

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 joint/muscle pain
- Severe headache
- Severe vomiting
- Severe fatigue
- Severe skin rashes
- Severe bleeding from nose, gums, or skin
- Severe dizziness

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Polls after a decade: Curtails fall over Phase-2 Campaigning, over 25.78 lakh eligible voters, 239 candidates in fray

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 23

The campaigning for the phase-II of Jammu and Kashmir elections, slated to be held on September 25 (Wednesday), culminated on Monday with 26 Assembly segments set to go to polls where a total 25.78 lakh voters will cast their ballots.

According to the news agency, a total of 240 candidates are in the electoral fray from across 26 constituencies in six districts

of Jammu and Kashmir. The second phase is interesting in itself as the top leadership of four political parties including National Conference (NC), Apni Party (AP), Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are vying for the five different seats.

From NC, the party Vice Party Omar Abdullah is vying for two seats including Ganderbal and Budgam while

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Ensuring transparency: 21 govt employees suspended, 5 adhoc, casual labourers disengaged

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 23

The Chief Electoral Office has initiated action against 21 government employees, adhoc and casual labourers after they were found to have taken part in election campaigning with a view to ensure transparency in ongoing

Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Acting swiftly on detailed ground inquiry reports, 21 employees found involved in political campaigning have been placed under suspension while 5 adhoc employees including casual labourers and others

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PM Modi talks high in "Man ki baat" but forgets "Kaam ki baat"; outsiders ruling J&K: Rahul in Srinagar, Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR/JAMMU SEP 23

Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi today took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for talking about “man ki baat” and forgetting the “kaam ki baat” stating that J&K was not only downgraded to a UT but “this place is not ruled by outsiders against the wishes of people.”

Addressing a massive rally in the Central



Shalteng constituency of Srinagar, Rahul said that J&K has not only been reduced to a UT from being a State but it has been ruled by the “outsiders directly.” “The Lieutenant Governor is Raja who is working against the wishes of people here. He doesn’t know how to work,” Rahul said.

He took a dig at PM Modi for talking high in his “Man ki baat” but forgetting the “Kaam ki baat.”

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PoK is undivided part of India: Amit Shah



JI NEWS SERVICE
FATEHABAD, SEP 23 (UND)

The BJP believes that Kashmir occupied by Pakistan is also an undivided part of India, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday during an election rally in Haryana's Tohana, adding that Rahul

Gandhi's wish to restore Article 370 would never be fulfilled.

Seeking votes for BJP's Tohana candidate Devendra Babli and BJP candidate from Ratia Assembly Sunita Duggal, Shah said, "Even the next three generations of Rahul Gandhi will not be able to restore

Article 370." Shah said that the BJP believes that the Kashmir occupied by Pakistan is also an undivided part of India.

The Home Minister lashed out at the Congress and Bhupendra Singh Hooda for insulting Dalits and failure to check corruption in government recruitment during his tenure as Chief Minister.

Calling Congress as an anti-Dalit party, Shah said Baba Saheb Ambedkar was never given Bharat Ratna during the Congress rule but the BJP honoured him by building Panchtirtha in the name of Baba Saheb and announcing to celebrate Constitution Day.

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Brief exchange of firing between SFs and terrorists in Kishtwar



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 23

The security forces and a group of terrorists on Monday briefly exchanged fire that triggered a gunfight in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The encounter in the

Chatroo area of Kishtwar has entered the third day as 2 to 3 terrorists are believed to be trapped in the area where the cordon is laid by the joint team of security forces.

“The encounter that started on September

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Success lies in collective strength and not in the battlefield: PM Modi at Summit of the Future

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW YORK/NEW DELHI, SEP 23 (UND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the world must adopt a human-centric approach to development and that “success lies in our collective strength, and not in the battlefield” - in allusion to the continuing Ukraine and Middle East conflicts.

In his address at the Summit of the Future at the UN General Assembly, the PM also called for reform of the global insti-



tutions, which he said is key to their remaining relevant.

He said that India had shown the way forward by including the African

Union in the G20 during its presidency of the bloc last year.

PM Modi said that while terrorism continues to

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Dr Farooq questions silence of PM, HM over UP girl's rape in Ram Mandir

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 23

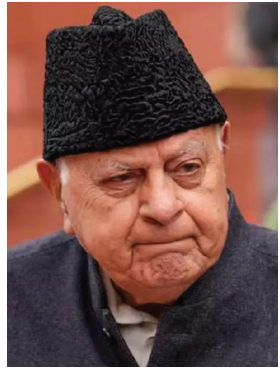
Jammu and Kashmir National Conference president Farooq Abdullah has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and UP chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of keeping mum on the rape of a Schedule Caste girl in Ram Mandir.

Farooq Abdullah, as per the news agency said that the girl has been raped inside Ram Mandir but did you hear any statement from PM, did you hear anything from HM, who is sitting in Jammu or from UP CM. "Isn't she our sister, isn't she our daughter?"

How many times will they become targets? Then they will claim to be protectors," the NC president asked and said, "They can't protect anybody. They can only protect their chair."

Farooq Abdullah was

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Think about those detainees against whom no crime proven so far: Omar Abdullah

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR (UND), SEP 23

National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Monday said the government must think about those detainees against whom no charges have been framed for the past five years.

Omar said this while replying to a question about what Home Minister Amit Shah had said Sunday during an election rally at Jammu that no stone pelted or terrorist will be released in Jammu and Kashmir.

“At last everybody has a right to prove one's



innocence and come out of jail”, Omar told media persons in Central Kashmir's Budgam district on Monday.

Omar is contesting Assembly elections from central Kashmir's Budgam

and Ganderbal districts.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister said “I just want to know that who had been arrested, does any case have been registered against them. Has their crime

been proven in the court”. “You have kept them jailed for the past five years, tell me how many of them had their crime proven in court,” he questioned and added, “most of them against whom no case has been initiated till this date”.

The government must think about those detainees against whom no initiative has been taken so far, he added.

Earlier during his electioneering in Budgam, Omar said that his party manifesto is committed to reviewing the case of those who have been

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Heat wave returns to Kashmir, Sgr sizzles at 33.7 degree Celsius

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 23

Severe heat wave was witnessed yet again in Kashmir parts on Monday with the gateway of Kashmir-Qazigund, recording the highest-ever day temperature in the month of September at 33.2 degree Celsius.

Jammu and Kashmir parts recorded a rise in the maximum as well as the minimum temperatures with Kashmir recording the heat wave and some parts including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recording severe heat wave today.

According to the news agency, the data reveals Srinagar recorded the maximum temperature of 33.7 degree Celsius, which was 6.7 degrees above normal.

In Qazigund, the mercury settled 7.6 degrees above normal temperature today, the data reveals, adding that Kokernag recorded a maximum temperature of 31.6 degree Celsius, which was 7.0 degrees above normal.

Kupwara in north Kashmir, Pahalgam a famous tourist destination and Gulmarg a ski-resort recorded maximum temperatures of 33.2

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Campaigning ends for second phase of Assembly polls in J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 23 (UND)

The campaigning for the second phase of Assembly polls came to an end on Monday evening in 26 constituencies across six districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

The stakes are high for the National and regional parties in the second phase of election.

A total of 27.78 lakh voters are eligible to vote to decide the electoral fate of 239 candidates in this phase of the election.

The authorities have set up 3,502 polling stations with webcasting for fair, transparent voting process, officials said.

These are for the first Assembly polls in J&K

since the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and downgrading the state into a Union Territory in August 2019.

In Kashmir, 15 Assembly Constituencies in central Kashmir comprising Kangan (ST); Ganderbal; Hazratbal; Khanyar; Habakadal; Lal Chowk; Chanapora; Zadibal; Eidgah; Central Shalteng; Budgam; Beerwah; Khansahib; Charar-I-Sharief; Chadoora will go to polls on Wednesday.

Similarly in Jammu region, 11 Assembly Constituencies comprising Gulabgarh (ST); Reasi; Shri Mata Vaishno Devi; Kalakote- Sunderbani; Nowshera; Rajouri (ST); Budhal (ST); Thannamandi (ST);

Surankote (ST); Poonch Haveli and Mehthar (ST) are scheduled to go to polls.

The campaign saw rallies being addressed by top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge.

Prime Minister and other top BJP leaders in their address accused the Congress NC, for being “soft” on terrorism and pushing the youth towards stone-pelting, a claim that has been dismissed by NC.

On the other hand, Rahul and Congress leaders focused on the resto-

ration of J&K statehood, while the regional parties NC and PDP sought votes against the BJP constitutional decisions in 2019.

The other parties Awami Ittehad Party headed by Baramulla Member of Parliament Abdul Rashid Sheikh, who has been released on interim bail for the polls till October 2, Democratic Progressive Azad Party led by Ghulam Nabi Azad, Apni Party and Peoples Conference campaigned vigorously for the second phase of election.

On the last day of campaigning, the parties made last ditch efforts to woo the voters.

The voters on Wednesday will decide the

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'Interview' Rahul Gandhi's Kashmir campaign aims to fight BJP's 'wrong policies': Congress leader G A Mir

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 23

Congress leader and Member of Parliament Rahul Gandhi made his second visit to Jammu & Kashmir on Monday, addressing two back-to-back election rallies in support of Congress candidates for the ongoing assembly elections.

After addressing a rally in Poonch, Gandhi travelled to Srinagar, where he spoke at a public rally in the Central Shalteng constituency, where Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Con-



gress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hameed Karra is contesting.

On the sidelines of the rally, the news agency-Kashmir News Observer's

of JKPCC, about Gandhi's visit to J&K as a star campaigner and its potential impact on voters in the region.

The brief interview also touched upon the alliance with the National Conference (NC) and the participation of groups that have previously boycotted the electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Excerpts: How significant is it for the J&K Congress to have Rahul Gandhi leading the election campaign?

Rahul Gandhi is

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DEO Rajouri chairs meeting of ROs, Nodal Officers, Zonal & Sectoral Magistrates

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 23

The District Election Officer Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Conference Hall of Government Degree College (GDC), Rajouri, to review election preparedness which was attended by Returning Officers (ROs), Nodal Officers, Zonal and Sectoral Magistrates along with various other officials involved in the conduct of the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024.

During the meeting, a detailed question and answer session was held to address minor queries raised by officials regarding poll day procedures.

One of the highlights of the meeting was an interaction with Engineers from the Election Commission of India (ECI), who



provided insights into the process for the replacement of Ballot Units (BUs) and Control Units (CUs) of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This technical session was crucial for ensuring a seamless voting process on the day of the election.

The DEO gave directives to Zonal and Sectoral Magistrates to thor-

oughly check the stickers on all vehicles before their departure to polling stations. These stickers are crucial for identifying the authorized election vehicles and ensuring their smooth movement during the election process.

DEO instructed the officials to ensure the proper marring of polling parties before they are dispatched to their respective polling stations. He stressed that accurate and timely sharing of data related to law and order, the status of EVMs and voter turnout should be a top priority for all election officials. Monitoring the electoral lists to prevent discrepancies was also highlighted as an important task during the polling process.

In addition, the DEO directed all officials to thoroughly review the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines and

ensure they are followed in letter and spirit on poll day. He emphasized that strict adherence to these guidelines is essential for maintaining the credibility and transparency of the election process.

The DEO urged all officials to maintain the highest level of coordination and preparedness to ensure the smooth conduct of the Assembly Elections. He also directed that any issues arising on the poll day must be promptly addressed to uphold the integrity of the election process.

SSP Rajouri, Randeep Kumar briefed the meeting on the security arrangements for the elections. He provided detailed instructions on adhering to the ear-marked routes for the dispatch of polling parties, especially for those heading to critical polling stations and far-flung areas.

Final Randomization for Poll Parties completed for all three Assembly Constituencies in Poonch



J1 NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 23

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal completed the final randomization of poll parties for the three assembly constituencies of Poonch district—Surankote, Haveli and Mendhar—ahead of the voting scheduled for September 25. The randomization, conducted in the presence of senior officials, is a crucial step in ensuring a transparent and impartial electoral process.

The DEO emphasized the importance of this process in upholding electoral integrity.

A total of 2,452 employees have been deployed to form poll parties across 483 polling stations in the district. This figure exceeds the required 1,932 personnel, ensuring additional staff is available to address any unforeseen challenges on Election Day. The deployment of surplus personnel is aimed at guaranteeing a smooth and efficient

voting process across all constituencies.

For constituency-wise deployment, 88-Surankote has 151 polling stations that require 604 personnel, with 778 employees deployed. In 89-Haveli, 760 personnel are required for 190 polling stations, but 956 employees have been assigned. In 90-Mendhar, 568 employees are needed for 142 polling stations, while 718 personnel have been deployed.

In addition to the poll parties, the required Micro Observers have also been deployed to monitor and ensure the integrity of the election process at the polling stations. This randomization process, conducted under the guidelines of the Election Commission of India (ECI), ensures that poll parties and observers are allocated impartially, reinforcing the district's dedication to a fair electoral process. With the final randomization, the district election machinery is fully prepared for the upcoming elections.

UT Level Inter Division Boys U-19 Volleyball Tournament kicks off in Bhandarwah



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BHADERWAH, SEPTEMBER 23

The District Youth Services & Sports Department organised the UT Level Inter Division Volleyball Tournament for under-19 boys at the Government PG ground in Bhandarwah.

The tournament featured two teams from the Jammu and Kashmir divisions, showcasing the best young volleyball talent from across the UT. The event was officially declared open by District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Sunil Kumar, in the presence of ZPEO Doda Surinder Singh.

While addressing the young players, Sunil

Kumar emphasized the importance of such tournaments in nurturing sports talent and developing teamwork among youth. He also urged the students to stay away from drug abuse and to maintain a healthy lifestyle through sports.

The matches witnessed intense competition, with the Kashmir Division team narrowly defeating the Jammu Division team in a thrilling 3-2 sets victory. The games were marked by exceptional sportsmanship, teamwork and enthusiastic support from both participants and spectators, making the tournament an exciting display of athletic excellence.

DEO Kathua holds meeting with Sector, Police Magistrates in Basohli



J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 23

District Election Officer Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas conducted an important meeting today with sector magistrates and police magistrates in Basohli to review the preparations for the upcoming elections.

The Returning Officer, 65-Basohli AC Anil Kumar Thakur was also present in the meeting.

The meeting focused on ensuring strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, maintaining law and order, and establishing effective communication between election and law enforcement teams.

Dr. Minhas underscored the need for timely response mechanisms and coordination to address any emerging challenges, urging officials to prioritize voter facilitation and security.

of adequate security measures to safeguard the democratic process. The meeting also addressed training requirements and the logistics for handling sensitive polling stations.

He further advised the team to maintain transparency and fairness throughout the election process, reiterating the responsibility each officer holds in delivering an election free of discrepancies or undue influence.

End of Campaigning Period in District Srinagar for all 8 Assembly Constituencies

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

In order to facilitate smooth conduct of electoral process in District Srinagar, to denote the end of campaigning period and start of silence period of campaigning, the District Magistrate (Deputy Commissioner / District Election Officer) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat issues Prohibitory orders under Section 163 BNSS throughout the District. According to the order issued from the Office of District Magistrate Srinagar, the restrictions have been imposed in District under Section 163 BNSS from 6:00 pm on September 23, 2024 (Monday) till 6:00pm on September 25, 2024 (Wednesday) in wake of the scheduled Polling in the District and to uphold the sanctity of democratic principles.

Election Observers review security arrangements ahead of polling in Ganderbal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, SEPTEMBER 23

With polling day approaching on September 25, 2024, the General Observer R. Lakshmanan, Expenditure Observer Ashok Gautam and Police Observer Bipin Shankarra Ahire today held a comprehensive review of the security arrangements in place for the upcoming elections in the district.

A joint meeting held in the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat Ganderbal was attended by District Election Officer, Shyambir; SSP Ganderbal, Wasim Qadri; Additional District Development Commissioner, Mushtaq Ahmad Simmani; ASP Ganderbal, Aijaz Ahmad; ROs, Dy DEO and other senior officers of various security agencies.

The review was conducted to ensure the safety, security and smooth functioning of the polling process, as well as to encourage maximum voter participation.

During the review, it was emphasized that all deployed troops will be thoroughly briefed on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for polling day. Essential contact numbers will be shared



at the booth level, ensuring rapid communication and coordination across all polling stations.

Election Observers stressed the importance of each Officer fully understanding the SOPs to ensure smooth and responsible execution of duties.

Key instructions were given concerning the management of queues at polling stations, maintaining order, and ensuring proper frisking procedures, all aimed at ensuring a safe and efficient voting experience for all citizens.

Security personnel were urged to work collaboratively, with a unified focus on maintaining a peaceful atmosphere during the election.

In addition, Zonal and Sectoral Officers have been directed to remain

highly vigilant throughout polling day. Their active supervision is essential to ensuring that the voting process runs smoothly and efficiently, with any potential issues being promptly addressed.

The Election Observers called upon all involved to work as a team, ensuring that the elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner. Special emphasis was placed on encouraging maximum voter turnout, in line with the district administration's commitment to fostering democratic participation.

The District Administration remains dedicated to providing a secure environment on polling day, and all necessary measures are being put in place to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

With final phase of training, DEO Srinagar readies female, PwD poll staff for special Pink, Red Polling Stations

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

The District Election Office Srinagar conducted the final phase of election training for female and specially-abled poll personnel whose services will be utilised at special Pink and Red Polling Stations in district Srinagar.

Under the directions of the District Election Officer (DEO), Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, all eight women-managed special Pink Polling Stations and eight all PwD-manned Special Red Polling Stations have been established in the District, as directed by the Election Commission of India, to add a unique feature of inclusiveness in the on-going Legislative Assembly Elections-2024.

The participating Poll Personnel were readied to stand side by side with general poll staff and contribute in strengthening the institutions of democracy by entirely managing polling stations in the district.

The Master Trainers deputised by the DEO Srinagar delivered exhaustive training and hands-



on experience sessions to equip the participating female and PwD employees with skills and knowledge to operate poll machinery on the day of elections.

With detailed presentations, the trainers ensured that the employees have a clear understanding of the election laws, rules and regulations which, as the election staff of Pink and Red Polling Stations, they have to follow in the election process.

The special instructions were also conveyed to the participating employees for strictly following the poll guidelines for free and fair Assembly Elections in Srinagar.

Earlier, DEO Srinagar conducted dozens of training and hands-on experience sessions in different phases in Srinagar to lay a base of skilled, well-trained and competent poll personnel to successfully carry out the polling

duties on the day of elections.

The District level team of DLMTs and ALMTs led by the Coordinator Trainings, Dr. Manzoor Reshi at DEO Srinagar, had prepared an exhaustive training schedule soon after the announcement of Legislative Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir by the Election Commission of India.

Nodal Officer Trainings, Riyaz Ahmad Shah (Deputy Director FCS&CA), guided the Training Team for successful implementation of training schedule in district Srinagar.

As directed by the DEO Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, the trainers made sure that each employee whose services will be utilised in elections, is able to operate poll machinery and is competent to carry out their individual responsibilities hassle-free.

