

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:

- ↑ or ↓ body temperature
- ↑ or ↓ pulse rate
- ↑ or ↓ blood pressure
- ↑ or ↓ haemoglobin
- ↑ or ↓ platelet count
- ↑ or ↓ white blood cell count
- ↑ or ↓ haematocrit
- ↑ or ↓ haemoglobin
- ↑ or ↓ platelet count
- ↑ or ↓ white blood cell count
- ↑ or ↓ haematocrit

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Over 56 per cent voting recorded in Phase-2: J&K CEO Pole

Says figures tentative likely go up as voting underway at some places, Mata Vaishno Devi Assembly seat records highest voting of over 80 per cent; Habba Kadal seat in Sgr lowest at 18.80 per cent, Kangan, Khansahib cross 67 per cent polling in Kashmir; foreign delegates visit four polling station, express full satisfaction



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) P K Pole Wednesday said the tentative figures suggest that the phase two of the Assembly elections recorded over 56 per cent polling.

The figure is seven per cent less than what J&K recorded in the first phase of elections held on September 18. Addressing a press conference here, as per news agency, Pole said that the

second phase of elections were conducted in a peaceful manner and no incident was reported anywhere in the UT where re-polling needs to be done.

"The total percentage for phase two is over 56 per cent. The figure is tentative as polling is still underway at some places," Pole said. He said for the second phase, 3502 polling booths were set up and almost 15000 polling officials including observers and other staff were deployed in six districts of the UT.

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History in making: CEC

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEPT 25

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Wednesday described the ongoing Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir as "history in the making", saying people are standing in long queues outside polling booths at places where calls were once given to boycott the democratic exercise. Talking to reporters here as the second

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LG congratulates people, election officials on high voter turnout

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 25

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has extended hearty congratulations to the voters of second phase of

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Srinagar records low voter turnout

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

As the second phase of voting for Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections in 26 Assembly Constituencies concluded on Wednesday, the voter turnout across the Union Territory stood tentatively at 56 per cent, with Srinagar recording the lower voter participation with over 29.00 per cent only.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Jammu and Kashmir, P K Pole, while addressing the media, as per the news agency said that

voting across the 26 Assembly Constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir recorded a tentative percentage of 56.

However, Srinagar district witnessed the lowest voter turnout participation with a tentative percentage of around 29.00 per cent. Eidgah Assembly Constituency recorded the highest voter turnout of 36.93 per cent while Habbakadal constituency recorded the lowest voter turnout in the district at 18.39 per cent. According to the Election Commission of

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Shobhit Saxena posted as SSP Kathua

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

The government of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday posted Shobhit Saxena, senior IPS officer, as senior superintendent of police Kathua.

According to an order, a copy of which lies with news agency, Saxena has been posted in place of Deepika, who shall await further posting in police department.

"In the interest of administration and pursuant to the approval conveyed by the Election Commission of India, Shri Shobhit Saxena, IPS, SSP (HQrs) CID, is hereby transferred and posted as Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua vice Ms. Deepika, IPS, who shall await further posting in Police Headquarters," reads the order. KNO

INDIA alliance will hit roads, stage protests in Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha to press for Statehood restoration in J&K: Rahul Gandhi in J&K



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEP 25

INDIA alliance will stage massive protests across the country on the streets, storm the well in both houses of the parliament to press for the restoration of Statehood for J&K soon after the Assembly polls, senior Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition (LoP)

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J&K Cong chief slams govt intention behind bringing diplomats to Kashmir

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

J&K Pradesh Congress Committee President Tariq Hameed Karra on Wednesday said that the foreign diplomats' visit to Kashmir to see polling in the Union Territory is aimed to "sell" the "deceptive" work of Government of India.

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Vote for positive change and guaranteed welfare: Kharage

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise their franchise as their one vote will bring in a positive change, secure their future, and guarantee unbridled welfare.

On social media handle X, Kharge said, "Jammu and Kashmir is on the cusp of change. Today, as the second phase of voting gets underway for 26 seats, I exhort

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Cong, allies don't like peace in J&K; they want to bring back Art 370: Modi



AGENCIES
SONIPAT (HARYANA), SEP 25

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday attacked the Congress, saying the grand old party and its allies do not like peace in Jammu and Kashmir and they want to bring back Article 370.

Bringing back Article 370 will be an insult to the sacrifices of the bravehearts who fought against terrorism in J&K, Modi

said while addressing a poll rally in Gohana in this district.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and other BJP leaders from the state were also present at the rally. Haryana goes to polls on October 5.

By mentioning J&K, where two of the three-phase polling is over, Modi targeted the Congress which is fighting in alliance with the

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Ouster of Abdullahs, Muftis, Gandhis must for democracy in J&K: Madhav

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

Senior BJP leader and election campaign in-charge for J&K, Ram Madhav, on Wednesday said that the ouster of three families of Abdullahs, Muftis and Gandhis from Jammu and Kashmir politics is a must for the flourishing of democracy in the Union Territory.

Mshav made the remark while addressing a public meeting in support of the party's candidate Faqir Mohammad Khan in Batra village of in north Kashmir's Gurez.

"PM Modi established peace in J&K and crushed terrorism but NC-Congress wants to revive terrorism and push J&K into unrest," Madhav

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Air Marshal SP Dharkar to be the next IAF Vice Chief

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPT 25

Ace fighter pilot Air Marshal SP Dharkar has been appointed as the next Vice Chief of Air Staff.

He would be succeeding incumbent Air Marshal AP Singh, who has been designated as the next Chief of Air Staff.

Dharkar would be assuming his new appointment after the new Chief takes over.

Dharkar- an experienced fighter pilot with over 3600 hours of flying. He is an alumnus of the Rashtriya Indian Military College Dehradun, National Defence Academy Pune,

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Visit to Kashmir to see how Indian democracy works: US Diplomat

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

US diplomat Jorgan Edges, who is among the group of foreign diplomats visiting Kashmir on Wednesday to see the election process, said that his visit to Kashmir is to see the election process and to learn more about how Indian democracy works.

"We, as diplomats, were pleased to visit India to see the election process and to learn more about how the Indian democracy works," Edges told the media here.

"It is a rare opportunity to come to Kashmir and see the electoral process in action to see democracy and another part of India's big year of elections," he



said. Asked about the first impression, the US diplomat observed, "it looks very smooth, very professional and everything is well set up and looks like a very exciting exercise." Asked what rating he would like to give this

process, Edges said, "we are not giving ratings as democracy is unique in every country."

Asked whether he sees any challenges here, he replied he did not and necessarily not to see any challenges here.

He said that it looks

like everything has been organised in a very typical fashion.

"I have not encountered anything which suggests any challenge," he remarked.

"It a good chance to see a sub-national-level election and obviously with

Kashmir's history. It is exciting to see elections here after 10 years or more," Edges added.

A high-level delegation of senior diplomats from several countries, including the United States of America, arrived in Kashmir to witness the ongoing Assembly election, officials said.

Soon after their arrival, the delegates straight away visited several polling stations in central Kashmir's

Badgam district to see the polling process and other arrangements. They also talked to the voters at many places.

The delegation later left for Srinagar to see the voting process.

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Govt facilitated foreign delegation's visit to J&K to showcase facade of normalcy: Omar Abdullah



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

Former chief minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday slammed the Government of India's decision to send a foreign delegation to Jammu & Kashmir on polling day, calling it an attempt

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'Er Rashid was aware in 2018 that Art 370 would be scrapped but stayed silent'

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, SEP 25

National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday alleged that Baramulla Parliamentarian Er Rashid was aware in 2018 that the government intended to revoke Article 370 but chose to remain silent instead of taking legal action.

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Kathua: First-Time Voters eagerly wait for Oct 1- the Polling Day

J1 NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

The excitement is building in Assembly Constituency 67-Kathua (SC) as the voters, particularly first-time voters prepare to cast their ballots on October 1, 2024. This historic day marks a significant milestone for these young voters, who are eagerly embracing their civic responsibility and gearing up to shape the future of their constituency.

Across Kathua, the enthusiasm of the youth is palpable. Many first-time voters are looking forward to participating in the democratic process, motivated by their aspirations for progress, development, and inclusivity. In the weeks leading up to the election, social media has been buzzing with discussions, while local communities have been engaging in conversations about the pressing issues facing the region. Edu-



cation, healthcare, and employment opportunities remain at the forefront of their concerns, and they are hopeful that their votes will contribute to creating a more prosperous and equitable future.

"This is a proud moment for me. Voting is not just a right, but a responsibility, and I'm excited to be part of this change," shared one first-time voter.

The anticipation surrounding this election has fostered a sense of unity among the residents of Kathua, as they collectively prepare to make their voices heard. The youthful energy in the constituency underscores the importance of this election, where the hope for better governance and greater opportunities resonates deeply with the people.

Enthusiastic participation marks commencement of Postal Voting in Baramulla

J1 NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 25

Postal voting for eligible voters in essential services and those on election duty commenced today across all the seven assembly constituencies of Baramulla district, ensuring that every eligible voter, regardless of their professional commitments, has the opportunity to exercise their democratic right. The measure, allowing postal voting for these voters, is aimed at guaranteeing the opportunity to participate in the electoral process even if they cannot physically visit polling stations on Election Day.

To facilitate this, the District Administration has established Postal Voting Centers (PVCs) for Absentee Voters Essential Services (AVES) and Voter Facilitation Centers (VFCs) for voters on election duty. These centres have been strategically established in all seven assembly constituencies of Baramulla,



ensuring accessibility for those who are eligible.

For the smooth conduct of postal voting, Baramulla's district administration has implemented stringent measures to ensure transparency and efficiency at every step, with District Election Officer Baramulla and Returning Officers overseeing the proceedings at ground level.

The commencement of postal voting was met with tremendous enthusiasm from the voters in the district, witnessing an eager participation of employees from essential services and election duty voters thronging the PVCs and

VFCs to cast their votes. The voters expressed their gratitude for this facilitative step, especially those employed in essential services and election duties, who are now able to exercise their democratic rights in spite of their professional commitments on the day of the election.

On the occasion, the District Election Officer (DEO) Baramulla expressed satisfaction regarding the turnout, stating that seamless arrangements have been made to empower every eligible voter, regardless of their duty commitments, to exercise their right to franchise.

SVEEP awareness program held at GHS Mara Patti

J1 NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

Government High School (GHS) Mara Patti on Wednesday organized a Voter Awareness Program under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative.

The event, held in the presence of Principal Shiv Devi, Sector Officer Dalip Kumar (Senior Lecturer), and BLO, Mara Patti, Sunil Kerni, aimed to promote voter education and encourage informed electoral participation in the community.

