

**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
- Diarrhea
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool
- Redness

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## NC, PDP bonhomie over in J&K ahead of polls

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

The bonhomie between the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jammu and Kashmir has imploded, marking the end of the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

The two regional forces, once united in their quest for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, are now at loggerheads and targeting each other with full force.

Two parties' leaders Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti had been targeting each other every day during their poll campaign.

The collapse of the NC-PDP bonhomie has left the PAGD in tatters. The alliance, formed



soon after the abrogation of Article 370, had promised a new era of politics in Jammu and Kashmir. However, internal fissures and a lack of sincerity have led to its downfall.

In 2020 district development council (DDC) polls, the six parties alliance of PAGD fought the elections together. And this alliance won 110 seats.

The bonhomie between the erstwhile arch rivals ended during the Lok

Sabha polls held earlier this year, when the two parties contested against each other. The NC and PDP's failure to accommodate each other in the Lok Sabha polls marked the beginning of the end for the PAGD. The NC's refusal to spare seats for the PDP in the assembly polls has further widened the rift.

While the NC and Congress have formed a coalition for the assembly

## Young guns dominate JK's assembly elections

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

The first phase of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections has brought a wave of young candidates into the political arena, with fresh faces representing both national and regional parties.

Out of 24 seats, 20 party-nominated candidates and an equal number of independents are newcomers. Among them, the youngest is 25-year-old Meenakshi Bhagat, who is contesting from the Bhaderwah assembly constituency on a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ticket.

As per the news agency Correspondent, in Kishtwar, the BJP has fielded 29-year-old Shagun Parihar, a relative of the late Anil Parihar, a prominent leader who was assassinated by terrorists. Shagun, with a background in Electrical Engineering, represents a new generation stepping up to continue the political legacies of their predecessors.

The PDP has placed its trust in 37-year-old Iltija Mufti, daughter of former Chief Minister

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## PM Modi arrives in Brunei on first leg of two-nation visit

AGENCIES  
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said he was looking forward to strong ties with Brunei, especially in boosting commercial and cultural linkages, as he arrived here on the first leg of his two-nation trip during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership.

Modi, who is the first Indian Prime Minister to travel to Brunei on a bilateral visit, said he was looking forward to his meetings with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and other members of the royal



family to advance the historical relationship to new heights.

"Landed in Brunei Darussalam. Looking forward to strong ties

between our nations, especially in boosting commercial and cultural linkages. I thank Crown Prince His Royal

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## Ram Madhav in Srinagar: He is on 'Mission Kashmir': Party leaders

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

Bhartiya Janata Party's (BJP's) point-man Ram Madhav arrived in Srinagar Tuesday after spending some time in Jammu where he calmed the tempers of disgruntled party men who were disappointed over mandate distribution.

Amid rousing reception in Srinagar, he patted on the back of the party's candidate for the politically significant Assembly seat—Lal Chowk—Er Ajiz Hussain. A video showing Er Ajiz receiving Madhav in Srinagar is viral on social media.

Madhav's arrival on the political scene of Kashmir



has come at a time when National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah has stoked a controversy of sorts by stating that he (Madhav) has good connections in PDP and may be still in touch with the party. Adding fuel to the fire, senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana, who parted ways from NC three years ago, dropped a bombshell stating that

in 2014, Omar led NC delegation went with a begging bowl to Delhi to seek alliance with BJP without any condition. Rana even claimed that NC was ready for a Hindu CM in J&K.

Madhav was recalled by the BJP high command for "mission J&K" ahead of the crucial Assembly polls commencing on September 18 in three phases. Madhav was the man behind striking the PDP-BJP deal in 2014 till the distribution of portfolios and was considered as the BJP's expert on J&K affairs. He, however, was removed from the party's General Secretary Post in 2020 but has been assigned a "big task"

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## GoC reviews operational preparedness of troops in forward areas in Ladakh



J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, SEPT 3

General-officer-Commanding of Fire and Fury Corps Lieutenant General Hitesh Bhalla visited forward areas in Ladakh on Tuesday and reviewed operational preparedness

of troops, officials said.

During the visit, he was briefed on operational readiness and employment of new generation equipment.

"Lt Gen Hitesh Bhalla GOC, Fire and Fury Corps visited the Parashu

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## Unlike NC, PDP has done everything in broad daylight: Mehbooba Mufti

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

The former chief minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief,



Mehbooba Mufti Tuesday said that her party has not done anything secretly like National Conference (NC).

She was reacting to the statement made

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## BJP leader Devender Rana on fire

'NC went to Delhi with a begging bowl in 2014 to forge alliance, agreed to have Hindu CM in J&K'

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, SEP 03

Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana Tuesday added fuel to the fire stating that in 2014, National Conference went with a begging bowl to Delhi for forging an alliance with the BJP but were asked to go back by the top leaders including Home Minister Amit Shah.

"I am surprised to see Omar Abdullah stating that Ram Madhav is having connections with the PDP. The fact remains that in



2014, a delegation led by Omar of which I am part also, went to Delhi with a begging bowl to enter

into an alliance with the BJP," Rana said addressing a press

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## Speed up transfer of technology to artisans: CS

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Tuesday called upon the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Srinagar to speed up efforts to transfer technologies from the lab to the grassroots level.

While chairing the 4th meeting of the State Level Advisory Committee (SLAC) of NIFT at Civil Secretariat here, Atal Dulloo said that fusion of craftsmanship and technology will pave the way for new opportunities, expanded markets, and enriched creative processes.

CS said that NIFT and Craft Development Institute (CDI), Srinagar should come up with a comprehensive framework for capacity building and training of master trainers who would later train the local artisans.

He said that NIFT should think about introduction of new designs to craft like Namda, carpets, crewel work and also help in marketing through introduction of latest tech-



nological interventions. He said that this would help in promoting entrepreneurship in regional craft for which Srinagar has been recognised as World Craft City.

Considering the resources and infrastructure available at NIFT, Dulloo said that more courses need to be introduced which will help in promotion and revival of local crafts like textile designing, paper mache besides other sectors.

He said that NIFT should become a hub of craft and everyone visiting the valley should make it to their priority list to visit the campus. During the meeting, brief

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## Revolt like situation in Congress for denying mandate to Babu Jagjivan Lal from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, SEP 3

Since the Congress party has announced the second list of candidates for the six constituencies for the second phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, there is a revolt like situation on Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat where a leader from schedule caste community has been ignored and the mandate has been given to one Bhupinder Jamwal.

Most of the leaders were

expecting the mandate for former minister and two-time MLA Babu Jagjivan Lal. Lal is also a district development councilor (DDC) from Reasi.

As per the news agency, Jagjivan Lal's late father Comrade Mansukh Rai was also a three-time MLA from Reasi and the family has a strong base among people.

Some Congress party leaders told KNO that due to some internal fight in the party, a senior leader pressurized the screening

committee and managed to cut Lal's name from the list and handed over the mandate to Jamwal.

"Jagjivan Lal and his family have a history of public service and they have been following secular, socialistic and Ambedker traditions throughout their lives. They have opened a trust in the heart of Reasi town on a 20 kanal piece of land where regular seminars and functions are held," said a leader.

"After the delimitation of the Assembly constitu-

encies of Jammu and Kashmir, Reasi constituency was divided into two parts, Reasi and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. The latter seat has over 26 percent vote share of scheduled caste population and over 16 votes are from Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. Lal coming from SC community has a strong hold among his own people and also enjoys a good reputation among ST population as well," he said.

"If he is given the

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## Paralympian Sheetal, Rakesh become first Olympic medalists from J&K

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, SEP 3

Ace archers' duo of Jammu and Kashmir Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar have bagged a bronze medal in the compound open archery mixed team event.

As per news agency, the 39-year-old Rakesh Kumar hails from Katra, Reasi



teamed up with 17-year-old Sheetal Devi from village of Loidhar, Kishtwar.

The duo defeated Italy's Matteo Bonacina and Eleonora Sarti 156-155 to clinch bronze, just a few minutes after India suffered a narrow loss to Iran in the semi-finals. India won bronze

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## Patients seek govt intervention as private hospitals stop Ayushman Bharat services in J&K

J I NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, SEP 3

Hundreds of patients in Jammu & Kashmir have called for immediate government intervention after private hospitals in the union territory halted services under the Ayushman Bharat scheme starting September 1.

The decision has raised serious concerns among patients who rely on these services for essential medical treatments, though the government claims steps have been taken to ensure no patient suffers.

Several patients spoke with the news agency and urged the government to step in and ensure the resumption of these crucial healthcare services.

The private hospitals in Jammu & Kashmir have ceased operations under the Ayushman Bharat scheme due to the non-receipt of funds, amounting to around Rs 200 crore, since March this year.

In November of last year, IFFCO-TOKIO Gen-

eral Insurance Company, the insurer for Ayushman Bharat in J&K, informed the State Health Agency (SHA) that they would not renew the contract after it expires on March 14, 2025. Initially, the scheme was managed by Bajaj Allianz GIC, whose contract ended in 2022. IFFCO-TOKIO was brought in as a replacement but has since sought to withdraw from the scheme, citing financial losses. Despite requests from the SHA for the company to continue operations in the interest of patient care, IFFCO-TOKIO has refused.

The SHA approached the high court to prevent the company from exiting the scheme, but the petition was dismissed on February 2, further complicating the situation. The government later appealed to the division bench to stay the single bench's order, making the issue sub-judice.

Recently, the high court directed IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance

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## ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS-2024

## General Observer conducts comprehensive inspection of Polling Stations in Bhagwah, Dessa

JNEWS SERVICE  
DODA, SEPTEMBER 3

To ensure smooth conduct of the upcoming Assembly Elections-2024, the General Observer for Assembly Constituency (AC) 52-Doda and AC 53-Doda West, Aditya Negi, conducted a thorough inspection of the polling stations at Bhagwah and Dessa of Doda District today.

During the inspection, Aditya Negi assessed the preparedness of the polling

stations and reviewed the arrangements put in place for voters. The visit was aimed at ensuring that all necessary facilities and security measures are in place to facilitate a fair and transparent election process. In addition to the inspection of polling stations, the Observer evaluated the functioning of the Flying Squad teams operating in the Bhagwah and Dessa. The squads, which play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the election

process, were reviewed for their readiness and effectiveness in addressing any election-related issues. The Observer was accompanied by Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), Dr. Subuh Ahmed Shad, besides police and other election staff.

The General Observer emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest standards of election conduct and reiterated the commitment of the ECI to ensuring a free and fair electoral process in Doda District.

## Samba Petrol Pump owners asked for strict MCC Compliance during elections



JNEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer Samba convened a crucial meeting today to discuss the adherence of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) by petrol pump owners during the ongoing election period. The meeting was attended by representatives of all 38 petrol pumps in the district, along with key officials from various departments. The District Election Officer emphasized the necessity of maintaining an apolitical stance during the enforcement of the MCC. To this end, several directives were issued to petrol pump owners to ensure a fair and transparent election process.

Prohibition on Free Fuel: Petrol pumps have been strictly prohibited from providing free fuel to vehicles associated with

any political party. This measure aims to prevent any undue influence on the election process and ensure a level playing field for all parties. Apolitical Conduct: All petrol pumps must operate without displaying any political party posters, flags, or promotional materials on their premises.

Adequate Fuel Supply: Petrol pump owners were instructed to ensure a sufficient supply of fuel for vehicles designated for election duties, including those used by polling parties, to facilitate the smooth and uninterrupted conduct of election activities.

Voter Awareness Initiatives: Petrol pump owners were encouraged to actively collaborate with the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) nodal officer and the Assistant Regional

Transport Officer (ARTO) in voter awareness campaigns. This includes displaying voter awareness posters and playing jingles to encourage voter participation.

Traffic Rule Enforcement: The ARTO was directed to set up checkpoints and conduct random checks to enforce traffic rules, including ensuring that two-wheeler riders wear helmets. Furthermore, petrol pumps were instructed not to dispense fuel to two-wheeler riders who are not wearing helmets, reinforcing the commitment to road safety during the election period.

These directives reflect the commitment of the District Election Office, Samba, to uphold the principles of a free and fair election process while promoting voter awareness and road safety.

## Election Observers inspect polling stations; review working of FST, SST Teams in AC-54 Ramban

JNEWS SERVICE  
RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 3

To ensure free, fair, and transparent elections in District Ramban, General Observer Himanshu Kumar Rai, along with Police Observer Kunal Aggarwal and Expenditure Observer Sulekh Chand Jain, conducted comprehensive review of enforcement teams and polling stations in Assembly Constituency -54 Ramban today.

The Observers reviewed the functioning of the Flying Squad Teams (FSTs), Static Surveillance Teams (SSTs), and other enforcement units deployed at different locations within the constituency, including Nashri. During their visit, they closely examined the security arrangements and operational efficiency of the FST and SST teams. The Observers interacted with team members, providing essential guidance to ensure proper monitoring of all activities for a smooth election process. In addition to inspect-



ing the enforcement teams, the Observers visited several polling stations established in various government buildings, such as High School Chanderkote, UPS Chanderkote, High School Dhalwas, GPS Champa, GGHS Batote, DFO Office Batote, UPS Tringla, and GMS Ladhwal. At each location, they assessed the polling arrangements and inquired about the availability of Assured Minimum Facilities, with a particular focus on the convenience of elderly

voters, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). On-the-spot instructions were issued to the concerned officers to address any deficiencies and ensure a voter-friendly environment. At Batote, the Observers also interacted with Deputy Inspector General of Police, DKR Range, Shridhar Patil.

The Observers were accompanied by ARO Deep Kumar, Tehsildar Batote Vijay Kumar, and other relevant officials throughout the inspection.

## SVEEP programme was attended by RO Karnah, DY. DEO Kupwara, ZEO Tangdar/ Nodal officer SVEEP and other officers.

JNEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, SEPTEMBER 03

The District Election Officer (DEO) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan Tuesday visited, Jabdi a far flung picturesque village of Karnah in Kupwara district which is located at LOC some 40 kms away from Tangdar and inspected polling station of Jabdi established at Govt. primary School Jabdi Upper to take first hand appraisal of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) and interact with voters of the areas.

DEO reviewed the preparedness of this remote polling station for the upcoming assembly elections.

The inspection was aimed to ensure that this polling station is accessible to voters especially to specially-abled persons. Ramp access, and other

facilities were reviewed by the DEO.

The DEO, accompanied by RO Karnah, Zaffar Ahmed Lone, Dy. DEO Kupwara, Mir Hamidullah, Ex. Engineer R&B, ZEO Nodal Officer SVEEP and other officers assessed the facilities, security arrangements and accessibility features at the polling station.

Ayushi Sudan emphasised the concerned departments for ensuring all required facilities at the polling station so that each and every eligible voter shall participate in the election process without any hindrance.

The DC interacted with staff to review the preparedness and adherence to electoral guidelines, emphasizing the importance of impartiality and transparency throughout the electoral proceedings.

She reiterated the administration's commitment to conduct free, fair and peaceful elections, urging all stakeholders to cooperate and contribute to the success of the electoral process.

The DC also reviewed the infrastructure, security measures and other arrangements in place.

The DEO interacted with the locals and first time voters of the village and urged them to use their right to franchise enthusiastically.

She further said that Jabdi is a beautiful village which has vast tourism potential.

On her return from Jabdi, the DEO convened a review meeting at mini secretariat Tangdar to review the preparedness of Sub Divisional administration Karnah for upcoming assembly elections.

## Police Observer Pulwama reviews Security measures in Rajpora Constituency

JNEWS SERVICE  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 3

Akhlesh Kumar, the Police Observer for Pulwama, Tuesday conducted an extensive visit to the Tehsil Litter area within the Rajpora Assembly Constituency to assess security arrangements and address public concerns ahead of the upcoming elections.

During his visit, the Police Observer inspected polling booths at Lassipora, Litter and Tumlihal to evaluate the security measures in place. He also engaged with local residents, listening to their election-related grievances and assuring them of a free and fair election process.

Furthermore, Kumar reviewed the Static Surveillance Team (SST) checkpoint at SIDCO Lassipora, ensuring compliance with security protocols. He also held a briefing with guards, dis-



cussing matters pertinent to their duties during the election period.

In addition, the Police Observer assessed the inter-district checkpoint at Naina, where he addressed issues raised by the security forces, ensuring that all concerns are managed effectively.

In addition to these activities, he also visited

the designated accommodation for candidates to inspect security arrangements put in place.

These activities were conducted in line with the guidelines set forth by the Election Commission of India, reflecting the commitment to a secure and impartial electoral process in the Rajpora Constituency.

## General Observer reviews election preparations in Bharderwah

JNEWS SERVICE  
BHADERWAH, SEPTEMBER 3

General Observer Malikarjuna A overseeing Assembly Constituency (AC) 51-Bharderwah, on Tuesday convened an online meeting to review the functioning of various teams constituting the upcoming elections in AC 51 Bharderwah. The meeting was attended by key teams, including the Flying Squad Team, the Video Surveillance Team, and the Static Surveillance Team.

During the meeting, the heads of these teams were asked to provide detailed briefings on their preparedness and operational strategies.

Malikarjuna emphasized the importance of transparent and effective conduct of duties, urging the teams to ensure that all actions are in compliance with election guide-

lines. He also outlined specific areas where improvements were needed, particularly in coordination and timely reporting.

Among the other

need for strict adherence to election protocols and efficient handling of media-related matters.

The Observer reiterated the importance of team-



work and encouraged all teams to collaborate closely to address any challenges. He stressed that all queries and uncertainties must be resolved promptly to ensure a smooth election process. The meeting concluded with the teams being reminded of their crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the election process and upholding democratic values.

Simultaneously, an EVM Awareness and Training Camp was held at GDC Budhal under the supervision of Dil Mir (ADC Koteranka), Returning Officer for Assembly Constituency 86-Budhal (ST). The camp, organized in collaboration with the College's Electoral Literacy Club and led by Prof. Tahir Nadeem, aimed to improve electoral literacy

## DEO Kathua reviews poll preparations



JNEWS SERVICE  
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the readiness for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024. The meeting involved key officers from Assembly Constituencies 63 Bani, 64 Billawar, 65 Basohli, 66 Jasrota, 67 Kathua, and 68 Hiranagar.

Returning Officers (ROs), Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) from each constituency, Zonal Magistrates, Sector Magistrates, and police officers were present on the occasion.