Home Voting to commence in Baramulla from 24th September

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 23

Home voting for Phase-3 of the Assembly Elections will commence tomorrow, on 24th September, across all seven assembly constituencies in Baramulla District.

The dedicated polling teams formed will visit eligible voters at their homes, allowing them to exercise their right to franchise via postal ballots, ensuring convenience and eliminating any undue hardship.

This first-of-its-kind initiative for the J&K Assembly Elections is designed to serve voters aged 85 and above, as well as individuals with benchmark disabilities, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The home voting process will continue until September 26, 2024, and to ensure smooth execution of the process, 49 dedicated teams have been formed across the district, consisting of dedicated staff members, including polling personnel, micro-observers, and reserve teams, and deployed in various clusters within the constituencies.

These include 5 teams in 07-Sopore Assembly Constituency, 8 teams in 08-Rafiabad AC, 18 teams in 09-Uri, 3 in 10-Baramulla, 6 in 11-Gulmarg, 5 in 12-Wagoora Kreeri, and 4 teams in 13-Pattan, ensuring there are not any logistical challenges while providing eligible voters a facility to vote from the comfort of their homes.

The dedicated teams would be visiting the homes of 661 eligible registered home voters, including those categorized as AVSC (Absentee Voters in Category of Senior Citizens with age criteria of 85+) and AVPD (Absentee Voters with Disabilities), thereby enabling them to exercise their democratic right to vote.

District Election Officer, Minga Sherpa emphasized the administration's commitment to achieving 100% voter participation, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and transparency. He assured that every eligible voter will have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

The DEO further underscored that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) laid down by the ECI towards the conduct of home voting have been meticulously followed at each stage of the process to ensure thorough scrutiny and fairness while maintaining the integrity of the election process.

DEO Poonch reviews poll preparations for Assembly Elections

J1 NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 23

District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal today convened a crucial meeting to review preparations for the Assembly Elections scheduled for September 25, 2024. During the meeting, the Returning Officers (ROs) apprised the DEO about the preparations, emphasizing the importance of strong coordination among election teams. The DEO urged officials to ensure seamless operations on polling day and instructed the ROs and Sector Magistrates to conduct final inspections of polling stations. He stressed the need for



essential facilities, such as ramps for differently-abled voters, adequate water supply and CCTV installations.

The DEO also reviewed the security arrangements, which include heightened

surveillance at sensitive polling stations and the deployment of additional security forces to prevent disturbances and voter intimidation. He highlighted the importance of accountability and

real-time reporting from Sector Magistrates during the election to promptly address any irregularities.

The meeting further discussed the deployment of trained polling staff and mock polling sessions to ensure familiarity with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). Special initiatives to engage first-time voters were outlined, focusing on creating a welcoming environment at polling stations.

SSP Poonch, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), senior officers, along with Sector Magistrates and Returning Officers (ROs) from constituencies of Surankote, Haveli and Mendhar attended the meeting.

Thermal fogging drive launched in Jammu Municipal areas

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 23

Under the overall supervision of Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Dr. Devansh Yadav and Director Health Services Jammu Dr Rakesh Magotra, an intensified fogging drive was today launched by Joint Venture of Directorate Health Services Jammu and Jammu Municipal Corporation from UMCP office Parade.

4 fogging teams shall be operational in Jammu Municipal Corporation jurisdiction daily. The fogging shall be done in areas where even a single case of Dengue or Chikungunya is diagnosed.

The drive was launched in presence of Dr. DJ Raina, State Malariologist, J&K, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Health Officer, Vijay Tiwari, IEC



Consultant and Mohan Lal, AMO in UMCP Parade among others.

On the occasion, the role of various preventive measures was emphasized. The situation of Dengue is well under control and with the coordinated efforts of JMC and Directorate of Health Services Jammu, all possible necessary actions are being taken including vigorous IEC campaign, anti-

larval measures, spraying, maintaining the Gambusia fish in the ponds and fogging besides others. Adequate testing facility and designated wards and beds are available in hospitals besides platelet transfusion wherever required. 104 helpline of National Health Mission is being utilized for any issues faced by the community and for addressing their queries.

Inter-District Division Level Under-17 Girls Volleyball Tournament begins in Samba



JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 23

The District Youth Services and Sports Office (DYSSO) Samba organised the Inter-District Division Level Under-17 Girls Volleyball Tournament at Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium, Samba.

The tournament was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Deputy Commissioner Samba, Rajesh Kumar Sharma, in presence of Guest of Honour, Jagdish Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner,

along with other distinguished officials.

During the event, the DC interacted with the teams, offering words of encouragement and support. He extended his best wishes to all participants, motivating them to compete with passion and sportsmanship, and underscored the significance of youth involvement in sports for their overall development.

During the inaugural ceremony, participants took a pledge to promote sports participation and

avoid drug use, underlining the importance of healthy and active lifestyle.

The tournament has brought together 94 young athletes from 9 districts of the Jammu Division, providing a platform for these talented girls to showcase their volleyball skills, while fostering teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship. DYSSO Samba Dharmvir Singh welcomed all the participants and encouraged them to give their best throughout the competition.

Multiple SVEEP events encourage Jammu voters

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 23

An electoral awareness event aimed at encouraging voter participation was organised today at the Jammu University Under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign.

The event witnessed the presence of District Election Officer Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh, ADDC Sher Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Anshu Jamwal, Nodal Officer SVEEP and ACD Jammu Dr Vikas Sharma, along with other district officers.

A blimp was launched into the sky with a voter awareness message, marking the commencement of activities aimed at encouraging maximum voter turnout for the upcoming elections scheduled for October 1, 2024. The event also featured a cultural program presented by artists from the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, which included motivational songs to inspire voters to participate on election day.

In his address, DEO Jammu Sachin Kumar Vaishya emphasised the



importance of democratic participation, urging all citizens to exercise their right to vote. "This is a crucial opportunity for every eligible voter to contribute to the democratic process by casting their vote. Let us ensure a record turnout this time," he said.

SSP Jammu echoed this sentiment, appealing to families to come out and vote together, making election day a collective responsibility. ADDC Sher Singh also encouraged all to dedicate themselves to strengthening the democracy by casting their vote and motivating others to do the same.

Meanwhile, ADC Anshu Jamwal urged participants to actively spread the message within their communities and inspire others to participate in the electoral

process.

Later in the evening, a similar SVEEP event was held at Amar Mahal, where DEO Jammu, along with other district officers including ADDC Jammu, ADC Jammu, and ACD, launched another blimp to mark the occasion. The DEO also assured that similar activities would be organised across the district to generate voting awareness.

This event also featured a kite-flying activity, with special SVEEP-themed kites symbolising the campaign's goal of reaching every voter. Additionally, a cultural presentation by DIPR artists was organised, where they performed cultural songs and encouraged voter participation for the upcoming elections.

Police Observer reviews security measures for Assembly Elections in Reasi, Gulabgarh

JI NEWS SERVICE
REASI, SEPTEMBER 23

In preparation for the upcoming assembly elections, Police Observer Pradeep Kumar Yadav conducted an extensive visit to the AC-56 Gulabgarh (ST) EVM strong room located at the Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostel in Sajroo, Mahore. The inspection aimed to evaluate the security arrangements in place to ensure a smooth and transparent electoral process.

The Police Observer was joined by senior officers from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and various nodal officers responsible for overseeing the security and logistical frameworks of the elections. Together, they reviewed the existing security protocols,



ensuring compliance with national standards designed to safeguard the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

Police Observer visited Government Higher Secondary School Budhan polling station, Polling Station no 162 at Government High School Jamaulan to review arrangements. He

emphasised the importance of coordination among different security agencies and the need for continuous monitoring to prevent any potential disruptions. Pradeep Yadav also engaged in discussions with the CAPF officers to identify any additional resources or support required to enhance security measures in the lead-up to the elections.

Training programme on home voting, postal ballot services held in Udhampur



JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 23

To ensure the smooth conduct of the upcoming General Elections for Legislative Assembly 2024, the District Election Cell Udhampur today organized a comprehensive training programme for polling staff for managing home voting and postal ballot services.

The training was conducted under the chairmanship of District Election Officer Udhampur, Saloni Rai, here at Conference Hall, DC Office Com-

plex, Udhampur. The primary objective of the training was to facilitate voting for senior citizens and Persons with Disabilities in the upcoming Assembly elections.

DEO emphasized the importance of this hands-on training for the staff, encouraging them to make the most of the opportunity to ensure they execute their duties efficiently. She further highlighted that their roles are critical in upholding the principles of free, fair and transparent elections.

District Nodal Officer Law & Order Rajouri reviews traffic management for Poll Day



JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 23

District Nodal Officer Law and Order Rajouri Rajiv Kumar Khajuria today chaired a meeting with concerned officers to review and finalize traffic management strategy for the Assembly Elections 2024, scheduled to be held on September 25, 2024 in the district. The meeting aimed to ensure seamless and efficient traffic management on

poll day, facilitating convenient movement of voters, polling personnel and essential services. The District Nodal Officer Law and Order reiterated the importance of meticulous planning and inter-departmental coordination to ensure the success of the traffic management plan on the poll day. The District Administration is implementing comprehensive measures to manage traffic effectively on poll day.

General Observer convenes meeting with Micro Observers, Zonal, Sector Magistrates for Gulabgarh Constituency

JI NEWS SERVICE
REASI, SEPTEMBER 23

The General Observer Saroj Kumar Sethi for AC-56 Gulabgarh (ST) today convened a crucial meeting with Zonal and Sector Magistrates, along with Micro-Observers, in the office chamber of the Returning Officer for the 56-Gulabgarh (ST) constituency.

The meeting was convened to enhance coordination and readiness ahead of the upcoming elections, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned in their commitment to a free and fair electoral process.

During the meeting, the General Observer emphasized the importance of each participant's role in monitoring the elections.

Key discussions also focused on public engage-



ment, highlighting the need to educate voters about their rights and the mechanisms available for reporting irregularities.

The General Observer reiterated that the collaborative efforts discussed will be instrumental in ensuring that the electoral process in the 56-Gulabgarh (ST) constituency reflects the true will of the people.

DEO Bandipora oversees EVM Commissioning ahead of polls



JI NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 23

The District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Monday conducted a thorough inspection of the strong rooms designated for the 15-Bandipora and 14-Sonawari Assembly Constituencies. The visit was part of the preparations for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024 in the district.

During the inspection at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora, the DEO reviewed

the ongoing commissioning process of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).

Additionally, the DEO visited the strong room at Government Degree College

Sumbal to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place for the Sonawari AC. The DEO emphasized the importance of teamwork and dedication among all officials and staff involved in election duties, stressing that their efforts are crucial for ensuring a smooth and transparent electoral process.

He instructed the officers and officials to work with the highest level of efficiency and integrity to uphold the democratic process.

Nodal Officer CAPF Welfare reviews facilities at multiple locations in Rajouri



JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 23

Acting on the directions of District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, the Nodal Officer for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) Welfare, Israr Mir, conducted an extensive visit to various key locations in Rajouri district to review the welfare arrangements for the deployed CAPF personnel ahead of the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024.

The welfare review covered crucial locations where CAPF personnel are stationed or will be stationed for election duties. Mir inspected the facilities

at Dangri Ashram, Pahari Hostel Rajouri, Handa Building in Jawahar Nagar, Honda Palace and Indoor Stadium among several other places.

During his visits, the Nodal Officer emphasized the importance of providing a conducive environment and adequate amenities for the CAPF personnel, who play a pivotal role in maintaining law and order during the electoral process. He assessed the living conditions, availability of drinking water, sanitation and medical facilities at all the locations, ensuring that the personnel are well-supported throughout their deployment.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM

Notice Inviting Applications for shortlisting of PAD items for use/sale/service at Static Catering Establishments over Firozpur Division was published in various leading National Newspapers on dated 01.09.2024 as well as on the official website of Northern Railways. Further, following changes have been made in the said notice:

Sl. No.	Name of the Items & Quality Standard	Category	Turnover per annum from sale of F & B items	Turnover per annum from sale of specific brand
1	PACKAGED DRINKING WATER (1000ml, 500ml, 300ml and 250ml) Must conform to IS 14543:2004 standards.	B	Rs. 2.5 Crore	Rs. 2.5 Crore

Accordingly, last date for submission of applications only for shortlisting of Packaged Drinking Water (PDW) is extended upto 15.10.2024 upto 15:00 hrs. instead of 03.10.2024 upto 15:00 hrs. Further, other terms & conditions and instructions regarding the same will remain unchanged. 2941/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Dy. Chief Materials Manager, NR, Store Depot Mech. Workshop, AMRITSAR for and on behalf of President of India, invited tenders through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Due date
01	62245292	Fabricated Doorway Stiffening Cross Bar (Complete Assembly) for BOXNHL Wagon to RDSO Drg No. WD-22093-S-05, Alt-3, Item no.1	1560 Nos.	28.10.24
02	62245294	Taper packing (04nos/set) as per Drg. No. BOXNHL 2D-817D with taper washer (08 nos/set) as per Drg. No. BOXNHL 2D-817F for Bolster of BOXNHL wagon	780 Sets.	28.10.24

NOTE - Above tenders with detailed description are uploaded on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. The firm, who desires to participate against e-tenders, is advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a class III digital certificate from certifying Agencies authorized under IT Act 2000 by Govt. of India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be accepted. Tender Notice No. 15/2024-2025 Date : 20.09.2024 2955/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Polls after a decade...

Syed Muhammad Altaf Bukhari is contesting from Chanapora seat. Besides, BJP's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina is contesting from Nowshehra and JKPC Chief Tariq Hameed Karra is contesting from the Central-Shalteng seat.

Moreover, many prominent candidates including four-time MLAs, former ministers and former Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Mayor and his deputy are also vying for the seats in Srinagar's eight constituencies.

Pertinently, a total of 329 had filed their nomination papers for the phase-II of J&K elections while 62 among them got rejected and 27 individuals withdrew their papers.

At present, 239 candidates are contesting from 26 assembly segments, which include eight in Srinagar followed by five each in Rajouri and Budgam and three each in Poonch and Reasi. However, Ganderbal has only two assembly segments going to polls on Wednesday.

Across the six districts of Jammu and Kashmir going to polls on Wednesday, a total of 25,78,099 will decide the fate of the candidates. The electorates include 13,12,730 lakh male voters, 12,65,316 lakh female voters and 53 third-gender voters. As many as 1,20,612 lakh voters aged 18 to 19 are eligible to vote in phase-II of the Assembly Elections. Among these, 11,294 are male and 10,065 are female first-time voters.

The tight competition is expected at the multiple assembly constituencies.

All eyes are on the seats where the prominent candidates are in the electoral fray, who have majorly opted door-to-door campaigning in this election to woo the voters.

Only a few rallies and roadshows have been witnessed in this election unlike the past in Srinagar with most of the candidates knocking every single door in their respective constituencies to woo the voters in their favour.

To facilitate the voters for smooth and hassle free electoral participation, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has established 3502 polling stations with 100% webcasting across 26 Assembly Constituencies. These include 1056 Urban Polling stations and 2446 Rural Polling stations.

To enhance voter participation, 157 Special polling stations have been established in second phase including 26 polling booths managed by women as Pink Polling Stations, 26 polling stations manned by specially abled persons, 26 polling stations manned by youths, 31 Border polling stations, 26 green polling stations and 22 Unique Polling stations.

The voting will take place from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm. KNO

Ensuring transparency: 21 govt...

against whom the charges of involvement in Political campaigning were proved have been disengaged", informed J&K Chief Electoral Officer.

Meanwhile, 20 employees have been shifted out of the offices where they were posted and attached with other offices to ensure that they do not indulge in such behaviour which raises suspicion of their involvement in campaigning or favouring any particular party/candidate.

The CEO further informed that notices have been issued to 15 employees against whom the complaints of involvement in campaigning have been received and their cases are under investigation. Besides, about 51 complaints have been closed as the detailed inquiry proved that they were not involved in political campaigning. KNO

PM Modi talks high in...

to address the unemployment and to restore Statehood in J&K," Rahul said, adding that the fact is nobody listens to man ki baat of PM Modi now.

He said before Lok Sabha polls, it was stated that Modi has a 56 inch chest. Earlier, he would speak with chest spread but INDIA alliance managed to break Modi's psychology. Modi's confidence is lost. He is the Modi of earlier days," Rahul said.

"I see him very closely in the Lok Sabha while people see him on TV. His mood has changed and his face has changed. Credit goes to INDIA alliance for this," he said.

He said BJP leaders spread hatred and pitched brother against brother. "They have spread hatred across the country. Hatred is not dealt with Hatred but with love," Rahul said.

From Kanyakumari to Kashmir, Rahul said, he walked 4000 kms. "Wherever BJP had opened the shops of hatred, we closed them and opened the shops of love. We will continue to do the same," he said.

He said this is for the first time that J&K as a state was downgraded to a UT. "We had seen UTs being converted into States. "We want Statehood to be restored as soon as possible so that J&K becomes a State again," he said. "We wanted this to happen before elections but BJP didn't."

He said Congress will build pressure on BJP to restore the Statehood post polls. "If they don't do it. I guarantee you that we will do it as it is your democratic right," said Rahul.

Earlier, in Surankote, Rahul while addressing a massive rally in support of Congress -NC alliance candidate Muhammad Shahnawaz Choudhary at Surankote, said:

"We wanted the government to return the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir before elections but this couldn't happen. But after elections we will force the Modi government to do that and if they can't do it we will do it ourselves," Gandhi said, with a huge round of applause from the people."

The Congress party's star campaigner said that it is for the first time in the history of India that a state has been downgraded to Union Territory (UT). "We have seen UTs being converted to states. State being divided and new states being made but not that any state has been downgraded to UT. It is for the first time in the history of India that such a thing has happened."

Targeting BJP and RSS, Rahul Gandhi said that they only believe in spreading hate and violence and this is what they have done in Jammu and Kashmir and in the rest of the country. "But you can't end hate with hate but love. This is the ideological battle of hate and

opening shop of love. I travelled from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Manipur to Maharashtra and shops of love have been opened everywhere. We have spread only one message that hate helps none. KNO

PoK is undivided...

He said that in the previous governments, jobs were not given without bribe and without nepotism, but the BJP has done the work of giving jobs to thousands of youth.

Shah said that Bhupendra Singh Hooda has promised to give 2 lakh jobs in his manifesto but can he assure the youth would get them without bribes.

Slamming the Congress for alleged corruption, Shah said can their leaders guarantee that their government would run without scams.

Haryana BJP State President Mohan Lal Badoli, Swami Sumedhanand, Biharilal Bishnoi, Praveen Joda, BJP candidate Devendra Babli from Tohana and BJP candidate Sunita Duggal from Ratia along with other leaders were present on the stage.

Brief exchange of firing...

21 near the Danna Dhar forest area at Gurinal village of Chatroo has entered the third day as fresh contact was established in the morning," official sources said.

