at Doda



J1 NEWS SERVICE

DODA, OCTOBER 24

In line with the Government of India's commitment to create a drug-free society, JKSPYM SLCA J&K organized a one-day training program for master volunteers of District Doda as part of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA).

The event, held at the Community Hall, Doda, was hosted in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, and the District Administration Doda.

The event was attended by District Social Welfare Officer, Tariq Parvaiz Qazi, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer Babu Ram and Ex-Counsellor of Nagri

Ramesh Kumar.

Addressing the gathering, Qazi expressed concern over the rising trend of substance abuse among youth in Jammu and Kashmir, urging the master volunteers to fully benefit from the training and apply the knowledge gained to fight drug addiction in the district. The program commenced with a welcome note, followed by an introduction to JKSPYM and SLCA J&K by Program Director, JKSPYM Pallavi Singh.

Around 55 master volunteers participated in the training, which included four sessions on various aspects of drug de-addiction, such as "Information on Drugs, Drug Use, and its Consequences," "District Level Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan,"

"Intervention Spectrum in Drug Treatment and Prevention," and "Roles and Responsibilities of Master Volunteers and Nasha Mukh Bharat Leaders."

Resource persons from SLCA delivered comprehensive presentations, highlighting the growing prevalence of drug use in India.

The training program enhanced participants' understanding of substance abuse while equipping them with the necessary skills to become advocates for drug prevention in their communities. The program concluded with the distribution of certificates, marking not only the end of the event but the beginning of the volunteers' journey as agents of change in promoting a drug-free society in Doda.

Director Panchayati Raj reviews status of rural infrastructure projects across J&K

J1 NEWS SERVICE

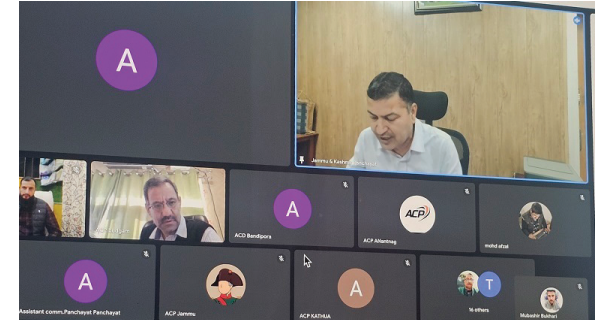
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

Director Panchayati Raj Sham Lal on Thursday chaired a meeting to assess the progress of several key initiatives aimed at strengthening the Panchayati Raj system.

The meeting focused on the status of Panchayat Ghars & CSC Co-location, the establishment of District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs).

Discussions were also held on the online enrolment and certification of Panchayat Accounts Assistants under the ICAI-ARF (Institute of Chartered Accountants of India - Accounting Research Foundation) initiative and the establishment of Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs).

The meeting was attended by all Assistant Commissioners Panchay-



ats (ACPs) of Kashmir and Jammu divisions and the SPRC/DPRC team.

Sham Lal emphasized the importance of speeding up the construction of new Panchayat Ghars.

He urged ACPs to ensure timely completion of the ongoing projects to enhance local governance and service delivery in rural and remote areas.

Highlighting the need for collaboration, Sham Lal stressed that the co-location of CSCs within Panchayat Ghars would significantly improve

access to digital services for rural communities.

He further directed ACPs to closely monitor the establishment of District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs) and Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs), which are crucial for capacity building at the grassroots level.

Sham Lal highlighted the government's focus on transparency and accountability, with the introduction of the "Audit Online" system to track progress and utilization of resources in real-time.

JKSTIC Hosts seminar on "Planet vs Plastic: Save Earth" at GHSS Jaganoo, Udhampur

J1 NEWS SERVICE

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 24

The Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council, under the Department of Science and Technology, Udhampur, organized a seminar on the theme "Planet vs Plastic: Save Earth" here today at Government Higher Secondary School Jaganoo. This mega event aimed to raise awareness about reducing plastic usage to protect the planet. The seminar was inaugurated by Principal of the institution Sush

Rani as the Chief Guest, along with the Convener of the event, Shamsher Singh, Senior Lecturer in Physics. Dr. Rashpal Singh, Senior Lecturer in Zoology at DIET Kud, Namrata Sharma, Senior Lecturer in Botany at GHSS Dehari, and Bindu Sharma, Lecturer in Chemistry, were the Guests of Honour.

They also served as judges for the competi-

tion held for the students during the event.

Students from different educational institutions of the Jaganoo cluster participated actively, sharing their insights on the importance of minimizing plastic use for the sustainability of life on Earth. The seminar's objective was to inspire young minds to take action against plastic pollution.

The welcome address was delivered by Narinder Raina, a senior teacher at GHSS Jaganoo, while Shruti Khanna, District Coordinator of the Department of Science and Technology, coordinated the event. She commended the efforts of the Principal, Convener, and school staff for hosting such an impactful and innovative program.

At the conclusion of the event, trophies and certificates were awarded to the top-performing students.

Certificates of participation were given to all stu-

dent participants. Sush Rani, Principal of GHSS Jaganoo, also delivered an enlightening lecture on the theme.

Anshu Devi and Swasthi, both from GHSS Jaganoo, secured the First and Second positions, respectively, while Simran from Girls High School Jaganoo earned the Third position.

Additionally, three consolation prizes were awarded to students from High School Ritti, High School Sattaini, and GHSS Jaganoo.

The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks by Shamsher Singh, Senior Lecturer in Physics and the Convener of the event, expressing gratitude to the Chief Guest, Judges, school staff, escort teachers, and Narinder Raina, who presented his thoughts on the theme through a Dogri poem, as well as the Department of JKSTIC for their support in organizing the event.

Sakeena Masood visits Gurez, reviews developmental scenario

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GUREZ, OCTOBER 24

Minister for Social Welfare, School Education, Higher Education, Health and Medical Education departments, Sakeena Masood, today conducted an extensive tour of Gurez subdivision of Bandipora district and took first hand appraisal of its developmental scenario.

During the visit, the Minister inspected Government Degree College (GDC), Gurez, Community Health Centre (CHC) Gurez, Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Dawar and other utilities of public importance and took on spot assessment of their functioning.

While inspecting the Community Health Centre (CHC) Gurez, the Minister took in-depth review of all the medical facilities available at facility as well as



inspected its wards and other units. She interacted with patients, attendants and sought feedback from them about the services being provided at the Centre. Interacting with doctors and paramedics on the occasion, Sakeena Masood asked them to provide best and quality medical treatments to the patients owing to its distance from the main district headquarters. She directed them to keep the buffer stock of medicines and other life saving equipments available at the facility in view

of the coming winters. She assured them of all possible support and assistance and advised them to approach her office directly in case of any urgent requirements for the health facility.

During her visit to Government Degree College Gurez and Government Higher Secondary School Dawar, the Minister interacted with college administration, school staff as well as students. She sought feedback from the students about the quality of education provided in these institutions.

DC Srinagar Chairs Security Coordination Meeting

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Deputy Commissioner (DC)/ District Magistrate Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a security coordination meeting here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex aimed to strengthen coordination among the Civil Administration and the Police across the District.

Besides, Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar, Imtiyaz Hussain, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik the meeting was attended by SDM East, SDM West and other senior Officers of Police and Administration.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of



seamless coordination between Police and District Administration to ensure safety of people & to ensure peaceful environment for all. He also stressed on security audit of the ongoing key infrastructural projects in the District and round the clock nakas at specific check points and night patrolling.

During the meeting, the Officers of the District from both Administration and Police side discussed extant security measures

in place and measures to enhance the security arrangements in Srinagar District. The meeting focused on devising strategies ensuring public safety and peaceful environment.

Earlier, the participating Officers briefed the District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner about the overall security scenario to provide insights into the existing security challenges so as to devise effective mitigation strategies.

DC inaugurates District Kabaddi championship for Boys & Girls



J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 24

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai today declared open the Junior/Sub-Junior Kabaddi Championship for Boys and Girls here at the Indoor Sports Stadium.

The event is being organized by the District Kabaddi Association Udhampur under the aegis of J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association.

The event commenced with the National Anthem followed by a cultural fest. A total of 300 players participated in the opening ceremony, taking an oath to play with integrity, sportsmanship and adherence to the rules of the game.

The two-day championship would feature competitions among 29 teams representing different clubs, government and private institutions from across the district.

Addressing participants, the DC expressed her delight at the enthusiastic participation of boys and girls in the competition, especially those from rural and urban areas. She

extended her best wishes to all participants and organizers, emphasizing the importance of engaging in sports to develop physical fitness, leadership, teamwork and positive thinking. She added that participation in sports is a great foundation for nurturing young talent.

She further appreciated the vibrant folk dance performances by students and commended the District Youth Services and Sports Department and the event organizers for their efforts in hosting the championship.

Ashok Kumar Salhotra, former Director of Sports at SMVDU Katra, attended as the guest of honour.

Earlier, Sheikh Tanveer, President District Kabaddi Association and Ashok Kumar Sharma, Chairman, presented a floral bouquet to the chief guest.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by District Information Officer Rajinder Dagra, DYSSO, Romesh Chander Mishra, former Municipal Councillor Udhampur Vikram Slathia.

DC tours Sub-Division Paddar to review progress of Developmental projects

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 24

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan conducted an extensive tour of Sub-Division Paddar to review the ongoing developmental projects in the region. He was accompanied by local SDM Dr. Amit Kumar Bhagat, Tehsildar BDO Paddar, BMO and the officers from GREF and other concerned departments.

The DC inspected the progress of work on Paddar-Sansari road up to the HP border, particularly focusing on the Kabban and Ungaie Nallah stretches. At Kabban Nallah, he directed the GREF authorities to expedite the completion of the bridge and ensure the road is made accessible for commuters and vehicles within the



stipulated time frame. He emphasized that delays would not be tolerated.

At Ungaie Nallah, the DC instructed GREF authorities to rectify the inclined grade of the road to ensure safety and smooth passage. He also inspected various blind spots along the said axis and emphasized the installation of crash barriers and road signages in spirit with the road safety measures. A comprehensive meeting was also held with Sub-Divisional level

officers. The DC stressed the importance of punctuality, hosting of awareness programs and public grievance redressal camps on regular intervals, besides timely completion of quality developmental projects.

Later, the DC visited Shri Machail Mata Yatri Bhawan in Gulabgarh to assess the progress of the remaining construction work. He issued strict directives to complete the work within the set timelines.

Mission Shakti organises workshop on Mental Health Disorders and Well being at GCW Bhagwati Nagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

To raise awareness about mental health disorder and its timely redressal, Mission Shakti SANKALP HEW Social Welfare department Jammu, in collaboration and esteemed support of Govt college for women Bhagwati Nagar organised one day lecture cum workshop on the topic "Mental Health Disorders and Well-being".

The session began with an informative lecture by Dr. Rajinder Kumar, a renowned expert in psychology and mental health. He specialises in the treatment of various psychiatric disorders like anxiety disorders, depression and other mood disorders. He covered different aspects of mental

health, including common mental disorders, symptoms, early warning signs, and coping strategies.

Emphasizing the importance of seeking help, he discussed available resources and the role of support systems in managing mental health issues effectively.

An interactive session followed allowing the participants to share their thoughts and experiences, ask questions, and seek advice from the expert. The open discussion helped to break down the stigma associated with mental health issues, fostering an environment where students felt comfortable discussing their concerns.

Dr. Meeru Abrol, Principal of the College, expressed appreciation for

Mission Shakti SANKALP HEW and the resource person. She encouraged students to continue learning about mental health. "The well-being of our students is our top priority, and it is essential for them to understand the significance of mental health. Events like these provide crucial knowledge and promote a culture of empathy and support," She said. The event concluded with a call to action for students to become mental health advocates within their communities. The officials of Mission Shakti also interacted and got feedback from attendees indicating that the session was not only informative but also a much-needed platform for candid discussions about mental health.

Satish Sharma reviews functioning of Transport Department; emphasises incorporation of innovative ideas



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Minister for Transport, Satish Sharma, today chaired a meeting to review the functioning of Transport Department besides JK Road Transport Corporation and State Motor Garages Department here at Civil Secretariat Srinagar.

Minister for Agricultural Production, Rural Development Department and Panchayat Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar was also present on the occasion.

Reiterating the commitment of Omar Abdullah led government towards ensuring ease of business, the Minister directed the department to come up with a proposal to reduce the permit fees to the extent of 50% ie Rs 75000 instead of Rs 150000 to encourage unemployed youth to earn their livelihood.

The Minister instructed to organise monthly medical checkup of drivers of commercial vehicles to keep a check on their fitness for operating their vehicles. He also direct-

ed the Road Transport Authority to ensure strict measures during the driving test, while issuing license for heavy vehicles. He emphasised speedy completion of IDTR Project to ensure proper testing of skill test of driving license applicants.

The Transport Commissioner was directed to increase the presence of RTO /ARTO in the field to check the menace of overloading and over speeding to avoid road accidents.

Regarding the issue of non availability of parking slots in the Municipal areas of Jammu/Srinagar for commercial light vehicles, it was decided to take up the matter with the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) to avoid traffic congestion in city areas.

The Transport Minister stressed the need for adopting and incorporating innovative ideas for further improving and streamlining functioning of the Transport Department. He said besides bringing efficiency and transparency in the working of the department, there is a

need for providing better and efficient transport facilities to the public.

Satish Sharma emphasised that Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), State Motor Garages (SMG) and J&K Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) should work in unison to improve and strengthen public transport system in the state.

Earlier, Secretary Transport presented a brief introduction about the Functioning of Department through a Power Point Presentation. Threadbare deliberations were held during the meeting regarding various issues including permit fees of commercial light motor vehicle, medical checkup of drivers of commercial vehicles, competition of ITDR in Samba, issuance of license, non availability of parking slots in SMC/JMC, liability of employees etc.

Transport Commissioner J&K, Managing Director JKRTC, Director State Motor Garages Department, Director Finance Transport, Additional Secretary besides RTOS attended the meeting.

Chief Justice visits Baramulla; inaugurates NDPS Court at District Court Complex

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, OCTOBER 24

Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Tashi Rabstan, today visited Baramulla and inaugurated the newly created Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Court at District Court Complex here.

The Chief Justice inaugurated the NDPS court in presence of Justice Sanjeev Kumar Shukla Judge High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh who is also administrative Judge of Baramulla, Principal Secretary to Chief Justice, M.K. Sharma, Principal District and Sessions Judge Baramulla, Jawad Ahmad, Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa, SSP Baramulla Mohammad Zaid Malik and other members of the bar and district administration officers.

The NDPS court will oversee and settle the cases that come under the NDPS Act, which prohibits the production, manufacturing, cultivation, possession, sale, purchase, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance to ensure that drug-dependent and non-violent offenders receive the necessary services while still being held accountable.



Speaking on the occasion, Justice Tashi Rabstan emphasized the crucial role that specialized courts like the NDPS Court play in the effective dispensation of justice. He commended the efforts of the judiciary and law enforcement in tackling the growing menace of narcotic drugs in the region.

The Chief Justice further said that the specialized court will serve as an instrumental platform for addressing cases involving drug trafficking and abuse in a swift and focused manner. He stated that through concentrating resources and judicial expertise, the NDPS Court will help to streamline proceedings and reduce delays in delivering judgments, ensuring justice is served in a timely fashion.

On the occasion, Justice Tashi Rabstan also distributed wheelchairs, crutches, and other aid material among the persons with disabilities (PwDs), aiming to enhance their mobility and improve their quality of life.

Meanwhile, the Chief Justice conducted a thorough inspection of the courtrooms at the district court complex and assessed the efficiency of court operations, infrastructure, and accessibility for both the judiciary and the public.

Later, Justice Tashi Rabstan interacted with the members of the Bar Association Baramulla who put forth their grievances, and the Chief Justice assured them of prompt redressal to their issues at hand.

Arrangements for Diwali Festival reviewed in Doda



J1 NEWS SERVICE
DODA, OCTOBER 24

The arrangements for Diwali-the festival of lights were reviewed here today at a meeting chaired by

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sudershan Kumar and attended by functionaries of line departments, police, besides representatives of Traders unions and local Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The magistrates, police officers, and the executive officers of all Municipal Committees (MCs) were asked to identify suitable locations for the sale of firecrackers, with all necessary permissions and safety measures. The enforcement officers were directed to monitor the sale of fireworks at designated points, ensuring safety protocols are strictly adhered to.

Security arrangements were also discussed, emphasizing the need for maintaining peace and harmony during the festivities. Traffic management plans for towns across the district were reviewed.

The Fire and Emergency Services department was asked to keep fire tenders on standby and issue safety advisories related to firecrackers.

The ADC also connected virtually with Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and Tehsildars, instructing by functionaries of line departments, police, fire services, and designate locations for firecracker sales in their respective areas.

Other directives included ensuring uninterrupted power supply by the Power Development Department (PDD), arranging drinking water and barricades by the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department, and coordinating ambulance and first-aid services with the Health Department. Additionally, ADC Kumar called for the constitution of flying squads to keep a check on the overcharging and ensure availability of quality food products in the market during the festival.