The Sector Officer Dalip Kumar, emphasized the importance of the SVEEP initiative as a flagship program of the Election Commission of India, designed to spread voter awareness and promote voter literacy. He highlighted that SVEEP is a multi-intervention program tailored to the socio-economic, cultural, and demographic profiles of the region, with the aim of educating citizens and electors about the electoral process. Through



various modes and media such as print, electronic, and social platforms, the Election Commission disseminates voter awareness materials to engage citizens and foster informed participation in elections.

During the event, Kuldeep Singh (Lecturer Botany) also addressed the students, stressing the need for every citizen to register as a voter and cast their vote in an informed and ethical

manner. He highlighted the importance of universal and enlightened participation in elections, which strengthens democracy and ensures that the voices of all citizens are heard. The program successfully engaged students and community members, encouraging them to take an active role in the electoral process and understand the power of their vote.

General Observer visits MCMC, ICR; reviews functioning



J1 NEWS SERVICE

KUPWARA, SEPTEMBER 25

Tshewang Gyachho Bhutia, General Observer 4-Lolab AC, on Wednesday visited Media Certification & Monitoring Centre (MCMC) Kupwara, and Integrated District Election Control Room set up at District Information Office and reviewed the functioning of these two pivotal offices for ensuring free, fair and transparent elections in the District.

On the occasion, the

General Observer inspected the documentation of MCMC, MCC violations and complaints in the mainstream media and Social media. He also took first hand appraisal of the action taken report of the violations.

He was informed that the dedicated team of MCMC during their scanning of various platforms of media identified various cases of violations since the announcement of elections to the J&K Legislative Assembly which were pro-

cessed for redressal.

Besides, General Observer was briefed regarding the other functions performed by the MCMC including Pre-Certification of Advertisements, and preparation of daily and weekly reports on Paid News and Political Advertisements in Media.

While interacting with the staff, General Observer expressed satisfaction with the overall functioning of the centre and directed to remain more vigilant in view of the approaching poll day and report any content immediately that has the potential of creating law and order issues during the election.

Reviewing the functioning of Integrated Control Room, General Observer inspected the number of grievances registered by the electorate of the district on C-vigil, status of permissions on ENCORE and the measures taken for redressal of the complaints and grievances.

He checked FSTs, SSTs via live streaming.

2-day Inter College Chess Tournament for men, women commences at GCE Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 25

A Two-day Inter College Chess Tournament 2024 for Men and Women was inaugurated today at the Government College of Education, Jammu under the supervision of Director Sports Cluster University of Jammu Dr. Vinod Bakshi. The event has drawn participation from various reputed institutions, including GGM Science College, Govt. MAM College, Govt. SPMR College of Commerce, PSPSGCW Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, and the host college. Competitions are being held in both the men's and women's categories.

The College Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar formally inaugurated the tournament with a warm welcome address. In her remarks, she motivated the players to participate with enthusiasm, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the true spirit of sportsmanship throughout the event.

The tournament was graced by the presence of several distinguished guests. Mohammad



Zubair attended as the Chief Guest, while Dr. Vinod Bakshi was the Guest of Honour, and Dr. Jyoti Parihar served as the Special Guest. The event was organized under the guidance of the College Sports Committee, led by Ramandeep Kralia, Convener of the Sports Committee, with contributions from Dr. Rakesh Bharti, Dr. Shalini Rana, Prof. Priyanka Mahajan, Prof. Sarita Dogra and Dr. Sonam Gandotra. The entire proceedings of the event were skillfully conducted by Dr. Rakesh Bharti. Other dignitaries in attendance included Prof. Satish Kumar, Neenu, Physical Director of MAM College, Ravi Kumar, Physical Director of SPMR College of Commerce, Kajal Premi, Physical Director of GCW Gandhi Nagar, Assistant Physical Direc-

tor of MAM College, Prof. Arun Sharma, and Prof. Arti Heer. Shushil Kumar officiated the matches.

On the day one, in the Men's Section, GGM Science College triumphed over MAM College with a score of 3-0, while Government SPMR College of Commerce secured a victory against Government College of Education, Jammu, with a score of 3-0. In the Women's Section, GCW Gandhi Nagar defeated Govt. College of Education, Jammu, with a score of 3-1 and GGM Science College received a walkover against MAM College.

Similarly, GGM Science College beat Government SPMR College of Commerce with a score 3-2.

The tournament continues tomorrow, with more intense competition expected as the teams strive for victory.

General Observers review Counting Centre preparations in Bandipora for Assembly Elections

J1 NEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 25

In view of Assembly Elections 2024, General Observer for Bandipora and Sonawari Assembly Constituencies (ACs) Nelson Eyon Bage and General Observer for Gurez AC, Ramniwas Yadav on Wednesday conducted a site visit to the designated counting center at Degree College Bandipora.

During the visit, District Election Officer (DEO), Manzoor Ahmad Qadri provided a comprehensive briefing on the arrangements and logistical steps taken to ensure a seamless counting process.

He said robust measures have been implemented to facilitate a smooth counting process, including extensive train-



ing for staff and logistical arrangements to ensure transparency and efficiency at every stage.

The Observers emphasized the importance of preparedness to uphold the integrity and transparency of the electoral process.

They stressed adher-

ence to all ECI protocols to maintain public confidence in the electoral system besides ensuring a fair and transparent counting process.

Among others, SSP Bandipora, ADC/Nodal Officer MCC, Dy.DEO and other concerned were present on the occasion.

"Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Pharmacy" Celebrates World Pharmacists Day



J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, SEPT 25

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Pharmacy a beacon of pharmacy education and values celebrated World Pharmacist Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Professor Mahadeva Lal Schroff and to recognize his contribution in establishing pharmacy education in India, an occasion to recognize the invaluable contributions of pharmacists to healthcare and patient well-being. This year, the theme is "Pharmacists Meeting Global Health Needs," highlighting the crucial role pharmacists play in promoting and supporting this life-saving practice. The event was attended by students, faculty, healthcare professionals, and local dignitaries, aiming to bring attention to the vital role of pharmacists in global healthcare systems and the increasing responsibilities they shoulder in meeting emerging health challenges.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Heena Jamwal (Director RG institute of pharmacy), along with Mr. Gourav Nanda (Principal) & Dr. Shalunol Jose (HOD), Ms. Seema were among the eminent persons present along with staff and students.

Dr. Heena Jamwal (Director) while addressing students said that Prof. M.L. Schroff is recognized as the Father of Pharmacy Education in India. In her keynote speech, she emphasized how pharmacists are pivotal in ensuring access to safe and effective healthcare worldwide. She underscored that pharmacists today are not limited to

dispensing medications but are involved in global health initiatives, research, patient counselling, and chronic disease management.

Mr Gourav Nanda (Principal) also spoke and highlighted the Pharmacists as critical professionals in the delivery of healthcare in the country as they bring in-depth knowledge of medicine composition, formulation and usage. The role of a pharmacist is gradually evolving from a dispenser of medicines to an expert in the field with multidisciplinary health care systems.

Dr. Shalunol Jose (HOD) highlighted the increasing demands on pharmacists in a post-pandemic world. "Pharmacists are at the forefront of many critical healthcare interventions. Their expertise in medication management, patient care, and healthcare innovation makes them integral to global efforts in combating health crises, from pandemics to chronic diseases," she said.

The Pharmacy Day celebrations at RGIP, Jammu, featured a variety of activities including Interactive Sessions, Speeches, Poems, Skit, Quizes & Poster presentation where students highlighted the importance of Pharma education for the well-being of society, followed by prize distribution ceremony by the dignitaries.

The event concluded with the vote of thanks present by Mrs. Seema Matoo, other staff members who made this event successful were Ms Mansi Chadha, Mr Sourav, Mr Rahul, Mr Abhishek, Mr Dilbag Singh, Ms Rushal Manhas, Mr. Sain Dass, Mr Dinesh.

Rangoli Competition, Skit hosted at GHS Lachhipur to promote Electoral Awareness



J1 NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

As part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, a Rangoli competition and skit programme were successfully conducted at Government High School (GHS) Lachhipur, today.

The twin events were part of spreading awareness about the importance of voting, with a special focus on educating the public about the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

The students enthusiastically participated in the event, using art and performance as a medium to convey the significance of voter participation in the upcoming elections. The Rangoli competition beautifully illustrated themes related to democracy and the electoral process, while the skit performance captivated the audience, delivering a clear message

on the importance of casting votes responsibly and using EVMs accurately.

The skit, performed by the students, was particularly impactful, offering a vivid demonstration of the voting process through EVMs, emphasizing how each vote plays a critical role in shaping the future of the constituency. The performance was well-received by the audience, who appreciated the students' creativity and dedication to raising awareness on such a vital issue.

These were part of broader SVEEP awareness programme of District SVEEP Cell designed to educate voters across the region, encouraging full participation in the electoral process. The local administration and school authorities lauded the efforts of the students, expressing confidence that such initiatives would significantly increase voter turnout in the upcoming elections.

BJP Pledges to Form Government in J&K, Aims to Make Akhnoor a District

JINNEWS SERVICE
JOURIAN, SEPT 25

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is ramping up its campaign efforts with a strong commitment to bring transformative changes to Jammu & Kashmir, with a special focus on Akhnoor. BJP Candidate and former Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohan Lal Bhagat conducted an extensive door-to-door outreach program in Jourian Bazar, engaging directly with local residents. Alongside this, Bhagat held public meetings in Charada Gran, Partap Kot, Bangti, and Gandarwan, where hundreds of enthusiastic supporters gathered to show their backing for the BJP candidate.

In his addresses, Mohan Lal Bhagat emphasized his dedication to fulfilling



the 25 key promises outlined in the BJP's Sankalp Patra. Among these, he announced a major uplift in social welfare schemes, including the enhancement of old age, widow, and disability pensions from Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000. Furthermore, he declared an increase in the coverage limit of the Ayush-

man Bharat Yojana from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh per person.

Bhagat underscored his vision of transforming Akhnoor into a model constituency with improved infrastructure and development projects. He reiterated his commitment to making Akhnoor a district, a move he believes will

generate jobs, boost local businesses, and strengthen the overall economy of the region.

"We will work tirelessly to ensure Akhnoor's development, and making it a district will be my top priority. This step will open new avenues for growth, provide employment opportunities, and enhance the economic stature of the constituency," said Bhagat.

Accompanying Bhagat on his campaign trail were prominent BJP leaders and supporters, including Jagdish Bhagat, In-charge of the SC Morcha, Ex-BDC Kiran Pawar, Ex-Sarpanch Devinder Singh, Rocky Mahajan, and Ashok Choudhary. Their united efforts aim to solidify the party's vision of a prosperous Akhnoor within a vibrant Jammu & Kashmir under BJP governance.

