

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Severe and continuous headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Present vomiting
- Steady rise in pulse or weak, rapid pulse
- Redness

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Will fight for Article 370 restoration, move SC again: Farooq



JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, SEP 16

National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday said that they will fight for the restoration of Article 370 and will knock the doors of the Supreme Court again.

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J&K police flags fake facebook account of ADGP, Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 16

Police on Monday flagged a fake Facebook account of ADGP, Jammu zone Anand Jain, advising people to be cautious and report any suspicious online activity to them.

They urged people to not engage with any such account and refer to verified social media handles of Jammu and Kashmir Police for information. In a statement, Jammu and Kashmir Police said

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Terrorism will be wiped out to the extent it won't erupt again in J&K: Amit Shah in Kishtwar

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 16

Union Home Minister Amit Shah today said as long as Prime Minister Narendra Modi government was at the Centre, no power can revive terrorism in Jammu region on the lines of 1990's. He said the BJP led government will bury terrorism to the extent that it doesn't erupt again. "Anti-national and anti-peace elements are trying to bring back the 90's like atmosphere in the Jammu region. Let me assure you that we



will push the terrorism several feet below the ground so that it doesn't erupt again," Shah said addressing a massive rally in Paddar-Nagseni Assembly constituency in

Kishtwar area, as per news agency.

Launching a scathing attack at National Conference chief Dr Farooq Abdullah, Shah said where he was when "bloodbath at its peak in Kishtwar." "He should be asked if he comes here. But I know where he was then. He was enjoying on London beaches," Shah said sarcastically. He said the NC-Congress alliance has always set a base for terrorism and separatism in J&K ever

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Read out NC's white paper on Sheikh Abdullah tabled in J&K Assembly once: Amit Shah dares Rahul Gandhi

JI NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR/RAMBAN, SEP 16

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday tested the National Conference bonhomie in J&K by challenging Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to read

out the 'white paper' on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah once tabled by the NC in the Assembly.

"I challenge Rahul baba to read out the white on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah once tabled by the NC in the then J&K Assembly.

Let Rahul read the paper once before the people of the nation," Shah threw an open challenge to Rahul while addressing a rally in Kishtwar district of Jammu.

He said the NC that is showing bonhomie with the Congress at present labelled

Sheikh Abdullah as a traitor and anti-national. "Who put Sheikh Abdullah in jail for 22 long years and who labelled him as a traitor and anti-national," Shah asked as per news agency. The Home Minister had

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40% Independents in fray; most sponsored by BJP to divide votes, claim rivals

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPT 16

More than 40 per cent of the 908 candidates contesting the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are Independents, leading to claims that a large number of them have been propped up by the BJP to divide votes.

These are the first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 and its reorganisation into two Union territories.

The number of assembly seats has also risen from the earlier 87 to 90 - 47 in the Kashmir Valley and 43 in Jammu - following a delimitation exercise in 2022.

The high number of Independent candidates in the fray have led to the National Conference, Congress and the People's Democratic Party to allege that they were being supported by "Delhi".

A total 365 candidates have filed their nominations as Independent candidates to contest the three-phase polls.

This is the second highest

number of Independents to contest the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. In the 2008 assembly elections, held in the immediate aftermath of the Amarnath land row agitation that left dozens dead and hundreds injured, 468 candidates had contested as Independents.

The total number of candidates this time is also the second highest ever. In 2008, a whopping 1,353 candidates had contested the elections.

In 2014, the last time assembly elections were held in the erstwhile state, 831 candidates had contested the elections. Of the total, 274 had contested as Independents.

This time, there are 367 candidates for the 43 seats going to the polls in the Jammu division, where the BJP has a strong base, while 541 are slugging it out for 47 seats in the Valley.

On an average, there are five Independent candidates for each of the 47 assembly segments in Kashmir. This number drops to 2.93 per constituency in the Jammu division.

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Sheikh Rashid's AIP, Jamaat-E-Islami dancing to someone else's tunes: Omar



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPT 16

National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Monday said the strings of alliance between Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party

(AIP) and Jamaat-e-Islami were being remotely pulled to take on their party.

"Their strings are connected somewhere else, they get their orders from them and they dance to their tunes," Abdullah told reporters in the Pampore Assembly constitu-

ency in the Pulwama district.

The former chief minister was reacting to the AIP entering an alliance with former members of banned Jamaat-e-Islami who are contesting the polls as independent candidates.

"They have been fielded to take on the National Conference. We have no issues, we will fight them," Abdullah added.

Asked about the BJP claims that 30,000 people were expected at the election rally in Srinagar will be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the NC vice president said people can be gathered for rallies but that does not necessarily translate into votes.

"How difficult is it to gather 30,000 people by using money?"

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Tight security arrangements in place for first phase of Assembly Elections: IGP



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 16

As Jammu and Kashmir gears up for its first assembly elections since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, security measures have been intensified to ensure a smooth and safe voting process.

The first phase of polling is scheduled for September 18, with authorities

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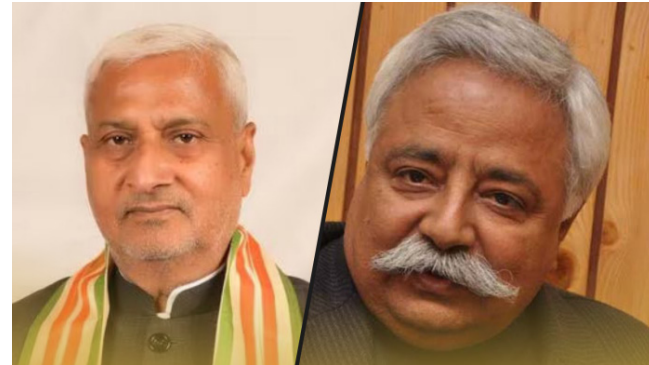
Jammu north seat set for tough fight between BJP, NC

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 16

The Jammu North assembly seat is set to witness a tough electoral battle between the BJP and the National Conference (NC), with BJP candidate and former minister Sham Lal Sharma making last-ditch efforts to sway voters in a bid to secure a hat-trick for his party.

Undeterred by two consecutive poll losses in the Marh assembly segment, former minister and NC candidate Ajay Sadhotra is trying his luck from Jammu North, formerly Raipur Domana, in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections.

Both candidates have shifted from their traditional constituencies - Sadhotra



from Marh and Sharma from Akhnoor - after these two segments were reserved for Scheduled Castes.

The other candidates who are in the fray include Darshan Kumar Magotra of PDP, Sunita Turki of National Democratic Party, Mohit of the National Awami Unity Party, and Maheshwar Singh

of DPAP.

Besides, BJP rebel and former MLA Shiv Dev Singh is also contesting from Jammu North as an independent. There are nine candidates in the fray, including a woman.

"It is a direct contest between two former ministers - Sharma and

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Modi's third tenure is ominous for people of J&K, terror incidents going unabated: Cong

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 16

Cautioning people against the deceitful tactics of BJP, Congress on Monday regretted that instead of highlighting the ten-year achievements of its government in Jammu, BJP's top leaders are shamelessly indulged in creating fear among the masses to get their votes.

Taking exception of the statement of Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Kishtwar, JKPC Senior Vice President & chief spokesperson of Jammu and Kashmir Congress Ravinder

Sharma lamented that the BJP leader tried to create a fear psychosis among the people ahead of the Assembly polls through speeches and advertisements.

"Instead of containing militancy in Jammu province, BJP leaders are now trying to terrorize the common masses", he said, presenting data of rising terror attacks during BJP period.

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP for its failure to protect the lives of the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir, Sharma

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219 candidates in fray on 24 seats as campaigning for Phase-I ends

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 16

As many as 219 candidates are in fray on 24 seats in the Phase-I of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Polls-the campaigning for which on Monday came to an end.

The voting on 24 constituencies in the Phase-I will be held on September 18.

Total 219 candidates are contesting across 24 constituencies in the Phase-I and of these, 183 are in the fight for the 16 seats in the Kashmir Valley and 96 on the eight seats in the Jammu region.

A total of 280 filed their nomination papers among which the nomination of 36 candidates was rejected while 25 withdrew their papers for the first phase of polling leav-

ing 219 candidates in the fray. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister Amit Shah were among the star campaigners for the BJP in the Phase-I.

The National Conference-Congress alliance and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have fielded candidates for all 16 seats in the Valley, for J&K Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) is contesting five Valley seats, while the Apni Party has fielded candidates on nine seats.

In the Jammu region, the NC-Congress alliance and BJP have fielded candidates for all eight seats, while the PDP has chosen not to contest in two.

The Democratic Azad Party is running in four con-

stituencies and the Apni Party in two.

The first phase voting will decide the fate of many former ministers, MPs and MLAs including first time contestant Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP President Mehbooba Mufti.

Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban districts of Jammu division and Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam districts of Kashmir division will be witnessing the voting in the first phase of election.

BJP's Sunil Sharma, Shakti Parihar, Sofi Yusuf, Congress's Ghulam Ahmed Mir, Vikar Rasool Wani, NC's Sajjad Kichloo, Hasnain Masoodi, Shaukat Ahmed Ganai, PDP's Iltija Mufti, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, Sartaj Ahmed Madani are among the promi-

nent contestants in the Phase-I.

More than 23.27 lakh voters including 5.66 lakh youths are eligible to exercise their electoral franchise during the Phase-I across the 24 Assembly Constituencies in seven districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the latest data of electoral rolls, there is a total of 23,27,543 lakh voters, who are eligible to vote during the Phase I and out of them, there are 11,76,441 male voters and 11,51,042 female voters along with 60 third gender electors.

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Abdullah frustrated with new-found peace, progress in J&K: Chugh

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPT 16

Reacting to Farooq Abdullah's statement that BJP's claims of normalcy post-Article 370 abrogation fall flat, BJP leader Tarun Chugh strongly rebutted the National Conference (NC) leader saying that Abdullah was frustrated in the face of new-found peace and development in the Valley.

Chugh said that the region, once plagued by instability under the rule of the Abdullahs and Muftis, has now transformed from a "terrorism capital" to a "tourism capital" ever since Article 370 was done away with.

Chugh also said that NC, along with other dynastic parties like PDP, misled the people of Jammu and

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DEO Bandipora chairs meeting cum interactive session with Zonal, Sectoral Magistrates

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 16

In preparations for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024, the District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, today convened a meeting cum interactive session with Zonal and Sectoral Magistrates deployed for election related duties.

The meeting was aimed to equip all involved officials with the necessary knowledge and strategies to uphold the standards of the electoral process and ensure a successful Assembly Election.

Speaking on the occasion, DEO M. A. Qadri emphasised the essential role of impartiality and strict adherence to the guidelines set by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

He urged all officials



detailed the responsibilities of the magistrates. He highlighted key duties such as inspecting Assured Minimum Facilities at polling stations, managing poll day reporting, and ensuring thorough familiarization with ECI guidelines.

ACR/RO 15 - Bandipora reinforced the necessity for proper coordination of zonal and sectoral magistrates with sector police officers and poll staff to maintain smooth electoral operations.

The event also included a comprehensive training session that covered pre-poll and poll day roles, with a focus on law and order, complaint management, and overall coordination to ensure the efficient handling of the election process.

to maintain impartiality while performing election-related duties, stating that it is crucial that each one performs duty without bias upholding the highest standards of professionalism and fairness. He underscored the

importance of the magistrates performing their duties with integrity to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process.

During the meeting, ADC/ Nodal Officer Model Code of Conduct (MCC), Zaffar Husson Shawal,

Unique SVEEP Rallies held at Shopian for enhancing voter mobilisation

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) rallies were held today at Hermain and Sedow areas of the district to promote voter awareness and increase mobilisation in view of the approaching polling day.

One of these rallies included a unique Umbrella Rally, organized by the Nodal Officer, SVEEP which witnessed an overwhelming response from children, local residents, and staff members who carried SVEEP Slogans for voter awareness and participation. Announcements emphasizing the importance of voting and need for people to register their franchise on the voting day were highlighted throughout the march.

Similarly, a Horse Rally was also organised by Nodal Officer SVEEP in the Sedow area of Shopian, emphasising on voter mobilisation.

Themes promoting a responsible, transparent, and vibrant democracy was the focus of today's activities.

Enthusiastic participation from electorates marks the Home Voting in Kishtwar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, SEPTEMBER 16

The home voting in the three Assembly Constituencies in Kishtwar District- AC 48-Inderwal, 49-Kishtwar and 50-Paddar Nagseni witnessed enthusiastic participation from the electorates in district Kishtwar.

The voters eligible for home voting including Elderly and PwD voters availed the opportunity to cast their ballots with great zeal amid highest standards of safety, transparency and efficiency throughout the process. The Election Commission of India initiative to ensure ease and accessibility for voters, particularly the elderly, differently-abled and those unable to visit polling stations, was well-received and resulted in significant voter turnout across the district.

Police Observer Shopian hold meeting with Zonal, Sectoral Magistrates, Police Officers

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

Police Observer, Shopian, Ravi D Channannavar today held a joint meeting of Zonal & Sectoral Magistrates besides Police Officers to ensure seamless coordination and preparedness for the smooth conduct of free and fair elections in the district in presence of DEO Shopian and SSP Shopian.

The Observer emphasized the crucial role played by these officers as the vital link between polling parties and the Returning Officer (RO) and DEO.

The Observer outlined their responsibilities, which include overseeing the movement of polling parties from dispatch centres to polling stations, ensuring the safe arrival of polling teams, reporting on poll day activities, monitoring mock polls and managing the deployment of reserve EVMs if needed. Detailed instructions were given regarding their specific roles and responsibilities. Key points covered included



poll day protocols, such as mock poll as per guidelines, start of poll and the strict observance of the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines.

DEO Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar on the occasion reminded officers to monitor the polling process closely, especially the implementation of multiple checks and balances, such as EVM and VVPAT testing and the reporting of any issues immediately.

Sector Magistrates were tasked with ensuring that

no polling party is delayed and that all materials are deposited and accounted for correctly.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Anayat Ali also addressed the gathering, detailing the deployment of police personnel across zones and sectors. He highlighted the collaboration between civil and police officers to maintain law and order during the elections and underscored the importance of adhering to security protocols to safeguard the electoral process.

Expenditure Observers Conduct Inspection of Election Expenditure Registers in Anantnag

J1 NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, SEPTEMBER 16

The Election Expenditure Observers for Anantnag district, Tamil Selvam and Vinay Kumar Arya along with the District Treasury Officer (Nodal Officer Election Expenditure Management Committee) Mohammad Akram conducted the final inspection of the expenditure registers for all contesting candidates in the ongoing General Assembly elections.

The review meeting took place at Dak Bunglow Khanabal, in the presence of senior officials and representatives of contesting candidates ensuring transparency and adherence to election expenditure norms.

This review is part of the ongoing efforts to ensure accountability in the electoral process. A team of senior officials, including the Nodal Officer of the Expenditure Monitoring Cell, examined the records submitted by candidates to



ensure compliance with the guidelines established by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The primary focus of the review was to confirm that all election expenditures remain within the prescribed limits.

The observers emphasized the importance of strict adherence to the

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and the regulations laid out by the ECI and compliance with these norms is essential.

Polling for the Assembly Constituencies in District Anantnag is scheduled for 18th September as part of the first phase of polling in Jammu & Kashmir.

Election Observers for B'la Review arrangements at designated counting centres, functioning of MCMC

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 16

Designated Election Observers for Baramulla Aparna U, Killu Siva Kumar Naidu, Kuldeep Narayan, Ujjwal Kumar, Sidlingappa Teli and Prakash Borghain today conducted a thorough inspection of the counting centre and strong rooms designated for district Baramulla at the indoor sports stadium in Baramulla.

During the inspection, the observers reviewed the facilities and arrangements at the counting center and the strong room to guarantee a smooth and transparent counting process.

The observers further conducted a thorough inspection to ensure the robust security measures, CCTVs, availability of power supply, implementation of fire safety measures, and other facilities, all aimed at ensuring a smooth counting process with no hassle.

Later, the Election



Observers for Baramulla, accompanied by District Election Officer (DEO) Minga Sherpa, visited the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) and Media Centre at the District Information Office today. The team conducted a thorough inspection of the facilities to ensure smooth and transparent operations during the election process.

DEO Minga Sherpa reiterated the significance

of maintaining transparency and media vigilance during the electoral process. He emphasized that all necessary arrangements have been made to ensure the free and fair conduct of elections in Baramulla district, with the active involvement of the media playing a crucial role in this effort.

During the visit, the District Information Officer briefed the Election Observers and the DEO on the functioning of the

MCMC and Media Centre. The officer explained the mechanisms for monitoring election-related media coverage, verifying the certification of political advertisements, and ensuring compliance with the Election Commission of India's (ECI) guidelines.

He also highlighted the steps taken to handle real-time media queries and streamline the dissemination of accurate election-related information to the public.

CEO launches Voters' Pledge campaign under SVEEP

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 16

In a significant stride towards fostering a culture of responsibility among the electorate, Office of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), J&K has launched a Voters' Pledge campaign ahead of the J&K Assembly Election 2024, with an aim to increase the voter turnout across the UT.

The campaign was launched under SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation), a flagship programme of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to promote voter education and participation in elections commencing on 18 September, 2024 across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Voters' Pledge campaign aims to inspire all the citizens of J&K UT to endorse the initiative and pledge their unwavering support to actively participate in the upcoming



Assembly Elections.

The voters who wish to create their Voters' Pledge certificate can click on the link SVEEPjk.in and follow some simple steps to download a 'Certificate of Commitment', duly signed by CEO, Pandurang K Pole, which includes the name of the voter, name of his/her Assembly Constituency including the certificate number.

The particular voter has to enter his/her name and select the Assembly Constituency to which they belong and then in the final step they have to validate himself/herself and submit the details.

After this a new web link with the certificate of the voter will appear from where they can download it. Speaking on the occasion, the CEO urged the electorate across J&K to visit SVEEPjk.in and take the Voters Pledge and download their 'Certificate of Commitment'.

Those who were present on the occasion included, Akther Husain Qazi, Nodal Officer for Media J&K; Sapna Kotwal, Nodal Officer for OSD Media and SVEEP; Siddheshwar Bhagat, Scientist NIC and officials of Jammu Smart City.

DEO Shopian briefs media on polling arrangements in the district

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

The District Election Officer, Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar today briefed the media of the district, representing regional and national media organisations on the election preparedness in the district.

During the briefing, the DEO highlighted the efforts made to ensure high voter mobilization and turnout.

Special attention has been given to security arrangements, with detailed plans in place to guarantee a safe and secure polling environment for all voters, he said while addressing the media.

The DEO gave an overview of initiatives under the SVEEP program, aimed at enhancing voter awareness and encouraging active participation, particularly among first-time voters and youth.

The DEO further informed the media regarding special polling stations, managed by PwD, Youth & women, and facilities to ensure their comfort and ease of voting.

He also informed about the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at polling stations, specifically to assist new voters and those requiring additional support.

In his appeal to the people of Shopian, the DEO urged all eligible voters, especially first-time voters and youth, to seize this opportunity to choose the best representatives for the district by coming out in large numbers on polling day and making their voices heard.

DEO conducts inspection of Urban Polling Stations in Poonch

J1 NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 16

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal conducted a comprehensive inspection of urban polling stations in Poonch to ensure the availability of assured minimum facilities (AMF) for smooth polling.