Mairaj Khalid Bandy, President of the Doda Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also participated in the discussions.

SLCA J&K organizes Training for Master Volunteers of Doda district under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 24

In line with the Govt. of India's commitment to creating a drug-free society, JKSPYM SLCA J&K today organized one-day training program for Master Volunteers of district Doda as part of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) at Community Hall, Doda in collaboration with NISD, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India and district administration, Doda. Tariq Parvaiz Quizi, District Social Welfare Officer accompanied by Mr. Babu Ram, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer and Mr. Ramesh Kumar, Ex-Counsellor Nagri, Doda graced the occasion. He addressed the pressing issue of rising substance abuse and speaking on the occasion he expressed distress over the rising trend of substance abuse



among the youth in UT of J&K and he urged master volunteers from district Doda to get benefit from the training and earn knowledge at the fullest. Training program initiated with the welcome note followed by the introduction of JKSPYM organization and SLCA J&K by Ms. Pallavi Singh, Program Direc-

tor, JKSPYM. Around 55 master volunteers were professionally trained by SLCA J&K. The program aimed to equip master volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills to combat substance abuse and promote drug demand reduction in the Doda district. Resource persons from SLCA deliv-

ered comprehensive presentations highlighting the prevalence of drug use in India. Training program was comprising of 4 sessions and sessions taken in training program were "Information on drugs, drug use and its consequences", "District Level Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan", "Intervention spectrum in drug treatment and prevention", "Roles/Responsibilities of Master-volunteers/ Nasha Mukht Bharat leaders".

Overall, the training program not only enhanced the participants understanding of substance abuse but also empowered them to become active agents of change in their communities. The distribution of certificates marked the end of the program but symbolized the beginning of their journey as advocates for a healthier, drug free district.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Camp at NCC Training Academy, Nagrota concluded

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NAGROTA, OCT 24

The much-anticipated Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) camp at the NCC Training Academy, Nagrota, successfully concluded today, leaving a lasting impact on the cadets of Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh and Bihar & Jharkhand Directorates. The two-week camp, which brought together Senior Division (SD), Senior Wing (SW), Junior Division (JD), and Junior Wing (JW) cadets, was a resounding success, marked by a diverse array of activities aimed at fostering unity, cultural exchange, and skill development.

The camp provided cadets with enriching experiences, starting with creative endeavours like extempore competitions, team-building exercises, and workshops that honed



critical life skills such as communication, leadership, and decision-making. The cadets embraced the challenges with enthusiasm, learning valuable lessons in teamwork, time management, and public speaking, which will serve them well in their future endeavours.

The camp also included physical activities like sports competitions, leadership-building exercises, and motivational sessions by accomplished speak-

ers like ARO, Jammu who inspired the cadets to aim for a future of service to the nation and clarified the process of recruitment including the educational requirements, basic QRs and the method of conduct of various competitive entrance exams. The evenings were lit up by a vibrant cultural exchanges where both directorates showcased their regional traditions. From the sweet melodies of Kashmiri folk songs to the energetic

rhythms of Bhojpuri music, the performances captivated audiences and reflected the spirit of unity in diversity. This cultural harmony was a fitting highlight of the camp.

As EBSB Jammu 2024 came to a close, the cadets left with a renewed sense of camaraderie, confidence, and cultural awareness. The camp was truly an accomplished enterprise, fulfilling its mission to unite and inspire the youth of India.

HDFC Bank Group Announces Winners of HDFC Tech Innovators 2024

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCT 24

HDFC Bank Group, announced winners of HDFC Tech Innovators - 2024. HDFC Tech Innovators - 2024 is a joint initiative of HDFC Bank Group companies - HDFC AMC, HDFC Ergo, HDB Financial Services, HDFC Life, and HDFC Securities, and spearheaded by HDFC Capital and HDFC Bank to promote innovations and opportunities for technology related start-up ventures. Each of the Group companies has a legacy of working with start-ups forging partnerships that have been a win-win for both organisations.

HDFC Tech Innovators leverages the platform created by HDFC Capital

over the years, to augment engagement with the start-up ecosystem and create mutual opportunities to do business, share platforms, provide financing & investments, facilitate co-learning & co-creation of products & offerings. This is the first time that the program is being organized at a Group level across segments covering PropTech, FinTech, Sustainability Tech, Consumer Tech and New Age Tech.

For the HDFC Tech Innovators 2024, more than 2,000 applications were received for the five categories. The top 10 winners were selected by a grand jury comprising, HDFC Bank Group leadership, venture capitalists, senior industry executives, and unicorn founders.

The screening process was managed by EY. The winners were Alt Drx Pvt Ltd, Garudalytics Pvt Lt, Inkers Technology Pvt. Ltd., Ishitva Robotic Systems, Nosh Robotics, Newspace Research and Technologies, Onestack Solution, Qunu Labs, Repos Energy India and VSOL4U Technologies Pvt Ltd (Yelloskye).

Shri P. Vasudevan, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Leading venture capitalists, unicorn founders, industry leaders, and academia, also attended the event. The event saw engaging discussions themed around the inspiring journeys of start-up founders and how large organisations like the HDFC Bank Group work with start-ups. Key speak-

ers included Parag Rao, Country Head - Payments, Liability Products, Consumer Finance and Marketing, HDFC Bank; Navneet Munot, MD & CEO, HDFC AMC; Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO, HDFC Securities; Vibha Padalkar, MD & CEO, HDFC Life; Anuj Tyagi, MD & CEO, HDFC Ergo; Rohit Kapoor, CEO, Food Marketplace, Swiggy; Kumar Vembu, Co-Founder, Zoho; Shradha Sharma, Founder & CEO, YourStory Media; Ajay Kaushal, Founder Director, BillDesk; and Mayank Kumar, Co-Founder & MD, upGrad.

Mr. Parag Rao, Country Head - Payments, Liability Products, Consumer Finance and Marketing, HDFC Bank said, "We engage with start-ups at multiple levels to offer

them a range of products and services that provide them ease of business. On the other hand, we have extensively worked with start-ups since the Bank's early days. Our collaborations with fintech startups have enabled us to deliver cutting-edge services to customers, from seamless digital payments to AI-powered financial tools. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the winners of HDFC Tech Innovators 2024."

Mr. Vipul Roongta, MD & CEO, HDFC Capital Advisors Ltd, said "With participation from over 2000 start-ups, the 3rd edition of HDFC Tech Innovators showcases the future of technology solutions and innovation in India. HDFC Capital will continue to sup-

port innovative businesses that provide sustainable and futuristic solutions for the real estate and affordable housing sector."

Key partners of the event were DPIIT Startup India, MeitYStartup Hub, IvyCap Ventures, Elevation Capital, Z47 fka Matrix Partners India, 3one4 Capital, Chiratae Ventures, Blume, Accel, 100x.VC, Inflection Point Ventures, Rainmatter, Gruhas, Brigade REAP, Earth Fund, Yournest Venture Capital, IIMA Ventures, IIMB NSRCEL, Indian Institute of Science, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association, Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, National Real Estate Development Council, and Awfis.

Tata Motors organizes 'Customer Care Mahotsav', a nationwide engagement program for commercial vehicle customers

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 24 OCTOBER 2024:

Tata Motors, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, announced the launch of its Customer Care Mahotsav 2024, a comprehensive customer engagement program for commercial vehicle customers till 24th December, 2024. The unique and value adding programme will be held at over 2500 authorised service outlets across the country, bringing together fleet owners and drivers for insightful discussions. Through the Mahotsav, customers can avail a range of benefits, including thorough vehicle

check-ups conducted by trained technicians, and access to value-added services. Additionally, drivers will receive extensive training on safe and fuel-efficient driving practices, along with tailored offerings under its Sampoorana Seva 2.0 initiative.

Launching the Customer Care Mahotsav 2024 edition, Mr. Girish Wagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors highlighted, "We are excited to bring back the Customer Care Mahotsav this year, starting 23rd October. The day holds a special significance for us as we sold our first commercial vehicle in 1954, we now celebrate it as the Customer Care Day.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

LG Sinha chairs UHQ...

managed to reach the spot. "He called for a collective approach of security agencies to wipe out terrorism and its eco-system from J&K soil. The LG laid special emphasis on uprooting the terror network in Kashmir and directed the heads of security agencies to go tough on the terror sympathisers and Over Ground Workers (OGWs)," he said.

The LG sought details from the army officers including northern army commander about the successful infiltration attempts this year so far and the number of "foreign terrorists active in both regions." Sources said that the LG reiterated that innocents shouldn't be touched and culprits including terrorists shouldn't be spared.

"The LG asked the security officials to track down those involved in the Gagangeer attack and punish them sternly," the source said, adding that he also called for the highest level of vigil on the LoC and International Border (IB) to prevent possible infiltration bids ahead of snowfall.

The LG also directed the security grid to deal effectively with the challenge of narco-terror and act swiftly against those involved in drug trade. Today's meeting came after two back-to-back security reviews taken by LG post Gagangeer, Ganderbal attack.

The LG also stressed on the need of thorough security audits of all vital Infrastructure projects and security installations across the UT. The LG sources said, also asked the security heads to ensure solid security cover for non J&K workers working at various projects across J&K. "Enhancement of security at important developmental projects was also discussed and steps to be taken were fine tuned as well," he said. Present in the meeting, the heads of various security agencies vowed to maintain close synergy and coordination while dealing with the fresh challenges on terrorism front.

CM Omar meets...

X posted. This was the first meeting of Omar Abdullah with the PM after being sworn as Chief Minister of J&K.

Omar, who arrived in the national capital for the first time on Wednesday since becoming CM, met Home Minister Amit Shah last evening.

Omar today also met Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari to discuss key road infrastructure development projects with him.

The CM also met Defense Minister Rajnath Singh this evening.

In a post on X, Singh said that the NDA-led government is looking forward to working with Omar Abdullah for J&K's progress.

"Met with the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah in New Delhi. The NDA Govt under PM

Narendra Modi is looking forward to working with him for J&K's progress," he posted on X.

Separate budget...

Home Affairs (MHA) in the Union Budget unveiled by Nirmala Sitharaman.

Even after bifurcation of J&K into two UTs, J&K Police's allocations were part of the Union Territory's own budget.

It is worthwhile to mention that Union Finance Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in July 2024 that the Centre has agreed to take the entire budget of J&K Police from UT. "It is observed that around 11% of the budget of Jammu and Kashmir is used for the Police. Such expenses on policing being unavoidable, leaves limited space for spending on development and welfare projects. I am happy to inform this august House that the Union Government has agreed to take the entire burden of the budget of the police from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir," she had said.

2 porters, 2 soldiers...

attack in Kashmir in the last five days. Earlier on Sunday, seven people including a Doctor were killed at Gagangir, Sonamarg.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah condemned the attack, terming the incident as unfortunate.

"Very unfortunate news about the attack on the army vehicles in the Boota Pathri area of North Kashmir which has resulted in some casualties & injuries. This recent spate of attacks in Kashmir is a matter of serious concern. I condemn this attack is the strongest possible terms & send my condolences to the loved ones of the people who lost their lives. I also pray that injured make a complete & swift recovery", he wrote on X.

Meanwhile, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President, Mehbooba Mufti condemned the attack and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured soldiers.

"Shocked & deeply saddened by the militant attack on an army convoy in Baramulla in which a civilian porter has been killed. Condemn it unequivocally & pray for the swift recovery of the injured soldiers," Mehbooba wrote on X.

Jammu traders...

only darbar move but Statehood should be restored. Statehood means more power to elected representatives and the darbar move should be the first step taken to stabilise the state."

"Most of the works are being awarded to men and companies from outside J&K and people here are jobless," they added.

Lt Governor...

He said, Power of knowledge, ideas and imagination of writers provides fresh perspective and contributes in prosperity and well-being of the society.

Suresh Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Ms Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL; Sh Kumar Manoj, Patron Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti; Ms Nasreen Ali 'Nidhi,' National President and other members of Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti, literary personalities and youth in large number were present on the occasion.

Cabinet approves...

population. "The two projects covering eight districts in three states, i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Bihar, will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 313 km," an official statement said.

The statement further said. "These are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as agriculture products, fertiliser, coal, iron ore, steel, cement, etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 31 MTPA (million tonnes per year)."

Briefing media on Cabinet decisions, Union Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that the Modi 3.0 government has so far approved infrastructure projects worth Rs 9.17 lakh crore.

The Union Cabinet also approved setting up a Rs 1,000 crore venture capital (VC) fund dedicated to the space sector under the aegis of IN-SPACE.

Incomplete Statehood...

restoration, leading to a growing sense of betrayal. "Everyone wanted to contest the elections in the framework of statehood," Karra said, "but that didn't happen. Later, we were expecting that the new government would take the oath under statehood. But again, that didn't happen."

Highlighting the sense of urgency among the people, he added, "The demand for statehood goes beyond political lines. It's a sentiment shared by all in Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of India has no moral, legal, or constitutional right to withhold it anymore."

Karra while speaking about the recent meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and J&K National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said: "I am not sure about the outcome. It has been reported that a resolution passed by the J&K Cabinet was submitted to the Centre, but we do not know the complete contours of the resolution."

When asked if Congress, an alliance partner of the National Conference, had been consulted on the resolu-

tion, Karra responded, "Perhaps they thought it appropriate to proceed in this way. Since we don't have representation in the Cabinet, we were not fully informed about the resolution."

The Congress President of Jammu and Kashmir also commented on the controversy surrounding the allocation of the Deputy Speaker's post in the newly formed Assembly. Initially, reports suggested that the post might go to the Congress, but it was ultimately given to the BJP, which is now the largest opposition party in the Assembly.

Karra clarified that offering the Deputy Speaker's post to the main opposition party is a standard parliamentary practice. "It is a well-established tradition, though not mandated by the Constitution. It reflects good parliamentary practice. However, BJP hasn't followed this tradition consistently, not even in Parliament, which raises concerns about their commitment to democratic norms," he said.

Addressing the absence of Congress ministers in the newly formed government, Karra said, "It's not that we were denied participation. If we were ready to join, they would offer us positions. However, we have taken a principled stand—we will maintain this position until statehood is fully restored."

Karra further admitted the complex political situation in the region, especially with recent unrest. When asked whether the volatile situation could derail the statehood restoration process, he admitted uncertainty. "We are keeping our fingers crossed. There are elements that do not want peace to prevail here. It's troubling that these disturbances started just after the popular government assumed office," he said.

If Gagangeer type...

the incident and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti too, though guardedly. "These incidents need the highest form of condemnation. These are attempts to destabilize the peace and new government in J&K," Koul said. He said that earlier it was Kathua, Reasi and Rajouri where innocents were targeted and now it is Kashmir. "Today also a non-local labourer was injured in Tral which again is highly condemnable," he said.

Replying to a query as to whether there should be talks with Pakistan, Koul said no talks can be held with the neighbouring country unless it hands over militant commanders including Syed Salahuddin to India. "Let Pakistan handover Salahuddin to India, only then talks can happen," he said.

About the possibility of restoration of Article 370, Koul said no government in J&K can bring back the Article 370 back. "There should be no confusion in this," he said.

KVK Anantnag leads strategic initiative to establish Oilseed Model Villages

JI NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, OCTOBER 24

As part of a national mission to reduce India's reliance on edible oil imports, KVK-Anantnag, SKUAST-K has been sanctioned 200 hectares under the establishment of Oilseed Model Villages (OMV) and 50 hectares under the Cluster Frontline Demonstration (CFLD) scheme. This initiative is crucial given that India currently imports 13-15 million metric tons (MMT) of edible oil annually—about 55-60% of its total consumption, which stands at approximately 25 MMT. The edible oil import bill frequently exceeds \$10 billion a year, highlighting the strategic importance of boosting domestic oilseed production under this "Yellow Revolution." Anantnag district, known for having the largest area under Rabi oilseed cultivation in Kashmir, has been identified as a key player in this mission. The KVK has undertaken a comprehensive baseline survey to determine the most suitable areas for oilseed cultivation, with soil samples col-



lected for nutrient analysis to ensure optimal results. As per the national guidelines, 5 clusters—each covering no less than 20 hectares—have been selected for oilseed production. To ensure success, the KVK has developed a Best Technology Module, which includes innovative farming techniques and essential inputs. Thus far, it has distributed 25 quintals of certified seed of the improved variety Shalimar Sarson (SS-2), released by

SKUAST-Kashmir in 2019-20, to 600-700 farm families across 13-15 villages. This is part of a larger technology Module/package aimed at boosting productivity, with each hectare receiving 10 kg of seed. The establishment of these OMVs is a critical part of India's effort to reduce its edible oil imports and attain self-sufficiency, making this mission strategically vital for both the region and the country.