Only Congress can liberate people from clutches of 'Autocratic' BJP: Tony

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

The Congress Party has the potential to liberate the people of Jammu and Kashmir from the clutches of the dictatorial BJP, which has inflicted a tyrannical ideology that disregards the welfare of the populace.

This assertion was made by Taranjit Singh Tony, the Congress candidate contesting from the Bahu constituency, while intensifying his election campaign across various localities in the region for the upcoming Assembly polls.

The senior Congress leader highlighted that the party is actively working at the grassroots level to raise awareness about the ways in which BJP has misappropriated resources and plunged the region into a state of deprivation and disaster.

Tony emphasized the necessity of supporting Congress to bring about Janata Raaj in Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that the BJP's previous governance



has been marked by failures. He pointed out that the incumbent BJP administration has burdened the nation with unprecedented inflation, record-breaking unemployment, and a plethora of false promises. "Congress is the only viable option available to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, capable of providing affordable amenities and a corruption-free environment. The people-friendly policies of Congress are well-known, and once the party assumes power in J&K, we will witness a positive transformation. Our government will genuinely serve the inter-

ests of the people, as it should be—by the people, for the people, and of the people," Tony stated.

In contrast, the current government seems to prioritize the interests of just two or three major corporate houses, leaving the rest of the population at the mercy of fate."

Tony appealed to the voters of the Bahu constituency to support Congress in the upcoming elections, asserting that only through their votes can they usher in a government that truly represents the needs and aspirations of the common people.

Returning Officer AC Thanamandi refutes claims of Political Party

JINNEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 25

The Returning Officer Thanamandi has clarified that the election in the Assembly Constituency were conducted smoothly and peacefully without any major disruptions.

"The allegation that polling agents of a Particular Party were not allowed entry into Polling Stations No. 183, 142, 139, 138, 133, and 132 is completely unfounded. Polling agents of the said party are present and have been functioning without any hindrance in Polling Stations No. 132, 133, 142, and 183" he said.

However, he said "In the case of Polling Stations 138 and 139, the polling agents were not authorized by the said Political Party itself, and thus, the absence of these agents is due to internal party decisions, not external interference."

"In light of these facts, all allegations made in a press conference by the contesting candidate are baseless and without merit. The election process continues to be conducted fairly and transparently, in line with the guidelines provided by the Election Commission of India," he added.

Rahul Gandhi is non-serious politician: Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

In a sharp critique, Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia, BJP Spokesperson and Prabhari for Social Media, described Rahul Gandhi as a "non-serious politician" who has failed to earn respect or credibility, not only among the opposition but even within his own party and from his allies. Dr. Jasrotia's remarks came in response to a recent statement by former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who suggested that Rahul Gandhi should focus on Jammu as he has been a major failure in Kashmir.

Dr. Jasrotia highlighted the growing sentiment across the political spectrum that Rahul Gandhi's influence has waned significantly. "The irony is that no one, whether the opposition, his own Congress party, or his political allies, takes Rahul Gandhi seriously anymore. The country as a whole doesn't take him seriously at all. The only people who seem serious about him are those conspiring against Bharat (India)," Dr. Jasrotia stated. Further intensifying his criticism, Dr. Jasrotia referred to the recent controversy surrounding Rahul Gandhi's pictures with U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who has been known for her anti-India stance. "Congress ka haath dushman ke saath" (The hand of Congress is with the enemy), he said, accusing Gandhi of aligning with forces hostile to India's interests.

He added that such actions by Rahul Gandhi not only damage his own reputation but also raise serious concerns about the Congress Party's position on national security. "At a time when India is progressing and emerging stronger on the global stage, those who are threatened by this progress seem to take Rahul Gandhi seriously.

BJP pledges 5 lakh jobs, IT hub, major youth-centric reforms: Arvind



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

As the campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections heats up, Arvind Gupta, Senior BJP leader and contesting candidate for Jammu West, emphasized the party's strong focus on youth in its manifesto, vowing to bring transformative changes for the next generation.

Gupta highlighted key promises from the BJP manifesto, which include the creation of 5 lakh jobs across sectors, ensuring sustainable employment opportunities for the youth. "BJP government is committed to tackling unemployment by providing jobs in both the public and private sectors, giving the youth of Jammu the opportunities they deserve," said Gupta.

Additionally, the BJP has pledged Rs 10,000 in coaching fee assistance for students preparing for competitive exams, ensuring that financial barriers don't hinder the

aspirations of ambitious young minds. To further strengthen the education system, Gupta also announced the party's plan to provide free laptops for students, helping bridge the digital divide and equipping students with the tools they need for modern education.

Arvind Gupta also underscored the importance of healthcare education, revealing the BJP's proposal to create 1,000 new medical seats, giving more students the chance to pursue medical careers and improve healthcare accessibility across the region.

In a significant push towards technological advancement, Gupta reiterated his commitment to the creation of an IT Hub in Jammu, aiming to make the region a center for innovation and entrepreneurship. This hub will attract investments, generate high-quality jobs, and open doors for youth interested in technology and startups, he added.

All DSS leaders join BJP



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

The office bearers of Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan (DSS), led by General Secretary, Hari Dutt Shishu, on Wednesday joined the BJP during a programme organized at BJP media center, today evening.

The new entrants were welcomed into the party fold by union minister and Incharge J&K Assembly elections, G Krishna Reddy, BJP's Working President, Sat Sharma, former Deputy Chief Minister, Dr. Nirmal Singh, Rajya Sabha MP Engineer Ghulam Ali Khatana, and Media Center In-charge, Arun Gupta

While speaking on the occasion, Reddy said, "It is not just joining but a magic and shows BJP's growing popularity in J&K".

Welcoming the new members, Reddy said that the Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan, which has been raising voices for the interests of Jammu, has now become part of BJP and it will impact the results of upcoming Assembly

elections. Working President Sat Sharma and former Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh also welcomed the office bearers of Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan into the BJP.

Among those who joined Rajesh Sharma Incharge Suchetgar CWC Member Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan Party, Maninder Singh Secretary Udhampur, Surjeet Kumar Bhagat Ex President Municipal Committee Nagri Kathua kathua Secretary, Rakesh Kumar Sharma Kathua, Dhian Singh Ji In charge Nagrota CWC Member, Yog Raj Sharma CWC Member Hira Nagar, Mahipal Sharma Kathua, Ashish Sharma Youth leader Jammu, Jhanvi Gupta Youth Leader Women cell Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan Party, Vikram Singh Andotra CWC Member Kathua, Balwant Singh Mandla CWC Member Incharge Boder Belt Arnia, Ramesh Chander, Secretary Kisan Cell Along with supporters which include Academician, Advocates, Formers and Youth leaders, local Business men and others.

Sat asks Cong to clear stand on Art 370



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

The joining of prominent leaders from different political parties in BJP continues as in this regard, PDP District President, Dapinder Singh Romi along with his team joined BJP during a programme organized at party head office, here today.

J&K BJP Working President, Sat Sharma, Ashish Sood, Seh Prabhari, Ranjodh Singh Nalwa, President, BJP Minority Morcha, Santokh Singh, General Secretary, Minority Morcha, in presence of other BJP leaders welcomed the new entrants into the party fold and

said that party will further be strengthened with joining of new people.

"More and more people are impressed by the policies of PM Modi and are embracing the BJP," Sat said, while adding, "BJP will form next government in J&K on its own".

Sat said that PM Modi has established peace in J&K by abrogating Article 370 and people are now living a dignified life. "Record number of tourists are now visiting J&K and film shootings have also started after more than 3 decades," he said.

He said that NC and Cong are responsible for terrorism and unrest in J&K. "These parties are now promising to release

the jailed terrorists and stone pelters," Sat said, adding, "NC and Cong want death and destruction in J&K and want to push it terrorism and unrest".

Sat also asked Cong to clear its stand on Article 370 and snatching of reservation rights given by PM Modi to Gujjars, Paharis, OBCs.

While speaking on the occasion, Ashish Sood said that there is a strong wave in favor of BJP as the 1st phase proved. "I have been visiting different places across J&K and seeing the ground situation I am 100% confident that BJP will form next government in J&K with full majority," Sood said.

DPAP candidate from Bahu AC seeks blessings of Mahant Manjit Singh

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) candidate for Bahu-Gandhi Nagar Assembly Constituency, Sobat Ali Choudhary on Wednesday visited Digiana Ashram and got the blessings of Mahant Manjit Singh Ji.

After this Sobat Ali, senior DPAP leader and former JMC Councillor conducted door-to-door visits at Digiana, Govindpura and Chatha areas of the Constituency and directly met the people of all sections of society.

The DPAP candidate listened to the problems of people who raised the issue of unemployment, drug addiction, poor sanitary conditions, power cuts and other problems.

Sobat Ali assured them that their issues will soon be taken up with the concerned authorities for a quick resolution.

Ali appealed to the people of the area to vote and support him in the Assembly elections so that he can properly work for the welfare of the people of Bahu Constituency.



He said that DPAP chief Ghulam Nabi Azad has a vision for J&K and the party will be an important force in forming the new government.

"On winning elections I will rope in national and international companies to solve the problem of unemployment," Sobat Ali maintained seeking full support from the public of Bahu constituency for making the constituency a model constituency in entire J&K.

He said that as the Leg-

islative Assembly elections are being held after 10 years the public should vote with full responsibility for their own welfare and to ensure peace and progress in J&K.

People from all sections of the society came forward and extended full support to Sobat Ali from Bahu constituency.

They said that the popular political parties remained selective in welfare measures and developments due to which the region suffered a lot.

Randhawa's Popularity Soars in Bahu Constituency

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) popular leader, MLA candidate for Bahu Constituency Vikram Randhawa, has witnessed a significant surge in popularity among the residents of Bahu assembly seat. As Mr. Randhawa continues to connect with voters through his door-to-door campaign, the public meeting at Ranibagh and its adjoining areas has affectionately dubbed him the "Rising Star" of Bahu Constituency. The people of Bahu Constituency have overwhelmingly expressed their appreciation for Randhawa's dedication, sincerity, and vision for development. His ability to listen to their concerns and provide tangible solutions has resonated deeply with the community. Randhawa has brought a new wave of enthusiasm to our constitu-



ency," said the local populace. "His humility and willingness to serve the people have earned him our respect and support."

While interacting with senior citizens, women, students, and shopkeepers in these areas, he shared with them that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has completed ten years in the office, and this period has been splendid in all matters. The list of achievements of the Modi government is very long, as numerous megaprojects of development were initiated during these years

and also countless welfare schemes launched for the poor and needy in the country.