The inspection focused on ensuring the availability of essential amenities, including ramps for persons with disabilities, adequate lighting, and clean drinking water. The DEO also checked security measures and the sensitivity of the polling stations.

The DEO emphasized the importance of providing a conducive polling environment, stating, "Our goal is to ensure that every voter can exercise their franchise with ease and dignity. We are committed to providing all necessary facilities to make the polling process smooth and accessible."

During the inspection, the DEO passed various instructions to the authorities and instructed them to conduct meetings under



Booth Level Awareness Groups (BAGs), comprising BLOs, locals, teachers, students, and first-time voters, to ensure 100% voting in the area. He also instructed the officials to address any shortcomings and complete the necessary arrangements before the polling date.

With the polling date approaching, the district administration is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that every eligible voter in Poonch can cast their vote with ease and dignity. The DEO was accompanied by senior officers of District Election authorities.

Expenditure Observer along with State Excise, Central GST authorities Conducted extensive tour across Shopian ahead of polls



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

A day-long inspection was carried out in District Shopian under the guidance of Expenditure Observer, Nelapatla Ashok Babu, in collaboration with Excise and CGST authorities, focusing on the seizure of illegal cash, illicit liquor, drugs, narcotics, and gifts or freebies potentially intended for voter inducement.

During the visit, the Expenditure Observer emphasized the need for rigorous checks in sensitive areas, including Fruit Mandi Aglar covering the Cold Storages, warehouses, and all the entry and exit points of the district.

This initiative is part of ongoing efforts to prevent the misuse of illegal substances and incentives in the electoral process.

The Expenditure Observer directed the concerned

agencies to enhance vigilance and take proactive measures to ensure a fair and transparent election environment. The briefings underscored the importance of continuous monitoring to deter any form of electoral malpractice.

Superintendent of CGST, Srinagar Division and Excise Inspectors participated in the daylong actions throughout Shopian and Zainapora Assembly Constituencies.

CEO Pandurang K Pole Releases Theme Song 'Vote Ka Tyohar' to Motivate Voters for J&K Assembly Elections 2024



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 16

In an effort to encourage voter participation in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), J&K, today launched the theme song 'Vote Ka Tyohar'. The song, released by CEO, Pandurang K Pole, is aimed at motivating voters across Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory to cast their votes in the Assembly Elections, which begin on 18 September 2024 across seven districts of both the Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

The release event took place at the conference hall of Nirvachan Bhawan, Rail Head Com-

plex, Jammu, in the presence of college students and several dignitaries. The CEO appreciated the efforts of the students and the Principal of Padma Shri Padma Sachdev Government PG College for the Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, for their contribution in making the song a success. In his address, Pandurang K Pole emphasized the importance of voting and the role of the youth in ensuring high voter turnout. He encouraged students to actively participate in the electoral process and urged all eligible voters to exercise their democratic right.

The theme song was produced by Rangyung, a renowned performing arts organization committed to promot-

ing social change and self-realization through theatre as part of the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Campaign and was choreographed by the students of Padma Shri Padma Sachdev Government PG College for the Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The project was directed by Deepak Kumar, with lyrics penned by Dr. Liaquat Jafri and music composed by Pankaj Pardhan and S. Amarjeet Singh.

The event was graced by Akhter Hussain Qazi, Nodal Officer of SVEEP J&K; Sapna Kotwal, Nodal Officer for Media J&K; Principal S.P. Sarawat, Deepak Kumar, Director Rangyung and other senior officers.

DEA hosts Cricket Match under SVEEP in Poonch



JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 16

The District Election Authority (DEA), Poonch, under the aegis of District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal, organized an exhibition and cricket match under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program at the Sports Stadium, Poonch.

Chief Education Officer, Poonch, Lal Hussain, (Nodal Officer SVEEP) was the chief guest on the occasion. He interacted with the players, administered the voting pledge, and emphasized the importance of electoral participation. The match aimed to engage youth in the democratic process and promote voter awareness. Lal Hussain said that through the medium of sports, we aim

to reach out to the youth and encourage them to exercise their right to vote. Sports and democracy share a common spirit - fair play, inclusivity and teamwork.

The SVEEP program seeks to educate and motivate voters, especially first-time voters, to participate in the electoral process. The exhibition cricket match was an innovative initiative to connect with young voters and promote democratic values.

The match generated enthusiasm among local youth, who were eager to showcase their cricketing skills while learning about their voting rights and responsibilities.

District Sports Officer Mool Raj Uttam, Vijay Kumar ZEPO Poonch, Vijay Kumar Sharma, and Ravinder Singh were also present on the occasion.

Forest Department Marwah division restores Sukhnai Bridge in record time of 2 days



JI NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, SEPTEMBER 16

The Forest Department, under the direction of the District Election Officer (DEO), Rajesh Kumar Shavan has successfully restored the Sukhnai Bridge at Warwan Block of Sub Division Marwah, for facilitating the movement of polling parties.

Pertinent to mention that, the bridge serves as the only connecting link to the area and was washed away just 2-3 days ago, threatening the accessibility of the polling station, which serves 380 voters of Polling Station no 01-Sukhnai.

On hearing about the incident, the DEO asked DFO Marwah Vishal

Choudhary, who instantly swung into action and pressed the employees of the department into action. The forest department under his close supervision worked tirelessly day and night and restored the foot bridge.

The DEO expressed appreciation for the DFO's dedication and active role in ensuring that electoral processes were not hampered. The DFO's commitment extends beyond the restoration efforts. Forest Team has been involved in SVEEP Activity and has been instrumental in mapping voters at Dhoks in the remote mountain areas, ensuring inclusive and comprehensive electoral participation in the district

Election Training imparted to reserve polling staff at GDC Shopian



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

The District Election Officer (DEO) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem today visited the Polling Staff Training Centre at the GDC Shopian to monitor the quality training being provided to reserve polling staff, especially in preparation for elections.

The visit was the part of the administration's efforts to ensure that Polling staff are well-prepared to handle their responsibilities effectively on election day. He also took stock of overall readi-

ness of all staff including reserve staff, who are kept on standby to replace any Polling personnel unable to perform their duties.

The training sessions included briefings and demonstrations on EVM management and operations, conducting of mock polls besides pre-poll and poll-days activities. The master trainers highlighted the critical role of polling staff in upholding the credibility of the election.

ADDC, Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, Nodal Officer, Training, Manzoor Ahmad and other concerned were present in the occasion.

DEO Pulwama reviews Final Election Preparations



JI NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 16

District Election Officer (DEO) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom conducted late night visit to the Dispatch-cum-Receipt Centres (DCRC) and the counting halls, to oversee and review the final arrangements ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections.

Polling parties are scheduled to be dispatched tomorrow for

all four Assembly Constituencies. To ensure all the arrangements are in place in-line with the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India, the DEO inspected all essential facilities and procedures for smooth, transparent and efficient election process.

He emphasized adherence to protocol and reinforced the district's commitment to a free and fair election.

Election Observers for District B'la chair a meeting to review electoral preparedness



JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 16

Designated Election Observers for Baramulla, Aparna U, Killu Siva Kumar Naidu, Kuldeep Narayan, Shri Ujjwal Kumar, Sidlingappa Teli, and Prakash Borgohain jointly chaired a comprehensive meeting of officers at Dak Bunglow here to review the preparation for Assembly Elections 2024 in District Baramulla.

The meeting was attended by the District Election Officer, Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Nodal Officer Election, Syed Qamar Sajad, Superintendent of Police Sopore, Divya Dev, Returning Officers (ROs) of all the 7 Assembly Constituencies, Nodal officers, Sector Magistrates, AROs of all assembly constituencies, election officials, and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the observers were comprehensively briefed by the DEO Baramulla regarding the various arrangements

implemented by the administration to facilitate the smooth conduct of the electoral process during the 2024 assembly elections.

Among other facets, the discussion encompassed the meticulous assessment of logistical requirements, a manpower management plan, a transportation plan for carrying polling staff and security personnel, and the implementation of robust security arrangements.

Speaking during the meeting, the observers directed the ROs, AROs, and all the stakeholders involved in the election process to create a conducive environment and ensure that all necessary measures are taken to encourage and facilitate widespread participation from the community in the electoral process.

The observers further instructed the officers to remain vigilant and work around the clock to prevent the spread of any misinformation or fake news on social media.

Voter awareness program under SVEEP held at Nomadic pastures of Chaturgul Ganderbal



JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, SEPTEMBER 16

The SVEEP team Ganderbal organized a highly successful outreach programme at Nomadic Pasture Mahlish and Tokdi on high mountains of Chaturgul.

This initiative aimed to boost voter awareness and participation among tribal communities.

The event, conducted with the supervision of the District Nodal Officer (DNO) SVEEP, saw active involvement from the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Kangan and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) ICDS Kangan.

Their participation was instrumental in engaging with the local community and ensuring the smooth execution of the pro-

gramme. A noteworthy highlight of the outreach was the significant enthusiasm demonstrated by tribal female voters.

Their proactive engagement and eagerness to participate in the upcoming elections underscored the effectiveness of the SVEEP initiatives in fostering electoral awareness and encouraging voter participation.

The SVEEP team extends its gratitude to all stakeholders and participants who contributed to the success of this outreach programme.

The commitment shown by the tribal community reaffirms the importance of continued voter education efforts and the role they play in strengthening democratic processes.

Excise Department destroys 147 Litres of Lahan in raid on brick kilns in Shopian

JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

Following the directions of the Excise Commissioner J&K, Subash Chander Chibber and under the supervision of Dy. Excise Commissioner Executive Kashmir, Tazayun Mukhtar, Excise Range South Kashmir conducted a series of raids at brick kilns located in Safnagri area of Tehsil Zainapora District Shopian.

During the raid, the team recovered 147 litres of Lahan adjacent to one of the brick kilns on State land which was destroyed on spot by the Excise Team.

The owners of the brick kilns were warned of



severe legal repercussions associated with illicit production and distillation.

In addition to the enforcement action, the senior citizens of the locality were sensitized regarding the social and health hazards of illicit liquor.

This operation underscores the commitment of the J&K Excise Department to curb the illegal production and distribution of illicit liquor in the region.

Final randomization of polling parties for Home Voting held in Poonch

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 16

The General Election Observer, Solai Bharathi Dasan and District Election Officer (DEO), Vikas Kundal conducted the final randomization of polling staff for home voting for the upcoming

Assembly elections in Poonch district today. The home voting shall be conducted from September 18 to September 20, 2024.

The process of randomization of polling parties ensures impartiality and transparency in assigning staff for home voting, specifically for voters aged 85+

and persons with disabilities in all the three Assembly Constituencies across the Poonch district.

A total of 426 staff members, including polling personnel, micro-observers, and reserves, have been randomized to cover home voting across 176 clusters in the three

Assembly Constituencies of Surankote, Haveli, and Mendhar in Poonch district.

In preparation for this exercise, 625 voters aged 85+ and persons with disabilities in Surankote, 717 in Haveli, and 764 in Mendhar have been identified for home voting.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Terrorism will be...

since they joined hands. “These parties pushed Maharaja Hari Singh from J&K. Later, only his mortal remains returned to J&K,” Shah said. “These parties are responsible for the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990.” This was the Home Minister’s second visit to Jammu region since September 6.

He said that Village Defence Guards (VDGs) and Special Police Officers (SPOs) have been laced with the latest weapons and powers. “This is being done to ensure infiltrators who come here to disrupt peace are buried in the mountains only and not allowed to enter the hinterland,” Shah said.

He said nobody will be allowed to use Indian soil for terrorism. About Article 370, Shah said there is no place for Article 370 in the Indian constitution. This Article has become an old chapter of India’s history,” Shah said.

He asked whether people want to bring back NC-Congress, the BJP workers shouted “No.” “I want to ask the NC-Congress how you can bring back Article 370. Let me clarify that neither terrorism nor Article 370 won’t return,” he said. Taking a jibe at National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah, the Home Minister said that earlier he stated that he won’t contest elections in the UT. “Then he decides to contest from two seats. This shows he has accepted defeat. Let me tell you, you can’t win from either seat,” he said in an obvious reference to Omar. Shah reiterated that as long as there is a Modi government at the Centre, no power can reverse the reservation given to Gujjars’ and Paharis.

The Home Minister said that there was no question of bringing back two constitutions, two flags, and two leaders. “Dr Shama Prasad Mukherji’s vision and mission has been fulfilled and no power can reverse these things,” he said. He promised massive development for Paddar and Kishtwar. “You have to ensure the victory of Sunil Sharma from Paddar-Nagseni constituency. You already have Dr Jitendra Singh in PMO. If Sunil wins, both of them can work closely for your development. We have a huge vision for the development of Paddar and Kishtwar,” Shah claimed.

Read out NC’s white...

earlier visited Jammu on September 6 and today was his second visit to the region where he addressed three back to back rallies in Paddar-Nagseni, Kishtwar and Ramban. In all three rallies, he targeted Abdullahs, Gandhis and Muftis for ruining J&K.

Shah blamed these families of nourishing terrorism in J&K for the past 70 years. “The upcoming polls is a direct fight between NC-Congress and BJP,” he said. Shah also sought votes for Shagun Parihar and Tariq Keen, the BJP candidates from Kishtwar.

The Home Minister said NC, Congress and PDP were responsible for the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in 1990 and nourishing terrorism in J&K.

“In 1990’s, Dr Farooq Abdullah was elected after an agreement with Rajiv Gandhi. “When terrorism was at its peak and bloodbath was everywhere, you went to London on vacation. Nehru, Gandhi and Abdulal’h provided a launching pad to terrorism in Kashmir,” Shah said, adding that once again Abdullah’s and Gandhi’s have joined hands together only to bring back bad old days of terrorism.

“In 1990, these two parties pushed Kashmiri Pandits out of the Valley. They are responsible for the mass exodus of KPs from Kashmir,” he said, asking people whether they want revival of terrorism, separatism, stone pelting again. The people responded with a big “NO”. He also asked people whether Afzal Guru wasn’t supposed to be hanged and people responded with “yes.” Omar Abdullah, Shah said, claims that Guru should not have been hanged. “I can only laugh at this statement,” he said.

Addressing the third rally at Ramban district of Jammu, Shah trained his guns at NC-Congress alliance, Shah said these parties advocate release of jailed terrorists. He asked people whether they should be released, and the people responded with “No.” “Till there is a Narendra Modi government at the Centre, we are not going to release the jailed terrorists,” he said. Shah asked people if they want attacks on Amarnath Yatra again, do they want stone pelting on the streets and do they want revival of terrorism in J&K, the people shouted “No.”

Lashing out at NC patron Dr Farooq Abdullah, Shah said the senior politician has stooped so low that he claims terrorists and army have a nexus. “I wonder how a senior politician stoops so low,” he said.

He said as long as the Modi led BJP government is at Centre, there was no question of bringing back Article 370. “What has Article 370 given you? Poverty, terrorism and separatism. We will not allow anybody touch the reservations given to Gujjars, Bakewals, Paharis and Valmikis,” he said and sought votes for the BJP candidates to end the dynasty politics in J&K forever.

40% Independents...

The Sopore assembly segment – once a hotbed for militancy and the epicentre of election boycott campaigns in Kashmir – has the highest number of Independent and total candidates.

There are 22 aspirants in the fray, 14 of whom are Independents.

Among the Independent candidates in Sopore are Ajaz Guru, the brother of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru.

The Sonawari segment in Bandipora district has 20 candidates in the fray, including 11 Independents. The area has a strong presence of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami.

Amid this glut, there are four constituencies where there are zero Independent candidates. These are Budhal, Kangan, Ramangar and Srigufwara-Bijbehara.

The Srigufwara-Bijbehara seat in Anantnag district has three candidates in the fray, one of them being People’s Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti’s daughter Iltija Mufti.

Doda West, Nowshera and Ramgarh each have one Independent candidate. The BJP’s Jammu and Kashmir president Ravindra Raina, a frontrunner for the post of chief minister if the saffron party wins the elections, is the candidate from Nowshera.

On the high number of Independent candidates in the fray, Mehbooba said they had been fielded “by Delhi to divide votes”.

“We have to be together so that the large number of Independents fielded by Delhi does not succeed in dividing the votes,” she added.

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who is contesting the polls from the Ganderbal and the Budgam segments, has said Delhi was fielding a large number of Independents against him to muzzle his voice.

“Delhi is not trying to silence any politician in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Kashmir, as much as they are trying to do with Omar Abdullah,” the former chief minister said.

There are 15 candidates in the fray in the Ganderbal segment. Seven of these candidates – including jailed separatist leader Sarjan Ahmad Wagay alias Barkati who hails from south Kashmir’s Shopian district – are Independents.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also raked up the issue of an “unusually high number” of Independent candidates in the fray.

“The Congress and the National Conference are contesting the elections together, which has made the BJP nervous. Now they are trying to break the alliance,” he said.

“They are even fielding private players and supporting them indirectly as Independents in an attempt to defeat our candidates. Otherwise, where do they (Independents) get the money from? Who is behind them?” he asked during his visit to Kashmir last week.

The three-phase elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be held on September 18, September 25 and October 1. The results will be declared on October 8. (Agencies)

J&K police flags...

a thorough investigation is underway in the case and strict action will be taken in accordance with the law to hold the responsible individuals accountable.

“It has come to our notice that a fake Facebook account has been generated using the name of Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu zone. This fraudulent act is a serious violation and an attempt to mislead the public,” it said.

“Immediate legal action is being initiated against the perpetrators involved in this unlawful activity,” police said, adding that they take such cyber offenses very seriously.

People are advised to be cautious and report any suspicious online activity to the authorities, the statement said.

“We also urge citizens not to engage with or follow any such fraudulent accounts. For any official communication or information, please refer to the verified and legitimate social media accounts of the Jammu and Kashmir Police.”

Sheikh Rashid’s AIP...

The PM has addressed a rally earlier as well by gathering government employees. Don’t show me the rallies, show me the votes. I do not think it will translate into votes. Let the BJP win one seat from the Kashmir valley, then we can talk,” he said.

Asked about the BJP’s charge of dynastic rule, Abdullah said the ruling party has nothing to show for its six-year direct rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

“They do not have anything else to sell to the people. If they had done something for the people, they would have presented their report card. When a ‘fail’ is written in the report card, they have to say something else,” he said.

Abdullah said the NC had a good campaign for the first phase of polls.

“Our campaign has been good... People’s participation in NC events was high and we are hopeful that a good part of the votes will go to NC candidates and they will win,” he said. (AGENCIES)

Tight security...

focusing on creating a secure environment to encourage maximum voter turnout.

“Jammu and Kashmir Police, in coordination with the Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) and the Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police (JKAP), have laid out an extensive multi-tier security plan. This includes the deployment of personnel around strong rooms, polling stations, and booths across the region,” Inspector General of Police Kashmir V. K Biridi said, as per news agency. He further explained, “The CAPF units, JKAP, and JKP are all part of the security plan. A multi-tiered security setup has been arranged, covering every aspect of the election process to ensure everything goes smoothly.”

The IGP further emphasized the importance of voter participation, stating, “Jammu and Kashmir Police have made proper arrangements to ensure the elections are free, fair, and held in an atmosphere free of fear. Our primary goal is to ensure that as many people as possible can exercise their voting rights and take part in the democratic process. We are committed to providing a secure environment so that people come to vote in large numbers.”