They said that the firing resumed and contact was established with brief exchange of firing.

On September 13 two soldiers were martyred and as many were injured in a gunfight in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar district.

On September 20, terrorists fired upon the security forces in the Reasi district.

Success lies in collective...

be a threat to global peace and security, he cited cyber, maritime, space as the new emerging theatres of conflict.

"In all this I will stress strongly that Global action must match global ambition."

He called for balanced regulation at a global level for responsible use of technology, and for global digital governance to ensure that national security and the territorial integrity of nations is upheld.

He said that digital public infrastructure should be a bridge and not a barrier, and offered to share India's digital public infrastructure with the entire world towards this.

PM Modi said that for India One Earth, One Family, One Future is a commitment.

This commitment he said is reflected in India's initiatives like One Earth-One Health, and One Earth-One Sun-One World-One Grid.

He said that India will continue to strive in thought, work and deed to protect the rights of all humanity and for global prosperity.

His address:

"We must give priority to human-centric approach. By lifting 250 million people out of poverty in India we have demonstrated that sustainable development can be successful.

"We are willing to share our experience with the Global South.

"Success lies in our collective strength, not in the battlefield.

Reform of global institutions is essential, it is the key to relevance.

"Permanent membership to the African Union in G20 was an important step in this direction.

"While terrorism continues to be a threat to global peace and security, on the other hand cyber, maritime, space are emerging as new theatres of conflict.

"In all this I will stress strongly that Global action must match global ambition.

"There is a need for balanced regulation at a global level for responsible use of technology; we need global digital governance to ensure national security and territorial integrity is upheld.

Digital public infrastructure should be a bridge not a barrier.

For global good India is ready to share its digital public infrastructure with the entire world.

For India One Earth, One Family, One Future is a commitment.

This commitment is reflected in our initiatives like One Earth-One Health, and One Earth, One Sun, One World, One Grid.

India will continue to strive in thought, work and deeds to protect the rights of all humanity and for global prosperity."

Dr Farooq questions...

in Budhal to support party candidate Javed Choudhary on the last date of campaigning for the second phase of election. NC's Choudhary is facing tough competition from Bharatiya Janta Party's (BJP) Choudhary Zulfiqar, who recently switched to BJP.

Targeting BJP for terming NC and Article 370 responsible for terrorism in J&K, Farooq Abdullah said, "For the last five years Article 370 is not there but has terrorism come down. Look what happened in Kishtwar yesterday. Why is it happening now?"

Replying to a query whether Article 370 will be restored in J&K or not, he said, "It is a legal battle. Earlier two judgments of the Supreme Court termed it permanent but the recent judgment termed it temporary. We will continue to fight this legal battle till it is restored."

Commenting on BJP's remarks of NC to take back ST status of Paharis, Farooq Abdullah said, "BJP ruled for 10 years and why they didn't give the ST status to Paharis during that time. Why was it that ST status was given ahead of the parliamentary elections. Pahari people know this and they will not fall into their trap." KNO

Think about those...

arrested under the Public Safety Act (PSA) and have been sent to outside jails of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that his party would repeal the PSA and try to bring all those detainees back home with honour if they formed the next government.

He said there is no home left where any of their youth has been registered under First Information Report (FIR) in their particular police stations. He alleged that they are being asked to present themselves every week.

Heat wave returns to...

degree Celsius, 29.4 degree Celsius and 23.6 degree Celsius respectively.

However, as per the forecast, the prevalent weather conditions are expected to continue for the next three days.

An Independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng said that the heat wave will continue for the next three days, however, a Western Disturbance is affecting Jammu and Kashmir on September 27 and 28 while under its influence, the rains in some parts of J&K is also expected during the period. KNO

Campaigning ends for...

fate of leaders such as NC's Omar Abdullah, Congress J&K President Tariq Congress, Apni Party Chief Altaf Bukhari, jailed cleric and separatist leader Sarjan Ahmad Wagay, widely known as Sarjan Barkati, who is contesting as Independent candidate; several NC leaders, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Rahim Rather and BJP's Aijaz Hussain.

Despite no call for boycott, any militant threat and improvement in the security situation, the voter turnout in the first phase of polls failed to match the voter turnout in the 2014 election.

According to an official spokesman 25,78,099 lakh voters are eligible to cast their ballot in this phase, comprising 13,12,730 lakh male voters, 12,65,316 lakh female voters and 53 third-gender voters.

As many as 1,20,612 lakh voters aged 18 to 19 are eligible to vote in phase-II of the Assembly Election. Among these, 11,294 are male and 10,065 are female first-time voters, the spokesman said.

This phase will also see participation of 19,201 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) voters and 20,880 voters above the age of 85.

The highest 15 candidates are in fray in Ganderbal, and four candidates in Budhal.

Rahul Gandhi's Kashmir...

our chief campaigner, representing the aspirations of the youth, poor, women and farmers. For the past 10 years, he has been steadfastly opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies. He is highly regarded in this region, and his presence carries weight. This election, taking place after the abrogation and downgrading of the state's status, sees him as our primary advocate to restore statehood. That is our commitment.

What is Rahul Gandhi's central message during these rallies?

As I mentioned, PM Modi has spread hatred and created divisions among communities. Rahul Gandhi's message to the people is clear: remove BJP and its harmful policies from J&K, and free the region from the detrimental effects of BJP rule. That will be the central message.

There have been breaches in the Congress-National Conference seat-sharing agreement in some constituencies. How do you view this?

Such instances have occurred in several places. From our side, some candidates who were supposed to step aside decided to contest. We took action and expelled those individuals to uphold the alliance agreement. However, the National Conference has not yet addressed or acted upon similar breaches. For example, in the Central Shaletang constituency, where the NC-Congress alliance has fielded Tariq Hameed Karra, an NC candidate is running as an independent. They may claim he has left the party, but the NC President, Farooq Abdullah, needs to clarify that the coalition's official candidate is Karra and that any independent candidate has no affiliation with either party.

You are contesting from south Kashmir's Duroo constituency. What are the political dynamics there?

In this constituency, the core National Conference supporters have respected the alliance. However, some disgruntled individuals without true conviction have strayed. Despite this, the committed cadre of both parties has followed the seat-sharing arrangement. These are minor issues, but the major message is that the NC-Congress-Panthers-Left alliance is intact, and it is the need of the hour. We have significant challenges to address, and this election is not about individual aspirations for chief ministership or MLA positions. It's about the people's verdict to reclaim what was taken from us.

How has the political landscape of J&K changed since it was downgraded and bifurcated into two union territories?

There is deep resentment among the people of J&K. Although they are not violently protesting, they now have the opportunity to express their views through the ballot. We advocate for a constitutional and democratic approach, and this election is their chance to respond to Modi's unilateral decisions, which were made without consulting the people of J&K and are widely rejected across India.

Many who previously boycotted elections are now contesting. How do you see this shift?

The people are the ultimate judges. Once these individuals enter the electoral field, their past actions will be scrutinized by the voters. I have nothing more to add to this.

Last year, Bharat Jodo Yatra was launched. Has it galvanized support for Congress in J&K?

Bharat Jodo Yatra was not about rallying support for Congress, it was a national message against the hatred spread by PM Modi and the divisions created between communities. Rahul Ji walked 4,000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to bridge these divides and promote brotherhood. When he entered Kashmir on foot, the reception he received from the people—youths, women, and elders—was overwhelming. His heartfelt message about the loss of his grandmother and father resonated deeply with every Kashmiri. That sentiment remains in the hearts of the people of Kashmir. KNO

NIT Srinagar organizes plantation drive 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'



JNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 23

As part of the ongoing Swachhata Pakhwada campaign, the NSS unit of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Wednesday organized a special plantation drive titled 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' on the campus.

"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" is an effort that shows our respect and dedication towards our motherland and nature. The aim of this campaign is to plant a tree in the name of a mother and create a lasting memory, which will not only protect the environment but also contribute to building a greener and more prosperous future.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath said this plantation drive is not just an event, but a step towards fostering a greener future. Initiatives like these remind us of our responsibilities to protect the environment and contribute to combating global challenges.

"NIT Srinagar will continue to support such activities that align with our vision of creating a sustainable and clean environment for future generations," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Registrar NIT Srinagar, Prof. Atikur Rehman said 'Ek Pad Ma Ka Naam' is a step in making our campus greener and raise awareness about the critical role trees play in combating climate change and pollution.

"I appreciate the NSS unit and all participants for their efforts in making this event a success. Together, we can continue to make meaningful contributions toward a sustainable and cleaner environment," he said. Prof. Rehman said such initiatives not only promote environmental stewardship but also encourage the involvement of our students and staff in community welfare.

NSS Coordinator, NIT Srinagar Dr. Jitendra Gurjar said that during the drive more than 100 saplings were planted across mul-

multiple locations on campus as part of the initiative.

"The drive was aimed to highlight the importance of planting trees in addressing critical environmental issues such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change," he said.

Dr. Gurjar emphasized that participants were encouraged to take responsibility for nurturing the trees, ensuring their survival and growth, thus reinforcing the vital role trees play in maintaining ecological balance.

"The event also included a felicitation ceremony for sanitation workers, recognizing their indispensable contributions," he said.

Earlier, NIT Srinagar hosted a five-day activity series from September 13 to September 17, 2024, to promote sanitation, environmental awareness, and community welfare.

Each day focused on a different theme, engaging volunteers and the local community in efforts to create a cleaner and healthier environment while also honoring the efforts of sanitation workers.

The NSS week kicked off with a pledge ceremony, where participants took an oath to maintain cleanliness in their surroundings and encourage others to do the same.

On the second day, a rally was held to raise awareness about cleanliness and hygiene, with NSS volunteers marching from the campus through nearby residential areas and markets, carrying banners and placards promoting hygienic practices.

The third day featured a large-scale cleanliness drive, during which volunteers cleaned roads, bus stops, parks, and public spaces, collecting and segregating waste into recyclable and non-recyclable materials.

In recognition of the tireless efforts of sanitation workers, NSS volunteers organized a special felicitation ceremony, where the workers were honored with appreciation certificates and small tokens of respect.

NILM celebrates Maharaja Hari Singh Bahadur's Birth Anniversary



JNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 23

National Incredible Literacy Mission (NILM) celebrated Maharaja Hari Singh Bahadur's birth anniversary with great pomp and show.

During the function Kavita Bali Secretary, National Incredible Literacy Mission, Jammu (N.I.L.M.) was the chief guest. Sheetal Devi Computer teacher working at Zonal office Ganga Nagar Bantalab, Jammu hosted

the function. Here students were informed by the faculty regarding achievements of Maharaja Ji. During the function Secretary N.I.L.M. Kavita Bali informed the youth regarding our history and specially about dogra rule.

At the end event Kiran Sharma faculty member presented vote of thanks to all the guests and students. Staff who was present during event included R S Thakur, Sheetal Devi, Kiran Sharma and Pooja Sahu.

OBC Samaj of Ambphalla, New Plot extend support to BJP Candidate Yudhvir Sethi

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 23

Braham Jyot Satti, Incharge BJP OBC Morcha Jammu Kashmir along with Surinder Sharma (Senior leader and Incharge Jammu east) and other bjp leaders hold public meeting at Ambphalla, New plot area of Jammu East and in which obc samaj extended their support to BJP candidate Yudhvir Sethi. Bharat Bushan (Veteran Journalist), bRavi Mehra (Vice President OBC Morcha), Karan Sharma (Mandal Gen sec BJP amphalla), Rakesh Pandey (mandal president OBC), Omkar Singh Boss (Shakti kendra Parmukh), Ajay Mehra (Mandal Vice President OBC ambphalla), Suresh Verma (dist vice president OBC) were present on the occasion. The program was organised by Ajay Mehra.

In the program they met with obc families, listened to their grievances

and appealed to them to cast their precious vote in the favour of BJP candidate Yudhvir Sethi and said Yudhvir Sethi is the only person who is serving humanity from more than 40 years and BJP is the only political party who works in the nation's interest.

People were very happy and extended their support to Yudhvir Sethi and raised slogans in the favour of India and BJP.

While addressing Braham Jyot highlighted the past of Jammu Kashmir and said a decade ago Kashmir was suffering from terrorism and situation started changing after 2014 when PM Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister of India and with in few years now Jammu Kashmir is almost terrorism free and hardcore militants has been buried under earth.

He said that the ideology of BJP is working for all segments of society and



it knows the pain of every person and BJP is the only party that takes along all religions and classes rest of all parties works for a special province and special class.

He briefed various different schemes for OBCs which are running by Central Government and urged people to take benefit of these schemes and he said BJP's ideology is best for public.

He highlighted various development projects like Highways, Ring road, Railways etc and said it is possible by the dynamic vision of Our PM Narendra Modi and briefed about various beneficial schemes which are run by the Govern-

ment just for needy people and the public should take benefit of these schemes.

Vote is biggest power of a citizen and it should be cast in the favour of Nationalist's Party because bjp is the only political party who is shielding hindus from international forces, he added.

Surinder Sharma said BJP is the only political party who thinks for OBCs and works for the upliftment of OBC samaj. The ideology of BJP is ideal and best for all segments of society and bjp is only party who raised OBC reservation from 2 percent to 4 percent. He said OBCs are backbone of our nation because OBCs shares maxi-

mum population of India and OBCs are diehard nationalists. In this elections OBC communities are giving full support to BJP and casting their precious votes in favour of and definitely bjp will get full mandate in these ongoing elections with the help of OBCs.

He said ongoing elections are not about any party but about ideology, one which is in the interest of the country and the other which is anti-national. The BJP always works in the interest of the nation and our public will vest their interest in BJP again and we will make majority government. He said in the past 10 years BJP dealt with big issues like surgical strike to strengthen the country, construction of Ram temple which has been in dispute for a long time, removal of Article 370 to connect Kashmir in the main stream, ban on triple talaq for justice to minority women. Our

party has tried to realize the slogan of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas. He said PM Modi also belongs to the OBC community and he highlighted various schemes like Vishwakarma, Ayushman Bharat, Kisan Samman Nidhi yojna, cleanliness campaign, Aawas Yojna, Ujjwala gas scheme and he said that Casting of Huge number of votes from OBC communities represents the dedication of OBCs samaaj towards nation and development. Definitely with the support of our nationalists supporters BJP will get clear mandate in these elections. Bharat Bhushan, veteran journalist, also graced the occasion with his presence and highlighted the significance of the electoral process in a democracy.

He called upon people to elect the candidates who can drive the nation on the path of development.

India alliance will form next govt in J&K: Neeraj Kundan



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 23

Congress candidate from bishnah assembly kundan appealed for their support in the meeting organized during public meeting in Pandoriya village. National President of All India Youth Congress Uday Bhanu Chib and former MLA Kamal Arora also reached the program and appealed to support Neeraj Kundan. Uday Chib and Kamal Arora said that the people of Bishnah

have a great opportunity to elect an energetic and young leader like Neeraj Kundan. This young leader has the power to bring a revolution in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Neeraj Kundan said that within 10 years BJP has ruined Jammu and Kashmir. People still have a chance to support the Congress Party by giving a befitting reply to the divisive forces. He promises that all the demands of the people will be fulfilled and their aspirations will be taken care of.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Showcases Special-Purpose Iconic Hilux at Himtech 2024

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 23

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) showcased special-purpose Hilux (modified with the support of an authorized external vendor) at the Himtech 2024 symposium, organized by the Indian Army jointly with FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry). Moving towards the national goal of "Raksha Atamanirbharta", and to provide the defense forces with access to the best equipment and solutions available, these two organizations (Indian Army & FICCI) have collaborated for "HIMTECH 2024" with an emphasis on utilizing military technology for high altitude areas (HAA). The event, held at the Rinch Auditorium Grounds, Leh, Ladakh, on 20th and 21st September 2024, witnessed the presence of senior officials from the Army Commands,

Air Force, ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police), defense users and other key dignitaries along with representatives from TKM.

Driven by Toyota's renowned QDR (Quality, Durability, and Reliability), this 4x4 all-terrain, off-road vehicle is expertly engineered to perform in the most demanding environments, making it the perfect choice for diverse customers with specialized needs, including the specific purposes of the Indian Army which are modified with the support of an authorized external vendor. These curated vehicles signify TKM's commitment to identify unique solutions to cater to diverse consumers' needs across markets and verticals, enabling 'Mobility for All'. During the event, TKM exhibited customised Hilux emphasizing its versatility and robust capabilities for



defense and commercial applications:

Hilux FDV (Field Deployment Vehicle): This model showcased its commercial viability with a focus on heavy-duty applications. It had previously undergone successful trials with the Northern Indian Army Command, proving its adaptability for demanding military operations. This is specifically designed to excel in tasks such as remote location diagnostics and repair, as well as the movement of supplies and spare parts, making it ideal for stimulating environments.

Modified Hilux: Designed to exhibit exceptional off-road performance, equipped with upgraded suspensions, specialized tires, and a snorkel to handle rugged and difficult terrains. Its modifications highlight enhanced capabilities for rough terrain, ensuring reliability even in extreme conditions.

Last year, TKM displayed two Hilux - Field Diagnosis Vehicle (FDV) and Rapid Intervention Vehicle (RIV) at the North Tech Symposium organized by Northern Command of Indian Army. TKM handed over a large fleet of

Hilux, marking the company's first-ever delivery of its Hilux to the Indian Army. Additionally, the company has provided necessary off-road driving as well as vehicle maintenance trainings for the vehicle drivers and service technicians respectively at the Northern Command of the Indian Army. Needless to say, Toyota's participation in high-profile forums reflects its strong support towards country's pursuit of self-reliance in defense sector, by leveraging its technological expertise in mobility space.

Sharing his views, Mr. V. Wiseline Sigamani, Vice President - Strategic Business Unit (North) of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "We are honoured to participate in Himtech 2024 and showcase the distinctive features of specially-purposed Hilux (modified with the support of an authorized external vendor). The global iconic

reputation of Hilux being a powerful performer is the courtesy of its rigid Innovative Multi-purpose Vehicle (IMV) platform and a strong powertrain system. These modified vehicles reflect Toyota's technological capabilities in developing customised solutions to meet the unique customer requirements (e.g. army purposes) and great practicality for various commercial usages. Further, these vehicles have been engineered keeping in mind the operational challenges of army troops be it the drivability through rough terrains, patrolling movement, surveillance including night visions, digital video for recording and winch for rescue operations during emergency situations and more. As we continue to innovate and enhance our product offerings, we remain committed to support such uniquely purposed requirements as may arise going forward."