The DEO underscored the importance of maintaining stringent security for Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) throughout the election process.

Dr. Minhas also highlighted the necessity of coordinated efforts to facilitate home voting for

physically disabled and elderly voters, ensuring inclusivity in the electoral process.

Continuous communication with concerned RO office was emphasized as essential to swiftly address any issues or requirements that may arise.

The meeting involved in-depth discussions on the proper coordination and timing for the dispatch of polling materials, EVMs, and polling parties to ensure a smooth and efficient polling day. The DEO reiterated the importance of promptly reporting voter turnout and maintaining vigilance over EVMs during their transportation and storage.

Overall, the focus remained on ensuring seamless collaboration among all stakeholders, adherence to the election schedule, and the secure handling of all election-related materials to uphold the integrity of the electoral process.

## Comprehensive SVEEP awareness programs organised across Rajouri to promote voter participation

JNEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 03

On the directions of District Election Officer Abhishek Sharma, a series of voter awareness programs were organized by District Nodal Officers, Bishamber Dass across district Rajouri to enhance voter participation in the upcoming Assembly Election. As part of these initiatives, Nodal Officer SVEEP AC-85 Rakesh Kumar Sharma, along with his team, organized an awareness program at Government High School Palam Rajouri and surrounding areas of Palam village. About 200 students and staff participated, learning about the voting process and the significance of every vote. Participants also pledged to mobilize their communities, ensuring no voter is left out.

The day's events included a voter awareness rally, sports activities, and a door-to-door campaign. At BHSS Rajouri, an outreach session for young and first-time voters attracted about 150 participants, who committed to engaging in the electoral process.

Simultaneously, an EVM Awareness and Training Camp was held at GDC Budhal under the supervision of Dil Mir (ADC Koteranka), Returning Officer for Assembly Constituency 86-Budhal (ST). The camp, organized in collaboration with the College's Electoral Literacy Club and led by Prof. Tahir Nadeem, aimed to improve electoral literacy

through hands-on training on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), provided by Assembly Level Master Trainer (ALMT) Abdul Razaq.

To further engage the youth, a volleyball tournament was organized at Government High School Badhal, led by Headmaster Madan Lal Sharma and the SVEEP Cell.

Similarly, a volleyball match at Govt. High School Dharamsal and cultural activities at GMS Badhanoo involved students and staff, highlighting the importance of voting.

A signature campaign and an awareness rally were also organized at Girls High School Kalakote and GHSS Channi Prat, under the guidance of Nodal Officer SVEEP AC-83 Kalakote Babu Singh. SVEEP activities were also held in different parts of AC 87-Thannamandi, focusing on voter education and electoral literacy. Notable events included a Quiz Competition at Boys Middle School Darhal, led by SVEEP team member Dr. Toseef Ahmed Malik, and a Skit at Higher Secondary School Manjakot, both designed to instill democratic values and emphasize the importance of voting. These initiatives, conducted under the guidance of Nodal Officer SVEEP AC 87-Thannamandi Dr Ather Aziz Raina, demonstrates the SVEEP team's commitment to fostering a culture of democratic participation and strengthening democracy in Rajouri.



## Training programme on Postal Ballot, ETPBS & counting procedures held at Udhampur



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 3

To ensure the smooth conduct of the General Assembly Election 2024 in the district, a one-day training programme focusing on postal ballots, ETPBS and counting procedures was organized here today by the District Election Authority.

The event was held under the chairmanship of District Election Officer Saloni Rai here in the Mini Conference Hall, DC Office

Complex. The training programme began with a detailed PowerPoint presentation by District Informatics Officer NIC, Anish Sharma. The presentation covered critical aspects of the election process, including the scanning and validation of e-postal ballots, the procedures for opening the strong room, counting of postal ballots, and the overall vote counting process in the counting hall. Special emphasis was placed on the procedures involved in ETPBS and the

counting of votes received through postal ballots.

During the programme, officers and officials were thoroughly trained on the entire postal ballot process, including the submission of Form I2-D and other essential formalities. The DEO emphasized the importance of a proactive approach, urging all officers to execute their assigned tasks diligently on the ground, while maintaining close cooperation and coordination with line departments.

## Mega SVEEP prog held at GHSS Handwara



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
HANDWARA, SEPTEMBER 3

A Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program was organized at Girls Higher Secondary School, (GHSS) Handwara to educate and empower young minds about the importance of voting and democratic participation. The program, conducted by GHSS Handwara in coordination with Nodal Officer SVEEP, aimed to sensitize Voters, and students about their rights and responsibilities. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who engaged in interactive sessions, quizzes, and discussions on electoral processes and duties.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Returning Officer (RO) Aziz Ahmed Rathar remarked that SVEEP is a flagship initiative designed to enhance voter education, raise awareness and promote electoral literacy across the country. He highlighted the critical importance of voting in strengthening democracy and ensuring inclusive

elections.

The RO acknowledged the vital role played by ASHA and Anganwadi workers in encouraging voter turnout and their continued efforts in supporting electoral participation.

The RO encouraged the electorate to recognize the significance of their vote and urged voters to participate in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, wheel chair facility for differently-abled voters & home voting for voters aged 85 have been ensured in the 5-Handwara Constituency.

A pledge was also administered by RO to participants during the event, encouraging all attendees to promote voter turnout and ensure that every eligible voter in the district exercises their franchise.

Among others, the programme was attended by District Nodal Officer SVEEP CEO Kupwara Ab Majeed Dar; AERO Handwara, Zeeshan Khan; Dy CEO Kupwara, Zonal Nodal Officer SVEEP, ZEO Handwara, Principal BHSS Handwara & students.

## FSTs act tough on MCC Violations, removes illegal campaign material from Government properties in Shopian

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 03

Flying Squad Teams constituted for monitoring Violations of Model Code of Conduct in district Shopian today took concrete steps against MCC Violations in the district.

The teams acted tough and removed illegal campaign materials including flags and banners of political parties and contesting candidates pasted on government properties, at various locations of the Shopian.

The removal action was taken at Tak Mohalla, Shopian, Batapora, Gagren, Eidgah Arhama and Gatipora areas of district where teams removed illegal campaign material from electric poles and rooftops of Government buildings.

The illegal use of gov-

ernment properties for election campaigning by political parties and contesting candidates constitutes a violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) of ECI.

All political parties and contesting candidates are advised to comply with the MCC and desist from using public properties for campaigning and instead are requested to approach authorities to use approved hoarding sites and AV sites of district for campaigning purposes.

6 FST teams, 3 each in Zainapora and Shopian ACs have been constituted by the District Administration on the directions of ECI to keep monitor MCC Violations. The teams are functioning, round the clock for the purpose.

## Bandipora Admin provides Training to Micro Observers

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 3

In preparation to the upcoming Assembly Elections-2024, the Bandipora Administration today organized a comprehensive one-day training session for micro observers at the Mini-Secretariat Bandipora.

The training was provided by District Level Master Trainer (DLMT) Mohd Iqbal Samoon.

During the session, participants were briefed on various polling procedures and their specific roles and responsibilities as micro observers to ensure a smooth and transparent electoral process.

The DLMT on the occasion emphasised the commitment to uphold the integrity of electoral process and equipping poll staff with the necessary skills and knowledge for the successful conduct of the elections.

## DEO Poonch chairs security review meeting

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch Vikas Kundal on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting with senior officials from the Army and police to review security measures taken for the upcoming Assembly elections.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police, officials from the BSF, Army, and the Additional Deputy Commissioner. The focus was on ensuring incident-free elections in this sensitive border district. SSP Mumtaz Ahmed delivered a detailed presentation on the current security environment, law enforcement readiness, and election preparedness in anticipation of the Assembly elections.

Army and paramilitary forces officials briefed the DEO on the security scenario within the district and along the Line of Control (LoC).

The DEO stressed the importance of robust security arrangements on key roads connecting Poonch district, such as Mughal Road and BG-Rajouri Road, ensuring high-level checking with



minimal inconvenience to commuters. He also emphasized the need for additional security at polling stations along the LoC and throughout the district. Additionally, DEO Vikas Kundal highlighted the readiness of bunkers constructed along the LoC as alternative polling stations in case of untoward incidents.

Senior officials from the Army and paramilitary forces provided the DEO with an overview of their action plans for the upcoming elections. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Poonch was

instructed to coordinate closely with security agencies to provide ambulances and other necessary medical services in emergencies.

The discussions emphasized coordinated strategies for maintaining law and order, with a particular focus on intensifying anti-terror operations, disrupting Over Ground Worker (OGW) networks, and strengthening the anti-infiltration grid. The officials underscored the importance of synergy among security forces to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections.

## General Observer for Pampore AC visits Polling Stations, assesses preparedness



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 3

Vadarevu Vinay Chand, the General Observer for Pampore Assembly Constituency (AC) today conducted a visit to various polling stations across Pampore to assess the preparedness and ensure that all necessary facilities are in place for the upcoming elections. During his visit, the General Observer reviewed the arrange-

ments at the polling stations, focusing on the availability of basic amenities, accessibility and overall readiness to handle voters on Election Day. His inspection underscores the commitment to ensuring a smooth and efficient electoral process in the Pampore Assembly Constituency. The visit is in line with the Election Commission of India's guidelines to ensure free, fair and well-managed elections.

## Nari Shakti Choupal held under SVEEP at Arnas



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
REASI, SEPTEMBER 3

Nari Shakti Choupal was held on Tuesday at Community Facilitation Centre, Arnas as part of the "Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation" (SVEEP) initiative. The aim was to reach out to the voters in the far flung areas of district and to maximize voter turnout in the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local masses including women of Self Help Groups, Anganwadi workers and ASHA workers

The SVEEP team, led by Nodal Officer Sachin Sharma, provided comprehensive insights into

the electoral process, encouraging all women to participate in the democratic process and cast their votes on 25 September 2024. He laid emphasis on various measures taken by District Administration to make voting accessible such as Pink Polling Stations for women, ensuring inclusivity in the voting process.

The program culminated with a pledge and mega mass rally by the participants to actively promote voter participation within their communities, aiming for a higher voter turnout in the upcoming elections.

Local Women, Youths, AWW's, ASHA's and Officials of the Social Welfare Department and Rural Department were present.

## Commissioning of EVMs/VVPATs to be held on Sept 05 in Shopian

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer, Shopian has revised the date of commissioning of EVM/VVPATs today. The commissioning was earlier to be held on 4th September 2024 at Strong Room, Mini Secretariat Shopian at 09:00 AM will now be held on 05 September, at the same time and venue.

The notice issued today was in partial modification of the earlier issued notice. This change follows the directions received from the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, concerning the reporting of ECIL Engineers in Shopian District on 04-09-2024 instead of the earlier communicated date of 03-09-2024.

However, as desired by the Returning Officers of 36-Zainapora and 37-Shopian Assembly Constituencies, the pairing of EVMs/VVPATs will be conducted on 04-09-2024 at 10 AM onwards.

All political parties and contesting candidates have been asked to take part in the entire process.

## Labour Commissioner's office asks all commercial establishments of J&K to observe mandatory 'Close Day'

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 03

The Office of Labour Commissioner has asked all the Shops and Commercial Establishment of UT of Jammu and Kashmir to remain entirely closed on one day of the week to observe the mandatory 'Close Day'.

A circular issued by the Office of Labour Commissioner reads, "in terms of Section-13 of the Jammu and Kashmir Shops & Establishment Act, 1966, every Shop or Commercial Establishment of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, registered under the Act, shall remain entirely closed on one day of the week to observe the mandatory Close Day".

It adds that it has come to the notice of this department that most of the Shops or Commercial Establishment owners do not close their shops or establishments on their designated 'Close Days', thereby violating the provisions of J&K

Shops & Establishment Act, 1966.

The circular further reads that Section-13 of the Act also provides that it shall not be lawful for an employer to call an employee at his shop or commercial establishment or any other place for any work in connection with the business of his shop or commercial establishment on a day on which such shop or commercial establishment remains closed and no employer shall make any deduction from the wages of any employee in a shop or commercial establishment on account of Close Day.

"Therefore, in order to ensure strict compliance of Section-13 of the J&K Shops and Establishment Act, 1966 i.e. observance of mandatory 'Close Day' by the Shops and Establishments of every district of UT of Jammu and Kashmir, it is hereby impressed upon all the owners of Shops/Establishments in every district of UT of Jammu

and Kashmir to observe the mandatory "Close Day", as designated under the Act, in their respective Shops/Establishments", circular also reads.

It also adds that all the Assistant Labour Commissioners (ALCs) of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir are hereby instructed to ensure the strict implementation of the Section-13 of the Act in their respective districts and in case any Shop or Establishment is found, violating the said provision or not complying with the above instructions, the appropriate legal action under Section-38 of the Act shall be initiated against the violator. The circular also directs the Assistant Labour Commissioners to take necessary steps to monitor the compliance of the 'Close Day' by the Shops or commercial Establishments in their respective districts and submit the action taken report to the office of Labour Commissioner by or before 3rd of every month.

## Assembly Elections -2024: Rajpora Constituency Gears Up for Free, Fair, and Transparent Elections

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 3

As the Election Day draws near, the Returning Officer of Rajpora, Dr. Peerzada Farhat has initiated the preparation of material kits to be used by poll parties at the polling stations across the Rajpora constituency. Each kit, meticulously assembled, contains over 100 essential items that will support the smooth conduct of the electoral process. The election machinery in Rajpora is working diligently to ensure that the upcoming elections are conducted in a free, fair, and trans-

parent manner. Every effort is being made to facilitate an efficient and orderly voting process, safeguarding the integrity of the democratic system.

"We are committed to delivering a flawless electoral process," said Dr. Basharat Qayoom, District Election Officer Pulwama. "The extensive preparation of these material kits is just one aspect of our larger strategy to ensure that every eligible voter has the opportunity to cast their vote without any hindrance", he said. With the election preparations in full swing, the onus now shifts to the voters of Rajpora AC

. The Returning Officer urges all eligible voters to turn up in large numbers at the polling stations on election day and exercise their right to vote. "Your participation is crucial in strengthening our democracy," Dr Farhat said. "It is now up to each voter to make their voice heard and contribute to the democratic process", he added. The election machinery in Rajpora remains committed to ensuring a secure and accessible voting experience for all. The focus now turns to the voters, whose participation is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy.

## DEO, SSP Baramulla Inspect Security Measures at Degree College Strong Room

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer (DEO) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohammad Zaid Malik, conducted an inspection of the strong room and intermediate strong rooms at Khawjabagh, Baramulla today. The visit was aimed at ensuring the highest standards of security for the election materials.

During the inspection, both officers assessed the current security measures, including surveillance systems, access controls, and overall management of the strong rooms.



## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

## NC, PDP bonhomie...

polls being held after a gap of ten years, the PDP has been left out in the cold.

The CPI(M) has been accommodated in the NC-Congress combine, but the PDP and the Awami National Conference headed by Farooq Abdullah's nephew Muzaffar Shah have been excluded from the seat-sharing equation.

Noted political commentator Prof Noor Baba believes that the political parties are guided by interests and not morals.

"In 2019 (when Article 370 was abrogated), they (NC and PDP) were facing a different situation that was largely external. So they joined together and it was in the common interest of both. Today when elections are round the corner, each party's interest is to undo another and so that they gain more acceptance," Baba said.

He opined that there is always a possibility that the two parties can again come together in future.

"Politics is always an art of possibility. Tomorrow if the alliance (NC-Congress) falls short of the majority, they can again reunite," Baba said.

## Young guns dominate...

Mehbooba Mufti, by nominating her from the Bijbehara assembly seat. Iltija, who holds a master's degree in International Relations, has been a vocal presence on social media, engaging with nearly 10,000 followers on X (formerly Twitter).

Similarly, 39-year-old Waheed Parra, another PDP candidate, has been chosen to contest from Pulwama. Known for his articulate speeches and significant social media following, Parra has previously run for the Srinagar parliamentary seat, although he was defeated by a Congress candidate. Now, he is ready for another political challenge in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly.

Congress has introduced 33-year-old Mohammad Zafarullah as its candidate from the Indrawal seat. Zafarullah, an economist by training, is new to the political scene but faces stiff competition from his equally young rivals.

In Doda West, Congress has fielded 38-year-old Pradeep Bhagat, who holds a Ph.D. in English. Meanwhile, the BSP has chosen Meenakshi Bhagat, a 25-year-old engineering graduate, and 33-year-old Arshad Muthir, a physicist, to contest from Bhandarwah and Pader Nagseni, respectively.

The National Conference has also joined the youth movement by nominating 40-year-old Pooja Thakur, a political science graduate, from the Indrawal seat. Additionally, the Democratic Progressive Azad Party has placed its bet on 28-year-old Fatima Begum, whose education extends to the 12th grade. KNO

## PM Modi arrives in...

Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah for welcoming me at the airport," Modi said in a post on X.

As a special gesture, Prime Minister Modi was received by Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah at the airport. Modi was accorded a warm welcome and given a guard of honour at the airport.

"PM @narendramodi alights in Brunei to a ceremonial welcome. Warmly received by Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

"This visit is special as it is the first ever bilateral visit by an Indian PM and is taking place as the two countries are celebrating 40 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties this year," Jaiswal added.

The prime minister expressed confidence in advancing India's historical ties with Brunei Darussalam and deepening its strategic partnership with Singapore during his three-day visit to the two countries.

Brunei is an important partner in India's 'Act East' Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision. India and Brunei enjoy a friendly relationship which is marked by mutual respect and understanding on bilateral and multilateral issues. The two countries are linked by history, culture and tradition spanning a millennium, the MEA said in a release.

Modi was welcomed by the vibrant Indian community members when he arrived at the hotel where he would be staying during his visit. He interacted with the community members. A little girl presented Modi with his sketch and he gave her his autograph.

Later in the evening, Modi will inaugurate the new chancery premises of the High Commission of India. He will also interact with the Indian community there.

He will also visit an iconic mosque built by the father of the present Sultan.

On Wednesday, Modi will hold bilateral talks with Sultan Hassanali Bolkhiah.

Earlier in his departure statement in New Delhi, Modi said he was embarking on a first-ever bilateral visit to Brunei Darussalam.

"As we celebrate the 40 years of our diplomatic relations, I look forward to my meetings with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanali Bolkhiah and other esteemed members of the Royal family to advance our historical relationship to new heights," Modi said.