As per the news agency KINS, security forces are on high alert, with additional measures in place to prevent any attempts to disrupt the electoral process.

The elections will take place in three phases. The first phase on September 18 will see voting for 24 seats. This will be followed by the second phase on September 25, where 26 seats will be contested. The final phase will be held on October 1 for 40 seats, with the counting of votes scheduled for October 8. (KINS)

Jammu north seat...

Sadhotra, who is also the coalition candidate of NC-Congress,” Vikas Kumar, a political expert, told PTI.

“It will be tough for both. Sharma is facing a rebel candidate, while Sadhotra has to work hard to win over voters in a constituency where his party has never won,” Kumar added.

BJP’s Sharma, busy with door-to-door campaigns and rallies, is banking on his pro-Jammu image.

“We will secure a victory with the full backing of the people. Our aim is to form a BJP government in Jammu and Kashmir so that Jammu gets its full rights, and development and progress reach everyone,” Sharma said.

Reiterating his commitment to following Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision for peace and progress in J&K, Sharma added, “No one can stop the BJP from continuing its development journey in J&K. People should vote for the BJP to ensure the region’s development.”

However, BJP’s decision to field Sharma, a former Congress MLA from Akhnoor who joined the BJP in 2019, has sparked internal strife within the party.

The NC hopes to capitalize on this internal discord.

Sharma is the younger brother of two-time Congress MP Madan Lal Sharma, who won the Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha seat in 2004 and 2009 and is considered a strong voice for the Jammu region. He served as a Congress MLA from Akhnoor and as a cabinet minister in the NC-Congress coalition government in 2008.

He lost to BJP’s Rajeev Sharma in 2014 from Akhnoor when BJP secured a historic 25 seats from Jammu in the assembly elections.

According to his poll affidavit, Sharma has Rs 15.8 crore worth immovable assets and liabilities worth Rs 1.2 crore, in addition to movable assets worth Rs 1.9 crore and Rs 65,000 in cash. This is a significant jump from his Rs 10.4 crore in assets in 2014, when he contested on a Congress ticket.

The 64-year-old politician, a resident of Purkhoo Domana, has no criminal cases against him, as per the affidavit. His immovable assets include agricultural land in Pallanwala, Purkhoo, and Palwan; commercial buildings in Patta Paloura; and a residential building in Platan.

On the other hand, NC’s Ajay Sadhotra, a senior politician, lost in 2008 and 2014 to the BJP. He was elected as an MLA in 1996 and 2002, representing Marh, and has held key ministerial portfolios.

Sadhotra, supported by the Congress as the alliance candidate, said he is confident of victory as people are “fed up with BJP’s anti-people policies”. He pledged to end BJP’s reign, stop smart meters, provide youth employment, and ensure education for all.

Former MLA Shiv Dev Singh, who resigned from the BJP, is contesting as an independent, claiming public support pushed him to fight the election. He criticized the BJP for discriminating against him and said, “People feel they haven’t had a local MLA. It’s time to raise the people’s voice.”

Singh dismissed his rivals, calling the NC-Congress alliance a “tactic” to confuse voters, adding, “We are fighters, and no one can stand against us.”

The Jammu North, with 75 per cent of its area urban, has a total of 1,11,228 voters, including 54,274 women. The constituency with 117 polling stations will vote in the third phase of the J&K elections on October 1.

exhorted the people to teach the BJP a lesson in the Assembly elections for betraying them.

Interacting with media persons, Ravinder Sharma said that the BJP, infamous for its false promises, has betrayed the people of J&K in general and Jammu region in particular. Ved Mahajan, vice president, Kapil Singh, Neeraj Gupta, Teja Singh, and Deepanshu Bhat were also present in the press conference.

“The BJP has failed to deliver on its promise of a secure and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. Under their rule, the terrain of militancy has shifted to Jammu, with a significant increase in terror attacks and killings of security personnel”, he said, adding, “The BJP’s electoral tool, the Kashmiri Pandit community, has been abandoned and betrayed when it comes to their safety and well-being”.

Modi’s third tenure...

“In the past three years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the killing of 119 security forces personnel, with over 40% of these killings reported from the Jammu division”, Mr. Sharma pointed out, adding, “This marks a significant shift from the 15 years of relative peace the region had experienced.

The districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Kathua, Reasi, Doda, and Udhampur have been targeted by terrorists, resulting in the loss of many lives.

Terming the third tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as ominous for the people of J&K in general and Jammu in particular, Mr. Sharma recalled that when the Prime Minister was taking oath on June 9, terrorists killed nine pilgrims in the ‘peaceful’ Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir”.

Although the BJP has been deceiving people since 2014, the third tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proved disastrous for the people of the Jammu region.

“Since Narendra Modi’s third term began, terror attacks in Jammu have increased significantly. On June 9, terrorists attacked a bus in Reasi district, killing nine pilgrims and leaving 33 injured”, he recalled, adding, “In the following 48 hours, two militants and a CRPF jawan were killed, and seven security personnel were injured in three different encounters. On July 8, five Indian army personnel, including an officer, lost their lives in the line of duty, and five others injured in a terrorist attack on a military convoy in Kathua”, he said.

Four Indian army soldiers, including a young officer attained martyrdom in Doda on July 15.

Highlighting the plight of the Kashmiri Pandit community, Mr Sharma said that BJP has shamelessly ed the Kashmiri Pandit community as an electoral tool, but when it came to protecting them, the party locked them up.

“In Vessu Pandit Colony, Anantnag, residents were prevented from leaving their homes after a spate of targeted killings”, he said, adding, “By December 2022, over 5,500 Pandit employees had fled from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, but instead of addressing their fears, the LG Manoj Sinha’s administration insisted they return to their posts in Kashmir, withholding salaries and forcing them to choose between life and livelihood”.

Mr. Sharma recalled that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, led by the Indian National Congress (INC), had a successful approach to militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Between 2007 and 2014, there were no major incidents of terrorism in the Pir Panjal Range. In 2013, both terror incidents and civilian deaths reached their lowest points since 1990”, he said, adding, “The UPA government also devised a comprehensive rehabilitation program for Kashmiri Pandits, providing 6,000 jobs in Kashmir Valley”.

Prominent NC leader, ex-sarpanch Aya Singh joins Apni Party

J NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 16

A prominent National Conference leader, and ex-sarpanch from Upper Gadigarh, Aya Singh has joined Apni Party in presence of President of the Party, Syed Mohammed Altaf Bukhari in Srinagar.

As per a press release, the joining of prominent NC leader, Aya Singh took place in Srinagar and the Women Wing Provincial President, Jammu, Pavneet Kour and other leaders. Expressing his faith in the leadership of Altaf Bukhari, he

joined the Party. Bukhari expressed hope that his joining will boost the morale of the leadership in Jammu South.

Meanwhile, Pavneet Kour expressed her gratitude to Aya Singh, for taking up the decision of joining the party, and supporting the party in Jammu South.

The occasion was also attended by Provincial President Minority Wing, Balbir Singh, Provincial President, Transport Union, Tirth Singh, District Secretary, Youth Wing, Abhinav Gupta, and others.

The Clean and Green Environment Committee, Dehradun completes 11th tree plantation campaign

J NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, SEPT 16

The Clean and Green Environment Committee successfully completed its eleventh tree plantation campaign of the monsoon session near Bhauwala in Bhagwanpur village.

On this occasion, over 100 trees including Gulmohar, Neem, Champa, Night Jasmine, Amaltas, Chakrasia, and Silver Oak were planted. Tree guards provided by the Mussorie-Dehradun Development Authority were also installed to protect the trees.

This eleventh tree plantation campaign, carried out in the third month of the monsoon session, demonstrates the contin-

uous efforts of the Clean and Green Environment Committee. The village head of Bhagwanpur and local residents provided significant support. Trees, along with tree guards, were planted on both sides of the main road in the village.

The Clean and Green Environment Committee has consistently carried out tree plantation across every village, government schools, and main roads in Dehradun this year, achieving complete success. This year, there has been a significant interest among people in conserving the environment and planting trees, as Dehradun’s temperature has exceeded 43°C, breaking all previous records.

The BJP’s failure to address the rising militancy in Jammu and their betrayal of the Kashmiri Pandit community is a stark reminder of their inability to govern effectively. The party’s electoral promises have been exposed, and it is time for a change in leadership to ensure the safety and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir.

219 candidates in fray...

of them male and 58380 female electors. In the Phase-I, 28,310 Person with Disabilities (PwDs) and 15,774 voters above the age of 85 are eligible to cast their vote.

In Kashmir Division, 16 Assembly Constituencies comprising Pampore, Tral, Pulwama, Rajpora, Zainapora, Shopian, DH Pora, Kulgam, Devsar, Dooru, Kokernag (ST), Anantnag West, Anantnag, Srigufwara-Bijbehara, Shangus-Anantnag East, Pahalgam; whereas in Jammu Division, 8 Assembly Constituencies including, Inderwal, Kishtwar, Padder-Nagseni, Bhadarwah, Doda, Doda West, Ramban and Banihal are scheduled to go for polls in the Phase-I of the Assembly Election.

The voting will be conducted from 7 AM to 6 PM. However, tight security arrangements are in place for the smooth and incident free three-phase elections in Jammu and Kashmir scheduled on September 18, September 25, and October 1.

This will mark the first election since the abrogation of Article 370, with vote counting scheduled for October 8.

Abdullah frustrated...

Kashmir for years, exploiting Article 370 for their own benefit.

He further said that it was the Modi-led BJP government that ended this “eclipse” in J & K and ushered in an era of peace and prosperity in the region.

Chugh further emphasized the BJP’s success in replacing “terrorism with tourism” and bringing unprecedented growth, citing the high voter turnout in elections as evidence of the public’s support for the current government’s policies.

He criticized the NC, accusing the party of corruption and failing to deliver on its promises during its rule.

Removal of Article 370 marked a significant turning point for Jammu and Kashmir, fostering investment, job creation, and stability, Chugh added.

Will fight for Article 370...

Speaking with reporters in Safarpora, Farooq Abdullah, as per news agency said that the alliance between Jamaat-e-Islami and Awami Ittehad Party is aimed at dividing the people. “They are their (BJP’s) product only. Tell me why he has been released today. The people are quite aware about such tactics,” he said.

He said that his party will continue to fight for the restoration of Article 370. “We will approach the Supreme Court again and will continue to do so. The decision has been given in our favour twice so far,” he said.

Reacting over the ‘One Nation, One Election’, Abdullah said, “They (Centre) had brute majority when they raised this issue. What was the motive? To set a precedent. This is a federal structure. Unity in diversity - that is India. How will they bring everyone onboard? There is election in our state but not in other states...”

Politically empowered Jammu will decide J&K Govt: Rana

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GHAROTA, SEPTEMBER 16

Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said the obtaining political standing and landscape of Jammu has reached such a pinnacle that it is going to decide the next government of Jammu and Kashmir on October 8, the day of counting of votes in the ongoing elections to the Legislative Assembly.

During his campaigning at Dheyaran, Ban and Faghari besides Mathwar in Amb Gharota and Mathwar Mandal of the Nagrota Assembly Constituency, Mr Devender Rana, who is the BJP candidate, said this is because of the political empowerment of Jammu ensured by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who believes in equal opportunities to the people of the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir in decision making and governance.

"The agenda of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka



Vishwas, Sabka Prayas is actually the mantra to end discrimination with any region and segment of the society besides ensuring equitable opportunities of progress, development and growth to all, irrespective of religion, caste or region, which is actually the essence of democracy as enshrined in the Babasaheb Ambedkarji's Constitution, he said and referred to the initiatives taken post abrogation of Article 370 that have manifested in holistic development, progress and restoration of peace. The people of this region

want to enjoy the peace dividends, especially in the Valley, that had been pushed to a dark tunnel of violence and uncertainty by the political actors believing in whipping up passions on emotive issues and playing their politics on graveyards, he added.

He said the political role of Jammu has become more pronounced, for the first time in the past over seven and half decades, which is why it is going to determine the governance structure and shape the future of Jammu and Kashmir under the ambit of the BJP's political phi-

losophy of 'Nation First'. He exhorted the politically sagacious electors to vote and support the BJP candidates and become partners in determining the trajectory of governance. This is the unique opportunity for the people of Jammu to set a roadmap for peaceful, progressive and prosperous Naya Jammu Kashmir as per the vision of Yashasvi Modiji, he added.

The upcoming elections will be pivotal in determining the trajectory of governance in J&K, with a politically engaged and empowered Jammu

taking center stage. Political observers note that the region's influence, driven by recent reforms and growing regional sentiment, will significantly impact the alignment of political forces in the Union Territory. With Jammu now positioned as a strong political voice, the eyes of the nation are on the region as it navigates its future in the post-reorganization era of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Rana lauded the vision of the BJP leadership under the Prime Minister for bringing Jammu at the political centre stage, saying this has become possible due to the landmark political developments of August 2019. The path breaking decision has opened vistas of opportunities for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which is discernible by the achievements registered in the Valley and in the Jammu region during the past over five years.

BJP did nothing except giving sufferings to people: Rajesh Gupta

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 16

In a fervent address during his door-to-door campaign in Ustad Mohalla, New Rehari, Old Rehari on Monday Rajesh Gupta, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate for Jammu East, launched a blistering critique against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launching a scathing attack on the BJP, Rajesh Gupta, said in last ten years BJP has done nothing for the public except giving sufferings.

"The entire UT administration is on the brink of collapse as BJP cheated the people of Jammu and entire UT", Rajesh Gupta said while addressing gatherings.

Gupta said that now the time has come to save the Jammu from the cruel clutches of BJP. He appealed to the people of



Jammu East that you must know about your candidate then the party. A candidate must have some political background, social working and what is his contribution for his constituency must be checked.

He said it is the right time for change and you must vote for honest, spotless, bold and passionate candidate.

Gupta alleged that the BJP's "proxy" government

has failed on all fronts in Jammu and Kashmir and claimed people are feeling betrayed by party.

"The government in J&K, run by the administration led by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, has proved to be an utter failure on all fronts with common people were left to fend for themselves. The people crumbled due to multiple miseries under the proxy government of BJP in J&K," Gupta said.

Ex-CPMF personnel ask Govt to redress their issues before Assembly election

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 16

The Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association J&K UT highlighted the ongoing issues faced by Ex-CPMF personnel and the lack of satisfactory responses from government representatives.

In a press conference held at Miran Sahib here today, D.K. Chauhan, said, "A delegation of Ex-CPMF members had previously met with prominent Members of Parliament, Jugal Kishore Sharma and Dr. Jitendra Singh. Despite their repeated efforts in 2014 and 2024 to communicate their essential and genuine demands, the delegation's concerns have largely been ignored. This persistent neglect has left a significant segment of society feeling disenfranchised and unaddressed."

He discussed the gov-



ernment orders related to the benefits for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel.

"The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), as per GOI Order No-23-11-2012, had approved a proposal from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to extend benefits similar to those granted to Ex-Servicemen of the Defence Forces to personnel from BSF, CRPF, CISF, and ITBP," he said adding

that despite this directive, there has been a lack of effective implementation by the State Government/UT, leaving many of the promised benefits unfulfilled. He also addressed the delays related to the 7th Pay Commission recommendations.

"There has been significant frustration over the slow implementation of these recommendations, particularly concerning the 2.57 new advisory, 3.68

adjustments, and the 18 months of Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears that are still pending," he said. He warned that the Ex-CPMF are deeply concerned that if these issues are not resolved promptly, the 65 lakh Central Employees may resort to boycotting the upcoming 2024 assembly elections in the UT as a form of protest.

The press conference was attended by Harvinder Mahajan Chief Advisor, Ashok Kumar Chairman, Kuldeep Singh President, Harbans Lal Sharma Vice President, Yash Pal, Jagan Nath, Gurdeep Singh Manjeet Singh and Bishno Devi Members, Noor Mummud President District Samba.

The primary objective of the press conference is to spotlight these critical issues and urge government officials to address them urgently.

BJP compromised own ideology, formed coalition Govt with PDP in 2014: Manjit

J1 NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYPUR, SEP 16

Apni Party Contesting Candidate for Vijaypur Assembly Constituency, and Former Minister, S. Manjit Singh said that the people cannot trust BJP that compromised the sentiments of Dogras, after getting 25 Assembly seats to then Legislative Assembly of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir and formed an alliance Govt with the PDP in 2014.

"It was the dishonest approach towards the people who trusted and voted BJP to power. Similarly, the BJP cannot be trusted because in all these ten years the Jammu and Kashmir, especially Vijaypur, suffered adversely with no scope of development as the administration was in the hands of the bureaucracy which was in direct control of BJP," he stated, addressing series of public meetings across Vijaypur, Parmandal,

Bari Brahmana, border villages, and other areas.

The Former Minister has intensified his election campaign by holding series of public meetings in the constituency, assuring an end to the discriminatory approach adopted by the administration, and ensuring overall development of all the areas.

He said that he is committed to bring changes on the ground as per the wishes of the people, who were kept away from the decision-making process.

"The suffering of the people in Samba's Vijaypur constituency increased because of the unilateral decision and no development. The unemployment has increased and on the other hand, the drug addiction and drug smuggling has become a major concern for the society," he said.

He said that the drug addiction / peddling has consumed many lives and destroyed families in Vijaypur that needs a serious policy to deal with the issue with the involvement of

administration, police and the members of civil society.

On the other hand, he questioned the high-profile marketing strategy to mislead the people of Vijaypur Constituency adopted by the BJP that does not address the basic issues of underdevelopment, unemployment, drug addiction, increase in crime, worsening condition of interior roads and Jammu-Pathankot highway in Vijaypur that has become a major cause of road mishap, and loss of life.

'Ganapati Visarjan' held after impressive Shobha Yatras in Akhnoor

J1 NEWS SERVICE
AKHNOOR, SEPT 16

In connection with Ganesh Chaturthi, impressive Shobha Yatras were taken out for Ganapati Visarjan (immersion of the Lord Ganesh's idols) in Chenab river of Akhnoor. Amidst beating of drums and singing of Bhajans in praise of Lord Ganesh, these Shobha Yatras were taken out from different parts of Akhnoor and passed through adjoining main bazar and bus stand before immersion of Lord Ganesh idols with proper rituals. Elaborate arrangements were made by SHO Akhnoor Tariq Ahmed under supervision of SDPO Mohan Lal Sharma for smooth Ganesh Visarjan Yatras. Special prayers were held by people on the occasion.

An impressive Shobha Yatra was taken out by the devotees of Puli wala Mandir at Akhnoor today to bid adieu to Lord Ganesh (Bappa), who was installed in the temple since Ganesh Chaturthi.

The Ganesh Chaturthi in temple was celebrated with full yield under supervision of Mouni Baba Ji. SSP Mohan Lal

Bhagat was especially invited by organizers, who had made elaborate arrangements for the Shobha Yatra before Ganesh Visarjan in river Chenab. The Shobha Yatra passed through Nirdosh Chowk, Bus Stand, Supply Mohalla and Jia Pota. Ashok Shastri, Vikas Verma, Shiv Mahajan, Raghuvir Singh, Shiv Gupta were mainly accompanying the Shobha Yatra.

Another impressive shobha yatra for Ganesh Visarjan was taken out from Pacca Danga Akhnoor which was organised by Ravi Verma, Akhil Verma, Munnu, Madan Lal Verma, Nikhil and others.