Udhampur clinches U17 years Boys Kho-Kho Trophy

JINNEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, SEPT 23

Inter district division level kho kho tournament for U17 boys successfully completed in kathua, where udhampur clinched the winner trophy by defeating Jammu in a nail biting finish. During the full time, both teams scored 12 points each. At last match entered the sudden death. In the sudden death Udhampur defeated Jammu by 01 point. Third place match was played between poonch vs Ramban, poonch won it's third place match by 01 point. The district youth services and sports officer kathua sh Sunil Singh Sambyal awarded the winner trophy to

District Udhampur. Runner and third place trophies were given to Jammu and Ramban respectively. The whole tournament was organized under the patronage of worthy Director General youth services and sports Jammu and Kashmir UT, Sh Rajinder Singh Tara (JKAS) and under the able guidance of Joint Director youth services and sports Jammu Sh. Ved prakash (JKAS). Others present on the occasion of closing ceremony were Activity Incharge S Dharminder Singh Shelly, Parveen Singh Lakhampur, Venue Incharge ZPEO Sh kamal Kumar Sharma and the officials of department of youth services and sports kathua.

Natrang completes 10 Shows of 'Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra'

JINNEWS SERVICE
AKHNOOR, SEPT 23

Natrang today presented the 10th show of its highly motivational play 'Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra' at Panchayat Ghar Dhok Khalsa, Bhalwal, Akhnoor. Written by Padamshree Balwant Thakur and directed by Neeraj Kant, this play is part of a travelling show series which started from District Anantnag, with its performances in Bijbehara, Anantnag, and Kokernag. The series then moved to hilly towns of Surankote, Mendhar, Poonch, Rajouri, Nowshera, and Sunderbani of Rajouri and Poonch districts.



local dialects, have helped to ensure that the message resonates deeply with viewers, who readily identify with the local characters portrayed in the play. Expressing his gratitude, Natrang Director Balwant Thakur thanked the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, for providing Natrang the opportunity to use theatre as a medium for a larger national cause. With its powerful narrative, Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra continues to inspire people to take an active role in democracy by exercising their right to vote. The play 'Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra' opens with the aggression of the disillusioned, frustrated youth who are struggling to survive in the contaminated air of corruption, scandals and dishonesty. They do not see any hope in the future as their present is being rotten by the corrupt system. They

want to devastate everything around them in rage but when questioned by an educated person that "what are they doing to come out of this unfortunate situation?. Busy in their illusionary world created by the social media, they are speechless as they just want the things to happen but are not ready to be part of that change and want everything without making any required effort. Terming them as the most vibrant human resource of the world, the educated person prompts them to come forward, take the command and change their fate. The most effective way of changing the fate of a country is the way of voting, this is the highly peaceful and effective way to bring big reforms of their choices. As the play proceeds, different age groups and varied sections of people are shown

in satirical manner who have their petty reasons to not vote and also whom to vote. This ignorance and arrogance of the masses leaves huge space for the vested interests to exploit this situation. Through this play all the sections of society are prompted not to run away from their ultimate responsibility of voting for the stronger democracy of India. Vote has the only and ultimate power to change the fate of the country and everyone through this play is motivated to ensure that this right of voting of every citizen should not go waste. Let's pledge to vote!

The artists who participated in the play Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra included Neeraj Kant, Subash Jamwal, Mohd. Yaseen, Vrinda Gujral, Brijesh Avtar Sharma, Vansh Pandotra, Vishal Sharma, Palshin Dutta, Mihir Gujral, Ananya Verma, Sanket Bhagat, Vansh Pandotra, Aadesh Dhar, Kushal Bhat, Lalita Sharma, Kananpreet Kaur, Pratibha Verma, Sanket Bhagat, Vansh Pandotra and Lal Mohd. The music of the play was operated by Mohd. Yaseen & Palshin Dutta.

Rajnath Singh formally inaugurates Sainik School, Jaipur

JINNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPT 23

In line with the Government's vision to establish 100 new Sainik Schools pan-India in partnership mode, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh formally inaugurated Sainik School, Jaipur in Rajasthan on September 23, 2024. Of the 100 schools, Ministry of Defence has approved 45 in collaboration with state governments, NGOs and private schools. Forty (40) of these schools have started operations, and Sainik School, Jaipur is among them.

In his address, the Raksha Mantri exuded confidence that the school will prove to be a boon to the patriotic youth of the state as proper guidance and necessary infrastructure will be provided to them to join the Armed Forces and serve the nation. "Rajasthan is a land of bravehearts like Maharana Pratap, Prithviraj Chauhan, Maharaj Surajmal and Sawai Jai Singh. These heroes are a motivation to the younger generation to join the military. This new Sainik school will provide a direction to them to



serve their motherland," he said. Rajnath Singh stated that the PPP-model is generally considered as 'Public-Private-Partnership', but the collaboration is now moving away from its standard definition, and is now being seen as 'Private-Public-Partnership'. "The private sector is now in the driver's seat of the country's economy, contributing significantly in agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors. Through these new Sainik schools, the private and public sectors will come together and provide the

best education to our future generations," he added. Terming education as the most fundamental element in the development of the nation, the Raksha Mantri highlighted the efforts being made by the Sainik Schools towards ensuring the physical, mental & social development of children, thereby creating a stronger future generation. He underlined the fact that Sainik schools not only impart academic knowledge, but also inculcate the values of discipline, patriotism and courage. The all-

round development of the personality of students inspires them to take the nation forward, he added. Rajnath Singh mentioned the fact that the current Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi are the shining products of Sainik School, Rewa. He added that not just the Armed Forces, the students of Sainik Schools can choose any other career and serve the nation in their own way. He urged the students to never give up and continue working hard to achieve their desired goals. The 100 new Sainik Schools in partnership mode are apart from the existing 33 Sainik Schools already functioning under the erstwhile pattern. These new schools, besides their affiliation to respective education boards, will function under the aegis of Sainik Schools Society and follow its Rules & Regulations. In addition to their regular affiliated board curriculum, they will impart education of Academic Plus Curriculum to the students of Sainik School pattern.

EDITORIAL

A Pivotal Moment as Campaigning Ends for Second Phase of Assembly Polls in J&K

As the dust settles on the campaigning for the second phase of the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the air is thick with anticipation. This phase represents much more than a mere political contest—it is a crucial juncture in the region's post-Article 370 reality. The stakes are high, both for local governance and for the larger political and constitutional landscape of the Union Territory. As candidates rally for votes, the people of J&K are faced with a monumental decision that could shape their future for years to come.

The second phase of elections, covering key constituencies across Jammu and Kashmir, comes at a time when the demand for restoration of statehood and a greater sense of local autonomy has taken center stage. For many parties, especially the regional ones like the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), these elections are an opportunity to assert their relevance and push for the return of a more empowered local administration.

Their challenge, however, is not just about regaining statehood but about addressing the long-standing grievances of the Kashmiri people, who have often felt sidelined in the larger national discourse. With the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, Jammu and Kashmir's unique constitutional position was dismantled, sparking both nationalistic pride in some corners of India and a sense of disenfranchisement among others. The polls are, thus, not just a democratic exercise, but a reflection of whether the electorate still believes in the power of their vote to shape their future in this new political framework.

One of the key narratives in these elections has been the debate between development and identity politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been making concerted efforts to strengthen its foothold in the region, has campaigned heavily on the promise of development. The party has consistently portrayed itself as the force that will bring infrastructure, jobs, and economic growth to the region, capitalizing on the political vacuum left by the decline of traditional powerhouses like the NC and PDP.

On the other hand, the regional parties have emphasized the need to safeguard the cultural and political identity of Kashmiris. They argue that development cannot come at the cost of erasing local identity and that any future for J&K must involve restoring its full political rights. The BJP's challenge lies in balancing these development promises with the local sentiments, especially in the Valley, where its influence remains limited.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of these elections will be the voter turnout. Low turnout in previous elections has often been seen as a reflection of disillusionment with the political process. Security concerns and the fear of unrest remain ever-present, which may again hinder voter participation. However, a high turnout could signal a significant shift in the political consciousness of the region—a reengagement with electoral politics and a belief in the potential for change.

The Election Commission, alongside the security forces, has made considerable efforts to ensure peaceful polling. Nonetheless, the presence of militant groups and separatist calls for boycotts will continue to loom large over this democratic exercise. A peaceful, high-turnout election would bolster confidence in the new governance structure and perhaps start to heal the deep-seated wounds of the region.

As the campaigns end and voters prepare to head to the polls, the significance of this election cannot be overstated. This phase, and the elections as a whole, will not just decide the representatives who will sit in the Assembly but will also offer a glimpse into the evolving political reality of Jammu and Kashmir. The outcome will be a reflection of the region's aspirations, concerns, and its readiness to move forward amidst uncertainties.

While the political actors have made their cases, the final verdict rests with the people. As they cast their ballots, they will be weighing the promises of development, the preservation of their identity, and their place in the larger Indian union. It is their voice, ultimately, that will determine whether Jammu and Kashmir can begin a new chapter of peace, progress, and political stability.

Nostalgia meets new age storytelling in India's diverse cinematic landscape

CHAITANYA K PRASAD

In recent years, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has dramatically transformed the way we consume entertainment. These platforms have revived classic content and introduced regional gems into mainstream media, offering a broad spectrum of India's diverse cinematic landscape to a global audience. Moreover, OTT has changed the way we socialize, becoming a central part of conversations, from casual chats to virtual gatherings.

Where once people exchanged pleasantries with questions like "Aur Batao" (What's up?), today, the perfect response is often about the latest series or film one is watching. Virtual watch parties have emerged as popular avenues for friends and families, separated by distance, to connect and share viewing experiences in real time. OTT platforms cater to diverse

tastes, ensuring there's something for everyone.

But what makes people subscribe to one OTT platform after another? The simple answer is content. OTT platforms have built vast libraries of classic shows and films, making iconic series easily accessible. Shows like "Malgudi Days", celebrated for its storytelling and memorable music, and "Fauji", featuring Shah Rukh Khan's debut, are just a click away. This accessibility allows viewers to journey back in time, relive cherished moments, and introduce younger generations to timeless narratives that shaped Indian television during the Doordarshan era.

Contemporary creators are also blending nostalgia with new storytelling. Content like "Laapata Ladies", "Heeramandi", "Guns and Gulaabs", "Jubilee", "Bambai Meri Jaan", and "Rocket Boys" weave retro elements into engaging plots. These

narratives are often set in simpler times, free of modern technology, offering viewers a respite from the chaos of the modern world. They transport audiences to the past, making the stories richer and more captivating.

Take "Laapata Ladies", for instance. Set in the early 2000s, its storyline is centered around a lost bride, but what captivates viewers is its charming simplicity. Scenes featuring a tea stall on a forgotten railway station or a sketch of the bride being shared in the absence of digital photos transport viewers to a different era. Such moments invite the audience to reminisce about their own memories, perhaps recalling special moments from railway journeys or simpler times in their lives.

The use of cultural symbols—retro fashion, old advertisements, vintage phones, cars, and even homes—evokes a sense of nostalgia. Every-

day objects like tape recorders, old computers, and the way people socialized in the past contribute to the surreal experience of OTT content. It's a reminder of how far society has come, while also showcasing the beauty of the past. This emotional connection enriches the overall viewing experience and keeps viewers coming back for more.

OTT's appeal to nostalgia has also fueled the popularity of the "OTT and Chill" culture. A recent example is Manoj Tiwari's rendition of the famous Bhojpuri Sohar "Hind Ke Sitare" for an OTT show, which became an internet sensation. The track went viral, with people of all ages singing along, demonstrating how content that resonates with simpler times can bring generations together.

In addition to revisiting the past, OTT platforms continuously release new content, often with extensive promotional

efforts that make certain shows highly popular. Red carpet events for premieres, media coverage, and articles listing the "10 best OTT shows to watch" have all become part of the cultural zeitgeist. Even major events like the Indian Premier League (IPL) stream on OTT platforms, drawing massive audiences.

OTT also champions diverse talent. Independent filmmakers and regional storytellers, who might have been overlooked in traditional media, now have a platform to showcase their work to a global audience. This has led to the discovery of fresh voices and unique stories, breaking down geographical barriers. OTT's ability to feature content in multiple Indian languages has helped regional films and series gain national and international recognition.

According to a FICCI-EY report from 2023, regional content on OTT platforms overtook Hindi

language content for the first time, with the share of regional language titles rising from 47% in 2021 to 52% in 2023. Stars like Mohanlal, Junior NTR, Vijay Sethupathi, and Fahadh Faasil, once confined to regional industries, have now become household names across India, thanks to the reach of OTT.

Films like "RRR" (Telugu), "Pushpa" (Telugu), "KGF" (Kannada), "Kantara" (Kannada), have found new audiences through OTT platforms. Actors like Vijay Sethupathi, who gained prominence in Tamil cinema, has become pan-Indian stars, appearing in films like "Jawan" and "Merry Christmas". This cross-cultural fusion, accelerated by the pandemic, reflects the growing demand for diverse content.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI. Research and Inputs by Priya Kamra, Views are personal)

Key reforms needed for unified electoral system

SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the recommendations of the high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. While many of these proposals are commendable, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. Notably, the plan should encompass not just Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections but also local body elections. The current recommendation to hold local body elections 100 days after the simultaneous Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections falls short of a truly unified electoral system. As a one-time reform, it is necessary to hold all elections, including to local bodies, concurrently.

Another issue that remains unresolved by the Kovind Committee is the problem of mid-term elections, which arise when a State government or the Lok Sabha falls due to a hung house or the collapse of a coalition. This challenge can be addressed by electing Prime Ministers and Chief

Ministers simultaneously with Speakers and Deputy Speakers through a secret ballot, utilising Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) equipped with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs).

Such elections should require nominations signed by at least 34 per cent of members. This system ensures stability, as a Prime Minister or Chief Minister could only be removed through a similar process, but with the mandatory nomination of an alternative leader in the same motion. Failure to vote in this process would result in the loss of voting rights in the House, though membership would remain intact. Implementing this system is crucial for the success of the "One Nation, One Election" initiative, as it would prevent the frequent dissolution of assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Current officeholders could also be re-elected using this method.

In terms of candidacy rules, a person should not be allowed to contest elections from more than one constituency or hold both Parliament and State

Assembly memberships simultaneously. Additionally, any sitting MP or MLA who seeks to contest for a different seat should first resign from their current position. This would prevent situations like the one that arose during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government, which fell due to a single controversial vote cast by Odisha Chief Minister Giridhar Gomango, who remained an MP after assuming office as Chief Minister.

Another important reform is the need to restore secret voting for Rajya Sabha elections, again using EVMs equipped with VVPATs. Additionally, the constitution should be amended to abolish legislative councils, which are often seen as redundant. Only those who have never contested any election should be nominated to the Rajya Sabha, ensuring that this house remains a body of experienced statespersons rather than active politicians. MPs and MLAs should also be barred from holding any party or social positions to avoid conflicts of interest.

Ministerial positions

should be limited to 10 per cent of the strength of the lower house, and the post of Parliamentary Secretary should be abolished. Candidates who lose their security deposits in elections should be barred from contesting for the next six years. The "None of the Above" (NOTA) option, introduced to allow voters to reject all candidates, should be made more effective. Candidates who receive fewer votes than NOTA should be barred from contesting future elections, even though the candidate with the next highest vote tally could be declared the winner for that particular term.

Furthermore, immunity for MPs and MLAs from legislative proceedings should be reconsidered. In the infamous JMM bribery case, the Supreme Court was unable to act against guilty individuals due to parliamentary immunity. Parliament's rules should be rewritten to introduce fixed penalties for members who violate norms, removing the discretionary powers of the Speaker. This would prevent lenient punishments like the one

imposed on MP Rajesh Manjhi, who faced only a brief suspension for taking his lady friend, pretending she was his wife, on a foreign trip at government expense.

Abandoning parliamentarians, if present in the House during sessions, should not be allowed to leave until legal authorities execute pending warrants against them. Additionally, MPs and MLAs with less than 75 per cent attendance should be barred from contesting elections for the next six years. Cases like that of George Fernandes, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha despite losing his memory, highlight the need for a minimum medical fitness certificate for candidates.

Parliamentarians should also be required to disclose all details of their assets, including the names of their spouses, to avoid cases of undisclosed multiple marriages, as occurred with actor-turned-MP Dharmendra. All dues, including those for utilities, rent, and government accommodations, should be deducted from their salaries or pensions. Pensions should

be withheld until former MPs and ministers vacate government accommodations. Additionally, political parties that fail to contest elections for five consecutive years should be de-recognised.

Finally, electoral reforms should be accelerated by empowering the Election Commission to implement reforms with a one-year notice to Parliament. If Parliament does not disapprove the proposed reforms within this timeframe, they should be deemed approved. To reduce the influence of black money, sections of the Income Tax Act that allow for contributions to political parties should be abolished. Moreover, the controversial MPLADS scheme, which allocates funds to MPs for local area development, should be scrapped. It is time to bring sweeping reforms to India's electoral system to ensure a more transparent, accountable, and stable political process.

(The writer is Guinness record holder and an RTI consultant, views expressed are personal)

Healthy Spine and WellBeing

RAVI VALLURI

How many of us get up in the morning and virtually struggle to get out of bed as the body feels sore, the neck remains stiff, knees wobble, and shoulders and feet pain? The entire day is a torturous nightmare. Such individuals run to doctors, seeking a magical cure for the pestilence. Unless the problem is genetic or hereditary, humans get afflicted with such disorders because of a deficient lifestyle, stress accumulated over a period and poor dietary habits. The vertebra and our skeletal frame are an extremely important part of the human body, which we ignore at our peril.

Therefore, a healthy spine leads to a healthy life. Do we recall when a child begins to walk, the preliminary baby steps are raising his/her thumbs; this is called the 'Meru-

danda Mudra'. The vertebra consists of a series of small bones that form the backbone of the spine, having several projections for articulation and muscle attachment, and a hole through which the spinal cord passes. Office goers who for making a living are programmed to undertake a typical quotidian 9 to 5 routine, and several among them use computers for prolonged hours, or those professionals who are compelled to drive long distances to their places of work from their dwelling paces ought to necessarily know how to protect their backs, necks, and hand muscles.

These days people have become addicted to the usage of smartphones and are constantly fixated on texting messages on WhatsApp, watching various features ending up with stiff necks and sore fingers. Not only do these muscles need to be



protected and fortified but the tissues should be sufficiently strengthened. Working men and women should be educated on how to deploy the correct activity posture while executing their professional tasks. Many homemakers at times develop severe middle or lower back medical problems for a variety of reasons. Continuously undertaking repeated

chores and even activities involving the handling of small or no weights, performed with an incorrect posture, damages tissues and muscles, which causes irreparable damage to the back and neck.

The afflicted suffer from infirmity for years together with pain and anguish. Awareness about the structure of the spine and adopting the right

postures along with simple strengthening stretches significantly helps to avoid these misadventures in one's life. In the cases these problems assume the shape of chronic disorders the patient suffering can be guided through simple stretching exercises under the supervision of a physiotherapist or an orthopaedic. A special programme has been developed by the Art of Living to ameliorate the condition of those suffering from these debilitating health issues. Those suffering from spondylitis, frozen shoulder, middle and lower back problems, and inter disc problems will immensely benefit upon undergoing the rehabilitation process and will certainly see visible dramatic changes in their lifestyle patterns and their daily routine. The programme encompasses the techniques mentioned below:

- Walk: For the align-

ment of vertebrae to open energy channels

- Posture Awareness and its correction

- Ergonomics

- Simple but powerful Stretches and Yoga - For inner surgical alignment of the spine to release the nerves that were being continually pressed

- Gait Training helps immensely

- Guided Meditation techniques to release accumulated stress

- In-depth knowledge of the spine

- Ancient wisdom and knowledge about acupressure points for overall well being "Total relaxation is the secret to enjoying sitting meditation."