The visit will further strengthen India's cooperation with Brunei in all existing sectors, including defence cooperation, trade and investment, energy, space technology, health cooperation, capacity building, culture as well as people-to-people exchanges and explore avenues for cooperation in newer sectors, the MEA earlier said.

From Brunei, Modi will travel to Singapore on Wednesday, where he will meet President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. He would also meet with leaders of Singapore's vibrant business community.

"Both countries are important partners in our Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Vision. I am confident that my visits would further strengthen our partnership with Brunei, Singapore and the larger ASEAN region," Modi said. (PTI)

## Unlike NC, PDP has...

by BJP leader Davinder Singh Rana during a news conference here.

As per the news agency, Mehbooba said that the PDP

was in direct contact with the centre when the coalition government was formed here in 2014, but NC has been doing the things secretly.

"Whatever Rana has uttered, he might be having the knowledge about it," Mehbooba said, adding that the coalition government with BJP was formed with an aim to resolve the Kashmir issue. "However, any alliance with BJP from now onwards is not possible," she said.

"I am the first and only chief minister who invited separatists for talks. Several Union Ministers visited the Hurriyat leaders, but they didn't open the doors," she also said.

About the development in south Kashmir, she said it is PDP only, who has ensured the development of schools, colleges, AIIMS and other works.

Furthermore, while replying to a query, Mehbooba said that the PDP believes in its agenda, which is practical and realistic. "Our agenda will remain relevant till the Kashmir issue is resolved," she added.

## Ram Madhav in Srinagar...

in J&K yet again.

A senior BJP leader, privy to Madhav's arrival in J&K, told news agency, given his expertise in J&K politics, he has been tasked with a mission for sure. "His job is to ensure BJP's slogan of ab ki baar 50 paar is achieved," he said on the condition of anonymity. "He has a script from the party high command in his pocket which is religiously being followed by him."

In Jammu, Madhav played a significant role to keep the party cadre intact amid growing tensions over distribution of mandates. The BJP saw resentment in Jammu over distribution of tickets even as its senior faces Chander Mohan and Kashmiri Singh decided to quit. Besides that, many leaders were upset over mandate distribution in Jammu. Amid brewing anger among party ranks in Jammu, Madhav, sources said played a vital role in "dousing the flames and keeping the flock together" even as some disgruntled party leaders decided to contest as independent.

Now that Madhav is in Kashmir, party leaders assert that he is going to pass on the directions to the party cadre how the party can achieve the target of 50 seats minimum in the upcoming elections. BJP is contesting on all 90 seats including seven seats reserved for Schedule Tribe (ST).

"There is no open alliance by the party this time around but....," another BJP leader, who has been given a mandate to contest from one of the seats in Kashmir, told KNO. "Madhav will meet some people outside BJP as he has a lot of friends in Kashmir."

Madhav's "love-lost" for BJP's Lal Chowk candidate Er Aijaz is not new. He visited Er Aijaz's house at Bahama in 2014 and addressed a rally there. He also had lunch here.

Party sources said that he may be part of one or two rallies with Er Aijaz in the coming days while carrying out the task assigned to him by the BJP high command. "He is here for a few days for sure. There is a meeting scheduled with like-minded people too," a source privy to Madhav's itinerary, said, adding that 'mission is to ensure BJP gains maximum out of the upcoming polls to stake claim on government formation'. "How we can achieve that, Madhav definitely has a script and directions from the high command." KNO

## GoC reviews operational...

Brigade to review operational preparedness", the Army's Fire and Fury Corps said on X.

The officer commended all ranks on their professionalism and steadfastness in executing their duty under challenging conditions.

## BJP leader Devender...

conference in Jammu, as per news agency.

Rana said that it was the BJP leaders including Home Minister Amit Shah who rejected the NC delegation in 2014 with the result they returned empty handed. "The NC was even ready to have a BJP (Hindu) Chief Minister in J&K. Yet, BJP didn't agree for an alliance," he said. "The NC was having only 15 MLA and ready to enter into an alliance with the BJP. I know the person who was to be made BJP CM but won't name him at this point in time."

Rana lashed out at NC stating that the party is demonising the people of Kashmir by playing politics of deceit. "The party claims it will change the name of Shankaracharya. Let me make it clear that till BJP is there in J&K no power can change the name of this hill," he said.

He said that the party wants to set free stone pelters from jails forgetting that "they were behind the dance of death on the streets of Kashmir in 2008 and 2010."

Rana said that it looks odd to see Omar criticising BJP and it seems that he has forgotten he has grown up in the "political lap of BJP." "I believe this party is even ready to forge an alliance with BJP today by ending the pre-poll alliance with Congress. Dr Farooq Abdullah is known for his mood swings. What he says in the morning, he doesn't stick to the same thing by evening," he said.

He said that the fact remains that NC doesn't feel happy over peace and development taking place in J&K. "We will not allow the situation to go back to what it was in 2010 and 2008," Rana said.

## Speed up transfer...

presentation on the agenda item was made by Director NIFT Srinagar highlighting the academic activities of campus and the future plans. He said that NIFT has been working as a knowledge service provider to the Jammu and Kashmir government in the area of design development and positioning of handlooms and handicrafts. He said that several programs and consultancy projects in the areas of design diversification, packaging of crafts, GI registration of crafts etc have been completed in the past two years.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Textiles (through VC), Principal Secretary, Department of Finance, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Director General, NIFT, New Delhi (through VC), Managing Director, J&K SIDCO,

Director, NIFT Srinagar, Additional Secretary, Planning Development & Monitoring Department and other officers from NIFT Srinagar.

## Revolt like situation...

mandate, we will win this seat and repeat Ayodhya performance which INDIA bloc won during parliamentary elections," the leader said.

Since this decision of the screening committee, some senior Congress leaders have raised this issue with the party high command and are asking for change of mandate if the party wants to win this seat. They were of the opinion that Lal was inducted into the party with an assurance of getting mandate from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat. KNO

## Paralympian Sheetal...

after the 17-year-old Sheetal's shot was upgraded following a revision. With just four arrows left, the Indians were trailing by a point with Sarti displaying awesome form even as her partner Bonacina struggled a bit. But the Indian pair held on to emerge winners in the end.

The duo has become first Olympic medalists from Jammu and Kashmir and interestingly it is only the second time that India has won a medal in Paralympics in archery.

Harvinder Singh bagged a bronze at the Tokyo edition of the Games three years ago. Coach Kuldeep Vedhwan praised their perseverance, especially highlighting the role of 17-year-old Sheetal, who became the first Indian woman to win an archery medal at the Paralympics.

This win also makes her one of the youngest medalists in India's Paralympic history. The victory is even more significant when considering the personal challenges faced by both archers.

ABOUT SHEETAL DEVI

Born in 2007 with phocomelia, a rare congenital disorder that results in underdeveloped limbs, has overcome immense physical challenges to become a top-tier archer. Her arms did not fully form, but her indomitable spirit and dedication to the sport have made her a Paralympic medalist at just 17 years old. Sheetal's incredible story began in 2019 at a youth event in Kishtwar, where her exceptional athletic abilities caught the attention of coaches from the Indian Army. Known for her ability to climb trees using only her legs, Sheetal's unique physical strength and determination were undeniable.

Recognizing her potential, the coaches initially tried to fit her with prosthetics but later found inspiration in Matt Stutzman, para-archer who shoots with his legs. Following an intense training regimen, Sheetal quickly mastered archery with her feet. In just 11 months, she was competing worldwide.

She made headlines at the 2022 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, winning gold medals in mixed doubles and women's individual compound competitions. Her achievement not only gained her honours but also challenged society's views of the potential of para-athletes. Sheetal's popularity rose during the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, when she competed in the women's individual compound event.

With a personal best of 703 points, she was one point away from breaking the world record. Her performance was outstanding, keeping her in competition for the top position throughout the ranking process.

Although she nearly missed the world record, her consistency and determination earned her a spot among the world's finest archers. In January 2024, Sheetal's remarkable achievements were recognized when she was awarded the prestigious Arjuna Award, one of India's highest sports honours.

This recognition celebrated not just her success but also the broader significance of her journey—from a remote village to a global icon in para-archery. Behind Sheetal's triumph is a dedicated team that believed in her potential. Her coaches, Abhilasha Chaudhary and Kuldeep Vedwan, played a crucial role in her development with innovative training methods inspired by Matt Stutzman.

RAKESH KUMAR

Rakesh Kumar was born on 13 January, 1985 in Katra, Jammu & Kashmir. His father works as a carpenter whereas his mother is a housewife. In 2010, Rakesh met with an accident and as a result, both of his legs were paralysed. Ever since, Rakesh has remained on a wheelchair, and in the aftermath of the accident, Rakesh even considered committing suicide.

Years have passed since that accident and now Rakesh is one of the most noted athletes in India. Coach Kuldeep Vedwan discovered Rakesh, a raw talent, and nurtured him. In 2017, when an archery centre was established at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex, the coach invited him for a visit to raise awareness about the sport. Rakesh instantly developed an interest in archery and joined the very next day.

Rakesh has practiced archery on a regular basis ever since he took up the sport. Due to his financial crisis, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board provided him with a monthly allowance under the sports scheme.

Rakesh went on to win several medals at the national level, prior to making a mark at the international stage. And those medals eventually ignited hopes in his coach, that Rakesh would become one of the brightest prospects in Indian archery.

PM, LG PRAISE THE DUO

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi today hailed the team spirit demonstrated by athletes Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar by winning a Bronze medal in the Mixed Team Compound Open Archery at the ongoing Paris Paralympics. Modi posted on X: "Teamwork triumphs! Congratulations to Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar on winning the Bronze in Mixed Team Compound Open Archery. They have demonstrated remarkable dexterity and determination. India is delighted by this feat. #Cheer4Bharat" - Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) September 2, 2024.

Lieutenant Manoj Sinha congratulated Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar by winning Bronze in Mixed Team Compound Open Archery even at Paris Paralympics 2024. In a post on X, LG Sinha wrote, "Sheetal Devi & Rakesh Kumar have brought glory to the nation and immense pride to J&K by winning Bronze in Mixed Team Compound Open Archery event at #ParisParalympics2024. You inspire millions across the nation. Many

## SVEEP activities

## conducted in Keegam to promote voter awareness

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SHOPIAN, SEPT 3

In a significant step towards promoting voter awareness and participation, a series of Nukkad Nataks and dramas were organized today under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme in the Keegam Education Zone of district Shopian.

The events took place in two Higher Secondary Schools and eight High Schools within the zone.

The primary objective of these activities was to inspire and motivate the voters in the respective areas to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming elections.

The performances were meticulously crafted to convey the importance of each vote in the democratic process, with themes focusing on the power of a single vote, the impact of voter apathy, and the role of youth in shaping the nation's future.

Students from classes 7th to 12th actively participated in these events, receiving special training aimed at enabling them to effectively engage with and convince the voters in their communities about the significance of their participation in the electoral process.

The students showcased their creativity and dedication, bringing to life real-world scenarios through their performances, which were both thought provoking and impactful.

The events drew considerable attention from local residents, who gathered in large numbers to witness the performances.

The enthusiasm displayed by the students was contagious, with many in the audience expressing their renewed commitment to vote in the forthcoming elections.

At the conclusion of the programme, the Headmasters and Principals of the participating schools delivered inspiring speeches, emphasizing the critical role that young people can play in fostering a vibrant democracy.

They urged the students to take the message of electoral participation to every household, thereby contributing to the success of the democratic process.

congratulations on this remarkable achievement." KNO

## Patients seek govt...

Company to continue with the existing arrangement as per the terms and conditions of the contract agreement for Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-SEHAT (AB-PMJAY-SEHAT) pending resolution of the dispute with the UT Government by the Arbitrator. However, the company has yet to start implementing the scheme, prompting authorities to file a contempt petition against it.

Sanjiv M Gadkar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the State Health Agency, Jammu and Kashmir, told KNO that they have filed a contempt petition against the company. "We have asked public hospitals to operate 24x7, including starting night shifts, and dialysis patients are being referred there for treatment," he said.

He said the patients can call the toll-free number 104 to provide their details, and the agency will arrange their treatment free of charge.

Gadkar said that private hospitals' dues currently amount to around Rs 165 crore. "We have assured all private hospitals that they have been paid regularly for the last four years without delay. However, due to the ongoing case, payments are delayed, and we have assured them that they will be paid immediately once the issue is resolved," he added.

Meanwhile, the government on Tuesday assured uninterrupted treatment under Ayushman Bharat JAY SEHAT.

The statement was issued following various news articles and reports regarding dialysis patients suffering due to the refusal and charging of cash by private hospitals to provide treatments under the Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana (ABJAY) SEHAT.

The government informed the public that IFFCO-TOKIO discontinued the implementation of the scheme effective March 15, 2024, resulting in Empaneled Health Care Providers (EHCPs) not receiving payments for treatments provided under the scheme. Despite the High Court's judgment directing IFFCO-TOKIO to implement the scheme, the company has not done so, causing significant hardships for patients.

The government said it has made every effort to ensure free treatment for patients under the scheme with the support of private EHCPs. "The government remains committed to providing the best health services to all patients and beneficiaries in Jammu & Kashmir," a government spokesperson said.

He said the government has already mobilised its resources to provide treatment to all patients through robust public hospitals, ensuring that no patient is left without care.

"Patients facing denial of treatment at private EHCPs should call the toll-free number 104 to register their names. The State Health Agency (SHA) will ensure these patients receive treatment at nearby public hospitals free of charge under the scheme," the spokesperson said.

He added, "There is no need for dialysis patients to panic or worry about treatment refusals by private EHCPs under the Golden Card. The government of J&K assures that all patients will receive free and timely treatment under the Golden Card at EHCPs."

He said the government of J&K remains committed to the principles of the AB-PMJAY/SEHAT scheme, which aims to provide accessible and affordable healthcare to all. "The health and well-being of citizens remain a top priority, upholding the objectives of the Ayushman Bharat - Jan Arogya Yojana/SEHAT," the spokesperson said. "Patients are urged to call 104 for further details, support and assistance. KNO



## DEO Ganderbal reviews preparations for AMF at polling stations



**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDERBAL, SEPTEMBER 3

As part of the preparations for the Assembly Elections 2024, the District Election Officer (DEO) Ganderbal, Shyambir today chaired a meeting to assess the status of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at all polling stations within the district.

At the outset, the DEO reviewed the current status of AMF at polling stations including seating arrangements considering weather conditions and overall infrastructure readiness.

Key issues discussed during the meeting includ-

ed ensuring Assured Minimum Facilities at all polling stations like ramps, electricity, toilet facility, water supply, wheelchairs, furniture and sanitation to be kept in place to facilitate accessible and inclusive elections.

The Nodal Officer for AMF was directed to ensure that all necessary facilities are in place well before polling day and Polling stations should prominently display basic information to assist voters. Additionally, special polling stations will be set up, including Women, PwD, Youth Manned, Green, Unique and Model Polling Stations, each manned and supervised

by designated officers.

He emphasized the need for polling stations to be accessible, particularly for women, elderly voters, and persons with special abilities, ensuring that no one is left behind in the electoral process.

The DEO urged all involved officials to prioritize these preparations, ensuring that the electoral process is conducted smoothly and efficiently in the district.

The meeting was attended by DyDEO, Abid Iqbal Malik; Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr. Bashir Ahmad; Executive Engineer KDPCL, CEO and other officials.

## DEO flags off cyclethon rally to promote voter awareness under SVEEP in Udhampur

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 3

To raise voter awareness among the common masses ahead of the upcoming General Assembly Elections 2024, District Election Officer Udhampur, Saloni Rai, flagged off a cyclethon rally from the DC Office Complex, here today. The cyclethon rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from a diverse group, including students, officers, and local residents. Participants cycled through different parts of the city, carrying banners and placards emphasizing the significance of voting and urging every eligible citizen to exercise their franchise in the forthcoming elections.

The rally commenced from the DC Office Complex and covered several key locations, including Slathia Chowk, Court Road, Salian Talab, Gole Market etc and culminated back at the DC Office Udhampur. While addressing the participants, the



DEO highlighted the pivotal role that each vote plays in shaping the future of the nation. She encouraged the youth to take the lead in fostering a culture of informed and responsible voting. The DEO further informed that this initiative is part of a series of activities under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program by the Election Commission of India. The program aims to boost voter turnout and ensure an inclusive and participative electoral process.

The event witnessed the active participation of Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, Chief Executive Officer PDA, Devendra Singh Bhau, Assistant Commissioner Development Dr. Ranjit Singh Kotwal, SDM Ramnagar Rafiq Ahmad Jaral, Nodal Officer SVEEP Dr. Preeti Sharma, District Information Officer Rajinder Digna along with other officers, staff members, students and stakeholders.

## Government Degree College Ramgarh hosts SVEEP Workshop

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 3

Government Degree College Ramgarh hosted a SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Workshop for Campus Ambassadors drawn from Higher Education Institutions and designated SVEEP officials.

The workshop was conducted by District Nodal Officer SVEEP Ekshu Sharma (AD Handloom) along with Assembly Constituency Nodal Officers from District Samba.

The workshop was well-represented by officials including BDOs from the Assembly Constituencies in Samba District including BDO Mukesh Kumar AC-69 Ramgarh, CDPO Sheetal AC-70 Samba and BDO Parul Khajuria AC-71 Bari Brahmana.

The event also saw significant participation from SVEEP nodal officers and campus ambassadors from five Government Degree Colleges of Samba District and Central Uni-



versity of Jammu.

Key attendees included Dr. Sweta Chowdhary, Nodal Officer SVEEP SPPND GDC Samba; Pallavi, Nodal Officer SVEEP GDC Purmandal; Dr. Vani Awasthi, Nodal Officer SVEEP GDC Ghagwal; Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Nodal Officer SVEEP Central University Jammu, Prof. Sandeep Kumari, Nodal Officer SVEEP GDC Ramgarh and Dr. Manoj Heer from GDC Vijaypur.

The programme was organised under the guidance and supervision

of Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra, Principal of GDC Ramgarh. The workshop aimed to enhance voter awareness and encourage active participation in the upcoming legislative assembly elections.

Ekshu Sharma provided an insightful session on the responsibilities of a thorough electorate, the electoral process, and the usage of voter helpline apps to facilitate voter engagement. The workshop was attended by all the faculty members and students of the college.