Similar Shobha Yatras were taken out from Choughan Mohalla Akhnoor, Hari Mandir Ghat, Arya Samaj. Sham Magotra, Sham Singh, Raman Sharma, Sanjay Sharma, Gourav Sharma, Sonu Malhotra, Raju, Rinku, Lucky, Munna Chandan, Shammi Jamwal, Ravi Mehra, Abhishek Ramgotra, Bittu, Rahul, Ramesh, Ankush, Atish, Naman, Krishna, Krish were others who actively participated in the celebration.

Indian Army interacts with Gujjars, Bakkarwals at Kesri Hill, Rajouri

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPT 16

Gujjars & Bakkarwals being one of the pastoral communities in the AOR migrate to the higher reaches of valley in search of pastures for their livestock, as part of their customary migratory practices. In continuation with the efforts to maintain connect with these tribes and with an aim to address their problems, Indian Army organised an interaction at Kesri Hill for Gujjars & Bakkarwals community. Gujjars & Bakkarwals, living in the remote villages of Kesri Hill participated in the event on 16 Sep 2024, wherein they



were presented an opportunity to discuss the hardships and issues being faced by their community.

During the interaction the community was guided on women empowerment, importance of education to children and their future prospects and significance of skill development for better employment opportunities. The community was assured

that every help possible would be given to them as it is their contribution due to which peace and harmony is maintained in the region Gujjars & Bakkarwal community also shared their experiences of this region and committed their unflinching support and trust in the Indian army. A total of 45 persons attended the event.

Apni Party backs jailed cleric Sarjan Barkati on Beerwah seat in J&K

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPT 16 (UND)

Apni Party led by Altaf Bukhari has extended support to jailed cleric Sarjan Ahmad Wagay, also known as Sarjan Barkati, who is contesting the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections as an independent candidate from Beerwah constituency of central Kashmir.

"We have not fielded our

candidate from Beerwah constituency and the party has decided to extend support in favour of Sarjan Barkati," Apni Party chief told media in Srinagar on Monday.

Bukhari appealed to all his Beerwah constituency party workers to extend full support to Barkati during the elections.

Barkati is contesting the Assembly election from Beerwah and Ganderbal

constituencies against former Chief Minister and National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah.

However, Apni Party has not withdrawn its candidate Qazi Mubashir from the Ganderbal Assembly constituency.

Barkati initially filed his nomination papers from Zainapora constituency in south Kashmir but his papers were rejected due to "incomplete documents".

Format C-2							
(For political party to publish in website, newspaper TV)							
Declaration about criminal antecedents of candidates set up by the party.							
(As per the judgment dated 25 th September 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) no. 536 OF 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & ors v/s Union of India & Anr)							
Name of political party: J&K NATIONAL PANTHERS PARTY (BHIM)							
Name of election ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2024							
Name of State/UT JAMMU & KASHMIR							
Sl. No.	Name of constituency	Name of candidate	(A) Pending criminal cases	(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of courts case no. And status of the case(s)	Sections of the acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)	Name of court ad order date(s) of order(s)	Description of offences and punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
1	76- JAMMU EAST	RAJESH GONDHI	JM1C (ELECTRICITY CITY MAGISTRATE) JAMMU 22003/2016 DT. 31.10.2016- PENDING	380/411/201 RPC	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
			N.A.	FIR NO. 67/2008 U/S 457, 380, 411 RPC	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Format C-1				
(for candidate to publish in newspaper, TV)				
Declaration about criminal cases.				
(As per the judgment dated 25 th September 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) no. 536 OF 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & ors v/s Union of India & Anr)				
Name and address of candidate RAJESH GONDHI R/O 220 LOWER MASTGARH JAMMU				
Name of political party: J&K NATIONAL PANTHERS PARTY (BHIM)				
Name of election ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS				
Name of constituency 76- JAMMU EAST				
I, RAJESH GONDHI (name of candidate), a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:-				
(A) Pending criminal Cases				
Sl. No.	Name of court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence (s)
1.	JM1C (ELECTRICITY MAGISTRATE) JAMMU.	22003/2016 DT. 31.10.2016	PENDING	380/411/201 RPC
2.	NA	NA	NA	FIR NO. 67/2008 U/S 457, 380, 411 RPC
(B) Details about cases conviction for criminal offences				
Sl. No.	Name of court date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed	
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	

EDITORIAL

A stark wake-up call for Urban planning in the face of unprecedented rains

The unprecedented rains sweeping across the country have wrought devastation on a scale not seen in recent memory. Flooded streets, submerged homes, paralyzed transportation systems, and overwhelmed drainage infrastructures bear grim testimony to a reality that our cities were unprepared to face. Beyond the immediate toll in human lives, homes, and livelihoods, these rains have exposed a far deeper issue: the chronic inadequacies in urban planning that have left our cities vulnerable to extreme weather events.

What was once considered an unusual climatic event is becoming disturbingly frequent, thanks to climate change. Yet, urban areas, with their unchecked expansion and poorly regulated development, continue to lag far behind in climate resilience. The situation we now confront, while devastating, is not surprising; it is the inevitable result of years of neglect, short-term vision, and flawed urban design.

Rapid urbanization is a key culprit. Cities have expanded in ways that are environmentally unsustainable. Natural drainage systems such as rivers, wetlands, and lakes have been encroached upon by unregulated construction, reducing the land's ability to absorb excess rainfall. The sprawling concrete jungles have suffocated natural water channels, leading to flash floods and waterlogging, as the rainwater has nowhere to go. Cities have been built on floodplains and low-lying areas with no regard for environmental impact, leaving urban populations at the mercy of extreme weather conditions.

Moreover, the uncontrolled expansion of urban areas has resulted in a "heat island" effect, which further exacerbates the intensity of rainfall in cities. The reliance on outdated infrastructure, insufficient stormwater drains, and inadequate flood management systems have all contributed to the current chaos. As a result, even moderate rainfall leads to paralyzing water accumulation, and any significant downpour spells disaster.

One of the biggest challenges that urban areas face today is the lack of adequate infrastructure to deal with such environmental extremes. Most cities rely on aging drainage systems that are incapable of handling the volume of rainwater that climate change has introduced. Many of these systems were designed decades ago, for much smaller populations and less severe weather patterns. The stark mismatch between urban growth and infrastructure capacity has created the perfect storm.

While governments are quick to blame the ferocity of nature, the truth is that this is largely a man-made crisis. In many cities, real estate and commercial interests have taken precedence over ecological sustainability, with builders and developers exploiting every inch of available land, often with scant regard for environmental regulations. Green spaces and permeable surfaces have been sacrificed in the name of economic growth, leaving cities with limited natural mechanisms to absorb water.

The environmental cost of poor urban planning cannot be overstated. The degradation of urban ecosystems—caused by deforestation, loss of wetlands, and unchecked construction—has left our cities ecologically vulnerable. This is a man-made disaster of cumulative neglect. The lack of investment in green infrastructure, such as parks and water retention systems, is glaring. Green belts, buffer zones, and floodplains, which could mitigate the impacts of extreme weather, have largely been eroded or outright eliminated.

The consequences of this neglect are now being felt. Water contamination, destruction of property, and loss of biodiversity are just the beginning. The economic cost of the damages will stretch local governments' resources to the limit, while rebuilding efforts will take years. This is not to mention the human cost—displacement, disease, and loss of livelihoods—all of which are already being seen in the aftermath of these floods.

This catastrophe should serve as a wake-up call for urban planners, policymakers, and citizens alike. It is clear that if we are to safeguard our cities and communities from future disasters, a radical shift in urban planning is required. This begins with a recognition that climate change is no longer an abstract threat but an immediate reality. Our cities must be designed not just for growth and commerce, but for resilience in the face of increasingly extreme weather events.

There is an urgent need for governments at all levels to prioritize the overhaul of outdated drainage systems, invest in flood control measures, and enforce strict building regulations that protect natural ecosystems. Local governments should adopt a more climate-conscious approach to urban planning, incorporating nature-based solutions like green roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, and permeable pavements, which can absorb excess water. Restoration of wetlands, protection of floodplains, and the creation of urban green spaces must be at the forefront of planning policies.

Furthermore, cities need to be equipped with comprehensive early warning systems, better disaster preparedness, and swift response mechanisms. Citizens, too, must play a role by advocating for sustainable practices and holding local governments accountable for poor planning.

The unprecedented rains that have battered our country are a stark reminder that the clock is ticking for urban centers to adapt to the changing climate. Failing to address these vulnerabilities now will lead to even greater human and economic losses in the future. The devastation we are witnessing today is not just a natural disaster; it is the result of systemic failures in planning, governance, and sustainability.

If we are to avert future disasters, we must act now—transforming our cities into resilient spaces capable of withstanding the pressures of climate change. This is not just about survival; it is about ensuring that the places where we live, work, and thrive can endure in the face of an uncertain future.

Nothing undemocratic about PM's visit to CJI's pooja

GOURAV VALLABH

The Prime Minister of India attending a Ganesh Pooja at the residence of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is an act that should be seen as a symbol of respect and unity rather than an event warranting criticism. In the complex structure of Indian governance, where the judiciary and the executive function as distinct but interdependent pillars, such gestures are appropriate and reflective of the harmony essential for the nation's progress. To criticise this act would be to adopt a narrow-minded approach, ignoring the more profound significance of the occasion. The judiciary and the executive are two of the most important pillars of Indian democracy. While they are distinct in their functions, they share a common purpose: the preservation of the Constitution and the welfare of the people. The Prime Minister, as the head of the executive, and the Chief Justice of India, as the head of the judiciary, embody the leadership of two vital branches of government.

Their personal or religious event participation reflects mutual respect and understanding of their respective roles in the country's governance. The Ganesh Pooja, a significant religious event in India, represents the invocation of wisdom, pros-

perity, and the removal of obstacles. By attending such an event together, the two leaders are sending a message that they are united in their goals for the nation, seeking divine blessings for the common good. To view this act as inappropriate would be to overlook the fact that it is not merely a personal gathering but a reflection of shared responsibility in upholding the constitutional fabric of India. Critics of the Prime Minister's participation in the Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence should remember that performing the Ganapati Pooja is not a crime, but a deeply ingrained part of India's cultural and historical heritage. The significance of Ganesh Pooja, especially when viewed through the lens of its revival by the great freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak, is a reminder of its deeper objectives—unity, nationalism, and collective strength. In this context, the Ganesh Pooja is not just a religious ceremony but a powerful cultural symbol that has historically promoted social cohesion, unity, and nationalism. By criticizing such an event, the critics undermine the values that Tilak sought to instil through this festival. In Indian tradition, the term "Karta" refers to the head or manager of a family, responsible for the well-being of the entire house-

hold. Similarly, the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice act as the 'Kartas' of their respective domains: the executive and the judiciary. While their roles are different, their objectives often align, especially concerning matters of national interest, law, and justice.

By coming together at a religious event, they demonstrate that despite their institutional separation, they work towards the same larger and greater goal—the welfare of the people and the strengthening of Indian democracy. As the Karta of the executive, the Prime Minister is responsible for running the government, implementing laws, and ensuring the country's development. The Chief Justice, as the Karta of the judiciary, ensures that justice is upheld and that the laws are interpreted and applied in a fair and just manner. These roles complement each other, and public gestures of respect and unity, such as attending a religious event together, only strengthen the understanding and coordination between these two pillars of governance. Only a narrow-minded perspective would find fault in the Prime Minister's attendance at the Ganesh Pooja. Such criticism is often rooted in a limited understanding of the executive and judiciary's roles in the country's broader governance. Criticizing such

gestures of goodwill and unity overlooks the significance of collaboration between these branches, which is essential for a well-functioning democracy. By attending the Ganesh Pooja, the Prime Minister and the CJJ are reinforcing their commitment to work together for the nation's greater good. It is well-known that Congress, during its tenure in power, had multiple instances where it was accused of attempting to influence or interfere with the independence of the judiciary. One such example that comes to the mind of every informed citizen is when Chief Justice S.M. Sikri retired on April 25, 1973, the day after the Supreme Court's landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgment, which ruled that Parliament could not alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution. Displeased by this limitation on her plans for constitutional amendments, Indira Gandhi swiftly responded by superseding three senior judges—Justices K.S. Hegde, J.M. Shelat, and A.N. Grover—on April 26.

Justice A.N. Ray, who was less critical of the government's stance, was appointed Chief Justice. This supersession sent a clear message, influencing the Supreme Court's subsequent ruling in the ADM Jabalpur case (also known as the Habeas Corpus case). During the Emergency declared on June

25, 1975, which suspended fundamental rights including the right to life and personal liberty, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court heard challenges to the presidential order. Attorney General Niren De argued that no judicial remedy could be sought during the Emergency.

Justice Khanna questioned the Attorney General about remedies for severe abuses, like police killings, during the Emergency. The Attorney General admitted there would be no judicial recourse during this period. Despite this troubling admission, the majority ruled that citizens had no right to life or personal liberty during the Emergency. Justice Khanna dissented but was later superseded by Justice M.H. Beg as Chief Justice in January 1977. In November 1976, Congress passed the 42nd Amendment, aiming to undermine judicial independence and establish a more authoritarian regime. The Prime Minister's participation in Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice of India's residence underscores mutual respect and recognition of each other's roles and powers.

Unlike Congress, which historically attempted to undermine judicial independence, this gesture reflects a healthy relationship between the executive and judiciary. It demonstrates that both leaders

acknowledge and uphold the boundaries of their respective roles, ensuring a collaborative rather than confrontational dynamic in governance and judicial matters. The Prime Minister's attendance at a religious function does not imply interference in the judiciary's functioning or decision-making. There is a significant difference between engaging in respectful cultural or religious participation and attempting to subvert judicial independence for political gains, as seen during the Congress era. To equate the two is to distort history and misrepresent the present.

The Prime Minister performing Ganesh Pooja at the Chief Justice's residence is an act that reflects India's values of cultural unity, mutual respect, and inclusiveness. Only those with a narrow-minded view or divisive political motives would criticize such a gesture. This event represents the healthy relationship between the judiciary and executive, reaffirming their shared commitment to upholding the Constitution and promoting the welfare of the nation. Rather than being a cause for criticism, it should be seen as a celebration of the harmony and unity at the heart of India's democratic and cultural ethos.

(The writer is professor at XLRI and a BJP Leader; views are personal)

Sports Boost Mental Health

SAKSHI SETHI

Sports have since long been celebrated for their physical benefits, but their impact on mental health is equally profound. Engaging in sports activities is more than just a means to maintain physical fitness. It is one of the powerful tools to enhance mental well-being. In an age where mental health challenges are increasingly common, the role of sports in fostering a healthier mind is more relevant than ever. One of the most significant mental health benefits of sports is their ability to reduce stress and anxiety.

Engaging in various physical activities increases the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which play a crucial role in regulating the mood and emotions of an individual and being consis-

tent in sports routine can lead them to a more stable mood, thereby helping them in reducing symptoms of depression and promoting overall emotional well-being. Furthermore, achieving personal goals in sports, such as running a faster mile or mastering a new skill, provides a sense of accomplishment that boosts not only self-esteem but also confidence to a large extent. Sports such as basketball, soccer or tennis that involve strategy, coordination as well as decision-making require quick thinking and concentration can help improve cognitive skills over time.

Studies too have shown that regular physical activity can enhance memory, problem-solving abilities as well as attention span, which are all critical components of mental health. By keeping the brain active and engaged, sports help



in maintaining cognitive function and prevent age-related decline. Moreover, they also teach individuals how to handle failures, manage stress and push through adversity—skills that are invaluable in everyday life. Whether it is dealing with a loss, overcoming an injury or working hard to achieve a goal, sports challenge individuals to grow stronger and mentally. This process of overcoming obstacles builds resilience and

equips individuals with the mental fortitude to face life's challenges more effectively. Not only this, engaging in team sports, cycling and aerobic activities are particularly effective in reducing anxiety symptoms caused likely due to the combination of physical exertion and social interaction.

When talking about different stages of life, there is no denying the fact that sports play a crucial role in enhancing mental health

across various stages of life—whether in school, college or professional settings. Schools can be a stressful environment for children due to academic pressures, social dynamics and extracurricular demands so engaging in sports offers an effective outlet for releasing stress and pent-up energy. Regular participation in the same helps manage stress by releasing endorphins and promoting relaxation, which leads to better focus and productivity in academic pursuits. Sports not only improve physical health but also boost mental acuity. This improved cognitive function can translate into higher productivity and better problem-solving abilities at work. Regardless of age or stage, engaging in sports provides a holistic approach to maintaining and enhancing mental health, making

it an invaluable tool for personal well-being and development. Thus, the benefits of sports extend beyond physical fitness thereby contributing significantly to emotional well-being, cognitive development and social integration. By fostering resilience, enhancing emotional regulation and encouraging positive social interactions, sports provide a comprehensive approach to mental health care. In a world where mental health challenges are increasingly prevalent, the importance of sports as a tool for mental well-being cannot be overstated. Encouraging participation in sports at all levels, from casual play to competitive athletics, can be a powerful strategy for improving mental health across all age groups.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Ayushman Bharat | Senior citizen cover is good, but what about fixing existing issues?

VENKATA VEMURI

Recently, the Union government announced that senior citizens aged 70 and above, hailing from families already covered under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), will be eligible for an additional top-up cover of Rs 5 lakh per year. It makes medicare affordable for and specific to the old and infirm.

The logic is the same as the one behind the original scheme – to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure of patients by increasing access to quality and timely healthcare. The scheme separately covers poor families, irrespective of size, per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

In its latest avatar, the scheme separately covers those 70 and above, whose medical cover stands separate from the other family members. Otherwise, the scheme is the same for

everybody. The new provision creates an opportunity for a critical look at the scheme itself, to understand if it is making the desired difference.

Yes, it is aspirational. Health insurance is no longer a luxury. The amount appears adequate as normally people do not spend Rs 5 lakh annually on medical expenses. However, if senior citizens require extended treatment or several persons in a family need treatment in the same year or the condition is something serious, the beneficiaries will find the amount short.

Let's play devil's advocate. Many mega-schemes of the government have boomeranged. Due to various reasons, students sold off their free laptops. The poor could not switch to gas-based cooking permanently because they couldn't afford refills.

Jan Dhan accounts are inoperative or minimally active because of poor sav-

ings. The mid-day meal scheme in government schools, especially in the north, suffers from inferior quality and poor monitoring.

What the government must understand is that for these national schemes to become routinised in rural India, they need to be part of a socio-economic reform bundle. You cannot operate laptops without the Internet; that means bringing the waves to the village first before distributing laptops, which means ensuring regular power supply. The linkages are important.

The biggest issue with the scheme is it principally covers inpatient care. Outpatient services are excluded. Ironically, the latter are more frequently needed by the beneficiaries. Notably, inpatient care could be of more help to senior citizens.

The fine print will tell us how frequently the scheme amount will come up for re-appraisal on account of infla-

tion and rising medical costs. As it is, rural and urban, and regional cost variations will decide whether the Rs 5-lakh amount is adequate or not.

Even a perfunctory review makes the scheme appear shallow, if you see the big picture. Under-investment in public healthcare is the real culprit, because over 60% of medical expenses for the poor are out-of-pocket expenses. The Ayushman Bharat campaign is yet to fully penetrate rural interiors where primary healthcare is still a mirage.