He asked the people to go through the achievements of the Modi government and also educate others about what has been done without any discrimination. He asked the people not to get misled by the false propaganda of the Congress and other regional parties and to strengthen the BJP, as it is the only party that takes care of one and all in a fair manner. He said that the nine-year rule of Narendra Modi has writ-

ten new chapters of development and welfare, which has turned opposition parties speechless.

Randhawa's rising popularity is a testament to his tireless efforts to serve the people of Bahu Constituency. As the election approaches, his momentum is expected to continue, solidifying his position as a strong contender for the MLA seat.

Quote from Randhawa "I am humbled by the overwhelming support from the people of Bahu Constituency. Their trust and faith in me fuel my determination to work tirelessly for their welfare and development. I pledge to continue serving the community with dedication and sincerity."

With Randhawa's popularity on the rise, Bahu Constituency is poised for transformative growth and development under his leadership.

Over 56 per cent voting...

As far as the Assembly constituency wise figures, in Kashmir, Central-Shalteng recorded 29.09 percent voting, Chanapora 26.95, Eidgah 34.65, Habba Kadal 18.80, Hazratbal 30.66, Khanyar 24.00, Lal Chowk 30.44 and Zadibal 28.36 per cent. "Beerwah registered 62.50 per cent voting, Budgam 47.18, Chadoora 54.16, Charar-e-Shareef 66 per cent and Khansahib 67.70," the CEO said. "Ganderbal recorded 53.44 percent voting and Kangan (ST) 67.60 per cent."

In the Jammu region, the CEO said Gulabgarh (ST) recorded 72.19 per cent voting, Reasi 69.09, Mata Vaishno Devi 80, Mendhar 69.67, Poonch Haveli 72.71, Surankote 72.18, Budhal 66.95 per cent, Kalakote-Sunderbani 66.37, Nowshera 69 per cent, Rajouri (ST) 70.56 per cent, Thanamandi 68.44 per cent.

The CEO said that phase two Assembly polls have surpassed the turnout recorded in the Lok Sabha polls held earlier this year. About the foreign delegations visit to Kashmir, the CEO said that diplomats visited four to five polling stations and expressed satisfaction with the poll process. "Our officers explained them the preparations made and the process how elections are being conducted," he said. KNO

History in...

phase of polling was underway on 26 seats in the Union Territory, Kumar said 100 per cent CCTV coverage is available for this phase and one could see youngsters, women and senior citizens patiently standing in queues, awaiting their turn to exercise their franchise.

"It is a festival of democracy. Voting is taking place in areas where it did not take place earlier.... There were calls for disruption and boycott in the past.... It is a standing ovation for democracy," the CEC said in the presence of fellow election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

Kumar said history is in the making in Jammu and Kashmir and its impact will be felt for a long time as he lauded the enthusiastic participation of the voters in the poll process. (Agencies)

LG congratulates people...

Assembly Election for turning out in large numbers to exercise their franchise. In a social media post, the Lieutenant Governor applauded the spirit of the people to strengthen the democratic values and for upholding the rich democratic traditions.

The Lieutenant Governor posted on X: "I would like to congratulate voters of Reasi, Poonch, Rajouri, Ganderbal, Budgam and Srinagar for turning out in large numbers to exercise their franchise. I applaud the spirit of the people to strengthen the democratic values and to uphold our rich democratic traditions.

Record voter turnout is shining example of vibrant and progressive democracy. I also appreciate the remarkable contribution of the election officials, JKP, security forces for smooth, free, fair and peaceful polling in 26 Assembly Constituencies in Phase-2".

Srinagar records...

India's (EC) voter turnout report, Reasi district has registered the highest voter turnout in J&K at 71.81 percent, closely followed by Poonch at 71.59 percent and Rajouri at 68.22 percent.

According to the voter turnout report, Budgam district in Kashmir is leading with a voter turnout of 58.97 percent, followed by Ganderbal closely at 58.81 percent.

Other assembly constituencies in Srinagar recorded the turnout percentages as, Central Shalteng 29.09 per cent, Chanapora 26.95, Hazratbal 30.65, Khanyar 24.00, Lal Chowk 30.44, and Zadibal 28.36 per cent.

Several voters from Central Shalteng, while speaking to KNO, expressed their desire to vote to keep the BJP at bay and to address unemployment issues.

A total of 25,78,099 voters were eligible to vote in this phase, comprising 13,12,730 male voters, 12,65,316 female voters, and 53 third-gender voters. This phase will determine the fate of 239 candidates.

Pertinently, the first phase of voting was held on September 18 across 24 constituencies in seven districts. The third phase will take place on October 1, after which counting of votes is scheduled to be held on October 8. KNO

INDIA alliance will hit...

Rahul Gandhi said addressing a mega rally in Jammu.

"After the elections, the INDIA alliance will build pressure on the BJP led government to restore the Statehood to J&K. If they do not do it still, we will storm the well in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and also hit streets across the country," Rahul said as per news agency.

He said if BJP doesn't succumb to opposition's pressure, then the INDIA alliance will restore the statehood to J&K soon after coming to power which is going to happen soon.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bragging much on "Make in India", Rahul said Adani and Ambani's tags are being fixed on Israeli made weapons. He said that the promise made by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh about Kashmiri Pandit Rehabilitation will be fulfilled. "As far as smart meters are concerned, we will remove them, we don't need them," he said. "We will make Punjabi an official language as well."

The LoP said that in the Parliament, he will

raise the voice of J&K people. He said the BJP led government has gagged the development of J&K. "J&K affairs are run by outsiders. Lieutenant Governor is doing things at his will," he said.

Rahul said that Kashmir's economy was dependent on its Apple but today, Prime Minister Modi has handed over "Kashmiri apples to Adanis' and Ambanis". "Wherever you go, there is Adani tax and Ambani tax. Prime Minister has waived off Rs 16 lakh crore worth loan for Adanis and Ambanis," Rahul said. He said unless and until, small medium enterprises flourish in J&K, unemployment will prevail.

"But BJP doesn't want it, that's why LG has been brought in," he said. Rahul sought votes for Congress candidates in Jammu. He is scheduled to address another rally in Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla late this afternoon. KNO

J&K Cong chief...

Karra, whose fate will be decided in Wednesday's voting, made these remarks in reply to a question about the visit of foreign diplomats.

"There are two aspects of their visit. One of them is that Jammu and Kashmir has already been a centre point and next thing may be by their visit, clarity will emerge about what the people want from these elections," Karra told media persons in Srinagar

He said the foreign delegations were often visiting Kashmir and "it can be possible that the government of India is willing to show them the good atmosphere and participation of people to sell their "deceptive" work around the world".

Karra said that Congress is the lone party which is fighting against the divisive, communal and anti-sectoral policies of Bharatiya Janata Party in the country.

He said people have understood the Congress party's importance and "if we will compare it on the state and national level, Congress is playing an important role in Jammu and Kashmir by which the people have been associating with us."

In reply to a question Karra said that Congress is the lone party which is fighting the present elections against BJP in Jammu and that is the reason the people are enthusiastic in Kashmir.

Karra said that the response of the people during the campaign was good and I had asserted people should know that this time the stress on the issues of lane, drain or development should be less and more on the contentious issues like restoration of full statehood, land and job rights.

He said people have been humiliated by the scraping of Article 370 unconstitutionally and undemocratically and with that humiliation the people are casting their votes.

Vote for positive change...

the people of Jammu and Kashmir to come out in large numbers to exercise their Democratic rights."

"When you press the voting button on the EVM, do think about how your decade was lost in betrayal. A state was downgraded to a Union Territory for the first time in history. There is widespread unemployment and rampant corruption, with land rights and social justice issues becoming prevalent," Kharge said.

Urging the first-time voters, Kharge said, "A vote for positive change will secure your future and guarantee unbridled welfare. One single vote will secure your constitutional rights. I warmly welcome the first time voters, who look forward to a better future."

"These elections are a turning point for Jammu and Kashmir, and let us use the power of democracy to make that change happen," the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said.

In the second phase, polling is on for 26 assembly constituencies spread over six districts of the Union Territory.

In Jammu, voting is underway in 11 constituencies, while in Kashmir, voters are casting their ballots in 15 constituencies.

Cong, allies don't...

National Conference (NC) in the Union Territory (UT).

Referring to the J&K polls, he said the Congress and its allies do not like peace there. A number of brave soldiers from Haryana are safeguarding the country's borders. There are many of these from the state who helped normalise the situation in J&K, he said.

When polls are peacefully held in J&K, brave mothers of Haryana feel happy, he said. "But Congress and their associates do not like peace in Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress wants to bring back Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. It again wants to promote terror and 'algav' (separatism) there.

"For appeasement, the Congress wants to implement the agenda of the country's enemy in India. I am sure you will teach the Congress a lesson and I have full belief," he said.

The prime minister said under the BJP government, Haryana has made a place among the top states in industry and agriculture sectors.

"Today, the world's biggest companies are interested in setting up factories in India, he said, adding "when industrialisation increases, its biggest benefit goes to the poor, farmers and Dalits".

He said when big companies invest, it will benefit the youth of Haryana and farmers of the state.

From Gurugram to Faridabad and Sonapat to Panipat, Haryana is becoming the centre of world's big companies, Modi said, adding

more than 35 per cent carpets and 20 per cent clothes exported from the country are manufactured in Haryana, he said.

In Kharkhoda here, industrial town is being set up and the endeavour is to ensure maximum employment and jobs to the youth, he said.

Many such industrial towns will be set up elsewhere in state. Maruti's unit is also coming up and many more units will come up, he said.

The prime minister said in three years, lakhs of new jobs connected to the manufacturing sector have been generated. Suzuki company manufactures car in the country and Japanese people purchase it after procuring it from India, he said, referring to the company's unit in the state.

He said with people coming to set up new units and make new investment, Haryana needs a government which gives boost to industry, and appealed to people to bring back the BJP to power.

Referring to Sonapat region, he said this land gave great men like Bhagat Phool Singh, who made girl's education their mission.

"It is my fortune that in 2015, I got the opportunity to launch Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign from Panipat," said Modi.

He said he was satisfied that Haryana benefitted with the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign.

Referring to the poll-bound state, which was once infamous for its adverse sex ratio, Modi said 10 years ago, there were 866 girls per 1,000 boys, which now is 914 girls per 1,000 boys.

"Today, Haryana's daughters are proving their mettle in sports, police and the armed forces," he said.

Haryana is the country's medal factory, Modi said, as he referred to medal won by sports persons in the recently concluded Olympics and Paralympics.

