

**DENGUE WARNING SIGNS**

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Severe and continuous headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Persistent vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Difficulty breathing
- Redness on the face
- Redness on the skin
- Redness on the eyes

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## All eyes on Srinagar in 2nd phase of J&K elections today



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEP 24

On Wednesday when voting for the second phase of the Assembly elections- being held after a decade - commences amid high security, all

eyes will be on Srinagar - once a bastion of election boycott.

Of the 90 assembly seats, the polling will be held on Wednesday in 26 Assembly Constituencies across six districts of Jammu & Kashmir. In

Jammu region, polling will take place in 11 constituencies and in Kashmir it will be held in 15 seats.

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

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### Battle lines drawn for Phase-2, 25.78 lakh voters eligible, 239 candidates in fray

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEP 24

Stage is set for the second phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir in which 26 Assembly constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir will be going for polls on September 25, in which fate of several high profile leaders including former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and others will be sealed.

These constituencies, as per the news agency, have a total of 25.78 lakh electorates which include 13.13 lakh male, 12.65 lakh female and 53 third gender electorates.

As per the chief electoral officer (CEO) Jammu and Kashmir around 1.21 lakh voters are between the age group of 18 to 19 whereas over 19,000 electorates are with Persons with Disability (PwD) and 20880 voters are above the age group of 85.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has established 3502 polling stations across 26 Assembly constituencies which include 2446 rural, 1056 urban, 26 green, 26 all women managed, 26 all PwD managed and 26 youth managed polling stations.

There are 239 candi-

dates in the fray which include 233 male and only six female candidates.

There are many high profile candidates in the fray which include Omar Abdullah, who is contesting from Ganderbal and Budgam Assembly constituencies, Apni Party President Syed Muhammad Altaf Bukhari, contesting from Chanapora Assembly constituency of Srinagar, BJP J&K president Ravinder Raina, contesting from Nowshera assembly constituency of Rajouri district and Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Tariq

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### PM Modi, Rahul Gandhi to address rallies in Jammu



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEP 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will be addressing public rallies in Jammu on September 28 and September 25 as part of the campaign for the last phase of Assembly elections on October 1.

Jammu district will be among four districts voting in the last leg of the elections, before the results are declared on October 8.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address an election rally here at

Maulana Azad Stadium on September 28," said a party leader.

He said that the rally is aimed at seeking votes for almost all 20 BJP candidates of Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts (Jammu Province) which will go to polls on October 1.

This will be the fourth election rally of the Prime Minister in Jammu and Kashmir in the ongoing Assembly elections.

Earlier, Modi addressed the rallies at Doda, Srinagar and Katra.

Meanwhile Leader

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### Congress denied reservation in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP gave it: Dr Jitendra

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPT 24

Making a scathing attack on the Congress Party for misleading the people, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh said here today that the matter of fact is that Congress had denied reservation in Jammu & Kashmir whereas BJP gave it after Narendra Modi took over as Prime Minister.

In an exclusive interview to a national news channel, Dr Jitendra Singh said, it is for the Congress party to answer why they had not granted political reservation to Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Jammu & Kashmir. He said, it is purely on vote bank consideration that Scheduled Tribes were not granted reservation, which was available in the rest of the country because Congress Party did not consider



them as a part of their vote bank in J&K.

The ongoing Assembly election in Jammu & Kashmir, said Dr Jitendra Singh, is the first-ever election being held with ST reservation and the credit for this goes entirely to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said, when Congress and National Conference say that they would reverse all these provisions if ever they come to power, this amounts to saying that they

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### PM Modi meets Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, reiterates India's willingness to help with peace process

**AGENCIES**  
NEW YORK/NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in New York, exactly a month after the two leaders had met in Kyiv, and reiterated India's willingness to play a constructive role in the quest for a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

Prime Minister Modi also reiterated India's clear, consistent and constructive approach for resolution of the conflict -- of both parties, Ukraine and Russia - sitting across the table to find a peaceful way out, and said India is open to provide all support to facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution to the dragging conflict.

The two leaders exchanged a warm hug



upon their meeting, before they sat down for talks, on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York.

The MEA spokesperson said in a post on X: "PM @narendramodi met President @ZelenskyyUa of Ukraine, today on the sidelines of UNGA in New York.

"The leaders exchanged views on bilateral ties. They also discussed the

situation in Ukraine. PM reiterated India's willingness to play a constructive role in the quest for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy."

A media statement said: "Prime Minister Modi held a bilateral meeting with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on

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### Heat wave persists in Kashmir, Sgr seethes at 33.6 degree Celsius

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEP 24

The heat wave continued to persist across Kashmir region on Tuesday with Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir recording the maximum temperature of 33.6 degree Celsius.

According to the news agency, the maximum temperature settled 6.6 degrees above normal today while Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir witnessed a slight decline in the mercury today as against yesterday's 33.2 degree Celsius, the station recorded 32.8 degree Celsius today.

In Qazigund, the mercury settled 7.2 degrees above normal temperature today, the data reveals, adding that Kokernag recorded a maximum temperature of 31.2 degree Celsius, which was 6.6 degrees above normal.

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### Never accepted abrogation of Article 370, will challenge it in assembly: Iltija Mufti

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEP 24

Iltija Mufti, the daughter of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti and the candidate from Bijbehara assembly segment on Tuesday said that if voted to power, she will challenge the abrogation of Article 370 in the assembly.

Reiterating her stance against the abrogation of Article 370, Iltija as per the news agency said that she never accepted the abrogation of Article 370, and will prioritize addressing this unconstitutional decision in the assembly. "The way it was scrapped will be my primary focus," she said.

"Article 370 was the soul of the relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India," she said.



Iltija, who was speaking to reporters in Kupwara during a rally, took aim at the National Conference (NC), accusing the party of historical wrongdoings, including the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and the rise of Ikhwan, a counter-insurgency militia.

"Peoples Democratic Party ended that era. It was the NC that brought these things, while we have consistently spoken about Kashmir's

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### Fake Registration Drive: GST officers detect 10,700 bogus firms, over Rs 10k cr evasion

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 24

Tax officers have detected around 10,700 fake registrations under the GST, involving evasion of Rs 10,179 crore in the ongoing all-India drive against fake companies set up to defraud the exchequer, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) member Shashank Priya said Aadhaar authentication of GST registration is already in place in 12 states and by October 4, another four states would join.

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Eventually, 20 states, including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, will start Aadhaar authentication.

Speaking at an Assam event, Shashank Priya also said that in future, the tax authorities may also put certain restrictions on new taxpayers based on their risk profile.

"How many invoices they can issue in a month, we may also put some restriction on that in the future... We feel very pained at the misuse of the system. We have to use all methods that are at our command to ensure that those are stopped," he said.

The CBIC official also said that the government is taking targeted action to check fake GST registration and more physical verification is taking place.

The second all-India drive against fake registration began on August 16 and will continue till October 15.

He said the tax authorities have identified 67,970

GSTINs. Of this, 59 per cent of the GSTINs or 39,965 have been verified as of September 22.

Shashank Priya said, "27 per cent have been found to be non-existent. This percentage is almost similar compared to the last drive. We have detected evasion of Rs 10,179 crore. Blocked ITC of Rs 2,994 crore. Also, recovery of Rs 28 crore has been done (in the second drive till September 22)."

In the first drive against fake registration between May 16, 2023 and July 15, 2023, a total of 21,791 entities having GST registration were discovered to be non-existent.

An amount of Rs 24,010 crore of suspected tax evasion was detected during the first special drive last year.

In the GST regime, there is a problem of data mismatches which is leading to more than one lakh

show cause notices being issued last fiscal by tax officers, he said.

"Going forward, we are proposing at some point in time, we have not decided when there will be a system to lock (GSTR-3B). But before that, we will make sure that all the areas, all the channels through which input tax comes they are reflected in the ledgers and returns so that they are populated to GSTR-3B and then it is locked. But that is for the future," Shashank Priya said.

He said going forward once the GSTR-1A and the Invoice Management System (IMS) stabilise, there would be no need for an edit facility of GSTR-3B.

"Whatever figure goes in GSTR-3B that gets locked in. That would be an ideal situation for taxpayers and tax

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### Two dead as vehicle with poll official falls into gorge in Reasi

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEP 24

Two people, including a policeman, were killed when their vehicle carrying a zonal magistrate on poll duty, plunged into a deep gorge in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, officials said.

The zonal magistrate Ajay Kumar, however, escaped with minor injuries as he jumped from the vehicle before it rolled down into the 100-metre deep gorge near remote TUKSON-Angadi village in Mahore area around 3 pm, the officials said.

They said rescuers retrieved the bodies of constable Aijaz Khan (31) of Budhal Rajouri and driver Javed Ahmad (30) of Khor Gulabgarh from the scene. Kumar was on his way to

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### Mehbooba urges ECI to check electoral malpractices

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEP 24

Former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President, Mehbooba Mufti, on Tuesday urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to direct the police and local administration to stop electoral malpractices amid allegations of "vote-buying" through money distribution.

Earlier, PDP candidate from Budgam, Agha Syed Muntazir, accused the National Conference (NC) of manipulating the election process and violating the model code of conduct.

In a letter to the ECI, which he posted on his social media account, Muntazir alleged that the NC is exploiting its political power to intimidate voters.

"...JKNC is seen using power of its elected members, to intimidate the



voters. Rampant and illegal distribution of money is taking place and the people associated with my party and my supporters are threatened of the consequences on the day of polling and later," Muntazir, who is pitted against NC vice president Omar Abdullah in Budgam, said in his letter.

He raised concerns about the impartiality of the district administration and police.

Muntazir called on the ECI to take immediate action by

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### Hoarding business thrives in J&K, traders say it shows wider participation in polls

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, SEPT 24

There has been a "remarkable boom" in the hoarding and printing business in Kashmir during these assembly elections, local traders have said, underlining that the trend shows wider participation in the democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir where polls are often marred by boycott calls.

Local entrepreneurs say the demand for election banners, posters, pamphlets, and flags has surged to the levels never seen before in the Valley's electoral history.

Jammu and Kashmir is voting in three pases to elect an assembly. The first phase was conducted on September 18. The second and the third phases are scheduled on September 25 and October 1.

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## DEO unveils Polling Station with Traditional setup at LOC to foster Community Connection

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 24

To ensure a seamless electoral process, District Election Officer (DEO) Vikas Kundal paid a surprise visit to the unique polling station established at Primary School Noorkote, located beyond the Line of Control (LOC) fence in the Haveli constituency.

The on-spot assessment focused on the arrangements made for the polling party and the deployment of security personnel to maintain order on the Election Day.

Marking an innovative approach to voter engagement, the district election authority has set up a polling station designed to evoke the charm and simplicity of rural life. Adorned with traditional items like a Cart, utensils, and daily-use objects, this polling station immerses voters in the essence of



village culture, showcasing the struggles and resilience of rural communities.

Expressing enthusiasm for such initiatives, the DEO stated, "In addition to the Pink polling stations managed entirely by women staff, we have introduced Green polling stations to promote environmental awareness. Our traditional-look polling station is equipped with all necessary arrangements for both the poll-

ing parties and the voters. It serves as a reminder of our rural heritage and lifestyle, making the voting experience more relatable and engaging for our voters."

This forward-thinking approach has successfully captured the attention of villagers and common voters, enhancing the overall electoral experience and ensuring that the elections resonate deeply with the community's cultural identity.

## Two-Day Home Voting for Senior Citizens, Specially-abled persons begins in Samba

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 24

District Election Office (DEO), Samba, under the guidance of DEO Rajesh Sharma, on Tuesday started two-day exercise to conduct home voting through postal ballots for Absentee Voters in the categories of Senior Citizens (AVSC) and Persons with Disabilities (AVPD) across the three constituencies of Vijaypur, Samba, and Ramgarh.

Polling teams deployed for the exercise on the first day covered numerous voters across the district. The comprehensive outreach was aimed at ensuring that every eligible voter is able to exercise his democratic right, regardless of health or mobility challenges.

A total 386 absentee voters are being covered in the exercise including 167 in Vijaypur Constituency; 170 in Samba Constituency and 49 in Ramgarh Constituency.



As part of the initiative, DEO Rajesh Sharma personally visited several locations in the district, including Khour Salarian, where he interacted with home voters and received feedback on the process. DEO Sharma commended the polling teams for their efforts in ensuring extensive coverage, reaching voters even in remote areas on this first day of the exercise.

The DEO praised the commitment of the teams, acknowledging their hard work in covering the district compre-

hensively and ensuring last-mile connectivity. He emphasized that no eligible voter should be left behind, particularly those in vulnerable categories.

The home voting process will continue tomorrow, ensuring that all absentee voters in the district are fully covered.

This initiative highlights the commitment of the District Election Office to ensuring inclusive and accessible voting, making the process as convenient and safe as possible for every citizen.

## DEO Poonch flags off Polling Parties ahead of poll Day

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, SEPTEMBER 24

With the Assembly elections scheduled for tomorrow (September 25), District Election Officer (DEO) Vikas Kundal today flagged off the polling parties for all 483 polling stations amid tight security arrangements. The DEO inaugurated the proceedings by flagging off the first poll party, marking the commencement of a comprehensive deployment operation. The district administration has completed all necessary preparations to ensure a smooth electoral process. Special attention has been given to critical areas requiring enhanced security measures, reflecting the authorities' commitment to conducting free, fair, and safe elections across Poonch.

A total of 2,452 employees have been deployed across the district's 483 polling stations, spread over its three constituencies. Additionally, 204 critical polling stations have been provided with extra security to guarantee a peaceful voting process. Flagging off the poll parties from the Audi-



torium of Government Degree College, the DEO emphasized the thoroughness of the preparations. "We have ensured all necessary arrangements for the poll parties at every polling station. From staff deployment to logistical support and security, no detail has been overlooked. Our aim is to facilitate a free, fair, and smooth election process on September 25," Kundal said. The constituency-wise deployment has been meticulously planned. For 88-Surankote, 778 employees have been deployed for 151 polling stations, while 956 employees

have been assigned across 190 polling stations in 89-Haveli and 718 employees for 142 polling stations in 90-Mendhar, ensuring smooth operations throughout.

In addition to the poll party staff, Micro Observers have been deployed at key polling stations to ensure transparency and uphold the integrity of the election process. These observers will oversee the proceedings and report any irregularities.

General Election Observers and senior election officials were present during the flag-off ceremony.

## Home Voting commences across Bandipora

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 24

The Home voting process commenced officially today across the Bandipora District and will continue until September 26.

This initiative is designed to facilitate eligible PWD voters with 40 percent benchmark disability and Senior citizens above 85 years of age, who are unable to cast their vote on the designated polling day. A total of 41 teams have been established to conduct home voting smoothly, across the district. At Bandipora, District Election Officer (DEO) Manzoor Ahmad Qadri along with RO 15-Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Wani flagged-off the Home voting teams of 15-Bandipora AC and at Sumbal, AERO flagged-off home voting teams for the 14-Sonawari Assembly constituency while at Gurez, SDM/RO 16-Gurez Mukhtar Ahmad flagged-off the Home voting teams for 16-Gurez AC.

The DEO along with RO Shabir Ahmad Wani and Nodal Officer PVC Dr. Naseer Ahmad Baba also inaugurated the postal voting centre at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora to further facilitate the voting process.

The DEO said that 504 eligible voters have opted for home voting. Additionally, the district has received 888 applications from service voters, leading to the establishment of postal voting centers at the RO level across all three assembly constituencies.

DEO stated that, the home voting and postal voting initiatives are aimed at ensuring that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate in the electoral process and all arrangements have been meticulously



planned to guarantee a seamless voting experience for everyone.

He said all preparations, including the commissioning of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), have been completed in accordance with Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines. Furthermore, three phases of training for poll staff have been successfully conducted.

The main attraction of the day was the traditional drum beating during the home voting process, which added a festive atmosphere and helped publicize the initiative.

This lively display aimed to engage the community and encourage participation in the electoral process.

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## DEO Rajouri briefs media on Polling Day preparedness

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 24

District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today briefed the media persons regarding the district's preparedness for the Polling, scheduled for tomorrow. The DEO listed various steps taken to ensure smooth, free, and fair elections in the district, with an emphasis on transparency, security and compliance with the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines.

The DEO informed that 745 teams have been dispatched to different polling stations across the district to facilitate the electoral process. Making a significant development, for the first time in any election Rajouri will witness 100% webcasting in all polling stations, a directive issued by the Election Commission of India to ensure transparency.

In addition to webcasting, 468 micro observers have been deployed across the district, ensuring real-time monitoring of election activities at different polling stations. Special arrangements

have been made for remote polling stations, where two cameras have been installed—one inside and another outside each polling station—to further enhance the transparency and accountability of the voting process.

To strengthen enforcement efforts, Flying Squads Teams (FST) and Static Surveillance Teams (SST) have been deployed and are operational round the clock. These teams are not only patrolling but are also being monitored through CCTV cameras installed at strategic locations throughout the district, ensuring that all activities are in line with the Model Code of Conduct. The DEO also informed about the restrictions imposed for the 48-hour silence period preceding the elections, ensuring that no election campaigning is conducted within this time frame as per the ECI guidelines.

During the press briefing, the DEO disclosed that several complaints were received from various areas of the district, all of which are being promptly addressed. A

complaint from Budhal regarding the alleged distribution of cash and liquor was received and immediately forwarded to the Returning Officer and police authorities for necessary action. Another complaint concerning vehicle checking is currently under investigation. Additionally, a complaint regarding the obstruction of a vehicle was swiftly dealt with, with FST teams reaching the location to address the situation.

The DEO assured the public that the directions of the Election Commission of India are being followed in letter and spirit and the district administration is committed to conducting free, fair, and transparent elections. He reiterated that all efforts are being made to ensure that the electoral process remains impartial and that any violations will be dealt with strictly.

The DEO also appealed to the public to cooperate with the authorities and report any instances of violations or misconduct to ensure the smooth conduct of elections in the district.

## General Observer inspects Facilitation Centre & Postal Voting Centre in Pattan AC

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 24

In a proactive measure to ensure a transparent and efficient electoral process, General Observer for 13-Pattan Assembly Constituency, Ujjwal Kumar accompanied by concerned Returning Officer, Gulzar Ahmad visited Pattan and conducted a thorough inspection of the Facilitation Centre located at Degree College Pattan today. He also assessed the Postal Voting Centre (PVC) at the SDM office Pattan.

Speaking on the occasion, General Observer emphasized the importance of a well-organized electoral process. "We are committed to ensuring that every aspect of the electoral process is functioning effectively. It is vital that voters feel supported and informed as they prepare to cast their



votes," he stated. He also highlighted the significance of accessibility and the need for facilities that cater to all citizens.