If doctors are absent and medical infrastructure is poor, access and affordability of health insurance hardly helps. The announcement of the scheme should have been made only after the strengthening of primary and secondary healthcare centres, and district and referral hospitals.

The scheme should specifically allow for covered treatment of diseases peculiar to rural areas such as

contagious, infectious, and waterborne diseases, TB, hepatitis, worm infestations, measles, malaria, and respiratory, urinary, and bladder infections.

Or else, there must be schemes which focus on early disease detection or help in prevention thereby reducing the medical burden.

Outpatient doctors' fees, tests, and treatments must be included in the insurance scheme for the poor. The scheme should allow incentives to those who practice health measures like giving up smoking, consuming alcohol and drugs, among others. As on date, 17 national and state-level health insurance schemes exist in India. However, there is no convergence, no meeting point between the Centre and the states for a single national scheme.

Worse, some of the exclusionary criteria for the insurance scheme are ridiculous. Those who own refrigerators

are excluded. So are those who own a motorbike. Both are not markers of financial security, and such conditions defy logic.

No government can introduce the needed reforms in one go. The first stage can take off by focusing on creating a comprehensive digital system to register the population covered by the scheme linked to diagnosis, diagnostics, treatment, and follow-ups. The second step should be an adequate supply chain of free essential drugs and diagnostics as part of primary healthcare services. This must be followed by ensuring skilled and equipped human resources at the primary health centres. Finally, the government must initiate campaigns to promote awareness about healthy lifestyles and right eating practices among the public, especially beneficiaries of the scheme.

(Venkata Vemuri is a Delhi-based journalist. X: @vvenmuri.)

100 days of Modi 3.0: Health cover to all above 70 years, 75K new medical seats

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

In the first 100 days of its third term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has rolled out several schemes to boost the healthcare sector such as providing health cover to all senior citizens aged above 70 years, and adding 75,000 new medical seats.

About 4.5 crore families, including 6 crore senior citizens will benefit from the health coverage of Rs 5 lakh to all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of their income.

The move rolled

out under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) comes as India's elderly population is projected to double by 2050, and will increase the demand for geriatric care.

In his address to the nation on Independence Day, PM Modi promised to create 75,000 new medical seats in the next five years, from the current over one lakh in the country.

The addition will make the healthcare system more effective and help reduce foreign dependence in medical education.

Emphasising the vision



of 'Swasth Bharat' (Healthy India) for 'Viksit Bharat 2047', the government introduced the Rashtriya Poshan Mission.

The flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) aims to improve the nutritional status of children, pregnant women, lactating

mothers, and adolescent girls.

Further, the U-WIN portal has been launched to digitise routine immunisations, and the National Medical Commission is developing a centralised doctors' repository.

In a bid to tackle the burden of sickle cell disease, the government launched a special campaign to raise awareness about the genetic blood disorder among women, adolescent girls, and tribal communities.

In the Union Budget 2024-25, the government exempted customs duty on three cancer drugs -- Trastuzumab Deruxtecan,

Osimertinib, and Durvalumab -- to reduce the financial burden of people suffering from cancer and also to facilitate accessibility.

The government also slashed the GST rate from 12 per cent to 5 per cent on these three cancer medicines. Under the PM E-DRIVE scheme, an electric ambulance facility has been rolled out with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore.

Digital Healthcare: The 'Scan and Share' feature on the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) has also been launched to provide a 4 crore out-patient registration facility.

Every 10pc increase in ultra-processed food intake may raise diabetes risk: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Love to binge on savoury snacks, ready meals, and sugar or artificially-sweetened beverages? Beware, every 10 per cent intake of these ultra-processed foods (UPF) may raise your risk of type 2 diabetes by 17 per cent, according to a study published in The Lancet Regional Health-Europe on Monday.

Importantly, the study showed that the risk can be lowered by consuming less-processed foods instead, said researchers from the University College London (UCL), University of Cambridge, and Imperial College London. To investigate the rela-

tionship between the degree of food processing and diabetes risk the team included 311,892 individuals from eight European countries in the study. They were followed over 10.9 years on average, during which time 14,236 people developed diabetes.

In the top 25 per cent of UPF consumers, where UPF made up 23.5 per cent of their total diet, sweetened beverages alone accounted for nearly 40 per cent of their UPF intake and 9 per cent of their diet overall.

On the other hand, substituting 10 per cent of UPF in the diet with 10 per cent of minimally processed food such as

eggs, milk, and fruit or processed culinary ingredients such as salt, butter, and oil reduced diabetes risk by 14 per cent.

Further, replacing 10 per cent of UPF in the diet with 10 per cent of processed foods (PF) like tinned fish, beer and cheese reduced diabetes risk by 18 per cent. PF also includes salted nuts, artisanal breads, and preserved fruits and vegetables.

The findings add to the growing body of research that links consumption of UPF with a higher risk of certain chronic diseases including obesity, cardiometabolic diseases, and some cancers, said the team.

New AI tool to help reduce death risk in hospitalised patients

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

A team of researchers, led by one of Indian origin, has developed a novel artificial intelligence (AI) based system that can help reduce the risk of unexpected deaths by identifying hospitalised patients at high risk of deteriorating health.

Rapid deterioration among hospitalised patients is the primary cause of unplanned admission to the intensive care unit (ICU).

But CHARTWatch, acted as an early warning system to improve patient health, and alert healthcare workers to reduce unexpected deaths, said the team in the paper published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal).

"As AI tools are increasingly being used in medicine, it is important that they are evaluated carefully to ensure that they are safe and effective," said lead author Dr. Amol Verma, a clinician-scientist at St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto, Canada.

"Our findings suggest that AI-based early warning systems are promising



for reducing unexpected deaths in hospitals," Verma said.

CHARTWatch's efficiency was evaluated on 13,649 patients aged 55-80 years who were admitted to the general internal medicine (GIM) (about 9,626 in the pre-intervention period and 4,023 used CHARTWatch). About 8,470 admitted to subspecialty units did not use CHARTWatch.

Regular communications helped reduce

deaths as CHARTWatch engaged clinicians with real-time alerts, twice-daily emails to nursing teams, and daily emails to the palliative care team, said the researchers.

A care pathway was also created for high-risk patients which prompted increased monitoring by nurses, and enhanced communication between nurses and physicians. This encouraged physicians to reassess patients. The AI system, Verma

said, can be used to support nurses and doctors in providing high-quality care.

Co-author Dr. Muhammad Mamdani, director of the University of Toronto said that the study evaluates the outcomes associated with the complex deployment of the entire AI solution.

Understanding the real-world impacts of this promising technology is important, Mamdani said.

CAR-T cell therapy, bone marrow transplant boosting Lymphoma outcomes: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Advanced treatments like targeted therapy, CAR-T cell therapy, and Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) are boosting outcomes for patients with Lymphoma, a type of blood cancer that affects the immune system, said experts on Monday.

September is celebrated as World Lymphoma awareness month.

Lymphoma is considered to be a fairly common cancer in India and develops in white blood cells called lymphocytes. It accounts for approximately 3-4 per cent of all cancers globally and is divided into two main types: Hodgkin's Lymphoma (HL) and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL), with NHL being the more common form.

In India, the incidence of lymphoma stands at around 1.8-2.5 cases per 100,000 people annually, with NHL being more prevalent, particularly among older adults. Survival rates for lymphoma have seen significant improvement over the



years, with a 5-year survival rate of about 86 per cent for HL and around 72 per cent for NHL.

Hodgkins develop majorly in the upper body, like the neck, chest, or armpits, while non-Hodgkins develop in lymph nodes anywhere in the body. "Modern treatment methods along with safe and effective treatment options like targeted therapy, CAR-T cell therapy, and BMT have helped improve the clinical outcomes in a big way. Many patients recover successfully after being declared terminal because of the use of innovative modules which proves to be an effective treatment option," Dr. Ashish Gupta, Medical Oncologist at Unique Hos-

pital Cancer Centre, New Delhi, told IANS.

Early detection is particularly important for Hodgkin's Lymphoma, as its cure rate is significantly higher when caught in the early stages.

Raising awareness helps individuals recognise key symptoms like swollen lymph nodes, fever, night sweats, and fatigue, which are often mistaken for more common illnesses.

"Immunotherapy, particularly CAR-T cell therapy, has emerged as a breakthrough for treating certain lymphoma types, especially those resistant to other treatments. Precision medicine, through genetic profiling, allows for personalised treatment strategies, enhancing

effectiveness and minimising harm," Dr. C N Patil, HOD and Lead Consultant - Medical Oncology & Haemato-Oncology, Aster RV Hospital, told IANS.

Advancements in technology have significantly transformed lymphoma treatment, making it more effective and reducing side effects.

The overall survival rate has increased, with Hodgkin's Lymphoma seeing up to 80-90 per cent cure rates when treated early. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, which has more subtypes, sees a varied survival rate based on the aggressiveness of the subtype but has improved with newer therapies.

Targeted therapies, such as drugs like Rituximab and Brentuximab, specifically attack cancer cells while sparing healthy cells, leading to better patient outcomes.

In addition, improvements in radiation therapy have made treatments more focused, reducing damage to healthy surrounding tissues and improving overall patient care.

New studies show encouraging outcomes for breast cancer patients

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, SEP 16

Three new studies on Sunday showed how post-treatment lifestyle choices shape long-term outcomes after diagnosis of breast cancer.

The studies, led by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute researchers in the US, have encouraging implications for patients with breast cancer.

Two studies focused on breastfeeding after breast cancer diagnosis and treatment.

These found it was safe and feasible for young patients carrying specific genetic variations to breastfeed without raising their risk of a cancer recurrence or a cancer in the other breast, and that it was safe and feasible to breastfeed for patients with hormone receptor-positive (HR+) breast cancer who conceived after a temporary interruption of endocrine therapy.

The third study showed that a telephone-based coaching programme can

significantly increase physical activity in overweight patients, potentially improving their outcomes.

The studies were presented at the 'European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress 2024' in Barcelona, Spain.

The first study was a collaboration among investigators at 78 hospitals and cancer treatment centres worldwide. It involved 474 patients with inherited mutations in the cancer-susceptibility genes BRCA1 or BRCA2 who became pregnant after being diag-



nosed with stage I-III invasive breast cancer at age 40 or younger.

The second study provides breastfeeding outcomes from the POSITIVE

trial which demonstrated early safety of the temporary interruption of endocrine therapy to attempt pregnancy. A key secondary endpoint was breastfeeding outcomes.

The study involved 518 patients at age 42 or younger with HR+, stage I-III breast cancer.

Of these patients, 317 went on to have a live birth and 196 chose to breastfeed. Breast conserving surgery was a key factor favoring breastfeeding.

"These studies provide the first evidence on the

safety of breastfeeding after breast cancer in both young patients carrying BRCA variations that predispose to breast cancer, as well as patients who conceived after pausing endocrine therapy" said Ann Partridge, the founder and director of the Programme for Young Adults with Breast Cancer at Dana-Farber.

The findings emphasise the possibility of supporting maternal and infant needs without compromising maternal safety.

The third study drew

on data from the Breast Cancer Weight Loss (BWEL) trial, which is exploring whether participating in a weight loss programme after a breast cancer diagnosis can reduce the risk of cancer recurrence in women with a body mass index (BMI) in the overweight or obese range. "Our results show that a telephone-based weight-loss intervention can motivate this group of patients to be more physically active," said the study's first author, Jennifer Ligibel.

Nipah virus death: Masks compulsory in Kerala's Malappuram

AGENCIES
KOZHIKODE, SEP 16

Following the death of a 23-year-old from Malappuram due to Nipah virus infection, authorities have made compulsory the use of masks in the district from Monday till further notice.

Health and revenue officials are now preparing the route map for the deceased and also the contact list to ensure that all the basic protocols of Nipah are followed.

The deceased, a 23-year-

old student at Bengaluru, was a native of Chembaram near Naduvath in Wandoor.

He died at a private hospital at Perinthalmanna last Monday.

The treating doctors, after feeling suspicious if it was on account of the Nipah virus, first got a positive report of the test conducted in Kozhikode Medical College.

On Sunday, it was Health Minister Veena George who confirmed that the Pune virology lab

report also confirmed that it was Nipah positive.

The district authorities have clamped strict protocols in and around the Thiruvalli panchayat including four wards and one ward from the neighbouring Mampad panchayat.

The local theatre and educational institutions in these five wards have been asked to close down and not to open till further orders come.

Notifications have also gone that there should

be no public assembly of people and to ensure that if there are any events, it should ensure that all the Nipah protocols are followed.

Incidentally, the deceased youth had come from Bengaluru recently with a leg injury and later turned feverish and visited two local medical clinics.

When there was no respite, he was admitted to the hospital at Perinthalmanna, where he passed away.

The Nipah virus also claimed the life of a 14-year-old boy from Kerala's Malappuram district this year on July 21, 2024, and then too, the authorities had enforced a clamp-down.

In 2018, 18 people died from the outbreak of the Nipah virus. It was the first time the deadly disease was detected in South India.

Fruit bats have been found to spread this deadly virus to other animals and human beings.

High-dose vitamin D3 not useful for metastatic colorectal cancer: Researchers

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, SEP 15

A team of US researchers on Sunday said that high-dose vitamin D3 does not provide benefit for patients suffering from metastatic colorectal cancer.

A randomised phase 3 clinical trial led by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute researchers in the US, conducted across several hundred cancer centres, tested the addition of high-dose vitamin D3 to standard treatment for patients with untreated metastatic colorectal cancer. More than 450 patients received standard chemotherapy plus bevacizumab and were randomised

to high-dose or standard dose vitamin D3, according to the researchers. The team observed no additional concerning side-effects or toxicities with the addition of high-dose vitamin D3. However, the addition of high-dose vitamin D3 to standard treatment did not delay the progression of cancer more so than standard-dose vitamin D3, according to the team's analysis after a median 20-month follow up. A potential benefit for high-dose vitamin D3 was observed for patients with left-sided disease (primary tumours that arise in the descending colon, sigmoid colon, or rectum) and requires further investigation, the team of researchers noted.

India committed to fight climate change: PM Modi

AGENCIES

GANDHINAGAR, SEP 16

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reiterated that "Green Future, Net Zero" are not just fancy words but they reflect India's commitment towards combating climate change.

Addressing the inaugural function of the 4th edition of the Global RE-Invest summit at Mahatma Mandir, in Gandhinagar, the Prime Minister said, "We are making this green transition a people's movement".

During his speech, the Prime Minister pointed that India, being a developing nation, had met its target committed in the Paris agreement ahead of the deadline.

"India is the only country among G20 nations to have fulfilled all the climate commitments made in Paris nine years before the deadline. A developing nation has achieved what developed nations could not," he added.

The Prime Minister said



for achieving a 500 GW renewable energy target by 2030, we are working at multiple levels.

Inviting global companies to invest in India's "green transition", Modi said India was the "best bet" in the 21st century.

"Today, not only Indians but the entire world feels that India is the best bet of the 21st century" he said.

Speaking about the summit, PM Modi said, "The 4th Global Re-Invest Renewable Energy Investors Meet marks a milestone in our comprehensive plan to transform India into a developed nation by 2047."

"The initial 100 days of

our third term have set the stage, displaying our priorities, rapid progress, and ambitious scale. This is just the beginning, with many more initiatives to follow, building on the base of our first 100 days," he further added.

Talking about his government's PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, which funds families to set up solar rooftops, PM Modi informed that 1.30 crore families have registered under the scheme, and 3.25 lakh households have installed solar rooftops.

PM Modi said, "Every 3 kilowatts of solar electricity generated will prevent emission of 50-60 tonnes

of carbon dioxide".

He also said that while Ayodhya was being turned into India's first model solar city, his government planned to build 17 solar cities in India where all services and utilities would run on solar power.

"Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Ram. And he was a 'Suryavanshi'... A grand temple has been built but Ayodhya is also moving forward to become a model solar city. The work is almost done... We have identified 17 such cities in India that will be developed as solar cities" he said.

Throwing light on the developments in the green energy sector in the last 100 days, the Prime Minister mentioned the initiation of a viability gap funding scheme for offshore wind energy projects worth more than Rs 7000 crore.

He said that India is working towards producing 31,000 megawatts of hydropower in the coming times with an outlay of Rs 12,000 crore.

PM Modi also interacted with beneficiaries of the 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijlee Yojna' scheme in Gandhinagar.

The scheme, launched on February 29, aims to increase solar rooftop capacity and empower households to generate their own electricity. A subsidy covers 60 per cent of the cost for systems up to 2 KW capacity and 4 per cent for systems between 2 to 10 KW capacity. The PM spent 20 minutes at the residential complex.

The 4th Global Renewable Energy Investor's Meet and Expo (RE-Invest) is poised to highlight India's impressive progress in renewable energy manufacturing and deployment.

Germany, Australia, Denmark and Norway are taking part in the event as partner countries. Gujarat is the host state and Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh are participating as partner states.

First Vande Metro train renamed as Namu Bharat Rapid Rail, to be inaugurated in Gujarat by PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 16

India's first Vande Metro train has been renamed as 'Namu Bharat Rapid Rail', top sources in the Indian Railways said. The much-awaited launch of the indigenously built train is slated for Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on a two-day visit to Gujarat, will inaugurate the country's first Namu Bharat Rapid Rail service in Gujarat on Monday, a day ahead of his birthday. The Namu Bharat Rapid Rail will connect Bhuj (Gujarat's Kutch district) with the capital Ahmedabad, thereby covering a distance of 360 kilometres in less than 6 hours. The train service will be flagged off at 4.15 p.m. virtually from Bhuj railway station while the train will officially start its services on September 17, the day when PM Modi celebrates his birthday.

The train will depart Bhuj at 5:05 a.m. and will reach Ahmedabad at 10:50



a.m. while the return from Ahmedabad to Bhuj is slated between 5:30 p.m. to 11:20 p.m.

Earlier, the Western Railways informed on X, "The Vande Metro train has 12 air-conditioned coaches with centrally controlled automatic sliding doors, modular interiors, continuous LED lighting, toilets with vacuum evacuation, route map indicators, panoramic windows, CCTV, phone charging facilities."

The Namu Bharat Rapid Rail is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and all modern amenities and has some distinct fea-

tures, which differentiate it from the Vande Bharat Express.

The Namu Rapid Rail is also equipped with advanced safety systems like KAVACH to avoid collisions and is also fitted with an automatic smoke/fire detection mechanism.

It has a seating capacity of 1,150 passengers. It has also provisions for cushioned sofas for added comfort to passengers. According to the Railways Ministry, it also has the exclusive features of Divyangjan-friendly toilets, a fully sealed flexible gangway and meal service among others.

Nitish Kumar pressurised me to merge HAM(S) with JD(U): Jitan Ram Manjhi

AGENCIES

PATNA, SEP 16

Union MSME Minister and leader of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) (HAM-S), Jitan Ram Manjhi, has claimed that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pressured him to merge his party with the Janata Dal (United) earlier.

Jitan Ram Manjhi expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for including him in the Union Cabinet.

He also thanked PM Modi for securing two additional ministry portfolios for his party leader, Santosh Kumar Suman, in the current Nitish Kumar government.

Speaking at a public gathering in Imanganj in Gaya district on Sunday night, Union minister Manjhi referred to an

incident in June 2023, where the JD(U) allegedly demanded that he either merge HAM(S) with it or exit the Grand Alliance government.