I sit with my spine upright, but not rigid; and I relax all the muscles in my body," writes Thich Nhat Hanh.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway and is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

Investors prefer regular hefty returns, tax benefits post Covid: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Degree of returns, regularity of returns, and tax benefits are the significant factors influencing post-Covid investment decisions, according to a report on Monday.

The report, jointly made by the PHD Research Bureau, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Jagan Institute of Management Studies (JIMS), Rohini, aims to analyse the factors influencing individual investments across various financial instruments and to compare the investor behaviours towards selected financial instruments in pre and post-Covid years.

"India's capital market has witnessed a robust performance during the post-Covid years supported by the strong regulatory environment, high growth of the economy, and investors' confidence in India's growth story," said Sanjeev Agrawal, President, PHD



Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Going ahead, our capital market is seen with outstanding performance in the coming years, as India is going to be the third largest economy soon and have a size of \$7 trillion by 2030," Agrawal added.

The period considered for the analysis includes two years of pre-pandemic (FY 2018-2020) and two years of post-pandemic (FY 2021-23).

A total of 6 financial instruments were considered to assess the change

in investor preferences in pre-Covid and post-Covid pandemic years including mutual funds, bonds, stocks, derivatives, gold, and real estate.

The participants were also given a multiple-choice questionnaire based on five factors including the degree of risk, tax benefits, liquidity, degree of returns, and regularity of returns (from the Investment option).

The analysis showed that in pre-Covid times, the degree of returns and the regularity of returns

guided the decision to diversify the portfolio.

Conversely, in the post-Covid pandemic years, tax benefits along with the degree of returns and regularity of returns influenced the investing decisions.

Investment in mutual funds was largely influenced by the degree of returns, regularity of returns, and degree of risk in the pre-Covid period.

But, the post-Covid period saw more influence of liquidity rather than the degree of risk involved along with the degree of returns and regularity of returns in the mutual fund investments, the report said.

Further, in the pre-Covid scenario, investors majorly preferred bonds due to the tax benefits offered by bonds. However, after the Covid pandemic, the preference to invest in bonds was found to be largely influenced by tax benefits along with liquidity and higher

returns.

In the case of stocks, their preference for investment was primarily driven by the degree of returns that the stocks were anticipated to yield in addition to the liquidity.

But after Covid, the investors categorised stock investments as high-paying ones and were found to not look for any other advantage like tax benefits, liquidity, etc from them, said the report.

Tax benefits and regularity of returns governed the decision to invest in Gold bonds or Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) in both pre and post-Covid times.

In pre-Covid times, while investing in real estate the investors considered its probability to be sold quickly as a major factor.

In contrast, tax benefits and regularity of returns were important factors governing investment preferences in post-Covid times, said the report.

Study shows antidepressants may improve brain function

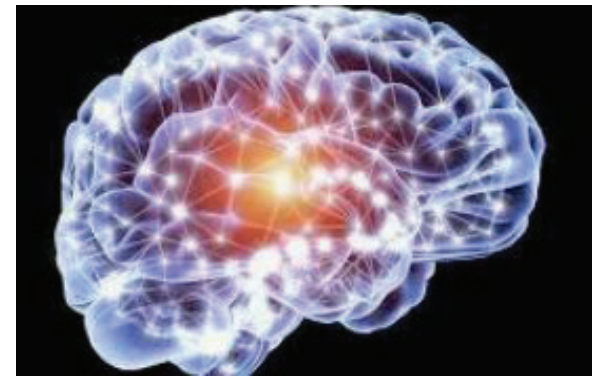
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

A class of drugs that are commonly prescribed to treat depression, and anxiety may also help improve brain function and memory, claimed a study.

The study, published in the journal Biological Psychiatry, showed that SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) antidepressants have the potential to improve certain cognitive functions, such as verbal memory.

Verbal memory is the ability to remember words, sentences, stories, and other information presented through language. Serotonin is often described as a 'feel good' chemical, and higher levels of serotonin circulating in the brain contribute to a sense of well-being, and can ease clinical depression in most sufferers.

Researchers from the Copenhagen University Hospital in the Nether-



lands measured brain function in 90 patients before and after taking the SSRI escitalopram daily for eight weeks.

The team scanned the participant's brain to measure the quantity of the serotonin receptor, the 5HT4 receptor. The patients were also given a series of tests to measure mood and cognitive abilities.

About 40 patients were rescanned to measure the quantity of 5HT4 receptor in the brain.

The results showed that the levels of 5HT4 receptor had dropped by around 9

per cent in the brain and the mood of the patients also improved.

Further cognitive tests showed improvements, so that the less the 5HT4 receptor had changed the better the cognitive outcome. This phenomenon was particularly prominent for the ability to recall words, the researchers said. SSRI medication may be an "important prognostic target to consider in optimising outcomes of antidepressant treatment," said researcher Vibeke Dam from the Copenhagen University Hospital.

AP govt to soon bring AI, digital health for better healthcare: CM

AGENCIES
VJAYAWADA, SEP 23

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has said that the state government would soon bring Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital health for better delivery of healthcare in the state, especially in maternal and child health.

The CM had a fruitful meeting with the President of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) and Chairman of the AI Institute in America Dr Prateek Sharma and the Director of Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Innovation at AIG Hospitals, Dr Rakesh Kalapala



on Sunday.

Later, Naidu posted a message on 'X' that they discussed in detail the newly constituted Healthcare Consortium and harnessing Artificial Intelligence and digital health for better delivery of healthcare in the state, especially in maternal and

child health.

He said that the most important aspect in this is the development of scalable and affordable solutions.

The state government is working in that direction to pave the way for healthier Andhra Pradesh, the CM said. The Consortium

seeks to identify critical areas and apply AI-driven diagnostics for risk assessment and automated care solutions, he said.

The innovations which were discussed with the experts include deploying real-time informative chatbots over phones in local language, Naidu said. This will certainly help guide expectant mothers on nutrition, prenatal care and symptoms to watch out for.

The chatbot can be integrated with local healthcare workers networks ensuring advice aligns with the Government guidelines and also sends reminders for appointments, Naidu mentioned.

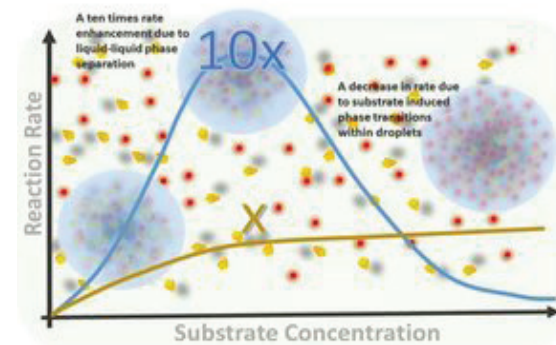
INST's new catalytic droplets to accelerate drug development, cut healthcare costs

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Researchers at the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed catalytic droplets that can lead to faster chemical reactions and help accelerate drug development and lower healthcare costs.

The catalytic droplets can lead to a 10-fold increase in speed and efficient catalytic reactions and this is valid below a critical substrate concentration, said the researchers.

"Such efficient chemical reactions can accelerate drug development,



the new approach allowed for barrier-free confinement, so that the molecules within the droplets could move freely.

The droplets themselves were indifferent to the native conformation of the proteins they contained, creating an ideal environment for catalysis. The result was a staggering 10-fold increase in the catalytic efficiency of the metal nanocatalysts.

This discovery opens up new possibilities for accelerating chemical reactions, making them faster and more efficient than ever before.

The finding published in the journal Nanoscale represents a paradigm shift in approach to chemical reactions.

leading to quicker access to innovative medications and potentially lower healthcare costs," revealed the findings, published in the journal Nanoscale.

The team led by Professor Sarmistha Sinha and colleagues explored a way to confine nano-catalyst molecules without imped-

ing their movement. They sought to confine protein-metal nanocomposites within droplets formed through liquid-liquid phase separation.

Unlike traditional methods, which relied on physical and chemical barriers to confine molecules during catalytic reactions,

Study calls for tailoring treatment for alcohol use disorders in men, women

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Hormonal and biochemical factors that affect alcohol dependence (also known as alcohol use disorder), suggesting that men and women with alcohol problems require different treatments, finds a study.

While it has been previously known that men and women have different risks related to alcohol misuse and related problems, the biological mechanisms underlying those differences are not well understood.

"This is the first large study to confirm that some of the variability in alcohol use disorder (AUD) and related problems is associated with particular combinations of hormones



and chemical biomarkers in men and women," said lead researcher Victor Karpayak, Professor of Psychiatry at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota (US).

Karpayak said this means that "sex-specific treatments can be tailored to improve responses for men and women with alcohol problems".

The researchers

focussed on hormonal and protein markers of 268 men and 132 women with AUD; and correlated them with psychological markers, such as depressed mood, anxiety, craving, alcohol consumption, and treatment outcomes during the first 3 months of treatment.

At the beginning of the trial -- before anyone had

taken any medication -- the researchers tested men and women for several sex-specific blood markers, including sex hormones (testosterone, oestrogens, progesterone) as well as proteins known to impact their reproduction (such as follicle-stimulating hormone, and luteinizing hormone) or bioavailability of these hormones in the blood (albumin and sex hormone-binding globulin).

They found that men with alcohol use disorder, symptoms of depression, and higher craving for alcohol, also had lower levels of the hormones testosterone, oestrone, oestradiol, as well as the protein sex hormone binding globulin. However, no such associations were found in women with AUD.

Further, women who had higher levels of testosterone, sex hormone-binding globulin, and albumin were also more likely to relapse during the first three months of treatment compared to women with lower levels of those biochemical markers.

But "no such relationships were found in men," Karpayak said.

Karpayak said this implies that what works for a man may not work for a woman, and vice versa. The researcher also called for further studies to understand the differences between men and women with AUD to tailor treatment options.

The study was presented at the ongoing European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) Conference in Milan, Italy.

Tension erupts at Gandhi Hospital as BRS leaders arrested during fact-finding mission

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, SEP 23

Tensions flared at Gandhi Hospital on Monday after police arrested members of the BRS fact-finding committee and BRS MLAs who had arrived to assess the conditions in the hospital.

During the incident, a scuffle broke out between the police and the BRS leaders. Former Deputy Chief Minister T Rajaiah, along with former MLA Metuku Anand, MLAs Dr Sanjay Kumar, and Maganti Gopinath, were taken into custody and removed from the premises.

The BRS had previously appointed a three-member fact-finding committee, headed by Rajaiah,



to investigate the deteriorating conditions in state-run hospitals, including Gandhi Hospital.

In a separate development, Janagama BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy was placed under house arrest, with heavy police deployment outside his residence in Jubilee Hills to prevent him from leaving. BRS Work-

ing President KT Rama Rao (KTR) strongly condemned the arrests. In a post on Twitter (now X), KTR questioned, "Why is the government afraid of a fact-finding committee looking into public institutions? If the committee conducts its work, will the truth about the Congress government's incompetence be exposed?"

Telangana govt to adopt family digital health cards soon: CM

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, SEP 22

Telangana Government will introduce family digital health card soon in the state.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, who chaired the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting here on Sunday, said that everyone will get digital health card with their health profile details in the state.

A facility will also be

provided to avail the benefit of subsidised Rice and other essential commodities through PDS anywhere in the state, he said.

After losing power, the opposition party (BRS) is restless and spreading canards against the government, the CM alleged.

No state government in India waived off Rs 18,000 crore farm loans in just 27 days in the country, he said the main objective of the farm loan waiver scheme is to free the farm-

ers from debt burden.

It is the responsibility of the party leadership to propagate the government programs and reach out people, he said the Party and government should work in tandem and coordinate each other.

The In-Charge ministers should visit the districts twice a week and the Party will recognise the leaders who worked hard and they will get political opportunities, the CM added.

Regular screening crucial step towards prevention and treatment of cancer: Dr Shashi Tharoor

AGENCIES
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEP 22

Kerala is witnessing a troubling rise in cancer cases, while in India an estimated 1.6 million cancer patients are projected by 2026, said Dr. Shashi Tharoor.

He said this while inaugurating the Advanced

Cancer Care Center at SP Medifort Hospital, Enchakkal, on the occasion of World Cancer Patients' Welfare Day.

Dr. Tharoor emphasized the importance of early detection in addressing the cancer burden, urging regular screenings as a crucial step toward effective prevention and treatment.

"We have access to advanced treatment facilities, but timely diagnosis is key to saving lives," he noted, expressing concern over the growing number of cases in the state and across the country.

As part of the event, Dr. Tharoor also launched the 'Yes We Can' Cancer Warriors' Support Group, an initiative aimed at pro-

viding a support system for cancer survivors to share their experiences and encourage one another.

Senior oncologists Dr. Chandramohan K and Dr. Boban Thomas stressed the need for widespread awareness about cancer screenings, highlighting that early intervention can significantly improve

outcomes and reduce mortality rates.

Dr. S.P. Ashokan, Chairman and Managing Director of SP Medifort, reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to advanced cancer care, noting that the newly inaugurated center is equipped with cutting-edge technology to provide comprehensive treatment.

Transformative steps taken for healthcare, pandemic preparedness in India: Nadda

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

The Union government has taken transformative steps for healthcare innovations, and pandemic preparedness in India, said Union Health Minister JP Nadda, on Monday.

He said this while announcing the successful implementation of the 100-day programme of the Union Health Ministry's Department of Health Research (DHR).

Med-Tech Mitra; National One Health Mission (NOHM) for pandemic preparedness; Integrated Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (IRDLS); programme for the development of indigenous drugs for rare diseases; and Centre for evidence-based guidelines are some of the key achievements and initiatives undertaken by the DHR in the last 100 days.

"These initiatives represent transformative steps in healthcare innovation, pandemic preparedness, and the development of indigenous medical solutions, contributing to a healthier, more resilient and Atmanirbhar Bharat," Nadda said.

Med-Tech Mitra is a joint initiative by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), developed to overcome challenges in the process of developing regulation-compliant products, their clinical validation, and scaling up.

The NOHM is an integrated approach to tackling diseases at the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health. The mission is a crucial step toward building India's capacity to manage zoonotic diseases and pan-



demics.

Six of the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) across the country are being converted into IRDLs covering a larger domain of infectious diseases. Construction of Zonal laboratories of the National Institute of Virology (NIV) has also been initiated, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

said.

As part of India's drive towards becoming a global leader in affordable healthcare, DHR is set to launch a programme developing 12 Indigenous drugs for eight rare diseases.

The initiative will aim to drastically reduce the cost of treatment for conditions like Muscular Dystrophy and Gaucher's Disease,

making life-saving therapies accessible and affordable for the masses.

Further, inspired by India's landmark Chandrayaan-3 mission, the "First in the World" challenge will fund 50 high-risk, high-reward innovations in biomedical research.

"This initiative epitomises India's spirit of innovation and excellence, accelerating its march toward becoming a leader in global healthcare solutions," the ministry said.

Another key initiative is the Centre for Evidence for Guidelines, which will help standardise medical practices nationwide, ensuring the highest standards of care.

To boost research and development, the establishment of the "Research to Action" vertical in DHR will ensure that cutting-

edge health studies are seamlessly integrated into policy and practice. The DHR has also worked to boost medical education in the country.

"A total of 93 fellows have been enrolled till now for PhD in Medical research in different ICMR Institutes in the first batch of Faculty of Medical Research (FMR). And 63 young medical college faculty members have been provided fellowships for undertaking PhD programmes," the ministry said.

"This is a big step towards strengthening the physician-scientist base in the country.

In addition, 58 women scientists have been provided fellowships for undertaking health research," the ministry said, adding that the initiatives are slated for launch in October 2024.

Will soon decide remission pleas of convicts as new CM in place, Delhi govt assures SC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

The Delhi government on Friday assured the Supreme Court that remission pleas of convicts lodged in prisons in the national capital will be processed soon since Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi has taken charge as the Chief Minister.

A bench, headed by Justice Abhay S. Oka, was apprised that the early release applications of convicts lodged in Delhi prisons, which were stalled due to the lack of Chief Minister's signature, will be decided soon.

The top court, in a hearing on September 6, flagged the delay in processing remission pleas of convicts lodged in Delhi prisons when Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal himself was in jail in the excise policy scam and could not have signed official files from Tihar Jail.

It had asked the Delhi government to clarify if there was any restraint order against Kejriwal in dealing with files pertaining to the premature release of convicts when he himself remained behind bars in a corruption case.

Remission files could not be forwarded to the Lt Governor's (L-G) office due to the lack of the signature of the then Chief Minister.

Observing that remission, which relates to the right of liberty of convict, cannot be stalled for want of signature of the Chief Minister, the SC had suggested that it would not hesitate to exercise its power under Article 142 to do "complete justice" in the matter. Atishi was sworn in as the Chief Minister on Saturday, following Kejriwal's resignation soon after his bail in the liquor policy scam by the Supreme Court, and took charge on Monday.

Staving off winter pollution 'biggest challenge', says Delhi Minister Gopal Rai after taking charge

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi Minister Gopal Rai took charge of the Environment Ministry on Monday and shed light on the new government's focus and priorities.

He said that the new Cabinet under Delhi Chief Minister Atishi will take forward the work started under AAP Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and hopes to take it to new heights by the next Assembly elections in the city.

Rai, also a close confidante of Kejriwal, spoke to IANS about the new government's roadmap and said that staving off pollution in the city during winters is the biggest challenge of this government.

"We will complete all the pending projects as envisaged and outlined by Arvind Kejriwal government and will undertake new initiatives for build-



ing a cleaner, greener and better Delhi. The biggest challenge before us right now is to contain the looming pollution levels during winters. Government will explore all options to resolve this issue. We have held roundtable discussions with seasoned experts and officials regarding this. Most departments have given their inputs on our Winter Action Plan. We will shortly meet the Delhi

Chief Secretary to firm up the suggestions and recommendations." "We are about to launch the Winter Action Plan on September 25. Earlier, it was scheduled for September 26," he added.

Gopal Rai also supported Chief Minister Atishi's decision to keep a chair vacant for Kejriwal in Delhi CM's office and rejected the 'stunt and gimmicks' charges by BJP.

"Everybody knows that

Atishi took charge as Delhi CM under highly adverse circumstances," he said referring to Arvind Kejriwal's decision to quit the chair until proven 'innocent' in people's court.

Soon after Atishi took charge as Delhi CM while keeping an empty chair besides her for erstwhile CM Arvind Kejriwal, the BJP mounted scathing criticism of her as well as the AAP leadership for doing 'drama' in full public glare.

Rai also said, "Currently, the big focus of Team Kejriwal is to bring the pending projects to fruition and ensure that all public welfare benefits and facilities keep reaching the city residents, like it was during previous tenures."