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, SEPTEMBER 3

The picturesque HajiNard village of Karnah in Kupwara district today witnessed a mega Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme to generate awareness regarding value of exercising franchise and ensure larger voter turnout in the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024. During the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program held at Govt. Middle School HajiNard, the District Election Officer (DEO) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan emphasized the importance of students as brand ambassadors for elections. The DEO highlighted that students play a crucial role in motivating their parents and other community members to participate in the voting process. By spreading awareness and encouraging voter turnout, students can significantly contribute to the democratic process.

During the programme, a series of events were



conducted wherein students actively participated in several initiatives aimed at promoting voter awareness and engagement. These activities included a proactive debate and essay competition focused on the importance of voting. Additionally, students created posters and slogans, to encourage their peers and community members to exercise their right to vote.

The highlight of the Mega SVEEP programme at Middle School HajiNard was a scintillating cultural

programme which captivated the audience with its vibrant performances.

The programme performed by students featured a variety of cultural performances, including traditional dances, music, and skits, centered around the theme of voter awareness and the importance of participating in elections. The engaging performances not only entertained but also effectively conveyed the message of the significance of voting, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

## Assembly Elections-2024 Randomisation of polling personnel held in Srinagar



**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 3

In preparations to the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly-2024, the first Randomization of Polling Staff to be deployed at 932 Polling Stations in all Eight Assembly Constituencies across Srinagar District was held today at Conference Hall of DC Office Complex.

The Randomization process was held under the supervision of District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat in presence of the concerned Officers.

The Randomization process was conducted through a dedicated Software as per the prescribed guidelines of Election Commission of India ensuring fairness and impartiality in the selection of Polling Staff.

A database of 12900 employees was Randomized which includes around 55% of reserve staff in order to meet any exigency.

Deputy District Election Officer Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz ul Aziz, Nodal Officer IT/ETPBS, Syed Mujadid and other concerned were present during the Randomisation process.

## RO Handwara inspects several polling stations



**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
HANDWARA, SEPTEMBER 3

Returning Officer AC 5-Handwara & Additional District Magistrate Handwara, Aziz Ahmad Rather today, visited several polling stations of Zachaldara Tehsil including new polling station of Rajpora in order to check the status of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) so that the voters do not face any inconvenience in exercising their vote.

The RO also inspected government schools of Education Zone Rajwar including BMS Wadipora where he interacted with the staff and students. He asked the school authorities to provide all required facilities to students besides quality education.

The ADC was accompanied by Block Development Officer Rajwar and other officers.

Assembly Elections 2024: Bandipora Admin Conducts First Randomisation of Poll Staff  
Bandipora, September 03: In preparation for the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly 2024, the first randomisa-

tion of poll staff was held today at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The randomisation was conducted under the supervision of the District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, using dedicated software designed for this purpose. This step ensures transparency and allocates poll staff to assembly constituencies without human interference.

DEO M. A. Qadri stated that the randomisation marks a pivotal step in preparations for the upcoming assembly elections, ensuring a fair and unbiased allocation of poll staff. This is crucial for maintaining public trust in the electoral process and upholding the highest standards of transparency.

Among others, Deputy District Election Officer Mohammad Rafeeq Bhat, RO 15-Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Wani, Chief Education Officer Kishore Kumar, District Information Officer Aadil Manzoor Wani, DIO Informatics, and other concerned officials were present.

## Assembly Elections-2024: DEO Srinagar reviews Election preparedness

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 3

As part of ongoing measures to ensure smooth and hassle free conduct of General Elections to Legislative Assembly-2024, the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Tuesday chaired a comprehensive meeting at Meeting Hall of DC office Complex, here to review election preparedness in the District.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar, Imtiyaz Ahmad, ADDC, Returning Officers (ROs) of all 08 Assembly Constituencies of Srinagar and designated Nodal Officers monitoring/ overseeing election related activities.

At the outset, the DEO gave a holistic overview of the measures that need to be taken to ensure smooth electoral process in the district including submission of nomination forms by candidates, scrutiny and

withdrawal, besides trainings of polling staff, material management, home voting and postal ballot, SVEEP activities, enforcement of Model Code of Conduct and etc.

During the meeting, Dr. Bhat received the current status of on-going preparations from different units of Election Office, wherein, stress was laid on creating a conducive and convenient atmosphere for voters in Srinagar

Citing the recent directions from the Election Commission of India, DEO passed strict directions to the officers to follow and implement the recent directions as well as the Model Code of Conduct and keep vigil on violations, if any, in the district.

He directed the SVEEP Cell of DEO, to remain on the forefront in creating awareness and mobilising the voters in Srinagar for greater participation in the upcoming elections.

Referring to the aspiring



voters among senior citizens and specially-abled, Dr. Bhat directed the concerned Nodal Officer to ensure smooth participation of such voters through home voting without any

inconvenience.

While reviewing the process of submission of Nomination Papers by the contesting candidates, he said that Returning Officers of the concerned constitu-

encies should remain vigilant and fully committed to their responsibilities.

In addition to this, Dr. Bilal strongly emphasized the safety and security of polling booths, polling staff, poll machinery and other units, and directed for putting in a robust mechanism in order to have a peaceful voting in the district.

The DEO reviewed the status of election training programmes, home voting initiative and other activities. He stressed the need for thorough training of all concerned officials ensuring that every member is well-versed in their election related duties.

The Nodal Officer AMF was instructed to ensure that all polling stations are equipped with assured minimum facilities well in advance.

The DEO asked the Nodal Officer SVEEP to pick up SVEEP events to maximize voter turnout in the assembly elections.

He asked the ROs and Nodal Officers to adhere strictly to the established procedures and guidelines of ECI in performing Election related duties.

He emphasized on the coordination of all election functionaries and said that all the sections involved in the election should work in unison for successful implementation of strategies and plans chalked out for elections.

Dr. Bilal expressed satisfaction over the pace, quality and the quantity of work carried out by the different units, and, as elections approach nearer, he directed the officials to maintain consistency and multiply the efforts as per the need and requirements during the election process.

Earlier, addressing the meeting SSP Srinagar extended full cooperation on behalf of the Police department for free and fair elections in the district.

### NOTICE

I, Burhan Wani S/o Nizam Ud Din Wani applied for change of name bearing consumer ID no. 0101031020562 R/o Umar Colony Sidhra, Jammu from Wali Mohd Sheikh S/o Habib Ullah Sheikh R/o Sidhra, Jammu to Burhan Wani that in case of any dispute arises. I will not claim any legal right of land ownership on the basis of electric connection and department will disconnect the power. Objections if any may be conveyed to Sub Division-III. ED-1, Prade within one week.



## EDITORIAL

## Trauma hospitals: A crisis of neglect

It is a grim reality that the Trauma Hospitals established in Jammu and Kashmir—designed to offer critical, life-saving care in accident-prone regions—are themselves in a state of severe disarray. These facilities, which should be bustling hubs of emergency care, are instead emblematic of administrative neglect and systemic failure. The essence of a trauma hospital is to provide immediate and effective treatment for victims of serious accidents and emergencies. Such hospitals are meant to be equipped with advanced medical technology and staffed with highly trained specialists, including surgeons, anesthesiologists, and emergency care providers. Unfortunately, the Trauma Hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir, as reported in a section of media, constructed at significant expense, stand as stark symbols of inefficacy. Take, for example, the Trauma Hospital at Thathri in Doda district. Despite being built several years ago with the intention of handling severe cases, this facility has been largely ineffective. The absence of essential medical personnel, including general surgeons and anesthesiologists, means that the operation theatre is rarely used. As a result, victims of road accidents and other emergencies are often referred to distant medical colleges, where critical time is lost in their treatment. Similarly, the Trauma Hospital at Khellani, also in Doda district, remains in a state of neglect. Although constructed five to six years ago, it has yet to be fully operational. Despite promises and assurances from various health authorities, the required posts for doctors and paramedical staff remain unfilled. This facility is now used merely as a sub-center and for training purposes, leaving it far from fulfilling its intended role of providing urgent medical care. The situation is equally dire in Ramban district, where the Trauma Hospital operates within the District Hospital Complex. This arrangement reflects a troubling policy paralysis. The trauma hospital, intended to be a standalone emergency care facility, is instead overshadowed by the district hospital, where accident victims are treated due to the lack of staff and equipment in the trauma center. The absence of specialized equipment, such as MRI machines, and specialized surgeons, including neurosurgeons, further exacerbates the problem. The repeated promises and assurances from the Health Department have proven ineffective. Numerous review meetings and discussions with the Road Safety Council have stressed the need for proper staffing and equipment. Yet, the reality on the ground remains grim. Trauma hospitals are supposed to be the frontline defense in emergencies, offering critical care when every second counts. Instead, they are underfunded, understaffed, and inadequately equipped, rendering them ineffective in their primary function. The stark failure to operationalize these trauma centers undermines the entire purpose of their establishment. It highlights a broader issue within the Health Department of Jammu and Kashmir—an institutional failure to prioritize and address the most basic needs of health-care facilities. For these trauma hospitals to serve their intended purpose, immediate action is required. The Health Department must prioritize filling the vacant positions with qualified personnel, equip the hospitals with the necessary technology, and ensure that these facilities are fully functional. Without these crucial steps, the investment in these buildings will continue to be a tragic waste, and the lives that could have been saved will remain a stark reminder of this critical failure.

## Envisioning a feminist world: Building a just and inclusive future

SHOBHA SHUKLA

The 4th Asia Pacific Feminist Forum (APFF) is set to take place next month in Chiang Mai, Thailand, under the theme "Feminist world-building: Creative energies, collective journeys." This theme highlights the importance of uniting people of all genders who are dedicated to defending human rights and promoting gender equality. The forum aims to collectively resist the patriarchal, militarized, and greed-driven world we currently inhabit, envisioning instead a feminist world order.

### What is a Feminist World Order?

A feminist world order envisions a different kind of development model, one rooted in sharing and caring rather than power and violence. Unlike the patriarchal systems that dominate today, where power is concentrated in the hands of a few through violence and exploitation,

a feminist system emphasizes care, solidarity, and the equitable redistribution of power. This system aspires to be socially just and ecologically sustainable, ensuring justice and sustainability for everyone, everywhere. At its core, this vision is grounded in the principles of development justice.

Abia Akram, founder and CEO of the National Forum of Women with Disabilities in Pakistan, describes a feminist world as a place where women and all diverse genders can fully realize their strength and contribute meaningfully at the grassroots level. In her view, such a world would bring about systematic changes through transformative laws and legal practices that are aligned with human rights.

Migrant rights activist Eni Lestari, Chairperson of the International Migrants Alliance, shares her perspective on the feminist world order based on her decades of experience in feminist movements. She observes that neoliberal

globalization has exacerbated structural exploitation, with each new crisis worsening poverty, displacement, and unemployment. Having migrated from Indonesia during the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Eni highlights that migration has become an integral part of the economic development strategy for many capitalist countries, with nearly 300 million people now living as migrants worldwide.

Eni envisions a feminist world as one where economic and political environments treat everyone with fairness and equality, eliminating the need for migration or displacement as a means of survival. In such a world, women would lead and ensure that justice and equality are upheld for all members of society.

### Feminist World: A Joyous and Inclusive World

Ivy Josiah, a women's rights activist and former President and Executive Director of Malaysia's Women's Aid Organisa-

tion, describes a feminist world as a joyous and inclusive one, where no one is left behind—not just as a tagline, but in reality. She believes that if feminists lead the world, it would be a peaceful one, as war is a choice, and so is peace. Feminist World: Anti-Capitalism

A feminist world would stand in stark opposition to capitalism, which prioritizes profit maximization for a tiny elite while subjecting the majority of people and the planet to unbridled exploitation. Ivy argues that a feminist world would not serve the interests of the wealthy few but would instead be characterized by equitable resource distribution.

Shrinking Spaces for Civil Society: Abia Akram raises concerns about the shrinking spaces for civil society organizations under the current political systems. She argues that creating an enabling environment where everyone has equal rights and opportunities is missing from the agendas of many

countries. Budgetary allocations often fail to include a gender perspective, resulting in inadequate resources and opportunities for women and girls with disabilities, transgender individuals, and LGBTQIAP+ communities. Abia asserts that meaningful engagement and equitable representation from feminist movements are essential for ensuring justice for all.

### The Present World Order:

The present world order, driven by patriarchy, fundamentalism, militarism, and corporate capitalism, stands as the anti-thesis of a feminist world order. This model has transferred wealth, power, and resources from the working people to the rich, and from developing countries to wealthy ones. The resulting financial, environmental, food, and energy crises have devastated the lives of women, particularly in the Global South.

### Transformative Shifts of the

### Development Justice Model

The current world order urgently needs to be replaced with a development justice model that addresses the inequalities of wealth, power, and resources between countries, between rich and poor, and between men and women and gender-diverse communities. This model is grounded in five transformative shifts: redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental justice, and accountability to the people.

The Asia Pacific Feminist Forum (APFF) plays a crucial role in advancing the vision of a feminist world order. Organized by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), this tri-annual event brings together feminists and women's rights activists of all genders from across Asia and the Pacific.

(Shobha Shukla is the founding Managing Director and Executive Director of CNS. Views are personal)

## E-commerce giants versus mom-and-pop stores

UTTAM GUPTA

At the launch of the Pahle India Foundation's report 'Net Impact of E-Commerce on Employment and Consumer Welfare in India' on August 21, 2024, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal took pot shot at the world's biggest e-tailer Amazon, for selling products directly to consumers and indulging in "predatory pricing" that could lead to massive growth of e-commerce capturing half of Indian retail market ten years from now. This would adversely impact an estimated 100 million small retailers across the country and in turn, lead to "social disruption".

E-commerce, put simply, is the practice of buying and selling goods or services using the Internet. Predatory pricing involves setting prices for a product at an unrealistically low level to undercut the competition and gain market share. Generally practised by a new player in the market, predatory pricing violates antitrust laws even as it seeks to create a monopoly. Goyal opines that Amazon is selling products on its e-commerce platform at unrealistically low prices which results in heavy losses estimated to be about a billion dollars annually. To fund these losses, it brings the money from its parent but camouflages it

as foreign direct investment (FDI). Any FDI in the country is normally welcome given its contribution to capital formation, accelerating economic growth and adding to the foreign exchange kitty. But, the dollars brought by Amazon don't serve this purpose.

In 2020 also, he had taunted the Amazon boss for the latter's claim to bring a few billion dollars into India. Then, he had charged that Jeff Bezos was bringing money to make up for the huge loss the company was incurring in its operations in the country. He also voiced concern over the harm it was causing to millions of small retailers. Amazon essentially operates the "market-place" model of e-commerce - a special dispensation carved out by the Narendra Modi Government under which 100 per cent FDI is permitted.

The "market-place" is a platform where vendors sell their products to consumers even as its owner (say, Amazon) merely acts as a facilitator. The marketplace owner books orders, raises invoices, arranges deliveries, accepts payments, handles rejections, warehousing and so on but can't undertake "direct selling." Considering that the operator is only expected to provide services instead of a fee, there is no question of any loss.

Yet, Amazon is incurring huge losses. The losses

incurred by Amazon are due to huge discounts on the products sold on the platform as well as expenses on promoting exclusive brands. But the discount is normally given by the seller; this is also true of money spent on promotion. The service provider can't do it unless he is also masquerading as the seller. Do the rules permit direct selling? Under the 2016 guidelines (Press Note PN issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade or DPIIT in the Ministry of Commerce and Industries), the permission for 100 per cent FDI in the "market-place" is subject to two main riders viz, "The entity cannot permit more than 25 per cent of total sales on its platform from one vendor or its group companies."

Further, it can't directly or indirectly influence the sale price." Sans any specification as to "who the vendor is", a firm connected with the "market-place" (either its subsidiary or a joint venture (JV) with an Indian company) is eligible.

In other words, each such entity could control up to 25 per cent of sales on the platform. So, you have companies like Cloutail - an Amazon venture in partnership with a firm owned by Narayan Murthy - operating as lead sellers on the platform. Thus, contrary to the real intent of

the policy which disallowed the e-commerce platform owners from direct selling to individual consumers, the fine print permitted them to do so, albeit through a subsidiary or JV. This is precisely what the e-commerce majors have been doing. They were operating as direct sellers, controlling inventory, giving discounts and so on. A clarification issued by the DPIIT on December 26, 2018, said that "the owner of the marketplace or its subsidiary or its joint venture (JV) with an Indian company can't have ownership of the seller."

Further, "a seller on the platform can't source more than 25 per cent of its inventory from a firm connected with the latter." Foreign investors can circumvent the first rider by having less than 50 per cent shareholding in the seller firm and arguing that they have no control (majority) over the latter. The marketplace owner can also sell his 'own' product through its wholesale arm on the platform. All that the wholesale arm needs to ensure is to restrict supplies to the seller within the 25 per cent threshold. Thus, the clarification hasn't helped much in diluting their role as dominant sellers. No wonder, small traders, whom the e-commerce platform was intended to help have suffered heavily.

This is because the business that should have gone to

the former was appropriated by the latter i.e. the dominant seller owned by itself. The small retailers haven't got relief from the court. In 2019, Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM) complained to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) alleging anti-competitive behaviour by Amazon Seller Services (ASS) and Flipkart Internet Private Limited (FIPL).

It argued that ASS and FIPL had entered into exclusive sales agreements with smartphone makers to sell certain phones through a small number of preferred sellers and offering to pay for part of the discount that such sellers would offer during key sales periods such as Flipkart's big bullion day and Amazon's Prime Day. Prima facie, the CCI agreed with DVM's contention and ordered a probe by the Director General (DG) - Investigation.

ASS and FIPL went up to the Supreme Court (SC) to get the order quashed. In August 2021, dismissing their appeal, the SC ordered "the CCI - DG will complete the probe. In its recent findings, the CCI-DG has charged ASS and FIPL with indulging in 'predatory pricing' and violation of antitrust laws. The latter will appeal against this starting a fresh round of never-ending litigation. In the end (if at all the result comes), Amazon et al will get away with paying

some penalty. How can the government get out of this mess? It could further tighten the rules to say that platform owners can't hold even one per cent equity in the seller. Further, the former's wholesale arm must not supply even one per cent of stocks of the latter. This is an abhorrent idea. It can't be implemented.