During the inspection, the team visited multiple polling stations, engaging directly with voters to gather feedback and address any concerns regarding the upcoming

elections. This visit reinforced the Election Commission's commitment to upholding the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process in the 13-Pattan Assembly Constituency. The insights gained from interactions with voters will be crucial in refining the arrangements leading up to the elections.

## GDC Ramgarh celebrates 55th NSS Foundation Day



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 24

The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit 'Prabha' of Government Degree College, Ramgarh celebrated 55th NSS Foundation Day, honoring the establishment of NSS, a journey dedicated to serving and strengthening our communities.

The event was held under the patronage and guidance of the Principal of the college, Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra.

Principal highlighted the importance of community service stating "NSS is a powerful platform for students to develop leadership qualities and a sense of responsibility towards society." She encouraged the students

to embrace the values of service and dedication.

The celebration included an informative session by the NSS Advisory Committee including Dr. Aditi Khajuria, Prof. Sandeep Kumari and Dr. Shivali Panjgotra. The session highlighted the aim of NSS which focuses on encouraging social responsibility, personal growth and community engagement among students.

The motto of NSS "Not Me But You" was emphasized, reminding participants of the importance of selfless service and prioritizing the needs of others. Attendees also learned how they can make a difference in their communities and the invaluable experiences that come with service.

## Expenditure Observers for Baramulla conduct second inspection of Exp. registers of all contesting candidates

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 24

The second inspection of expenditure registers of the contesting candidates of all the seven Assembly constituencies of Baramulla district was conducted at Dak Bungalow Baramulla under the supervision of Sidlingappa Teli and Amit Dahiya, Expenditure Observers for the Assembly Constituencies of District Baramulla.

The Nodal Officer for district expenditure monitoring cell along with all the 07 Assistant Expenditure Observers and their teams were present in the meeting.

All 101 candidates were notified to submit their expenditure registers for inspection by the District Election Officer Baramulla. Out of 101 candidates only 73 candidates attended the second inspection meeting and submitted expenditure registers for inspection.

The candidates were

advised to include all the election related expenditure in their registers and also the expenditure noted by the AEOs in their register was cross verified and candidates were advised to maintain their registers/ records as per ECI guidelines.

The 28 candidates who neither appeared for the meeting nor produced their registers for inspection, their names were forwarded to the concerned Returning Officers for issuance of Show Cause Notices for non-compliance and for further action in the matter as per norms.

Next date of inspection is fixed on 28.09.2024 and all the candidates are requested to produce their complete expenditure statement register along with all documentary proof before the inspection committee for inspection. The final reconciliation of expenditure incurred by each contesting candidate will be conducted after polling.

## Second inspection of expenditure registers conducted for Udhampur Assembly Segments

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 24

The second inspection of expenditure registers for all four Assembly segments of Udhampur District was conducted today under the chairmanship of Expenditure Observer Vivekananda Reddy here in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex.

The meeting was convened to ensure compliance with the financial regulations mandated by the Election Commission of India for election expenditures.

Earlier, Nodal Officer for Expenditure Monitoring (EEM) Bikram Dutt Sharma along

with District Treasury Officer Dheeraj Jandial, briefed the Expenditure Observer on the financial overview of the General Assembly Elections 2024.

The meeting held in-depth discussions regarding the submission and scrutiny of expenditure accounts by the contesting candidates. Authorities underscored the importance of strict adherence to prescribed financial limits and the timely submission of reports. The candidates were reminded of their responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability in all election-related expenses.



## GDC Kathua engages Youth in vibrant SVEEP campaign to promote voter awareness

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 24

In a spirited endeavor to reinforce the democratic process and ensure that every citizen's voice is heard, a series of vibrant voter engagement activities were held today at Degree College Kathua, under the ongoing voter awareness initiatives in AC 67-Kathua (SC). These efforts, aimed at boosting voter participation, particularly targeted young students, many of whom are first-time voters.

One of the day's most captivating activities was a signature campaign that drew widespread participation. This symbolic, yet engaging initiative, served as a powerful reminder of the crucial role that voter participation plays in the world's largest democracy. The enthusiasm displayed by the college students reflected the energy and optimism of youth eager to leave their mark on this significant effort.

Following the signature campaign, a unified



voter pledge was taken by all attendees, including students and staff. This moment of solidarity reaffirmed the commitment of all present to achieving maximum voter turnout, highlighting their dedication to upholding and strengthening the democratic process. The pledge was more than a mere formality—it was a collective acknowledgment of the power of the vote as the foundation of a thriving democracy.

These initiatives are part of the broader SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) campaign, meticulously executed across the district by the District Election Office.

Under the leadership of the Returning Officer for

AC 67-Kathua (SC), Vishav Partap Singh (ACR), the campaign has taken a strategic approach to enhance voter education and ensure that every eligible citizen is informed and empowered to exercise their voting rights.

The District Election Office remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening democracy. Through these ongoing activities, it not only raises awareness but also actively engages voters, especially the youth, to contribute to a more inclusive and participatory future. By encouraging citizens to exercise their electoral rights, the campaign aims to create a lasting impact, fostering a stronger and more resilient democratic process.

## SVEEP Voter awareness programme held at Govt High School Kaghote



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMNAGAR, SEPTEMBER 24

A Voter awareness programme was organized here today at Government High School, Kaghote as part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation initiative.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from approximately 500 attendees, including students and local voters. Parshotam Sharma, Headmaster of the School delivered an inspiring speech emphasizing the

significance of each vote in shaping the nation's future. He also sensitized students and voters on the importance of participating in the electoral process.

The programme aimed to boost voter awareness and encourage greater participation in the upcoming General Assembly Elections. The program featured a variety of colorful activities, including cultural performances, skits, awareness speeches, a signature campaign and poster-making competition.

## Day-02: Home Voting, Postal Ballot Voting continues in Kupwara

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, SEPTEMBER 24

The process of Home Voting for the Assembly Elections-2024 continued on second day today across all six assembly constituencies of Kupwara District, with home voting teams traversing to remotest and toughest terrains of this frontier district to cover the eligible voters.

This major initiative, specifically, is aimed at enhancing electoral participation among voters aged 85 and older, as well as persons with 40% benchmark disability, as per the provisions set by the Election Commission of India (ECI). This process will continue until September 25, 2024.

To ensure smooth operations in Kupwara district, 45 dedicated home voting teams including polling personnel, micro-observers and videographers have been deployed in six assembly constituencies of the district. The district administration has identified a total of 750 home voters including 360 elderly (85 plus), and 390 (PwD) voters categorized as AVSC (Absentee Voters in Category of Senior Citizens) and AVPD (Absentee Voters with Disabilities) across different polling stations.

The provision of home voting is a progressive measure aimed at empowering voters who encounter barriers to participat-



ing in the electoral process at the polling stations. This upholds the Commission's motto of ensuring - No voter is left behind.

By giving home voting facilities to elders and PwDs, it is the Commission's expression of care and respect towards them. Voters who availed the home voting facility at different polling stations of the district have expressed their gratitude and satisfaction for the ECI initiative. Voting from home takes place with involvement of a full contingent of polling staff and security personnel with secrecy of voting diligently maintained. With this, ECI has taken this decisive step towards facilitating a more equitable and representative democracy, where every citizen's voice matters, regardless of physical limitations or age.

Meanwhile, Postal

ballot voting for government employees of Kupwara district proceeded smoothly, on second day today, reflecting the efficient conduct of the electoral process, with officials of essential service duties seamlessly exercising their voting rights at the Postal Voting Centers established at Karnah, Trehgam, Kupwara, Lolab, Handwara and Langate. The employees stood in queues enthusiastically, to wait for their turn to cast their votes.

The District Election Office Kupwara has ensured that all necessary arrangements were in place for home voters and employees who applied for postal ballots through Form-12.

The DEO Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan has emphasized the administration's commitment to ensuring inclusivity and transparency.

## JMC intensifies anti-dengue measures



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

To contain the spread of Dengue, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) has launched a special fogging drive in collaboration with the Anti Malaria Wing under the aegis of Commissioner, JMC Dr. Devansh Yadav.

The fogging team supervised by Health Officer, Dr. Vinod Sharma targeted the hotspots including Muthi, Janipur, Bantabal, Trikuta Nagar, Shastri Nagar and Channi areas falling under the jurisdiction of Jammu Municipal Corporation.

The Health & Sanitation and Transport Wings of JMC deployed sufficient manpower and machinery to carry out the fogging operations. The drives are now being conducted in double shifts, ensuring that fogging occurs twice in these critical areas to effectively eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Urging the public to cooperate with the JMC in maintaining cleanliness and avoiding water accumulation in and around their dwelling units, the Commissioner said that it would go a long way to prevent the spread of Dengue.

## 40 polling parties dispatched for home voting in Udhampur



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 24

To facilitate home voting through postal ballots for absentee voters, including senior citizens and persons with disabilities, District Election Officer Udhampur, Saloni Rai, dispatched 40 polling parties today from the DC Office Complex. These parties are tasked with covering four assembly constituencies—59 Udhampur West, 60 Udhampur East,

61 Chenani and 62 Ramnagar—on September 24th and 25th, 2024.

In her address to the polling staff, the DEO emphasized the importance of coordination and efficiency in the election process. She urged the Returning Officers to ensure that the polling teams reach their assigned destinations on time, ensuring smooth execution of the postal ballot process for voters in distant areas.

## SVEEP: GCW Gandhinagar hosts debate competition - "Is voting a right or a duty"

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

As part of the ongoing (Systematic Voters' Education and electoral participation) (SVEEP) campaign, the Electoral Literacy Club, Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu today organized debate competition under the theme, "Is voting a right or a duty".

As many as 15 students participated in the competition judged by Prof. Bindu Chib, Prof. Suman Bala and Prof. Sunita Devi.Prof.

Liaquat Jafri lent a unique charm to the

occasion with his gracious presence. Winners of the competition were Gunveen kour (1st), Khyrul Nisa Bhat (2nd) and Naina Rajput (3rd). Debate competition was concluded with the voter's pledge.

In the same series, a Social Media based activity was also organized on the theme, "Know your Constituency". The objective of this activity was to create awareness among the college students and the local community about the importance of knowing one's constituency and to enhance electoral participation and informed

decision-making. A total of 8 students participated actively and shared informative posts providing details of their respective assembly constituencies including Doda, Kathua, Billawar, Vijaypur and Jammu.

Principal of the College, Dr. S. P. Saraswat appreciated the efforts of participants and shared valuable views to motivate the students. Both the activities were coordinated by student coordinators Shiyva Gandotra, Pratishtha Sharma and Khushi Bhardwaj under the mentorship of Prof. Vinay Lata and Dr. Manmeet Kour.

## GDC Vijaypur celebrates National Service Scheme Day

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, SEPTEMBER 24

Government Degree College Vijaypur, reverberated with the spirit of community service as it celebrated National Service Scheme (NSS) Day - a day dedicated to honoring the legacy of NSS founder Shri Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. This event, marked by enthusiasm and fervor, brought together NSS volunteers, college students and faculty members to commemorate the essence of NSS.

The celebration commenced with an inspirational speech by Dr. Naseem Chowdhary (NSS Programme Officer) where she briefed the students by underscoring the significance of selfless



service to society, motivating the students and NSS volunteers to actively participate in community service endeavors. She stressed upon the volunteers to work with zeal and zest and prove themselves as volunteers and further stated that volunteers should commit themselves for social cause and community development.

Principal of Government Degree College Vijaypur, Dr. (Prof.) Vandana Verma expressed pride in the active participation of NSS volunteers and their dedication to upholding

the values and ethos of NSS. She emphasized the vital role played by NSS in nurturing responsible and socially-conscious individuals. The event exemplified the institution's unwavering commitment to fostering responsible and socially committed NSS volunteers who understand the importance of community service and citizenship.

The vote of thanks was presented by Prof. Ritu Bhagat (Coordinator NSS). The event was organized with the full support of the senior faculty members.

## Rajnath Singh inaugurates 41st Indian Coast Guard Commanders' Conference in New Delhi

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 24

Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 41st edition of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Commanders' Conference in New Delhi on September 24, 2024. The three-day meeting serves as a vital forum for ICG Commanders to engage in meaningful discussions on strategic, operational & administrative matters in the backdrop of the evolving geopolitical landscapes and complexities of maritime security.

Addressing the senior Commanders at the Coast Guard Headquarters, the Raksha Mantri described ICG as India's foremost guard, ensuring the security of the country's vast coastline through constant monitoring of the Exclusive Economic Zone, and prevention of illegal activities such as terrorism and trafficking of arms, drugs & humans. Commending the bravery & dedication with which the ICG personnel serve the nation in the times of distress, he paid tributes to the bravehearts who lost their lives in a recent operation near Porbandar.

Rajnath Singh termed the contribution of ICG in protecting the nation from internal disasters as unparalleled. He extolled its quick response during an oil spill off Chennai after Cyclone Michaung, which averted a major damage to the coastal ecosystem of the area.

Sharing his vision to make ICG as one of the strongest Coast Guards, the Raksha Mantri emphasised the need to move forward from being a human-oriented to a technology-oriented force to deal with conventional as well as emerging threats in today's unpredictable times. He underlined the



importance of ultra-modern technology on maritime borders, stating that it acts as a force multiplier to further strengthen the security system of the country.

"The world is going through a phase of technological revolution. In this era of Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Technology and drones, the field of security is witnessing significant changes. Given the current geopolitical situation, maritime threats will increase in the future. We need to be alert and ready. The importance of manpower will always remain, but the world should know us as a technology-oriented Coast Guard," Shri Rajnath Singh said. While the Raksha Mantri stressed on the benefits of incorporating latest technology, he exhorted the Commanders to remain wary of its negative side. He termed technology as a double-edged sword and called upon ICG to be proactive, vigilant and prepared to tackle the potential challenges.

Rajnath Singh reiterated the commitment of the Government, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, to modernise & bolster the Armed Forces and ICG with indigenous platforms & equipment.

On the efforts being made to attain 'Aatmanirbharta', he stated that 31 ships for ICG, worth more than Rs 4,000 crore, are being built by Indian shipyards. He also highlighted the approvals accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council to enhance the capabilities of ICG, which include procurement of Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft, Software Defined Radios, Interceptor Boats, Dornier aircraft and Next Generation Fast Patrol Vessels. Asserting that the three Services are evolving themselves with changing times, the Raksha Mantri urged the ICG to continue improving itself, creating a unique identity, gaining expertise in its domain, and moving forward with renewed vigour.

The Raksha Mantri also paid tributes to late ICG DG Rakesh Pal who passed away due to a heart attack in Chennai recently. He described him as a kind-hearted and capable officer whose untimely death, he said, is an irreparable loss.

Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane, Secretary (Defence Production) Shri Sanjeev Kumar and Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Dr Niten Chandra were among the senior officers present on the occasion.

## Massive Voter Awareness Campaign conducted across Rajouri District

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 24

A series of voter awareness events were organized across the Assembly Constituencies of Rajouri District to encourage voter participation and highlight the importance of voting in the upcoming J&K Legislative Assembly elections.

Nodal Officer SVEEP for AC-85 Rajouri, Rakesh Kumar Sharma, accompanied by Senior Lecturer Abdul Hamid, conducted a door-to-door campaign in the Badoon and Dhangri areas. The campaign emphasized the significance of voting and the



pride associated with casting a vote. The team visited public places such as the Maruti Jamkash Showroom in Badoon and Hyundai Showroom in Dhangri, where they

conducted awareness programs. The initiative garnered an enthusiastic response, with participants expressing excitement about exercising their democratic rights.



# Religious, Minorities and SC, ST, OBC masses shall vote to end era of False Slogans & Promises: Joint Action Committee

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, SEPT 25

Joint Action Committee of all the frontal organizations of SCSTOBCs including socio-religious groups, retirees, youth & women wing in a heavily attended Press conference has appealed to the masses to vote in large number against the political dispensations who believe in false sloganeering, false promises and misguiding the masses through advertisements in media only regarding their agenda of development and end of terrorism in J&K post

abrogation. They said that ground reality of development and end of terrorism is entirely opposite to what both central and JKUT government under Mr. Narinder Modi claims. Such repeated attempts are only misleading the SCSTOBC masses with sole attempt of luring their votes. The agenda/manifestos of all the recognized political parties in J&K more so BJP, is bundle of lies and have nothing for the welfare of SCSTOBCs and other religious minorities. If the pre-poll alliance of Congress & National Conference come to power in J&K, we hope

and also advise them to focus their developmental agenda for the overall welfare of masses and in particular SCSTOBCs without false sloganeering and promises like BJP.

Prof. G.L. Thapa (Working President), while elaborating on various issues said that in 25 points SANKALP PATAR of BJP, at S.No 16 they have ensured Reservation in Promotions for SCSTs and transfer policy of all employees serving in Kashmir Valley but what they have done in last ten years should be explained first. Their LG never bothered to meet the repre-



sentatives of SCSTOBCs in spite of multiple requests, none of their leaders including SCST Morcha leaders could wince words about Reservation, as well as, other welfare measures for SCSTOBCs of JKUT. Few of the SCST Morcha leaders said on record in 2018 that if reservation in promotions is not restored within

shortest time, they will resign from their respective posts and their party but instead they got individual better positions in the party for playing divisive politics within SCSTs itself, they have become pimp of their bosses. They all shall be taught a good lesson by the masses in these elections.

Mohinder Bhagat, (Working General Secretary) while countering the false narratives of BJP JKUT Parbharis, their senior leader, SCSTOBC Morcha leaders who are having no mass base are trying to mislead SCSTOBCs on the basis of sub castes also, in the matter of reservation and many other issues. He said that all these leaders are speaking lie after lie during election campaigns especially on the issues of Reservation for SCSTOBCs and development without any substantial evidence of what they are speaking in the public, their

sole motto is to get votes of these communities for BJP. In real sense, BJP first killed Reservation in Promotions and after that targeted direct recruitments also. He said that different Governors and the present LG who in specific never paid any heed to the demands of SCSTOBCs in connivance with bureaucrats of JKUT not only tried to bury issue of reservation in promotion in JKUT but attacked and tried to finish slowly and steadily other constitutional rights of these communities like SC component plans, privatization of the government

system without any representation of SCSTOBCs in it, land ownership rights, non-implementation of SCST Atrocities Act and non-appointment of SC member in the PSC. The direct recruitment reservation roster was also changed by the LG administration making selection of SCs in direct recruitments further difficult. BJP under LG have failed to issue WHITE PAPER on their false claims of benefiting SCSTOBCs in last ten years. SCSTOBCS in fact have been badly ignored in favour of micro minority of the state.

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

### All eyes on Srinagar...

this phase of the elections. The authorities have set up 3,502 Polling Stations with webcasting for a fair, transparent voting process and elaborate security arrangements have been made, officials said.

A voter turnout of more than 61 per cent was recorded in the first phase of Assembly polls covering 24 constituencies on September 18.