DC reviews progress of work on key infrastructure projects in Bhandarwah

JI NEWS SERVICE
BHADERWAH, OCTOBER 24

Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh on Thursday conducted a detailed inspection of upcoming infrastructure projects in Bhandarwah, including the new library, the work on which is expected to complete by December 2024.

During the visit, he also reviewed the facilities in the old library, assessing the maintenance and implementation of the modernization plan initiated to benefit the local community and students.

The progress of work on the new hotel being constructed by the Municipal Committee Bhandarwah (MCB) was also assessed. The upcoming hotel is expected to foster much needed accommodation for the tourists visiting the region. The project is part of a broader effort to enhance Bhandarwah's tourism infrastructure and promote economic growth.

Later, the DC convened a meeting at Telighar



Resort with key officials, including the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhandarwah, Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bhandarwah Development Authority (BDA), Tehsildar, Executive Engineer of R&B, and Executive Officer of MCB. The meeting focused on discussing ongoing projects, addressing challenges, and ensuring timely completion of the infrastructural works.

The DC also visited the Rehabilitation Centre

Bhandarwah, reviewing the facilities and services provided to individuals in need of support.

The DC emphasized the importance of completing all projects on schedule to meet the growing demands of both residents and tourists in the region. He also directed officials to maintain high standards of quality in construction and rehabilitation efforts, ensuring that these initiatives contribute to the sustainable development of Bhandarwah.

DC Ganderbal reviews Security Scenario in District

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir today convened a high-level meeting at the Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat Ganderbal to review and discuss the security situation in the district.

The meeting addressed various security concerns across the district, and key decisions were made to strengthen security and ensure safety for residents and government establishments.

The DC directed all Heads of Departments (HODs) and executing agencies to install CCTV cameras in all important establishments for enhanced surveillance and security. The Forest Department was specifically instructed to alert their field staff to report any illegal activities in forest areas immediately to the concerned Station House

Officers (SHOs).

The DC emphasized the importance of taking precautionary measures to safeguard key establishments and staff from potential threats. The ACD was asked to ensure that field functionaries report any non-local individuals residing in their respective areas.

Additionally, the ACD, Tehsildars, and Executive Officer Municipality were tasked with installing CCTV surveillance in shops and other establishments.

The Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) was instructed to ensure that all laborers in the district are covered under insurance for their safety and security.

The executing agencies for the Z-Morh and Zojila tunnel projects were directed to enhance security at residential camps by ensuring proper fencing, installing surveillance cameras, and deploying

sufficient guards to provide a secure environment for labourers.

The Tehsildars were also instructed to share real-time information and regularly coordinate with Lumberdars and Chowkidars to monitor any unusual activities within the district.

SSP Ganderbal urged all HODs to promote security awareness within their departments and ensure strict access control in all important offices and establishments. He said that crash training sessions will be provided to private security guards, where necessary, to enhance their preparedness. The meeting was attended by key officials, including SSP Ganderbal, Wasim Qadri; ADDC, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani; ADC, Gulzar Ahmad; ACD, and other district and sectoral officers. Representatives from other security agencies were also present.

Dy. CM Calls for Strict Ban on Illegal Mining in J&K



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, emphasised the need for a complete ban on illegal mining in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing transparency and accountability in harnessing mineral resources to fuel economic growth and public asset development.

During a review meeting at the civil secretariat, Choudhary directed the officers to prioritise ecological concerns while allocating mineral blocks, ensuring preservation of flora and fauna and preventing contamination of water and other natural

resources.

"The government is committed to responsible mining practices, balancing economic development with environmental stewardship," Choudhary stated.

Emphasizing on strict enforcement, Dy CM directed the officers to ensure a complete ban on illegal mining operations. He said that the environmental protection with emphasis on preserving flora and fauna of the region is priority and prime objective of the current dispensation.

He stressed on transparency and accountability for maintaining openness and responsibility in mineral resource manage-

ment. He instructed for initiating efforts towards fostering economic growth while safeguarding natural resources.

He reiterated that the government is dedicated to focus on environmentally conscious policies, aligning with existing regulations and guidelines.

The Deputy Chief Minister's emphasis on responsible mining practices underscores Jammu and Kashmir's determination to sustainable development and environmental protection.

Among others, Commissioner Secretary Industries, Director Mining, MD JK Minerals and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Cultural program by DIPR educates students about drug hazards

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

A Cultural program was today organised by Cultural Unit of Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Jammu at Govt. Middle school, Railway Colony on the theme "Nasha Mukta Bharat and Denge awareness".

Artists of DIPR Cultural Wing participated in the event and presented Folk songs, theme songs and

patriotic songs. Students of the school educated the audience about Denge through their speeches.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest and Headmaster of the school Nishat Akhter shared her views on the topic. She appreciated the Cultural Unit of the Department of Information and Public Relations for organizing such a meaningful program to aware the future of the nation.

3 Day Craft demonstration cum awareness workshop commences at GDC Ramgarh

JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBHA, OCTOBER 24

Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Government Degree College Ramgarh, in collaboration with the Handicrafts Service Centre Jammu Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles- Government of India inaugurated a three-day workshop on "Craft Demonstration cum Awareness Programme" here today on the College Campus.

During the three days, participants will get the opportunity to explore four unique crafts: Decoupage/Clay Art, Pottery Craft, Basholi Painting, and Bamboo Craft.

The sessions are being led by skilled resource persons, including Priya Gupta for Decoupage / Clay Art, Ankit for Pottery, Antima Manhas for Basholi Painting, and Rashpaul for Bamboo Craft. The workshop received an enthusiastic response from the students. Participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques.

The workshop aims to empower participants with hands-on training in popular indigenous crafts including decoupage, pottery craft, Basholi painting, and bamboo craft, enhancing their creativity and entrepreneurial skills. The event was organized under the guidance and supervision of Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra, Principal of the College, with the support of IQAC convener Dr. Aditi Khajuria and faculty members of the college.

The workshop was also attended by Assistant Director Handicrafts Service Centre, Jammu, Ambika Sambyal, who provided insights into the significance of handicrafts in our cultural heritage. The workshop began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, officiated by the Principal of the college, chief guest Ambika Sambyal along with faculty members of the college.

Earlier, Disha from the Handicraft Service Centre introduced the theme of the workshop, focusing on the significance of traditional handicrafts and their preservation.

Welfare of common masses; Govt's prime concern: Rana



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

Several deputations of PHE Workers Welfare Associations (Daily Wagers Wing) of Kashmir province, today called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana and apprised him of their issues and concerns.

A deputation led by the President of PHE Workers Welfare Association and other workers projected the burning issues of daily wage/ temporary employees of the department.

The major demands raised before the Minister included regularization of

all the daily wagers after seven or more than seven years of service, fixation of minimum wage to each category of daily wagers of PHE and adjustment of dependents of deceased daily wagers on humanitarian ground and clearance of pending wages of the workers.

Javed Rana listened to the issues of the PHE workers and assured them that all their genuine grievances would be addressed on priority basis. He reiterated the commitment of Omar Abdullah led Government to work for welfare of common masses including employees of all classes.

KVK hosts Mushroom Cultivation workshop for students of GDC Hiranagar

JI NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, OCTOBER 24

A One day Workshop on mushroom cultivation was organized at Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kathua SKUAST-JAMMU under ARYA-Project. The workshop was organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kathua in collaboration with Govt. G.L.D.M Degree College, Hiranagar.

Total of Forty students participated in the workshop. The students were taken to a field for practical demonstration, where the various stages of compost were being prepared for mushrooms and the turning process was going on. The students very enthusiastically participated in the workshop.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Kathua Dr. Vishal Mahajan, emphasized upon mushroom unit to improve livelihood security of the need youth and adoption of mushroom cultivation as an enterprise based approval for development of Mushroom sector. He elaborated the objective behind organization of the workshop on mushroom cultivation. He also briefed various opportuni-



ties and subsidies given by Government for taking up mushroom cultivation and other allied activities.

Chief Scientist, Plant Protection and CO-PI of ARYA Project Dr. Anamika Jamwal, emphasised upon the scientific methods for cultivations of year round mushroom. She briefed the students about cultivation methods for different types of mushroom like White Button, Dhingri and Milky mushroom. She also discussed health benefits, processing and how to run a mushroom production unit. She elaborated the processes of spawning, casing, pinning and crop-

ping in very interesting way. She also shared her previous experience of working related to mushroom enterprise. The students expressed keen interest and enthusiasm towards the workshop.

Students of Department of Environmental Sciences and Eco Club visited Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kathua for one Day Workshop on Mushroom Cultivation.

Prof. Neeru Sharma from Govt. G.L.D.M Degree College, Hiranagar expressed gratitude to scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra for their joint collaboration in organising

the one day workshop. The programme was attended by Prof. Ganga Sharma and Prof. Tammana Rajput from Govt. G.L.D.M Degree College, Hiranagar.

Other scientists present at the Programme were Dr. Berjesh Ajrawat, Dr Vishal Sharma, Amit Kumar and Sushant Sharma.

The visit was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Pragaya Khanna, esteemed Principal of Govt. G.L.D.M Degree College, Hiranagar. About 40 students attended the workshop and received hands-on training on Mushroom Cultivation.

Power Shutdown

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

According to the Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL, in order to carry out branch cutting / pruning of trees coming under alignment of lines, the shutdown of below mentioned 33KV lines shall be observed which will subsequently affect electricity to given areas.

The shutdown of 33 KV Hatchipora tap line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Station at Hatchipora shall remain off while the power supply to the Hatchipora area will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 26 & 29 of October, 2024.

The shutdown of 33 KV Amargarh-SIDCO line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Gurseer, Rohama, Chakloo, SIDCO and Irrigation shall remain off while the power supply to the Gurseer, Rohama, Chakloo, Sidco and Irrigation areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 03rd of November, 2024. The shutdown of 33 KV LJHP-Boniya line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Nowshera and Boniya shall remain off while the power supply to the Nowshera and

Boniya areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 30th of October, 2024.

The shutdown of 33 KV Sheeri-Malpora-Chandoosa line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Chandoosa, Shurnz, Malpora and Gantamulla shall remain off while the power supply to the Chandoosa, Shurnz Malpora and Gantamulla areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 31st of October, 2024. The shutdown of 33 KV Arampora-Handwara HOT line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Handwara and Chogal shall remain off while the power supply to the Handwara and Chogal areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 28th of October, 2024. The shutdown of 33 KV Gopalpora Pahalgam line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at Hutmurrah, Aishmuqam, Sallar, Pahalgam, Batkoot and Salia shall remain off while the power supply to the Seer, Mattan, Poulter, Hutmurrah, Aishmuqam, Silgam, JNV, Hassannoor, Sallar, Kuller, Kathsoo, Batkoot, Pahalgam, Laddi, Yenner, Salia, Haptnar, Vail Nagbal and Panzmulla areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM on 28 & 30 of October, 2024.

EDITORIAL

A dark shadow looms over Kashmir

The tragic killing of two porters and two soldiers in a terror attack near the Nagin area of Botapathri in Gulmarg's Baramulla district has once again highlighted the precarious situation along the Line of Control (LoC). Thursday's attack on an Army party is not an isolated incident but part of a troubling trend of escalating violence, as the region witnesses yet another spurt in terrorist activities. With the loss of civilian lives and uniformed personnel, the emotional and political stakes rise higher. The need to reassess security strategies and strengthen efforts to combat militancy is more pressing than ever.

This attack, occurring just five days after the massacre in Gagangir, Sonamarg that claimed seven lives, demonstrates how fragile peace in Kashmir remains. The perpetrators of such heinous violence not only target military personnel but also civilians—ordinary porters eking out a living in one of the most difficult terrains. These incidents aim to create a climate of fear, disrupt communal harmony, and frustrate ongoing efforts toward normalization in the region.

Both Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and PDP President Mehbooba Mufti have condemned the attack in unequivocal terms, expressing grief and concern over the recent surge in violence. Their voices, though reflective of political responsibility, are not enough. Mere condemnation of such attacks needs to be accompanied by collective action from both the political leadership and security apparatus.

It is worth noting that attacks along the LoC serve a dual purpose for the perpetrators: to bleed the military forces and to sabotage economic and social stability. The involvement of civilian porters, essential to logistical operations in these remote areas, makes their deaths all the more tragic. These porters are unsung heroes, contributing silently to the operational readiness of the Army, yet they have now become targets of a conflict they have no part in perpetuating.

The security apparatus has launched search operations to apprehend the attackers, but more than reactive measures are needed. Strengthening the intelligence network, involving local communities, and enhancing border vigilance are essential to preventing such incidents in the future. Furthermore, a long-term strategy must involve addressing the roots of militancy through dialogue, employment generation, and developmental initiatives.

At the same time, it is critical to remind all stakeholders that violence is not—and has never been—a solution. For decades, the people of Kashmir have been caught in the crossfire between security forces and militants, their aspirations for peace often overshadowed by recurring violence. The recent attacks threaten to undo the progress made toward stability, and it is imperative that the state and central governments take concerted steps to ensure the safety of civilians and security forces alike.

The soldiers who lost their lives in Botapathri laid down their lives in the line of duty, upholding the values of service and sacrifice. Equally, the civilian porters' deaths serve as a poignant reminder of the indiscriminate nature of violence that engulfs this region. Their loss demands not only justice but also a renewed commitment from the nation to strive for lasting peace in Kashmir.

In moments like these, rhetoric and sympathy must give way to decisive action. As Kashmir mourns these losses, the nation must stand in solidarity with the bereaved families. The path to peace may be fraught with challenges, but it remains the only viable way forward for a region that has witnessed far too much bloodshed. Only through vigilance, dialogue, and sustainable development can Kashmir hope to escape the cycle of violence and reclaim its promise of peace.

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

With the internet and social media, we are constantly being reminded about the wealthiest, the most powerful, very famous, the prettiest, etc. Have you imagined meeting anyone of these personalities except to see them in print or in a video? What about God, who owns everything there is, is omnipotent, is omniscient, is omnipresent and a whole lot more, about which I will write in this article?

God is not only omnipresent but available to us 24x7. Yes, God cannot be seen in person except to the very best of devo-

tees like Sant Tulsidas, but can be seen in Deity forms and in nice photos everywhere. God even manifests in His murti forms like He had in His Rama Lalla form in Ayodhya.

How is Lord helping us by His activities? He listens to all our prayers, and He must respond to them, they being spiritual activities. However, the response will be appropriate at a time chosen by God. Mostly, it won't be as prayed for, because most of the prayers are for material gains, which are undeserved. For example, a student prays for good marks even though he doesn't deserve them. God will give something as God can

never be a debtor. Then, God is ever ready to guide us, as He guided Arjuna by preaching the instructions of the Bhagavad-Geeta. Few pray for guidance but those who do really benefit, because direction is all important. It determines where we will end up. God gives intuitions, uses mediums to convey, etc. God even instructs directly His devotees as He instructed Arjuna.

The third important help God provides is to get us out of troubles, we get into due to our past faulty karmaphalas (results of acts). God does not stop them from coming because that will make the 'Karmaphala Principle' ineffective; God only makes them less painful. Continuing about God's bounties, God empowers us in various ways. For example, a scientist is deep into looking for a solution, which will benefit humanity, and he deserves getting credit for it due to past pious karmaphalas. God gives him the intuition, because God is the only source. We cannot invent or create anything new. All big or important acts are done by God only; He makes the deserving among us 'nimitta' (instruments), just as He used Arjuna to kill the biggest warriors of the Kaurava army (11.33)

God is especially partial to welfare workers, because it suits His Creation. He has promised that doers of welfare acts will not end up badly. (6.40) What this means is that such persons will not suffer a painful death. God goes a step further for His advanced devotees; He does miracles for them. Meerabai was given poison to drink because she chose Lord Krishna as her worshipable Deity. What did the Lord do? He made poison ineffective. How did Lord Krishna save Arjuna - His devotee and friend (4.3), who had sworn to enter fire, if he could not kill Jayadrath before sunset? As soon as Jayadrath came out of hiding Arjuna's immi-

nent death, Lord brought the sunlight back. This allowed Arjuna to kill Jayadrath before sunset. I can go on regarding what all God does and can do for us if we link with Him. And He has made approaching Him very easy. What is so difficult to have 'darshan' of God in His Deity form in a temple? What about chanting God's names? Is it so difficult? It may appear childish but this is the way it has been designed to gain God's favour. Someone may say why is it so easy to get so much cash out of an ATM? Because this is the way it has been designed.