Besides, it will be a retrospective change of policy and send a wrong signal. The way forward is to make obvious and straightforward what the bureaucrats had already done in a 'subtle' way. The government should say that '100 per cent FDI is allowed in retail in all forms, single brand or multi-brand retail (MBR), online or offline (currently, while FDI in MBR online is completely barred, in MBR offline, 51 per cent foreign investment is allowed subject to riders which tantamount to completely barring it.

All these distinctions should go. With this, even as Amazon et al can continue with direct selling to consumers alongside running a marketplace model, Indian retailers including the millions of mom-and-pop stores will also have 'unrestrained' access to foreign capital thereby ensuring a level playing field.

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

## Revitalizing the Workplace

SAKSHI SETHI

In today's fast-paced, high-stress work environments, organizations are increasingly seeking ways to support the well-being of their employees. Among the most effective and holistic approaches are the practices of yoga and meditation. These ancient techniques, rooted in mindfulness and physical wellness, have transcended their spiritual origins to become powerful tools for enhancing mental and physical health in modern workplaces. Incorporating yoga and meditation into the daily routine of employees not only benefits individual well-being but also significantly impacts organizational productivity and culture.

The modern workplace is often characterized by high levels of stress, tight deadlines, and the pressure to constantly per-

form. A study published in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology found that employees who participated in the workplace yoga program experienced significant reductions in perceived stress levels. Participants even reported reductions in musculoskeletal pain, particularly in the lower back, neck and shoulders, areas commonly affected by prolonged sitting. The study found that employees who practised yoga reported higher levels of emotional well-being and lower levels of psychological distress. Another study published in the Journal of Managerial Psychology examined the effects of workplace yoga on organizational culture.

It found that yoga contributed to a more positive and supportive work environment by fostering better communication, teamwork and a sense of community among



employees. Many office workers spend long hours sitting at desks, which can lead to a range of physical issues, including poor posture, back pain and repetitive strain injuries. Over time, these physical ailments can decrease productivity and increase absenteeism. Yoga addresses these issues by improving flexibility, strength, and posture. The various poses and stretches in yoga help to relieve tension in the

neck, shoulders and lower back, common problem areas for office workers. Additionally, the emphasis on breathing exercises improves circulation and oxygenation, leading to increased energy levels and overall vitality. This can strengthen workplace relationships, improve communication, and foster a sense of community and mutual support.

A positive work environment, where employees feel valued and con-

nected, leads to higher morale, reduced turnover and a more cohesive and productive team. The benefits of meditation in the workplace are well-documented. Regular meditation practice has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure and improve sleep quality. Employees who meditate regularly are more likely to exhibit improved focus, emotional intelligence, and the ability to manage stress. This not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to a more harmonious and collaborative work environment. Mentally, yoga promotes relaxation and reduces stress by regulating the autonomic nervous system, which governs the body's stress response. The mindful breathing techniques and meditative aspects of yoga help calm the mind, reduce anxiety

and enhance mental clarity.

For employees, this means better focus, improved decision-making and greater resilience in the face of workplace challenges. The cumulative effect of these benefits is a more productive, engaged, and satisfied workforce. The modern workplace is often characterized by high levels of stress, tight deadlines, and the pressure to constantly perform. Moreover, prolonged stress can have severe consequences on employees' mental and physical health, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression and chronic illnesses. Therefore, investing in employee well-being through practices like yoga and meditation is not just a trend but a strategic move that can yield substantial returns.

(The writer is an educator, views expressed are personal)



# Packaged juices harmful, no matter 'healthy' branding, warn experts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Packaged juices, even the ones that come with the label "healthy", are dangerous for health, and are low in nutritional value, warned experts on Tuesday, stressing the need to avoid them.

National Nutrition Week is observed annually from September 1 to September 7. The theme this year is "Nutritious Diets for Everyone".

Packaged juices usually contain minimal fruit pulp and are unhealthy due to their high sugar content, posing the risk of diabetes and obesity -- a rising health concern in the country. Processed juice



also lacks fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

"Packaged juices are not healthy at all. They are high in sugars and low in nutritional value. When it comes to nutrition, the percentage of fruit pulp is low, while artificial fla-

vours, stabilisers, sugar/sweeteners/ fructose syrup are generally very high," Dr. Shweta Gupta, Unit Head- Dietetics, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh told.

Importantly, Gupta also recommended having

fresh fruits instead of juices (both fresh/ packaged). It is because "when juice is prepared, the pulp is removed and along with its vitamins, minerals, fibres also are removed. Hence, to maintain good health avoid juices, especially packaged juices", the expert said.

Dr Sukhvinder Singh Saggi, Director of Minimal Access, GI & Bariatric Surgery at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi told IANS that consuming packaged fruit juices can also lead to weight gain, insulin resistance, and other health issues.

Instead, the expert called for eating fresh fruits that provide a balanced mix of vitamins,

minerals, and antioxidants.

"Despite their healthy branding, packaged fruit juices are often loaded with added sugars and stripped of essential nutrients and fibres that whole fruits provide.

In addition, the processing involved in making these juices often destroys beneficial enzymes and reduces the overall quality of the product," Saggi said.

If you're aiming to maintain a healthy diet, it's best to avoid packaged fruit juices altogether. Opt for whole fruits or freshly squeezed juices instead, as they offer the complete nutritional profile that your body needs.

# Burping too much? Improve your dietary habits, says study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

While belching or burping is a normal physiological function, a new study on Tuesday revealed that dietary habits or a disease could be the reason.

About 10,000 persons participated in an online survey administered by researchers at Osaka Metropolitan University in Japan to investigate the association between the prevalence of belching disorders, comorbidities, and lifestyles.

Based on the results, 151 individuals, or 1.5 per cent of the total, had belching issues. This was more common in men, alcohol drinkers, and people on acid reflux medicine.

"The problem with



belching disorders is that they take a long time to treat and are only practised in a limited number of medical facilities," said Professor Yasuhiro Fujiwara from the varsity's Graduate School of Medicine.

"In the future, the evaluation of the number of times someone chews and the effects of improved dietary habits in patients

with belching disorders will provide a treatment option for patients to perform on their own," Fujiwara said.

Moreover, studies showed a strong association between gastrointestinal disorders, finishing food before feeling full, excessive chewing frequencies (either very low or extremely high), and burp problems.

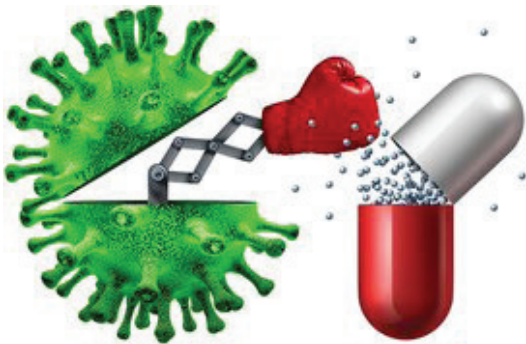
# WHO launches global guidance to curb antibiotic pollution from manufacturing

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

In a bid to curb the rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday published its first-ever guidance on wastewater and solid waste management for antibiotic manufacturing.

AMR poses a looming threat to global health and even food security. Medicines produced at the manufacturing sites can lead to pollution, and also spur new drug-resistant bacteria, undermining the effectiveness of antibiotics globally.

"Pharmaceutical waste from antibiotic manufacturing can facilitate the emergence of new drug-resistant bacteria, which can spread globally and threaten our health. Con-



trolling pollution from antibiotic production contributes to keeping these life-saving medicines effective for everyone," said Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for AMR ad interim.

The new guidance, which comes ahead of the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) high-level meeting on AMR later this month, provides much-needed information on the environmental damage caused

by the manufacturing of medicines.

It showed that consumers worldwide are unaware of how to dispose of antibiotics when they are not used, for example, when they expire or when a course is finished but there is still antibiotic left over.

The new guidance covers all steps from the manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and formula-

tion into finished products, including primary packaging. This can help "regulators, procurers, and inspectors" develop robust antibiotic pollution control in their standards.

The deadly AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to medicines. It can increase the risk of mortality as the infections can become difficult to treat. The WHO estimates that bacterial AMR was directly responsible for 1.27 million global deaths in 2019 and contributed to 4.95 million deaths.

While the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials are the major reasons for the rise in AMR, many people around the world also do not have access to essential antimicrobial medicines.

# S. Korea asks patients with mild illness to visit community hospitals amid doctors strike

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, SEP 3

The South Korean health ministry on Tuesday asked patients with mild illness to visit community hospitals during the Chuseok holiday, as some doctors have warned of a potential disruption of emergency care at major hospitals due to a prolonged walkout by trainee doctors.

The Chuseok fall harvest holiday runs from September 14-18.

In a rare acknowledgment of a shortage of trainee doctors at emergency rooms, Jung Tong-ryoung, a senior official at the health ministry, said there is a "vacuum" in medical personnel at emergency units at major hospitals, Yonhap news agency reported.

There had been some 1,500 senior doctors and 500 trainee doctors at about 180 major hospitals before the junior doctors left their worksites in late February in protest of the government's medical reform, Jung said. With the trainee doctors being absent, Jung said, "There is a vacuum of about 25 per cent (medi-



cal personnel)."

Health authorities have been preparing for the Chuseok holiday, including deploying military and public doctors to emergency rooms amid concerns over a possible disruption in medical services.

"Medical specialists from other departments are also working in emergency rooms to fill the vacancies, but it is not easy to operate emergency rooms at full capacity as in the past," Jung said.

The government, meanwhile, plans to have around 4,000 clinics and hospitals open during the holiday, which runs from Sept. 14 through 18, while charging more for non-critical visits to emergency rooms.

Earlier this week, the ministry said that the number of doctors, including specialists and junior doctors, currently working in emergency rooms stands at 73.4 per cent of the usual capacity.

# Here's how more screen time, no exercise may push you to digital dementia

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Does your work keep you glued to screens for a longer period? Beware, coupled with no physical activity, it might take a toll on your brain's cognitive functions and lead to digital dementia, warned experts on Tuesday.

The term "digital dementia" means memory issues and cognitive deterioration brought on by over-dependence on digital devices like smartphones, computers, etc.

"Long periods of screen time can affect the brain's cognitive functions," Dr Vinayak Kshirsagar, Senior Laparoscopic Surgeon, DPU Super Speciality Hospital, Pimpri, Pune told IANS.

"This is basically

because of the decreased attention span and prolonged screen time, which often involves sitting in a difficult posture on the bed or couch. This can cause various health-related problems, such as obesity, body aches, spine problems, and backaches," he said.

Dementia is a broad term for a range of cognitive impairments that significantly affect an individual's daily functioning.

While more common among older people, recent research has highlighted the association between a sedentary lifestyle and an increased risk of developing dementia, especially in younger adults. It emphasises the importance of physical activity in both prevention and management.



A 2022 study investigated the relationship between total dementia risk and sedentary activities, such as watching television and using computers, and found that regardless of physical activ-

ity levels, spending more time engaged in sedentary activities increases the risk of developing dementia.

Another study found individuals who used screens for more than four hours a day had a

higher chance of developing vascular dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

"The symptoms of digital dementia include short-term memory loss, trouble remembering words and difficulty in multitask-

ing, a decline of attention span and learning capacity. Its consequences are aggravated by a sedentary lifestyle characterised by long periods of inactivity when the person is tied to his desk and screen for a majority of the day," Dr. Pawan Ojha, Director - Neurology, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi, told IANS.

Prolonged periods of inactivity such as sitting or lying down while awake, are increasingly common in modern society. This lifestyle has been linked to various health issues, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia.

"Physical inactivity can lead to structural changes in the brain, inflammation and reduces blood flow to the brain," Dr (Lt Gen)

CS Narayanan, VSM Chairman, Institute of Neurosciences, Manipal Hospital Dwarka, New Delhi, told.

"This can also lead to changes in behavioural patterns because continuous digital processing means our memory isn't being trained for short and fast-paced tasks. We're not using all of our neuronal channels in the brain as much, which can lead to excessive anxiety, stress levels, and possible changes in behavioural patterns," Kshirsagar said.

Narayanan said conditions like obesity and diabetes, which are exacerbated by inactivity, are also known risk factors for dementia.

Incorporating short, frequent breaks from sitting throughout the day

can help reduce sedentary time. Simple activities like standing up, stretching, or taking a short walk can make a significant difference.

"Regular exercise, particularly aerobic activity, can improve cardiovascular health, reduce inflammation, and enhance neuroplasticity -- the brain's ability to reorganise itself by forming new neural connections.

These benefits are critical in maintaining cognitive function and reducing the risk of dementia," the expert said.

The experts also suggested moderate use of screen time. For general cognitive health, it's critical to utilize digital technology carefully and have a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

# Study shows kidney, diabetes drug may boost survival in heart failure patients

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Finerenone -- a medication used to reduce the risk of kidney function decline -- can lower death risk and boost survival in patients with heart failure, which impacts more than 60 million people globally, according to a study.

The gradual loss of the heart's capacity to pump and fill with blood is known as heart failure. With no choices for treatment, around half of all heart failure patients have modestly

diminished or retained left ventricular ejection fraction.

The study by Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US pointed out finerenone, a non-steroidal mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist, as a potential new treatment option for patients. Finerenone is also used to treat chronic kidney disease (CKD) in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Principal investigator and corresponding author Scott Solomon, at Mass General Brigham noted that the drug represents a new

drug class that may become a pillar of therapy for this disease.

The team conducted an international-level clinical trial by dividing over 6,000 patients into two groups -- the group that used Finerenone and the placebo group.

The finerenone group experienced fewer heart failure episodes and cardiovascular deaths (842) than the placebo group (1,024).

The percentage of patients who died from cardiovascular causes was 8.1 per cent and 8.7 per cent.

# Women less likely to screen for breast cancer over false-positive mammograms

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

While early detection of breast cancer via mammograms -- an x-ray scan -- is crucial for better treatment outcomes, false positive results, meaning which do not result in a cancer diagnosis, are likely to deter women from further screenings, according to a study.

Researchers from the University of California-Davis in the US said that abnormal findings on mammograms can lead to women being recalled for additional imaging and biopsies, many of which



turn out to be false positives.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide.

Of more than 3.5 million screening mammograms on over 1 million patients aged 40 to 73, about 77

per cent of women with a negative result from a mammogram returned for subsequent screening.

However, the percentage dropped to 61 per cent after a false-positive finding requiring another mammogram in six

months to confirm the results and 67 per cent if a biopsy was recommended, revealed the research, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

"The finding raises concerns about the potential unintended consequence of false-positive results, where women may avoid screening mammograms in the future," said lead author Diana Miglioretti, cancer centre researcher at UC Davis.

It can also have financial implications for patients and cause significant emotional anxiety, said the team.

The impact was even

more pronounced for women who received false-positive results on two consecutive mammograms recommending short-interval follow-up -- only 56 per cent returned their next screening mammogram, they added, expressing concern.

"It is important for women with false-positive results to continue screening every one to two years," Miglioretti said, "Having a false-positive result, especially if it results in a diagnosis of benign breast disease, is associated with an increased risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer in the future."



# Many parties example of what happens when organisations don't follow internal democracy: Modi

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took a swipe at opposition parties, saying many of them are examples of what happens when political organisations do not follow internal democracy. Speaking at the launch of the BJP's membership drive, he said the 33 per cent reservation for women in assemblies and Lok Sabha will get implemented when the BJP build itself further through this campaign.

During the BJP's membership drive held every six years, existing memberships are renewed and new members are enrolled into its fold. BJP president J P Nadda enrolled Modi as the first member, marking the launch of the drive.

The prime minister asked BJP members to think innovatively and make border villages fortresses for the party. PM Modi said the new generation is not aware of headlines about scams 10 years ago, and asked party

leaders to target the 18-25 year age group during the membership drive.

Addressing the event, PM Modi outlined the distinctiveness of the BJP in the Indian political landscape, underscoring its adherence to democratic values and internal democracy. "From the days of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh to the present, we have strived to bring a new political culture to the country," PM Modi stated.

He highlighted that for any political organization entrusted with power by the people, it is essential to embody and nurture democratic values internally. "BJP is the only party that expands its work by following democratic processes in letter and spirit, as per the constitution of our party, continuously making itself capable of living up to the hopes and aspirations of the common people," said PM Modi.

Reflecting on the historical journey of the BJP, PM Modi recalled the early days when party workers, with unwavering dedica-



tion, would paint lotus symbols on walls, signifying their commitment and belief.

"We are those people who painted lotus on the walls with devotion because we believed that the lotus painted on the walls will someday be painted on the hearts too," said PM Modi. Even today, in some states, Bharatiya Janata Party workers live the same life and fight for their ideals, he added.

Mentioning the 33% reservation for women in assemblies and Parliament, PM Modi also suggested that the Sadasyta Abhiyan should focus on including individuals who

can help maximize the success of women candidates in the Party.

While concluding his address, PM Modi underscored the commitment and emotion behind the 'Sadasyta Abhiyan', and said, "This 'Sadasyta Abhiyan' isn't just a ritual. It's an expansion of our family. It isn't a game of numbers. It doesn't matter the numbers we achieve. This membership drive is an ideological and emotional movement.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted that the BJP's membership drive will again launch the campaign of "Bharat Vijay" and

"Bhajapa Vijay". Speaking at the launch of the party's membership drive, he said the programme will reinvigorate the organisation. The home minister said the BJP will work to enrol people from every age group, caste and religion during the drive. Shah said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India made a new mark in every sector and resolved long-pending matters such as the Ram Janmabhoomi issue.

He lauded Modi for institutionalising the party's membership drive and recalled the prime minister's work as its senior organisation leader in Gujarat.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended the credibility crisis in politics and the BJP is seen as the most credible party. The party has consistently followed its ideology and works to build society, he said.

Party president J P Nadda said the BJP is the only political organisation

which is run democratically and follows its constitution.

Taking a swipe at the rivals, he said the BJP does not work from home in a clandestine way but follows a transparent process. With the party set to renew membership of its existing members and enrol new members in line with its constitutional requirement, Shah echoed Nadda, saying no other party follows its membership process in a truthful and democratic manner like the BJP. The BJP is nourished by its members, Shah said, asserting that the party's lively organisation spawns its brimming enthusiasm.

Both Nadda and Shah expressed confidence that the party will cross the milestone of 10 crore members in the drive as it did for the first time in 2014.

During a similar membership drive in 2014 and afterwards, the BJP went on to form governments in several states, including in some for the first time.