Voting on Wednesday will decide the fate of former chief minister and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah who is contesting from two constituencies of Budgam and Ganderbal. In Budgam, Omar is in contest against Peoples Democratic Party's Agha Syed Muntazir, cousin of NC leader and Member Parliament Rullah Mehdi.

The fate of J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina, who is contesting from Nowshera seat, will also be decided in this phase. The BJP chief is facing a tough challenge from former MLC Surinder Choudhary who is fighting the elections on an NC ticket.

The other prominent candidates whose fate will be decided in the second phase include Congress J&K president Tariq Karra from Central-Shalteng; Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari from Channapora, jailed cleric and separatist leader Sarjan Ahmad Wagay from Ganderbal and Beerwa, NC leaders Ali Mohammad Sagar from Khaniyar, Rahim Rather from Chrar-i-Sharief, BJP leaders Aijaz Hussain from Lal Chowk, Choudhary Zulfikar from Budhal and Syed Mushtaq Bukhari from Surankote.

The constituencies that will go to polls on Wednesday 25 include Hazratbal, Khanyar, Habbakadal, Lal Chowk, Channapora, Zadibal, Eidgah, and Central Shalteng in the Srinagar district. Five constituencies including Beerwah, Khansahib, Chrar-i-Sharief and Chadoora in Budgam district in central Kashmir. In Ganderbal district two constituencies Ganderbal and Kangan are going to polls.

The constituencies in Jammu's Reasi district include Gulabgarh (ST) and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. Kalakote-Sunderbani, Nowshera, Rajouri, Thanamandi and Budhal are in Rajouri district, while the remaining three -Poonch-Haveli, Mendhar, and Surankote - are in Poonch district.

After the impressive turnout of over 61 per cent in the first phase, the focus now will be on Srinagar, as most of the constituencies in the district have been a bastion of election boycott.

This time, however, no boycott call has been given by any separatist group.

In the 2014 Assembly elections, PDP had made inroads into Srinagar a bastion of NC by winning five of the eight seats. NC had won only three seats. However, this time the NC is likely to emerge stronger in the polls in Srinagar.

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election is being held in three phases, with the third voting phase scheduled on October 1. The votes will be counted on October 8.

### Battle lines drawn...

Hameed Karra contesting from central Shalteng Assembly constituency of Srinagar district.

During this second phase, eight constituencies of Srinagar district including Hazratbal, Khanyar, Habbakadal, Lal Chowk, Channapora, Zadibal, Eidgah and Central Shalteng, two constituencies of Ganderbal district including Ganderbal and Kangan, five constituencies of Budgam district including Budgam, Beerwah, Khansahib, Charar-i-Sharief and Chadoora, three constituencies of Reasi district including Gulabgarh, Reasi and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, five constituencies of Rajouri district including Budhal, Rajouri, Thanamandi, Nowshera and Kalakote-Sunderbani and three constituencies of Poonch district including Surankote, Poonch-Haveli and Mendhar will be going for polls.

The campaigning for the second phase witnessed high profile events like Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a rally in

Srinagar, Leader of Opposition (LOP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addressing a couple of rallies, one in Surankote and another in Srinagar and union home minister Amit Shah and other top BJP star campaigners addressing rallies all across.

The counting of the votes for all the three phase of Assembly elections in J&K will be held on October 8 alongside Haryana.

### PM Modi, Rahul...

of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also visiting Jammu on September 25.

"Rahul Gandhi will reach here around 11 am and will address professionals at Hotel Radisson Blu," said a party handout.

Thereafter, he shall address a public meeting at JK Resorts ground and then leave for Srinagar.

He shall also visit Sopore and address a public meeting at Dagerpora Sopore and fly back to Delhi in the evening."

### Congress denied...

would also take back the political reservation granted to Scheduled Tribes by the BJP government headed by Narendra Modi.

What to talk of reservation, Dr Jitendra Singh alleged that the Congress governments at the Centre and in Jammu & Kashmir did not grant even the normal and usual legitimate rights to certain sections of society as an extreme act of inhuman and constitutional discrimination. In this regard, he cited the example of the Balmiki community who were denied equal rights as other communities and refugees from Pakistan who were neither given citizenship rights nor voting rights for 70 years before the same was granted to them by the Modi government.

Dr Jitendra Singh cautioned, if ever Congress comes to power in J&K, it will not only take back reservation but will also snatch away the property rights of our daughters and citizenship rights of our refugee brethren by reviving Art 370 and 35A.

Regarding Statehood, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the opposition is asking for something which has already been granted and announced. When none less than PM Modi said this in public rallies in Doda and earlier in Srinagar that Statehood is going to be announced and the Home Minister has reiterated the same more than once in Parliament, then what is there to ask about it. He said, the opposition leaders probably believe that when the formal orders are issued they will take credit, but this old trick is not going to work in the new scenario.

Appealing for a vote in support of the BJP, Dr Jitendra Singh said, representation of BJP in the Assembly will enable the fast-track progress and development at a double engine speed.

### PM Modi meets Ukrainian...

September 23, on the sidelines of the Summit of the Future in New York.

The two leaders recalled Prime Minister's recent visit to Ukraine and expressed satisfaction at the continued consolidation of bilateral ties. The situation in Ukraine as well as the way forward on pursuing a path to peace also figured prominently in their discussions.

Prime Minister reiterated India's clear, consistent and constructive approach in favour of a peaceful resolution of the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue as well as engagement between all stakeholders.

He conveyed that India remains open to provide all support within its means to facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

This was the third meeting between the two leaders in little over three months. The two leaders agreed to remain in close touch."

PM's meeting with Zelenskyy came as he stated in the UNGA's Summit for Peace that "Success of Humanity lies in our collective

strength, not in the battlefield".

India has stated that resolution of the conflict can not be found on the battlefield, and has reiterated its stand of dialogue and diplomacy as the only means to resolve the conflict, with both parties sitting across the table to discuss matters.

PM Modi was in Kyiv on August 23 in the first visit by an Indian PM to Ukraine, during which he also offered any help in his personal capacity to find a resolution of the conflict.

PM's visit to Ukraine and his talks with Zelenskyy, just over a month after he met with President Putin in Moscow in early July, was a key topic of discussion between him and US President Joe Biden during their bilateral meeting in Delaware on September 21.

A Ukraine government readout of the meeting said:

"President Zelenskyy thanked India for supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Narendra Modi discussed the implementation of cooperation in areas agreed upon during the Prime Minister's historic visit to Kyiv a month ago. These included enhancing trade and economic relations, defense cooperation, India's involvement in post-war reconstruction, and collaboration in education, science, and culture.

"During the meeting, special attention was paid to strengthening interaction on international platforms, particularly within the UN and G20, as well as implementing the Peace Formula and preparing for the second Peace Summit."

### Heat wave persists...

Kupwara in north Kashmir, Pahalgam a famous tourist destination and Gulmarg a ski-resort recorded maximum temperatures of 33.7 degree Celsius, 29.5 degree Celsius and 23.6 degree Celsius respectively.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather would remain generally dry tomorrow with possibility of light rain and thunder at isolated places.

On September 26 & 27, the weather would remain generally cloudy with a spell of light rain and thunder expected at many places, he said, adding that from september 28 to 3, generally dry weather with a brief spell of rain and thunder is expected at isolated places on 28th and 29th.

However, he said that generally dry weather is expected on October 01 to October 03.

Besides, the MeT has issued an advisory, stating that thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds are expected at isolated places with possibility of light snow over a few higher reaches during 26th Sept (Night).

Farmers are advised to safely store the harvested crops, it reads.

### Never accepted...

sufferings, especially after 2019," she stated.

In an attack on the National Conference, she called the party a "Choor Jamaat" (a band of thieves) and accused them of betraying the people of Kupwara. "NC did nothing for Kupwara and is responsible for the rigging of past elections and the accession of Kashmir. The people know the PDP's stand before 2019 and after," Iltija said.

She further criticized Omar Abdullah, former Chief Minister and Vice President of NC, suggesting he is anxious about losing the Ganderbal seat in upcoming elections. "The NC leadership is frustrated and nervous. Omar is under tension over his uncertain future in Ganderbal," she added.

Iltija, PDP's star campaigner was on her day long visit to Kupwara and was campaigning for the party candidate Fayaz Ahmed Mir for the upcoming electoral battle in the region.

### Fake Registration Drive...

administration," he added. GSTR-1A gives an option to taxpayers to amend outward supply or sales return form (GSTR-1), while GSTR-3B is used to pay taxes monthly.

Separately, GSTN would start the IMS from October 1, which will facilitate taxpayers in matching their records/invoices vis-a-vis issued by their suppliers for availing the correct Input Tax Credit (ITC). IMS would enable taxpayers to efficiently address invoice corrections/ amendments with their suppliers through the portal.

During 2023-24, Shashank Priya said, 1,12,852 show cause notices were issued.

The major areas of dispute are short payment of GST in GSTR-3B as compared to GSTR-1 liability, excess ITC availed in GSTR-3B, non-payment of GST under reverse charge mechanism, interest for late filing of GSTR-3B and GSTR-1, ITC availed beyond prescribed time limit, difference in taxable value in e-way bill issued and taxable value reported in GSTR-3B, and classification issues.

"Out of the seven major areas of disputes, 6 relate to data discrepancies. So if we can address data mismatches by use of technology, then we will be able to solve a lot of disputes and pain points of the taxpayer," he said.

Out of the 1.12 lakh SCN, only 555 pertains to classification disputes. "So policy level disputes are much less," he said, adding that the CBIC is analysing these classification disputes to see if any policy guidelines to address them. (PTI)

### Two dead as vehicle...

Gulabgarh to review the polling arrangements in the Shadole polling station area, the officials added.

On September 20, three BSF troopers were killed and 32 others injured when a bus carrying the forces' personnel for election duty fell into a gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district.

The second phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls will be held on Wednesday.

### Mehbooba urges ECI...

deploying sufficient personnel to investigate and prevent the misuse of authority, ensuring a peaceful election process.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti shared her party candidate's letter, urging the ECI to

act against electoral malpractices.

"Disturbing reports about money being distributed to buy votes in Budgam & Ganderbal. Urge @ECISVEEP to impress upon police & local administration to stop these electoral malpractices. We've seen how brazen rigging of the 1987 election plunged J&K into turmoil," she said in a post on X.

On Wednesday, 26 Assembly constituencies across six districts of Jammu and Kashmir will see polling for the second phase of election. Polling will take place in 11 constituencies in Jammu region and 15 constituencies in Kashmir.

### Hoarding business...

Waseem Raja Khan, who has three-decade experience in the filed and owns a printing press in Srinagar's Batamaloo, says the scale and the visibility of campaign in these elections stand in stark contrast to previous ones when such promotional material were often used discreetly.

"We handle a wide array of services including banners, hoardings, pamphlets, flags, and manifesto printing. This election cycle has seen a remarkable increase in the use of these material," Khan said.

He said nearly every political party has approached him for his services.

Another printer, who did not wish to be identified, said, "While there have been many elections in Kashmir, this one has significantly boosted our business. In the past, there was minimal printing for electoral campaigns."

The surge in the demand has translated into substantial financial growth for Khan's business, with an increase of over 40 per cent in orders.

"We are working around the clock to meet the deadlines, often pulling night shifts to ensure timely delivery. Each day, we print over a thousand posters and hoardings," Khan said.

He also highlighted a notable improvement within the industry. "Our business is thriving, but we have never operated so openly during elections. This time, we are proudly showcasing our work," he said.

With two more phases to go and the counting of votes set for October 8, the excitement surrounding the elections continues to fuel the demand for promotional materials in Kashmir.

As political parties ramp up their campaigns, local businesses say they expect more business coming their way.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir  
 Office of the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M) J&K  
 Phone No: 0191-2586218 (Jammu), 0194-2468116 (Srinagar)  
 (Email id: [relief-comm@jk.gov.in](mailto:relief-comm@jk.gov.in))

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of all Kashmiri Migrants, that for their facilitation Help Desks have been provided in all Special Polling Stations in Jammu and Udhampur. Further, for any clarification regarding free transport facility or facilitation at the Special Polling Stations, the concerned Zonal Officer/ Camp Commandant/Booth Level Officer can be contacted. Besides, for any query /clarification contact below mentioned contact numbers:

1. 9484320655- Jammu
2. 9484320657- Jammu
3. 9596557086- Udhampur
4. 9419163539- Udhampur.

**(Dr.ArvindKarwani) JKAS**  
 Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner  
 (M)  
 J&K

DIP/J-5143/24  
 Date: 24-9-24



## JU Law School Students raise Voters Awareness through Nukkad Natak

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPT 24

To raise electoral awareness and voter participation, the students of The Law School, University of Jammu, organized Nukkad Natak titled "Samvidhan Ka Samman, Matdaan Ka Adhikaar." This event was part of the Third Prof. V.S. Mallar Memorial Legal Aid Competition, 2024, organized by NLSIU, Bengaluru, and Symbiosis Law School, Pune, in collaboration with the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. The program attracted an audience from various departments, including notable faculty members, the NSS Unit, and the District SVEEP Team.

Opening the event, Piyush Khajuria, Rishabh, and their team delivered an engaging musical performance that set the tone for the day, emphasizing the crucial role of youth in shaping a democratic society. Their energetic presentation served as a reminder



of the importance of active participation in the electoral process.

The highlight of the program was a powerful Nukkad Natak performed by students, which traced the historical journey of voting rights in India, from independence to the present day. The play intricately woven together themes of constitutional rights, the attributes of a good candidate, and the significance of election manifestos. It also addressed contemporary challenges to free and fair elections, ensuring the audience was both informed and engaged. The talented cast, including Suhansi Sharma, Tanvi Bhagat, Janvi Sharma,

Diksha Sangra, Bhagirathi, Usman, Raghvendra, Harshika, and Aditya, delivered a spellbinding performance under the expert guidance of Drama Instructor Mr. Sumit. Their dedication and creativity brought to life the struggles and achievements associated with voting rights, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

Dr. Seema Rohmetra, Director, The Law School, commended the students for their activism, highlighting the critical message that every vote matters. Her words resonated with the attendees, reinforcing the importance of individual participation in the democratic process.

The event also featured contributions from several distinguished faculty members along with members of the District SVEEP Team, including Dr. Avineet, Dr. Paramjeet Kour, Ms. Poonam, Dr. Sita Ram Shastri; NSS Unit-3 Volunteers and Ms. Mansi Mantoo (Media Officer, JU), participated actively, enhancing the program's impact.

Overall, Dr. Nitán Sharma, Faculty Member, The Law School, was instrumental in coordinating the event, ensuring it served both as an educational platform and a call to action for students to recognize their electoral

## Shiv Aroor and Rahul Singh Honoured with Chief of Air Staff Commendation for 'India's Most Fearless' Series

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPT 24

Esteemed defense journalists and authors, Shiv Aroor and Rahul Singh, have been awarded the prestigious Chief of Air Staff Commendation today, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to chronicling the stories of valour in their best-selling India's Most Fearless book series. This military honour marks yet another milestone in their distinguished careers covering the nation's defense forces.

Rahul Singh, the Chief Defense Correspondent at the Hindustan Times, and Shiv Aroor, Senior Anchor and Editor at Aaj Tak, both have an extensive background in defense journalism. They have reported on a wide range of critical national security issues, including wars, border tensions, military operations, and the lives of soldiers on the frontlines. Their dedication to the defense beat has earned them respect within military circles and beyond, with both journalists having received multi-



accolades and medals for their work over the years.

In a joint statement, the authors expressed their deep gratitude for the commendation: "We are deeply honoured by this recognition, but the true credit belongs to the soldiers, airmen, and sailors whose extraordinary courage we've had the privilege of documenting. This award is dedicated entirely to them, their families, and

the units that serve this nation with unwavering commitment."

India's Most Fearless has been widely celebrated for its gripping narratives and first-hand accounts of some of India's most daring military operations. The series shines a spotlight on the unsung heroes of the armed forces, capturing their bravery and sacrifice in extraordinary detail. Aroor and Singh's work has not only resonated with

readers across the nation but has also contributed significantly to shaping public understanding and appreciation of the Indian military.

The Chief of Air Staff Commendation is a significant military honour, traditionally conferred upon individuals who have demonstrated exceptional service or made noteworthy contributions to the Indian Air Force and the broader defense sector.

## Delhi Public School Rajbagh, Kathua celebrates Heartwarming Grandparents Day with Enthusiasm, Emotion

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
KATHUA, SEPT 14

In a beautiful blend of tradition and modernity, Delhi Public School (DPS) Rajbagh, Kathua, recently hosted an emotionally uplifting Grandparents Day celebration, dedicated to honoring the irreplaceable role that grandparents play in their grandchildren's lives. The event, held on school premises, saw a heartwarming gathering of grandparents, who were greeted with traditional Tilak and adorned with specially crafted badges as a token of the school's respect and love.

The day began with a warm welcome speech by Principal Mr. Vivek Arora, who expressed his gratitude to the grandparents for their enduring support and love. "We are deeply honored to have you here today. Your presence is a reminder of the time-

less values of wisdom, love, and care that you pass on to future generations. Rest assured, your grandchildren are in safe hands here at DPS Rajbagh," he said.

Ms. Gauri Thakur, the esteemed Director of the school, presided over the event. Her gracious presence added further charm to the day's proceedings. She expressed her appreciation for the valuable role grandparents play in shaping the values and character of the younger generation, calling the event a "tribute to their unconditional love and guidance."

The Grandparents Day event was thoughtfully conceptualized by Chief Coordinator Ms. Rimjhim Wazir and Coordinator Jyoti Katoch, who ensured every detail reflected the affection and admiration the school holds for its elder members. The day



was made even more special by the sincere efforts of staff members, including Lata Punia, Ranjana Punia, Diksha Jasrotia, and Rupa, who worked tirelessly to make the event a success.

Anchoring the program was Diksha Jasrotia, who maintained a smooth flow of activities throughout the day. Her vibrant energy and compassionate demeanor kept the audience engaged and the program running effortlessly.

The students of DPS Rajbagh had prepared an

array of performances to showcase their talents and express their love for their grandparents. From traditional dances to moving speeches, the children poured their hearts into each performance, leaving the audience captivated. A deeply emotional play, which poignantly illustrated the bond between grandparents and their grandchildren, moved many in the audience to tears.

The event wasn't just about performances but also about interaction and bonding. A series of fun-filled games and activities were organized exclusively for the grandparents, adding a sense of joy and lightheartedness to the celebration. The games saw enthusiastic participation from the elderly attendees, who not only won prizes but also shared laughter and joy with the

younger generation. The event concluded with an impromptu dance session, where grandparents grooved to their favorite tunes, further enlivening the day.

The atmosphere was filled with warmth, love, and togetherness. The event successfully created an unforgettable memory for everyone present, reaffirming the special bond that exists between generations. Grandparents left the venue with smiles, a sense of belonging, and deep appreciation for the thoughtful celebration organized by DPS Rajbagh.