Olympic nurseries will be set up in Haryana, he said.

"I am saying with pride that whatever I am today, Haryana has a great contribution in it," he said.

On the occasion, Modi also talked about the BJP's Haryana poll manifesto, which was released recently, in which the party has made various promises, including a monthly assistance of Rs 2,100 for women, if voted to power.

Polling for the 90-member Haryana assembly will be held on October 5 and the votes will be counted on October 8. (Agencies)

Ouster of Abdullaha...

said, adding, "people are with the development agenda of PM Modi".

Cong-NC wants to bring back Article 370 which means they want death and destruction in J&K, he said. "The ouster of dynastic parties from the politics of J&K is a must for democracy to flourish peace in J&K".

He said PM has brought democracy to the ground and restored peace in J&K, paving the way for development and prosperity.

Madhav alleged the three dynastic parties looted J&K and crushed democracy. Complete freedom from such rulers is essential so that peace prevails and development continues, he said.

He urged the public to vote in large numbers to ensure the BJP's victory so that the ongoing development and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir do not come to a halt.

On the occasion, the BJP General Secretary (Organisation), Ashok Koul expressed hope that the people will support BJP. "Only BJP can guarantee peace and development in J&K and its bright future," Koul said.

He said people are fully behind PM Modi's development agenda and BJP will form the next government in J&K.

Visit to Kashmir to...

The delegation is likely to visit Jammu also. The delegates from US, Mexico, Guyana, South Korea, Somalia, Panama, Singapore, Nigeria, Spain, South Africa, Norway, Tanzania, Rwanda, Algeria, Philippines are visiting Kashmir on Wednesday to witness the ongoing election process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Polling is currently underway in 26 assembly constituencies spread over six districts of Jammu and Kashmir. These are the first elections in J&K in a decade and after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

They said most of the embassies are represented by their Cda/ DCM (Chargé d'Affaires ad interim and Deputy Chief of Mission) and others are represented by Political officers at Minister-Counsellor/ Counsellor ranks.

Meanwhile, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference vice-president, Omar Abdullah, questioned the visit of foreign delegation in Srinagar and said "I do not know why foreigners should ask to check the elections."

He said when foreign governments made their comments on Kashmir, India said that "this is our internal matter. Now, suddenly the foreign observers are coming to Kashmir to look at our elections. These are the internal matter for us. We do not need their certificate."

"This participation is not because of the Government of India, but due to what the Union government did... they humiliated people, they have used all the machinery to detain and harass the people and despite that the people are coming and participating in the elections," Omar told media persons today.

"This is not something that the government of India should be highlighting," he added.

J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra said that the foreign diplo-

mats' visit to Kashmir is to "sell" the "deceptive" work of the Government of India.

"There are two aspects of their visit. One of them is that Jammu and Kashmir has already been a centre point and next thing may be by their visit, clarity will emerge about what the people want from these elections," Karra told media persons in Srinagar.

He said the foreign delegations were often visiting Kashmir and "it can be possible that the Government of India is willing to show them the good atmosphere and participation of people to sell their "deceptive" work around the world."

Govt facilitated...

to create a false impression of normalcy in the region.

Addressing a public rally, Omar questioned the logic behind sending foreign delegations to Kashmir, despite the government's claims that the issue is an internal matter.

"If the Jammu and Kashmir issue is truly internal, what's the purpose of sending foreign delegations here? It's only to create an illusion of peace and normalcy, which is not the reality on the ground," he said.

The National Conference (NC) vice president, who cast his vote along with his two sons at the Ram Munshi polling booth in Srinagar, accused the government of making life difficult for common Kashmiris.

He said that despite the hardships, people are participating in elections in defiance of the government's attempts to suppress them. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir are not voting because they are happy with the Centre, but are voting in defiance of hardships and against the atrocities of the government in the past seven years," he said, adding, "The government has left no stone unturned to make life difficult for the common Kashmiris."

Abdullah warned that if the NC or its alliance does not form the next government after the upcoming elections, there is a high possibility that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will seize the opportunity.

"If the BJP forms the government, they might use it to pass an ordinance claiming that people of Jammu & Kashmir have accepted the abrogation of Article 370 and all decisions made since August 5, 2019," he said.

Omar asserted that if people are indeed happy with the abrogation of Article 370 and the current situation in the region, it will be reflected in the upcoming election results.

The former CM said every candidate of any political party contests elections to win and that NC has the same expectation.

"We expect more and more votes in favour of NC. Wherever NC is not contesting, we hope our alliance partner Indian National Congress (INC) will get votes there," he said. KNO

Er Rashid was aware...

Speaking at a public rally, Omar, as per the news agency, accused the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief of playing emotional politics and being tasked by the Government of India (GoI) to manipulate the people of Kashmir. "It's strange that Er Rashid, in recent interviews, claimed he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an hour, during which Modi asked him to help in scrapping Article 370. Rashid responded by saying he supported Modi in all his good decisions," he said.

The former chief minister added, "Had he (Er Rashid) raised the issue in 2018, legal steps could have been taken to fight against the move. He could have moved to the Supreme Court. Perhaps there might have been a verdict that would have saved Kashmir's special status, flag, and constitution. But he remained quiet, and now, in 2019, the people are suffering."

Quoting a famous phrase, the NC leader said, "Lamhoon Ne Khataa Ki, Sadiyoon Ne Saza Paayi" (A mistake made in moments is punished for centuries)." He further accused Rashid of being assigned by the central government to manipulate the emotions of the people and divide votes in Kashmir.

"Er Rashid claims to further the Hurriyat's agenda, but his words and actions tell a different story. He aligns himself with those who dismantle Hurriyat's identity, and with individuals like Sandeep Mawa, who publicly brief the press while awaiting Yasin Malik's hanging," Abdullah said.

Omar challenged Er Rashid to clarify his position on forming an alliance with the BJP if needed to form a government. "I am still waiting for that speech from him where he clearly states he won't support the BJP. He hasn't uttered a word," he said. KNO

Air Marshal SP Dharkar...

Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and Air War College, USA. Commissioned in June 1985, he is a Qualified Flying Instructor, Fighter Strike Leader, and Instrument Rating Instructor and Examiner and has also been an Air Force Examiner.

During his illustrious career, he has commanded a frontline fighter squadron and a Fighter Flying Training Establishment.

He has instructional experience in conducting Professional Military Education for medium and senior level officers at the Defence Services Staff College and at the College of Air Warfare, Secunderabad.

He has served as Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Training) at Air Headquarters and Air Defence Commander at Headquarters Eastern Air Command.

He has the distinction of being the first Director General of Defence Space Agency. He has been the head of Eastern Air Command for the last two years now. (AGENCIES)

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

Format C-2							
(For political party to publish in website, newspaper TV)							
<u>Declaration about criminal antecedents of candidates set up by the party.</u>							
(As per the judgment dated 25 th September 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) no. 536 OF 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & ors v/s Union of India & Anr)							
Name of political party: J&K NATIONAL PANTHERS PARTY (BHIM)							
Name of election ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2024							
Name of State/UT JAMMU & KASHMIR							
1	2	3	4	5			
Sl. No.	Name of constituency	Name of candidate	(A) Pending criminal cases	(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of courts case no. And status of the case(s)	Sections of the acts concerned and description of offence(s)	Name of court and order date(s) of order(s)	Description of offences and punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
1	76- JAMMU EAST	RAJESH GONDHI	JM1C (ELECTRICITY MAGISTRATE) JAMMU 22003/2016 DT. 31.10.2016- PENDING	380/411/201 RPC	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
			N.A.	FIR NO. 67/2008 U/S 457, 380, 411 RPC	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

NYKS organises Swachhta Hi Seva Cleanliness Campaign in UTs of J&K and Ladakh

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

My Bharat an autonomous body under Department of Youth Affairs, MoYA&S is conducting Nation Wide Campaign Swachh Bharat Mission - Naya Sankalp with the theme of Swabhav Swachhta - Sanskar Swachhta in a mission mode with the spirit of Jan Bhagidhari se Jan andolan

As a befitting tribute to Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji and celebration of 10th year of Swachh Bharat Mission, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, J&K and Ladakh UTs under MoYAS, Govt of India has organized Swachhta hi Seva Cleanliness campaign with the theme of Swachh Bharat mission - Naya Sankalp across the 20 district in J&K UT and 2 districts in Ladakh UT in coordination with Youth Clubs/ Mahila Mandal,



social activists, Education Department, Youth Service and Sports Deptt and volunteers registered on My Bharat Portal.

The objectives of the programme is to Educate and generate Awareness on the significance of sanitation, hygiene and waste management and share best practices for maintaining cleanliness.,

to educate and generate awareness about the environmental and health impacts of single use plastics and to promote sustainable alternatives.

The programme commenced on 17th September and will be culminated on 2nd October - the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi ji which is observed as Swachh

Bharat Diwas. The target fixed for collection of waste and disposal around 1.66 lakh kg in J&K and Ladakh UTs.

The activities under the Swachh Bharat Mission gained momentum on the 9th day with NYKS organizing village-level activities in all the districts of the UTs of J&K and Ladakh. In both UTs, the event saw a tremendous public response with a large number of people and youth joining the campaign and conducting door-to-door campaigns, street cleaning, garbage collection, cleaning of iconic places, pledging ceremonies, poster making, nukkad natak, etc. 246 blocks and 1205 villages were covered in J&K under this campaign. More than 60,000 Kg waste materials (Sup) were collected and disposed off during the campaign.

School soil health card scheme gaining attention of students to save mother soil

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

As per the directions of Director Agriculture Jammu Dr. Arvinder Singh Reen, a team of experts from District soil testing laboratory Jammu headed by Dr. Neeraj Rajwal, Assistant Soil Chemist along with Principal Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Jhiri Sh. Sarsa Ram, Teachers and students conducted field visit of Kalyanpur area of Marh sub division to register farmers and collection of soil samples through mobile app designed under School soil health card scheme a Pilot project which was launched by Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Department Govt. of India in collaboration with Department of School education and Literacy in this year aimed to give chance to the students to conduct experiments, analyze soil samples, and explore the



fascinating biodiversity within the soil.

By engaging in practical activities, students will develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of ecosystems. Students will learn about sustainable agricultural practices, the impact of human activities on soil health, and the role each of us plays in preserving the delicate balance of our ecosystems said Rajwal.

Giving more information Dr. Rajwal added that

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya, Eklavya Model Schools and Govt. Hr. Sec. Schools have been taken under this programme. Schools are being onboarded on the School Soil Health card portal and online batches are being created. He said School students will collect soil samples, test in the Mini labs set up in schools and generate Soil health Card. After generating Soil Health Card, they will go to the farmers and educate them about recommendation of Soil health Card.