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

Encountering the Divine

AI's impact shines in Nobel Prizes

BKSINGH

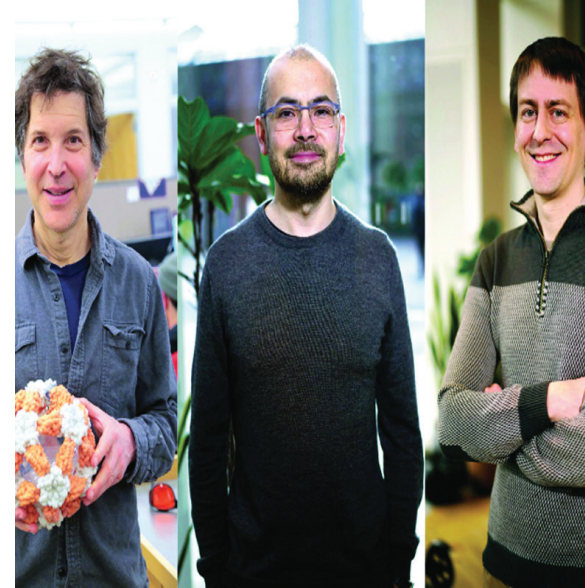
This year's Physics and Chemistry Nobel prizes are linked to Artificial Intelligence. While Physics laureates applied principles and tools of Physics namely atomic spin and Boltzmann's machine to create structures that can store, reconstruct and discover properties in data for artificial neural networks to enable powerful computers to mimic human memory and learning, Chemistry laureates worked on computational protein design that advanced protein structure predictions. In all living creatures, proteins are essential for cell functions. David Baker, a 62-year-old Professor at the University of Washington, Seattle succeeded in building an entirely new kind of Protein, that is known as life's building blocks and comprises 20 different amino acids. Since 2003, he and his research group have created several imaginative proteins that can be used in pharmaceuticals, vaccines, tiny sensors and nanomaterials. He was awarded half the prize money for the 2024 Chemistry Nobel Prize.

In 2020 David Hassabis and John Jumper both Britons aged 49 years and 39 years respectively presented AlphaFold2, an AI model that predicted the structure of Proteins from amino acid sequences. Two Britons were awarded this year's remaining half of the prize. AI model AlphaFold2 has opened ways to predict proteins and has already been used by researchers to predict

nearly 200 million proteins. Research has also advanced in understanding antibiotic resistance and creating enzymes that have the potential to decompose plastics. Proteins are molecular machines of our lives making up a significant portion of bodies i.e. muscles, enzymes, hormones, hair, blood and cartilage.

Proteins' shape determines their function. Different shapes can be folded in numerous ways to arrive at the resultant shapes of protein. Incorrectly folded protein may lead to improper functioning and can be the reason for Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis, and diabetes. As protein's shape is solely based on amino acid sequence, these can manoeuvre into specific shapes duly minimising inter-atomic repulsions among the atoms of amino acids.

In the new era of machine learning laureates have solved the problem by using a large database of experimentally obtained protein structures to train AI and allowed it to learn the principles of folding. The result was AlphaFold2 which predicted three-dimensional structures of proteins. A new nanomaterial was developed in 2016 where up to 120 proteins were spontaneously linked together. In 2021 nanoparticles with protein were developed that were found to imitate the influenza virus which will further help in developing a vaccine for influenza. Vaccines for livestock using the technology have already been successful. Some of the



other developments are the proteins that function as molecular rotors and also the geometrically shaped proteins that can change their shape under external influences.

Such geometrically shaped proteins which are impacted by external influences are quite useful in producing tiny sensors. Many new possibilities for the use of protein in nanotechnology are useful to develop new tools for precise control and manipulation of elements at the nanoscale. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of molecules has been studied and researchers have found how specially modified diamond flakes can be used as nanoscale magnetic field detectors.

These tiny sensors can elucidate the structure of a single organic molecule.

With nanoscale MRI researchers may one day directly image proteins. A 91-year-old Professor at Princeton University, USA John Hopfield and a 76-year-old Professor at University of Toronto,

Canada have been awarded this year's Nobel Prize in Physics. Hopfield created associative memory for storing and recreating images.

Like the structure of the brain, the artificial neural network was created where the brain's neurons were represented by nodes and each of these nodes having different values. A neural network as a system is inspired by how the human brain works, it does the same with data. It takes in information, processes it and makes decisions, learning from experience. Neural network utilises Physics that describes characteristics of any material due to its atomic spin, which makes each atom a tiny magnet. Hopfield described the network as energy in the spin system as in Physics and is trained by finding values for connections between the nodes such that saved images have low energy. When it is fed with incomplete/distorted images it works through the nodes and updates the

values for each in such a way that the energy of the network falls.

The overall state of his network i.e. energy is calculated using a formula that uses all values of the nodes and all strengths of connections between them. When the minimum energy is attained, the corresponding saved image is most like the imperfect image fed in the network. Further improvements have made it possible to save more pictures and to differentiate between them even when they are quite similar.

Using the Hopfield network, Hinton found the Boltzmann machine using tools from statistical Physics - a new network that can learn to recognise a characteristic element in the given data. Researchers use the tool from statistical mechanics to look at the collective behaviour of a large number of particles to determine large-scale microscopic properties like temperature, pressure and magnetisation.

There are different energy states in the model and the material is more likely to exist in the lowest energy state. Boltzmann distribution explains how likely the given state is. It describes the probability of a system being in a particular state - solid, liquid or gas - based on its energy and temperature. Hinton used the tool to solve computing problems in neural networks. Hinton added hidden layers to neural networks allowing machines to analyse data in more sophisticated ways.

The machine is trained by feeding it with examples that are most likely to arise

when it is run. Boltzmann machine can also classify images or create new examples on the pattern it was trained. A trained Boltzmann machine can recognise a familiar trait in information it has not previously seen. Hinton has further developed this work which led to the current explosive development of machine learning. "The laureates' work has already been of greatest benefit. In Physics we use artificial neural networks in vast range of areas, such as developing new materials with specific properties." Says Ellen Moons, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics.

The scientific and academic communities have expressed confusion over how machine learning and artificial neural networks can be aligned with the traditional boundaries of Physics. Nevertheless, the work of Hopfield and Hinton is having a profound impact on the digital age, even if its classification within the Physics domain remains contested.

The laureates' contribution is the brain behind medical imaging systems that detect cancer faster than doctors. Scientists are inventing more and more applications of machine learning and advanced studies in Physics like processing data to discover Higgs particles, searching for exoplanets, and reducing noise in the measurement of gravitational waves from colliding black holes.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests-head of Forest Force-Karnataka; views are personal)

Nobel Prize snub of Rosalind Lee sparks debate on fairness of the system

BIJU DHARMAPALAN

The recent announcement of the Nobel Prize snubbing Rosalind Lee of Nobel Prize who was the first author of the paper that was considered for this year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, while considering her co-worker and husband, Victor Ambros, the corresponding author of the paper for the coveted prize, has reignited discussions about fairness, recognition, and the implications of such decisions on science.

Traditionally, scientific papers list authors in an order that reflects the perceived contribution to the work. The first author typically plays a significant role in conducting the research and writing the paper. In contrast, the last author often represents the senior scientist or principal investigator who guided the research.

Middle authors usually contribute in specific areas but are not as heavily involved as the first or last author. This system has fostered a hierarchy in academia that rewards a select few.

At the same time, many essential team members go unacknowledged, ultimately skewing career advancement, compensation, and visibility in the scientific community. We still follow this flawed authorship order in most recruitments, funding agencies, promotions, awards, and recognitions.

Even for awarding doctoral degrees, our universities follow this order of authorship. It often overlooks a person's intellectual knowledge and technical skills needed for the study.

This bias creates an environment where specific contributors, though not in prominent author positions, have a dimin-

ished chance of recognition and growth, potentially leading to a loss of morale and an outflow of valuable talent from academia and research fields. Many talented and skilled youngsters are not getting good positions because of this flawed protocol in research and academic institutions. In today's world, science cannot be done in isolation.

Most of today's research involves interdisciplinary work collaborating with one or more institutions, and each person involved may contribute to its success. Projects like the Human Genome Project or the Large Hadron Collider involve the contributions of hundreds of scientists from varied institutions across the globe.

Even in our national institutions, outsourcing certain works has become a norm. In that scenario, even the company that does the work has to be



credited, though they may charge for it.

The importance of each contributor extends beyond the experimen-

ters. Data analysts, statisticians, field researchers, technicians, and other support staff often carry out substantial portions

of the work. While their names might not always appear on a paper, they enable discoveries and innovations by ensuring

the research is feasible, accurate and applicable.

In such a framework, reducing credit to a first author or corresponding author model grossly underestimates the collective effort, leading to unfair career advantages for select individuals over others equally deserving. A system that values equal contribution offers a fairer foundation for hiring, promotions, and awards.

This shift would ensure that positions of responsibility and recognition are not limited to those with the resources or negotiating power to secure lead author positions. Moreover, equal credit distribution could improve diversity in science. This approach could also boost diversity by supporting women, early-career researchers, and marginalised groups who are often in middle-author roles due to limited mentorship and systemic

inequities, giving them a better chance at securing resources and opportunities.

Critics may argue that equal weightage could lead to confusion over who contributed most to a particular study, possibly complicating the evaluation process.

To address this, journals should strictly include only those who actively contributed to the study, ending practices of "gift authorship" to the department or the head of the institution. Science thrives on collaboration and equal weightage for all authors in jobs and awards, including consideration for the Nobel Prize, which promotes a culture of inclusivity, fairness, and shared achievement.

(The author is the Dean Academic affairs, at Garden City University and adjunct faculty at NIAS, Bangalore; Views are personal)

MUST IDENTIFY AREAS WITH LOW POLIO VACCINATION COVERAGE: EXPERTS

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Even as India celebrates a decade of being polio-free, it is important to identify areas with low polio vaccination coverage to protect children from the devastating disease, and pave the way for a healthy future, said experts on World Polio Day on Thursday.

World Polio Day is celebrated on October 24 every year to raise awareness about polio -- a viral disease that mainly affects children below the age of five. India has achieved a significant milestone in eradicating polio with the country declared free of polio by the World Health Organization in 2014.

However, polio remains a threat, and the pace of the polio vaccine has also slowed down in India, with the coverage levels being poorest in the north-east, as seen in recent data from the National Family Health



Survey.

This is also reflected in the recent case in August, where a two-year-old child in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district was confirmed to have a case of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV).

Earlier in 2022, an immunodeficiency-related vaccine-derived poliovirus (iVDPV) specimen was detected in Kolkata through routine surveillance, though this did not equate to a case of polio in the area.

"Given the high vac-

ination coverage in India, these detections do not result in increased cases of polio. However, there is concern that if vaccination rates decline, the polio viruses could re-enter the population and cause disease. Therefore, it is crucial to identify areas with low vaccination coverage and take corrective action," Dr. Rajeev Jayadevan, Chairman of the Kerala State IMA Research Cell, told IANS.

"While India has been polio-free for 10 years, we must remain vigilant,

especially with the virus still present in neighbouring countries," said Deepak Kapur, Chairman of Rotary International's India National PolioPlus Committee (RI-INPPC), at an event on Thursday.

"With only two endemic countries remaining -- Pakistan and Afghanistan -- we can finally see the silver lining on the horizon, therefore, keep our focus on immunisation," he added.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), launched in 1988, efficiently reduced over 99.9 per cent polio cases, and also eradicated wild poliovirus (WPV) types 2 and 3.

"India has achieved significant milestones in polio eradication within the duration of the last twenty years. However, the fight is still on as some sensibilities still remain because of: poor healthcare facilities; reluctance to vaccination; and socio-economic factors," Dr.

Parimala V Thirumalesh, Sr. Consultant - Neonatology & Pediatrics, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, told IANS.

Constant improvement in surveillance, vaccination coverage, and community involvement continues to be crucial in the fight against polio which can be transmitted via eating or drinking contaminated substances and lead to partial paralysis and even death.

"We must remain vigilant as challenges persist, particularly in regions where vaccine-derived polio remains a threat. We must innovate and adapt our strategies to reach the most vulnerable populations. Empowering local health workers is vital, as they are key to building trust within communities and addressing vaccine hesitancy," Dr Ritesh Yadav, Consultant, Internal Medicine, Paras Health, Gurugram, told IANS.

Joint action needed to protect children from environmental health risk in Cambodia: Report

AGENCIES
PHNOM PENH, OCT 24

Cambodia released a report on children's environmental health (CEH), highlighting joint action to protect children from environmental health risks.

The CEH report, the first of its kind in the Southeast Asian country, was conducted by the Ministry of Health with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), Xinhua news agency reported.

It highlighted the major environmental health risks that children face, including exposure to air pollution, water and food contamination, heat stress, toxic heavy metals, pesticides, and other hazardous waste, which are exacerbated by climate change.

"Today, we are proud to launch the final report



of the national Children's Environmental Health Assessment, which will guide our efforts. By addressing environmental hazards, we are building a healthier, safer future for our children and future generations," Kol Hero, director of the Preventive Medicine Department at the Ministry of Health, said. He added that ensuring continued progress in maternal and child health is a top priority for the royal government of Cambodia.

Will Parks, the Unicef representative in Cambodia, said children face unprecedented multiple environmental threats

that harm their health and cognitive development.

"Tackling these complex issues requires multilateral cooperation and strong partnerships. By joining forces, we can create healthier environments so every child can thrive and reach their full potential," Parks added.

In Cambodia, it is estimated that nearly one in five deaths among children under 5 is attributable to both indoor and outdoor air pollution and that more than 50 per cent of children under the age of 18 have elevated blood lead levels due to lead exposure, according to Unicef.

Nearly 480,000 children suffering from malnutrition in Kenya

AGENCIES
NAIROBI, OCT 24

Some 479,498 children under the age of five in Kenya's 23 arid areas are facing acute malnutrition and need treatment, the country's National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) said on Thursday.

Although malnutrition cases remain high, the number represents a decline from 760,488 in July, according to NDMA's September update released in Nairobi, Kenya's capital.

"The reduction in cases is attributed to availability of milk albeit in low quantities prioritised for consumption by the under-fives, and consumption of diverse diets due to the slightly elevated purchasing power by households,"



the NDMA said.

The authority said that 110,169 pregnant and breastfeeding mothers are malnourished and in need of care, down from 112,401 in July.

The malnutrition cases stemmed from adverse climate events, low incomes and poor healthcare-seeking behaviour, Xinhua news agency reported.

NDMA also noted that 1 million Kenyans still require humanitarian assistance, a figure that has remained unchanged

since July.

According to the World Health Organisation, as of the end of June, about 10.8 million children and nearly 1 million pregnant and lactating women were acutely malnourished and in need of treatment in the Horn of Africa.

The UN health agency said the crisis was caused by increased conflict and climate disasters, including drought and recent El Nino rains that caused severe flooding, displacing thousands more.

Prolonged exposure to air pollution may be detrimental to brain

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Even as air quality in the national capital continues to be in the 'very poor' category, health experts on Thursday said that prolonged exposure to air pollution may be detrimental to the brain.

According to Central Pollution Control Board data (CPCB), the air quality index (AQI) was 336 at 7.30 a.m. Various monitoring stations across the national capital recorded the air quality in the 'very poor' category -- between 301 and 400.

During the day, the air quality is expected to drop to the 'severe' category at places where the AQI is near 400, as per the CPCB.

A recent study, published in The Lancet Planetary Health, showed short-term air pollution



exposure claimed 33,000 lives annually in 10 cities in India, and Delhi topped the list with 12,000 deaths every year.

Dr PN Renjen, Senior Consultant, Neurology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, told IANS that pollution poses a significant threat to both physical and neurological health.

"Heavy metals like lead and mercury, along with volatile organic compounds, have detrimental effects on brain function.

Neurotoxins from pollution can bypass the blood-brain barrier, triggering inflammation, oxidative stress, and neuronal damage," Renjen said.

"This not only impairs cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and executive functioning but also increases the risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

In addition, pollution increases the risk of cerebral stroke due to neuro-

toxins and oxidative stress, which affect the arteries and contribute to atherosclerosis," the doctor said.

Higher levels of particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) exposure can increase the risk of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, revealed recent studies, published in the JAMA Network Open.

Prolonged exposure to air pollution has also been associated with reduced brain volume, accelerated brain ageing, and higher rates of mental health disorders, including depression and anxiety.

Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable, with studies showing that children exposed to high levels of pollution may experience impaired cognitive development, while older adults face a heightened risk of cognitive decline.

Besides the brain, rising pollution levels can also affect eyes, and skin and lead to respiratory issues.

"Exposure to smoke and particulate matter can cause redness, itching, and tearing in eyes, while increased pollen and pollutants can exacerbate allergies," Dr. Mukesh Mehra, Senior Director-Internal Medicine, Max Super Speciality Hospital told IANS.

Pollutants can also cause skin irritation, breakouts, and allergic reactions. Long-term exposure can also lead to skin damage and premature ageing, trigger asthma attacks and other chronic respiratory diseases, the doctor said.

The experts called on to create a safe indoor environment with air purifiers; use masks while going outside during high pollution levels, and eat healthy.

Indian practice of limiting food waste, more veg diets can mitigate climate change: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Indian sustainable eating habits such as limiting food waste, prioritising vegetarian diets, and consuming locally sourced foods can help address global climate change, a pressing issue worldwide, according to a report.

A recent Living Planet Report by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) showed that food consumption patterns followed by Indians are the most climate-friendly among the G20 nations.