This heartwarming Grandparents Day celebration at DPS Rajbagh was a testament to the school's commitment to nurturing not only the academic excellence of its students but also their emotional and familial bonds, making it a cherished and memorable occasion for all.

## CUJ organizes Expert Talk

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPT 24

Mr. Omvir Singh Bhadoria, Training and Placement Officer at IIIT Jabalpur, delivered an insightful talk on the skills required for successful placements in the current job market, specifically for students pursuing B.Tech. in Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) and ECE (Avionics) in online mode. Mr. Bhadoria emphasized the importance of strong technical proficiency, particularly in core electronics subjects like analog and digital electronics, signal processing, and communication systems. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of programming skills in languages such as C, C++, Python, and MATLAB. Proficiency in advanced technologies like IoT, embedded systems, VLSI design, and FPGA development were underscored as critical for



career growth in sectors like avionics and electronics. Beyond technical abilities, Mr. Bhadoria stressed the importance of soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills play a vital role in ensuring students perform well in interviews and excel in professional environments. He encouraged students to continually upgrade their knowledge, remain adaptable, and gain industry exposure through internships and certifications. Platforms like Coursera and Udemy were recommended for acquiring relevant certifications. The session also covered preparation strategies for placements,

including improving aptitude, participating in mock interviews, and building a strong resume. Mr. Bhadoria concluded by discussing current industry trends and expectations, advising students to focus on both academic knowledge and practical applications. Overall, the talk provided students with actionable insights to enhance their employability in the competitive job market, equipping them with both the technical and soft skills necessary for a successful career. The expert talk was coordinated by Dr. Sunil Datt Sharma, Associate professor & Dr. Misbah shafi, Assistant Professor under leadership of Prof. Rakesh Kumar Jha.

## Airtel Business and Cisco launch Airtel SD-Branch to simplify, secure enterprise networking

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, SEPT 24

Airtel Business, the B2B arm of Bharti Airtel (Airtel), and Cisco, the worldwide leader in networking and security, today, launched Airtel Software-Defined (SD) Branch – a simple, secure, cloud-based, end-to-end-managed network solution for enterprises.

Powered by the Cisco Meraki cloud-first platform, Airtel SD-Branch will enable the unified management of networks across LAN, WAN, security and connectivity over multiple branch locations, helping enterprises to simplify their network management, enhance application performances and provide greater flexibility and control over the entire branch network infrastructure.

Sharat Sinha, CEO - Airtel Business, said, "We are thrilled to announce the launch of our revolutionary network solution for enterprises in the country, in partnership with 'Cisco Meraki India Region'. The service is



crafted to prioritise core business outcomes over IT management. This will provide customers with a simplified network solution that scales effortlessly, enabling users to access business applications with enhanced performance and security".

Daisy Chittilapilly, President, Cisco India & SAARC, said, "We live in an environment where workplaces are dispersed

and applications are distributed, making reliable and efficient network infrastructure a necessity. Our partnership with Airtel aims to empower enterprises with a platform solution that delivers a unified, agile and secure experience across multiple locations, enabling businesses to succeed in a hyper-connected world."

Airtel SD-Branch is designed to meet the

diverse network infrastructure needs of enterprises in sectors such as retail, education, banking and healthcare. It will transform how businesses manage their complex network requirements with simplified provisioning, helping build robust and efficient connectivity across branch locations. With Airtel's extensive connectivity solutions and advanced network management capabilities and Cisco's expertise in secure networking, this solution delivers a unified, centralised platform for the network needs of organisations, making network management more efficient.

In today's hybrid world, employees are working from multiple locations, using various connections and accessing information across diverse platforms. While this provides flexibility to employees, it has created a new set of challenges for business as they must connect and protect people and devices

across customer-owned and unowned networks. According to Cisco's Cybersecurity Readiness Index, 92% of companies in India have stated that their employees access company platforms from unmanaged devices, and 48% of those spend one-fifth of their time logged onto company networks from unmanaged devices. Additionally, 39% have reported that their employees hop between at least six networks over a week. Powered with capabilities like central management of the network, intuitive dashboards, automated processes, advanced analytics and high-performance connectivity solutions that can be tailored to meet specific business requirements, the Airtel SD-Branch will help enterprises to gain more control of their branch networks. With subscription models that can be customised for each unique branch location, the Branch will also offer businesses the flexibility to scale their networks on demand.

## Exercise Al-Najah V between India and Oman in progress at Rabkoot Trg Area, Oman

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU: 24 SEP 24

The Indo-Oman joint military exercise AL-NAJAH V 2024, currently underway at Rabkoot Trg Area, Oman is in full swing. The exercise commenced on 13th September and will continue till 26th September. The Indian Army contingent comprising 60 personnel is being represented by a Battalion of the Mechanised Infantry Regiment along with personnel from other arms and services.

In the initial few days, classes were conducted on combat first aid and casualty evacuation, weapon handling of both armies' weapons and counter drones drills to promote interoperability keeping in mind the latest trends of the modern battlefield. Thereafter, due emphasis was laid on Assault Rifle, Sniper, Pistols and LMG firing with an aim to simulate their application in actual operations by inculcating reflex fire and Close-quarter battle.

Valuable combat experience was shared by both



contingents through case studies. The exercise saw Indian and Royal Army of Oman Engineers collaborating in field engineering tasks, addressing yet another pivotal aspect of real-time combat scenarios. Subsequently, both contingents engaged in a dynamic Field Training Exercise, wherein stress was laid on real-world scenarios and practical application of combat skills. The same has allowed troops to refine their response strategies to various complex situations to include clearance of Built-Up Areas, Casualty Evacuation, hostage

rescue and replenishment of supplies and ammunition in a combat zone to name a few.

In addition to the tactical drills, AL-NAJAH V has provided a platform for cultural exchange, which plays an integral role in strengthening the bond between the two forces. The exercise is set to culminate with a grand live-fire demonstration, offering an opportunity to exhibit the cohesion and interoperability developed between the two armies for conduct of peacekeeping operations in concurrence with the UN Mandate.



## EDITORIAL

## Congress's election dilemma

As the election campaign in Jammu and Kashmir intensifies, the stakes have never been higher. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is leveraging every possible tactic to sway voters, including the controversial remarks made by Pakistan's Defence Minister, Khawaja Asif, regarding Article 370. In a bid to corner the Congress party ahead of the third phase of polling, the BJP has seized upon these comments to frame the narrative. However, the response from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been notably measured, as he refrains from engaging with the Article 370 debate directly. During his recent rallies in Surankot and Srinagar, Gandhi chose to focus on issues that resonate deeply with the local electorate: the restoration of statehood and pressing economic concerns. By emphasizing the need for statehood, Gandhi positioned himself as a voice for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, contrasting sharply with the BJP's centralizing approach. His remarks centered on the discontent surrounding the downgrading of Jammu and Kashmir from a state to a Union Territory, a move that many residents feel undermines their autonomy and representation. Gandhi's choice to sidestep the contentious issue of Article 370 may appear strategic. By concentrating on the restoration of statehood and economic grievances, he aims to consolidate support among locals who are grappling with unemployment and the decline of key industries. His critique of the BJP's governance—accusing it of favoring select industrialists and stoking divisiveness—aligns with the frustrations of many voters who feel left behind. In contrast, the BJP's approach hinges on polarizing narratives, capitalizing on external statements to create an environment of fear and insecurity. The party's focus on Asif's remarks suggests a strategy designed to paint the opposition as unpatriotic or aligned with external interests, thereby diverting attention from pressing local issues. This tactic, however, risks alienating voters who are more concerned about their livelihoods than geopolitical rhetoric. The controversy ignited by Asif's comments has indeed sparked a significant debate, but the real questions facing the electorate revolve around economic stability and governance. Rahul Gandhi's emphasis on local versus non-local issues underscores a fundamental concern about the economic future of Jammu and Kashmir's youth, many of whom struggle to find employment despite their qualifications. As the campaign unfolds, it is clear that voters are seeking authentic leadership that addresses their immediate needs rather than indulging in divisive politics. Gandhi's commitment to advocating for statehood resonates with those who feel that their voices have been muted under central rule. His promises to fight for the restoration of statehood reflect a broader demand for agency and representation among the people of Jammu and Kashmir. As the BJP continues to manipulate narratives for electoral gain, the Congress party must remain steadfast in its commitment to the people. The focus should be on unity, economic revival, and restoring the dignity of Jammu and Kashmir as a state. If Rahul Gandhi and his allies can effectively communicate this vision, they may well emerge as the voice of hope and change in a region yearning for both stability and opportunity. The upcoming elections will not only determine the political landscape but also shape the future trajectory of Jammu and Kashmir.

## The Decline of Malayalam literature: A tale of nepotism and fading standards

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The reasons for the downfall in the standards of Malayalam literary works have come out thanks to an octogenarian literary professional who is passionate about the high quality novels, short stories, and poems authored by the likes of G Sankara Kurup, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, Kesava Dev, S K Pottekattu, etc. Malayalam novels, poems and stories, a trendsetter of modern literature during the 1940-1970 period and which hogged the national limelight have faded into insignificance over the last four decades because of the poor standard of writing. The modern day writers are obsessed only with awards and the resultant cash prizes that come with it, according to C K Anandan.

Pillai, the 81-year old editor of Sahitya Vimarsam, a quarterly publication exclusively focusing on literary works. In his pursuit to find out the

reasons for the fall in the standards of Malayalam literary works, what Pillai found out is shocking. "More than the quality of the works, the writers are vying with one another to get the awards instituted by Kerala Sahitya Academy, monopolised by the CPI(M) and Left intellectuals." The modern day Malayalam writers are ignorant about the great works of Kalidasa.

They do not have any idea about Premchand, Saraswathichandra, K M Munshi or Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya or even Kalki of neighboring Tamil Nadu," said Dr Ravi Shankar S Nair, leading literary critic as well as a puritan of Malayalam language. Dr M Rajeev Kumar, himself a protagonist of modern literature in Malayalam said that what is being published nowadays as novels and stories are mere jugglery with words and sentences.

Kesava Dev, always considered a rebel as well as revolutionary in Malayalam literature had said in



the 1970s that unless one gets hands-on experience in life and the world in which we live, no literature would be possible.

Dev was the first Malayalam writer to write about head load workers, rickshaw pullers and subalterns in the Kerala society. His interactions with people in this category resulted in eternal classics like Odayil Ninnu (From the Gutter) which was written in 1940.

Since the story had its origin from the bottom of his heart, the work remains an eternal classic more than eight decades after it was published. Anandan Pillai has shocking disclosures to make to the readers.

The works that bag the top honours from Kerala

get recognised by the National Academy of Letters in New Delhi. Standards and qualities are dumped into gutters as third-rated writers walk away with awards and cash prizes. What happens is that the truly deserving writers never make it to the victory stand.

The Vilasini Award for 2024 declared by the Kerala Sahitya Academy to P K Pokker has opened a can of worms. The Award was meant for studies in the branch of Malayalam novels and was instituted by M K Menon (1928-1993), the author of India's longest novel The Inheritors (Avakaasikal) published in 1980.

When Menon found that there were no serious studies about Malayalam

novels, he set apart Rs five lakh as a corpus fund and instituted an award for the best study undertaken on Malayalam novels. The award carried a prize money of Rs 50,000 and a citation. The one stringent condition by Menon was that the award should be given to a serious and quality study on a novel.

He also wanted the award should be named after O Chandu Menon, author of Indulekha, the first ever Malayalam novel. The Marxists ruling the Kerala Sahitya Academy threw to the winds all the norms prescribed by M K Menon and selected Pokker's collection of essays "The Blue Light of Creativity" for this year's award.

Menon had instructed in his will that there is no need for the academy to honour the writers as a ritual every year. "He had mentioned that if no quality studies are available, the award need not be given at all," said A B Reghunathan Nair, who helped Menon to draft the will.

Pillai points out that

this is not just one case of nepotism and favouritism which are the hallmarks of Sahitya Academy. K P Ramanunni, executive committee member of the National Academy of Letters chose Unni Ammayambalam, a hitherto unheard writer for a sub-standard work on children's literature. "The reason? Unni who was the chairman of Pottekkat Memorial Award Committee had ensured that Ramanunni got the award for the best story.

Self-styled poets are all members of the award mafia ruling the roost in Malayalam literature.

The National Academy of Letters, as part of a cover-up mission, has stopped publicizing the names of jury members, books that were considered and what made the selection process have put an iron curtain on queries under the RTI Act. Well, it is better to leave certain things unsaid, unexplained and undisclosed.

(The views are personal)

## Is Modi government losing interest in ELI schemes?

SUBHASH CHANDRA GARG

The Prime Minister's package of three Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) schemes for generating 21 million jobs, revamping 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) for skills training and internship to 10 million youth in top 500 companies, with expenditures of about Rs 2 trillion, was announced with a lot of chutzpah.

The ELIs and PM's employment package, unfortunately, found only a casual mention in the first 100-days achievements report.

What explains this? An inherent unimplementability of the package, or is it no longer a political game-changer?

## No urgency in roll-out

The first ELI scheme promises one month's wage, limited to Rs 15,000, to eligible fresh recruits enrolled in the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) subject to the employee successfully undergoing a compulsory online financial literacy course.

The second ELI scheme

incentivises first-time recruitment in manufacturing jobs. The government promises to pay 24% of the EPFO contribution (reduced to 16% and 8% in the third and fourth years) for the first four years of employment subject to conditions. The employers will need to have a three-year track record of making EPFO contributions, and hire at least 50 persons or 25% of the previous year's EPFO-registered employees, whichever is lower, maintaining the enhanced employment throughout.

The third scheme targets employment in non-manufacturing sectors with the government paying up to Rs 3,000 per month for two years towards the EPFO contribution for each additional (not necessarily a new) employee. The employers, with less than 50 employees, must increase and sustain employment by at least two employees and those with 50 or more by five employees. For employers creating more than 1,000 additional jobs, the incentive will continue for third and

fourth years.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), which has a budget provision of Rs 10,000 crore for the ELIs, seems to be struggling with its formulation. On August 2, the labour secretary asserted that the ministry 'should be ready with the draft in another few weeks'.

Many weeks have gone by. The government rolled out the unified pension scheme (UPS) for government employees. However, no progress on the ELIs.

## ELIs goals are tough and strategy suspect

The total number of employees and workers, in about 2 lakh factories in India, is only 1.72 crore, as per the Annual Survey of Industries 2022, with only about 16 lakh employees (no separate data for the new recruits) added per year. The Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) data suggests still smaller annual increments.

The Narendra Modi government is fond of the policy of making contributions to EPFO to create new employment.

The Aatmnirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), launched in the wake of Covid-19 in 2020, incentivised re-employment of workers losing jobs (later new employment, as well) by paying 24% of EPFO contribution. This scheme reportedly benefited 60.49 lakh employees. The second and third ELI schemes mentioned earlier are modelled on the ABRY.

The creation of 30 lakh manufacturing jobs for new recruits and 1.8 crore non-manufacturing jobs looks highly doubtful with the employees receiving no incentive and the risk-reward equation not very favourable for the employers.

## No one is excited

The government has literally muffled the Ministry of Skill Development in the last few years.

Earlier it had undertaken schemes to upgrade ITIs as well. Under a PPP scheme initiated in 2008, 1,227 ITIs were approved and upgraded with private participation. Given this, the announcement to upgrade 1,000 ITIs over a five-year period

in collaboration with the state governments and industry seems to have excited none. There is no visible follow-up either.

## Internship gamble

The internship scheme under the package envisages 'internship opportunities in 500 top companies to 1 crore youth' – exposure to real-life business environment. The government will pay an internship allowance of Rs 5,000 per month for 12 months (10% by the company concerned), and one-time assistance of Rs 6,000 per intern.

The eligibility under the scheme is highly restricted. Only those between 21 and 24 years, who are not employed, and who are not engaged in full-time education are eligible. Further, candidates with IIT, IIM, IISER, CA, CMA qualifications or belonging to families assessed to income tax or of government employees are not eligible.

Who remains eligible? Also, can the top 500 companies hire 2 million interns a year?

The Ministry of Corpo-

rate Affairs, entrusted to implement the scheme (budget allocation Rs 2,000 crore) is reportedly making the list of top 500 companies. Thereafter, it will invite companies (the scheme is voluntary) to indicate their interest in taking in interns, and those eligible need to apply. Finally, companies will have to hire from the shortlisted candidates.

One must wait and see how and when each of these steps is completed.

## PM package on backburner

Completion of the first 100 days coincided with Modi's 74th birthday. The Government of India used the occasion to roll-out most of the promises made in the Union Budget and outside. Surprisingly, it did nothing to roll out the PM package for employment.

Has the programme been sent to the backburner?

(Subhash Chandra Garg is former Finance & Economic Affairs Secretary, and author of 'The Ten Trillion Dream' and 'We Also Make Policy'.)

## Embracing Convenience

RACHNA LAKHPATI

Advanced gadgets in today's world offer convenience and enhance our daily lives. However, at some point, it appears that we have lost sight of the delicate balance between tools that improve productivity and objects that simply encourage laziness. Similar to our homes, the market is currently filled with a wide array of devices that seem to serve little purpose other than solving problems that we never really had to begin with. Consider the salad mixer or the corn stripper, for instance. At first glance, these products offer a convenient solution for busy households looking to save time. But are they truly necessary?

Is it really necessary to rely on machines to mix our salad or remove kernels from a cob, when these tasks can be effortlessly accomplished using

our own hands? The consumer market is saturated with a plethora of gadgets and products that claim to simplify our lives. In reality, they contribute to the mess in our homes and encourage a lifestyle focused on convenience that is quite lazy. It's not simply about the quantity of these devices; it's about their significance. In the past, advancements such as washing machines and microwaves were highly praised for their ability to liberate people from mundane household tasks, allowing them to focus on more meaningful activities.

These products had a significant impact on productivity, allowing for more efficient use of time without any negative effects on individuals. However, in this era of excessive consumerism, the notion of convenience has been taken to extreme levels. We're bombarded



with a never-ending array of products that promise to make our lives easier, allowing us to save time and avoid any sort of physical exertion. What is the outcome? We are growing more disconnected from

basic, everyday tasks, relying instead on gadgets that often end up forgotten in the cupboard once their initial excitement wears off.

This crowded marketplace is a clear outcome

of a society consumed by materialism. Our lives are constantly bombarded with advertising, convincing us that every small inconvenience can be solved by purchasing the latest product. Is life meant to be devoid of challenges? Or does it include striking a balance between making life simpler and limiting ourselves to doing things ourselves? We should consider whether the items we buy fulfil a genuine need or if they are making us passive participants in our own lives. Our goal is to find ways to make daily routines less burdensome.