"We owe the responsibility to ensure the progress work uninterrupted, till the elections. I am confident that the whole team will make it a success," he added.

Archbishop hails India's diversity, lauds PM's concern for all, including minorities

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the Archbishop of Bombay on Monday heaped praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for pursuing inclusivity in all spheres of his governance and said that his concern for everyone instils a feeling of confidence even among the minorities.

Speaking to media persons after the 'Ek Ped Ma ke Naam' programme in Mumbai, Archbishop Gracias said, "PM Modi is concerned about everyone including minority communities. I am confident that he has the interests of every minority, including the Christian community, in mind in all his plans and progress."

He also hailed India's diversity and termed it as a key pillar of the country's greatness.

"Our greatness lies in



our diversity – people, cultures, languages, and religions. I believe no other country has the richness that we have," he said.

Sharing his views on celebration of 'Sewa Pakhwada' to mark PM Modi's birthday, Cardinal Gracias said, "Today was a very significant event as a part of the Sewa Pakhwada 2024. We had a programme to encourage our youth and everybody else also to make sure Earth's resources are very wisely used.

"The sapling plantation today was a symbol of our continuous commitment to care for the Earth and nature for future generations. We hope a movement begins from here in the whole country and the world. I am happy that the government of India has taken an initiative for this and I am thankful to the Prime Minister for having encouraged this movement (tree plantations)."

A 'Sewa Pakhwada' was organised by the Christian community of Maharash-

tra on Monday to celebrate PM Modi's 74th birthday with a 'prayer for peace'.

Notably, Sewa Pakhwada is a 15-day-long event, organised every year from September 17 to October 2, to mark PM Modi's birthday and also to mark the period as part of the party's devotion to poor and marginalised sections.

During this period, various activities from health camps to blood donation drives are organised throughout the country.

PPP model brings strength of public & private sector together: Rajnath Singh

AGENCIES
JAIPUR, SEP 23

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated the Shri Bhawani Niketan Sainik School in Jaipur which will operate under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

He emphasised on public-private partnership to take the nation forward through the field of education combined with soldierly discipline.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Sainik School run under Shri Bhawani Niketan Shiksha Samiti located on Sikar

Road in Jaipur, Rajnath Singh described himself fortunate to inaugurate the Sainik School here.

He reflected on his own background as a teacher and said that it was a special honour to be present at the inauguration of a Sainik School.

"I am happy that I have been a teacher," he added. Further speaking on the rich history of Rajasthan, he said, "The land of Rajasthan is known not only for bravery but also for culture. Heroes like Maharana Pratap, Prithviraj Chauhan, Surajmal and Sawai Jai Singh were born here.

Opening of Sainik School on the land of Rajasthan is no less than a blessing."

He added: "Some people might be thinking that many Sainik Schools are already running in the country. So, why was there a need to open 100 new Sainik Schools?"

Replying to this query, the Defence Minister said, "Actually, the Sainik Schools that have been in the country till now were established with the joint efforts of the Central and state governments. The state government used to allocate land and the Central government used to

play other roles. All the old Sainik Schools of the country were running in the same manner. But, the 100 new Sainik Schools that PM Modi has set a target of establishing in the country are not being run through the partnership of the Central and state governments but on the basis of the PPP model i.e. Public-Private Partnership."

He then emphasised on the role of private entities in shaping Indian economy and said, "The PPP model suits our system as it helps to bring in the strength of public and private sector together." "Private sector

contributes to over 50 per cent of the country's economy and hence PPP can be termed Private-Public Partnership."

Rajnath Singh also quoted the ancient education system and said, "In our ancient education system, the focus has been on literature, science and mathematics along with spirituality."

He also quoted the lines spoken by former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee and said he used to say, "A person with a small mind can never become great, a person with a broken mind can never stand up. As the

mind expands, happiness and joy will increase."

The Defence Minister praised Rajasthan's historical significance, noting that the state has always played a key role in every era. He highlighted Rajasthan's reputation not only for its bravery but also for its rich traditions.

Speaking of Jaipur, he emphasised its renowned architecture, cultural heritage, and popular tourist attractions, which make it a must-visit destination for anyone travelling to India.

He also paid homage to the legendary figures of the state, including Maha-

rana Pratap, Prithviraj Chauhan, Maharaja Surajmal, and Sawai Mansingh.

Rajnath Singh also highlighted the vital characteristics of Sainik Schools and said that they inculcate commitment towards values and discipline and hence a student gets comprehensive development which inspires him to take his country forward.

"Sainik Schools have delivered renowned talent. Our Army Chief is a pass-out from Sainik School. In fact, students here can choose a career as per their choice; they can be doctor, engineer, banker,

civil servant and others, however their learnings from Sainik schools will stay with them, this is what I believe," he said.

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari expressed gratitude to PM Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and said that after 2014, a strong defence shield has been created in the country.

"The government is completely with the soldiers. PM Modi also celebrates Diwali with the soldiers. I am proud that I am a soldier's daughter," she said.

Stalin writes to EAM Jaishankar, seeks immediate release of TN fishermen from Lanka

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, SEP 23

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday wrote to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar seeking immediate release of fishermen and their boats from the custody of Sri Lankan authorities.

Stalin in a letter to the Union Minister pointed out that the Sri Lankan Navy arrested 37 fishermen from Tamil Nadu on September 21. He also said that the costly mechanised boats of these fishermen were also in the custody of the Sri



Lankan Navy.

The Chief Minister sought the intervention of the Union Minister for the immediate release of Tamil Nadu fishermen from the custody of Sri Lanka. In the letter, he also requested the Minister to speak to the Sri

Lankan government against levying hefty fines on the arrested Tamil Nadu fishermen and to provide legal assistance to those arrested.

Stalin also expressed deep anguish at the regular arrest of Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu by

the Sri Lankan authorities even while fishing in Indian waters. He also called upon the Union Minister to take strong measures to stop the Sri Lankan authorities from arresting the Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu.

It may be recalled that the Tamil Nadu fishermen have been regularly facing problems from the Sri Lankan authorities.

On August 1, 2024, an Indian fisherman from Tamil Nadu died after his fishing boat capsized when a Sri Lankan Navy coastal patrol vessel rampaged into it. One fisherman went

missing while two others in the fishing boat were arrested. They were later handed over to the Indian authorities. At present 87 fishermen from Tamil Nadu are languishing in Sri Lankan jails and around 35 mechanised fishing boats are in the custody of Sri Lankan authorities. Recently, a Sri Lankan Naval ship had rampaged into a fishing boat and the collision resulted in significant losses, including nets, GPS equipment, cell phones, and fishing gear worth approximately Rs 6.50 lakh, which were washed away in the sea.

B'luru man suffers burn injuries after bathroom cleaner hurled, police hunt for accused

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, SEP 23

A 31-year-old man was attacked with a bathroom cleaner containing acid content, causing injuries to his face, said officials here on Monday.

The case came to light in Kamakshipalya police station limits in Bengaluru. DCP (West) S. Girish said that the victim, identified as Nangesh Konda, is a resident of Kamakshipalya.

The accused is an

unknown person and the case in this regard has been lodged under the provisions of 124 (1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The victim was admitted to the Victoria Hospital. His left eye was injured and was not able to open it.

He has suffered burn injuries on the face and left hand, said the DCP adding that the incident had taken place on Sunday.

The police seized the

plastic bottle in which the chemical with acid substance was carried. "If it were to be purely acid, the plastic bottle melted instantly," the DCP stated.

The victim Nagesh had stated that he was staying in the area for one year and worked at a factory. Two years ago when he was working in the Whitefield area, he got introduced to Laxmi who lived close by. They were in touch over the phone and used to speak to each other on mobile.

Japanese PM reiterates India's call for expansion of UN Security Council

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, SEP 23

Reiterating India's longstanding stance on expansion of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in both permanent and non-permanent categories, as well as reform in its working methods, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has called for "concrete actions" to adapt the international organisation to the contemporary world realities.

The outgoing Japanese PM, while addressing the 'Summit of the Future' in New York on Monday, Japan time, stated that the world stands at a "historical inflection point" and there is an urgent need to collectively take actions to safeguard the interest of present and future generations.

"The Summit of the Future is witnessing a clear call from Member States for action on reform, with a majority supporting the



expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats.

A great majority are also acutely aware of the Security Council's vital role in international peace and security and the urgent need to reform it and restore confidence in its effectiveness," said Kishida.

"Next year marks the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations.

We should take concrete actions towards the Security Council reform. Japan

is determined to continue to contribute to the realization and maintenance of international peace and security by strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law, in a reformed Council," he added.

The government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also been according highest priority to obtain a permanent membership for India in an expanded UNSC.

The process of UNSC Reforms is being presently discussed under the Inter-

Governmental Negotiation (IGN) framework of the UN General Assembly, where India along with like-minded countries have been pushing for text-based negotiations to commence on an urgent basis.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India is also working alongside other reform-oriented countries through its membership in G-4 (India, Japan, Brazil and Germany) and the L.69 Group (a cross regional group of countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America) for building support among the UN Member States for expansion in both permanent and non permanent categories.

The process of reforming the United Nations Security Council would require amendments in the United Nations Charter. As per Article 108 of the UN Charter.

On Saturday, the Japanese PM had held a bilat-

eral meeting with PM Modi on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit hosted by the US President Joe Biden in his hometown of Wilmington in Delaware.

"At the beginning, Prime Minister Kishida mentioned that he chose India as the destination of his first bilateral visit since taking office, and while mentioning the various achievements he has made with Prime Minister Modi, stated that he hopes that Japan and India will continue to cooperate in global governance," the Japanese Prime Minister's Office stated after the meeting.

The two leaders also confirmed that both countries will continue to cooperate on concrete initiatives in a wide range of areas, bearing in mind Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan as part of the annual reciprocal visits between the leaders of both countries.

PM Modi an incredible student, seeks to democratise AI in India: Nvidia's Jensen Huang

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, SEP 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an incredible student who always seeks to not only learn more about artificial intelligence (AI) and chip technologies but also how to democratise them for the larger benefits of society as well as industry, Jensen Huang, Founder, President and CEO of graphics chip giant Nvidia, has said.

After attending the CEOs' roundtable here with PM Modi in the presence of fellow tech leaders, Huang said AI is a new industry, offering several manufacturing opportunities and he is looking forward to "partnering with India in a very deep way to make that possible".

"We are helping India gain access to our most advanced technologies. We're partnering with Internet companies like digital transformation service provider Yotta Data Services and other Internet companies to create latest-generation AI supercomputers in India," the



Nvidia CEO emphasised.

Stressing that India is the third-largest startup economy, he said the new generation of startups are based on AI and in order to achieve more, they have to have an AI infrastructure.

"We are partnering with startups, IITs and many companies in India. We're teaching students how to upskill in this new world of AI. AI really democratizes computing and this is India's moment to seize the opportunity," Huang added.

PM Modi interacted with technology industry leaders in New York in a roundtable anchored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), School of Engineering. The tech roundtable focused on AI and quantum; biotechnology and

life sciences; computing, IT and communication; and semiconductor technologies.

The Prime Minister highlighted the economic transformation happening in India, particularly in electronics and information technology manufacturing, semiconductors, biotech and green development. He stated that his government was committed to making India a global hub of semiconductor manufacturing.

Meanwhile, Yotta Data Services last year announced a collaboration with Nvidia to deliver cutting-edge GPU computing infrastructure and platforms for its Shakti Cloud platform.

Infosys and Nvidia also announced plans to expand their strategic collaboration with the aim of helping enterprises worldwide drive productivity gains with generative AI applications and solutions. The companies are also co-developing AI-powered solutions in areas like 5G, cybersecurity and energy transition.

Japan: Death toll rises to 7 as unprecedented rainfall batters Ishikawa

AGENCIES
TOKYO, SEP 23

Unprecedented rainfall in Japan's Ishikawa has claimed seven lives as of Monday afternoon, with several people still missing as rescue operations continue at full speed.

The torrential downpour, which began on Saturday, has severely impacted the region, which is still recovering from a significant earthquake earlier this year.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased and reassured the public that the government is making every effort to assist those affected. Addressing a press briefing, Hayashi detailed the rescue efforts and ongoing relief operations.

"As of 8:00 a.m. today, we have received reports that seven people have died, two are missing, and eight others are



unaccounted for, some of whom may still have a connection to the disaster," Hayashi stated.

He emphasised that police, fire departments, and the Self-Defense Forces are conducting intensive search, rescue, and relief operations across the affected areas.

Hayashi also stated that some evacuation centres in Suzu City and Wajima City were facing shortages of essential supplies.

He revealed that the prefecture had transported 2,000 servings of instant rice, 1,500 bottles of 2L water and tea, and other

emergency supplies from stockpiles to Suzu City on Sunday.

Additionally, with improved weather conditions, the Self-Defense Forces were set to airlift 10,000 servings of instant rice and 8,000 portable toilets to the Machino and Monzen districts of Wajima City later in the day.

The Chief Cabinet Secretary also confirmed that in response to a request by Governor Hase, three national government officials had been dispatched to assist local authorities.

"The Cabinet Office

Disaster Prevention Counselor and two other officials would be sent to the region, in line with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's instructions to ensure comprehensive support for the affected areas," he said.

"The region is still in the recovery phase from the Noto Peninsula earthquake, and we will continue to work closely with local governments to assess and respond to the evolving needs of the disaster-hit areas," Hayashi added.

Although Japan's weather agency downgraded the heavy rain emergency warning for parts of Ishikawa Prefecture on Sunday morning, authorities have urged residents to remain vigilant against potential floods and landslides.

The severe weather has caused widespread damage, with rescue teams and government officials working around the clock to locate the missing and deliver essential aid to the affected communities.

Dissanayake vows to lead Sri Lanka into 'new era of Renaissance'

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, SEP 23

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of the Marxist-leaning Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party, who was sworn in on Monday as the ninth Executive President of Sri Lanka, vowed to usher in a "new era of Renaissance" in the island nation.

"This morning (23rd), I took oath as the 9th Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the presence of Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at the Presidential Secretariat," the newly-elected leader said in a post on X.

Expressing his commitment to work for the country, Dissanayake wrote, "I promise to fulfil your responsibility to usher in a new era of Renaissance for this country, and I look forward to your collective contribution to that."

Addressing the com-

plexity of the challenges Sri Lanka faces, Dissanayake assured citizens that he would work diligently to meet their expectations.

The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, where Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya administered the oath, marking a historic moment as the country's first leftist head of state.

After the swearing-in ceremony, he pledged to "restore the public's confidence in politicians" and to govern the country with wisdom and transparency.

"I'm not a magician but an ordinary citizen with certain capabilities and incapacities. My top priority is to enhance my abilities, expand my knowledge, and make the best decisions to govern the country," he further emphasised.

The election results were finalised on Sunday

evening after Sri Lanka's first-ever presidential run-off, as neither Dissanayake nor Samagi Jana Sandhanaya candidate Sajith Premadasa secured the required majority in the initial round.

According to the Sri Lankan Election Commission, Dissanayake won the presidency with 42.31 per cent of the vote, with Premadasa finishing second and outgoing President Ranil Wickremesinghe third.

Following his victory on Sunday, Dissanayake, popularly known as AKD, reflected on the historic nature of the moment, writing on X, "The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true. This achievement is not the result of any single person's work, but the collective effort of hundreds of thousands of you. Your commitment has brought us this far, and for that, I am deeply grateful."

Dissanayake also paid

tribute to those who sacrificed for this cause, stating,

"Our journey here has been paved by the sacrifices of so many who gave their sweat, tears, and even their lives for this cause.

Their sacrifices are not forgotten," he wrote.

In a message of unity, the newly elected President stressed the importance of solidarity among all Sri Lankans, saying, "The unity of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and all Sri Lankans is the bedrock of this new beginning. The New Renaissance we seek will rise from this shared strength and vision."

Dissanayake has been a prominent figure in Sri Lanka's political scene, leading the JVP party through significant national events. His presidency is seen as a pivotal moment in the country's history, marking the first time a leftist leader has taken the highest office.

Bangladesh, Russia resolve N-plant loan repayment issues

AGENCIES
DHAKA, SEP 23

Bangladesh has proposed an extension on Russia's loans for Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant but Moscow is hesitant to proceed with repayment and wants payment of loan interest to be made through Chinese banks, which Dhaka is yet to give a green signal, media reports said.

Bangladesh borrowed USD 12.65 billion from the Russia EXIM Bank for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project. A bilateral agreement was signed on this matter in 2016, which was followed by the release of the funds in 2017, Prothom Alo reported.

Payment of interest has already begun, and Dhaka is supposed to pay USD 110 million in two instalments annually. Since Russia faces international sanctions, Bangladesh cannot send money through the country's EXIM bank. So, Dhaka is depositing the



funds in a special account of Bangladesh Bank.

According to reports, Russia made another proposal to Bangladesh in August, asking that the money held in the special account of Bangladesh Bank be sent to Russia through a Chinese bank. Dhaka is yet to respond to the proposal. To date, an overdue amount of USD 630 million has been deposited in a special account of Bangladesh Bank.

Bangladesh started building the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant at a cost of about Tk 1.14 trillion in 2016, and the proj-

ect is set to be finished on December 31, 2025. Now the deadline seems to be delayed by two more years. Moscow is lending USD 12.65 billion for this project.

"The matter of loan repayment should be discussed with Russia since there has already been a big investment. So, it is necessary to negotiate logically instead of getting emotional. If Russia can be convinced of our situation, the matter will be solved soon," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM).

South Korea: Bill passed for strengthening punishment for deepfake sex crimes against teens



AGENCIES
SEOUL, SEP 23

A parliamentary committee passed a bill on Monday, toughening the punishment for deepfake sex crimes against children and teenagers.

The parliamentary gender equality and Family Committee passed revisions to the Act on the Protection of Children against sex crimes and the sexual violence prevention act amid public alarm over a surge in digital sex crimes using doctored pornographic images of girls and women, reports Yonhap news agency.

Under the revision to the Act on protecting children, using sexually exploitative material to blackmail or coerce children and teenagers will be newly punishable by law and more heavily than under existing laws. While current laws punish such crimes with imprisonment of one or more years in the case of blackmail and three or more years in the case of coercion, the revision raises the sentences to three or more years and five or more years, respectively, in the event the crimes are carried out against children and teenagers.

ISRAEL TO INTENSIFY STRIKES AGAINST HEZBOLLAH: MILITARY CHIEF

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM, SEP 23

Israeli forces "are carefully planning the coming days" and their attacks against Hezbollah will intensify, Israel's military chief Herzi Halevi said Sunday.

Israeli forces have killed over 600 militants, "including dozens of Hezbollah's top military leaders," since the onset of the Gaza conflict last year, and have struck "hundreds" of targets in Lebanon recently, weakening Hezbollah's launch and combat capabilities, Halevi said in a televised speech from the Tel Nof Airbase, a principal airbase of the Israeli Air Force.