It stated that if people in other countries adopt the Indian diet, the world would need 0.84 per cent of the Earth to support food production by 2050. The food system is one of the major contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Shravani Mali, Consumer Analyst at GlobalData, a data analytics company,



said India has intensified the vegan movement, especially in metropolitan cities in recent years.

"The country's current food consumption practices, emphasises plant-based diets and climate-resilient crops such as millets, which require fewer resources and generate lower emissions compared to meat-heavy diets," Mali said, adding

that, "the transition is also connected to a wider focus on sustainability".

Citing a recent consumer survey by GlobalData, Mali said that 79 per cent of Indians said that the sustainable or environmentally friendly feature is essential while purchasing food and drinks.

"Traditional Indian diets primarily consist of lentils, grains, and

vegetables. These traditional diets, which place an emphasis on seasonal and local produce, are becoming more popular as environmental issues gain more attention. Consequently, with increasing awareness, consumers will look forward to curtailing environmental burdens by adopting traditional dietary practices that prioritise plant-based foods,"

Mali said.

Deepak Nautiyal, Consumer and Retail Commercial Director, APAC and Middle East at GlobalData lauded the government for introducing several initiatives to promote environmentally sustainable practices in the country.

He cited the National Millet Campaign and the International Year of Millets (2023) campaigns rolled out by the government to boost the production and consumption of millets. Millets are an environmentally sustainable source of food and nutrition.

In addition, the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) also aims to improve climate-resilient farming.

Mali said adopting climate-friendly diets, especially Indian sustainable eating habits can be key to address critical global environmental and health challenges.

South Korea launches programme to prioritise critical care at general hospitals

AGENCIES
SEOUL, OCT 24

South Korea's health ministry on Thursday said it has selected eight institutions to launch a programme in which general hospitals will focus more on treating critical patients while referring those with mild symptoms to local hospitals.

According to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, through the programme, the government aims to have critically ill cases take up 70 per cent of total patients treated at general hospitals, up from the current estimate of 50 per cent, Yonhap news agency reported.

The selected hospitals will receive higher compensation for treating patients with critical or rare conditions, it added.

The move is in line



without preconditions to help resolve the prolonged walkout by trainee doctors.

"Dialogue and communication are the first steps to rebuilding trust and the most effective way to tackle ongoing challenges," Second Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo said.

The government earlier decided to raise medical school seats by 1,500 for 2025 as part of its plan to increase the number of students by around 2,000 over the next five years to address the shortage of doctors.

The Korea Medical Association, the country's largest group of doctors, has been demanding that the government scrap the plan to increase medical school seats before they agree to engage in any form of dialogue.

UGANDA CONFIRMS FIRST MPOX DEATH AS INFECTIONS RISE TO 164

AGENCIES
KAMPALA, OCT 23

Uganda on Wednesday confirmed its first death of mpx as the cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed infections hit 164 in the East African country.

Henry Kyobe Bosa, incident commander at Uganda's Ministry of Health, told

Xinhua over the phone on Wednesday that the death was registered in the mid-western district of Masindi, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The patient died in Masindi but was a resident of Hoima. We warned the public about the possibility of deaths occurring. We need to adhere to precau-



tions," the incident commander said.

The latest situation report showed that Kampala, the national capital, recorded 11 new cases in the last 24 hours as of Monday, while at least 84 patients had recovered.

Mpx, also known as monkeypox, is an infectious disease caused by the

monkeypox virus, which spreads through close contact. Symptoms include fever, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, muscle aches, skin rash, and back pain.

In August, the World Health Organisation declared mpx a public health emergency of international concern, high-

lighting its potential for further global transmission.

Authorities in Uganda have intensified preventive measures, including enhanced surveillance, case management, risk communication and community engagement, and public awareness campaigns to curb the spread of the virus.

Conferring classical language status on Pali has ignited spirit of joy, says PM Modi

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the decision to confer Classical Language status on Pali has ignited a spirit of joy among those who believe in the thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha.

In a post on his X handle, the PM expressed gratitude to scholars and monks who took part in a conference on the subject in Colombo.

"Glad that the Indian Government's decision of conferring Classical Language status on Pali has ignited a spirit of joy among those who believe in the thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha. Grateful to the scholars and monks who took part in this programme in Colombo," PM Modi said in the post.

Buddhist scholars and monks from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh participated in a programme in Colombo where they welcomed



India's recent decision to recognise Pali as a classical language.

The Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), the cultural arm of the High Commission of India, organised the panel discussion on 'Pali as a Classical Language' in the Sri Lankan capital. Deputy High Commissioner of India, Dr Satyanjal Pandey

graced the event with Ranjith Ariyaratne, Secretary of the Ministry of Buddha Sasana, Religious and Cul-

tural Affairs, National Integration, Social Security, and Mass Media, Government of Sri Lanka, as the Chief Guest.

A media release from the High Commission said the speakers focused on the importance of Pali language particularly in the impartation of the teachings of Lord Buddha. The Sri Lankan scholars commended the milestone decision by the Government of India to recognise Pali as a classical language

and praised this initiative, highlighting it as a reflection of India's deep commitment to preserving and propagating Buddhist heritage and culture.

The panellists also pointed out that recognising Pali as a classical language by the Government of India will open up avenues for further collaborations for research in the language by the monastic and academic communities of India and Sri Lanka. The event saw several

monks and scholars in attendance, including from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal.

Reinforcing the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at International Abhidharma Divas on October 17, the discussions emphasised that granting Pali classical language status would help maintain the purity of Buddha's message of peace, compassion, and human welfare, ensuring its transmission through generations.

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi recently approved to confer the status of Classical Language to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali languages.

The Classical Languages serve as a custodian of India's profound and ancient cultural heritage, embodying the essence of each community's historical and cultural milestone. This recognition highlights Pali's literary importance and India's commitment to preserving its linguistic heritage.

All INDIA bloc candidates to fight UP bypolls on 'cycle' symbol: Akhilesh Yadav

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, OCT 24



Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav has said that the candidates of the INDIA bloc are set to contest all nine Assembly seats in the upcoming bypolls in the state on his party's election symbol, 'cycle'.

He claimed that the opposition bloc's pursuit of victory, not any seat-sharing calculations, guided its decision.

"Congress and the Samajwadi Party are united and stand shoulder to shoulder for a big victory. The INDIA bloc is going to write a new chapter of victory in this by-election," Yadav said in a post on X.

"With this unprecedented cooperation and support, every worker of 'INDIA bloc' on all nine Assembly seats is filled with new energy with the resolve to win," he added.

"It is not about seats but about winning. Under this strategy, the joint candidates of the INDIA bloc will contest all the nine

seats on the Samajwadi Party's election symbol 'cycle'."

"Congress and Samajwadi Party are united and standing shoulder to shoulder for a big victory. INDIA bloc is going to write a new chapter of victory in the Uttar Pradesh by-election, the SP President wrote on X.

"Samajwadi Party's strength has increased manifold with the support of Congress party's top leadership and booth level workers. With this unprecedented cooperation and support, every worker of the INDIA bloc in all the 9 Assembly seats has been filled with new energy with the resolve to win."

"This is an election to save the country's consti-

tion, harmony and the honour of the PDA. That is why our appeal to everyone is: not even a single vote should be reduced, not even a single vote should be divided," Yadav further wrote on X.

This unity and solidarity of the INDIA bloc filled with harmony in the interest of the country will write new history today and tomorrow as well, he added.

Speaking about the Uttar Pradesh bypolls, the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister asserted that the upcoming election will be fought for the protection of the country's Constitution, peace, and the honour of "Pichchde (backwards), Dalit and Alpsankhyak (Minorities)".

Himachal CM seeks Centre's assistance for developing tourist destinations, ropeway projects

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu on Thursday sought central assistance for developing tourist destinations and developing roads, bridges and ropeway projects.

At a meeting with Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat here, the Chief Minister sought support to develop new and integrated tourist destinations. He also asked the Union Minister to support the state under special central-assistance schemes.

He said the detailed project report (DPRs) would be submitted to the government of India in a couple of weeks. He sought support to con-



struct a wellness centre-health resort at Dehra in Kangra district and an integrated tourism complex at Auhar in Bilaspur district.

Sukhu said the state government was promoting water sports in a big way, adding the Pong Dam and Bhakra Dam had huge potential.

The Chief Minister said Himachal Pradesh was committed to sustainable development and promotion of tourism in the state.

The emphasis was being laid on developing infrastructure and improving connectivity to facilitate high-end tourists.

He said the state has been developing heliports to connect all district headquarters, besides expanding the Kangra airport. "The state is also envisaging to develop new tourist destinations for expansion of tourism."

He urged the Union Minister to support and fund the state for constructing golf courses in the state.

At a separate meeting with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, the Chief Minister held discussions on roads, bridges and ropeway projects and sought liberal central assistance and support.

The Chief Minister submitted a proposal for constructing four new road projects to the Union Minister, an official statement said.

He also suggested that the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) should explore the possibility of tunnelling wherever feasible as it would reduce the maintenance cost.

Sukhu requested for review of the realignment of the Solan-Parwanoo road and urged for considering the preparation of a new detailed project report (DPR), keeping in view many blind spots and curves that result in accidents.

He also requested for four-laning of left-out portions of the Shimla-Mataur national highway.

Centre clears appointment of three additional judges in Andhra Pradesh HC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Acting swiftly on the recommendations made by the CJI D.Y. Chandrachud-led Supreme Court Collegium, the Centre on Thursday cleared the appointment of three additional judges in Andhra Pradesh High Court.

In a post on X, Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal announced that President Droupadi Murmu was pleased to appoint advocates R. Maheswara Rao Kuncham @ Kuncham, Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T.C.D. Sekhar, and Challa Gunaranjan as additional judges of Andhra Pradesh HC.

Last week, the Supreme Court Collegium, headed



by CJI Chandrachud, had recommended the elevation of three advocates as judges in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The recommendation for the appointment was made in May this year by a Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues.

The SC Collegium said that advocate Kuncham,

who appeared/argued in 136 reported judgments, has a good practice at the Bar. "All the four consultee-judges have given a positive opinion on the suitability of the candidate for appointment as a Judge of the High Court," it noted.

Advocate Sekhar has a practice of more than 25 years in civil, criminal, constitutional, and tax-

ation cases with specialisation in taxation, revenue laws, land acquisition and civil law, said the apex court Collegium, adding that the inputs provided in the file indicate his professional competence to be good and nothing adverse has come to notice with regard to his integrity. In relation to advocate Gunaranjan, the SC Collegium said that he has an extensive practice which is reflected in his professional income of Rs 71.74 lakh per annum and 129 reported judgments delivered in the cases in which he argued. Further, it said: "All the four consultee-judges have given a positive opinion on the suitability of the candidate for appointment as a Judge of the High Court."

Previous govts didn't develop infra to prevent tragedies during heavy rain: Siddaramaiah

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, OCT 24

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah claimed on Thursday that the previous governments in the state have not developed infrastructure to prevent tragedies in case of downpours.

Siddaramaiah's comment came in response to the BJP and JD-S criticism of his government's handling of infrastructure in the state.

"Making allegations is easy. Did tragedies like this not occur when they were in power?" he maintained.

This time the Yelahanka locality in Bengaluru received 170 mm of rain, the first time in 125 years.

"We are not evading responsibility as heavy

rain has occurred. The government should have the capability to deal with any circumstances and tragedies. We can't express our inability," he said.

More than 1,000 families were shifted from the Kendriya Vihar Apartment and rescue programmes were taking place, he said.

"I had directed the BBMP to clear the storm-water drains. Now also, I have issued directions. We will take loans and set them right. We are taking a Rs 3,000 crore loan for disaster management in Bengaluru," Siddaramaiah said.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar said Bengaluru and Yelahanka have not seen such unprecedented rainfall in the last 120 years.

Setback to Akali Dal ahead of bypoll in Punjab, four-time MLA Thandal joins BJP

AGENCIES
CHANDIGARH, OCT 24

In a setback to the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) ahead of the bypoll to four Punjab Assembly seats on November 13, its former minister and four-time legislator Sohan Thandal on Thursday joined the BJP in the presence of former Gujarat Chief Minister and Punjab party in charge Vijay Rupani.

Thandal may be fielded from the Chabbewal (reserved) seat. Thandal was believed to be the Akali Dal candidate for this seat, but there was no clear picture of whether the party would contest the bypoll or not. With the induction of Thandal, the BJP has managed to get a 'panthic' face.

Amidst his joining, speculations are also rife that former Union Minister Vijay Sampla may be

fielded by the BJP from this seat.

Thandal had unsuccessfully contested the 2024 Lok Sabha poll from Hoshiarpur parliamentary constituency (reserved) on an Akali Dal ticket. He had won the 2012 Assembly poll from Chabbewal. But was unsuccessful in the 2017 and 2022 Assembly elections.

The BJP on Tuesday named three candidates, including former Minister Manpreet Badal, for the bypolls.

Former Finance Minister Badal has been fielded from his stronghold Gidderbaha. Ravi Karan Singh Kahlon will contest from Dera Baba Nanak and Kewal Singh Dhillon from Barnala.

Badal had been elected from Gidderbaha on Shiromani Akali Dal's ticket four times -- 1995, 1997, 2002 and 2007. He won



from Bathinda (Urban) in 2017 on a Congress ticket. However, he lost this seat in 2022 polls.

Earlier, the state ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), released the list of candidates.

From Gidderbaha, the party fielded Hardeep Singh Dhillon, who recently quit the Shiromani Akali Dal and joined AAP. Dhillon was inducted into the party by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Harinder Singh Dhali-

wal and Gurdeep Singh Randhawa have been fielded from Barnala and Dera Baba Nanak, respectively. Dhaliwal is a close confidant of Sangrur MP Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, while Randhawa is the party's constituency in-charge of Dera Baba Nanak.

For the Chabbewal seat, the party fielded Ishaan Chabbewal.

The four Assembly seats -- three represented by the Congress and one by AAP -- fell vacant after MLAs from these constituencies

were elected to the Lok Sabha this year.

Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, the Congress legislator from Gidderbaha, was elected from the Ludhiana parliamentary seat, while Raj Kumar Chabbewal, a Congress MLA who later switched loyalties to AAP, became MP from the Hoshiarpur Lok Sabha seat.

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who was a Congress legislator from the Dera Baba Nanak seat, was elected from the Gurdaspur parliamentary seat, while Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, the AAP legislator from Barnala, was elected as MP from the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat.

The Congress fielded Warring's wife Amrita Warring from Gidderbaha, while Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa's wife Jatinder Kaur from Dera Baba Nanak,

Ranjit Kumar from Chabbewal and Kuldeep Singh Dhillon from Barnala.

Punjab Chief Electoral Officer Sabin C. said the last date for filing nominations is October 25 and the scrutiny of nomination papers will be conducted on October 28, while the last date for withdrawal of candidature is October 30.

He said the number of voters in the four constituencies is 6,96,316, with a total of 831 polling stations.

For Dera Baba Nanak, there are 1,93,268 voters and 241 polling stations. In Chabbewal, the number of voters is 1,59,254, with 205 polling stations.

For Gidderbaha, the total number of voters is 1,66,489, and 173 polling stations will be established. The Barnala Assembly seat has 1,77,305 voters and 212 polling stations.

Himanta accuses Hemant Soren of betraying Jharkhand, lying in name of his father

AGENCIES
RANCHI, OCT 24

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma mounted a sharp attack on Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, accusing him of deceiving the people by swearing falsely in the name of his father, Shibu

Soren. Speaking at an election rally in Jamshedpur on Thursday in support of NDA candidates, Sarma remarked, "Hemant Soren is the only leader in the country who has lied in his father's name."

Sarma criticised Soren for making grand prom-

ises during the previous election campaign, such as providing five lakh jobs for the youth, unemployment allowances of Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 per month, and Rs 2,000 monthly 'stove allowances' for women, but failed to deliver on any of them.

He said, "The youth have no future under the Hemant

Soren government. Every time exams like CGL are held, the papers are sold for money."

Sarma further alleged that Hemant Soren and Minister Banna Gupta have obstructed the smooth conduct of competitive exams in Jharkhand. He vowed that if the BJP forms the

next government, its first Cabinet meeting would initiate a CBI enquiry into the JSSC-CGL exam scam.

"Those responsible for leaking exam papers during the JMM-Congress regime will face severe consequences under a BJP government," he asserted.

Talking about rising

crime and violence against women in the state, Sarma claimed, "Jharkhand has seen the highest number of murders of women in the last five years, and the honour of daughters has been violated. The state ranks number one in crimes against women under the current government of infil-

trators, mafia, and brokers."

Outlining the BJP's vision for the state, Sarma spoke of the party's "panch pranas (five vows)" for governance. "Once in power, our first Cabinet meeting will approve the 'Gogo Didi' scheme, which will provide Rs 2,100 monthly to women. We also promise

to create 1.5 lakh jobs every year," he said.