We should be discerning consumers; the aim is to invest in products that genuinely enhance our lives, rather than filling our homes with things that pretend to be convenient but encourage laziness. Furthermore, the excessive consumption of products has significant consequences for

the natural environment. Each unnecessary item contributes to the escalating issues of waste and resource depletion. In addition, the ongoing cost of constantly chasing after the latest and most desirable gadget is something that many households simply cannot afford.

As consumers, we hold the power to create change through the choices we make. We should strive for sustainable purchases that would help simplify life but not erode our self-reliance. In essence, life is about investing time and energy wisely in what matters, not buying something we don't need. So, the next time you feel tempted to purchase something new, take a moment to reflect: does this item genuinely simplify my life, or am I simply becoming more inclined towards laziness?

(The author is a motivator and freelance writer; views are personal)



## Six years of Ayushman Bharat: Lesser-known facts about universal healthcare scheme

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 23

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), launched in the second tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government to provide universal health coverage to crores of citizens across the length and breadth of the country is a saga of success and also show how it went to lay the foundation of a 'Swasth Bharat'.

Today, an impoverished farmer in any village to a middle-class citizen in Top II, Tier III cities to someone in a metropolitan town has access to similar medical facilities, without worrying about financial fallouts. Money is not a constraint in getting healthcare benefits and this is what makes PM-JAY deliver on its universal health coverage.

Ayushman Bharat has become a lifeline today, with more than 60,000 patients getting free treat-



ments daily and crores of families getting 'insulated' from exorbitant medical expenses. Below are some interesting and lesser known facts about PM-JAY

\* It was on September 23, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the transformative Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda made an interesting revelation on Monday about how

the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, initially conceived with Rs 1 lakh insurance cover, went to become a gamechanger with suggestions from the Prime Minister.

Taking to X, the Health Minister said: "When we were initially drafting the roadmap for Ayushman Bharat, we proposed a health coverage of Rs 1 lakh. It was on the advice of PM Modi that it was increased to Rs 5 lakh,

ensuring that the scheme truly benefits those in need.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi placed special emphasis on the effective implementation of Ayushman Bharat, launching nationwide campaigns to raise awareness and ensure accessibility for all citizens," he added.

As per government records, about 49 per cent of the Ayushman Cards have been issued to women and out of 7.79 crore hospital admissions, approximately 3.61 crores are utilised by women.

Public and private hospitals are equally contributing to the implementation of the scheme with 57 per cent and 43 per cent contributions, respectively. PM-JAY, being the world's largest health insurance scheme, aims to provide health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to approximately 55 crore beneficiaries, cor-

responding to 12.37 crore families, constituting the bottom 40 per cent of India's population.

At least 18 states have converged their state-specific schemes with AB PM-JAY and some have even expanded the beneficiary base, at their own cost.

Recently, PM Modi-led government announced an expansion of PM-JAY yojana for all those senior citizens above the age of 70 years, irrespective of their socio-economic status. This will benefit about 6 crore such senior citizens residing in approximately 4.5 crore families.

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, having emerged as the world's largest government-funded health insurance scheme in mere six years of launch, embodies the government's resolve for building a 'Swasth Bharat' and transforming the healthcare landscape for crores of Indians.

## WHO, multilateral development banks ink \$1.5 bn primary health financing deal

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

In a significant move to boost health in low and middle income countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) and multilateral development banks (MDBs) have launched a \$1.5 billion primary health financing platform in 15 countries.

The landmark partnership under the new 'Health Impact Investment Platforms' aims to address the critical need for coordinated efforts to strengthen primary healthcare (PHC) in vulnerable and underserved communities to build resilience against pandemic threats like Monkeypox (Mpx) and the climate crisis.

About 15 countries were identified as part of phase one. They include Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Jordan, Maldives, Morocco, Senegal, South Sudan, The Gambia, Tunisia, and Zambia.



"Primary health care is the most equitable, cost-effective and inclusive way to improve health and well-being, helping to keep people healthy, prevent diseases, and detect outbreaks at their earliest stage," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

Ghebreyesus called the new 'Health Impact Investment Platform' as a "vital source of new financing" which will help "build climate and crisis-resilient primary health care".

The platform will work closely with the governments of these countries to develop national health strategies to boost their

primary health. They will also prioritize investment opportunities that meet national health needs.

The funding was signed at the high-level roundtable meeting in New York.

The roundtable was attended by the partnership's three founding MDBs -- the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) --, WHO and the heads of state, as well as finance and health ministers from Djibouti, Egypt and Ethiopia. They were joined by the Asian Development Bank.

## India's biopharma sector key driver of bioeconomy: Report

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, SEP 24

The biopharma sector has emerged as a critical component of the country's bioeconomy, contributing to 49 per cent of India's biotechnology output, according to a report on Tuesday.

The report offers a comprehensive analysis of India's biopharma sector, showcasing its exponential growth and emergence as a major global player in bioeconomy. "India's biopharma sector is uniquely positioned to address global health challenges, from pandemic preparedness

to developing advanced biotherapeutics and vaccines," said H. S. Sudhira, Director of Gubbi Labs and lead author of the report.

"The growth observed is driven by a combination of evolving regulatory landscapes and robust international partnerships, showcasing India's significant role in shaping global healthcare innovation," Sudhira added.

As per the report, by Gubbi Labs and Cactus Communications, the Biologicals CDMO market size is expected to grow from \$13.58 billion in 2023 to \$24.77 billion by 2028, at

a CAGR of 12.78 per cent during the forecast period (2023-2028).

There has also been a significant rise in R&D investments, with Indian companies spending nearly 8-10 per cent of their revenue on research, particularly in drug discovery and development. The biopharma segment develops products such as therapeutics, vaccines, and diagnostics. Of these, diagnostics alone account for 52 per cent (\$20.4 billion) share of the total biopharma market, while the therapeutics segment accounts for 26 per cent (\$10.3 billion).

## Evidence grows to show air pollution can raise Parkinson's risk

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Evidence is increasing to show the link between air pollution and the risk of Parkinson's disease, health experts said on Tuesday.

More than 10 million people worldwide are living with Parkinson's disease. India alone shares almost 10 per cent of the global burden of Parkinson's disease.

A recent study, published in the JAMA Network Open, showed higher levels of particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) exposure were associated with increased risk of Parkinson's.

"Yes, there is growing



evidence that air pollution can increase the risk of developing Parkinson's disease," Dr Anshu Rohtagi Senior Neurologist, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told IANS.

"Recent studies have shown that exposure to pollutants like PM2.5 and NO2 can also worsen Parkinson's symptoms," Rohtagi added.

PM2.5 is a harmful

substance that can penetrate the lungs and affect our health. It can come from natural sources like volcanoes and deserts or human activities like industry, cars, agriculture, domestic burning, and climate change-related fires.

Besides Parkinson's, PM2.5 has been linked to various health issues, including asthma, reduced lung health, increased risk of cancer and heart disease, and diabetes, and Alzheimer's.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an annual average concentration of 5 micrograms per cubic meter air (5 ug/m<sup>3</sup>) as very good air quality. However, 99 per

cent of the world's population lives with concentrations above this value.

Rohtagi said higher levels of air pollution, particularly in metropolitan areas, are associated with a greater risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

For those already diagnosed with Parkinson's, exposure to air pollution can lead to more severe disease progression and symptoms.

"Pollutants like PM2.5 can cross the blood-brain barrier, causing inflammation and oxidative stress, which are believed to contribute to the development and progression of Parkinson's disease," the expert noted.

## Study finds 200 chemicals linked to breast cancer in food packaging plastics, paper

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

A team of researchers has identified nearly 200 potential breast carcinogens in food packaging materials, including plastics, paper, and cardboard highlighting widespread exposure despite existing regulation.

The findings, published in 'Frontiers in Toxicology' on Tuesday, underscore an urgent need for stronger preventative measures to reduce these chemicals in everyday products.

"This study is important because it shows that there is a huge opportunity for prevention of human exposure to breast cancer-causing chemicals," said Jane Muncke, Manag-



ing Director of the Food Packaging Forum and co-author of the study.

"The potential for cancer prevention by reducing hazardous chemicals in your daily life is underexplored and deserves much more attention," she added.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide. It is the number one cancer in women.

In 2022, 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 670,000 died globally, according to the World

Health Organization (WHO).

For the study, the team compared a recently published list of potential breast carcinogens. They found 189 potential breast carcinogens have been detected in food contact materials (FCMs), including 143 in plastics and 89 in paper or board.

Further, the team limited their study to the most recently available studies in 2020-2022.

They also found evidence of exposure to 76 suspected mammary carcinogens from FCMs purchased all over the world, 61 of which (80 per cent) are from plastics.

This indicates continued exposure of the global population to these

chemicals under realistic use conditions.

Importantly, the food contact materials were purchased within the last few years from markets in highly regulated regions, including the EU and the US.

Despite existing regulations in these countries, intended to limit carcinogenic substances in FCMs, the study highlights gaps in current regulatory frameworks.

"Our findings imply that chronic exposure of the entire population to suspected mammary carcinogens from FCMs is the norm and highlights an important, but currently underappreciated, opportunity for prevention," the researchers said.

## AP: Manipal hospital gives new lease of life to 4-year-old boy

AGENCIES  
VIJAYAWADA, SEP 24

The Manipal Hospital, located at Tadepalli near here, and the South Asian Liver Institute announced yet another landmark liver surgery, with a successful living donor liver transplantation (LDLT) performed on a 4-year-old boy diagnosed with inoperable bilobar hepatoblastoma.

This complex surgery, performed by Prof. Dr. Tom Cherian and team, represents a significant milestone in the hospital's commitment to providing advanced paediatric care.

The boy was admitted to Manipal Hospital in July 2024 with intermittent abdominal pain. A thorough evaluation revealed a low-grade metabolically

active lesion in the right lobe of his liver. Further histopathological examination confirmed the presence of hepatoblastoma, a rare form of liver cancer in children. Due to the critical nature of his condition, a living donor liver transplant was deemed essential.

On 1st August 2024, under general anaesthesia, the surgical team successfully performed the LDLT, providing the child with a new lease on life. The procedure was intricate, but the expertise of the medical team ensured a smooth operation with no significant intraoperative complications.

"We are overjoyed with his recovery and the results of the liver transplant. This example high-

lights the value of prompt intervention as well as the cutting-edge capabilities of our liver transplant division. This successful result is possible because of the child's resiliency, his parents' commitment, and our diverse team's experience," said Prof. Dr. Tom Cherian.

Following the surgery, the patient was closely monitored in the ICU by the critical care, paediatric, and medical gastro teams, where he received comprehensive postoperative care. Soon his condition stabilised, and he showed significant improvement in liver function tests. On 9th August 2024, he was discharged in a stable condition, with prescribed medications to support his continued recovery.

## 586 new appointments in Punjab health department

AGENCIES  
CHANDIGARH, SEP 24

The Punjab government on Tuesday handed over appointment letters to

586 new candidates in the Health and Family Welfare Department.

State Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh handed over the letters on behalf of CM Bhagwant Singh Mann at the Tagore Theatre here.

Describing it as a historical juncture that will trans-

form the destiny of youth, the Minister said the event reflects the commitment of the state government to ensure the well being of youth and opening new avenues of employment for them. The new recruits included 558 Multipurpose Health Workers (Female) or Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), 14 Ophthalmic Officers, six Medical Laboratory Technicians Grade-2, three Stenographers and five Ward Attendants (on compassionate grounds).

## Over 4 crore Ayushman Bharat card-holders in MP; CM Mohan Yadav expresses gratitude to PM Modi

AGENCIES  
BHOPAL, SEP 24

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday said that more than four crore people in the state have Ayushman Bharat cards of which 1.8 crore beneficiaries have been availing the benefits of the scheme.

He said that over the past six years, the support provided to poor citizens in recovering from major and serious illnesses and staying healthy has been nothing short of a lifesaver.



Ayushman Bharat Yojana, a flagship health-

care scheme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has

completed six years on Monday.

The Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY scheme was launched by PM Modi on September 23, 2018,

On this occasion, Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav expressed his gratitude to PM Modi for setting the path for a prosperous nation with healthy citizens with Ayushman Bharat Yojana. "So far, treatment assistance has also been given in 45 lakh cases. Madhya Pradesh is leading in the implementation of the scheme. This scheme,

which has benefited crores of beneficiaries of the country, will now also benefit senior citizens above 70 years of age," Yadav said.

The Madhya Pradesh CM further said that PM Modi provided the people of the country the benefits of this useful scheme on a large scale and the scope of people benefiting through Ayushman Bharat-Jan Arogya Yojana has been expanding.

He said that a new dimension is being added to this important scheme, for which the elderly

people are also giving their blessings to the Prime Minister.

Mohan Yadav further stated that through this scheme, innumerable families have been saved from the huge expenditure on the treatment of diseases.

"Such benefited families will be grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The state government is determined that the maximum number of citizens in Madhya Pradesh should get the benefit of the scheme when needed," the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister added.



# INDIA, US EFFORTS HELP CREATE GREEN JOBS: US ENVOY

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

The strides jointly made by India and the US in terms of climate change mitigation and energy transition not only lead to a better planet but also create the much anticipated green jobs, Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy, Jorgan K. Andrews, said on Tuesday.

Addressing the 21st India-US Economic Summit organised by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) here, the top US embassy official noted the India-US relationship "is getting deeper and wider from all aspects".

Highlighting the need to curb climate change, he said that "if not resolved, climate change would have a significant impact on the collective prosperity of both the countries".

The theme of the 21st economic summit was "Building Bridges, Shaping Futures: Pioneering Pathways for 21st Century Growth".

"The impact on our collective prosperity if we do not solve these climate change problems together is profound.

Together, I think we are doing some amazing things both at the government level and in private sector to reduce emissions to help India find a path for growth and development that does not overly exacerbate global climatic challenges and also, these changes would create the well-paying green jobs that I know we would all like to see," said Andrews.

Observing the fast pace of growth in bilateral ties, he said the strengthening and robust ties have provided "tremendous benefit" for people in both the

countries.

The statement comes close on the heels of the bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden last week in the US on the sidelines of the QUAD Summit.

Andrews said the India-US Commercial Dialogue and the CEOs forum would be held next week in the US with the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and the US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo co-chairing the meetings.

"Next week the Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal will be in Washington and he'll have a chance to meet with his counterpart Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo.

Together they will co-chair the US, India commercial dialogue, and CEO forum.

This is another one of these crucial links between government and industry that helps us build-out," he said.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the summit, Abhay Sinha, Director General, Services Export Promotion Council, said trade with US comprises a significant portion of India's overall services exports worth about \$350 billion.

He was of the view that ongoing efforts should be made to develop synergy and create opportunities in services and manufacturing sectors in the US market for Indian businesses.

Lalit Bhasin, Summit Chair and Immediate Past National President, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, citing the latest round of agreements between both the countries last week, said

the robust bilateral cooperation and mutual support could be gauged from media reports on the number of pacts signed between both the countries, which ensure a continued strengthening of the ties.

"Whoever wins the November (US) election, the India-US ties will continue to grow stronger and stronger," Bhasin noted.

Awansh Kumar Awasthi, a former IAS officer, who is the advisor to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, said the state "provides one of the best business environments in the country with a robust implementation of the rule of law".

Inviting global investors to Uttar Pradesh, Awasthi said "it is one of the most investor-friendly states with a clear and attractive foreign direct investment policy".

# Not receiving funds under PMAY for last three years, says Mamata Banerjee

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, SEP 24

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on Tuesday, accused the Centre of not releasing funds under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) to the state government for the last three years.

"For the last three years, we have not received any funds under PMAY. A total of Rs 1.70 lakh crore of Central funds are due to us. Still, we are trying to allot as many houses as possible from our limited resources," the Chief Minister said at the sidelines of an administrative review meeting at Bolpur.

She also said the money for 11 lakh houses in the district will be released shortly. She also announced that the expenditure for restoration of roads damaged because of flood will



be met from the development funds allotted to the legislators. Speaking on the flood situation in the state, the Chief Minister said that although the situation has improved to an extent now, certain pockets in the state are still inundated.

"It is unfortunate that West Bengal does not get floods just because of the rainfall. The state gets flooded because of the water released from Jharkhand," she said.

Justifying her decision to withdraw the representation of the state government in Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Com-

mittee (DVRRC), the Chief Minister said that there is no point in maintaining that representation since Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) is responsible for the flood situation in the state because of its indiscriminate release of water from their barrages and that too without giving prior intimation to the state government.

"I do not want to maintain any connection with any organisation which kills human beings by indiscriminately releasing water. Now DVC is concentrating on power generation forgetting its prime objective of protecting the state from flood," the Chief Minister said.

She said that DVC had repeatedly ignored the state government's pleas for gradually releasing water instead of releasing huge quantities in one go.

# UP CM warns against food adulteration with dirty substances

AGENCIES  
LUCKNOW, SEP 24

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday took note of some alarming instances where food items were adulterated with dirty substances, including human waste, in some parts of the country and warned against such practices in the state.

The Chief Minister reiterated the state government's zero-tolerance policy towards such practices and instructed officials to take strict action against individuals involved in adulterating food with human waste or other harmful substances.

In a meeting, he directed a thorough investigation and verification of all hotels, dhabas, restaurants, and eateries in the state and called for amendments to existing rules, ensuring the health and safety of the general public. Recently, incidents of adulterating food items like juice, dal, and roti with human waste, inedible, or dirty substances have been reported from vari-



ous parts of the country. These acts are atrocious, posing a serious threat to public health. Such malicious practices are completely unacceptable. To prevent such occurrences in Uttar Pradesh, concrete measures must be put in place to ensure food safety and protect the health of the common man.

Below is the set of guidelines as underlined in the meeting:

It is essential to investigate food establishments such as dhabas and restaurants. A state-wide intensive campaign should be conducted to verify all employees, including the operators of these establishments. This verification process must be completed swiftly by a joint team comprising the Food Safety and Drug Administration, Police, and Local Administration.

The names and addresses of the operator, proprietor, manager, and other relevant personnel should be displayed at food establishments. In this context, necessary amendments should be made to the Food Safety and Standards Act to ensure compliance.

CCTV cameras should be installed in food establishments such as dhabas, hotels, and restaurants. Surveillance should cover not only the areas where customers dine but also other parts of the establishment. It is imperative that every operator ensures the security of the CCTV footage and makes it available to the police or local administration upon request. Cleanliness must be maintained at all food centres. All personnel preparing and serving food must wear masks and gloves, with no room for negligence in these practices. There can be no compromise on the health interests of the general public. Strict action must be taken against anyone who attempts to jeopardise public health.

# Confident of order getting nullified in coming days, says CM Siddaramaiah on HC decision

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, SEP 24

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that he will not shy away from any investigation in the MUDA case and was confident that the High Court's Tuesday order would be nullified in the coming days.

Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's order to allow prosecution against him in the MUDA case was dismissed by the High Court.