## CBSE conducts surprise inspections across 27 schools in Rajasthan, Delhi



AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Tuesday carried out a series of surprise inspections across 27 schools in Rajasthan and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi to curb the menace of dummy schools.

The inspections were carried out by 27 teams, each comprising of a CBSE officer and a Principal from a CBSE-affiliated school. The inspections were meticulously planned and executed in a synchronized manner, taking place simultaneously across all selected schools within a short timeframe, an official statement said.

These inspections were

aimed at ensuring that the schools affiliated with the Board are strictly adhering to the norms and Bye-Laws set forth by CBSE, it said. This approach was adopted to maintain the element of surprise, thereby ensuring that the information gathered about the operations and compliance of the schools is accurate and reflective of their everyday functioning, the CBSE said.

The findings from these inspections will be reviewed comprehensively, and appropriate action will be taken in cases of non-compliance, it said adding that it will continue to conduct such surprise inspections to ensure that affiliated schools uphold the quality and standards expected by the Board.

## Rahul Gandhi, Kharge to unveil Sangli leader Patangrao Kadam's statue on Sep 5

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, SEP 3

Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and party President Mallikarjun Kharge, who is also Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, shall visit Sangli on September 5, giving a booster to the state unit ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, officials said here on Tuesday.

During the trip, they shall unveil a statue of the late Congress heavyweight and ex-minister Patangrao Kadam there, in the likely presence of Maha Vikas Aghadi allies, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) President Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray.

Top leaders including state Congress President

Nana F. Patole, Leader of the Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar, Congress Legislature Party Leader Balasaheb Thorat, former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, and others shall remain present.

Both Sharad Pawar and Thackeray have been invited to the event, but their response is not known yet, said a party leader in Mumbai.

The late Patangrao Kadam (January 8, 1944 - March 9, 2018), was an MLA from the Sangli district, had been a minister in the erstwhile Democratic Front government comprising Congress and undivided NCP, and served as President of Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC).

A highly respected

leader, he was the founder of the Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, an educational empire headquartered in Pune, with branches all over India, besides being a big player in the state's cooperative sector.

His statue shall be inaugurated at the Sonhira Sugar Factory in Kadegaon, coinciding with Teacher's Day on 5 September.

Incidentally, Kadam's son Vishwajeet Kadam is also a senior Congress leader and lords over the party in the Sangli district and surroundings.

The event is likely to be attended by AICC General Secretary in-charge of Maharashtra Ramesh Chennithala, AICC GS (Organisation) K C Venugopal and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

## Land survey will create more disputes in Bihar: Prashant Kishor

AGENCIES  
PATNA, SEP 3

Jan Suraaj Chief Prashant Kishor said on Tuesday that the ongoing land survey in Bihar will create more disputes in the state.

"The way in which the survey is being conducted could lead to widespread land ownership disputes within the next six months. The survey was initiated hastily, without proper preparation or allocation of resources," Kishor said while interacting with the media persons in Kaimur.

He said that Nitish Kumar is probably playing the last inning of his political career.

"I have a great relationship with him, but I won't hesitate to say that he has made a blunder. The Bihar government has done no preparations to conduct a



land survey. At present, 33 per cent of lands are disputed in Bihar and after the survey, it will double," he said.

He also elaborated on the potential issues arising from the ongoing land survey in Bihar, pointing out that many plots of land are registered under the names of only one family member.

"This situation can lead

to disputes if that individual is unwilling to share the property with other family members or refuses to provide the necessary

No Objection Certificates (NOCs) required for any changes in land ownership," he said.

He said that these challenges, among others, could complicate the survey process, for which the state's Land Reforms

and Revenue Department is unprepared.

He also emphasised that the lack of preparation and foresight in handling these complexities could further escalate land-related disputes and create chaos at the community level.

He noted that the digitisation of land records in Bihar was recently carried out by an external agency, which operated under a system that incentivised speed over accuracy - rewarding more digitisation work with more money.

"This rushed approach led to numerous errors, such as lands being incorrectly transferred between family members, causing significant confusion and chaos at the village level," Kishor said.

He said in an attempt to rectify these mistakes, the government launched another land survey with-

out adequate preparation, which will further exacerbate land-related disputes in the future.

Meanwhile, in a significant political development, Prashant Kishor said that his political organization - Jan Suraaj - would contest the upcoming Ramgarh by-election.

He expressed confidence stating that Jan Suraj's candidate would "definitely" win.

"Only a few families have contested and won elections in most seats in Kaimur. However, this time, I would plan to personally devise a strategy to ensure the success of the Jan Suraaj candidate and secure a seat in the Vidhan Sabha. The people of Ramgarh would now have the opportunity to vote for their own children rather than the descendants of established political leaders," he said.

## CM Shinde makes strong pitch for e-governance for people's benefit

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, SEP 3

Emphasising the importance of e-governance, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday said it was because of its swift use that the state government could deposit the first two instalments of Rs 1,500 each directly into the bank accounts of eligible women beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana in a very short time.

"E-governance is not just a technology but a medium to change the mindset of people. This

leads to transparency and trust in the administration among the common citizens. It has become possible to register the property in relation to buying and selling of houses in any deputy registrar's office in Maharashtra. The process of buying and selling property online is going on smoothly due to e-governance," he added. CM Shinde was speaking at the inauguration function of the 27th National Conference on e-governance titled 'Developed India: Safe and Sustainable e-Service Delivery'.

The CM said the state



government was aggressively implementing e-governance practices taking a

cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "minimum government, maximum administration" principle. The Chief Minister further said that now the entire filing work is being done in the Chief Minister's Secretariat through the e-office. In future, the work in the ministries will be done through e-office. He also added that all the services are being provided online under Seva Adhikar in the state.

CM Shinde said that a central registration centre has been started near the entrance of the Mantralaya and all letters

are being accepted here. This is saving people's time. In this regard, the government has planned the development of a data centre hub in Navi Mumbai in the near future.

The Chief Minister further said, "Maharashtra is the first state to implement an e-governance system and we have also prepared an information technology policy for this and also contemplated using artificial intelligence. The AI will be used in industry, agriculture, and health along with speeding up the administrative work. The sole objective is that the

common people should get justice by reducing the administrative hassles and procedural delays. The government wants the administration to be more responsive, inclusive and citizen-centric in future," he added.

On this occasion, the name of the General Administration Department was changed from 'Administrative Reforms, Structure and Procedures' to 'Administrative Innovation, Excellence and Good Governance'. The announcement in this regard was made by the Chief Minister.

## Under pressure, Kolkata Police lift barricades to allow junior doctors to march ahead

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, SEP 3

Nearly 24 hours after junior doctors began a sit-in demonstration after being prevented by the cops from marching towards the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar demanding the resignation of Commissioner Vineet Kumar Goyal, the police authorities on Tuesday afternoon finally succumbed to the pressure of the agitators and allowed them to proceed by removing the barricades put up on B.B. Ganguly Street in



Central Kolkata.

At around 3 p.m. on Tuesday, the tall barricades set up to prevent the protesters -- who were

also joined by the common people -- from marching forward were lifted, allowing the agitators to proceed further towards the

next barricade just near the entry gate of the city police headquarters.

From the next point, a delegation of 22 protesters from the medical fraternity will go inside the police headquarters and handover a memorandum to Commissioner Goyal seeking his resignation.

The junior doctors, who have been receiving a lot of support from the common people and the student community alike, have accused the police of taking inadequate measures during its probe into the ghastly rape and

murder of a trainee doctor whose body was found in the seminar hall of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on the morning of August 9.

The Calcutta High Court later handed over the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"It is our moral victory. We had said that we will continue with our sit-in demonstration for an indefinite period. As junior doctors, we are used to long duty hours for 24-36 hours," said a protester.

## No challenge: BJP's Manoj Tiwari takes potshots at Cong-AAP 'likely' alliance in Haryana

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari on Tuesday mocked the potential alliance between the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections, asserting that such an alliance would not pose any threat to the BJP.

Speaking to a news agency, Tiwari remarked, "If Congress sees the need for an

alliance in Haryana, it means the public is now showing its support for the BJP."

He suggested that the alliance signals Congress's desperation in the face of rising BJP popularity in Haryana.

The Lok Sabha MP expressed confidence in the BJP's ability to win the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections, stating that the Congress-AAP alliance would not pose a significant challenge.

"There is no chal-

lenge. Everyone saw that they formed an alliance in Delhi, yet they were defeated in all seven seats, with the same margin that we would have won if they had fought separately," Tiwari said.

The BJP MP further criticised Congress for its alliance with the National Conference (NC) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), stating that the move has damaged the party's prospects in Haryana.



# PM MODI INAUGURATES NEW INDIAN HC CHANCERY IN BRUNEI AMID CHANTS OF 'BHARAT MATA KI JAI'

AGENCIES  
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN  
(BRUNEI), SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated the new Chancery of the Indian High Commission in Brunei amid a rousing welcome and chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' from members of the Indian diaspora present at the venue.

The new facility, which has come up at the Jalan Duta Diplomatic Enclave, is adjacent to the US Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan.

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar were also present on the occasion.

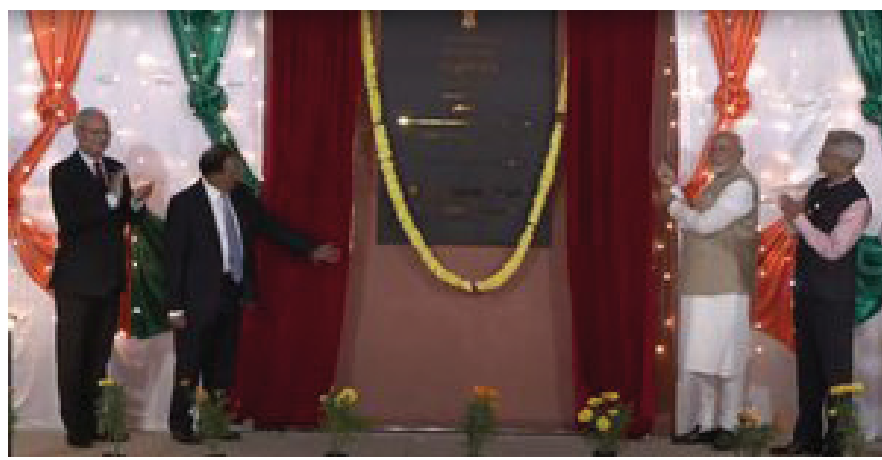
Earlier, PM Modi arrived at the Bandar Seri Begawan Airport Tuesday

afternoon as he began his two-day visit to Brunei Darussalam - the first ever bilateral trip by an Indian PM to the southeast Asian nation - at the invitation of Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah.

The historic visit of the Prime Minister coincides with the 40th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Brunei.

Upon arrival, Prime Minister Modi was accorded a ceremonial welcome and warmly received by Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Crown Prince and Senior Minister of the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei.

"Landed in Brunei Darussalam. Looking forward to strong ties between our nations, especially in boosting commercial and cultural linkages.



I thank Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah for welcoming me at the airport," PM Modi posted on X after his arrival.

As he arrived at the hotel, PM Modi got a massive reception from members of the Indian community in the country, including several children.

During his visit, the Prime Minister will engage in bilateral discussions focusing on exploring new areas for cooperation in multiple areas like defence, trade and investment, energy, space technology, health, capacity building, culture and vibrant people-to-people exchanges.

Last month, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar had met Erywan Pehin Yusof, Foreign Minister of Brunei on the sidelines of ASEAN meetings in Vientiane and jointly launched the logo celebrating 40 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Brunei Sultan met for the first time on the sidelines of 25th ASEAN Summit at Nay Pyi Taw in November 2014.

They met once again during the 2017 East Asia Summit held in Manila.

In January 2018, the Brunei Sultan, along with the 10 ASEAN Heads of State and Government, visited India for the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. The leaders were also 'Guests of Honour' at India's 69th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2018.

In 2013, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Brunei Darussalam to participate in the 11th ASEAN-India Summit and the 8th EAS Summit.

Crowned as the 29th Sultan and Yang Di-Pertu-

an of Brunei Darussalam in August 1968, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah undertook his first State Visit to India in September, 1992. His second State Visit to India came in May, 2008.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Brunei Darussalam government has been supportive of India's 'Look East' and 'Act East' policies for expansion and deepening of cooperation with ASEAN.

"Brunei is an important partner for India's Act East Policy and our vision for the Indo-Pacific, and as we mark a decade of our 'Act East' Policy this year, the visit assumes additional significance.

Brunei has been our country coordinator in ASEAN from 2012 to 2015 and played a key role in our further engagements

with ASEAN and continues to do so today," Jaideep Mazumdar, MEA Secretary (East), said ahead of the PM's landmark visit.

There are currently around 14,500 Indians living in Brunei Darussalam out of the total population of about 450,500 with more than half of the Indian expatriates being semi and unskilled workers, who work in oil and gas industries construction, retail businesses, etc. There is also a substantial number of Indian doctors and teachers working in Brunei.

After Brunei, PM Modi will travel to Singapore - a country with which India is exploring enhanced cooperation in digital, skill development, sustainability, healthcare, connectivity and advanced manufacturing areas.

## 293 killed, 564 injured in monsoon rain-related accidents in Pakistan

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD, SEP 3

A total of 293 people have been killed and 564 others injured in monsoon rain-triggered accidents in Pakistan in the past two months as heavy downpours continued to wreak havoc in parts of the country, according to the National Disaster Management Authority.

Heavy rains have partially or fully damaged 19,572 houses, 39 bridges and several schools across the country, said the agency, adding that nearly 1,077 livestock have also perished from July 1 to August 31, Xinhua



news agency reported. Most of the damages and casualties were reported from the eastern Punjab province, where 112 people lost their lives and 302 others sustained injuries due to torrential rains, followed by the

northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with 88 deaths and 129 injuries. The agency said a fresh spell of moderate to heavy rainfall was expected in parts of Pakistan in the coming days.

## At least 129 killed, 59 injured in jailbreak attempt in Congo

AGENCIES  
KINSHASA, SEP 3

At least 129 prisoners were killed and 59 others injured in an escape attempt at the Makala Central Prison in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the government announced on Tuesday.

The provisional death toll has reached 129, including 24 by gunfire after a "warning", and the others by "shoving or suffocation", said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Security, Jacquemain Shabani, specifying that at least 59 injured inmates were taken care of by the government, as well



as some women who had been reportedly raped. Shabani said the administrative building, the registry, the infirmary, and food depots were set on fire during the jail break attempt. Gunshots were heard for several hours at the Makala

Central Prison in the early hours of Monday, witnesses told Xinhua.

In July, Justice Minister Constant Mutamba decided that 1,284 inmates at the Makala Central Prison would be granted conditional release to ease overcrowding.

## Death toll from floods in Yemen's Hodeidah province rises to 95

AGENCIES  
SANAA, SEP 3

The death toll after a month of heavy rains and floods in Yemen's Hodeidah province has risen to 95, with 34 others injured, Houthi-run al-Masirah TV reported on Tuesday.

Dozens of houses across the province have collapsed or been swept away by the heavy rains and floods, said the television station, citing a statement from a Houthi emergency committee, without providing a specific number, Xinhua news agency reported.

Two weeks ago, the local health authorities in Hodeidah reported

that at least 45 people were killed and more than 12,000 houses damaged due to the heavy rains and floods.

In the neighbouring province of Al-Mahwit, Houthi television said that the search for 20 missing people was still ongoing in the Malhan district, where rains, floods, and landslides killed at least 30, swept away dozens of houses and cut off roads to the district last week.

The World Health Organisation has warned of the possible spread of diseases due to contaminated water and poor sanitation during the rainy season in the conflict-affected country.

## Palestinian death toll in Gaza rises to 40,786: Health authorities

AGENCIES  
GAZA, SEP 3

The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip has risen to 40,786, Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement on Monday.

During the past 24 hours, the Israeli military killed 48 people and wounded 70 others, bringing the total death toll to 40,786 and injuries to 94,224 since the Palestinian-Israeli conflict broke out in early October 2023, it added.



Meanwhile, initial reporting shows over 86,000 children in the central Gaza Strip received a polio vaccine on Sunday,

the first day of the polio campaign in the coastal enclave, Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adha-

nom Ghebreyesus said on social media platform X on Monday.

"We call on all parties to continue fulfilling their commitment on the humanitarian pauses so that all children in need get the vaccine," he said.

Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on Oct. 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostage.

## Netanyahu vows heavy price for Hamas after hostages found dead in Gaza tunnel

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM, SEP 3

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Monday that Hamas will "pay a heavy price" for the alleged killing of six hostages in a Gaza tunnel over the weekend.

"Israel will not ignore this massacre. Hamas will pay a very heavy price for this," Netanyahu said in a news conference, adding that the price will be exacted "in the short term."

On Sunday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said six bodies, including two

women and four men, were discovered on Saturday in an underground tunnel in the Rafah area, southern Gaza.

According to an initial assessment by the IDF, the hostages were estimated to be brutally murdered by Hamas terrorists 48-72 hours before the Israeli troops reached them.

All six were taken hostage during Hamas' surprise attack on Oct 7, 2023, which left around 1,200 people dead and approximately 250 others captured.

Meanwhile, Hamas

confirmed in a press statement that the bodies were found by the Israeli army in a tunnel in Rafah but noted that they "were killed by Israeli shelling."

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis rallied across Israel on Sunday and Monday, demanding Netanyahu negotiate a ceasefire with Hamas to secure the return of hostages held in Gaza.

In Monday's news conference, Netanyahu also said Israel is "not going to withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor."

"We need to have it under our control," which is critical for preventing future weapons smuggling from Egypt to Gaza, he said, calling for unity within his cabinet concerning the matter.

The Israeli army took control of the Philadelphi Corridor, a 100-meter wide and 14-km-long buffer zone along the Egypt-Gaza border, and the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing in May, which halted the entry of humanitarian aid trucks from Egypt into Gaza.

## AUSTRALIANS WARNED TO PREPARE FOR FIRES, CYCLONES, FLOODS DURING HIGH-RISK SEASON

AGENCIES  
CANBERRA, SEP 3

Australians have been told to prepare for possible cyclones, storms, fires and flooding during the upcoming high-risk weather season.

Minister for Emergency Management Jenny McAllister on Tuesday said the federal government is preparing for the worst-case disaster scenarios as the nation heads into warmer months of the year.