National Webinar on Sustainable Energy held at SMVDU

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

National Webinar on Sustainable Energy: An Environmental Approach and Solar Photovoltaic: Nano fluid Approach has been organised by School of Mechanical Engineering, SMVDU on 23.09.2024. In the inaugural function; Prof. Balbir Singh, Dean (AA), SMVDU has presided over the function, and delivered his presidential address, highlighting the importance of sustainable development goals on clean and affordable energy practice at local and national level. Also, importance of collaborative work in this area between SMVDU and Puducherry Technological University. Prof. Yathesh Anand, Head, School of Mechanical Engineering has advised the students about clean and zero emission energy conversion systems at micro and macro level.

Vote for Congress, NC candidates: Chalotra

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

Today, a significant meeting was held by the OBC Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC), led by Chairman Madan Lal Chalotra, alongside Vice Chairman Bodh Raj Goliya, General Secretary Darshan Mehra and key leaders such as Chaman Lal Gandhi and Maheshwar Vishwakarma. The team met with Congress Candidate from Bishnah constituency and Secretary AICC, Neeraj Kundan to strategize for the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The focus of the meeting was on mobilizing support for Congress and National Conference (NC) candidates, particularly in the Bishnah constituency.



stituency and a prominent leader of social justice. His history of advocating for marginalized communities, especially the youth and OBCs, reflects his deep commitment to fairness and equality in society. Kundan's leadership, coupled with his strong grassroots connections, positions him as a true representative of the people's aspirations.

As a young and forward-thinking leader, Neeraj Kundan brings a fresh perspective to politics, focusing on inclusive develop-

ment and empowerment for underrepresented communities. His ability to listen to the concerns of his constituents and provide solutions rooted in social justice makes him stand out. Constituencies led by leaders like Kundan often experience progressive change, driven by a vision of equal opportunity and fairness for all.

It is crucial for the electorate to recognize and focus on candidates like Neeraj Kundan, who possess the potential to transform their regions

and champion the cause of social justice. In a political landscape where true leadership is often scarce, Kundan's candidacy offers hope for a better future—one where the voices of marginalized groups are heard, and the needs of the people are prioritized over political agendas. His rise would mark a significant step toward ensuring equality and justice for all sections of society.

During the meeting, Madan Lal Chalotra emphasized the Congress Party's long-standing com-

mitment to social justice, particularly for the OBC community, which has historically been marginalized in political representation. Chalotra's leadership in mobilizing the OBC vote is crucial for the party's electoral strategy in the region. The meeting highlighted the importance of unity among various sections of society to secure a victory for the Congress-NC alliance, which aims to deliver inclusive governance.

The leaders stressed the need for unified support for Congress candidates, affirming that their success would lead to better representation, development, and justice for all communities in Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting concluded with a strong message of solidarity and a renewed commitment to the Congress's vision of equality, social justice, and progress. This is time to vote and support Neeraj Kundan.

Thapar Institute Counselling Cell successfully hosted Luminescence 2024

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIET) renowned for its progressive educational initiatives, hosted Luminescence 2024. This marquee event was organized by the Thapar Institute Counselling Cell (TICC) whose focus is to provide a supportive environment that assist students with mental wellbeing. With the theme "Illuminate, Empower, Thrive," the event was a resounding success, fostering greater mental health awareness amongst students and parents and equipping students with essential tools for personal and academic growth.

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIET) places the mental well-being of its students at the forefront of its institutional priorities. Through Thapar Institute Counselling Cell (TICC), the institute has created a robust support system, ensuring that students have access to the resources, counselling, and community support they need to navigate the pressures of modern academic life. With global suicide rates exceeding 700,000 annually and India accounting for



1,70,000 of these cases, according to The Lancet, and a 4% rise in student suicides, as per the National Crime Records Bureau, the need for proactive mental health interventions has never been more urgent. With programs like Luminescence, which represent its strategic focus on developing a campus culture where mental health is a key concern, TIET is tackling this epidemic head-on. The institute is enabling students to develop emotional resilience in addition to academic achievement by offering them comprehensive assistance. Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIET) is a leader in establishing a supportive, thriving environment for students' growth and well-being. This innovative approach puts TIET at the forefront of educational institutions driving mental health awareness and intervention. Prof.

Padmakumar Nair, Director of TIET and Dean of Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, underscored the institute's unwavering commitment to student mental well-being, stating, "At TIET, we firmly believe that the mental health of our students is the cornerstone of their overall success. In today's fast-paced and competitive world, we must go beyond academic excellence and create a nurturing environment where mental well-being is prioritized. Through initiatives like Luminescence 2024 and our counselling support systems, we are actively fostering a culture of care, ensuring that every student feels valued, supported, and equipped to thrive both personally and professionally. Our mission is not just to educate minds, but to empower healthy, balanced individuals who can lead with resilience and purpose."

Airtel cracks down on SPAM, launches India's first AI-powered network solution for SPAM detection



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPT 25

In a pioneering move to curb the country's spam menace, Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), today, launched India's first network-based, AI-powered spam detection solution that will significantly solve the issue of spam calls and messages for its customers.

A first-of-its-kind solution by a telecom service provider in the country, the tool will alert customers in real-time to all suspected spam calls and SMSes. The solution is free of cost and will get auto-activated for all Airtel customers without them having to raise a service request or download an app.

Gopal Vittal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bharti Airtel said, "Spam has become a menace for customers. We have spent the last

twelve months to solve this comprehensively. Today marks a milestone as we launch the country's first AI-powered spam free network that will shield our customers from the continuous onslaught of intrusive and unwanted communications".

"Designed as a dual-layer protection, the solution has two filters - one at the network layer and the second at the IT systems layer. Every call and SMS passes through this dual-layered AI shield. In 2 milliseconds our solution processes 1.5 billion messages and 2.5 billion calls every day. This is equivalent to processing 1 trillion records on a real time basis using the power of AI. Our solution has been able to successfully identify 100 million potential spam calls and 3 million spam SMSes originating every day. For us, keeping our customers

secure is a burning priority," Vittal added.

Developed in-house by Airtel's data scientists, the AI-powered solution uses a proprietary algorithm to identify and classify calls and SMSes as "Suspected SPAM". The network powered by state-of-the-art AI algorithm analyses various parameters such as the caller or sender's usage patterns, call/SMS frequency, call duration amongst several others, on a real time basis. By cross-referencing this information against known spam patterns, the system flags suspected spam calls and SMSes accurately.

Additionally, the solution also alerts customers to malicious links received via SMS. For this, Airtel has built a centralised database of blacklisted URLs and every SMS is scanned in real time by a state-of-the-art AI algorithm to caution users from accidentally clicking on suspicious links. The solution can also detect anomalies such as frequent IMEI changes - a typical indicator of fraudulent behavior. By layering these protective measures, the company is ensuring its customers receive maximum level of defense against the evolving landscape of spam and fraud threats.

Indian Army concludes Beautician Course in Pir Panjal Region at Sangiot, Rajouri



JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, SEPT 25

In a significant step towards empowering women in the remote Pir Panjal region, the Indian Army recently concluded a beautician course at Sanjot, Poonch, aimed at enhancing the skills and livelihoods of local women. This initiative, part of the Indian Army's broader effort to support and uplift communities in economic and social spheres. As these women take their first steps into the beauty industry, they carry with them not just skills but also the hope of a brighter future for themselves and their communities. The success of this beautician course serves as a testament to the transformative power of education and skill development, paving the way for further initiatives in the region.

self-confidence and entrepreneurship among the participants. By equipping these women with the tools, they need to start their own businesses, the Indian Army hopes to inspire financial independence and create sustainable livelihoods. The Indian Army's commitment to social development in the

region goes beyond this beautician course. Previous initiatives have included educational programs, health camps, and vocational training, all aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents of Pir Panjal. By focusing on women's empowerment, the Indian Army is contributing to a more inclusive society where women can actively participate in economic and social spheres. As these women take their first steps into the beauty industry, they carry with them not just skills but also the hope of a brighter future for themselves and their communities. The success of this beautician course serves as a testament to the transformative power of education and skill development, paving the way for further initiatives in the region.

IN THE COURT OF AUTHORIZED OFFICER, JAMMU FOREST DIVISION JAMMU

In the Case of: UT of J&K Through Range Officer, Jammu
V/s

Shaid Ali S/o Sh. Jamal Din R/o Kuwara Village Panjgrian

In the Matter of:-

Confiscation proceedings of seized Mahindra Scorpio bearing Registration no. JK02AE-1014 alongwith loaded with 24 khairwood (Acacia catechu) billets.

NOTICE FOR APPEARANCE

Shaid Ali

S/o Sh. Jamal Din

R/o Dhamuni, Dhmoni Jagir Panjgrian 181221

Whereas, the Range Officer, Jammu has filed case for initiation of confiscation proceeding of Mahindra Scorpio bearing Registration no. JK02AE-1014 alongwith loaded with 24 khairwood (Acacia catechu) billets.

Whereas, on dated. 02.07.2024, 13.07.2024, 27.07.2024, 10.08.2024, 17.08.2024, 07.09.2024, 14.9.02024 & 21.09.2024 you did not appear.

In this regard, your appearance in the instant case is required for recording statement, accordingly through the medium of this notice final opportunity is hereby given to you with the direction to appear in person or through Authorized Counsel on 28.09.2024 before the Court of Authorized Officer along with documentary evidence if any related to this case to show cause, as to why the above-mentioned vehicle along with seized stuff of khairwood may not be confiscated failing which the case shall be decided on its merits.

No. AO/JFD/265-67

Dt: 21.09.2024

Sd/-

(Authorized Officer)

Divisional Forest Officer

Jammu Forest Division

Jammu

DIP/J-5145/24

Date: 25-9-24

EDITORIAL

A Triumph of democracy in action – Phase-2 voting sees strong turnout

The recently concluded second phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, which saw a tentative turnout of over 56 percent, marks another significant chapter in the region's political evolution. While this figure is seven percent lower than the first phase's turnout, it nonetheless reflects a healthy level of voter engagement and a commitment to democratic participation amid challenging circumstances.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) P. K. Pole's announcement that the elections were conducted peacefully across all six districts is particularly reassuring, given the region's complex political and security landscape. That no incidents requiring re-polling were reported is a testament to the concerted efforts of the Election Commission, security forces, and local administration in ensuring a smooth electoral process.

This second phase, involving 3,502 polling booths and nearly 15,000 officials, highlights the logistical complexity of organizing elections in a region like Jammu and Kashmir. The figures from both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions present a striking contrast in voter behavior, a pattern observed in previous elections as well.