In his official statement regarding the quashing of his petition, CM Siddaramaiah said, "I have come to know about the High Court's order through the media. I will respond after obtaining a copy of the order and reading it. The court has completely rejected the prosecution sanctioned by the Governor under Section 218," he maintained.

"The justice has limited himself to Section 17(A) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of the Governor's order. I do not shy away

from any investigation. I will consult experts on whether such an investigation is legally permissible. After discussions with legal experts, I will decide on the next course of action," the CM stated.

"In his complaint, the complainant had sought permission for an investigation and prosecution under Section 218 BNS, 17 (A), and 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act. However, the Governor had initially rejected the prosecution permission sought under Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act," CM Siddaramaiah underlined.

"Today, the honourable court has clearly dismissed the prosecution sanction given by the Governor under Section 218 BNS. I am confident that in the coming days, the truth will emerge, and the investigation granted under Section 17 (A) will be nullified," CM emphasized.

"The people of the state are with me in this political battle. Their blessings are my protection. I



believe in the law and the Constitution. In this fight, truth will ultimately prevail," he stated.

"This is a fight against the vengeful politics of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government. Our legal battle against the BJP and JD(S)'s vengeful politics will continue. I have faith in the judiciary," he maintained.

"All our party MLAs, leaders, workers, and the Congress High Command have stood firmly by my side and encouraged me to continue this legal battle. The BJP and JD(S) have resorted to political vengeance against me because I have been fighting for the poor and social justice... In my 40 years of politi-

cal life, I have faced such vengeful and conspiratorial politics, and with the blessings and support of the people, I have always emerged victorious. I am confident that I will win this fight with the strength of the people's blessings," he said.

"The MUDA case is just an excuse. The real intention of the BJP and JD(S) is to stop the schemes of our government that are in favour of the poor and the oppressed... I urge the people of the state to take a good look at those who are making false accusations by creating the MUDA case... The same leaders who are now asking for my resignation had opposed the schemes I implemented for the poor and the oppressed. The same BJP and JD(S) leaders had opposed schemes like Anna Bhagya, Ksheera Bhagya, Ksheera Dhare, Vidyasiri, Krishi Bhagya, Pashu Bhagya, and Indira Canteen, which I implemented during my first term as Chief Minister. Today, the same leaders

who are conspiring against me had opposed the SC/ST Sub Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Act," he alleged.

"The people of Karnataka have never given the BJP a clear majority to come to power on their own. So far, the BJP has come to power through 'Operation Kamala' using unethical practices and money power. In the last Assembly elections, the people of the state gave us a majority of 136 members, closing the door on Operation Kamala... Frustrated by this, BJP and JD(S) leaders, while misusing the Raj Bhavan, have made false allegations against me to disturb our government," the CM said.

While hurling allegations against the BJP, the CM said, "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the BJP has been using the Raj Bhavan to disrupt opposition-led governments across the country. In my case too, the BJP and JD(S) will undoubtedly face defeat similarly."

# AIM TO BE TECH-ORIENTED FORCE, RAJNATH TELLS COAST GUARD COMMANDERS

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 41st edition of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Commanders' Conference here on Tuesday where he called on the ICG to become a technology-oriented force to deal with conventional and future threats.

The three-day meeting serves as a vital forum for ICG Commanders to engage in meaningful discussions on strategic, operational and administrative matters in the backdrop of the evolving geopolitical landscapes and complexities of maritime security, an official statement said.

Addressing the conference, Singh described ICG as India's foremost guard, ensuring the security of the country's vast coastline through constant monitoring of the Exclusive Economic Zone, and prevention of illegal activities such as terrorism and trafficking of arms, drugs and humans.



Commending the bravery and dedication with which the ICG personnel serve the nation in the times of distress, he paid tributes to the bravehearts who lost their lives in a recent operation near Porbandar.

He termed the contribution of ICG in protecting the nation from internal disasters as unparalleled.

He extolled its quick response during an oil spill off Chennai after Cyclone Michaung, which averted a major damage to the coastal ecosystem of the area.

Sharing his vision to make ICG as one of the strongest Coast Guards, the Defence Minister emphasised the need to

move forward from being a human-oriented to a technology-oriented force to deal with conventional as well as emerging threats in today's unpredictable times.

He underlined the importance of ultra-modern technology on maritime borders, stating that it acts as a force multiplier to further strengthen the security system of the country.

"The world is going through a phase of technological revolution. In this era of Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Technology and drones, the field of security is witnessing significant changes. Given the current geopo-

litical situation, maritime threats will increase in the future. We need to be alert and ready. The importance of manpower will always remain, but the world should know us as a technology-oriented Coast Guard," Singh said.

While he stressed on the benefits of incorporating latest technology, he exhorted the Commanders to remain wary of its negative side. He termed technology as a double-edged sword and called upon ICG to be proactive, vigilant and prepared to tackle the potential challenges.

On the efforts being made to attain 'Aatmanirbharta', he stated that 31 ships for ICG, worth more than Rs 4,000 crore, are being built by Indian shipyards. He also highlighted the approvals accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council to enhance the capabilities of ICG, which include procurement of Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft, Software Defined Radios, Interceptor Boats, Dornier aircraft and Next

Generation Fast Patrol Vessels.

Asserting that the three Services are evolving themselves with changing times, the Raksha Mantri urged the ICG to continue improving itself, creating a unique identity, gaining expertise in its domain, and moving forward with renewed vigour.

The Raksha Mantri also paid tributes to late ICG DG Rakesh Pal who passed away due to a heart attack in Chennai recently. He described him as a kind-hearted and capable officer whose untimely death, he said, is an irreparable loss.

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar and Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Dr Nitendra Chandra were among the senior officers present on the occasion.

During the course of the conference, the ICG Commanders will also interact with the Chief of Defence Staff, as well as the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Engineer-in-Chief.

# Badlapur horror: MVA picks holes in police 'encounter' theory; parents allege 'contract killing'

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, SEP 24

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has questioned the killing of Akshay S. Shinde, the prime accused in the Badlapur rape case, while his parents have alleged that it was a 'contract killing' by the Thane Police, here on Tuesday.

MVA allies, Nationalist Congress Party (SP)'s President Sharad Pawar and former Minister Anil Deshmukh, besides Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Aditya Thackeray, Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut, MP Priyanka Chaturvedi and others criticised the MahaYuti government on various counts, seeking a probe by a retired High Court judge.

Pawar questioned the laxity of the Home Department in transferring the main accused, as the injustice meted out on the two minor girls in the Badlapur school should have been executed within the proper framework of the law.

"It seems the government has become weak in showing the threat of the laws so that nobody would

dare think of such a reprehensible act in the future. We expect that the exact situation will come out after a thorough probe," Pawar said.

Aditya Thackeray raised many doubts on where is the trustee of the (Adarsh Vidya Prasarak Sanstha - AVPS) school, why are they being protected by the MahaYuti government and why is the Shiv Sena leader Waman Mhatre being shielded.

"The citizens who joined the protest are being treated like gangsters, will the cases against them be withdrawn? They were raising their voice against the police refusal to file the complaint of the victims' parents a week after -- who were the police protecting? It is said that the school is affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party, is it true, the government must answer," Thackeray demanded.

The former Home Minister, Anil Deshmukh wondered how, "when the hands of the accused were tied up, he could grab a pistol and start firing," and sought to know the status

of the absconding ACPS trustees.

"The accused Akshay Shinde was working as a toilet sweeper in the school (since August 1), then where did he learn to operate a firearm, fired to injure himself and a police official," Raut asked.

"The accused is dead. The other co-accused who were school trustees and BJP workers are on the run. Such a textbook case of shoot-and-scoot tactics applied an incompetent government. Coming soon: Nobody sexually assaulted the minor girls, a story written, sponsored and executed by the state government," said Chaturvedi in a jibe at the MahaYuti government.

Akshay Shinde's parents -- father Anna and mother Alka -- on Tuesday morning have refused to believe the police claims of a 'shootout inside the van' in which their only son was killed. "This is a contract killing by the police... The government must take strong action against the perpetrators who killed our son," wailed Alka Shinde.



## Grateful for PM Modi's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, says Zelensky

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky lauded Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday for his "clear support" of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the UN Summit of the Future to discuss the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and explore paths toward peace.

In a post on X, Zelensky expressed gratitude for the productive conversation.

"This is our third bilateral meeting this year. We are working together to strengthen cooperation across various fields," he said.



Highlighting the focus on bolstering interaction on international platforms, Zelensky wrote, "The main focus of our conversation was on enhancing our interaction on international platforms, particularly

at the UN and G20, as well as implementing the Peace Formula and preparing for the second Peace Summit. We had a substantive discussion on the available opportunities." "I am grateful for Prime

Minister Modi's clear support of our sovereignty and territorial integrity," Zelensky wrote, stressing India's diplomatic stance on the conflict.

During their meeting, PM Modi reiterated India's commitment to a peaceful resolution of the war through diplomacy and dialogue.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Modi emphasized India's "clear, consistent, and constructive" approach, which prioritizes engagement between all stakeholders.

After the meeting, PM Modi shared a post on X, saying, "Met President Zelensky in New York. We are committed to implementing the outcomes of my visit to Ukraine last month to strengthen bilat-

eral relations. Reiterated India's support for early resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and restoration of peace and stability."

This marked the third meeting between the leaders in just over three months.

The two agreed to maintain close contact, as confirmed by the MEA.

PM Modi's visit to Ukraine in August, the first by an Indian PM since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, underscored India's active engagement in promoting peace in the war-torn region.

Despite being seen as neutral in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Modi has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution, reaffirming India's position as a proponent of stability.

## EU to allocate 120 million euros to farmers hit by adverse weather

AGENCIES  
BRUSSELS, SEP 24

The European Commission proposed financial support of 119.7 million euros (US\$141.4 million) for farmers in Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Italy and Romania impacted by severe weather this spring and summer.

Germany will receive the largest share of the funding, totalling 46.5 million euros, followed by Italy with 37.4 million, Romania with 21.6 million, Bulgaria with 10.9 million and Estonia with 3.3 million, the Commission said in a statement on Monday.

"This proposal... represents a strong statement of EU solidarity with farmers in need. ...Our farmers do not stand alone in the fight against climate change," said Janusz Wojciechowski,



ki, European agriculture commissioner.

The funds will be drawn from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-27, which includes an agricultural reserve of at least 450 million euros annually to address market disruptions and exceptional circumstances, Xinhua news agency reported. National authorities are expected to distribute the aid to farmers by the end of April 2025 and may supplement the

allocated amount with national funds by up to 200 per cent.

Severe weather in the first half of the year included hot and dry conditions in Italy, frost in Estonia and Germany, and heatwaves, drought and storms in Bulgaria. In July, the Commission also allocated 77 million euros from the CAP for farmers in Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal affected by adverse climate conditions.

## Suicide remains leading cause of death for young Australians veterans: Report

AGENCIES  
CANBERRA, SEP 24

Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians who leave the military, a government report has found.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on Tuesday released its seventh annual report on deaths by suicide among permanent, reserve and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), reports Xinhua news agency. According to the report, 1,763 people who served at least one day in the ADF since 1985 died by suicide between 1997 and 2022. Of those, 1,464 -- 83 per cent -- were ex-serving members of the ADF, 174 were permanent members and 125 were in the reserves.

Between 1997 and 2022, suicide was the leading cause of death among ex-serving personnel under



the age of 30, the report said, accounting for the deaths of 42 per cent of ex-serving males and 44 per cent of ex-serving females in the age group.

The suicide rate for ex-serving males has trended downwards since 2014 but remains 26 per cent higher than for males in the general population.

"Every life lost to suicide is a deep tragedy and the impact on their loved ones is profound and far-reaching, including on Australia's defence and veteran community," AIHW spokesperson Paul

Pham said in a statement.

Across three years from the start of 2020 through the end of 2022, the suicide rate -- measured as deaths per 100,000 population per year -- was 27.6 for ex-serving males, 18.5 for permanent males, 13.4 for reserve males and 12.6 for ex-serving females, respectively.

The report was published weeks after the landmark Royal Commission into Defense and Veteran Suicide handed down its final report on September 9 following a three-year inquiry.

## UNSC REFORM: G4 MINISTERS SEE BOTH STEPS AHEAD AND A LACK OF PROGRESS

AGENCIES  
UNITED NATIONS, SEP 24

The foreign ministers of G4, the group advocating for Security Council reforms, see both a step ahead and a lack of progress in the mission to make the world organisation "better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities" and be fit for the present and future.

After meeting on Monday, the foreign ministers in a joint statement said they saw "a concrete step closer towards reform" in the debates on reform models held during the negotiations at the last General Assembly session.

However, they also "voiced strong concern over the persistent absence of substantial progress" in the reform process known as the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN).

Their meeting tradi-



tionally held every year during the week of high-level meetings at the UN, was attended by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Foreign Ministers Mauro Vieira of Brazil, Annalena Baerbock of Germany and Yoko Kamikawa of Japan.

The ministers "underlined the urgent need to begin text-based negotiations" and "welcomed the recent increase of support of text-based nego-

tiations", their statement said.

The negotiations have been unable to make headway without such a document.

A dozen members of the group known as Uniting for Consensus (Ufc) oppose increasing the number of permanent members on the Security Council and block the adoption of the negotiating text as a manoeuvre to block progress towards reform.

They welcomed the world leaders' strong call for urgent reform of the Security Council at the Summit of the Future".

They said discussions on Council reform should remain a top priority in the follow-up to the summit.

The ministers of Germany, India and Japan also welcomed Brazil's initiative of launching a 'Call to Action on Global Governance Reform', while

it holds the presidency of the G20, the group of major developed and emerging economies, their statement said.

They stressed the importance of transforming global governance and emphasized that discussions on reform of the UN Security Council remain a top priority following the 'Summit of the Future'.

The ministers said it was necessary to enhance "the role and participation of developing countries, and those significantly contributing to international peace and security, in the Security Council, in both membership categories".

They said that it was important to raise the representation of under-represented and under-represented groups and regions, such as Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, in both membership categories.

## California sues ExxonMobil for misleading consumers on plastic recycling

AGENCIES  
SACRAMENTO, SEP 24

The US state of California filed a lawsuit against oil and gas giant ExxonMobil, accusing the company of conducting a "decades-long campaign of deception" regarding plastic recycling.

The state's Department of Justice claimed on Monday that ExxonMobil had been deceiving Californians for half a century through misleading public statements and marketing campaigns.

These efforts allegedly promised that recycling would solve the increasing plastic waste issue produced by the company, according to a press release from California Attorney General Rob Bonta's office.

The suit, filed in San Francisco County Superior Court, accuses ExxonMobil of being the larg-



est producer of polymers used in single-use plastic that becomes plastic waste in California, Xinhua news agency reported.

It seeks to compel the company to "end its deceptive practices that threaten the environment and the public," the release said.

Additionally, Bonta is seeking an abatement fund, disgorgement, and civil penalties for the harm caused by plastic pollution to California's communities and environment.

"Plastics are everywhere, from the deepest

parts of our oceans, the highest peaks on Earth, and even in our bodies, causing irreversible damage -- in ways known and unknown -- to our environment and potentially our health," said Bonta in the statement.

"For decades, ExxonMobil has been deceiving the public to convince us that plastic recycling could solve the plastic waste and pollution crisis when they clearly knew this wasn't possible. ExxonMobil lied to further its record-breaking profits at the expense

of our planet and possibly jeopardising our health," he continued.

The attorney general's office said that most plastic products cannot be recycled, either technically or economically, but the alleged deception purportedly led consumers to purchase more single-use plastics than they would have otherwise.

The lawsuit also criticises ExxonMobil's recent "advanced recycling" project as a public relations tactic to encourage the continued use of single-use plastics.

The reality, according to the lawsuit, was that most discarded plastic ends up in landfills, incinerated, or dumped into the environment.

Since 1985, over 26 million pounds (about 11.8 million kilograms) of trash have been collected from California's beaches and waterways, with approxi-

mately 81 per cent being plastic. The attorney general's office claimed that most plastic items found during annual cleanups can be traced back to ExxonMobil's polymer resins.

Monday's lawsuit is the result of a two-year investigation by the California Department of Justice into the role of fossil fuel and petrochemical companies in the global plastics waste crisis. It is the first in the United States to hold a fossil fuel company accountable for its messaging around plastic recycling.

Last year, California sued several major oil companies, including Exxon, for their alleged role in the damage caused by climate change-induced storms and wildfires. Other states also have taken legal action against oil and gas companies for their role in climate change and air pollution.

## Finland beating recession but deficit will persist: Finance Ministry

AGENCIES  
HELSINKI, SEP 24

Finland is emerging from recession, but the public economy is expected to remain in persistent deficit, according to the latest forecast of the Finnish Ministry of Finance.

Nevertheless, the analysis report said the country will avoid triggering the European Commission's Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP), a mechanism designed to ensure that EU member states return to or maintain discipline in their governments' budgets, Xinhua news agency reported.

The report also projects the public sector deficit-to-GDP ratio at 3.7 per cent this year and 3.2 per cent in 2025. The Finnish government had committed to keeping the deficit

ratio below 3.5 per cent. Under EU guidelines, the ratio should remain below 3.5 per cent this year and drop below 3 per cent by 2025.

In June, Finland avoided the EDP after the European Commission's forecast projected that the Finnish deficit ratio would soon drop below the 3 per cent threshold. The Commission is set to reassess Finland's situation in November.

In a statement on Monday, Minister of Finance Riikka Purra said that the government is planning to bring the deficit ratio down to 2.9 per cent next year, a target approved by the economic policy ministerial group on Monday.

Purra expressed confidence that the EU would not demand further aus-

terity measures beyond those implemented earlier this year, but he emphasised that the final decision on the EDP remains with the EU.

The Ministry's latest economic outlook also noted that while Finland has exited recession, growth expectations for 2024 have been slightly revised downward. The forecast for 2025 has been adjusted upwards.

The Ministry anticipates a 0.2 per cent contraction for 2024, a 1.7 per cent growth in 2025 and a 1.5 per cent growth in 2026. In its June forecast, the Ministry anticipated zero growth for 2024 and a 1.5 per cent growth in 2025.

As global trade recovers, demand for Finnish exports is expected to increase.

## PM Modi's whirlwind US trip achieved 'very significant outcome': Foreign Secretary

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, SEP 24

During a whirlwind trip of about 55 hours, Prime Minister Narendra Modi achieved "very significant outcomes" in bilateral and multilateral domains and India was able to share its thoughts on a global stage, according to India's Foreign Secretary Vikram

Misri.

"I'm sure the results from this will stand us in good strength as we move forward," Misri said briefing reporters on Prime Minister Modi's visit that included meetings with US President Joe Biden and other leaders, participation in the Quad and United Nations summits, and speaking at a rally of

the diaspora.