"The price Hezbollah is paying is increasing, and our strikes will intensify," Halevi said.

"We have many more capabilities yet to deploy, and we are in a very high state of readiness, both



offensively and defensively," he said.

Meanwhile, Halevi claimed that the Israeli airstrike on a building in Beirut's southern suburb on Friday has "eliminated" Hezbollah's chain of command.

The building was bombed by Israeli warplanes when Hezbollah commanders were planning in it an attack on northern Israel aimed at killing civilians and kidnapping soldiers, he claimed.

"We will ensure the safety of those (displaced Israelis) returning to their

home along the border), and if Hezbollah hasn't understood this yet, they will continue to face blow after blow until they do," he said.

Tension along the Israel-Lebanon border has escalated sharply following communication device explosions across Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday that killed 37 people and injured 2,931, as well as an Israeli airstrike on Friday targeting a building in the Jamous area in the southern suburbs of Beirut that killed 45 and injured dozens more.

The Israeli army and Hezbollah, which has deep ties to Hamas in the Gaza Strip, have been exchanging fire across the Israel-Lebanon border since Oct. 8, 2023, raising fears that the nearly one-year-long confrontations could escalate into a full-scale war.

EPFO adds highest-ever 19.94 lakh members in July, surge in 1st-time job seekers

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) added 19.94 lakh net members in the month of July, marking the highest recorded increase since payroll data tracking began in April 2018, data from the Ministry of Labour and Employment showed on Monday.

The EPFO added 10.52 lakh new members in July, a 2.66 per cent increase over June and a 2.43 per cent rise compared to the same month last year.

The surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's



successful outreach programmes, said Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya.

About 14.65 lakh members who had exited the system rejoined EPFO in July. This figure represents a 15.25 per cent year-over-

group, with 8.77 lakh net additions in July.

According to the government, this marks the largest increase for this demographic since records began and reflects the continued trend of young people, mostly first-time job seekers, entering the organised workforce. This age group represents 59.41 per cent of all new members added during the month.

Nearly 3.05 lakh new female members joined EPFO in July, reflecting a year-over-year growth of 10.94 per cent. In total, 4.41 lakh net female members were added, marking the highest monthly addition for women since payroll tracking began, with a 14.41 per cent increase

compared to July 2023.

As per the ministry, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Gujarat accounted for 59.27 per cent of the total net member additions, collectively adding 11.82 lakh members.

Maharashtra led among the states/UTs, contributing 20.21 per cent of the total new members, the data showed. Notably, 38.91 per cent of net additions came from expert services, including manpower suppliers, contractors, and security services, among others.

The payroll data is provisional since the data generation is a continuous exercise, as updating employee records is a continuous process.

GCCs expand in India, revenue growth to be 1-2 pc higher than ISPs: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

As global capability centres (GCCs) continue to expand in India, their revenue growth is estimated to be 1-2 per cent higher than that of IT service providers (ISPs) in the next two-three years, compared to 3 per cent higher in the past few years, a report showed on Monday.

New GCCs are opening at a fast pace and, more importantly, existing GCCs continue to expand, as per HSBC Global Research.

"It's tough to generalise but based on our sample set of over 30 GCCs we met this year, GCC-to-outsourcing ratio may stabilise at 70:30 eventually (especially for banks) and we are currently at 65:35,"

the report mentioned.

Improving value proposition in terms of cost and services have driven GCC growth in recent years.

However, a GCC's cost per head (salary and overheads) is still 25-30 per cent higher than an ISP's. This is due to inferior pyramid and higher like-to-like salaries at most levels.

However, ISPs have significant offshore mark-up (pricing/billing rate over costs) and compared to those billing rates, GCC costs are still 10-15 per cent lower, the report mentioned.

GCCs' value proposition to their parent companies has improved over the past few years and a lot of strategic transformation work is being executed by GCCs now.

Multiple GCCs mentioned that there has been a significant expansion of top management at GCCs in recent times, which reflects the growing influence of GCCs on their headquarters.

According to Deloitte, nearly 5,000 global leadership roles are currently in GCCs in India.

India has the largest base of 17 per cent of global technology capability centres, currently employing over 1.9 million (19 lakh) people. By 2030, the GCC market in India is estimated to grow to \$99-105 billion, with the number of GCCs reaching 2,100-2,200 and headcount rising to 2.5-2.8 million (25 lakh-28 lakh), as per a latest Nasscom-Zinnov report.

Recoveries from stressed operational thermal plants to improve by 9 pc in next fiscal: Report

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 23

For asset reconstruction companies (ARCs), the cumulative recovery rate for stressed operational thermal power plants (TPPs) is set to improve 700-900 basis points (bps) on-year to 83-85 per cent next fiscal due to robust growth in power consumption, a report said on Monday. "Increase in the recovery will be driven by higher power demand on the back of adequate coal availability, timely payment by distribution companies (discoms) and expected healthy merchant power prices," CRISIL Ratings said in a report.

These industry tailwinds are not only supporting faster resolutions but may also aid the resolution of about 5 GW of stressed TPPs over the next 2 fiscals, it said. Power consumption is expected to rise 6-7 per

cent in FY 2024-25, driven by strong demand from the commercial and industrial (C&I) segments, and growing urbanisation.

The report said: "Government initiatives had improved coal availability for TPPs by 8.8 per cent in FY 2023-24, leading to healthy coal stock with the TPPs. This trend is likely to sustain with a ramp-up in coal production and improved evacuation infrastructure."

Mohit Makhija, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings, said: "The trend is likely to continue. Operating performance and cash flows of stressed operational TPPs will strengthen this fiscal. Additionally, timely realisations from discoms will also improve the liquidity position. The receivables position of thermal plants rated by us has already improved to 185 days as on March 31, 2024, from 200 days a year earlier."

Upasana and Ram Charan's Game Changing Approach to Corporate Health

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEPT 23

Upasana Kamineni Konidela, Vice Chairperson of CSR at Apollo Hospitals Group and Managing Director of URLife, and global star Ram Charan, co-founder of URLife, are a powerful force in India's wellness industry, driving a transformative change that goes far beyond traditional health initiatives. As leaders passionate about integrating wellness into everyday life, the couple's vision is redefining how India approaches corporate health and well-being. Ram Charan, with his global recognition and influence, complements Upasana's vision by bringing a unique perspective to wellness that transcends borders. Together, they aim to revolutionize how India perceives health in a corporate environment, blending modern technology with a holistic approach.

Their brainchild, URLife, is not just a wellness platform; it is a movement that seeks to inspire healthier living through the strategic use of technology. URLife offers a comprehensive suite of wellness services—ranging from on-demand doctor appointments and medicine deliveries to virtual consultations and tailored fitness programs—designed to seamlessly fit into busy corporate lifestyles. This initiative is creating ripples of positive change across India's workforce, particularly through its 550+ Occupational Health Centres (OHCs) that support the well-being of over two million people.

In line with their powerful vision of wellness and empowerment, URLife has now partnered with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) taking corporate wellness to unmatched levels. This strategic collabora-



tion spans 94 HPCL sites, offering a holistic health ecosystem that includes weekly doctor visits, 24/7 virtual doctor support, and emergency management solutions.

The initiative extends beyond the employees to their families through innovative programs and regular health webinars, embedding wellness into the fabric of everyday life.

Speaking about the HPCL partnership, Upasana Kamineni Konidela says, "Wellness is not just a

buzzword; it is the foundation of a thriving society.

Our partnership with HPCL reflects our deep commitment to empowering people to take charge of their health. This is about making wellness accessible and essential, not optional. We are redefining corporate wellness, turning workplaces into healthier, happier spaces where everyone can flourish."

HR director, Shri KS Shetty says "We couldn't find a better partner than UR life—they are pioneers

in this space. Two giants—one from the energy sector and one from the health sector—are coming together to work in this arrangement. This collaboration between HPCL and URLife represents the next generation of healthcare. Together, we are committed to creating a healthier future by bringing medical expertise and wellness initiatives to every employee, no matter where they are."

Ram Charan's dedication to this initiative is grounded in his belief that wellness is the cornerstone of productivity and success.

As an advocate for physical fitness and mental well-being, he brings a dynamic approach to this mission, ensuring that URLife's offerings resonate with the modern workforce. His influence has helped amplify the initiative, making it a movement that impacts lives beyond borders.

But Upasana Kamineni

Konidela's mission doesn't stop at just providing services; it's about building sustainable and inclusive ecosystems. She earlier introduced an entrepreneurial platform exclusively for women, serving as a unique 'shark tank' for female innovators in the wellness space. Upasana's mission is clear: to build an inclusive space where women can innovate, lead, and drive social impact. The initiative isn't just a bold step toward reshaping the wellness industry but also the future of women in business.

Ram Charan and Upasana Kamineni's relentless dedication to improving lives is not just about offering services; it's about sparking a movement. Whether it's establishing occupational health centers or creating entrepreneurial platforms for women, their goal is clear: to cultivate environments where health, inclusivity, and innovation thrive.

Indian real estate market set to reach \$10 trillion by 2047: Report

AGENCIES
SYDNEY, SEP 23

The real estate market is expected to play a pivotal role in the economic growth trajectory of India. It will potentially be a \$10 trillion market by 2047, accounting for a 14-20 per cent share in the country's GDP, according to a report on Monday.

lay between real estate and India's economic growth journey over the next few decades is explored in the latest report by Colliers in collaboration with the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) and released at the CREDAI NATCON event in Sydney.

The report noted that along the accelerated jour-

ney till 2047, various real estate segments will evolve and continue to proliferate, growing and maturing by varying degrees.

Core assets such as office and residential real estate are likely to mature further and alternative assets such as data centres and senior living will embark upon strong growth trajectories.

Market consolidation, fair pricing, and institutionalisation will become more pervasive across asset classes, especially in the industrial and warehousing segment.

With shifting demographic patterns in India, the median age is likely to increase from about 30 years to approximately 40 years by 2050.

Further, half of the Indian population is pro-

jected to live in urban agglomerations by 2050. With rapid urbanisation and supporting factors like infrastructure growth and employment opportunities, real estate traction is likely to expand beyond tier-I cities and create dispersed growth centres in smaller towns and cities.

Peripheral areas of established cities and tier II and III cities of the country will particularly witness accelerated real estate development across asset classes, the report said.

"India has set its sights on becoming a \$10 trillion real estate market, driven by the sector's ability to adapt and innovate. Landmark initiatives such as RERA and REIT regulations have enhanced



transparency, improved investor confidence, and streamlined operations across the sector. These reforms, alongside critical programmes like PMAY and Gati Shakti, are creating a conducive environment for sustained real estate development," said

Manoj Gaur, Chairman, CREDAI National.

Furthermore, flagship programmes such as the Golden Quadrilateral Project, 'Make in India' Programme and National Infrastructure Pipeline have positively impacted multiple real estate seg-

ments across the country, particularly the industrial and warehousing segment.

With high-volume freight movement along industrial corridors, we can anticipate amplified requirements for warehouses, logistics hubs, and manufacturing units across multiple smaller locations in the country.

Over the years, driven by strong domestic growth prospects, improvements in ease of doing business, and continual FDI relaxations, foreign capital inflow has also grown significantly across diverse sectors.

Institutional investments in the real estate sector in the last decade have crossed \$60 billion, with the majority being

funded by foreign players.

In the upcoming years, the Indian real estate sector will also increasingly embrace digitalisation across aspects ranging from planning, design, and construction to property and facilities management. PropTech and Metaverse are likely to mature and elevate Indian real estate to global standards of operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Advanced technologies will also play a major role in decarbonising the real estate sector. With a focus on built spaces, developers will incorporate sustainable elements at every stage of construction. Green certifications in the office market will particularly become a hygiene

factor and green adoption levels are likely to increase from about 60-70 per cent to almost 100 per cent over the next few years.

"Favourable demographics and urbanisation trends are likely to accentuate the emergence of over hundred - million plus cities by 2047," said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer, Colliers India

"This in turn presents a case for the emergence of multiple real estate hotspots dispersed across the country. Residential, office, and retail segments, particularly, are expected to mature significantly in the next few decades, creating substantial opportunities for investors, developers, and occupiers," he added.

Apple iPhone 16 models receive overwhelming response in India, Pro models lead the pack

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Riding on strong tailwinds from the premiumisation wave in the Indian smartphone market, Apple iPhone 16 series has received overwhelming response in the country, with Pro Max devices leading the pack.

As per trade experts, the demand of iPhone 16 Pro and Pro Max has been at a new high in the country compared to previous generations, owing to attractive financing offers, trade-in schemes and a growing craze to own the most advanced iPhones

ever made.

According to industry watchers, the demand for top-end iPhone 16 Pro and Pro Max is gaining momentum in tier 2 and 3 cities – even beyond.

Featuring Apple Intelligence (to arrive in India in early 2025), larger display sizes, new creative capabilities with innovative pro camera features, stunning graphics for immersive gaming, and more – all powered by the A18 Pro chip – the new series is set to break previous records, they added.

Camera Control in the 6.9-inch iPhone 16 Pro Max unlocks a fast, intuitive



way to tap into visual intelligence and easily interact with the advanced camera system. Featuring a new 48MP Fusion camera with a faster quad-pixel sensor

that enables 4K120 fps video recording in Dolby Vision, the device achieves the highest resolution and frame-rate combination ever available on iPhone.

Additional advancements include a new 48MP Ultra Wide camera for higher-resolution photography, including macro; a 5x Telephoto camera and studio-quality mics to record more true-to-life audio.

The durable titanium design is strong yet lightweight, with larger display sizes, the thinnest borders on any Apple product, and a huge leap in battery life – with iPhone 16 Pro Max offering the best battery life on iPhone ever.

The stunning Super Retina XDR displays with Always-On and ProMotion technologies help users

accomplish more. The device offers industry-leading durability with a strong, lightweight titanium design, as well as the latest-generation Ceramic Shield, which has an advanced formulation that is 2x tougher than glass on any other smartphone.

The new mechanical architecture improves heat dissipation and efficiency for up to 20 percent better sustained performance. Along with the new internal design and advanced power management of iOS 18, larger batteries are optimised to offer a huge leap in battery life.

Retail credit growth moderates in June quarter

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 23

India's retail credit growth moderated in the June quarter as financial institutions tightened the supply of credit, particularly on consumption-led products like credit cards, consumer durable loans, and personal loans, a report said on Monday. A TransUnion CIBIL Credit Market Indicator (CMI) report said that there was a "continued decline in new-to-credit (NTC) volumes, especially when younger consumers

are entering the credit marketplace for the first time".

The share of originations for NTC consumers has declined consistently over the past five years. The share of NTC consumers in originations dropped from 16 per cent in the quarter ending June 2023 to 12 per cent in the June quarter. The report showed overall originations continued to grow at a moderated rate, home loan originations dropped by 9 per cent in volume, while credit card originations declined by 30 per cent YoY.

India, Sri Lanka strengthen case for WTC final after dominant wins

AGENCIES
DUBAI, SEP 23

India tightened their grip on the top spot of the World Test Championship (WTC) 2025 cycle with a comprehensive 280-run victory over Bangladesh in Chennai, while Sri Lanka boosted their chances of making the final by outclassing New Zealand in Galle.

Both teams secured crucial points, adding intrigue to the race for the final two spots in next year's WTC finale at Lord's.

India's latest triumph extended their lead at the top of the table, reaching a percentage of 71.67%. Ravichandran Ashwin led the charge, claiming Player of the Match honours for



his all-round brilliance; a century in the first innings and a six-wicket haul in the second. His efforts helped India bowl out Bangladesh for 234, sealing the match on the fourth day.

Starting the day at 158/4 and chasing a mammoth target of 515, Bangladesh's

hopes rested on captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan.

However, India's spin duo of Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja quickly dismantled the lower order, securing 12 crucial WTC points.

Bangladesh's defeat pushed them down to sixth in the standings, holding a percentage of 39.29%, trailing behind Sri Lanka and England.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, capitalised on their victory over New Zealand in Galle to leapfrog into third place in the WTC standings.

Dhananjaya de Silva's side now boasts a 50% win rate, putting them in a strong position to challenge the top teams for a place in the final.

Sri Lanka's 63-run victory over the BlackCaps came in a thrilling five days, with Prabath Jayasuriya emerging as the hero, finishing with match figures of 9-204 and securing the Player of the Match award.

Sri Lanka's decision to hold off bowling New Zealand out on the fourth day proved tactical brilliance, allowing their bowlers to come back fresh on the final day.

Jayasuriya struck early to remove Rachin Ravindra, who could only add one to his overnight score of 91, and the Kiwi tail folded quickly in pursuit of the 275-run target.

Sri Lanka's win make them as strong contenders for a spot in the WTC final.

With a potential maximum percentage of 69.23%, they will now need a clean sweep against South Africa, followed by a 2-0 series win over Australia at home, to secure their place in the final.

PM, Stalin, Union Sports Minister, Vishy Anand, lauds Indian gold medal winning show in Chess Olympiad

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, SEP 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin Union Sports Minister and Chess legend Vishy Anand lauded Team India for winning two golds at the FIDE Chess Olympiad at Budapest and termed it as an historic achievement.

The women's team won for the first time.

Mr Modi termed the achievement marked a new chapter in India's sports trajectory and would inspire generations of chess enthusiasts to excel.

A release from PIB said, Mr Modi lauded the Indian contingent for winning Gold in both open and women's category at 45th Chess Olympiad.

He congratulated the incredible Men's and



Women's Chess teams for their remarkable achievement.

The PM in a message on X said "Historic win for India as our chess contingent wins the 45th #FIDE Chess Olympiad!".

"India has won the Gold in both open and women's category at /Chess Olympiad!", he said.

"Congratulations to our incredible Men's and Women's Chess Teams. This remarkable achievement marks a new chapter

in India's sports trajectory. May this success inspire generations of chess enthusiasts to excel in the game."

In his message, Mr Stalin said "India continues to rise and shine!".

"From our remarkable hosting of the Chess Olympiad in Chennai to now claiming gold in both the men's and women's categories at the 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad Budapest 2024, what a journey!", he said.

Alcaraz leads Team Europe to Laver Cup title

AGENCIES
BERLIN, SEP 23

Carlos Alcaraz delivered a pair of stunning performances in Berlin to help Team Europe complete a thrilling come-from-behind 13-11 victory to lift the Laver Cup title.

The Spaniard dispatched Taylor Fritz 6-2, 7-5 in a winner-takes-all singles clash on Sunday night to ensure Team Europe lifted the team event trophy for the first time since 2021.

By defeating Fritz, Alcaraz secured three points and his second singles win of the action-packed weekend, during which he earned a total of eight points for the men in blue.

It's the fifth Laver Cup title for Team Europe, providing an unforgettable



moment for outgoing captain Bjorn Borg, who closes out his tenure with a 5-2 record over longtime rival, friend, and Team World captain John McEnroe.

Team Europe, which started the day at a 4-8 deficit, mounted an impressive comeback led by Alcaraz and Casper Ruud, who triumphed in

the day's opening doubles match over Ben Shelton and Frances Tiafoe to thrust their side into contention.