In the Kashmir Valley, where turnout rates hovered between 18 to 34 percent in urban constituencies like Habba Kadal and Eidgah, voter apathy seems to persist, especially in the capital city of Srinagar. The reasons for this could range from political disillusionment to fear of instability, but it calls for introspection from political parties, which must bridge the gap between voters and the democratic process. Nonetheless, constituencies like Beerwah and Khanshab in Budgam district saw a more encouraging turnout, with figures exceeding 60 percent. This indicates that there are pockets within the Valley where people are keenly participating in the democratic process, even as others remain reluctant.

In stark contrast, the Jammu division recorded an overwhelming turnout, with constituencies like Gulabgarh, Surankote, and Poonch Haveli registering over 72 percent voting. The Mata Vaishno Devi constituency stood out with a remarkable 80 percent voter turnout, underscoring the vibrant democratic spirit in the region. Such high participation speaks to the relative political stability in Jammu compared to the Valley and a strong voter commitment to influence the region's future.

It is also noteworthy that the turnout in this second phase surpassed the figures from the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year. This suggests that voters in Jammu and Kashmir are more inclined to participate in local Assembly elections, where they feel their vote has a direct impact on governance and development. The enthusiasm in the Jammu region could also reflect voters' confidence in their ability to effect change at the grassroots level through their elected representatives.

However, the divergence in voter turnout between the two regions – Jammu and Kashmir – is an important point for political parties to reflect upon. While Jammu is steadily moving forward with high voter engagement, Kashmir's low turnout suggests alienation or distrust that needs to be addressed. Political leaders must engage in dialogue with the people of Kashmir to understand their grievances and work toward creating a more inclusive political environment where every vote feels consequential.

Another positive takeaway from this phase was the presence of foreign diplomats who observed the elections and expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the polls. Their visit serves as an international endorsement of the electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting India's commitment to ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in a region that has been under intense global scrutiny.

As Jammu and Kashmir moves further into subsequent phases of the Assembly elections, it is crucial to sustain this momentum. The peaceful execution of the polls in Phase 2 provides hope for continued democratic progress. It also lays the groundwork for addressing the region's long-standing issues, from economic development to the restoration of full political rights. The election results, more than just a reflection of numbers, represent the aspirations of the people to have their voices heard and their concerns addressed.

Ultimately, the success of these elections will not only be measured by the voter turnout but also by how effectively the newly elected leaders fulfill the promises made on the campaign trail. Whether in Jammu's high-turnout constituencies or the more reserved areas of Kashmir, the people have placed their trust in the democratic process. Now, it is up to the elected representatives to prove worthy of that trust and guide the region toward peace, prosperity, and stability.

The pursuit of peace in tumultuous times

RAJDEEP PATHAK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the 79th UN General Assembly Session on September 23, 2024, reiterated the idea of adopting human-centric development for enhancing sustainability. Addressing the members at the "Summit of the Future", the Prime Minister emphasized the need for global reforms to foster peace, development, and collective progress. He underscored that humanity's success lies not in conflict but in harnessing collective strength. The meeting of the 79th UN General Assembly – immediately after the commencement of the International Day of Peace – which the world observed on September 21, is again a reminder of the power – and necessity – of nonviolence, dialogue, and reconciliation. In a world grappling with various forms of violence, the call for peace demands a concerted effort.

The very recent chilling incident of an annihila-

tion attempt in Lebanon has thrust a long-forgotten technology back into the spotlight: the pager. On September 17, 2024, a coordinated attack sent shockwaves through the region when hundreds of pagers, used by Hezbollah members and medics, exploded simultaneously. The devastating blasts claimed the lives of at least nine people and left nearly 3,000 badly injured. While the political ramifications are immense, the sheer audacity and sophistication of this attack are terrifying.

The hijacking of a seemingly obsolete technology for such lethal precision raises haunting questions about modern warfare and its evolving, invisible threats vis-à-vis the effort of reconciliation amidst unending turmoil such as these. In this direction, Mahatma Gandhi's vision of peace stands as a beacon of hope. He believed that true peace is not merely the absence of war, but a dynamic force rooted in justice, truth, and nonviolence.

To Gandhi, peace was a way of life, achieved through self-discipline, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to the welfare of all. Gandhi's thought process emphasized that lasting peace could only be built on the foundations of truth and ahimsa (nonviolence), where individual and collective actions are guided by compassion, respect, and cooperation. His concept of Sarvodaya – the upliftment of all – called for each person to contribute to the common good, recognising that peace could not thrive in isolation but required the well-being of every individual. Inspired by Gandhi's legacy, we are reminded that the path to sustaining this delicate, yet priceless state, lies in our hands.

As the political scientist "Johan Galtung", known as the founder of peace and conflict studies puts it, "Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means." Galtung went ahead to underscore the importance of dialogue,

empathy, and the peaceful settlement of disputes – (vital principles) – in a world grappling with rising geopolitical tensions, internal conflicts, and growing polarization. In his seminal work, "Terror in the Mind of God," historian and American Sociologist, "Mark Juergensmeyer" argues that acts of terror are often rooted in a perceived cosmic war between good and evil.

He emphasises that "The ultimate goal of peace cannot be achieved by military means alone but through addressing the underlying causes of violence, such as political exclusion, economic disparities, and social injustice." This reflects the need for a broader strategy incorporating dialogue, economic cooperation, and cultural understanding. Gandhi's Satyagraha – The Ingredient for Peace – Long before September 11 became a symbol of destruction, it marked the birth of a powerful, but peaceful revolutionary force.

On September 11, 1906,

in Johannesburg, Mahatma Gandhi launched his first "Satyagraha" campaign, rooted in truth (Satya), nonviolence (Ahimsa), and moral courage.

As Nelson Mandela once said, Gandhi's philosophy "contributed in no small measure" to transforming not just South Africa but the entire world. Judith Brown, in his book "Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope", calls Satyagraha a "moral experiment," where conflict was resolved ethically, not violently.

This approach shaped India's independence. Peace as the Only Panacea in a divided world where conflicts grow more complex and risk escalation, it is crucial to return to the principles of peace and nonviolence. Political Scientist Michael Howard reminds us that "Peace cannot be imposed from above; it must be constructed from below," through trust, education, and dialogue – values central to the UN's Declaration on a 'Culture of Peace.' As we also approach the

International Day of Non-violence on October 2, (Gandhi's birth anniversary), we must heed the lessons of war.

At this crossroads, we must choose: to continue on the path of division or embrace the dialogue, compassion, and justice championed by Gandhi, Mandela, Bhave, King, and many other silent crusaders of peace. The benefits of a peaceful world are profound, fostering stability, prosperity, and the overall well-being of humankind. Peacemakers, per se, remind us that peace is more than the mere absence of war; it requires the continuous pursuit of justice, collaboration, and respect. British historian A.J.P. Taylor had succinctly put it, "War is a failure of diplomacy and peace". It is time for collective – and renewed effort.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

Anura Kumara Dissanayake's Victory: A new dawn for Sri Lanka amidst political upheaval

POOJA KAPOOR

On Sunday, September 22, 2024, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, a prominent left-wing leader, won the presidential election in Sri Lanka, securing a victory that signals a significant departure from the country's traditional political establishment and heralds a period of unprecedented transformation. The Election Commission of Sri Lanka officially declared Dissanayake the winner after conducting the nation's first-ever second vote count, which included preference ballots.

"People are voting for change," said Dissanayake, the National People's Power alliance's presidential candidate, who was led by the JVP. "Change" became one of the primary slogans for the 2024 presidential election. The election was remarkable in many ways – it was the first since the public uprising in July 2022, which forced President Gotabaya Rajapaksa out of office. The election was largely centered around economic issues. Interestingly, the Rajapaksa family, which

had dominated Sri Lankan politics for decades, had no influence on the election. Among the 38 candidates, Namal Rajapaksa, son of former President and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, was never considered a serious contender. The main contest was between opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, Dissanayake, and incumbent president Ranil Wickremesinghe, who assumed office after Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country in 2022.

Wickremesinghe campaigned on a platform of continuity, with his primary focus on stabilising the nation's economy following its debt crisis and collapse in 2022. His administration claimed to have restored some financial stability by securing an IMF bailout package, ending fuel rationing, and addressing economic turmoil. However, poorer sections of the population, who were hardest hit by the economic collapse, saw little benefit from the stability he touted.

The core cause of Sri Lanka's economic crisis was excessive borrowing for non-profitable



ventures. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the government's insistence on depleting its limited foreign reserves to support the rupee, further crippled the economy. The severe shortage of essentials like fuel, food, cooking gas, and medicine led to mass public outrage. People stood in line for days to access basic necessities. As protests intensified, then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was forced out of power, with demonstrators taking over key government buildings,

including the president's residence and office. Sri Lanka's deep political divisions continue to threaten the country's already fragile legislative framework, making effective governance increasingly difficult. These divisions risk perpetuating delays and inefficiency, potentially leading to a prolonged political deadlock that hinders the nation's progress. Antonio Gramsci's theory of passive revolution is relevant here, highlighting the danger of significant changes that merely reinforce the existing power

structures. Likewise, Hannah Arendt's observation that "The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution" warns against decisions based purely on emotion rather than logic.

Sri Lanka and India have long been civilisational twins. India has historically maintained a deep interest in Sri Lanka's political landscape. Today, the island nation is one of India's most important regional allies, especially as some of its neighbors struggle with internal conflict or drift further from India's influence. Sri Lanka's proximity to key Indian scientific and security installations, including nuclear reactors, space research centers, and naval bases in southern India, makes the island strategically vital. India's primary concern has been ensuring that no foreign power, particularly an adversarial one, gains undue influence in Sri Lanka. China's growing presence in Sri Lanka is a major point of contention. Both India and China are vying for a foothold in the country due to its strategic

location for trade and military purposes.

India has actively worked to strengthen its ties with Sri Lanka. This is evident in Colombo, where India's Adani Group, with backing from US investments, is leading a multi-million-dollar expansion of the Colombo West International Terminal. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka has handed control of Hambantota, a major shipping hub, to China on a 99-year lease due to financial losses.

In addition to its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region, New Delhi is keen to maintain strong relations with Colombo to address the unresolved Tamil question in Sri Lanka.

In India's Vision SAGAR and Neighbourhood First Policy, Sri Lanka occupies a special place. Both countries' ministers can look forward to close collaboration to further develop and strengthen their bilateral relationship.