She said Australians need to be thinking about a range of perils in the high-risk weather season, which traditionally runs from October through April, Xinhua news agency reported.



"Fire is one of them. But we are, of course, thinking about the cyclone season and we're thinking about the risk of severe storms like some of the rain and flooding that we've seen in recent days," McAllister

told Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio.

"Based on the available data, we may anticipate increasingly frequent and intense extreme weather events in the upcoming

years due to climate change. Therefore, as a community, we do need to begin preparing for that reality," Xinhua news agency reported, quoting ABC radio.

Over 100,000 prop-

erties lost electricity as destructive winds and heavy rainfall hit Australia's southeast in late August and early September.

Two people were killed by falling trees, one each in the states of New South Wales and Victoria, and towns were evacuated in the island state of Tasmania due to major flooding.

McAllister said on Tuesday that staff from the National Situation Room -- the government's crisis management and coordination facility -- are currently engaged in briefings with authorities from states and territories in advance of the high-risk season.

## 'Walls or militarising borders' can't solve immigration plight, says Mexican president

AGENCIES  
MEXICO CITY, SEP 3

The solution to the problem of mass immigration lies in addressing the root causes, not in "walls or militarizing borders," Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has said.

The best way to tackle immigration was "supporting the countries of Central America and the Caribbean with poor communities," the president said as he delivered his sixth and last state of the nation address to thousands of citizens gathered at Mexico City's central square on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Those who abandon their family, their community, do not do it out of



pleasure, they do it out of necessity," he said, stressing the need to create jobs in underdeveloped regions to slow immigration.

Lopez Obrador said that while the United States decided on a plan to address immigration, Mexico "must lead by example," and that was why it would continue to promote welfare and

development programs in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia, Belize and Cuba.

"We are helping through Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) and Youth Building the Future programs, and other actions" and "we will continue to do so," he said, referring to two Mexico-led development programs.



# India's medium-term outlook remains positive amid strong growth: World Bank

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Indian economy continues to grow at a healthy pace despite challenging global conditions, a World Bank report said on Tuesday, adding that the country's medium-term outlook remains positive.



Amid tough external conditions, the country remains the fastest-growing major economy and grew at a rapid pace of 8.2 percent in FY23/FY24.

Growth is forecast to reach 7 per cent in FY24/FY25 and remain strong in FY25/FY26 and FY26/FY27, said the World Bank.

With robust revenue growth and further fiscal consolidation, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to decline from 83.9 per cent in FY23/24 to 82 per cent by FY26/27. The current

account deficit is expected to remain at around 1-1.6 per cent of GDP up to FY26/FY27, according to the World Bank's latest India Development Update (IDU). "India's robust growth prospects along with declining inflation will help to reduce extreme poverty," said Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank's Country

Director in India.

The country can boost its growth further by harnessing its global trade potential. In addition to IT, business services and pharma where it excels, India can diversify its export basket with increased exports in textiles, apparel, and footwear sectors, as well as electronics and green

technology products," Kouame mentioned.

Growth in the country was boosted by public infrastructure investment and an upswing in household investments in real estate. On the supply side, it was supported by a buoyant manufacturing sector, which grew by 9.9 per cent, and resilient services activity, which compensated for underperformance in agriculture.

Reflecting these trends, urban unemployment has improved gradually since the pandemic, especially for female workers. Female urban unemployment fell to 8.5 per cent in early FY24/25.

With a narrowing of the current account deficit and strong foreign portfolio investment inflows, foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time high

of \$670.1 billion in early August.

The report also highlighted the critical role of trade for boosting growth, emphasising that India has boosted its competitiveness through the National Logistics Policy and digital initiatives that are reducing trade costs.

However, reach its \$1 trillion merchandise exports goal by 2030, India needs to diversify its export basket and leverage global value chains, the report mentioned.

According to Nora Dihel and Ran Li, senior economists and co-authors of the report, to create more trade-related jobs, India can integrate more deeply into global value chains which will also create opportunities for innovation and productivity growth.

# Adani Green, TotalEnergies sign \$444 mn JV to boost solar energy portfolio

**AGENCIES**  
AHMEDABAD, SEP 3



Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has announced a strategic joint venture (JV) with TotalEnergies, involving an investment of \$444 million into a new entity. The JV is aimed at managing a portfolio of solar projects totalling 1,150 MW. Adani Green and TotalEnergies will each own 50 per cent stake in the new entity.

The electricity generated from the 1,150 MW solar projects will be sold through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), and through sales on the wholesale market.

Adani Green said that the projects are located at the world's largest renewable energy plant in Khavda, Gujarat.

AGEL will contribute

its current assets to the new JV, while TotalEnergies plans to inject \$444 million to accelerate the development of these projects, said the Adani Group company.

The signing and completion of the transaction is subject to customary closing conditions, including regulatory approvals.

AGEL is developing the world's largest renewable energy plant on a barren wasteland at Khavda, Gujarat covering an area five times larger than Paris at 538 square kilometres.

The company has already operationalised a cumulative capacity of 2,250 MW of solar and wind energy at the site.

Once completed, the plant will supply affordable clean energy to over 16 million homes in India, generate over 15,200 green jobs and avoid about 58 million tons of CO2 emissions annually.

"This investment underscores AGEL and TotalEnergies' commitment to bolstering collaboration, aligning with their shared objective of expediting India's transition to clean energy," said the companies.

AGEL currently has an operating renewable portfolio of 11.2 GW, the largest in India, spread across 12 states. The company has set a target of achieving 50 GW by 2030 aligned to India's decarbonisation goals. AGEL's operating portfolio is certified 'water positive for plants of more than 200 MW capacity', 'single-use plastic free' and 'zero waste-to-landfill'.

# Sale of smartphones worth Rs 1 lakh and above surge in India

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

With disposable incomes rising amid the premiumisation trend, the sales of luxury smartphones have surged in India in recent quarters, industry experts said on Tuesday.

The smartphone shipments of Rs 1 lakh and above increased by 20 per cent (year-on-year) and 10 per cent (YoY) for Q1 2024 and Q2 2024, respectively, according to Counterpoint Research.

The shipments in the Rs 1 lakh and above segment accounted for just over 1 per cent of the market in the first half this year.

"This share is expected to increase slightly in the second half of the year

with the arrival of Samsung Galaxy Foldables and the new Apple iPhone series," Tarun Pathak, Director, Counterpoint Research, told.

In 2021, luxury or super-premium smartphones saw 14 per cent growth (YoY) in the country. In 2022, this growth surged to 96 per cent and in 2023, it was 53 per cent.

Samsung led the super-premium smartphone market with 52 per cent share in 2023, followed by Apple at 46 per cent.

According to Prabhu Ram, VP-Industry Research Group, CyberMedia Research (CMR), the premiumisation wave in Indian smartphone market continues to gain momentum.

# EET Fuels enters front-end engineering design stage, appoints Toyo-India for industrial carbon capture project

**AGENCIES**  
STANLOW (UK), SEP 3

EET Fuels, the trading name of Essar Oil UK, which plans to create the world's leading low-carbon process refinery, has progressed to the front-end engineering design (FEED) stage of its industrial carbon capture (ICC) project.

The company has appointed Toyo Engineering India Pvt Ltd (Toyo-India) (100 per cent subsidiary of Toyo Engineering Corporation, Japan) a leading Engineering, Procurement and Construction company, to carry out the FEED phase -- an integral part of the project management process.

Toyo-India will oversee design completion, project de-risking, detailed cost analysis and other vital work. Completion of FEED will enable the company to make a final investment decision (FID) on the ICC project.

Upon completion (expected in 2028), the ICC project will capture carbon dioxide emitted from Stanlow refinery's full-residue fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) unit -- one of Europe's largest units. Leveraging Stanlow's unique location, the captured carbon dioxide will use a repurposed existing gas transportation network and be permanently



sequestered into depleted gas fields in Liverpool Bay, as part of the HyNet industrial decarbonisation cluster in the North West of England.

The ICC project is expected to capture 1 million

tons of CO2 per year, removing around 45 per cent of all Stanlow emissions.

The project has applied for the right to negotiate with the UK Government for a revenue sup-

port mechanism as part of the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's Track One expansion programme in the carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) cluster sequencing process. Confirmation of the date for the final investment decision will be part of this process.

This announcement follows the appointment of Wood to conduct the FEED for EET Fuels' hydrogen fuel switching project. The progression of both these projects demonstrates the company's momentum towards achieving its target of reducing CO2 emissions at the Stanlow Refinery by 95 per cent by

2030 while creating the UK's leading energy transition hub.

Deepak Maheshwari, CEO, EET Fuels, said, "Our ambitious carbon capture and storage plans are a key component of Stanlow, securing the future of the refinery for generations to come and vastly reducing industrial carbon emissions in the North West."

This announcement represents a significant milestone as we work to become the world's first low-carbon process refinery, and we look forward to working with Toyo-India to keep momentum towards achieving FID for this project."

# Spam calls: Telcos ban 50 entities, disconnect 2.75 lakh mobile numbers and services

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

In a bid to curb spam calls and messages, telecom service providers have blocked over 50 entities and disconnected more than 2.75 lakh mobile numbers and telecom resources, the government informed on Tuesday.

The action was taken after the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued stringent directives to all access providers last month to immediately stop promotional voice calls from unregistered senders or telemarketers.

"Access Providers have taken stern measures against misuse of telecom resources for spamming and blacklisted over 50 entities and disconnected more than 2.75 lakh SIP DID/Mobile Numbers/Telecom resources," said the TRAI.



These steps, the telecom regulator added, are expected to have a significant impact on reducing spam calls and providing relief to consumers.

TRAI urged all stakeholders to comply with the directives and contribute to a cleaner and more efficient telecom ecosystem.

"Any unregistered telemarketer found to be misusing these resources will face severe consequences, including disconnection of

all telecom resources for up to two years and blacklisting," it noted.

In the January-June period, the TRAI observed a significant rise in spam calls, with over more than 7.9 lakh complaints reported against unregistered telemarketers (UTMs).

Meanwhile, the regulator has granted a one-month extension to access service providers to comply with its direction

regarding the whitelisting of URLs, APKs and OTT links. TRAI had earlier asked major telecom operators in the country to regulate such messages by September 1.

The move is aimed at curbing the number of spam and phishing attempts by scammers who try to dupe people using SMS service.

The telecom regulator has now directed all access providers to furnish to the authority an updated status on action taken within 15 days and a compliance report within 30 days from date of issue of this direction.

The TRAI has also introduced punitive measures for non-compliance. Content templates registered under the wrong category will be blacklisted, and repeated offenses will lead to a one-month suspension of the sender's services.

# 45pc Indian organisations have partially or fully implemented GenAI in HR: Report

**AGENCIES**  
MUMBAI, SEP 3

About 45 per cent of Indian companies have already implemented or are piloting generative AI in their HR processes, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) showed that with GenAI about 93 per cent of companies showed improved efficiency and productivity. The report, presented at the FICCI Innovation Summit 2024, outlines the transformative changes reshaping the Indian HR landscape, highlighting key strategies for organisations to thrive in a rapidly evolving business environment.

As India's economy continues to grow, the HR



function is undergoing a radical transformation, driven by technological advancements and the need for more inclusive and purpose-driven workplaces.

"Companies are moving beyond the pilot phase with predictive and generative AI, scaling across the HR value chain and investing in developing GenAI expertise. By continuing to evolve and innovate, Indian companies are setting the foundation for purpose-driven and innovative workplaces of the future," said Ashish Garg, Managing Director at BCG.

Further, the report showed that a significant 85 per cent of Indian CXOs surveyed believe that Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives are essential or very important in driving HR strategies and aligning organisational culture with broader societal goals.

About 66 per cent agree that environmental responsibility has become significantly more important in the past 1-2 years and are adapting to global and national ESG report-

ing standards.

"The business landscape is evolving with unprecedented speed, driven by technological advancements, shifting workforce dynamics, and the imperative for sustainability, making the role of Human Resources more critical than ever. By embracing these emerging trends and embedding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and ESG principles into their core strategies, organisations can build resilient, innovative and purpose-driven workplaces that are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the future," said Jyoti Vij, Director General, FICCI. Talent management is another critical area, with 72 per cent of organisations leveraging policy changes to enhance work-life balance, recognising it as vital for talent retention.

# Education loan AUM of NBFCs in India to cross Rs 60,000 crore this fiscal: Report

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Amid the rising demand for higher education abroad, the education loan asset under management (AUM) of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) in India is projected to grow at healthy 40-45 per cent to cross Rs 60,000 crore this fiscal, a report said on Tuesday.

After robust growth of over 80 per cent and 70 per cent in fiscals 2023 and

2024, respectively, NBFCs' education loan AUM rose to Rs 43,000 crore as on March 31, 2024, according to a report by CRISIL Ratings.

The number of Indian students studying abroad is estimated to have doubled in the past five years to around 13.4 lakh as of last fiscal.

"Only a tenth are being funded by these NBFCs, and even including education loans by banks, the financed quantum is not



much higher," said Ajit Velonie, Senior Director,

CRISIL Ratings. What that indicates is

that a large portion of overseas education is being

funded through alternative means -- informal financing, self-funding, or perhaps other forms of loans.

"That shows education loan companies have significant headroom for growth. Rising ticket sizes because of ascending tuition fees, inflation and living expenses are also tailwinds," Velonie added.

Education loans, primarily those to fund courses overseas, will continue to be among the fastest-growing segments

for NBFCs because of rising demand for higher education. According to the report, strong micro-market intelligence and fast turnaround times have allowed NBFCs to carve out a niche in the education loans space.

The portfolio performance of these NBFCs have been resilient so far based on strong credit underwriting.

Malvika Bhotika, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said that additionally, prepay-

ment and foreclosure rates are high as 35-45 per cent of the loans get prepaid during the initial moratorium period of typically three years. "Most of the loans are repaid in 5-7 years even where the contractual tenure is higher. However, given the recent high growth, around 90 per cent of the portfolio is currently under moratorium. So, asset quality performance over the longer term remains to be seen," Bhotika.



## Lord's to host 2025 World Test Championship final from June 11-15

AGENCIES  
DUBAI, SEP 3

The third World Test Championship final will be played at the Lord's Cricket Ground from June 11 to 15, the International Cricket Council announced on Tuesday.

The one-off Test will have June 16 as a reserve day if required, it said.

It will be the first time that Lord's has been used for the World Test Championship final, with Southhampton as the venue for the first edition (2021) and The Oval as the venue for the second edition (2023), that were won by New Zealand and Australia, respectively.

The match will be played between the top two sides in the standings at the completion of the current cycle.

"The ICC World Test Championship Final has quickly become one of the most anticipated events



in the cricketing calendar and we are pleased to announce the dates for the 2025 edition," ICC CEO Geoff Allardice said.

"It's a testament to the enduring appeal of Test cricket, which continues to captivate fans around the world. Tickets will be in high demand so I would encourage fans to register their interest now to ensure they are in with

a chance of attending the Ultimate Test next year," he added.

Currently, Rohit Sharma-led India are sitting in pole position ahead of reigning champions Australia.

New Zealand (third), England (fourth), Sri Lanka (fifth), South Africa (sixth) and Bangladesh (seventh) are still well in contention for a place in

the one-off decider.

However, Bangladesh jumped to fourth place after a series whitewash against Pakistan, who slipped to eighth place from seventh.

India will take on defending champions Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, scheduled from November 22, 2024 to January 7, 2025.

## Mohun Bagan beat East Bengal in penalty shootout in charity match

AGENCIES  
LUCKNOW, SEP 3

Mohun Bagan Super Giant emerged victorious on penalties in the Chief Minister's Cup charity derby match against East Bengal FC at the KD Singh Babu Stadium here.

After Suhail Ahmad Bhat's first-half goal was cancelled out by Muhammed Ashique K's second-half leveller, the Green and Maroon Brigade nicked a 3-2 win on penalties to claim the first ever Kolkata Derby in the City of Nawabs on Monday night.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant started off all guns blazing and would've taken the lead in the first 19 seconds had Suhail Ahmad Bhat not been in an offside position before flicking a fine header into the back of the net.

The Mariners were quick in their attacks and were able to find spaces through the middle rather easily in the opening minutes. In the eighth minute, Ningombam Engson Singh



blasted his effort wide from a good position.

East Bengal's first real foray in the Mohun Bagan SG box came in the 15th minute when Hira Mondal made a mazy run to the by-line but he was stopped on his tracks by Raj Basfore.

Mohun Bagan SG's continued pressure paid off in the 18th minute when they took the lead from a set-piece. Salahuddeen Adnan K's free-kick landed on the feet of an unmarked Suhail, who punted a per-

fect side-footed volley past the outstretched gloves of Aditya Patra.

Salahuddeen could've doubled the lead when he was released in plenty of space in the box but his shot lacked power and Patra made an easy collection.

East Bengal were able to reduce the tempo of Mohun Bagan SG's attacks and kept more possession of the ball towards the end of the half, but their lack of creativity in the final third

was evident.

Mohun Bagan started off stronger after the restart as well, with two good opportunities falling their way early on. Loitongbam Taison Singh's free-kick from just over 20 yards missed the target by a few inches.

In the 53rd minute, the winger made a brilliant run on the right and cut it across the face of goal for Engson, who ballooned his shot over from merely eight yards out.

## West Delhi Lions to play for pride against Central Delhi Kings in DPL

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 3

West Delhi Lions on Tuesday will step on the field for the final time in the ongoing Delhi Premier League T20 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here.

West Delhi Lions will face Central Delhi Kings in their last match of the season one of DPL.

While it will be an important match for Central Delhi Kings, West Delhi Lions will play for pride as they will look to end the season on a high. West Delhi Lions are out of the semi-final race, having won just two matches from nine.

West Delhi Lions faced many challenges in the ongoing season but gave tough fight to the opponents. There were some really close games which West Delhi Lions lost and

the side will look to seal their last match on Tuesday.

West Delhi Lions owner Dr. Rajan Chopra said, "While this season has been a challenging one, I'm incredibly proud of the way our team has fought in every match.

We've faced tough opponents and come close on several occasions, showing the resilience and spirit that define West Delhi Lions. As we step onto the field for the final time this season, we're determined to play our hearts out and end on a high note, for our fans and for ourselves."