Manjhi refused to comply, and he now views this decision as advantageous for HAM(S).

Manjhi emphasised that there are "only two castes in the country: Rich and poor," stating that his party represents the poor.

Manjhi also criticised Nitish Kumar's government for offering only one ministry portfolio to his son, Santosh Kumar Suman, after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government was formed earlier this year.

However, Manjhi noted that when he contested and won the Gaya seat in the Lok Sabha elections, more portfolios were given

to Suman, attributing this change to PM Modi.

Union minister Manjhi recalled the PM's support during the Lok Sabha elections in Gaya, mentioning that PM Modi campaigned for him and urged people to vote for him, emphasising that it was not just Manjhi but also he himself contesting the election there.

With the Bihar Assembly elections slated to be held in 2025, political parties in the state, including HAM(S), have begun their preparations.

Manjhi is focussing on his stronghold, Gaya, where he belongs to the Mahadalit community (Mushar). This community has a significant presence in the district, particularly in areas like Imamganj, Belaganj, Sherghati, and Barachatti.

'No meetings without politics', TN Congress chief on VCK's anti-liquor conference

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, SEP 16

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President K. Selvaperunthagai said on Monday there were 'no meetings without politics' while referring to the anti-liquor conference to be organised by the VCK in Kallakurichi on October 2.

VCK, a long-term ally of the DMK in the state, invited the principal opposition party AIADMK for the October 2 anti-liquor conference.

The statement of Selvaperunthagai is a clear indicator that the invitation extended by the VCK to the AIADMK has some political undercurrents to it. It may be noted that in Tamil Nadu, there is no visible bonhomie between

the ruling and the opposition parties. Hence the invitation extended by the VCK founder leader and Member of Parliament, Thol Thirumavalavan surprised many with theories in place that the VCK was in the process of jumping the fence and joining the AIADMK-led front.

After the exit of the BJP from the AIADMK front in Tamil Nadu, there have been certain discussions between DMK allies and AIADMK which can lead to a realignment of politics.

The TN Congress president in his statement to the media on Monday said that the party was yet to receive an invitation from the VCK for the Gandhi Jayanti Day anti-liquor meeting at Kallakurichi.

K.Selvaperunthagai,



however, said that despite some political disagreements, the INDIA bloc was intact in the state and that there was no discord between the partners.

It may be noted that there have been strong demands from the Congress office-bearers in Tamil Nadu to enter into a coalition in the state and to share power.

The Tamil Nadu Con-

gress party was planning a total revamp of the district committees to strengthen the party at the grassroots levels ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

The state president has recently met all the district presidents of the party and has taken feedback on the grassroots situation of the party.

Sources in the Congress told IANS that the state Congress chief was pitching for a revamp of the district committees in consultation with the All India Congress Committee (AICC).

The party's local leaders have suggested that the Congress candidates must be drawn from the local leadership and that they will oppose any 'outsider' as candidates. The

candidates must not be as suggested by either the AICC or TNCC but by the District Congress Committees (DCC), they contend.

There have been demands from party cadres to go for a hard bargain with the DMK for accommodating Congress legislatures in the government. It may be recalled that the DMK had shared power at the Centre in the UPA-1 and the UPA-2 with the Congress.

With VCK extending an invitation to the principal opposition party of Tamil Nadu, AIADMK and Congress state president publicly stating that no meetings will take place without any political move is an indicator that the state is heading for some political churning.

TENSION IN K'TAKA DISTRICT, TWO ARRESTED FOR PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS

AGENCIES

DAKSHINA KANNADA (KARNATAKA), SEP 16

Two persons were arrested on Monday for allegedly provoking Hindus in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district ahead of the Eid Milad festival, said officials here adding that a case has also been filed against a VHP leader in the Cybercrime, Economic Offences and Narcotic (CEN) Mangaluru police station.

The arrested persons were identified as Mohammad Shareef, former president of Bantwal Municipality Corporation and his relative Hasinar, police sources said. The case has been filed against the VHP Dakshina Kannada Divisional Joint Secretary Sharan Pumpwell for inciting remarks.

Dakshina Kannada Superintendent of Police (SP) N. Yathish said the Eid Milad procession and a protest by Hindu activists have been peaceful and normalcy is completely restored in the BC Road region in Bantwal taluk near Mangaluru city. "The BC Road is back to normalcy and the police have reined in the situation," said Yathish.

"The route of the Eid Milad procession was not



changed by the police. We had given permission for Hindu organisations as they had sought permission to stage a peaceful protest. We have warned them that legal action will be initiated if anything goes wrong," SP Yathish stated.

"Action has been initiated against two persons for releasing the provoking audio. Mohammad Shaer and Hasinar have been arrested. We conducted peace meetings for the Eid Milad as well as the Ganesh festival celebrations much earlier.

No untoward incident has taken place till now and we will not allow anything to go wrong in future," SP Yathish said.

The security on the BC Road will be arranged as per the circumstances, he added.

Tension prevailed in the communally sensitive

coastal district of Dakshina Kannada on Monday as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal called for Hindus to hold a procession on BC Road in Bantwal taluk, near Mangaluru city, on the occasion of Eid Milad.

Police forces rushed to the spot, and a tense situation prevailed in the area.

Hindu activists stated that the procession call was in response to provocative statements made by a Muslim leader, who allegedly challenged Hindu leaders to come to BC Road during the Eid Milad celebrations. Angered by this, the VHP and Bajrang Dal urged Hindus to gather on BC Road.

As Hindu organisation leaders and workers arrived in large numbers at the Raktsheshwari temple on BC Road, Dakshina Kannada SP, N. Yathish rushed to the scene, and police reserve platoons

were also deployed to the area.

The police, as a precautionary measure, denied permission for the Eid Milad procession to pass through BC Road and provided an alternative route instead.

Hindu workers staged a flash protest, chanting slogans like "Jai Bhairav," and "We have come, where are you" while the police attempted to stop them.

Protesters tried to march ahead on BC Road, but the police managed to halt them after considerable effort.

SP Yathish later spoke to the Hindu leaders and attempted to calm the situation. However, they rejected the police's assurance to file a complaint about the provocative statements and demanded more decisive action, expressing frustration over the perceived inaction they had observed over time.

Prasad Kumar, the VHP President of Bantwal, stated that Hindu workers and leaders had gathered on BC Road in response to the call for a protest. "We decided to stage a protest after accepting the challenge from Muslim leaders," he said.

Addressing Hindu

activists, VHP Dakshina Kannada Divisional Joint Secretary Sharan Pumpwell stated that the challenge given to him and his supporters to come to BC Road during the Eid Milad procession was not just a challenge to him but was a challenge to the whole Hindu community. "That's why we are here. I condemn the actions of the police to prevent our rally. I have not issued a provoking statement. In Nagamangala town, Hindu shops are torched. The person who made the challenge should have been here," he maintained.

The tensions were sparked by comments from Mohammad Shareef, former president of Bantwal Municipality Corporation, who had challenged Sharan Pumpwell to come to BC Road during Eid Milad.

This was in reaction to Pumpwell's speech about the recent violence during the Ganesh Visarjan in Nagamangala town, Mandya district. Sharan Pumpwell had stated that if Hindus decide they won't allow the procession on the BC Road.

Although the police have brought the situation under control, the atmosphere in the region remained tense.

Maharashtra Assembly Elections: Congress's Longstanding Struggles Persist

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, SEPT 16

The relationship between Maharashtra and Congress has been fraught with tension for many years, much like oil and water that never mix. From the era of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to the political reigns of Yashwantrao Chavan and Sharad Pawar, Congress - Delhi has consistently sought to undermine Maharashtra's leadership and influence.

Historically, the Congress administration attempted to curtail the power of Maharashtra's kings. National ideologies were significantly shaped by the thoughts and actions of figures like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Shahu Maharaj, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. However, whenever these ideologies clashed with those of the Congress party—which dominated Indian politics for nearly seven decades—the voices of these towering figures were often suppressed.

One notable example is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, who sparked outrage in Maharashtra by referring to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as a "misguided



patriot" in his famous book Discovery of India. This portrayal angered many in Maharashtra, prompting Nehru to commission the construction of a statue of Shivaji in the state to pacify the people. Yashwantrao Chavan played a key role in making this happen.

Similarly, the Congress party has been accused of trying to diminish the legacy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar faced two electoral defeats in Lok Sabha elections against Congress candidates, leading many to believe that the party sought to weaken its influence. Furthermore, the Congress has continuously sidelined Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a practice still evident today under leaders like Rahul Gandhi.

Maharashtra's strong ideological stance has long posed a challenge to the

Congress party's dynastic politics. This has led to frequent clashes, with Maharashtra's icons often targeted. Congress-led administrations in states like Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have been accused of dismantling statues of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and opposing new installations in his honor.

Congress leaders have also made controversial statements about Shivaji's descendants, further straining relations. A former chief minister even claimed Nehru was superior to Shivaji, while politicians like Jitendra Ahwad have made derogatory remarks about Shivaji's legacy.

Even figures like actor Amol Kolhe, once a vocal supporter of Shivaji's heritage, have faced backlash for decisions perceived as disrespectful to Maharashtra's history.

No one is even trying to assassinate Biden/Kamala: Musk on Trump attack

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Reacting to the incident of an alleged assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump, Tech billionaire Elon Musk made a controversial statement saying why "no assassination attempts were being made on US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris".

Trump on Sunday (local time) faced the second assassination attempt after gunshots were fired outside a golf course in Florida where he was playing.

He was the target of an alleged assassination attempt in Florida, the FBI said, with the Repub-



lican presidential candidate's campaign and law enforcement reporting he was safe and unharmed.

Responding to a question from an X user, "Why they want to kill Donald Trump?", the Tesla CEO wrote: "And no one is even trying to assassinate

Biden/Kamala."

The Tesla and SpaceX chief is a Trump supporter and has often been writing posts in his favour.

The US Secret Service confirmed one or more of its agents "opened fire on a gunman" located near the boundary of Trump's golf

course, and that an "AK-47 style rifle" was recovered along with a video camera.

According to authorities, there is still no confirmation whether the gunman, identified as Ryan Wesley Routh, fired a weapon in the direction of the former president, but, Secret Service agents did fire on the suspect who was hiding in the bushes at the golf course.

The former US president's son Donald Trump Jr. said that authorities also found an AK-47 rifle in the bushes, extremely close to the spot from where Trump was leaving.

"Again folks! SHOTS FIRED at Trump Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Florida. An AK-47

was discovered in the bushes, per local law enforcement," he said in a post on X.

The attempt on Trump's life came just two months after he was shot at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. He sustained a minor injury to his right ear. The attacker was immediately shot dead by security personnel. The White House issued a statement saying both President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's Democratic rival in the November elections, had been briefed about the incident.

"There is no place for political violence or for any violence ever in our country," President Joe Biden said in a statement.

Yemen's Houthis threaten to intensify military action against Israel

AGENCIES
ADEN (YEMEN), SEP 16

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of Yemen's Houthi group, has said that the group's military operations against Israel will continue and intensify.

The Houthi leader issued the threat in the wake of a missile attack launched by the group on central Israel earlier on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Our operations will continue as long as the aggression and siege on the Gaza Strip continue," al-Houthi said in a televised address broadcast via the group's al-Masirah channel.

"We are moving to do more and what is coming



is greater."

The Houthi leader highlighted technological advancements in their military capabilities, specifically mentioning a new ballistic missile reportedly used in the recent attack on Israel.

According to al-Houthi, the missile "penetrated all the protective belts" of Israel's defence system, travelling a distance of

nearly 2,040 km in eleven-and-a-half minutes.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said the group's forces had "targeted a military target of the Israeli enemy in the Jaffa area," using a "new hyper-sonic ballistic missile".

This recent development is part of a series of confrontations between the Houthi group and Israel.

Over 47,000 acres of crops drown in floods in Myanmar

AGENCIES
YANGON, SEP 16

More than 47,000 acres of monsoon crops have been submerged in recent floods in Myanmar's Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, state media reported on Monday.

A total of 345,000 acres of monsoon crops were cultivated this season in the union territory, and over 47,000 acres of them have been flooded, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting state-run daily The Mirror.

More than 17,000 acres of the flooded crops have been damaged, and 3,900 acres of them were completely destroyed, the



report said. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation is working to re-cultivate the destroyed crops and mitigate the negative effects on the damaged and flooded crops, among other relief efforts, the report added.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation U Min Naung, along with officials from the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, inspected the damaged crops and dams on Sunday, the report said.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation U Min Naung, along with officials from the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, inspected the damaged crops and dams on Sunday, the report said.

Lankan FM clarifies diplomatic representation issue in Israel

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, SEP 16

Sri Lanka has not established any new consular offices in Israel nor made any Honorary Consul appointments since October 2023, Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said on Monday.

In a statement made in response to "recent public discussions" surrounding Sri Lanka's diplomatic presence in Israel, Sabry made four points to "provide clarifications and prevent any misunderstandings" on the issue.

"Sri Lanka continues to maintain its official embassy in Tel Aviv, which has been the sole diplomatic mission in Israel since 2000. The embassy remains fully operational,



serving as the primary diplomatic channel between the two countries," Sabry posted on X.

In March, the Sri Lankan government announced the establishment of a new Honorary Consulate for Haifa and Northern District of Israel which is a main trade and industrial hub. The main port city of Israel is also located in Haifa and there are around 2000 Sri Lankan migrant

workers in Haifa and the northern area of Israel. Sabry acknowledged on Monday that the country had appointed an Honorary Consul in the Haifa region to extend consular support to Sri Lankans living and working in the area but this appointment was made before the events of October 7, 2023 when Hamas terrorists attacked Israel.

"It adheres to standard

international practices. Honorary Consuls, typically citizens of the host country, voluntarily provide essential consular services. The Honorary Consul in Haifa continues to offer such services, operating from an office they maintain in a voluntary capacity," stated the Lankan Foreign Minister.

He added that since October 2023, Sri Lanka has not established any new consulates nor made additional Honorary Consul appointments in Israel and any claims suggesting otherwise are inaccurate and do not reflect the official position or actions of the Sri Lankan government.

"It is customary for Honorary Consuls to relocate their offices within their

jurisdiction based on personal or business considerations. These relocations are purely administrative and should not be misinterpreted as the establishment of new consular offices. We encourage the public and media to rely on verified and official sources for accurate information regarding Sri Lanka's diplomatic activities and to avoid being influenced by unfounded or incomplete reports," he said. Sri Lanka is currently gearing up for the crucial Presidential Election slated for September 21 and some opposition MPs have emphasised the need for Colombo to temporarily suspend relations with Israel until the ongoing war in the region is stopped.

Cambodian PM sends condolences to neighbouring countries over Typhoon Yagi, flood disasters

AGENCIES
PHNOM PENH, SEP 16

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet has expressed his deepest sympathy to Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam over the heavy casualties and property damage caused by Typhoon Yagi and massive floods.

In a letter to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, chairman of Myanmar's State Administration Council, on Sunday, Hun Manet said he was saddened to learn about dozens of deaths caused by severe floods around Nay Pyi Taw amid heavy rains from Typhoon Yagi, Xinhua news agency reported.

"I extend my deepest



condolences to the Government and friendly people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at this difficult time, particularly the bereaved families," he said. "I also extend my wishes to those injured for a full and speedy recovery."

In another letter to Thai Prime Minister Pae-

tongtarn Shinawatra, the Cambodian leader said he had learned with sadness about the loss of many lives, injuries and extensive damage to property and infrastructure in north and northeast Thailand from heavy floods caused by Typhoon Yagi in recent days.

"On behalf of the Royal

Government and people of Cambodia, I convey my deepest condolences and sympathies to the Government and friendly people of Thailand, especially the families of the victims," he said.

"I am confident that, under your able leadership, the resilient people of Thailand will rapidly overcome this disaster."

In a letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Hun Manet said he was profoundly saddened to learn about the casualties and massive damage to properties, infrastructure and crops caused by Typhoon Yagi ravaging several northern provinces of Vietnam recently.

"I extend my deepest condolences and profound

sympathies to you, the Government and people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, particularly the bereaved families, at this difficult time," he said. "I am confident that, under your able leadership, the resilient people of Vietnam will overcome this natural disaster."

Widespread flooding in Myanmar has left at least 113 people dead and 64 missing, according to the Information Team of Myanmar's State Administration Council on Sunday.

For Vietnam, as of Monday morning, Typhoon Yagi and the consequent landslides and floods have left 292 dead and 38 missing, according to the Vietnam Disaster Management Authority.

AGENCIES
BERLIN, SEP 16

An explosion was reported in Germany's Cologne city early on Monday, causing some damage to a building, local media said.

The NRW-Koln Police, in an X post in German, only announced that it had launched a "major police operation in area #Hohenzollernring" and that the area was closed "between Rudolfplatz and Friesenplatz" and citizens should avoid the area.

Subsequently, it posted that the traffic closures on Hohenzollernring had been lifted, and further information on the police operation would follow shortly.

Local media outlet EXPRESS.de, however, cited a police spokeswoman telling it that an explosion occurred between Rudolfplatz and Ehrenstrasse at around 5.50 a.m. "We have cordoned off a wide area and the investigation is ongoing," said the spokeswoman.

It said that the blast occurred directly in front of the Vanity Club Cologne.

It also claimed that it had obtained CCTV footage of a man in a hoodie who apparently left a bag outside one of the entrances and the explosion occurred shortly after it.

It cited a local resident as saying that he was woken up early in the morning by a loud bang,

saw a fire outside, and called the fire service.

He also claimed that he had seen several individuals running away from the area.

The Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger newspaper also reported that the incident may have taken place at a nightclub.

Radio Koln said the explosion also reportedly led to a fire, which had, however, been doused by the time firefighters arrived.

It said that one person had suffered mild injuries and was taken to hospital.

Police said that investigations are underway in the area of the incident and it would release further details later.

200 acres of border land to be returned to Bangladesh after meeting between BGB, BSF: Report

AGENCIES
DHAKA, SEP 16

A meeting between the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and India's Border Security Force (BSF) on Sunday resulted in a decision to return 200 acres of land to Bangladesh that was previously lost to India due to river erosion, a media report said.

A joint decision to resurvey the disputed land and return it to the rightful owners was reached in a meeting held between senior officials of the BGB and the BSF, unreported.

The land in question, located in the Challishpara area of Ramkrishnapur union in Daulatpur upazila, has been under dispute due to shifts in the Padma River's course and natural disasters, which disorganised international boundary pillars over a stretch of three kilometers. The problem was first identified in a survey conducted earlier this year.

Lieutenant Colonel M Mahub Murshed Rahman, Commander of BGB's 47th Battalion, confirmed the matter. "It has been agreed to conduct a resurvey of the

disputed land and return it to the rightful owners."

During the survey on February 10, it was revealed that about 200 acres of Bangladeshi land had ended up inside Indian territory, and approximately 40 acres of Indian land in Bangladesh territory.

Both countries are now preparing to officially correct the boundaries in October.

Sunday's meeting, held at the border pillar 152/7-S of Jamalpur Border Outpost in Mahishkundi, Daulatpur, also addressed broader issues such as preventing

border killings and tackling drug trafficking. The Bangladeshi delegation was led by Lt. Col. Rahman, while Commandant Vikram Dev Singh of the Rowshanbagh Battalion represented BSF.