Though Daniil Medvedev lost a tough battle, decided by a Laver Breaker, against Shelton, local hero Alexander Zverev kept Team Europe's hopes alive by eking out a win over Tiafoe in another

Laver breaker.

"We did it for you," Alcaraz said while hugging Borg after first being encircled by his ecstatic teammates who charged onto the iconic black court to celebrate with the debutant.

"It's great, obviously we came here with a goal, all of us, that is to win the Laver Cup. We almost lost, you know, but Sascha (Zverev) came with really good tennis, and give me the chance to win the Laver Cup so I think we are really, really happy with everything," said the Spaniard.

"It's really difficult to watch the matches from outside, you know, a lot of nerves, killing us. It's always tough to play Team World at Laver Cup," Borg said. "I'm very proud of my team," he added.

Ashwin credits Chepauk's 'energy' after memorable performance at home ground

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

Ravichandran Ashwin delivered one of the best performances in recent years as he contributed with both, bat and the ball to guide India to a dominating 280-run win against Bangladesh in the first Test at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday.

In the first innings, the all-rounder smashed his second Test century at the home venue before returning with the figures of 6-88 to give India a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. Ashwin's dual feat earned him the accolade of Player of the Match. However, the veteran off-spinner credited Chepauk's 'energy' for delivering a spectacular



show in front of his wife Prithi Narayanan, two daughters and the home crowd.

"I don't know how to react because the first day was something that happened really quickly. I didn't expect to walk in to bat here and get a

"Do you think this energy (referring to her) added anything to your energy," Prithi asked.

When Prithi questioned what gift Ashwin would give to the kids on the occasion of Daughter's Day. The cricketer replied, "I would give them the ball I picked up a fiver with."

"She kept complaining that I didn't see her on the first day. I didn't. For me, it's very difficult for me to look out for the family when I am playing. In the middle of the game, but I do make a conscious effort because the children are always asking me, 'Why didn't you say hi,'" Ashwin said in an amused way.

"I would like to defend myself here. I don't always say hi.

ISL 2024-25: Kwame Peprah's late goal guides Kerala Blasters to 2-1 win over East Bengal

AGENCIES
KOCHI, SEP 23

Kerala Blasters FC produced a stellar second half comeback, to win 2-1 against East Bengal FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi in their Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 clash on Sunday.

In front of a passionate and vociferous home crowd, the boys in yellow struck twice in the final 30 minutes to secure all three points from the contest, with strikes by Noah Sadaoui and Kwame Peprah.

Powered by impactful forwards from both ends, the opening half of the game saw close chances coming the way of Jesus



Jimenez and Dimitrios Diamantakos. The duo was unable to convert those opportunities for their respective sides, but in the 59th minute, Diamantakos paved the way for the Red & Gold Brigade to take an important lead away from

home.

Kerala Blasters FC defender Sandeep Singh's clearance was intercepted by the lively Nandhakumar Sekar on the left flank for East Bengal FC. The attacker laid the ball for Diamantakos inside the box. The

Greek forward could have attempted a shot, but he instead squared a pass for the 22-year-old Vishnu Puthiya on the right. Vishnu met the pass perfectly and tapped the ball into the back of the net to open the scoring for his side.

Kerala Blasters FC striker Noah Sadaoui then set the comeback on, steering the offence forward and breaking past the East Bengal FC defence with utmost ease. His sharp footwork and movement in the box allowed him to get an equaliser past Prabhakumar Singh Gill in the 63rd minute.

The proceedings were fairly balanced thereafter,

but the home side arguably grew into the game on the back of their crowd support.

East Bengal FC defender Anwar Ali's hasty clearance landed on the feet of Mohammed Aimen, who spotted Kwame Peprah with space near the 18-yard box. Peprah took his time and buried the ball into the back of the net in the 88th minute to seal the win for the Mikael Stahre-coached team.

This was the 12th goal after the 85th minute mark in ISL 2024-25, highlighting how teams and results are going down to the wire, giving fans, exciting footballing action in the stadium and on TV.

Kerala Blasters beat East Bengal 2-1 in ISL

AGENCIES
KOCHI, SEP 23

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Odisha gets past NCOE, IOCL thrashes Central Secretariat in Murugappa Gold Cup tourney

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, SEP 23

Two coming from behind, Hockey Association of Odisha defeated National Centre of Excellence (NCOE), Bhopal, 3-2 to record its second win in Pool B in the 95th All-India MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup Hockey Tournament here on Sunday night.

Despite Odisha struggling to find their rhythm during first quarter of the match missing six penalty corners, they went on to defeat NCOE.

The Odisha team recovered from 0-1 and 1-2 deficits to emerge winner in the odd goal in five.

Sathish B put NCOE ahead in the 21st minute. Odisha levelled through Satish Kangadi six minutes later. The Bhopal team again went ahead when MD Faraz converted a penalty corner in the 32nd minute. When it looked like NCOE would walk away with 2 points, Sudeep Minz restored parity in the 55th minute. Prasad Kujur scored in the 58th minute to dash Bhopal's hopes.

In another match, Indian Army-Red (ARMY) drew 1-1 with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), with both teams demonstrating tenacity and skill throughout the match.

Deepal Kumar scored

for Army in the 8th minute from a penalty corner which was neutralised out by BPCL when Vishwas Girish found the net in a quick counterattack. The two teams tried to break the deadlock but their defences held firm.

In the final match, between IOCL-CS, the former outclassed its rival by scoring almost at will, with an impressive 7-0 victory. From the opening whistle, IOC set their intent to dominate the game. Gujinder Singh set the tone for IOC with a goal in the 3rd minute, followed by Sumit Kumar's brilliant field goal in the 13th minute, doubling their lead.

La Liga: Barca beat Villarreal 5-1, Ter Stegen sustain knee injury

AGENCIES
MADRID, SEP 23

FC Barcelona remain on top of La Liga with an impressive 5-1 win away to Villarreal to make it six wins from six games, but have paid a heavy cost as goalkeeper ter Stegen suffered what could be a season-ending knee injury.

Ter Stegen suffered the injury while claiming a corner two minutes into the second half after two goals from Robert Lewandowski had put Barca ahead, and Ayoze Perez pulled one back for the home side.

Pablo Torre added Barca's third just before the hour, with Raphinha



adding two more in the 74th and 83rd minutes.

Atletico Madrid dropped points with a 1-1 draw away

to Rayo Vallecano in which they again punched below their summer spending, reports Xinhua.

Isi Palazon put Rayo ahead with an excellent goal with Conor Gallagher leveling for Atletico after the break to further increase his status at the club.

Athletic Bilbao move up to third with a 3-1 win at home to Celta, which gives them their third triumph in a week.

Gorka Guruzeta's fourth-minute flick put Athletic ahead, but Iago Aspas leveled from the penalty spot in the 25th minute.

Guruzeta's second of the game put Athletic back

ahead after 39 minutes before Alvaro Djalo's first goal for the club sealed the win 10 minutes from time.

Earlier in the day, Getafe and Leganes drew the south-Madrid derby 1-1 with Borja Mayoral's 83rd-minute penalty for the home side, canceling out Jorge Saez's goal for Leganes seven minutes earlier.

On Saturday, Vinicius Jr helped Real Madrid notch a 4-1 win at home to Espanyol. Thibaut Courtois deflected a low cross into his own net in the 54th minute to give Espanyol the lead, but some poor defending allowed Dani Carvajal to tap in the equalizer four minutes later.

Comprehensive online Sehat App; CS reviews progress

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the Health Department to assess the progress on developing a comprehensive online Sehat App envisaging availability of all requisite healthcare facilities in a hassle-free manner.

Besides Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) IT Department, the meeting was attended by Director, SKIMS; Principal, GMC Jammu/Srinagar and other Medical Colleges; Director Coordination, Medical Colleges; Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu; representatives from BISAG-N and other concerned officers of the department.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a detailed review of all the components added, so far, in the app. He emphasised on making 'Sehat App' more comprehensive for both service providers



and seekers. He urged the developers to take into consideration the future needs of the people in addition to the possible avenues that could be explored with the use of modern technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) at present.

Dulloo asked for making it a one stop solution for extending every kind of support to the patients. He emphasised on including subsidiary details like bed strength, specialities, distance from current location and other diagnostic facilities available in each private or government health facility.

The Chief Secretary further emphasized the

indenting department to lay more focus on content generations so that the app becomes more user-friendly and ready made solution for each kind of the query related to health delivery mechanism. He suggested to onboard the health insurance providers with their packages on offer along with the empanelled hospitals thereof. He made out that this will assist people to have a better comparison of each of them.

Dulloo further encouraged the BISAG-N, which is developing this app, to look into the possibility of API integration with many applications developed by some reputed health-

care facilities across the country so that these too are made available here without having to redo the same under this application.

Director Coordination, Dr Yashpal Sharma, threw light on the current status of the 'Sehat App' developed by the department in coordination with BISAG-N. He revealed that the broad counters of this app included tabs for Patient Services, Facilities for General Public, Health Care Professionals, Medical Students, Health Insurance, Helpline and Skill Development/ Capacity building for the medical/paramedical staff.

Moreover, the sub-

categories like information about Health facilities, diagnostic installations, drug stores, patient appointments, emergency services, blood banks, De-addiction centres, advisories, health alerts are to be provided through this app. In addition, facilities like medical resources and references, journals, workshops & courses, higher education and training would be extended for healthcare professionals.

For medical and paramedical students the amenities like accommodation, course details, library facilities, would be made available. A helpline giving all important contacts and SoS facility is also in offing through this app.

Once completed, it will also have provision of enhancing capacity through online courses, trainings and study materials for the staff and other concerned health care providers, as was elaborated in the meeting.

Training organized for Micro Observers in Udhampur



J1 NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 23

Under the supervision of General Observer, Assembly Constituencies 59-Udhampur West & 60-Udhampur East, S A Raman and General Observer, Assembly Constituencies, 61-Chenani & 62-Ramnagar, B C Sateesha, a comprehensive training of staff to be deployed as Micro Observers for smooth and transparent conduct of General Elections for Legislative Assembly 2024 was conducted in the Conference

Hall DC Office Complex Udhampur.

District Election Officer Udhampur, Saloni Rai extended warm welcome to the General Observers and briefed about the importance of deploying Micro observers at the critical polling stations and ensure that all micro observers involved in the election process are well prepared and confident to handle their responsibilities effectively for conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.

The DLMTs imparted extensive training to Micro

observers through PPTs, Hands-on practice of Electronic Voting Machines and regarding their role and responsibilities and discussed reporting format in detail.

The General observers instructed the trainees to perform their duty efficiently and strictly adhere to the guidelines of ECI.

Among others, Devinder Singh Bhatt, Nodal Officer Postal Ballot CEO PDA and Darshan Kumar, Nodal Officer Training DSEO Udhampur were also present on the occasion.

Chief Secretary reviews implementation of JKCIIP in J&K

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of Agriculture Production Department (APD) to review implementation of Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture & Allied Sectors Project (JKCIIP).

Besides Principal Secretary APD, the meeting was attended by Mission Director HADP/JKCIIP; Director Agriculture, Kashmir/Jammu; Director Horticulture, Kashmir/Jammu and other concerned officers of the department.

The Chief Secretary had a holistic assessment of steps taken by the department for successful implementation of the project. He enquired about the status of different verticals constituting this project along with their desired outcomes and scheme of their implementation over the years of the life of this intensive agricul-



tural development across different sectors and areas of J&K.

Dulloo urged the implementing department to take proactive steps in procuring several critical items envisaged under this project for timely delivery thereby propelling the project further towards its success. He asked for enhancing the capacity of the allied staff along with taking only capable persons whose expertise would be pivotal in making the progress under it.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the department to formulate a well-thought plan to

develop curriculum for the courses, training of trainers and thereafter the training of the farmers for best results. He enjoined upon them to focus on developing the horticulture sector across the districts not currently known for it on the basis of their strengths in this field.

He suggested involving farmers and other private players in making FPOs promoting niche crops with active credit linkage and support by the financial institutions of the UT.

While speaking in the meeting, Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar, apprised the chair

of the current status of the Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) to be set up for implementation of JKCIIP. He informed that the bid had been received for the same and it would be in place till September end.

He also elaborated on the journey of this project till date after its envisaging. He threw light on different challenges faced initially and their resolution by the department. He said that the project is run on reimbursement mode and would therefore start showing results immediately once the funds are released to the implementing agency.

He highlighted the role of Agricultural Universities and the field functionaries of the department in creating awareness, implementation, capacity building and training to be carried out as part of this programme.

MD JKCIIP, Rahul Yadav, threw light on different steps taken by the depart-

ment to implement this \$217 Million IFAD funded project. He revealed that this project aims at improving competitiveness and climate resilience of farmers through different initiatives like production support, value addition and marketing of high-value niche crop produced across the UT.

As far as its constituting verticals are concerned, it was added that these include agri niche crop production, Horticulture crop promotion under the intervention named climate-smart and market-led production.

Next major intervention of JKCIIP is Agri-business Ecosystem development which encompasses enterprise promotion, market promotion, incubation and startups. Other interventions which are part of this project are support to vulnerable communities involved in different sectors of farming and project management.

SVEEP: 'Jashn-e-Jamhoor' held at Polo View Market ignites spirit of participation & responsibility among citizens

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

A grand mega event titled 'Sham-e-Jamhoor' under Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative of the government was today organised at historic Polo View Market Srinagar.

The event, organised by District Election Officer Srinagar was aimed to raise awareness about the significance of voting and encourage citizens, especially the youth, to actively participate in the Assembly Election scheduled for 25th September in Srinagar District.

The event was graced by the presence of M Tharun Patnaik, Assistant Commissioner with Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, and Qazi Akhtar, UT Nodal Officer SVEEP; Ahsan-Ul-Haq Chishti, Nodal Officer



MCMC/ Media and District Nodal Officer SVEEP besides other concerned officers/officials and large number of public were also present on the occasion.

'Jashn-e-Jamhoor', witnessed a diverse range of cultural and musical performances by the students of GHS Nawakadal, Amar Singh College and University of Kashmir, which enthralled the audience and garnered a huge

round of applause from them.

The performances, which focused on the importance of voting and the power of each citizen's voice, were well-received by the audience, igniting a spirit of participation and responsibility.

The programme underscored the importance of every vote and its role in shaping the democratic future of Jammu and Kashmir.

DEO Rajouri reviews final arrangements for Assembly Elections-2024

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 23

As part of the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024, the District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the district's readiness and ensure strict adherence to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlined by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the final 72 and 48 hours before polling.

The meeting, attended by all Returning Officers (ROs) and Nodal Officers, aimed to streamline various aspects of election management to ensure smooth and transparent polling across Rajouri district.

The Nodal Officer for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) was directed to manage the deployment and mobilization of security forces at all polling stations to ensure law and order. A detailed security plan was discussed to address sensitive areas and ensure voter safety.

ROs were instructed to visit the District Control Room immediately after the departure of polling teams. They were advised to use

webcasting to monitor the timely arrival of these teams at their assigned polling stations. A detailed check of polling station setup, including accessibility and security arrangements, was also mandated.

Micro Observers will be deployed to conduct random inspections across polling stations. These inspections will ensure adherence to ECI guidelines and address any irregularities promptly.

As a precautionary measure, coordination with local Gurudwaras was suggested to mobilize resources if needed, ensuring a robust backup plan.

The Nodal Officer for Manpower was tasked with thoroughly reviewing the deployment of polling personnel. Specific instructions were given to exempt pregnant women and officials with locomotor disabilities from election duties, in compliance with ECI guidelines.

The Nodal Officer responsible for Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was directed to ensure timely replacement of malfunctioning machines. Engineers will be strategically deployed to handle any technical glitches during

polling hours, ensuring minimal disruptions.

Teams were instructed to maintain a strict vigil in sensitive areas, particularly those prone to liquor and cash distribution, as well as regions close to the Line of Control (LOC). Any suspicious activities must be immediately reported and acted upon.

The DEO emphasized the submission of updated polling station details, including their latitude and longitude, as part of the district's communication plan.

All the contesting candidates must be formally informed about the opening and closing of intermediate strong rooms. This measure ensures transparency in the handling of sensitive election materials.

All vehicles transporting polling staff will be equipped with GPS tracking. The data should be monitored to ensure smooth transit, and any delays or issues will be addressed promptly through proper mapping and webcasting.

The Static Surveillance Teams (SST) and Flying Squad Teams (FST) were reminded to ensure thorough checks at all Nakas. Prompt communication

regarding any seizures of illicit cash, liquor or materials is critical for ensuring compliance with ECI directives.

In case of non-EPIC (Elector's Photo Identity Card) voters, the DEO reiterated that no voter shall be allowed to enter polling stations without valid identification.

The DEO directed election teams to raise awareness about this requirement across all Assembly constituencies to prevent any voter from being turned away.

He emphasized to convey to all political parties to submit a list of their agents. These lists will be provided to the polling parties in advance to ensure proper coordination at polling stations.

He directed to ensure timely issuance of passes to Media persons for covering the election events will be issued special passes for smooth access to polling stations. In his concluding remarks, the DEO reiterated the importance of following every directive issued by the Election Commission of India, emphasizing that all measures are aimed at ensuring free, fair, and peaceful elections.

DEO Srinagar chairs meeting with ROs, Zonal SPs to reviews preparations for smooth conduct of Assembly Elections in District

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23

In order to review the arrangements for smooth and peaceful conduct of General Elections to the Legislative Assembly-2024 Assembly Elections for all Eight Assembly Constituencies of the District, the District Election Officer (DEO), Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting with Returning Officers and Zonal SPs here at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

The meeting was held in presence of the General Election Observer for Srinagar District.

Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar, Imtiyaz Hussain Mir was also present on the occasion.

At the outset, the District Election Officer took a detailed review of the arrangements and preparations made for smooth, seamless and peaceful conduct of the upcoming Assembly Elections in all Eight Assembly Constituencies of the District.

The DEO also discussed threadbare the action plan related to



Despatch of Poll parties and Election Materials to the Polling Stations on Poll Day (September 25, 2024) from Despatch/Collection Centres established in Srinagar. On the occasion, the DEO stressed the officers to ensure utmost coordination for efficient and hassle free despatch of Poll staff and Election material to the designated Polling Stations. He further emphasised on making all required arrangements well in

advance to facilitate smooth and efficient election process. The DEO asked them to ensure meticulous advance planning for despatch of polling staff and Election material, adequate parking and separate entry/exit of the vehicles carrying election material from collection/distribution centres to respective Polling Stations. He also laid emphasis on placing adequate spaces for counters to be placed at Collection/Distribution

Centres in order to avoid any cluttering during distribution/collection of election materials. The DEO also stressed on a proactive approach by the Officers under close supervision of concerned ROs to preserve the sanctity of democratic Institutions and ensuring free, fair and polling at all polling stations. Deputy District Election Officer, Mir Imtiyaz ul Aziz and other concerned were also attended the meeting.