Sarma expressed confidence that the BJP, in alliance with the Janata Dal United (JD-U), AJSU Party, and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), would win the upcoming elections and form the next government in Jharkhand.

'Widespread anxiety' that West Asia conflict would spread further: EAM Jaishankar

AGENCIES
KAZAN, OCT 24

Expressing concerns over the situation in Middle East and West Asia, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Thursday said that there remains a "widespread anxiety" that the ongoing conflict would spread further in the region.

"The situation in the Middle East, West Asia for us, is an understandable concern. There is a widespread anxiety that the conflict would spread further in the region. Maritime trade has also been deeply affected. The human and material consequences of further escalation are truly serious. Any approach has to be fair and durable, leading to a two-state solution," the EAM said at the BRICS Outreach session in Kazan.

Representing Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the segment, Jaishankar



emphasised that conflicts and tensions have to be handled effectively.

"Prime Minister Modi has emphasised that this is not an era of war. Disputes and differences must be settled by dialogue and diplomacy. Agreements, once reached, must be scrupulously respected. International law should be adhered to, without exception. And there should be zero tolerance for terrorism," he said.

Citing that as the old order changes while ineq-

uities of the past continue, the EAM mentioned that BRICS is a statement in itself and can make a real difference.

He made five key points to ensure that the benefits of change reach those who are currently left behind and a more equitable global order is created.

It included strengthening and expanding platforms of an independent nature to widen choices and avoid being leveraged; Reforming established institutions and

mechanisms, especially the UN Security Council in the permanent and non-permanent categories; Democratizing the global economy through creating more production hubs to build resilient, redundant and shorter supply chains; Correct distortions in global infrastructure through connectivity options that enhance logistics and mitigate risks; and, sharing experiences and new initiatives that hold relevance and are of common interest.

"India's Digital Public Infrastructure, its Unified Payments Interface and the Gati Shakti infrastructure, all hold a larger relevance.

The International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, the Global Biofuel Alliance, Mission LIFE and the International Big Cat Alliance are similarly initiatives of common interest. As a First Responder, be it for natural calamities, health emergencies or economic crises, we seek to do our fair share," he mentioned.

The plenary session of the 16th BRICS summit in the outreach/BRICS-plus format on Friday was attended by leaders of the CIS countries, delegations from Asian, African, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, as well as heads of executive bodies of a number of international organisations.

3,000 N.Korean troops sent to Russia this month: White House official

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, OCT 24

North Korea sent at least 3,000 troops to eastern Russia earlier this month, a White House official confirmed, raising a "highly concerning" probability that they could engage in combat to support Russia's war in Ukraine after finishing training.

National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby offered the US' assessment that Pyongyang moved those troops to Russia by ship during a period from early- to mid-October, but stressed that Washington does not yet know what the troops' mission is, Yonhap news agency reported.

The official also warned that should North Korean troops deploy to fight against Ukrainian forces, they could become "fair targets," and that there could be casualties among them.

"We assess that these soldiers travelled by ship

from the Wonsan area in North Korea to Vladivostok, Russia. These soldiers then travelled onward to multiple Russian military training sites in eastern Russia where they are currently undergoing training," Kirby told a press briefing on Wednesday, referring to the North's eastern coastal city and Russia's Far Eastern city. "We do not yet know whether these soldiers will enter into combat alongside the Russian military, but this is certainly a highly concerning probability. After completing training, these soldiers could travel to western Russia and then engage in combat against the Ukrainian military," he added.

Kirby noted that the North Korean soldiers in point are currently getting basic combat and familiarisation training at three Russian sites. The US analysis meshes with the assessment by Seoul's key intelligence agency that about 3,000

North Korean soldiers were thought to have been sent to Russia, with a total of 10,000 troops expected to be deployed by December.

In the coming days, Washington plans to announce a "significant" sanctions tranche targeting the enablers of Russia's war in Ukraine located outside of Russia, Kirby stressed.

"Russia's cooperation with the North Korean military violates multiple UN Security Council resolutions, which prohibit the procurement of arms from North Korea and military arms training," he said.

"This move is likewise a violation."

The official pointed out that if Russia is forced to turn to North Korea for military manpower, it would demonstrate an "unprecedented" level of direct military cooperation between the two countries with security implications for Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Turkish air force destroys 32 PKK targets in Syria, Iraq - Reports

AGENCIES
ISTANBUL, OCT 24

The Turkish air force destroyed at least 32 "terrorist" targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Syria and Iraq on Wednesday, the TRT Haber broadcaster reported, citing the Turkish Defense Ministry.

On Wednesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that four people had been killed in an attack on state-run aerospace company TUSAS.

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said hours later that the death toll had been revised up to five, with 22 others

reported injured. Turkish authorities reportedly believe that the terrorist attack was most likely carried out by PKK members.

The report noted that as a result of the strikes, a large number of PKK militants were eliminated.

The armed conflict between the PKK and Turkey began in 1984 and reignited in 2015. The organization, which seeks the creation of an independent Kurdish state, including on Turkish territory, has established bases in northern Syria and Iraq, where the Turkish military has been targeting them with land and air strikes.

LARGE TURNOUT FOR EARLY VOTERS IN US SWING STATE GEORGIA; FOCUS ON ECONOMY, PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

AGENCIES
ATLANTA, OCT 24

Early votes hit a record high in the US major battleground state of Georgia as a big proportion of voters have already made up their minds on key issues and who to vote for.

As many as 2.15 million, among 7.2 million active voters in total, have cast their ballots in the Peach State's early voting as of Wednesday, according to data issued by the Election Lab with the University of Florida as well as the Georgia Secretary of State, Xinhua reported.

Georgia also saw a record turnout of voters on the first day of early voting, which lasts from October 15 to November 1, shortly before the general

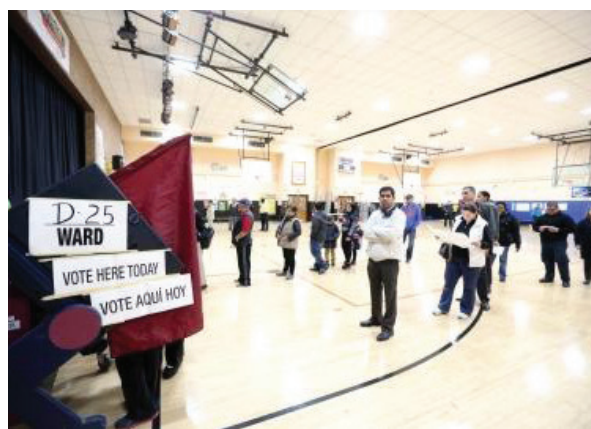
election is held on November 5.

Though voters' first priorities vary, especially between urban and rural people, the cost of living is seen as the most common concern in the voters' minds.

Sedrick Hamner, an African American from the College Park area in the southwest of Atlanta city, said that he cast his vote in support of the candidate who hopefully is going to promote democracy.

Still, kitchen table issues such as inflation, taxes, prices of goods and wages are vitally important, said Hamner, a pastor who voted on Tuesday.

"I used to be middle class, perhaps. Now, I'm probably closer to the lower class just due to



inflation," said Hamner, adding that the US dollar doesn't go as far as it used to go while wages have been stagnant.

He was not able to eat out or go travelling as much as he used to due to the expenses, he said.

Nancy Goude, a voter from Molena, a town

around 100 km south of Atlanta, told Xinhua on Wednesday that her change jars were not as full as a few years ago because she no longer has spare change. "It takes everything we have to survive," she said.

Goude added she would like her grandchildren to

have opportunities like she herself and her children had enjoyed. She said that everybody in her family has voted and she herself voted early this year. Romy Goldman, a resident from Buckhead, Atlanta, said that her main considerations were electing someone who's good for the country, and someone who believes in human rights and women's rights.

Goldman told Xinhua that she had made her decision on who to vote for early on and had voted early so she could take part in volunteer work in this year's election cycle.

George Pilibosian, a retired businessman who voted on Tuesday inside Buckhead Library, said that people's rights to take

care of their own bodies are important.

"The government should not tell us what to do with our own bodies, whether you're a woman or a man," said Pilibosian.

John Duncan, a retired painter from La Grange, a city which is about 112.6 km southwest of Atlanta, said the US priority should be to secure the border as people cannot go out and enjoy themselves as they could back in 2020.

Duncan said that the new President should get the economy straightened out so that people can buy food for their families.

"I have a family of six. It costs me a good 120 (dollars) a day to feed my family. That's hard to do when you are retired," Duncan said.

Sri Lanka on high alert after intelligence info on potential terror attack targeting foreigners

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, OCT 24

Sri Lankan Foreign and Public Security Minister Vijitha Herath revealed on Thursday that three suspects have been arrested in connection with the security threats to Israeli nationals in the Arugam Bay area of the island nation's Eastern Province.

The action follows after several countries have issued travel alerts over the past 24 hours considering intelligence information received about a possible terror attack targeting foreigners, especially Israelis, across popular tourist locations in coastal Sri Lanka.

Some reports cited that

the intelligence has been provided by India, like it was also reportedly done before the horrific 2019 Easter Sunday bombings which the Lankan security agencies had failed to act on in time.

The suspects, all Sri Lankan nationals, caught on Thursday are currently being questioned regarding the incident, Herath said at a special media briefing.

"Minister Herath said Sri Lankan authorities received intelligence information from foreign intelligence services about a potential attack on Israeli nationals earlier this month. He said that similar information had also been received by the authori-

ties during the previous government," Sri Lanka's Daily Mirror reported.

He asserted that the new government didn't inform the public until the information was confirmed, but took security measures as soon as the information was received.

Herath also urged the public not to fall victim to misleading reports and assured that comprehensive security measures are in place to protect tourists.

On Wednesday, the United States issued a security alert, strongly advising US citizens of a potential attack on tourist locations in a coastal area of Sri Lanka.

"The Embassy received credible information warn-

ing of an attack targeting popular tourist locations in the Arugam Bay area. Due to the serious risk posed by this threat, the Embassy imposed a travel restriction on Embassy personnel for Arugam Bay effective immediately and until further notice. US citizens are strongly urged to avoid the Arugam Bay area until further notice," stated the US Embassy in Colombo.

Similarly, Israel's National Security Council (NSC) called on Israeli citizens to immediately leave Arugam Bay and the south and west coastal areas of Sri Lanka.

The NSC said that it has raised the travel alert level for Sri Lanka due to "cred-

ible terrorism threats" at the tourist and coastal areas.

"The travel alert for Arugam Bay and the coastal areas in south and west Sri Lanka (including for the cities Ahangame, Galle, Hikkaduwa and Weligama) has been raised to level 4. We recommend leaving these areas immediately. For those currently in these areas, we recommend leaving the country or at least traveling to the capital city Colombo, where there is a heavier presence of local security forces," the NSC alert detailed.

"For the rest of Sri Lanka, the travel warning has been raised to level 3, and we recommend that

Israelis planning to travel to Sri Lanka delay any non-necessary trips to the country. If you do travel to Sri Lanka, avoid the areas for which level-4 travel alerts have been issued," it added. Australia too asked its citizens in Sri Lanka to "exercise a high degree of caution".

"There is an ongoing risk of terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. Terrorists may target areas popular with foreigners and tourists, including in regional and coastal towns. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East could lead to an increased threat of attacks against Israeli interests in other regions," it mentioned.

Lankan Daily 'The Daily Mirror' revealed that a

building in Arugam Bay, which had been converted into a 'Chabad House' by the Israeli nationals could have been a potential target.

"The elite STF officers had taken control of the security situation and continue to be stationed to date. It was learnt that STF had also kept bomb squads standby for any emergency," it reported on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka remains on high alert even as it continues to investigate the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks carried out by the ISIS-backed suicide bombers that killed 270 people, including 45 foreign nationals and injured over 500.

In June, former Lankan

President Ranil Wickremesinghe had appointed a Committee of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate the actions taken by Lankan intelligence services on the prior information received from their Indian counterparts regarding the Easter Sunday bombings.

Weeks before the coordinated bomb attacks on three churches and several hotels, the Indian intelligence agencies had reportedly alerted their Lankan counterparts about the Islamic State's plan to carry out such suicide missions. Last month, the country's newly-elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake had promised to thoroughly investigate the entire episode.

China, Japan hold high-level consultations on maritime affairs in Tokyo

AGENCIES
TOKYO, OCT 24

China and Japan held the 17th round of high-level consultations on maritime affairs in Tokyo, exchanging in-depth views on maritime affairs and agreeing to make the East China Sea a sea of peace, cooperation and friendship. Director-General of the Department of Boundary & Ocean Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Hong Liang and Direc-

tor-General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry Hiroyuki Namazu co-chaired the 17th round of consultations of the High-level Consultation Mechanism on Maritime Affairs between China and Japan on Wednesday. Representatives of the departments related to maritime affairs from the two countries were present. This round of consultations saw a plenary meeting and three

working group meetings on maritime defence, maritime law enforcement and security, and the marine economy, Xinhua reported. China elaborated on its position on issues related to the East China Sea, Diaoyu Dao, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Straits, among others, and urged Japan to respect China's territory, sovereignty and security concerns, and to take practical actions to promote the improvement

and development of China-Japan relations. The two sides agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, continue to maintain close communication on maritime affairs, properly manage and control differences, strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, and make positive efforts to build the East China Sea into a sea of peace, cooperation & friendship.

Bangladesh interim govt bans student wing of ex-PM Sheikh Hasina's party

AGENCIES
DHAKA, OCT 24

The Bangladesh interim government has banned Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student organisation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's party Awami League, after a demand by a student group that led the July-August uprising under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009. The government, under the powers pro-



vided in sub-section (1) of Section 18 of the "Anti-Terrorism Act 2009", banned Bangladesh Awami League's fraternal organisation "Bangladesh Chhatra League", said the Bangladesh Home Ministry in an official notification.

"At various times since the independence of Bangladesh, especially during the last 15 years of dictatorial rule, the Bangladesh Chhatra League, the fraternal organisation of Bangladesh Awami League, has been involved in various public security-related activities including killings, torture, harassment in common rooms, trading of seats in dormitories, gangs, rape, and sexual harassment," said

an order issued by Bangladesh Home Ministry.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, the group led to oust Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, announced five-point demands, including the resignation of Bangladesh President, Mohammed Shahabuddin.

The demands also included banning Awami League's student organisation, Bangladesh Chhatra League.

Govt working tirelessly to create conducive innovation ecosystem for startups: Minister

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The government has been working tirelessly under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to create an ecosystem that is conducive to growth of businesses and, in particular, startups, Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, said on Thursday.

Speaking at an event during the 'ITU-WTSA 2024' in the national capital, the minister said "we are at a pivotal point where emerging technologies are converging and laying the foundation of a new world". Since the launch of "Startup India, Standup India" initiative in 2015, India has emerged as the third largest ecosystem for startups globally, with over 1.12 lakh government-



recognised startups.

"The academic research and startups are solving problems in diverse industrial sectors. The Bharat 6G Alliance, a vital platform uniting industry leaders, academia, startups and government, is set to drive 6G innova-

tion, guided by the vision of 'Innovate in India, for India and the World,'" said the minister.

He advised youngsters to start small but think big and act now. "You don't need all the resources in the world to begin - just conviction. Many waits for

perfect conditions or significant funding, but the best time to start is now. Action creates momentum, and momentum fuels success," Dr Pemmasani told the gathering at the 'Innovation Xchange' event.

Madhu Arora, Member

Technology, Digital Communications Commission, Department of Telecommunications, urged ITU to collaborate with India in areas like 5G intelligent villages and AI-led 'Digital Twins' technology.

Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU, said it is important to remember that people decided to innovate because they wanted to improve the quality of life and open new doors of opportunities and choice.

"Technology is just a means to an end. I call upon everyone in the development sector to work towards unmasking technology and showing its human impact. This includes coordinating food supply, medication, and shelter to save humanity," he noted.

Adani Group's ACC Ltd clocks highest quarterly revenue at Rs 4,614 crore in Q2

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, OCT 24

Cement and building materials leader ACC Ltd, part of the diversified Adani Group, on Thursday reported the highest quarterly revenue at Rs 4,614 crore, up 4 per cent (year-on-year).

The company clocked volume growth of 15 per cent (year-on-year), at 9.3 million tonnes - the highest volume in Q2 series in the last 5 years.

Operating EBITDA was at Rs 436 crore while net worth increased to Rs 16,725 crore, according to ACC Ltd, a subsidiary of Ambuja Cements.

"Our performance in Q2 reinforces our standing as a frontrunner in the cement industry. Our financial results this quarter - fuelled by higher volumes, cost optimisation, increasing efficiencies, and agility -

build the momentum for our growth strategy for FY25 and beyond," ACC Ltd Whole Time Director and CEO Ajay Kapur said.

"Our growth is being driven by robust demand for high-quality cement products across all markets, as well as our continuous efforts to optimise operations and lead on all ESG parameters," he added.

Overall, the cement industry expects an improvement in demand in H2 FY25, which is likely to be driven by the post-monsoon pickup in construction and housing activity.