Despite a tough season, Rajan Chopra has emphasized his message to the team: focus on giving 100 percent effort on the field without worrying about the outcome. He has encouraged his players

to play fearlessly and as a united team, regardless of their individual backgrounds.

"As an owner, I only advise the players to give their 100 per cent, no matter what the result is. I always say to them to play without any fear. My only message to the players is play like a team, no matter where you come from, just play with a free mind," said Dr. Rajan Chopra.

West Delhi Lions Squad: Hrishik Shokeen, Navdeep Saini, Dev Lakra, Deepak Punia, Shivank Vashishth, Akhil Chaudhary, Ayush Doseja, Krish Yadav, Anmol Sharma, Jugal Saini, Ankit Rajesh Kumar, Vivek Yadav, Aryan Dalal, Masab Alam, Ekansh Dobal, Shivam Gupta, Yogesh Kumar, Suryakant Chauhan, Tishant Dabla, Abraham Ahmad Masoodi.

## RF Naupang League will expand talent pool for Indian football: Lalengmawia Ralte

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, SEPT 3

Mohun Bagan Super Giant midfielder Lalengmawia Ralte commonly known as Apuia appreciated the Reliance Foundation Naupang League for improving the grassroots footballing infrastructure in Mizoram.

23-year-old Apuia, as he is popularly known, hails from Aizawl and has risen the ranks to become one of the finest players in the Indian Super League (ISL). He has made 91 appearances in the competition since debuting for North-East United FC in 2019-20.

The Naupang League is a collaboration between the Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RFYC) and the Mizoram Football Association, aimed at developing community-level football in the north-eastern state.

The third season of the competition began on August 24 and it will be



a nine-month-long campaign, whilst operating in four districts, namely: Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, and Lunglei, across the U-8, U-10, U-12, and U-14 age groups.

Apuia is confident that the RFYC Naupang League will provide competitive playing opportunities to youngsters and help expand the talent pool for Indian football.

"The RFYC Naupang League is very good for the

midfielder said in an interview with the Indian Super League.

Apuia relished a decorated spell at Mumbai City FC from 2021 to 2024, playing a critical role in helping them become the ISL League Winners in 2022-23 and ISL Cup Winners in 2023-24 respectively.

His transfer to the Mariners opens a new chapter in his fledgling career. Apuia has played in several high-pressure matches in the ISL and also in the AFC Champions League for the Islanders. However, the magnitude of the Kolkata Derby is cut from a different cloth and the midfielder is eagerly looking forward to participating in the same, especially with Mohammedan SC joining the league from the 2024-25 season onwards.

"I am very excited to be a part of the Kolkata Derby. In India, it's one of the most important matches in the ISL and it will be

a very exciting journey for me. Not only for Kolkata, but having Mohammedan SC in the ISL is great for Indian football. It majorly helps the players as there will be more footballers and more teams, resulting in a greater number of matches, so it's very good for Indian football," he signed off.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant will begin their ISL 2024-25 campaign by hosting Mumbai City FC in the season opener at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Kriangan (VYBK) in Kolkata on September 13, at 7:30 pm IST.

The first Kolkata Derby of the upcoming edition of the competition will take place on October 5, at 7:30 pm IST, at the same stadium, between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Mohammedan SC.

ISL Season 2024-25 will kick off on September 13 at 7:30 PM IST on JioCinema and Sports18 network.

## Adani DPL T20: Purani Dilli 6 reach playoffs with 33-run win over Central Delhi Kings

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Purani Dilli 6 rode on Lalit Yadav's 46 not out off 29 balls and Prince Yadav's 3-15 to beat Central Delhi Kings by 33 runs in their final league stage match and qualify for the playoffs of the Adani Delhi Premier League T20 at Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday.

After posting 173/6 in their allotted 20 overs, Purani Dilli 6 came up with a clinical bowling performance to restrict Central Delhi Kings to 140/8 and

win the match by 33 runs.

Purani Dilli 6 came out firing to defend a target of 174. They capitalised on the early swing to contain Central Delhi Kings during the Power-play. Prince Yadav drew first blood by dismissing Dhruv Kaushik (2 off 5), and the second wicket came through a run-out, with Central Delhi Kings at 39/2 after six overs. Lakshay Thareja, who looked in good touch, couldn't build on his start as he was dismissed for 34 off 26 in the ninth over. At the halfway mark, Central

Delhi Kings were reduced to 57/3.

Shivam Sharma then removed Hiten Dalal (27 off 25) in the 14th over, with the required run rate climbing above 12. Central Delhi Kings crossed the 100-run mark in the 15th over as they struggled to accelerate the run chase.

Yadav picked up his second wicket of the match as he dismissed impact sub-Aryan Rana (8 off 10) in the 17th over, putting Purani Dilli 6 firmly in control.

Jonty Sidhu brought



up his fifty in 31 balls in the 19th over but was caught and bowled in the same over off Yadav, who returned with the figures of 3/16. Ayush Singh Thakur picked up two wickets in the final over to ensure Purani Dilli 6 entered the playoffs with a remarkable win.

Earlier in the contest, Purani Dilli 6 were invited to bat first. They also had a challenging start to their innings as they lost three wickets by the end of the Powerplay with only 38 runs on the board.

Keshav Dalal and Yug Gupta steadied the ship with timely boundaries, but Jonty Sidhu provided a breakthrough to Central Kings as he removed Dalal for 28 off 20 balls in the 11th over.

Gupta, on the other hand, took the team's total to the 100-run mark in 12.2 overs but was dismissed on the very next ball after scoring 44 off 30, thus narrowly missing his fifty. Mayank Gusain (13 off 12) also fell cheaply to Dadar in the 16th over, leaving Purani Dilli 6 at 131/6.

From there, Lalit Yadav took charge as his unbeaten 46 off 29 balls and Sumit Chhikara's 19\* off 10 balls guided Purani Dilli 6 to a competitive total of 173/6 in their 20 overs.

Dadar was the pick of the bowlers as he returned with 2-29 in his four overs.

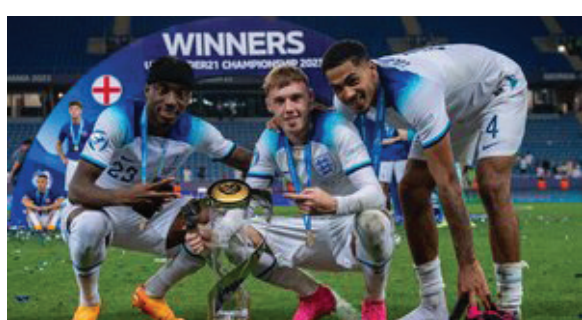
Brief scores: Purani Dilli 6 173/6 in 20 overs (Lalit Yadav 46\*, Yug Gupta 44; Rajneesh Dagar 2-29) beat Central Delhi Kings 140/8 in 20 overs (Jonty Sidhu 52, Lakshay Thareja 34; Prince Yadav 3-15) by 33 runs.

## Palmer, Colwill, Madueke ready to prove themselves on international stage

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Chelsea forward Noni Madueke has been in scintillating form in the new season and has been rewarded with his first international call-up for England. Madueke will be representing England alongside his teammates Cole Palmer and Levi Colwill.

The Chelsea trio were part of new England interim head coach Lee Carsley's U21 England side that won the 2023 U21 European Championship and are excited to prove them-



selves on the senior level.

"He knows my game and he's a great manager, a great guy, so I'm looking forward to going and linking up for sure. A few of us that won the Under-21 Euros are going up, so it should be good. It should

be really fun to see all the boys, just do our best and show everyone what we're all about," said Madueke to Chelsea's media team.

Last Thursday certainly turned out to be an eventful day for Madueke. Coming hot on the heels

of his first Chelsea hat-trick, in the side's 6-2 Premier League victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers the previous Sunday.

First, Noni was promoted from the England Under-21s to the senior side as part of interim manager Lee Carsley's first squad, ahead of UEFA Nations League fixtures against the Republic of Ireland and Finland.

Then he played his part in securing Chelsea's place in the league phase of the UEFA Conference League with a 3-2 aggregate victory over Servette, helped by his goal in the first leg

at Stamford Bridge a week earlier, despite a narrow loss in Switzerland.'

Madueke described it as a 'great day', having received the news via a phone call while in Geneva ahead of that Conference League tie.

The manager called me about an hour or two before the England squad came out [in the afternoon] and broke the news to me. I was in my room, just relaxing preparing for the game, watching SWAT on Netflix, and Cars said I should give him a buzz. I did and he told me that I was in the squad.

## PM Modi congratulates Sumit & Nithya for winning medals at Paris Paralympics

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated Sumit Antil for winning the Gold medal in the Men's Javelin F64 and Nithya Sre Sivan on winning the Bronze medal in the Women's Singles Badminton SH6 event at Paris Paralympics 2024. Prime Minister in a post on 'X' wrote, "Exceptional performance by Sumit! Congratulations to him for winning the Gold in the Men's



Javelin F64 event! He has shown outstanding consistency and excellence. Best wishes for his upcoming endeavours. @sumitjavelin #Cheer4Bharat". In another post, Modi said, "Congratulations to Nithya Sre Sivan on winning the

Bronze medal in the Women's Singles Badminton SH6 event at the #Paralympics2024! Her feat has inspired countless people and highlights her passion as well as dedication to the game. @07nithyasre #Cheer4Bharat".



## District Election Cell intensifies voter awareness under SVEEP in Ramban

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 3

To boost voter participation in the upcoming General Election to Legislative Assembly 2024, the District Election Cell Ramban, under the guidance of District Election Officer Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, on Tuesday organized a series of informative and engaging programs as part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative across the district.

The SVEEP team, led by the Nodal Officer for Assembly Constituency-54 Ramban, Kewal Krishen Sharma conducted an awareness program at Government Model Higher Secondary School Batote. The team educated and motivated students to ensure full voter turnout by themselves and their family members.



They were also informed about the use and benefits of the c-VIGIL mobile app and the 'Home Polling' facility.

The local Booth Level Officer (BLO) provided guidance to the students on filling out various electoral forms online through the NVSP portal. The students actively participated in the program, expressing their views on the importance of voting through speeches, drawings, and skits.

The District SVEEP team, along with Nodal Officer SVEEP 54-Ramban, organized additional awareness programs in the Batote marketplace. These events saw significant participation from voters, teachers, BLOs, and students. The awareness campaign was conducted under the overall supervision of District Nodal Officer SVEEP, CEO Ramban, Bikram Singh.

## Police Observer Dharamvir inspects Polling Stations in Sub Division Gandoh

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, SEPTEMBER 3

Dharamvir, the Police Observer for Assembly Constituency (AC) 51-Bhaderwah, 52-Doda and 53-Doda west conducted a thorough inspection of Polling Stations and facilities in the region today.

The visit aimed to ensure the implementation of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) and to assess the security measures in place ahead of the upcoming elections.

During his visit, Police Observer Dharamvir inspected the Polling station at Govt. Higher Secondary School Kilhotran in Sub Division Gandoh. The Police Observer also evaluated the AMF provisions at different polling Stations and examined the intermediate Strong room to ensure the security of election material. The Police Observer



also visited polling stations in Thaloran and several other locations, including the flying squad teams stationed at Trithloo and surrounding areas in Gandoh, to ensure that all security protocols are being rigorously followed.

The Police Observer was accompanied by Nodal Officer Postal Ballot (SDM) Arun Kumar Badyal, SDPO Gandoh Raj

Kumar, AROs, and other concerned Officers and officials who are collectively working to ensure a fair and transparent election process in the region.

The Police Observer Dharamvir expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest standards of security and efficiency throughout the election process.

## SVEEP: Awareness programme to boost electoral participation organised at Chandgam Pulwama



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 3

A vibrant Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program was held today at High School Chandgam in Pulwama.

The event featured a variety of cultural activities, including singing, skits, drama and awareness sessions aimed at promoting electoral participation. The program saw enthusiastic participation

from various sections of the community especially women and youth. The cultural performances were designed to engage the audience and convey important messages about the significance of voting and active participation in the democratic process.

The SVEEP initiative continues to play a crucial role in enhancing voter awareness and encouraging informed and responsible participation in elections across the district.

## EO Pulwama holds meeting with Candidates, their Representatives and Representatives of various Political Parties

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 03

The Expenditure Observer (EO) for Pulwama, Srikanth N convened a crucial meeting with candidates, their representatives and representatives of various political parties at the District Administrative Complex in Pulwama, today. During the meeting, the Expenditure Observer emphasized the importance of adhering to the expenditure guidelines laid down by the Election Commission of India. He urged all candidates and political parties to maintain transparency in their campaign finances and ensure compliance with the prescribed limits.

The discussions also covered the procedures for submitting expenditure reports and the measures in place to monitor and regulate election spending. The Expenditure Observer assured the representatives that all efforts would be made to ensure a level playing field



for all candidates and parties. This meeting is part of the ongoing efforts to promote fair and transparent elections in the Pulwama district.

The workshop also provided a platform to students to exchange ideas and foster creativity.

## Joint workshop for campus ambassadors held at Samba under SVEEP



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 3

Under the guidance of the District Election Officer Samba, Rajesh Sharma, a joint workshop was organized with Campus Ambassadors from all Degree Colleges and the Central University of Samba. The event, aimed at raising awareness among students about their crucial role during the election season. The workshop also provided a platform to students to

exchange ideas and foster creativity. Organized by the District SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Nodal Office in collaboration with Government Degree College (GDC) Ramgarh, the workshop witnessed active participation from students who engaged in discussions about the electoral process and the importance of their involvement.

The event was attended by all three AC SVEEP

Nodal Officers and selected Booth Level Officers (BLOs), who addressed various queries raised by the students regarding election procedures, voter registration, and the overall electoral process.

The workshop provided an effective forum for enhancing the understanding of electoral procedures among the youth and emphasized the significance of their contribution in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections.

## DEO reviews preparations ahead of election notification for Kathua District

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer, Kathua Dr. Rakesh Minhas, today chaired a meeting with Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) to discuss various critical aspects related to the Assembly elections-2024 in the District.

Dr. Minhas engaged in detailed deliberations on essential election procedures, beginning with the issuance of the Election Notification, followed by the processes of nomination, scrutiny, withdrawal of candidatures, and the allotment of symbols. He emphasized the importance of strictly adhering to the guidelines set forth by the Election Commission of

India (ECI) and following the procedures outlined in the RO handbook, along with the regular advisories issued by the Election Department.

The DEO impressed upon the designated officers the necessity of ensuring all required measures are in place, including the security of the RO and ARO offices. He further stressed the importance of maintaining the decorum and integrity of the election process in both letter and spirit.

To enhance understanding of the election procedures, a mock drill of the complete nomination process was conducted, providing officers with hands-on experience and reinforcing their preparedness for the upcoming elections.

## General Observer for Tral AC reviews MCC Implementation, engages with Public & Schools Children



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 3

Brajesh Narain Singh, the General Observer for Assembly Constituency Tral today conducted a comprehensive visit to various locations within the constituency to assess the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). As part of his visit, the General Observer

held multiple interactive sessions with the general public, emphasizing the significance of adhering to the MCC and the role of citizens in ensuring free and fair elections.

In addition to these engagements, Singh inspected several polling stations including Lariyar, Buchoo, Saimoh, Rathuna and Pinglish, to evaluate the basic facilities

available for voters. His focus was on ensuring that the polling stations are well-prepared to accommodate voters and facilitate a smooth electoral process.

Moreover, the General Observer also visited various schools within the constituency, where he conducted interactive sessions with children. These sessions aimed to raise awareness among the younger generation about the democratic process and their future roles as responsible citizens.

## DEO discusses critical matters with Political Reps; Reviews Election preparations

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 3

District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri Abhishek Sharma on Tuesday chaired a comprehensive interaction on election matters with Political representatives, besides reviewing general preparations in a meeting with nodal officers.

The DEO conducted an in-depth review of several key areas crucial for the smooth conduct of the elections, including expenditure management, Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF), postal ballots, electoral rolls, and adherence to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The meeting also covered the status of seizures made till date.

A significant focus was placed on vulnerability mapping, with 518 hamlets identified as sensitive. The DEO directed the nodal officers to finalize the transportation and communication plans, emphasizing the importance of identifying shadow areas where communication is challenging so that stringers can be effectively deployed.

The training of election



officials was another critical area of discussion. The DEO noted that the second round of training is currently underway in the three Assembly Constituencies (ACs) and stressed the need for thorough training, particularly for male, female, and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) officials.

The deployment of security forces and the status of the complaint redressal mechanism were also reviewed. The DEO emphasized the importance of training officials on the use of the C-Vigil app, the Flying Squad Teams (FST), and the process of granting permissions through the ENCORE app. He instructed that all political party representa-

tives must be adequately trained on these processes. Further discussions covered the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), the strong room arrangements, barricading of the counting hall, and ensuring lease line connectivity and power backup for counting day arrangements. Later, he convened a crucial meeting with representatives of political parties to discuss the guidelines and preparations for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024. The meeting focused on ensuring a fair and peaceful election process across the district.

The DEO urged political representatives to avoid holding political meetings or rallies with-

out prior permission from the competent authority. He assured the representatives that the security of candidates and political parties will be meticulously managed once the necessary permissions are granted. In line with the Election Commission of India's (ECI) directives, the DEO highlighted that all candidates must finance their election expenses exclusively from their official bank accounts. Additionally, no candidate is permitted to use cash exceeding Rs 10,000 throughout the entire election period. "Candidates with criminal antecedents are required to publish their backgrounds in newspapers thrice during the campaign" he added.

## MCC: RO 48-Inderwal lodges FIR

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, SEPTEMBER 3

Taking cognizance of an inflammatory video being circulated on social media, Returning Officer (RO) Inderwal has lodged an FIR and asked the police to investigate the matter. The video in circulation on social media shows some unknown persons raising objectionable, inflammatory and inappropriate slogans and favouring contesting candidate Ghulam Mohd Saroori. During the Modal Code of Conduct, such inflammatory slogans or propaganda is an electoral offence and violation of Model Code of Conduct as well. Taking cognizance, the contesting candidate has been put to notice, who in the reply has altogether denied having any knowledge of such a meeting stating that some mischievous persons had circulated an edited/doctor video just to create a bad atmosphere into the festival of democracy. The matter is under scrutiny before the Returning Officer. Meanwhile an FIR No: 51/2024 has been lodged in police station Chatroo under section 125 of the Representation of People Act 1951 and the investigation is on to nab the miscreants.