Lt Col Rahman emphasized that until the resurvey is complete, no one will be allowed to utilize the disputed land. He also conveyed Bangladesh's strong protest against recent border killings, urging BSF to refrain from detaining innocent citizens and prevent illegal cross-border activities, particularly in the lead-up to the Durga Puja, unreported.

Pakistan: Donkey prices rise due to high demand from China

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD, SEP 16

Donkey prices in Pakistan have surged to PKR 300,000 per animal due to rising demand from China where donkey hides are used in cosmetics and medicine production, media reports said on Monday.

The sudden increase in prices has resulted in a significant decrease in local buyers at markets like the popular Lehari donkey market in Karachi.

The primary reason for the price hike in the market is attributed to China's increasing demand for donkey hides.

"Donkey hides are utilised in a variety of cosmetic products, and a traditional Chinese medicine known as 'e jia' is also produced from these hides," the Express Tribune reported.

The surge in demand has made donkeys a lucrative commodity, particularly for those looking to export



hides to meet Chinese requirements.

Due to the soaring prices, local customers are finding it increasingly difficult to afford donkeys, which has resulted in fewer buyers in markets that once saw high demand from local businesses, the reports said.

The rising costs reflect the global demand for natural resources in

cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, which has trickled down to influence domestic markets in Pakistan. With no signs of this demand slowing down, prices are expected to remain high.

According to reports, in June 2023, Pakistan had approved the export of donkey hides to China, alongside other goods such as cattle, dairy products, and chillies.

100 days of Modi 3.0: More relief for middle class via tax savings, UPS

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

In the first 100 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new term, the government has given further relief to the middle class on the tax savings and pension fronts.

The government has raised the income tax exemption limit to Rs 7 lakh. The standard deduction for salaried individuals has been increased to Rs 75,000, and the exemption limit for family pensions has been raised to Rs 25,000.

Also, a comprehensive review of income tax regulations is underway to simplify and streamline the tax system.

According to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, within the next few months, there will be a new Tax Code or a new Income Tax Act aimed at reducing litigation.



The Tax Code will be simplified in line with the three goals set by Prime Minister Modi - seamless, painless and faceless. The Finance minister also said that 72 per cent of all the taxpayers have moved to the new and simpler tax system.

As the number of income tax returns (ITRs) filed surged to a record 7.28 crore in the assess-

ment year 2024-25, the processing time has also been reduced significantly in the last decade, which is a transformative shift in the tax assessment methodologies in the country.

According to Finance Minister Sitharaman, the average processing time of ITR has been reduced from 93 days in 2013 to 10 days now, thereby making refunds faster.

Meanwhile, the Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Modi, has approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for central government employees. This scheme will be effective from April 1, 2025. Under UPS, central government employees can choose between the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) and the National Pension Scheme (NPS).

State governments will have the option of choosing between all three schemes, including the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

Under the UPS, if a government employee retires after serving for 25 years, 50 per cent of his basic salary for the last 12 months will be given as a pension.

The special thing about this scheme is that it has provisions for an assured pension. If a government employee works for 10

years, at least a Rs 10,000 pension will be paid by the government with indexation benefits.

There is also a provision for family pension. If the employee dies after retirement, his family members will receive 60 per cent of his pension.

A lump sum amount (apart from gratuity) will also be given on retirement in UPS. It will be calculated as one-tenth of the basic salary and dearness allowance (DA) for every six months of service. More than 23 lakh Central government employees will benefit from this.

In the first 100 days of Modi 3.0, the government has also revised rank-wise pensions under the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme for retirees from the Army, Navy, Air Force and other defence units, as well as for family pensioners, effective July 1, 2024.

Account Aggregators facilitating loan disbursement worth Rs 4,000 cr a month: Report

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 16

In a remarkable achievement of the country's fintech ecosystem, the Account Aggregator (AA) framework is now being used to facilitate loan disbursement worth about Rs 4,000 crore a month, a report showed on Monday.

The lending firms have used the AA framework to facilitate loans worth Rs 42,300 crore since September 2021 till March 2024, with cumulative average loan ticket size at Rs 1,00,237 for the same period, according to Sahamati, an industry alliance for the AA ecosystem in the country.

The growth surge is indicated by total loans disbursed at 21.2 lakh with Rs 22,100 crore in disbursements facilitated by AAs in the second half of this fiscal (FY25).

Average loan ticket size in this period stood at Rs 1,04,245 and is expected to reduce "as we expect more cash-flow based



lending to MSMEs and unsecured loans to new to credit customers," the report mentioned.

There are 163 financial information providers on the AA system as of August, which includes banks, insurance firms, mutual funds, depositories and pension funds and tax/GST.

The total number of successful consents on the AA crossed 100 million in three years (as of August 15). "We have seen a steady 15 per cent monthly growth on the number of cumulative consent requests being fulfilled on the AA framework," said BG Mahesh, CEO, Sahamati.

Each consent request represents the fact that

more and more individuals are now in control of their data and are using it for accessing financial services, he added.

The reliability, convenience and security of data sharing through AA platforms have brought down the transaction costs for the lenders by nearly 20-25 per cent.

Lending firms have been the first few players who have adopted the AA framework for their ongoing business.

According to Mahesh, the authenticity of data on AA framework, along with the ease of use, results in higher operational efficiencies and a high reduction in fraud cases through tampered documentations.

India sees healthy 8 pc increase in overall rainfall, positive for inflation outlook

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

India saw a healthy 8 per cent increase in overall rainfall above the long-term average (till September 13) as average retail prices of vegetables and milk cooled down, a report showed on Monday.

Cumulative weekly rainfall was 14 per cent above the long-term average (as of September 11).

With overall sowing nearly completed, the focus will now shift towards the harvesting season, as per the 'Indian Rainfall Tracker' by Emkay Global Financial Services.

The total area under sowing (109.2 million hectares) is higher (2 per cent YoY) than last year (as of September 6).



This is mainly due to healthy sowing for most major food crops - rice (41.0 million hectares), pulses (12.6 million hectares), coarse cereals (18.9 million hectares), and oilseeds (19.2 million hectares), said the report.

Overall area under sowing is at 99 per cent of normal area sown, compared with 98 per cent at the same point in 2023.

According to the report, prices have softened in recent weeks due to higher supply, but are expected to remain stable at current levels until the harvest brings more supply to the markets.

The overall basin-wise reservoir levels are in a healthy position and are above the long-term average and last year's levels. According to Aditi

Gupta, Economist at Bank of Baroda (BoB), most regions of the country have received normal to above normal rainfall which has also translated into an improvement in reservoir storage.

Kharif sowing has shown a steady improvement with acreage 2.2 per cent higher than last year. Pulses and paddy have shown the maximum improvement.

Overall, cumulative rainfall this year remains much higher so far at 817.9 mm, compared with 684.6 mm last year.

"The trajectory of the monsoon has evolved broadly in line with IMD's projections. This should be positive for the inflation outlook," said Gupta in the latest BoB update.

Climate-resilient policies vital, says Naidu; greets PM at renewable energy meet

AGENCIES
AMARAVATI, SEP 16

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu who met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 4th Global Renewable Energy Investor's Meet in Gandhinagar on Monday, stated that it was imperative to devise climate-resilient strategies for the energy sector.

CM Naidu, whose Telugu Desam Party is a key ally of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, shared on his X handle that he was pleased to meet the Prime Minister.

CM Naidu shared a video, in which he is seen greeting PM Modi.

Both the leaders had a warm handshake and brief chat.



CM Naidu stated that he was attending the meeting to discuss the untapped renewable energy potential of Andhra Pradesh.

"It is imperative to devise strategies for our energy sector that are climate-resilient and compliant. This needs a fundamental transition in the way energy is generated, transmitted, distributed and utilised. In this context, the 4th Global Renewable Energy

Investor's Meet is significant. Andhra Pradesh is a pioneer in technology for prosperity, and now, it's the energy sector's turn," wrote Chandrababu Naidu.

The Andhra Pradesh CM is one of the keynote speakers at the event. He will pitch for investments in the state's green energy sector.

The PM inaugurated the Global Renewable Energy Investor's Meet and

Expo, being conducted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

Meanwhile, Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka is attending the 4th Global Renewable Energy Investor's Meet on behalf of the state government.

Vikramarka, who holds the portfolios of finance and energy, had said on Saturday that 20,000 MW of green power will be generated in the state by 2029-30.

The Deputy CM said that solar power panels were being provided for farmers' pump sets at the government's expense on a pilot basis in 25 to 30 villages on a saturation mode and this will help farmers earn money on solar power, along with their crops.

Accel Atoms 4.0 applications now open, targets \$500 bn 'Bharat' consumer market, AI-focused pre-seed startups

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Accel Atoms 4.0, the fourth cohort of the pre-seed scaling programme by Accel, is now open for applications till November 17, the global VC firm announced on Monday.

The current edition of the sector-themed programme focuses on two categories of pre-seed startups - those building for 'Bharat', and those building in or with Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Accel defines 'Bharat' as the middle-income households spread across Tier 2, Tier 3, and rural India which presently is estimated to offer a \$500 billion consumer market.



Interestingly, the top 20 per cent of the rural population has a higher MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure) than 50 per cent of the urban population. Accel believes multiple Indian unicorns will

emerge from this Bharat opportunity.

Through the 3-month hybrid programme, pre-seed stage startups selected for Accel Atoms 4.0 will gain mentorship from top industry experts

in AI and Bharat, and over \$5 million in perks from leaders such as AWS, Google, Stripe, and more, to cover initial infrastructure needs. Startups which make exceptional progress during the program will be eligible for investment up to \$1 million.

Anand Daniel, Partner at Accel, will lead the Bharat cohort. Since joining the firm in 2010, Anand has focused on investments in Bharat, consumer technology, online marketplaces, AI, fintech, and healthtech.

He has led investments in ApnaMart, BlackBuck, Bounce, Emeritus, MyGlamm, Niyoo, OrangeHealth, Rupeek, SenseHQ, Simplismart, Spinny, Swiggy, Vedantu, Zolve,

and other early-stage companies.

The AI cohort will be led by Prayank Swaroop. Prayank is also a Partner at Accel, and has been with the firm since 2011, focusing on sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, marketplaces, and SaaS. He has led investments in Aave-nir, Bizongo, DhiWise, Dr. Droid, Securden, and Zetwerk, and other early-stage companies.

Founders in Accel Atoms 4.0 will also have access to Accel's global community of over 300 founders, mentors, and potential customers in addition to collaborations with organisations like xto10x to offer deeper mentorship, expert insights, and support.

India aims to increase operational airports to 400 by 2047: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 15

The number of operational airports in the country has doubled from 74 in 2014 to 157 in 2024 and the aim is to increase this figure to 350-400 by 2047, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said on Sunday. The domestic air passengers have more than doubled in the past decade, with Indian airlines significantly expanding their fleets.

India is the third-largest domestic aviation market and the aviation sector has shown substantial growth, with a 15 per cent YoY increase in total air passengers handled at Indian airports reaching 37.6 crore in FY24, according to the ministry data.

"The industry has

undergone a remarkable transformation, shedding its previous limitations and evolving into a vibrant and competitive sector. This dynamic shift has propelled India to the forefront of the global aviation ecosystem, becoming the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world, after the US and China," the data revealed.

At the recent second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's technological and infrastructure achievements in civil aviation and emphasised the importance of making the sector more inclusive for women.

PM Modi noted that 15 per cent of India's pilots are women, significantly higher than the global average of 5 per cent, and mentioned the issuance of an advisory to further increase this number. Meanwhile, the Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) was launched in 2016 which aims to provide connectivity to unserved and underserved airports of the country through the revival of the existing airstrips and airports.

RCS-UDAN is contributing to the growth of the civil aviation industry as four new and successful airlines have come up in the last 7 years.

More than 1.43 crore passengers have availed of the benefits of the scheme. Over 2.8 lakh flights have operated under the UDAN scheme so far.

India, key nations to cooperate in mutually beneficial areas in agriculture

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 15

India held bilateral meetings with several nations on the sidelines of the G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting in Brazil, expressing the commitment to cooperate in mutually beneficial areas, it was announced on Sunday.

Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Ram Nath Thakur,

led the Indian delegation along with Ambassador of India to Brazil, Suresh Reddy, and other senior government officials.

India held bilateral meetings with the US, Brazil, Germany, the UK, Japan, Spain and the UAE.

In the meeting with Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, Sakamoto, Thakur asked to expedite the market access of Indian

pomegranate and grapes in Japan.

In the bilateral meeting with Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, Carlos Favaro, both sides discussed issues related to cooperation in science and technology, cooperation in ethanol production and market access.

They also expressed the hope that the memorandum of understanding



between ICAR India and EMBRAPA Brazil would

be completed before G20 leaders meeting in Novem-

ber.

The Brazil side showed commitment to cooperate in ethanol production technology which will help the climate change action, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The US and India agreed to take forward the cooperation in areas of climate-smart agriculture, agricultural productivity growth, agricultural inno-

vation, forecasting and production reporting and agriculture and crop risk protection and agricultural credit. In the meeting with Germany, Minister Thakur expressed the happiness on ongoing regular engagements of Indo-German Joint Working Group (JWG) and expressed the hope that the next upcoming meeting of JWG will be fruitful. Both sides agreed to collaborate in the sec-

tors such as application of artificial intelligence in farming and support to small farmers, agro-ecology and organic farming.

In the bilateral meeting with the UK, the both sides expressed their interest to cooperate in transformation of agriculture food system into sustainable agriculture, research and science-precision breeding, gene editing, and extension services.

Asian Hockey Champions Trophy: Hosts China stun Pakistan to enter maiden final

AGENCIES
MOQI (CHINA), SEP 16

In a mega upset, China stunned Pakistan 2-0 (1-1) in the shootout to enter the final of the Asian Champions Trophy here at the Moqi Hockey Training Base in Hulunbuir, China.

This will be the first time in the history of the tournament that the Chinese national team has made it to the title round while the second-highest number of title winners Pakistan will play for the bronze medal against the loser of the second semifinal between India and Korea.

The Chinese goalkeeper Caiyu Wang was outstanding in his efforts to keep a clean slate in the shootout while Benhai Chen and Chanliang Lin scored for China. Earlier in the match, Yuanlin Lu had given China an early 1-0 lead in the 18th minute.

The first semifinal of the day truly lived up to its billing with China posing a mega threat to Pakistan's hopes of making the final right from the start. They were gritty in their pursuit, dominated the ball



possession and created early chances.

China were buoyed by the unprecedented support from the home crowd, who turned up in large numbers as it was a government holiday on Monday for the Mooncake Festival which marks the post-autumn harvest celebrations across China.

After a 0-0 stalemate in the opening quarter, China scored in the 18th minute through Yuanlin Lu's powerful dragkick to convert from the PC. The 1-0 lead for China put Pakistan on

the backfoot. China also came up with brilliant defending in the second quarter to stop Pakistan from scoring a PC. They had created as many as five PCs this quarter but could not breach the Chinese defence.

Ahead of the start of the match, China Head Coach Jin Seung Yoo, who was a former player for Korea, said, "It's an important game for us and we are totally charged up. This is the first time China is playing the semifinal of such a prestigious event in front

of home crowd. Tahir Zaman, the Head Coach of Pakistan, and I have played quite a lot against each other (when Seung played for Korea) including the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Pakistan used to crush us (Korea) in the matches."

Seung ensured this time, his team was not going to be crushed by Pakistan as they put up an inspired show. They punctured Pakistan's attack and kept the pressure on through tactful defending. Though Pakistan mustered

a goal in the 37th minute through Ahmed Nadeem, China ensured they didn't concede another goal.

They played a disciplined game, tackled Pakistani attackers with strong man-to-man marking to ensure they didn't create scoring opportunities. Though Pakistan made a handful of circle entries in the following minutes in the third and the fourth quarter, China restricted their shots on goal quite effectively to keep the scoreline at a 1-1 stalemate.

Hero of the Match, Yuanlin Lu of China said, "We prepared for this match with great enthusiasm.

We discussed strategies in small batches before we finally got together as a team and prepared for the match against Pakistan. It also helped that we had played a few test matches against Pakistan just before this tournament. We had won against them in some of those matches, so we were quite upbeat. This was the first time I was playing the Asian Champions Trophy and to win the Hero of the Match is special."

Sakshi Malik, Geeta Phogat announce Wrestling Champions Super League

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Former wrestler Sakshi Malik and Geeta Phogat announced the foundation of Wrestling Champions Super League via a social media post on Monday.

Rio Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi and 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Geeta shared a joint statement on social media platform X.

"While our villages & communities raised us, the whole nation came together to mould us into champions. There can be no greater honour than to fight for the tricolor and your love & inspiration made it possible. We are grateful, also, to our partners, both public & private, for their contribution, and we specially acknowledge the government's sustained commitment & support," the post read. "The only way to repay your trust is to dedicate our sporting talent, experience, grit & success to the service of the sport. The 2 of us have therefore come together to create the Wrestling Champions Super League (WCSL)."

"The WCSL, a world



class international league, will skill & strengthen our wrestlers to dominate the sport globally by taking on the world's best in a hyper competitive, expertly supervised environment with best-in-class support systems in place," the statement read further.

Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aman Seherawat has also joined the duo in their new endeavour and extended his full support.

"We are delighted that Aman shares our vision and is joining us on this journey. "This league is a very commendable initiative which will help Indian wrestling greatly and therefore I want to be a part of it and support it fully", he said. We look forward to working closely with this bright young star of Indian wrestling."

"Wrestling holds some of the most inspiring stories of heroism, glory, and community spirit in Indian sports. Through WCSL we'll also bring those to life! While WCSL is focused on wrestling, it is inspired also by our overwhelming urge to build a culture of sustained high performance in Indian sport & motivate every Indian to experience the joy of playing.

"Although founded by the two of us, the WCSL is a national mission committed to respecting & working in close partnership with all stakeholders... Our hearts beat only for India, for Indian wrestling, & for Indian sport. Come, let's build the sporting India of our dreams mil ke, ek saath!" the post concluded.

Team that is mentally strong in last 4-5 overs wins the match: Harmanpreet Kaur

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Ahead of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the team is focusing on the importance of mental toughness in its preparations for the tournament.

She added that being mentally tough is important, as the team that is strong in this aspect usually wins matches in the last four-five overs. India are in Group A for the World Cup alongside Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and are chasing their first women's T20 World Cup title.

"We have been working on mental strength for a long time. The last 3-4 overs are the most crucial. T20 cricket is not a small format; at the end of the day, you are playing 40 overs. In the last 4-5 overs, the team that is mentally



strong wins the match.

"We have been focusing on this for a while. If we can remain mentally stable in those final 5 overs, we can execute what's best for us. We are working on those aspects, and hopefully, we will overcome this hurdle in the tournament," said Harmanpreet to Star Sports, who would be broadcasting the competition in India.

India will begin their

campaign against New Zealand in Dubai on October 4 in an evening game and will play Pakistan on October 6 at the same venue in an afternoon match. "All the players in our team come from different states. It feels good when you see so many different characters in the team.

"People from various states share the dressing room, and you get to learn about their cultures. I think you can only experience that in sports, not in any other career. It's a beautiful feeling. All the girls in the team are really nice and humble. It feels great to share the dressing room with them and play cricket together," added Harmanpreet.