The government's continued focus on infrastructure development - roads, highways, railways, and metros - will continue to remain the key demand driver.

"We expect cement demand to register growth

of 4-5 per cent during FY 25," said the company.

"Our leadership status is highlighted in our drive for operational excellence supported by innovation, sustainability, and a customer-centric approach. We continue to deliver strong value for our stakeholders as we aim for sustained profitability through our competitive advantage."

In Q1 FY25, the cement and building materials leader reported sustainable performance with an operating EBITDA of Rs 679 crore. Ambuja and ACC are the only two cement companies in India undergoing net zero target validation from the Science Based Targets initiative.

"We continue to deliver strong value for our stakeholders as we aim for sustained profitability through our competitive advantage," said Kapur.

Yotta Data Services, Nvidia introduce 6 new AI platform services for Indian firms

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, OCT 24

Yotta Data Services on Thursday unveiled six artificial intelligence (AI) platform services, in collaboration with global graphics giant Nvidia, under its 'Shakti Cloud' platform to accelerate AI adoption for businesses, researchers, and innovators by offering state-of-the-art capabilities at competitive prices.

Announced during the 'Nvidia AI Summit' in Mumbai, these AI models will be available through a token-based system and GPU seconds model, making AI more accessible

for various industries. "The future of AI is about speed, flexibility, and scalability. With Yotta's AI solutions built with Nvidia technology, we're eliminating barriers and enabling organisations to push the boundaries of what's possible in AI," said Sunil Gupta, Co-founder, CEO and MD of Yotta.

'Shakti Cloud' features an advanced orchestration layer and a self-service portal, integrating the Nvidia AI Enterprise software platform along with various open-source software and libraries.

With access to Nvidia GPUs, Indian AI innova-

tors now have a world-class solution in 'Shakti Cloud' to achieve their AI goals within the country itself.

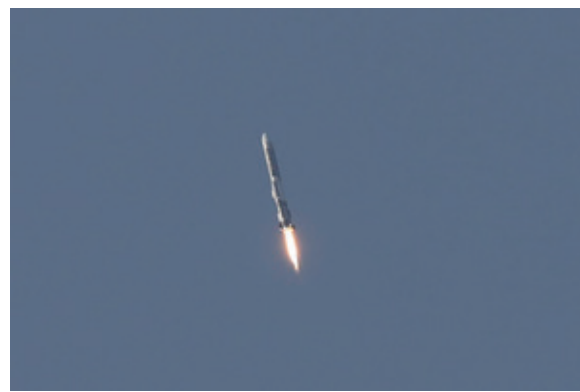
"The combination of Nvidia's cutting-edge technology with Yotta's Shakti Cloud platform delivers a comprehensive ecosystem that democratises AI development, enabling businesses, researchers, and startups to rapidly create and deploy advanced AI solutions that drive innovation and economic growth throughout the country," said Raj Mipuri, vice president, Enterprise and Cloud, Nvidia.

Cabinet approves Rs 1,000 crore VC fund to propel space sector, boost employment

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday approved the setting up of a Rs 1,000 crore venture capital (VC) fund dedicated to the growing space sector.

The deployment period of the proposed VC fund, under the aegis of IN-SPACE, is planned to be up to five years from the actual date of the start of the fund operations. The proposed fund is expected to boost employment in the Indian space sector by supporting startups across the entire space supply chain. The average deployment amount



could be Rs 150-250 crore per year, depending on the investment opportunities and fund requirements, said the Cabinet.

According to the government, the indicative range of investment is proposed to be Rs 10-Rs 60 crore, depending upon

the stage of the company, its growth trajectory, and its potential impact on national space capabilities. Indicative equity investment range could be at Rs 10 crore-Rs 30 crore for the growth stage and at Rs 30 crore-Rs 60 crore for the late growth stage.

"Based on the above investment range, the fund is expected to support approximately 40 startups," said the Cabinet.

As part of its 2020 space sector reforms, the government established IN-SPACE to promote and oversee private sector participation in space activities. IN-SPACE proposed a Rs 1,000 crore VC fund to support the growth of the space economy, currently valued at \$8.4 billion, with a target to reach \$44 billion by 2033.

With nearly 250 space startups emerging across the value chain, timely financial support is crucial to ensure their growth and prevent talent loss overseas, according to a Cabi-

net note. The proposed government-backed fund will boost investor confidence, attract private capital, and signal the government's commitment to advancing space reforms, it added. The fund is designed to foster innovation and economic growth through capital infusion, to retain companies in India, accelerate space technology development, boost global competitiveness and create a vibrant innovation ecosystem.

The capital infusion will create a multiplier effect by attracting additional funding for later-stage development, thereby instilling confidence in private investors, said the Cabinet.

Indians seek lifestyle residences amid govt's infrastructure push: Economist

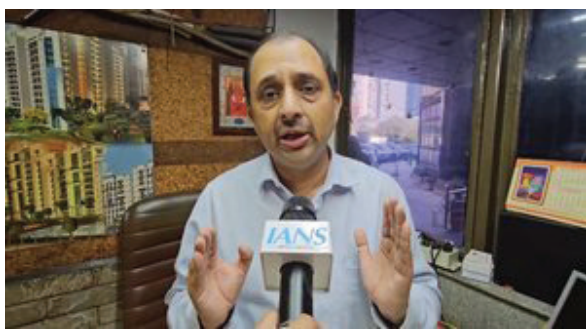
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Amid the government's push to develop world-class infrastructure, the real estate industry is also surging due to better connectivity options, festive incentives, and changing lifestyle choices, an economist said on Thursday.

More and more Indians are opting for "lifestyle residences" and real estate remains the most preferred asset class for investment, especially premium properties.

Economist Aakash Jindal told IANS that India is developing its overall infrastructure.

"To give you an example, in Delhi-NCR, Metro is reaching new places, providing new connectivity options. Any area where Metro reaches or is about



to reach, people want to shift there. They want to buy houses there. India is building so many expressways and connecting many places, thus fueling real estate buying," Jindal said.

Also, many developers are now offering incentives around the year, especially during the festive season, which has also resulted in a surge in property buying.

"These days, people

love to have lifestyle residences. The preferences of the younger generation have changed. They want to have, in certain cases, an indoor swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, steam bath and whatnot. They would like to invest or live in societies which offer such lifestyle facilities," Jindal told IANS.

"Going forward, there are certain pockets in India where you are going to see many people going

in for flat and property purchases. Real estate is going to boom in the coming year," the economist added.

According to a report by FICCI and Anarock Property Consultants last week, about 51 per cent of Indians now prefer 3 BHK units, showing increased demand for larger homes, as 67 per cent of buyers seek property for end use, while 33 per cent for investment purposes. The report highlighted significant shifts in homebuyer preferences and market dynamics in India's real estate sector.

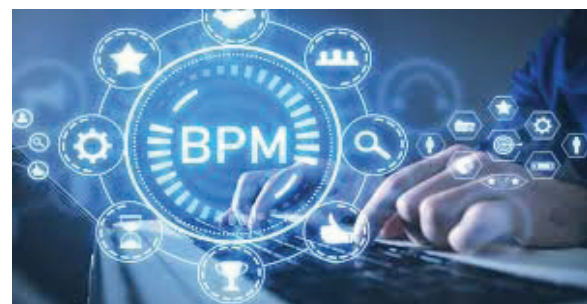
The Rs 45-Rs 90 lakh budget remains the most popular, but there's a shift towards premium properties. About 28 per cent now prefer homes priced between Rs 90 lakh and Rs 1.5 crore.

Indian BPM industry must rethink hiring strategies, prioritise right skills: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The Indian business process management (BPM) industry, that generated \$48.8 billion in revenue in FY24, must rethink hiring strategies and prioritise right skills for the next phase of growth, according to a report on Thursday.

Job movements now revolve around deep domain expertise, with a premium on candidates who can blend technical prowess with industry expertise. While technology adoption is a major growth driver, talent shortages remain a key challenge, as nearly four in five BPM organisations report a widening gap between the demand for skilled professionals and available talent.



The report by Nasscom, in collaboration with job search platform Indeed, emphasises the need for BPM firms to move beyond routine tasks and address more complex, strategic challenges, while offering valuable insights into the emerging skills that will define the future of work in this dynamic industry.

According to Harita Gupta, Chair, Nasscom BPM Council, organisations must focus on nurturing talent by investing

in continuous learning and upskilling programs.

"Building capabilities in AI, data analytics, and specialised domain knowledge will be key to unlocking the full potential of this transformation and ensuring that the BPM workforce is ready for the challenges of tomorrow's digital economy," said Gupta.

Over the next three years, technology is expected to significantly accelerate the emergence

of new job roles across BPM functions.

Emerging roles include data scientist analyst and AI strategy director in finance, HR data scientist and Chatbot HR specialist in human resources, and AI conversation designer and virtual assistant trainer in customer services.

"Over the next three years, more than 80 per cent of organisations are actively seeking to employ experienced professionals resulting in changes across the organisational structure," said Sashi Kumar, Head of Sales, Indeed India. Nearly 45 per cent of BPM companies plan to allocate over 12 per cent of their revenue to technology, with an 8 times increase expected in those spending above 20 per cent in the next three years.

Adani Total Gas clocks 7 pc jump in net profit at Rs 186 crore in Q2, revenue up 12 pc

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, OCT 24

Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL) on Thursday reported a seven per cent increase in consolidated net profit (year-on-year) at Rs 186 crore in Q2 FY25, while operational revenue saw a 12 per cent jump, reaching Rs 1,315 crore.

EBITDA rose by 8 per cent to Rs 313 crore in the July-September period, as standalone net profit (PAT) increased by 6 per cent,

reaching Rs 178 crore. For the first six months of this fiscal (H1 FY25), the consolidated net profit stood at Rs 357 crore, up by 11 per cent YoY.

The Adani Group company said the volume surged 15 per cent (YoY) in Q2 FY25, while the CNG network increased to 577 and PNG households increased to 8.93 lakh homes in the quarter (adding 34,468 new households).

"ATGL has reported



healthy operational and financial performance

during the quarter. Our business is closely aligned

with India's energy transition goals which we

are delivering by providing cleaner and greener energy solutions to all our consumers," ATGL CEO and ED Suresh P. Manglani said.

"We now reach over 9 lakh consumers through our piped gas network supplying uninterrupted piped natural gas.

We have commissioned our first LNG station for the transportation segment and are progressing towards covering key highway networks aiding

India's decarbonisation march," he added.

The company saw industrial and commercial connections reach 8,746 with 204 new consumers in the quarter.

With the joint venture IndianOil-Adani Gas Pvt Ltd (IOAGPL), the combined network of CNG stations stands at 958, with 31 new stations added in the quarter.

According to the company, PNG home connections have crossed the

1-million mark to 1.06 million, touching over 4 million lives on a daily basis.

"Following the recent reduction in APM gas allocation, which caters to auto CNG and home PNG consumers, we are closely monitoring the situation and given our diversified gas sourcing portfolio, we will ensure a calibrated pricing approach to balance the interest of our consumers," said Manglani.

Bilateral Hockey Series: India beat Germany 5-3, but lose series in a shootout

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

The Indian men's hockey team defeated Germany 5-3 in regulation time but lost the bilateral test series to the reigning world champions after coming short in the shootout. Germans triumphed 3-1 in the shootout to bag the series.

In the regulation time in the second test match, Sukhjeet Singh (34', 48') and Harmanpreet Singh (42', 43') scored a brace each while Abhishek (45') contributed one goal to India's tally. Elian Mazkour (7', 57') and Henrik Mertgens (60') were successful for Germany.

Though India began the match with a penalty corner in the fourth minute, it was Germany who drew the first blood following a quickfire counter-attack launched in the 7th minute.

Abhishek had made a circle entry from the left flank, but his shot on goal was unsuccessful. The Germans took this opportunity to strike.

The reigning world champions entered the match riding on a 2-0



win in the first match and bagged another opportunity to score in the 12th minute through a PC, but failed to convert.

Though India had an opportunity to score in the 14th minute through a PC too, Danneberg made a fine save.

In the second quarter, Vishnu Kant and Shamsher played tag-team to trouble

the German defence but couldn't find an equaliser. In the following minutes, both India and Germany won PCs but neither could convert. While India hunted for a goal in this quarter, the German defence stayed resolute, particularly in PC defence.

With the scoreline reading 1-0 at half-time, India had to align their

attack and come up with an improvised tactic to score. And that's exactly what they did in the third quarter. Shilanand Lakra's backhand pass to Sukhjeet inside the circle was brilliantly deflected to equalise.

This first goal by India gave them the momentum they were looking for and pumped two more goals

in this quarter. It was Harmanpreet Singh who found success in PC when he struck back-to-back in the 42nd and 43rd minute to help India take a strong 3-1 lead.

India ended the third quarter with another goal. This time it was Abhishek who scored a fine field goal. In the 48th minute, India extended their lead to 5-1 when a counter-attack saw Sukhjeet make a solo run with no defenders near him, as he pushed the ball past Danneberg.

The thrilling action continued with Mazkour scoring his second goal. Germany ended up scoring their third goal in the 60th minute through Henrik Mertgens, taking the match into a shootout.

"We analysed our opponents carefully after yesterday's game and tried to minimise errors to bounce back today. I am proud of the way the team played today. We found success in field goals and PC attack but unfortunately couldn't win the Series," expressed India skipper Harmanpreet Singh, who was also awarded the Player of the Match award.

USA drop Aaron Jones from ODI squad for preferring club over country

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, OCT 24

USA have dropped Aaron Jones from the ODI squad for the World Cup League 2 (WCL-2) tri-series starting on Friday. His snub came after he opted to play for the CPL franchise St. Lucia Kings and missed the Namibia tour with the USA in September. The selection panel named an unchanged squad that last toured Namibia for WCL-2.

It is believed that Jones' decision to participate in the CPL, despite "warnings" from USA Cricket, may have caused tension within the selection committee and higher authorities at USA Cricket. Ultimately, Jones played as a local in the tournament and didn't require a NOC from USA Cricket.

In contrast, Andries Gous, who limited his stint with the Trinbago Knight Riders to rush to Namibia, has retained his place in the team. In Jones' absence, USA continued their unbeaten run in four ODI matches in Namibia which gave selec-



tors confidence to make the bold decision to drop him. Although Jones was recalled for the T20I series due to his CPL final heroics, his place in the T20I squad is also under threat following a series of low scores in the recent Nepal T20I series. Jones has been a constant presence in USA's white-ball squads since his debut in 2018.

Meanwhile, it was a day of mixed emotions for young sensation Sanjay Krishnamurthy. The 21-year-old, who has impressed throughout the American cricket summer with standout performances in the Major and Minor League, played a remarkable knock of 167* for USA-A against the tour-

ing Scotland team. Battling the intense Dallas heat, Krishnamurthy showcased his fitness and composure, leading his team in a challenging chase of 341 against a strong bowling attack, boosting his claim for a return to the national side.

Interestingly, the USA squad was announced while USA-A were still chasing, though it might have been more prudent to finalise selections after the match, especially given Krishnamurthy's stellar performance. Nonetheless, his inclusion as the 16th man could be a wise decision. USA are set to play their first game of the tri-series against Nepal on Friday.

Former India captain Rani Rampal bids farewell; Hockey India retires No. 28 jersey

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

Rani Rampal, the former captain of the Indian women's hockey team, announced her retirement from international hockey on Thursday, marking the end of an illustrious 16-year career. Hockey India honoured her remarkable contributions by retiring her iconic No.28 jersey in a ceremony held after the India versus Germany bilateral series.

Rani, who debuted at just 15, became a beacon of hope and inspiration in Indian hockey, famously leading the national team to a historic fourth-place finish in the re-scheduled Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021. She will serve as a mentor and coach with the Soorma Hockey Club of Punjab and Haryana, ahead of the inaugural women's Hockey India League (HIL) later this year.

Reflecting on her farewell, Rani said, "I am very emotional. I don't know where to begin. I thank



Hockey India for letting me say my goodbye from this ground. I know all the spectators in the stadium are hockey lovers. When I started at the age of seven, maybe the people in the crowd saw my journey and gave me love. I thank all of you for coming here.

"I consider myself as a very lucky person, I believe it's the end of one chapter but the beginning of another. I will be mentoring in the women's HIL so I will work as hard in my next chapter so that I can help all women who want to compete for the nation," said Rani Rampal in her farewell speech after the conclusion of India vs New

Zealand bilateral hockey series," she said.

Rani's impact on Indian hockey has been nothing short of extraordinary. Over her career, she played more than 250 matches for India and scored over 100 goals, leading the team to several historic victories. She was a driving force behind India's silver medals at the 2017 Women's Asian Cup and the 2018 Asian Games, where she also had the honour of serving as India's flag-bearer during the closing ceremony.

Rani's rise to stardom began when she made her international debut in 2008 at the age of 15,

becoming the youngest player to represent India at that time. She later emerged as one of the key players during the 2010 World Cup, scoring seven goals and helping India secure their best performance since 1978. She played both as a forward and midfielder, showcasing her versatility and leadership over the years.