Despite being brief, "We've had very significant outcomes in the bilateral, in the unilateral and in the multilateral domains", he said. It has "enabled India to say its piece and share its thoughts on a global stage".

The visit had "a very strong technology element", not only with the



roundtable of tech CEOs,

but also in the joint state-

ment of the Quad, the US-India bilateral factsheet, and Prime Minister Modi's other settings, he said.

The tech CEOs roundtable felt at this moment when things like AI and quantum computing are changing the world as we know it, the belief in India that "technology can be a driver of seminal change for the nation, but also

for countries of the global south in general, which should not be left behind in this race for technology". "They felt that India could play a leadership role in this regard," he said. The concept of the digital public infrastructure (DPI) that provides for a payments, identity, and documentation system that India had rolled has

"shown a third way to the world of how digital prowess could be leveraged for social and public good, not just in one country, but in a scalable manner to the rest of the world", he said.

"It also gave the opportunity to reflect on how technology has become a core driver of the India-US strategic partnership," he added.



# US mulls ban on Chinese software in connected vehicles from 2027

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, SEP 24

The US Department of Commerce has proposed a rule to prohibit the import or sale of connected vehicles integrating certain software and hardware with a "nexus" to China or Russia, citing national security concerns.

The department's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) published a notice of the proposed rule amid concerns that those cars with cameras, sensors, software and other components - manufactured in China - could be used to glean sensitive data about drivers and passengers, as well as U.S. infrastructure.

The rule is expected to lead South Korean automakers to readjust their supply chains if they have used prohibited software and components from China. But the measure would make it difficult for their potential Chinese competitors to enter the



U.S. market, observers said, reports Yonhap news agency.

The prohibitions on software would take effect for the 2027 model year, and those on hardware would go into force for the 2030 model year, or January 1, 2029, for units without a model year, the department said.

The rule focuses on hardware and software integrated into the Vehicle Connectivity System (VCS) and software integrated into the Automated Driving System (ADS).

The VCS refers to the set of systems that allow the vehicle to communi-

cate externally, including telematics control units, Bluetooth, cellular, satellite and Wi-Fi modules, according to the department. The ADS includes the components that collectively allow a highly autonomous vehicle to operate without a driver behind the wheel.

The department called the proposed rule a "proactive" measure designed to protect national security, saying it has found that certain technologies originating from China or Russia present an

"undue" risk to U.S. critical infrastructure and those who use connected vehi-

cles.

"Cars today have cameras, microphones, GPS tracking and other technologies connected to the internet. It doesn't take much imagination to understand how a foreign adversary with access to this information could pose a serious risk to both our national security and the privacy of U.S. citizens," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo was quoted as saying in a press release.

"To address these national security concerns, the Commerce Department is taking targeted, proactive steps to keep PRC and Russian-manufactured technologies off American roads," she added, referring to China by its official name, the People's Republic of China.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan cast the rule as "strong action" to protect American people, US critical infrastructure and automotive supply

chains from national security risks associated with connected vehicles.

"While connected vehicles yield many benefits, the data security and cybersecurity risks posed by software and hardware components sourced from the PRC and other countries of concern are equally clear, and we will continue to take necessary steps to mitigate these risks and get out ahead of the problem," he said.

The proposed rule would apply to all wheeled on-road vehicles, such as cars, trucks and buses, but would exclude vehicles not used on public roads, like agricultural or mining vehicles, the department said.

It would also prohibit manufacturers with a connection to China or Russia from selling connected vehicles that incorporate VCS hardware or software, or ADS software in the United States, even if the vehicle was made in the US.

# S&P Global Ratings retains India's GDP growth at 6.8 pc for FY25, cuts China's forecast

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 24

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday retained India's growth forecast at 6.8 per cent for the fiscal 2024-25, while reducing China's economic growth by 0.2 per cent to 4.6 per cent in the calendar year 2024.

In its quarterly economic outlook for the Asia-Pacific region, the global rating agency said, "In India, GDP growth moderated in the June quarter as high interest rates temper urban demand, in line with our projection of 6.8 for GDP for the full fiscal year 2024-2025."

India's solid growth allows the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to focus on bringing inflation in line with its target. The rating agency also retained India's growth forecast for FY 2025-26 at 6.9 per cent. Meanwhile, S&P further reduced China's GDP growth to 4.3 per cent in the calendar year 2025.

## ECONOMY



The July budget confirmed that the government remains committed to fiscal consolidation and to keeping the focus of public expenditure on infrastructure.

In Budget 2024-25, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated a total of Rs 11.1 lakh crore for capital expenditure. The central government also has set a target to bring down the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent of GDP by FY 2025-26.

India will see a first-rate cut in October as Inflation

is within RBI's target.

According to the report, "The RBI considers food inflation a hurdle for rate cuts. It reckons that unless there is a lasting and meaningful decline in the rate at which food prices are increasing it will be tough to maintain headline inflation at 4 per cent. Our outlook remains unchanged: we expect the RBI to begin cutting rates in October at the earliest and have penciled in two rate cuts this fiscal year (year ending March 2025)."

# Indian banks to issue bonds worth Rs 1.3 lakh crore in FY25, PSBs to dominate: Report

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, SEP 24

Led by public sector banks (PSBs), Indian banks are set to issue all-time high bonds worth Rs 1.2 lakh crore- Rs 1.3 lakh crore in the current fiscal (FY25), surpassing the earlier peak of Rs 1.1 lakh crore in FY23, a report showed on Tuesday.

PSBs are likely to command a lion's share at 82-85 per cent of bonds issuances, with infrastructure bonds dominating the segment, according to leading credit rating agency ICRA.

Banks have recently increased fund-raising via bonds, even as the share of borrowings in total liabilities remains below the pre-Covid levels.

Tight liquidity conditions and credit growth continuously surpassing deposit growth has necessitated fund raising by banks from alternate sources.

For FY25 (year to date),



banks' total bond issuances were Rs 767 billion, registering a YoY growth of 225 per cent and reached 75 per cent of the total issuances done in FY24. During FY15 to FY22, PSBs had a negligible share in infrastructure bond issuances.

"However, with improved capital position, tight funding position and sizeable infrastructure loan book, the PSBs became dominant in the issuance of infrastructure bonds and accounted for 77 per cent of banks' infra-

structure bond issuances in FY23-FY25 (YTD)," said Sachin Sachdeva, Vice President and Sector Head-Financial Sector Ratings, ICRA.

The trend is expected to continue through FY2025 with the PSBs likely to account for 82-85 per cent of the bank bond issuances in FY25 and infrastructure bonds are expected to account for more than two-third share, Sachdeva noted.

Additionally, the government's continued focus towards infrastructural

spending, the availability of sizeable infrastructure loan book, which is eligible to be funded through these infrastructure bonds and strong demand from insurance companies and provident funds for long term issuances, support these bond issuances.

While these are required to have a minimum tenor of 7 years as per regulations, however, given the investor preference, they have been issued for relatively longer tenors of even 10 and 15 years, said the report.

Banking sector advances to the infrastructure sector are estimated at Rs 13 lakh crore-14 lakh crore as on June 30, of which the PSBs have a lion's share of around 75 per cent.

Banks are expected to continue to fund the infrastructure sector growth and infrastructure bonds remain a key tool for raising long-term resources to fund this portfolio, said the report.

# India-UAE bilateral trade set to surpass \$100 billion target before 2030

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 24

The bilateral trade between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is on track to surpass the \$100 billion target well before 2030, underscored by a notable 12.7 per cent (year-on-year) increase, according to a report on Tuesday.

The UAE remains India's third-largest trading partner and second-largest export destination (FY2022-23).

According to a report by Primus Partners, Bilateral trade reached \$85 billion in FY 2022-23 and is expected to cross the 2030 target of \$100 billion well before the expected timeline.

The India-UAE economic relationship strengthened with the recent visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to India.

The two countries signed five MoUs, follow-



ing the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Crown Prince.

The India-UAE trade relations are entering a new era, driven by structural reforms like 2022 Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that have dismantled long-standing barriers.

"This shows how this trade growth is not only strengthening existing sectors like gems, jewellery, and IT but is also paving the way for emerging industries such as green energy and food security,"

said Nilaya Varma, CEO and Co-founder of Primus Partners.

Both countries lead the path for key collaborative ventures, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) as well as the India-Israel-UAE-US (I2U2) coalition.

The India-UAE economic relationship is set to be further cemented with initiatives like the implementation of a master dashboard to oversee critical infrastructure projects; establishment of a bilateral e-commerce marketplace for goods and servic-

es, potentially leveraging India's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) model and creation of an online digital repository highlighting investable projects in identified strategic sectors,

Nader Haffar, Director of Primus Partners UAE, said that the bilateral relationship has evolved into a multifaceted partnership that is reshaping the future of regional and global trade.

"This synergy between two of the world's fastest-growing economies is creating new opportunities, fostering innovation, and building a foundation for long-term prosperity that could serve as a global model for emerging market partnerships," Haffar added.

Gems and jewellery, traditionally a cornerstone of trade, have seen increased activity under the CEPA. The metals, stones, gems, and jewellery sector is among India's key exports to the UAE.

# Gig workers must develop industry-specific knowledge to remain competitive: Report

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 24

There is a persistent skill gap among gig economy workers and they must develop industry-specific knowledge to remain competitive, a report said on Tuesday.

The report by TeamLease Edtech showed that 42.86 per cent of gig workers lack industry knowledge as the primary skill deficit. While gig workers are often technically adept, the absence of domain expertise can hinder their efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition to this, 28.57 per cent of employers cited soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, as another critical gap. These skills are essential for gig workers, who frequently manage multiple clients and projects simultaneously.



"The gig economy has fundamentally altered the employment landscape. It is reshaping how we work by introducing a level of flexibility that aligns with modern work preferences," said Shantanu Roop, Founder and CEO of TeamLease EdTech. "However, with this shift comes the need for continuous upskilling," he added.

The report comes as demand is set to surge for gig workers, especially in the upcoming festive season.

This season, employers plan to hire 1 million gig workers and 250,000 con-

tractual workers across sectors, with e-commerce leading the charge.

Companies like Uber, Ola, Swiggy, and Zomato are offering significant opportunities, reflecting the shifting labour market accelerated by the pandemic, which has driven both workers and businesses to seek flexible work arrangements.

To bridge the gaps, the report also identified the top ways for gig workers to upskill. According to the data, on-the-job training (76.19 per cent) and online courses (73.81 per cent) are the most effective methods.

# 500 mn smartphone owners to use digital identity wallet by 2026

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 24

At least 500 million smartphone users globally will regularly make verifiable claims using a digital identity wallet (DIW) by 2026, a report said on Tuesday.

Identity verification establishes confidence in the identity of a person during a digital interaction when curated credentials do not exist, are not available or do not provide sufficient assurance.

However, due to challenges with the traditional IDV model, solutions based on portable digital identity (PDI) have emerged, according to a Gartner report.

"The market is entering a transition period as PDI solutions are starting to mature, which in the next five years, will reduce the demand for standalone IDV," said Akif Khan, VP Analyst at Gartner.

The current IDV model of a user being asked to do the ID-plus-selfie process



repeatedly, is not ideal.

Khan said that the processes in place today are focused and limited to core identity data (name, date of birth, address etc.).

As more and more processes move online, there is a need to tie many other attributes to a user's identity, such as educational or workplace qualifications, proof of employment, not to mention healthcare data, Khan noted.

A PDI is best defined as a digital identity that contains all the necessary attributes for identifying

someone in the digital world. PDI also means that the user maintains some level of control over security and privacy.

According to the Gartner report, the principle of PDI is that the user formerly proves their identity with a trusted entity, and once authenticated, it is recorded as an identity assertion.

That identity assertion is either stored with the party that verified their identity (centralized model) or saved in a DIW on their smartphone (decentralised model).

# India to sign bilateral investment treaty with Uzbekistan during FM Sitharaman's visit

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to embark on an official visit to Uzbekistan from September 24-28, to attend the ninth annual meeting of Board of Governors of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

FM Sitharaman will hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts from Uzbekistan, Qatar and China, along with the AIIB President. The Finance Minister will attend the meeting as the Indian Governor to the AIIB, according to a statement from Ministry of Finance.

India is the second largest shareholder of the bank. The multilateral discussions will centre around a broad spectrum of important global issues relevant to the development agenda.

As part of the official visit, the Finance Minister is expected to call on HE



Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan. She will sign a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) between India and Uzbekistan, according to the ministry.

The treaty aims to promote more extensive economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of both countries on a long-term basis.

FM Sitharaman is also set to also participate in the India-Uzbekistan business forum discussions, jointly organised as well as represented by industry captains from both the countries.



# Indian men's hockey team to host Germany for two-match bilateral series in October

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Indian men's hockey team will host Germany for a two-match bilateral hockey series in October here at the national capital, the sports national governing body announced on Tuesday.

Team India is riding high on confidence as they recently retained their Asian Champions Trophy title following their second successive bronze medal win at Paris Olympics.

The Indian side led by captain Harmanpreet Singh secured the Asian Champions trophy for the fifth time after beating hosts China 1-0 in the final at the Moqi Hockey Train-



ing Base last week.

"This bilateral series against Germany will be a remarkable showcase of world-class hockey. Both India and Germany have a rich history in the sport, and this series will give

fans an opportunity to witness an intense competition between two of the most formidable teams in the world. We are honoured to host this event, which will not only promote the spirit of hockey

but also strengthen the bond between the two nations," Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said.

Hockey India secretary general Bhola Nath Singh added, "The India-Germany hockey rivalry has always been a thrilling contest. Our players are eager to compete against such a good side, and I believe this series will offer both teams a chance to fine-tune their skills and strategies ahead of future international tournaments. We are proud to be part of this Indo-German collaboration, which brings together not just business and diplomacy but also the love of sport." The last time India faced

Germany was in the semi-final of the Paris Olympics, where the European giants emerged victorious with a 3-2 win.

President of the German Hockey Federation Henning Fastrich shared, "India has always been a special place for hockey, and our team is excited to play in front of passionate Indian hockey fans. This series will be a fantastic opportunity to strengthen the sporting ties between Germany and India while offering both teams a competitive platform to prepare for upcoming global events. We look forward to the challenge and the experience of playing at the historic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium."

# Border-Gavaskar Trophy: 'We've got to keep Pant quiet', says Australia captain Cummins

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEP 24

Australia captain Pat Cummins remains wary of India star wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant's ability to take the game on and said his side needs to keep the 26-year-old batter quiet in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The upcoming five-match Test series between India and Australia will start on November 22. The series will see India and Australia play in Perth, Adelaide (pink-ball match), Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney from November 22 to January 7, 2025.

India were able to retain the title in the last four successive BGT, which includes their famous series wins in 2018-19



and 2020-21, where Pant played a remarkable knock of 89 not out in Gabba and snatched the victory in style to end Australia's 32-year undefeated run at their fortress.

Pant made a remarkable comeback in Test cricket against Bangladesh, after a long wait of 637 days due to a near-fatal car crash in Decem-

ber 2022, scoring 109 runs in the second innings, helping India in a 280-run victory in Chennai. "Look, I think every team has one or two of those players who can take the game on. You know, we've got Travis Head and Mitch Marsh and those guys. I think with those guys, you know that they're going to be aggressive.

# India aim to bag full points against Mongolia in AFC U20 qualifiers

AGENCIES  
VIENTIANE (LAOS), SEPT 24

The three months of preparation all come down to the final touches, as India get ready to commence their AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025 qualification campaign in here.

The Blue Colts kick off the proceedings in Group G at the Lao National Stadium KM16 at 2.30 pm IST on Wednesday against Mongolia. The top teams from each group, along with the five best second-placed teams from 10 groups will qualify for the tournament proper.

India head coach Ranjan Chaudhuri outlined his side's intentions at the very outset of the pre-tournament press conference.

"We've been preparing well for the last three months, and the boys are ready for the challenge," said Chaudhuri.

"Of course, our aim is to qualify for the AFC U20 Asian Cup for the first



time, which will set a great precedent for our boys. Not only will it be a good experience for them all, but it will also put India on the Asian stage at this age group level," he said.

Facing Mongolia in their first match, the Blue Colts are keen on beginning the qualifiers with three points.

"The first match of any tournament is crucial, and we must ensure that we get three points from

it. That would set the tone for us," said Chaudhuri. "Mongolia are a very good side, and we have to be at our best, but we will try to maintain our focus and remain positive."

India reached Vientiane on Monday evening, and after a good night's rest, Chaudhuri's first course of action on Tuesday morning was to gather the entire squad together and announce Thomas K. Cherian as the captain.

The young defender took the responsibility on his shoulders instantly. "We have a great responsibility from our nation, and we've prepared well for it. The mindset of the boys is extremely good, and we just have to do our job with a positive mindset."

For Mongolia, who arrived in Laos a couple of days before India, it is a matter of acclimatising in time to play on natural turf.

# Mohun Bagan Super Giant edge past NorthEast United FC in ISL

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, SEP 24

Mohun Bagan beat NorthEast United 3-2 at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here to register their first win of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season on Monday night, which marks the fifth comeback victory for a team this season, at the end of gameweek 2.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant have now scored in 12 consecutive ISL games whereas the Highlanders have failed to keep a clean sheet for the first time in their last three matches.

NorthEast United wasted no time bothering the Mohun Bagan Super Giant defence with their exceptional pace and intensity.

The match's first chance fell to Alaeddine Ajarai, who struck the post

through a telling cross from Jithin MS from the left. The Mariners' backline had no answer in front to Jithin's pace and trickery as he lost his marker with relative ease.

However, the Highlanders were soon rewarded when Ajarai corrected his mistake by finding Mohammed Ali Bemammer with a well-weighted cross.

The Moroccan duo combined as the latter hammered a thumping shot past Vishal Kaith to hand the visitors an early lead in the fourth minute.

Despite being under immense pressure, the hosts retaliated with a well-worked freekick as youngster Dipendu Biswas rose highest from a Dimitrios Petratos delivery to head home the equaliser in the 10th minute. It was a momentous occasion for

the 21-year-old defender as he scored his first goal for the senior team.

The Juan Benali-coached team kept their patience for the next 10-minute spell when the hosts enjoyed possession. They capitalised on a counter-attack which saw Ajarai combine with Jithin on the left.

The 26-year-old ran fiercely before releasing Ajarai on the right in the penalty box. The Moroccan calmly slotted it home, helping NorthEast United regain the lead in the 24th minute.

The Mariners raised the tempo after conceding and came close twice from close range but failed to find the opening. Both teams continued to exchange offensive moves but the visitors went into the half-time break with a 1 goal lead.

The start of the second half was extremely cagey between the two teams. Most of the proceedings happened in midfield, but the hosts kept pushing and finally scored the equaliser in the 61st minute when Subhasis Bose slotted home a stray ball after Gurmeet Singh failed to gather a corner from Greg Stewart.