The right-handed batter also reflected on her journey and touched upon how the mentality of choosing sports as a career has changed immensely in

recent times. "It has been a beautiful journey. I come from a city where there was no cricket, and playing cricket professionally was not easy for me."

"But my family supported me a lot, and today, when I look back, it feels good. A lot of people appreciate it. Obviously, a lot of girls are joining cricket—not just cricket, but other sports as well. At the same time, parents are taking sports seriously. When I started, no one saw sports as a career.

"But now, parents want their kids to play well and choose sports as a career. The way parents think has changed, and it feels good to see that. In the past, only a few parents encouraged their kids in sports, but now, regardless of what they do, parents take pride if their child excels in sports. I think that's a big change," she concluded

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Despite numerous setbacks, including a freak leg injury that derailed Australia pacer Jason Behrendorff's IPL 2024 campaign and World Cup hopes, the 34-year-old remains optimistic and determined for a comeback.

The left-arm pacer's recent journey in 2024 has been nothing short of eventful. In March, just days before he was to board a flight to India for the IPL, a freak injury at the WACA nets shattered his fibula. The injury couldn't have come at a worse time, especially as Behrendorff was in prime form and being touted as a contender for Australia's T20 World Cup squad.

But for Behrendorff, success isn't measured by the Baggie Green, but by the impact he's made in the game. "I've played two



formats for Australia, I've played professionally for the best part of 15 years. Everyone's view of success is different," he told cricket.com.au.

The injury not only sidelined him from the IPL, where he had signed a lucrative Rs 75 lakh contract with the Mumbai Indians, but also dashed his hopes of representing Australia in the World Cup.

"It was probably the most angry and the most frustrated I've been after an injury, because it was

so freakish. "It literally hit me flush and snapped my fibula," Behrendorff said, reflecting on the incident.

It was a crushing blow for the reigning Australian T20I cricketer of the year, who had hoped to use the IPL as a platform to prove his worth for the national squad.

"The feedback leading into the IPL was basically all the main bowlers in contention for that World Cup squad were playing in the IPL," he said.

But in true Behrendorff

fashion, the pacer decided to take control of his future. He opted out of the final year of his state contract with Western Australia, informing high-performance boss Kade Harvey and coach Adam Voges of his decision to pursue freelance opportunities in global T20 leagues. Overnight, he went from representing Australia, WA, and Mumbai Indians to being an uncontracted freelancer.

"So that was a great chance to play well, put yourself in with a chance, and for me it was a case of, 'Well, I've got nothing to lose. I know I'm not one of the top three to be included in the squad. There was myself and realistically you're looking at Nathan Ellis, Sean Abbott, Spencer Johnson - it was probably the four of us competing for the one or potentially two spots left.

Bangladesh have shown that they are a force to reckon with, says Sunil Gavaskar

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Legendary India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar feels that Rohit Sharma-led side needs to be cautious about facing Bangladesh in the upcoming two-match Test series, citing the visitors coming on the back of a historic 2-0 series win in Pakistan. India will begin its home season when it takes on Bangladesh in the Test series opener at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai from September 19-23. It is followed by the two teams playing second Test at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur from September 27 to October 1.

"By beating Pakistan in both the Test matches played in Pakistan, the Bangladesh team have shown that they are a force to reckon with. Even a couple of years back, when India toured Bangladesh, they were given a good fight by the Bangladeshis. Now with the series win against Pakistan



under their belt, they are primed to take on India too." "They have some fine players in their ranks and some new promising players who no longer have the awe of the opposition that seemed to characterise their early forays into the international game. Now, every team that play them know they can't put their guard down as they could be knocked down as the Pakistanis found out. It will certainly be a series to look forward to," wrote Gavaskar in his column for mid-day.

Both Test matches are a part of the ongoing 2023-2025 World Test Championship cycle, where India

are on top of the table with 68.52 percentage points, while Bangladesh are at fourth place, with 45.83 percentage points.

The series against Bangladesh also marks the start of a gruelling 10-match Test season for India, which includes hosting New Zealand for a three-match Test series in October-November.

After this, India will fly to Australia for the all-important five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, in a bid to secure a place in the 2025 World Test Championship final, to be held at Lord's from June 11 to 15 next year.

"India have 10 Test matches coming up over the next four and a half months and they need to win at least five of them to give themselves a good chance to qualify for the World Test Championship final. None of these Tests will be easy and so we could be in for an exciting summer of cricket," added Gavaskar.

Punjab FC head coach Dilmeris hails captain Luca as 'great leader'



AGENCIES
KOCHL, SEP 15

Punjab FC head coach Panagiotis Dilmeris, following his first game at the club, hailed Luka Majcen as a great example for the youngsters after the team got off to a winning start in the 2024/25 Indian Super League season against Kerala Blasters

Skipper Luka Majcen who started off the bench went off to score a goal in the penalty and assisted the winning goal in stoppage time

"Luka is the captain of this team and a leader. He's a great player but I have to say more about

his personality. He is an amazing person. He didn't complain about being on the bench but he realised that I might start with (Mushaga) Bakenga. He's a great example for the young players who sometimes keep their head down and feel angry or disappointed because you don't start them or you don't get them on the bench. We are really lucky to have him. He scored and it's amazing.

Let's hope that after the foul he received from the opponent, he will be ready for the next game," he stated in the post-match press conference.

Odisha-RF HPC athletes claim five medals at SAAF Junior Athletics Championships

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEPT 16

Odisha-Reliance Foundation Athletics High Performance Centre's (HPC) athletes sparked at the SAAF Junior Athletics Championships in Chennai by winning five medals at the competition.

DM Jayaram starred by winning a brace of medals, bronze in the men's 100m event and a silver in the men's 4x100m relay event, where he was joined by fellow Odisha-RF HPC athlete Mahendra Santa.

Sabita Toppo claimed silver in the women's 100m hurdles event in an eye-catching display and Laxmi Priya Kisan also won a silver in the women's 800m event.

Speaking about the performance, Martin Owens, Head Coach, Odisha-RF HPC said, "The SAAF Junior Athletics Championships was a really good meet and a really good opportunity for some young athletes to represent India

for the first time. From our point of view, Jayaram ran exceptionally well. He was up against two very high quality Sri Lankan sprinters, who like Jayaram had taken part in the Junior World Championships. He ran his best race of the season so far, so I was very pleased with his effort."

"Jayaram and Mahendra also ran really well in the 4x100m relay team. Mahendra is still recovering from dengue and he'll run even better in the future. Laxmi was a big positive as she only got called up at the last minute. She had a short turnaround but ran really well. The best performance from our contingent for me was Sabita's as she ran under 14s for the first time. When she is in tip top condition, she does very well. Really proud of the team here in Odisha for preparing the athletes so well," he added.

The Odisha-RF HPC, is a strong collaborative effort of the Odisha Government and Reliance Foundation,

with the aim to improve the standard of athletics across the state and produce home-grown athletes who can achieve both national and international success.

Acknowledging the role played by the Odisha-RF HPC in his success, Jayaram said, "My life has completely transformed in the last two years and I feel like I have come a long way. Before becoming a part of the High Performance Centre, I had never even received training of this kind. To win medals in this kind of an international competition is a dream come true moment for me and I feel very proud."

Kisan, who was a last minute entry, clocked a time of 2:10.87 to win silver. Sabita notched her personal best of 13.96s and was inside the previous SAAF junior record enroute to her medal. Jayaram ran a season best of 10.56s, which was also inside SAAF junior record for India.

General, Police Observer for Ganderbal review Poll Preparedness in district

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, SEPTEMBER 16

The General Observer for District Ganderbal, R. Lakshmanan along with the Police Observer, Bipin Shankarrao jointly chaired a meeting today at the Dak Banglow Ganderbal to review the poll preparedness across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy DEO Ganderbal, Abid Iqbal Malik provided a detailed overview of the ongoing electoral preparations. He said that the district administration has assured minimum facilities at all 267 polling stations. Additionally, model polling stations including Pink, Blue, Red, and Green has been established to enhance the voting experience.

Besides Postal and home voting arrangements have been fully prepared, and election staff have received

comprehensive training to ensure efficiency during the polls.

They also took a detailed review of implementation of Model Code of Conduct and Status of Expenditure Monitoring in the district.

The ADDC/Nodal Officer MCC provided a briefing regarding the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) within the district.

He highlighted the steps taken to monitor compliance, address violations, and raise public awareness about the MCC.

Giving details regarding Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme, Nodal Officer SVEEP informed that multipronged activities are going on daily basis under SVEEP, besides several booth-level camps and interactive sessions have been conducted aimed

at engaging marginalized groups.

ASP Ganderbal also briefed the observers regarding the security scenario of the district and measures taken up to ensure smooth and peaceful elections in the District.

The General Observers expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made so far and stressed the importance of ensuring a seamless electoral process. They highlighted the need for close coordination between all stakeholders and emphasised the need to maintain strict adherence to ECI guidelines.

They called for enhanced focus on resolution of election related issues and also highlighted the importance of monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and fairness in elections.

The observers expressed

satisfaction with the progress and emphasized the importance of maintaining strict oversight throughout the election period.

While reviewing the working of MCMC, the Observers were apprised that MCMC is working round the clock to ensure close monitoring of Print, Electronic and social media in order to prevent the dissemination of misleading or inappropriate information and to ensure monitoring of paid news besides ensuring media coverage of election related activities within the guidelines of ECI.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Ganderbal, Mush-taq Ahmad Simnani, RO Ganderbal Constituency, RO Kangan Constituency, DyDEO, DTO, Dy CEO, and other concerned.

General & Expenditure Observers review polling arrangements in AC-55 Banihal

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 16

In preparation for the upcoming Assembly Election 2024, the General Observer Himanshu Kumar Rai, along with Expenditure Observer Sulekh Chand Jain, today conducted an extensive review of the election arrangements in Assembly Constituency- 55 Banihal. Their visit aimed at ensuring smooth dispatch of polling parties and the effective implementation of all necessary logistical and security arrangements.

During the visit, the General Observer met with the Returning Officer Banihal, Rizwan Asgar to assess the preparedness for dispatching polling parties. A detailed review of the stay arrangements for polling personnel was conducted, ensuring that



appropriate food and lodging provisions are in place, especially for those staying overnight. Additionally, the allotment of polling stations to micro observers was discussed to ensure effective monitoring of the polling process.

The dispatch plan for polling staff was a focal

point of the discussions and the General Observer visited Lambar Ground to personally inspect the transport arrangements. While there, the Observer interacted with the Nodal Officer for Transport, receiving updates on the vehicle availability and scheduling for the movement of polling parties in

AC-55 Banihal. The General Observer also visited the strong room established at Government Higher Secondary School Banihal to review the plan for the distribution of polling materials to the polling parties. Special attention was given to the arrangements for the early morning dispatch of polling staff to their respective polling stations.

The Expenditure Observer also met with representatives of various candidates to address their concerns related to the movement and activities of the Static Surveillance Teams (SST) and Flying Squads (FST). Mr. Jain provided reassurances that the teams would operate transparently and fairly, ensuring adherence to the Model Code of Conduct while facilitating a smooth election process.

Final Randomisation for polling staff held at Shopian

JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

The 3rd & final randomisation of the polling staff designated for deployment across the polling stations for the General Assembly Elections-2024 was held today at Shopian. The randomisation took place under the supervision of General Observer for 36-Zainapora Assembly Constituency (AC), Jeevan Babu K, and General Observer for 37-Shopian AC, Roohi Khan and in presence of District Election Officer (DEO), Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, and respective Returning Officers (ROs) and Nodal Officers.

As per the Election Commission of India's (ECI) guidelines, the randomisation was carried out using software to generate polling parties for all 251 Polling stations of the district; 129 parties for Zainapora AC and 122 for



Shopian AC.

Polling parties were also allotted to Women, PwD and Youth managed polling stations of both ACs besides, micro observers were also allotted to 194 locations of both ACs.

Reserve polling staff for all polling stations including special polling stations and reserve micro observers were also randomised and shall be placed on stand-by at district and tehsil headquarters to replace the main parties

in case of any eventuality during the pre-poll or poll day. GHHS Keller, GHHS Vehil, GHSS Ramnagri and Ranjoor Memorial HSS, Keegam have been identified in Shopian AC while as GHSS Zainapora, GHSS Chitragam, GHSS Barbugh, GHSS Ramnagri and GHSS Herman have been identified in Zainapora AC as stand-by stations for reserve polling parties.

These parties were then allocated to their respective

polling stations, ensuring fairness and impartiality in the deployment process.

The Observers also reviewed the measures taken for the welfare of polling parties including the provision of refreshments.

The webcasting of polling stations was also assessed by the Observers and instructions passed to ensure live web casting throughout the poll for proper monitoring.

Police Observer for Reasi inspects various polling stations across district

JI NEWS SERVICE
REASI, SEPTEMBER 16

Police Observer for District Reasi Sh. Pradeep Kumar Yadav, IPS conducted a thorough inspection of various polling stations of AC-57 Reasi and AC-58 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. The Police Observer emphasised on the importance of maintaining professionalism to make this election free, fair and peaceful.

The polling station visited includes a triple polling station at Government High school Gran i.e. Polling station no.167, 168, 169(Gran Barotrian-GeetaNagar, Gran-Barotrian-Goswan and Gran Barotrian). Police Observer also visited double polling station i.e. Polling station no. 55 and 57 at Government Higher secondary school Aghar jitto. The concerned Booth level officer and

police officials apprised the police observer about the arrangements that are put in place.

During the inspection, the main focus was on the evaluation of security protocols, CCTVs and secure logistical arrangements at these polling stations to assess the preparedness of the district for the Assembly elections 2024. Police Observer also visited Shrine board sports complex to review security arrangements in the complex in view of the forthcoming VVIP visits in the area. The Police Observer emphasised on the importance of maintaining professionalism, the highest standards of security and efficiency throughout the election process. He was accompanied by SSP Reasi Gaurav Sikarwar, other concerned police officers and team.

Expenditure Observer Conducts 3rd Inspection of Contesting Candidates' Expenditure Registers



JI NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 16

In a continued effort to ensure transparency and adherence to election expenditure norms, Expenditure Observer for Pulwama, Shrikant N, carried out the third inspection of the expenditure registers of contesting candidates. The inspection was conducted as per the schedule already notified by the Returning Officers for Pampore and Tral Assembly Constituencies in District Pulwama.

The inspection, in collaboration with District Treasury Officer (DTO) Pulwama and Treasury

Officers (TO) Pampore and Tral, was aimed at ensuring strict compliance with the expenditure regulations and procedures laid down by the Election Commission of India.

The process is pivotal in maintaining accountability and providing a level playing field for all candidates, thereby promoting a free and fair election process.

Shrikant N emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate expenditure records and urged the candidates to strictly follow the standards set by the Election Commission of India to uphold the integrity of the election.

Dr. Karwani reviews arrangements for migrant voters at Udhampur



JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 16

Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), Dr. Arvind Karwani, today took stock of the arrangements being put in place for facilitation of Kashmiri migrant voters at Udhampur for upcoming General Elections to the Legislative Assembly.

Dr Karwani accompanied by Tanveer-Ul Majid Wani, Assistant Returning Officer (M) Udhampur and Raj Kumar, Zonal Officer Udhampur and other officials, visited the Government Industrial Training Institute Udhampur, venue of Special Polling Station for Kashmiri migrant voters.

He was apprised about the arrangements in place for distribution and collection of polling material/EVMs and also the arrangements being put in place for counting of votes.

Dr Karwani emphasized on ensuring all the requisite Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) for voters like permanent ramps, drinking water, toilet facilities as per norms of Election Commission of India.

Zonal Officer and his staff was directed to reach out to the voters, keeping in view the scattered population of the migrants in the non-camp areas.

Dr. Karwani also interacted with the polling staff and asked them to strictly follow the laid down instructions /guidelines to ensure free, fair and impartial polling.

Pertinent to mention that the 16 Assembly constituencies of South Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam are going to polls on 18th September, for the purpose of which Special Polling Stations for Kashmiri migrant voters have been set up in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi. The

Special Polling Stations at Jammu and Udhampur have been mapped to the Camps/Zones individually, ensuring that every Zone has at least one special polling station.

The intra-zonal jurisdiction for each such polling station has been earmarked keeping in mind the distance/ease of approach for each set of electors. Free transportation facility is also being provided to the voters from certain designated locations to the polling stations and back, keeping in consideration the scattered population of Kashmiri migrants.

Similar arrangements have been put in place for the 2nd phase of polling on 25th September (Central Kashmir districts of Srinagar, Budgam) and for the 3rd phase of polling on 1st October (North Kashmir districts of Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramulla and Kupwara).

DEO Bandipora Reviews Arrangements for Postal Ballot, Home Voting, Counting Centre

JI NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 16

The District Election Officer Bandipora Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Monday chaired a meeting at Mini Secretariat to review the arrangements for postal Ballot and Home Voting in the district and Counting Centre.

The DEO took detailed assessment of arrangements for Home voting, facilities for service voters, Postal Voting Centre, PB facilitation Centre, migrant voting and other necessary measure besides also assessed the counting arrangements.

Nodal officer postal ballot and Home voting Mehraj wani briefed the chair regarding arrangements made so far.

He said, 12 D-forms have been received from all three constituencies and facilitation centers will be set up at the RO level in three constituencies of District to streamline the postal voting process and ensure that all procedures are carried out smoothly.

He informed that for 15- Bandipora AC 106 PWD voters and 134 senior citizens above 85 years of



age have opted for home voting.

Likewise for 14-Sonawari AC 158 PWD and 144 Senior citizens have opted for Home voting and for 16-Gurez 09 PWD voters and 03 senior citizens have opted for Home voting.

He further informed that all the arrangements are in place to facilitate the postal ballot for essential service voters.

Addressing the participants, DEO M. A. Qadri emphasised on proper coordination of all concerned to ensure that

voting procedures are executed smoothly and efficiently besides ensuring a transparent and inclusive electoral process.

He directed the concerned to make sure that every voter has access to the facilities they need, and that the electoral process is conducted with the utmost transparency and efficiency upholding the integrity of the election and ensure that all procedures are executed as per ECI guidelines.

Reviewing the counting arrangements, the DEO emphasised to ensure

that counting centres are adequately equipped with all necessary resources, including security and technical support, to facilitate a smooth and accurate counting process.

Among others the meeting was attended by ADC/ Nodal Officer MCC Zaffar Husson Shawal, DyDEO Mohammad Rafeeq Bhat, RO 15-Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Wani, RO 14-Sonawari Murtaza Ahmad Sheikh, ACD / Nodal Officer EVM Irfan Bahadur, Election Nodal Officers and other concerned.

DEO Shopian to felicitate first time voters, voters who report first at Polling stations on Polling Day

JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, SEPTEMBER 16

In order to ensure enhanced voter mobilisation on the Poll Day for better voting turnouts across Shopian Assembly Constituency, the District Election Officer Shopian has decided to felicitate voters.

Those voters who report first at their polling stations in the morning and first time voters will be awarded with appreciation certificates and a gift voucher by the Presiding Officers at the Polling stations.

Pertinent to mention that during the recently concluded electoral summary revision, an addition of around 1850 new voters have been made in the Constituency and all these new voters who are going to cast their first-time vote will be thanked through an appreciation certificate.

All arrangements have been made for the smooth execution of the initiative. The measure has been taken to celebrate the polling Day as a day of great joy and happiness to instill a positive sense of feeling about the participation in the democratic setup.