Throughout her career, Rani earned numerous accolades. In 2016, she was awarded the prestigious Arjuna Award, followed by India's highest sporting honour, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, in 2020. That same year, she was also honoured with the Padma Shri, one of India's top civilian awards.

She was recognised as the "Best Young Player of the Tournament" at the 2010 Women's Hockey World Cup and "Player of the Tournament" at the 2013 Junior World Cup, where India won its first-ever bronze medal.

Rani will now serve as coach of the sub-junior women's hockey team.

SAFF Women's C'ship: We are ready to come out stronger, says head coach Santosh Kashyap

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

Head coach Santosh Kashyap said that the team is ready to come out stronger after the India lost 3-1 to Bangladesh in a crucial group-stage match of the SAFF Women's Championship 2024 at the Dasharath Stadium.

Supporters filled opposite ends of the stadium, creating an electric backdrop for the high-stake clash. But as the final whistle blew, it was only the Bangladesh fans, who were left applauding their team's 3-1 victory.

The scenes were similar to those of the 2022 SAFF Women's Championship, where India suffered a 3-0 defeat to Bangladesh. "Both the teams played fantastic and played high-standard football. We were unlucky as we missed so many chances. In the second half, we dominated the game but still, we lost, it's a part of the game," head coach Santosh Kashyap said after the match.

"I had the privilege to



qualify before the match for the semi-finals. So I experimented with some tactical changes and I am successful in that. The story could have been different if we did not concede those silly goals," he said.

India women entered the match hungry to reclaim their glory, but the contest unfolded in a way few anticipated. Three back-to-back goals from Bangladesh in the first half were enough to break India's rhythm. India, momentarily stunned after the first two goals, sought to regroup, but before they could regain

their footing, disaster struck again. Midfielder Anju Tamang went down with an ankle injury, forcing her off the field and dealing a heavy blow to India's attacking options. The morale of the team came down from that moment itself.

"Anju's chance is difficult. She got a jerk in the knee and then hit back again in the ankle. So it looks serious. We will examine and come to know," said the coach.

Bala Devi, showing her captain's spirit, rose to the occasion and nodded the ball into the net to reduce the deficit. It was

a moment of hope amidst the storm, a spark that suggested a second-half comeback might still be possible. But it did not.

As the final whistle blew, the scoreboard read 3-1 in favour of Bangladesh.

The result cemented their position atop Group A, while India settled for the runners-up spot.

"I am confident I am not talking about the previous five years we won. I feel the girls have improved a lot. If we face Nepal in the semi-final, the home team is another challenge for us as the crowd will be there. But we are confident and we will try our best to reach the final and win," he said.

For India, the loss was a bitter reminder of 2022, yet their journey to come back stronger continued. With a place in the semi-finals, the Blue Tigresses would now need to regroup and find a way to overcome the setbacks in their three training sessions, as they set their sights on reclaiming the SAFF crown.

2nd Test: India reach 16/1 at stumps after Washington's 7-59 bowls out New Zealand for 259

AGENCIES
PUNE, OCT 24

India lost skipper Rohit Sharma for a nine-ball duck, before Yashasvi Jaiswal (six not out) and Shubman Gill (ten not out) took the hosts' to 16/1 and trail New Zealand by 243 runs at stumps on day one of second Test at the MCA Stadium on Thursday.

Previously, off-spin all-rounder Washington Sundar justified his selection in the playing eleven at the expense of Kuldeep Yadav through picking career-best figures of 7-59 in his 23.1 overs as New Zealand were bowled for 259.

Electing to bat first, New Zealand were 197/3 at one stage and it felt like they would go past 300. But Washington displayed an exhibition of drift and dip, while varying his pace

well and turned the game on its head for India and keep New Zealand to one below 260.

His fellow Chennai mate, senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin chipped in with 3-64 as the innings marked first-ever instance of all ten wickets taken by India's right-arm off-spinners in a Test match.

Post-tea, Washington asked for a review after rapping Daryl Mitchell on the pads with a sharp turning delivery, which proved to be a good decision as replays showed ball going on to clip leg-stump. Mitchell Santner tried upping the ante by hitting five boundaries, but Washington continued to hurt New Zealand.

Glenn Phillips holed out to long-off him, while Tim Southee and Ajaz Patel were castled by the young all-rounder, and Washing-

ton wrapped up the New Zealand innings in style by rattling Santner with grip and turn to take out the off-stump, as the visitors' lost their last seven wickets for 62 runs.

In reply, India didn't have the greatest of starts as Rohit to defend a delivery from Southee which nipped off the seam, but the ball went past the edge to hit top of off-stump. Left-arm spinners Ajaz Patel and Mitchell Santner got help to create jeopardy in minds of Jaiswal and Gill, but the duo ensured there wasn't any more loss of wickets till stumps arrived.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 259 in 79.1 overs (Devon Conway 76, Rachin Ravindra 66; Washington Sundar 7-59, Ravichandran Ashwin 3-64) lead India 16/1 in 11 overs (Shubman Gill 10 not out; Tim South-

A special moment for South Africa: Markram reflects on historic Test win vs Bangladesh

AGENCIES
DHAKA, OCT 24

Stand-in captain Aiden Markram hailed South Africa's first Test win in the subcontinent in a decade as a "special moment" for the team as the players basked in the glory following their seven-wicket triumph against the hosts at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

South Africa ended a decade-long drought in the Indian subcontinent with a commanding seven-wicket win over Bangladesh. This triumph at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium marked South Africa's first Test win in the region since 2014.

Reflecting on the historic win, Markram praised the efforts of his team, particularly given their rela-



tive inexperience in the challenging conditions of the subcontinent. "I think it's special. We've got a pretty young, or slightly

experienced group, so to come to the subcontinent and get a result creates a nice buzz in the change room," said Markram,

who stepped in as captain for the injured Temba Bavuma.

The Proteas dominated with bat and ball, wrapping up the match before lunch on the fourth day. This victory not only halted a 15-match winless streak in subcontinental conditions but also moved South Africa up to fourth in the World Test Championship standings, positioning them strongly for a shot at the final in 2025. "I've been playing now for a couple of years and never won in the subcontinent, so it is a special moment for us," he said. "It gives us belief that we can compete in conditions where the odds are maybe stacked against us."

With the second Test set to begin in Chittagong on Tuesday, South Africa is

now eyeing back-to-back victories to solidify their position in the World Test Championship standings.

The win against Bangladesh lifted spirits and boosted the team's chances of qualifying for the prestigious final at Lord's in London next year. Home series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan will provide further opportunities for South Africa to strengthen their claim.

"A lot of the game is played from confidence and belief and a mental side of things, so I think that this win will help a lot of us moving forward," Markram explained. "We will see if we can put back-to-back performances together because that's ultimately what makes a really good team."

One Day Counseling cum Mentorship Seminar held for IAS/ JKAS Aspirants at Kulgam

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, OCTOBER 24

The District Employment and Counseling Centre, Kulgam under the aegis of District Administration Kulgam today organised a day long mentorship/ career counseling Seminar for civil services aspirants of District Kulgam at Auditorium cum Conference Hall of Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

The theme of the programme was 'How to Crack IAS/JKAS Examinations'.

The Seminar was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, who was also the chief guest on the occasion. Major Abhinandan (CCE Qualifier -2023) attended the seminar as the invited guest speaker.

On the occasion, the speakers shared their wide experiences and expertise



with the students.

In his presentation, the DC provided a comprehensive outlook to the students on the necessity of qualifying the civil services examinations like JKAS and IAS for a better career choice and effective public contribution.

He stressed that for cracking this prestigious exam, students need to perform some specific exercises/practices like reading newspapers daily and NCERT books, understand national and international current and social issues, learning good presentation, time-management, reading previous

year question-papers of UPSC/JKPCSC and most importantly focus on personality development.

He reiterated the commitment of the Govt. in providing quality education and preparing students for future challenges. He said that one can render noble service to the society through civil services even in an increasingly corporate driven world.

Major Abhinandan informed the aspirants that having academic degrees is not enough, but what is needed is focus, hard-work and full dedication. He provided tips on the various books, reading material and resources that students need to access for qualifying the exams like IAS and KAS.

He advised the students to inculcate passion and motivation for qualifying the Civil Service exams

and exhorted them to focus on set goals by evolving a proper strategy to qualify civil service exams. He underscored the need to constantly put in efforts at an opportune time to qualify the same.

Earlier, Career Counseling Officer DE&CC Kulgam highlighted the series of ongoing initiatives and programmes organized by DE&CC Kulgam for the career counseling of students.

The programme was very informative and enriching for students. It gave everyone a clear perspective about the strategies to be adopted for cracking these prestigious examinations. All the factors affecting the choice of the students were addressed, questions/queries were answered and the stereotypes were dispelled. 2800 Aspirants and students attended the programme.

DC Poonch convenes Public Outreach Program at block Lassana

J1 NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, OCTOBER 24



To address the public concerns and grievances, the District Administration Poonch conducted an extensive Public outreach program today at Block Lassana Surankote.

Line Department Officers, senior district and sector officers led by Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal were present at the venue to address grievances and ensure last mile connectivity.

The locals from the concerned block and adjacent Panchayats projected their issues and demands before the Deputy Commissioner. Residents highlighted numerous issues affecting their daily lives during the interaction. They sought augmentation of water supply under Jal Jeevan Mission, Road projects in unconnected areas, upgrading of Education, Healthcare, Agriculture, Electricity, and other critical infrastructure.

Vikas Kundal assured that their concerns would be promptly addressed. He emphasized the administration's commitment towards resolving the issues and improving the quality of life for the people of Lassana.

The program aimed to enhance public outreach, with significant directions given by the Deputy Commissioner to concerned heads to ensure the smooth implementation of development initiatives and the swift resolution of the public issues.

Chairperson KVIB presides over Bankers review meeting at Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

Chairperson J&K KVIB, Dr Hina Shafi Bhat, today presided over bankers review meeting of Jammu division at Jammu.

Senior officers from Board, officers from participating banks and district officers of KVIB Jammu division attended the meeting.

The meeting emphasized the significance of collaborative efforts in bolstering successful implementation of various employment generation programmes of the board.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Bhat reiterated that government is committed to provide employment opportunities to the aspirant entrepreneurs/unemployed youth to ensure sustainable development in JK. She added



that employment generation programmes like PMEGP and JKREGP have been devised to encourage entrepreneurship, empowering individuals to start their businesses and contribute towards economic diversification.

Dr Bhat expressed confidence in the commitment of the financial institutions in successful implementation of employment generation

programmes. She, however, cautioned the banks to refrain from rejecting cases on flimsy grounds.

Referring to large number of cases pending in the financing banks, she advised the bankers to issue directions to such financing bank branches to process the cases as per timelines fixed in the guidelines. She impressed upon the bankers to give preferential treatment to

the aspirants belonging to women and marginal sections of the society and process their cases on priority.

The Chairperson emphasized the need for improved collaboration among the bankers and implementing agencies to ensure that the benefits of employment generation programmes like PMEGP and JKREGP percolate to the target population.

Handicraft & Handloom Department organises Awareness Programme at Aspirational Block Thakrakote

J1 NEWS SERVICE
REASI, OCTOBER 24

The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Reasi on Thursday conducted an awareness programme at the Aspirational block of Thakrakote to educate the public about various schemes and training programmes offered by the department. The event was part of ongoing efforts to support artisans, weavers, and local communities engaged in the handicraft and handloom sector.

Assistant Director Ujwal Singh Sambhal interacted with the local community. He emphasized the department's commitment towards uplifting artisans and weavers by providing them access to skill development programmes, financial assistance, and market linkages. Sambhal



encouraged the public to utilize the available opportunities to enhance their livelihoods and preserve the region's rich cultural heritage.

Other attendees included Assistant Handicraft Training Officer (AHTO) Jyoti Prakash, officials Ashish Sharma, and Aspiration Block Fellow Sajjad Mir. They shared valuable insights about the schemes

tailored to meet the needs of the local artisans, and highlighted training programmes designed to help individuals upgrade their skills, adopt modern techniques, and access wider markets. The programme concluded with a positive response from the public, with many expressing their interest in participating in future initiatives by the department.

GBHSS Zainakote honoured with 5th National Water Resource Conservation and Management Award

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR OCTOBER 24

In a significant achievement Government Boys Higher Secondary School (GBHSS), Zainakote Srinagar has been honoured with the prestigious 5th National Water Award for 2023, receiving a special mention for its exemplary and outstanding efforts in water conservation and management at Vigyan bawan New Delhi.

The award was received by Principal of the School, Ali Muhammad Rather and Lecturer Environmental Science Nyla Ali.

The award was given by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti C. R Patil at New Delhi.

This recognition holds even greater significance as GBHSS Zainakote is the only Educational Institution in Jammu & Kashmir to receive this prestigious award and the fourth in the entire Country to earn such a distinction hence bringing laurels to Jammu and Kashmir especially Department of School Education by receiving this National Award.

This achievement is the



outcome of dedication and collaboration among the Staff and Students. From the micro to macro contributions, everyone played an integral role in making this project a reality.

This Environmental project was led by Mtr Nyla Ali Lecturer Environmental Science and the team leader of Eco Club of the School.

With the tireless efforts and innovative ideas the entire school marched ahead with zeal and zest, from organizing rainwater harvesting systems, organising awareness campaigns, engaging with

locals and eliminating the water waste all the efforts were truly transformational.

The award also recognized the wholehearted support from every member of the institution, from the Multi tasking Staff (MTS) to the Head of Institution (HOI), each of whom played an invaluable role in ensuring the success of our conservation projects. Their contributions, whether in logistical support, participation in initiatives, or providing moral encouragement were essential to the positive outcome.

District Level Mock Exercise held at Bharderwah to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BHADERWAH OCTOBER 24

A District Level Mock Exercise was conducted today at Bharderwah to evaluate disaster preparedness and response mechanism. The exercise was organized in coordination with 4RR, local PWD (R&B) Division and Municipal Committee, among others. The exercise was aimed at strengthening coordination between the civil administration and disaster response teams in handling emergencies efficiently.

The exercise commenced at the New Bus Stand and involved a simulated disaster scenario to test the readiness of the district's emergency

services. Representatives from the JDDPCL/PHE, Child Development Project, Fire and Emergency Services, and other vital departments participated actively in the drill. Special emphasis was laid on assessing communication, evacuation, and rescue operations during the mock disaster event. The practical aspects of handling various contingencies, including fire, medical emergencies, and structural collapses, were meticulously rehearsed.

The Tehsildar of Bharderwah & Bhalla was overall in-charge of the event, working closely with the representative of the 13th BN NDRF, Sub Inspector Vinod Kumar, and ensuring seamless coordination

during the mock drill. The event received praise for enhancing disaster management skills and raising awareness among local authorities about quick and effective response strategies in the face of potential disasters.

The Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, supervised the exercise and appreciated the involvement of all departments. He emphasized the importance of such mock exercises in mitigating risks and saving lives during real emergencies. The press and media were also briefed about the outcomes of the event, and the Tehsil Information Officer Bharderwah ensured widespread publicity of the event's success.

Awareness cum Counselling camp hosted for Sheep breeders at Samba



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

An Awareness cum Counselling camp regarding Breed Based Farms under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) was organized by Sheep Husbandry Department Jammu for Entrepreneurs/Farmer Producer Organizations/Farmer Cooperatives/Breeders of Jammu division here at Principal Sheep & Wool Workers' Training Class Kartholi, Samba.

A large number of farmers desirous to avail the benefits under the schemes participated in the camp. The farmers interacted with the senior officers of the Department and NABARD and learnt about the modalities of the schemes.

DDM NABARD Shalesh Sharma briefed farmers

Career Counselling held at GDC Banihal under BBBP Initiative

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN OCTOBER 24

A comprehensive career counselling and awareness session was held for final-year students at Government Degree College Banihal here today under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Choudhary and the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer Rahul Gupta and Assistant Director Employment Amit Kumar. The event was organized by the Social Welfare Department in collaboration with the GDC Banihal and the District Employment and Counselling Centre/Model Career Centre Ramban, under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative.

Young Professional (YP) and Counsellor, Lovpreet Singh, provided an in-depth overview of various career opportunities, introducing students to platforms such as the National Career Service (NCS) Portal and the J&K Employment Portal.

Singh also emphasized the significance of personality development, interview preparation, and self-employment schemes such as the Mumkin Scheme, Tejaswini Scheme, and the Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative (SEI) to foster entrepreneurship and job creation.

The session also brought attention towards the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative, which is being actively implemented in District Ramban. The program focused on promoting the education and welfare of the girl child, encouraging gender equality, and addressing the issue of the declining child sex ratio.

The event concluded with the address of the College Principal Dr. Shafiq Ahmed, who appreciated the initiative and urged students to take full advantage of the guidance provided during the session.