Jose Molina's men kept pushing for the winning goal and were finally rewarded when two substitutes, Sahal Abdul Samad and Jason Cummings combined, with the latter slotting it home from the former's cross in the 87th minute.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant will face Bengaluru FC on September 28 whereas NorthEast United will head home to welcome Kerala Blasters on September 29.

# Players did a great job, fought until end: MBSG head coach Molina

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, SEPT 24

Mohun Bagan SG head coach Jose Molina commended his team's overall performance as the Mariners staged a thrilling comeback victory against NorthEast United FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here on Monday night.

The Highlanders took the lead twice during the match, but the hosts mounted a strong comeback on both occasions, ultimately securing the win with super-sub Jason Cummings scoring the decisive goal. This victory marked Mohun Bagan SG's first of the ISL 2024-25 season. Notably, it was the

10th time Mohun Bagan SG has rallied from a deficit to win and the fifth instance against NorthEast United FC.

The Mohun Bagan SG head coach praised his players for their dedication on the pitch, highlighting their efforts to secure the win. Molina expressed his delight at earning their first three points of the season after playing to a 2-2 draw in the season opener.

"Yes, it was important to win. Today we achieved our first victory of the season. Really happy," Molina said in the post-match press conference.

"Of course I tell sometimes that I'm not happy. But today the players did a great job. They fought

until the end. They never gave up," he said.

The Durand Cup finalists were involved in another exhilarating encounter, with the Mariners emerging victorious after 90 minutes of end-to-end action. Juan Pedro Benali's men delivered a solid performance throughout the match, showcasing both offensive versatility and defensive stability. Molina acknowledged the Highlanders' squad depth and their style of play, especially their defensive organization. While speaking about his opponent players, Molina shared,

"To play against NorthEast United FC isn't easy because they defend really well," Molina said.

# Draw would have been a fair result: NEUFC head coach Benali

UNI  
KOLKATA, SEPT 24

NorthEast United FC head coach Juan Pedro Benali believed a draw would have been a fair result for both sides after the Highlanders went down to the Mariners at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here.

In a rematch of the Durand Cup final, the match lived up to its expectations from the very first minute. The visitors started strong, taking an early lead with a goal from Mohammed Ali Bemammer in the 4th minute.

However, the hosts quickly responded, with young Dipendu Biswas equalising just six minutes later.

NorthEast United FC showcased their quick



counterattacking style, regaining the lead through Alaeddine Ajarai.

Captain Subhasis Bose levelled the score for the Mariners in the second half before substitute Jason Cummings found the winner late in the game, securing a thrilling victory for the home side in a captivating five-goal showdown.

"Sometimes football is unfair. For example, you know, as I say all the time, you can play against 11 players, but not against the elements. And sometimes it's small details that change the game," Benali stated in the post-match press conference.

NorthEast United FC showcased their dynamic attacking style, posing a

constant threat with their swift counterattacks.

The Highlanders pushed hard for an equaliser in the dying minutes, but Mohun Bagan SG stood firm to secure their first win of the ISL season.

"But I'm really happy, and proud of my players because we showed that we're growing," said Benali.

Winger Jithin MS started on the right wing tonight, while Moroccan forward Ajarai operated on the left.

The duo worked well together to score NorthEast United FC's second goal, and Jithin frequently posed a challenge for Bose. However, Benali highlighted that it was not only Jithin but the whole team that showcased a spirited performance throughout the match.

"You know, not only Jithin MS, but all the players played hard on Monday," Benali said.

"We showed that we have a good team, we have good players. Everybody did their job (today).

But sometimes it's not enough to do your job (get the desired result)," he said.

The hosts enjoyed more possession of the ball, but both sides had almost an equal number of scoring opportunities. The Mariners registered seven shots on target, while the Highlanders weren't far behind with six.

"I think if the game had finished as a draw, it would have been a great result for both teams. That would've been a fair result. But sometimes I repeat, football is unfair," Benali commented.

# T10 is incredibly tough but has a big future: Colin Munro

AGENCIES  
HARARE, SEP 24

Former New Zealand cricketer Colin Munro shared his take on the T10 format, calling it a bit different and added that for tournaments like Zim Afro T10, the planning has to be done every single day.

Munro, who is playing for Durban Wolves, said Zim Afro T10 is a kind of tournament where the player needs to level up the mental game rather than the physical.

"I think it's different for



everyone. But there's no space for selfishness in this game (format). You have to go out there and go hard. It's like the last five overs of a T20. You can just get

used to the pace of the wicket but you have to go hard. It's kind of a tournament where you plan every single day. You just level up the mental game

rather than physical. It's just about what happens today and then moving on tomorrow and starting afresh," Munro said.

According to Munro, the T10 is an exciting format and is growing quickly in different parts of the world. "I always say that you go to places and wherever you go, you try to give back and grow the game a little bit. I have played a lot of cricket around the world and I can pass on some knowledge to the guys around.

The boys have been

quite open. I have told them that I'm open for an opportunity to have a chat if they want to come. Whether they are young or whether they are learning to play this format, I'm not even that experienced (in this format).

"I guess I have played 15-20 T10 games. So, these guys out there haven't played much T20 cricket but a lot more T10. So, if I can pass on some knowledge to somebody and they can pass it on to someone else, that's how you grow the game.

# BAI to reward Paris Paralympics 2024 medallists

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 24

President of Badminton Association of India (BAI) and Assam CM on Tuesday announced that BAI will honour the Paris Paralympics 2024 medallists for their outstanding efforts that scripted history with a combined reward of INR 50 lakh. India won five medals - one gold, two silver, and two bronze - their most in any version of the Paralympic Games, and secured podiums in the women's events for the first time at the recently concluded event in Paris. Nitesh Kumar clinched the coveted gold in the Men's Singles SL3 category, while Suhas Yathiraj (Men's singles SL4) added to his silver haul from Tokyo with a repeat triumph in Paris.

Thulasimathi Murugesan, Manisha

Ramadass, and Nithya Sre Sivan made history by becoming the first Indian women shuttlers to secure medals at the Paralympics. Thulasimathi bagged the silver in the Women's Singles SU5 and Manisha the bronze.

The gold medal winner, Nitesh, will receive a purse of INR 15 lakh, silver medallists, Suhas and Thulasimathi, INR 10 lakh each and bronze medallists, Manisha and Nithya, INR 7.5 lakh apiece, according to a media statement. Commenting on the historic campaign of India's para badminton players, BAI Secretary General Sanjay Mishra said, "Indian Para badminton players have been performing consistently on the world stage and the cash rewards are just one way for BAI to recognise their efforts in helping the country win medals at the Paralympics."



## World Food India 2024: J&K pavilion presents UT's unique products, attracts international buyers

J1 NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

The Jammu and Kashmir Government participated in the 3rd World Food India edition in New Delhi, which wrapped up on September 22, 2024.

The JKPTPO sponsored pavilion at World Food India featured an array of J&K's signature products, including fruits, spices, dry fruits, honey, aromatic products etc. The event enabled J&K exhibitors to establish crucial business connections, explore new markets and expand their export footprint.

World Food India 2024, a remarkable four day food event, was organized at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi from September 19th to 22nd, 2024.

The region showcased its unique products through seven exhibitors sponsored by the Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organi-



zation (JKPTPO). This strategic participation not only highlighted J&K's rich agricultural heritage but also facilitated vital connections between local businesses and international buyers, fostering an environment ripe for collaboration and growth.

The event enabled J&K's entrepreneurs to tap into global markets, unlocking opportunities for sustainable economic development. By leveraging platforms like World Food

India, the region aims to boost its trade and export potential.

At the J&K Pavilion, international buyers from 17 countries including South Africa, Iran, Malaysia, Vietnam, Kenya, USA, Oman, Lebanon, Australia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Netherlands, and Bhutan engaged in productive B2B meetings with J&K exhibitors. These interactions yielded significant outcomes, with buyers sam-

pling local products and placing on spot orders, particularly for GI-tagged Saffron, Honey and Basmati.

Notably, Wancho Sons, a local exhibitor, secured a substantial order for GI-tagged Saffron from African and Malaysian buyers. The other exhibitors are also expecting valuable orders from the potential buyers who were engaged in negotiations with them. Notable on-spot sales were also registered by certain exhibitors.

## Home Voting for 85+ and PwD Voters Begins in Baramulla, shall continue till September 26th

J1 NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 24

The District Administration Baramulla, led by District Election Officer (DEO) Minga Sherpa, has started home voting today on 24th of September, allowing registered voters aged 85 and above, as well as Persons with Disabilities (PwD), to cast their votes from home. The initiative that shall continue till September 26th, aims to ensure that every eligible voter, regardless of physical limitations, can exercise their democratic right. In a notable instance, a 115-year-old voter from the Uri Assembly Constituency expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for this special provision. "I am thankful to the ECI for providing this facility, allowing us to cast our vote from home," the voter remarked, appreciating



the accessibility that this initiative offers to elderly and disabled voters.

Dedicated polling teams have been deployed across all seven Assembly Constituencies (ACs) in Baramulla, visiting the homes of registered 85+ and PwD voters. The District Election Office has taken all necessary pre-

cautions to ensure that the voting process is carried out safely, securely, and in compliance with electoral guidelines.

DEO emphasized, "This initiative will continue until September 26th, and we are committed to reaching every eligible 85+ and PwD registered voter across the district."

## GDC R S Pura hosts SVEEP event to spread voter awareness



J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

A mega SVEEP event was organised today at Government Degree College R.S. Pura to educate and encourage the voters participation for upcoming Assembly Elections.

The programme started with great fervor. Block Development Officer, R. S. Pura, Pardeep Singh, in presence of Principal Govt. Degree College R.S. Pura, Paramjeet Kour, Child Development Project Officer, Poshan Project Satwari, Tanvi Gupta, delivered a thought provoking speech. Street Play 'Lok-

tantra Ka Asli Mantra' presented by artists of Natrang group Jammu encouraged the masses to participate in elections and not run away from their ultimate responsibility of voting for the stronger democracy of India. The street play has been written by Padmashree Balwant Thakur and directed by Neeraj Kant.

The event concluded with the Vote of thanks by Tanvi Gupta, Child Development Project Officer, Poshan Project Satwari with an appeal to all to exercise the right to vote for upcoming assembly elections at District Jammu.

## 2nd inspection of expenditure registers conducted for 11 ACs of Jammu District

J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

Amidst electoral season, Jammu Assembly Constituencies (ACs) witnessed the second inspection of expenditure registers of contesting candidates at the General Zorawar Singh Auditorium University of Jammu, here today.

The inspection was overseen by Expenditure Observers, Amaresh Kumar Tiwari, B.K. Vishnu Priya and Gayatri M and Nodal Officer for Expenditure Monitoring Yasir Sharief.

Of the 109 candidates contesting for 11 Assembly Constituencies (ACs), 92 candidates or their election agents were present for the second inspection.

The absence of the candidates was communicated to them through notices by their concerned Returning Officers.

During the inspection, discrepancies were

observed between day-to-day expenses register and the shadow observation register and was communicated to the contesting candidates through notices by their concerned Returning Officers.

The Observers emphasized the importance of strict adherence to the Model Code of Conduct and the financial regulations prescribed by the ECI. Contesting candidates were reminded that compliance with these norms is essential as per Election Commission norms.

The Expenditure Observers reiterated the need for candidates to maintain accurate and up-to-date expenditure records, stressing that all expenses must be duly recorded in their registers. The importance of keeping supporting documents such as bills, vouchers, and invoices on hand was also conveyed to the candidates for future reference.

## Awareness programme on Drug Abuse & Drug Menace held at Town Hall Kulgam

J1 NEWS SERVICE

KULGAM, SEPTEMBER 24

Pursuant to the Directions of Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority and on the directions of Chairperson District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kulgam, an awareness programme on NALSA (Legal Services to victims of Drug abuse and Drug Menace Scheme 2015) and NDPS Act was held today at Townhall Kulgam.

The programme was organised under the chairpersonship of Chairman DLSA Kulgam, Aijaz Ahmad Khan and under the supervision of the Secretary DLSA Kulgam, Muzamil Ahmad Wani.

The programme was attended by Medical officers, Officers and Officials from Police, Prosecuting officers, LADCs, Members of Juvenile Justice Board, members of Child Welfare Committee, Members of



Bar Association Kulgam, PLVs, staff of DLSA and College students.

The resource persons for the programme included Bari (Senior Prosecuting Officer), Ld. Advocate Arshid Hussain Baba, Basit Farooq Assistant LADC, Dr. Irshad Ahmad Clinical Psychologist.

The resource persons threw light on various provisions of the NDPS Act and NALSA scheme while emphasizing upon the basic postulates of the scheme and requirement of the collective efforts for the eradication of the Drug addiction menace.

Secretary DLSA in his speech focused upon the college students more par-

ticularly while deliberating upon other officials and said that the real essence of the duty lies in submission towards working for humanity at a larger level, and the efforts for eradication of drug menace is one such goal to be achieved.

He also said that the Special Units for eradication of the Drug abuse would be constituted and it will take all stakeholders into confidence as its members and work for the effectuation and implementation of all measures taken by the Executive for the eradication of the Drug menace and work at grass roots level in order to ensure that there is proper prevention.

## Chief Secretary reviews progress on RDSS works; asks for expeditious completion

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 24

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of Power Development Department (PDD) to assess progress on Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) tailored to achieve reduction in distribution losses. Besides Principal Secretary PDD, the meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Finance; MD JPDCL/KPDCL; Chief Engineers, representatives from PELS, NTPC and other concerned officers of the department.

The Chief Secretary, while speaking in the meeting, asked the department to make strenuous efforts towards achieving time bound progress on implementation of this ambitious scheme. He termed it significant for substantial reduction in Actual Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses across the UT.

Dulloo asked the department to devise a proper monitoring mechanism to ensure timely execution of works with desired out-



comes. He enjoined upon the DISCOMS of both the divisions to ensure the set targets are achieved within the fixed deadline.

The Chief Secretary enquired about the status of smart metering and other loss reduction works accomplished in different districts of the UT by different executing agencies. He also asked about the physical progress registered in each package of work awarded to PIA.

In the presentation, the Principal Secretary Power, H. Rajesh Prasad, gave out a detailed description about the RDSS works being executed across different districts of the UT.

Regarding its objectives, he informed that the scheme aims at improving the quality, reliability and

affordability of power supply to customers through an efficient distribution system.

The meeting was further apprised that implementation of these works had resulted in sharp decline in the gap between Average Cost of Power (ACP) and Average Revenue Realised (ARR).

As far as other LR works are concerned, it was added that the scope includes LT cable replacement work, HVDS, HT Line cabling, HT Line (Conductor), Feeder segregation etc. It was also revealed that different project implementing agencies including PELS, NTPC, RECPDCL have been assigned specific works for completion in a time bound manner.

## SVEEP Marathon held in Basohli amid overwhelming Public participation

J1 NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 24

A highly successful SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Marathon was held in Basohli today, witnessing enthusiastic participation from a wide spectrum of people. The event, aimed at spreading awareness about the importance of voting, was flagged off by Director ACB Shakti Pathak, along with Returning Officer 65-Basohli AC Anil Kumar Thakur and AC Nodal Officer Dr. Roshan Pakhroo.

The marathon saw participation from athletes of various age groups, emphasizing the inclusive nature of the event.

The marathon commenced from the iconic Cable Stay Setu Bridge, a well-known landmark of Basohli, and passed through the vibrant streets of the town, culminating at Purthu on the banks of Ranjit Sagar Dam, known as Mini Goa. The scenic route not only provided a visually appealing setting but also symbolized the connection between the people and their electoral responsibilities.

A special highlight of the event was the presence of Renowned Mountaineer Suman Verma, who partic-



ipated as the District Election Icon/Ambassador. Suman Verma, known for her extraordinary achievements in the field of mountaineering, joined hands with the election authorities to promote voter awareness. Her presence resonated deeply with the participants, symbolizing the strength and perseverance required not only in mountaineering but also in exercising one's right to vote responsibly.

The event attracted participants from all walks of life, with a particularly enthusiastic response from young citizens. Ath-

letes, local community members, and students came together, reflecting a strong commitment to the cause of electoral participation. Many participants shared that they were excited to be part of a marathon with a larger social message, helping to raise awareness about the importance of voting in a democracy.

The DIG, while formally flagging off the marathon, appreciated the District Election Cell for organizing a wide range of activities under the SVEEP initiative in Kathua District. "Such initiatives provide a

tangible reminder to all electors about the significance of voting. The enthusiasm shown by the participants today speaks volumes about the commitment of the people to the democratic process," he said and urged everyone to ensure that they exercise their voting rights in the upcoming elections.

Returning Officer (RO) Anil Kumar Thakur, while addressing the participants, said that the SVEEP Marathon was an integral part of the District SVEEP Plan, designed to sensitize all stakeholders about their crucial role in the voting process. "This marathon serves as a reminder that each vote counts. Our goal is to make sure every eligible voter is informed, aware, and ready to cast their vote responsibly in the upcoming elections," he added.

The AC Nodal Officer for SVEEP, Dr. Rakesh Pakhroo, emphasized that the event was designed to spread the message of the importance of voting

## DGP J&K sanctions Rs 2.04 Cr. Special Welfare Relief

J1 NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, SEPT 24

The Director General of Police J&K Shri R.R. Swain has sanctioned Rs. 2.04 crore as Special Welfare Relief for NoK of deceased police personnel/SPO who have passed away while in service. He has also sanctioned financial assistance of rupees one lakh for the marriage ceremony of a martyr's daughter.

The special welfare relief of Rs. 22 lakh each has been sanctioned in favour of dependents/legal heirs of deceased Police personnel Insp. Shri Gurdeep Singh, HC (Tel) Shri Davinder Singh, HC Shri Ram Raj, SgCt Shri Manoj Kumar, SgCt Shri Farooq Ahmad, SgCt Shri Imtiaz Ahmad, SgCt Shri Gulzar Ahmad Wani, SgCt Shri Imran Fayaz and Ct. Shri Vishal Singh. They passed away due to illness while in service.

Rs. one lakh each has been already paid to the families/ NoK deceased personnel for performing the last rites as immediate relief by the PHQ through their concerned Unit/Wing. The amount is sanctioned out of the Contributory Police Welfare Fund and is one among other various welfare measures of Police Headquarters.

The DGP has also sanctioned rupees 06 lakh in favour of the family/ legal heirs of deceased SPO Shri Deepak Sharma, who passed away while he was engaged with the Police department. Out of this amount, rupees 50 thousand was already paid to the family/NoK for performing the last rites as immediate relief. The financial assistance has been given out of the Contributory Police Welfare Fund of SPOs.

Police Headquarters is running many schemes for the welfare of its personnel and their families. There are also schemes for the wards of Police personnel and SPOs. Besides, there are schemes for the NoKs of martyrs, their wards and also for retired Police personnel and their families.