(The writer is an Associate Professor at the School of Liberal Arts – Bennett University, Greater Noida; views are personal)

The perils of imparting higher education in local languages

BIJU DHARAMAPALAN

The debate of whether education should be imparted in English or a regional language has been actively rhyming in our post-independent society. It's true that as a nation we have to preserve our rich culture and tradition, but at the same time, we need to equip our present generation to take up the challenges in the future, like space age and AI.

During colonisation, English was forced on us to make the jobs of foreigners easy. In that process the foreign rulers who ruled our land even learned native languages, sometimes better than native Indians, to understand our rich scientific knowledge. Because of this, they were able to produce scholarly works about Indian Knowledge Systems better than native Indians. This has also helped the world rec-

ognise Indian Knowledge in the long run.

On the flip side, the dominance of English has badly affected the status of many native languages. The British educational reforms prioritized English-medium instruction, particularly at the higher levels. This led to a situation where proficiency in English became synonymous with access to power, jobs, and social mobility. Many educated Indians, especially in urban areas, began to adopt English as their primary language, sidelining regional languages. This created a linguistic divide between the English-educated elite and the native-language speaking masses. The historic NEP 2020 envisioned reorienting our attention to regional languages in the education system. Unfortunately, its focus on nurturing local language in science and technology education



has become problematic because of hyper activism. Many states are involved in the translation of science, engineering and medicine textbooks into regional languages.

Though these will serve as a valuable document to preserve our languages, they won't help in improving the quality of higher education.

Even before NEP, in many state universities, there was a provision

to write science in their regional languages. But there were few takers for that. Even today when we make propaganda to promote regional languages, it's not implemented uniformly. All these policy changes, good or bad, will affect only students studying in public sector institutions.

Unfortunately, none of the children of our government servants politicians' or even activists study in

these public sector educational institutions, so they are not concerned about whether it will improve quality or not. So all this language love is 'only for others, not for me'.

This culture is again creating a linguistic divide in our society, which the British did to us long before. Whether we like it or not, English is the only language that acts as a bridge connecting various sections of our country. And in higher education, especially in science and technology courses where information is gathered from the knowledge generated in other countries, it has become the only language of that can connect us with the global knowledge hub.

How we can generate good engineers or scientists if they are not competent to understand English? Will there be any takers for an engineering or science course if offered

in a regional language? How will our future youngsters survive in an AI dominated digital world where English is the lingua franca for the global workforce? How will they survive in a space colony? English is undeniably the global language of science, technology, and research. Most cutting-edge scientific papers, engineering manuals, and international patents are published in English.

Though a bilingual mode of education can be adapted to teach complex scientific facts, totally neglecting English from our higher education will be a death trap for our science and technology. Unnecessary language chauvinism will erode the quality of higher education.

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

World Lung Day: Why non-smokers equally at risk for respiratory diseases

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

While the cause of lung diseases like lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease has long been linked with smoking, an alarming increase in cases has been observed even amongst non-smokers, majorly due to passive smoking and air pollution, said experts on Wednesday.

World Lung Day is observed every year on September 25th to raise awareness about lung health and promote better lung care around the world.

Smoking is a major cause of lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. Quitting smoking can significantly improve lung health and reduce the risk of developing these diseases.

However, a significant increase in respiratory cases has been observed



even amongst non-smokers, said experts.

"These are mostly traced to an increased exposure to second-hand smoke and increased air pollution, which are significant risk factors for lung disease. Microscopic pollutants have been found to penetrate the lungs and cause cell damage and inflammation within them, which over time, can induce cancerous mutations," Dr. Sunil Kumar K, Lead Consultant

Interventional Pulmonology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, told IANS.

"Such chronic exposure to polluted air not only harms lung tissue but slowly weakens the immune defense of the body. Even for those who have never smoked, passive smoking poses a serious threat. Breathing in smoke from the environment from someone smoking nearby or lingering smoke indoors can be just as harmful," the expert

added.

The residual toxins even from third-hand smoke that settle on surfaces also put individuals, especially children and pets, at risk of health problems.

The World Health Organization notes that 99 per cent of the world's population breathes unhealthy air. Climate change is a major driver of air pollution, which can impact lung health. Children, older adults, and people with existing respiratory conditions are especially vulnerable.

Other risk factors for lung problems in non-smokers include childhood respiratory infections that may prevail in adulthood also, Dr Kuldeep Kumar Grover, Head of Critical Care and Pulmonology - CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram told IANS.

"Repeated childhood infections may lead to bronchiectasis in lungs, and cystic problems can also destroy lungs," the

expert said

Lung problems such as Respiratory infections, COPD, asthma, and TB infections are the most common among non-smokers, majorly due to low immunity levels, Grover said.

According to Kumar, people in occupations like mining or construction are even more susceptible as they are continuously exposed to carcinogens, dust, and smoke, which disrupts their health.

Lifestyle conditions like obesity, or engaging in minimal physical activity also predispose people to diseases by decreasing lung function.

"While smoking remains a well-known risk factor, much more is required to protect our lungs than avoiding cigarettes. We need cleaner air, smoke-free spaces, and a better understanding of the various hidden dangers we're exposed to every day," Kumar said.

New annual HIV infections decreased by 44pc since 2010 in India: MoS health

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

India has made significant efforts in combating HIV/AIDS and the country's annual HIV infections have decreased by 44 per cent since 2010, said Anupriya Singh Patel, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.

Addressing a high-level side event at the UN, Patel said India has outperformed at the global reduction rate of 39 per cent.

In her intervention, the Minister reaffirmed India's commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Patel also outlined India's progress and key strategies in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS, including the 5th phase of the National AIDS and STD

Control Programme (2021-2026), fully funded by the government.

Data from the recent India HIV Estimations 2023 report show that more than 2.5 million people are living with HIV in India. But with concerted efforts, the adult HIV prevalence is at 0.2 per cent and estimated annual new HIV infections are at around 66,400.

"India has made great strides in combating HIV/AIDS through innovative programmes and robust partnerships," the Minister said. This includes youth awareness campaigns like Red Ribbon Clubs in educational institutions and mass awareness activities such as the annual RED RUN Marathon.

"India offers comprehensive HIV and Syphilis testing to all pregnant women with more than 30 million free HIV tests

being conducted annually", Patel said.

Further, public health-care systems in India are providing free Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) to "more than 1.7 million people".

The MoS also highlighted India's role as the world's largest supplier of antiretroviral drugs -- over 70 per cent to ensure affordable access for nations in need.

"We are proud to contribute to the global fight against HIV/AIDS by making quality treatment accessible worldwide," said the Minister.

Importantly, the country has made efforts to address stigma around HIV with HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017 It "ensures that all Indian states appoint ombudsmen to handle grievances and promote HIV prevention policies", Patel said.

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"India offers comprehensive HIV and Syphilis testing to all pregnant women with more than 30 million free HIV tests being conducted annually", Patel said.

Further, public health-care systems in India are providing free Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) to "more than 1.7 million people".

The MoS also highlighted India's role as the world's largest supplier of antiretroviral drugs -- over 70 per cent to ensure affordable access for nations in need.

"We are proud to contribute to the global fight against HIV/AIDS by making quality treatment accessible worldwide," said the Minister.

Importantly, the country has made efforts to address stigma around HIV with HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017

It "ensures that all Indian states appoint ombudsmen to handle grievances and promote HIV prevention policies", Patel said.

In addition, "India's approach to integrating national health programmes, including efforts to tackle tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, and non-communicable diseases, is helping address comorbidities faced by people living with HIV," she added.

The Minister urged for continued global cooperation, to "strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS and build a healthier world for all."

S.Korea to commercialise genetic diagnostic kit for lumpy skin disease next year

AGENCIES
SEOUL, SEP 25

South Korea's agricultural ministry on Wednesday said it plans to commercialise a genetic diagnostic kit for lumpy skin disease (LSD) next year.

The genetic kit will help selectively cull infected cattle rather than destroying the entire herd, Yonhap news agency reported.

The technology -- developed jointly with Median Diagnostics -- is capable of delivering results within 8 hours, significantly faster than previous methods, which took a week, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The solution allows farms to cull only infected cattle, overcoming the limitations of the previous methods, which were less effective due to the need for rapid containment of the disease during an outbreak.

The ministry added that the technology allowed local farms to spare 2,281 cattle during trials last year, which helped the government save 14.8 billion won (\$11.1 million) in



compensation and other costs.

"The diagnostic technology, which enables the prompt and efficient identification of cattle testing positive for LSD, allows the government to selectively cull infected units and reduce damage to farms," the ministry said in a statement.

South Korea, meanwhile, reported five LSD cases between August and September.

LSD is a highly infectious disease that causes skin lesions, fever, and loss of appetite, often leading to a

fall in milk production and even death.

It affects cattle and buffalo via mosquitoes and other blood-feeding insects.

South Korea reported its first case of LSD in cattle this year in August.

The case was confirmed at a livestock farm in Anseong, located some 65 kilometers south of Seoul, breeding 80 cows, the Agriculture Ministry said.

It was the first LSD case in South Korea since November last year.

Workplace harassment, lack of maternity benefits must be immediately addressed: NCW

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Companies must immediately address the concerns raised by employees on harassment at the workplace, and the lack of maternity benefits, said Delina Khongdup, Member National Commission for Women on Wednesday.

Addressing ASSOCHAM 5th Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards and Conclave 2024, Khongdup stressed the need for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

"This should be a constant practice in organisations for the entitlement of women and all genders. This is a human and social

responsibility to achieve gender diversity for all walks of society. India has a vast diversity and there should be a feeling of inclusivity in all the places possible," she said.

While there has been an amendment to the Companies Act to increase the representation of women on the board of directors, the reality, however, is that there is less than 5 per cent of women at the CEO level in the Indian workforce.

"Corporate India should recognise this inclusivity and bridge the gender balance relationship in working spaces. Harassment in the workplace and non-payment of maternity benefits should

be addressed immediately for betterment. We should apply a holistic approach to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat @2047," Khongdup said.

Khongdup's comments come even as Anna Sebastian, a young CA at audit firm Ernst and Young succumbed to death in Pune due to severe work pressure.

Anna (26) passed away on July 21 after being burdened with a "backbreaking workload" and "work stress", claimed her mother Anita

Augustine in a heart-wrenching letter to Chairman Rajiv Memani. Anna worked for four months at the accounting firm.

Study shows VR tech can prevent pedestrians, cyclists from harmful pollutants

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Virtual reality models can be crucial in reducing the exposure of pedestrians and cyclists to harmful, non-exhaust vehicle emissions -- linked to diseases, including respiratory and cardiometabolic, according to a study on Wednesday.

The research led by the University of Birmingham in the UK targets the issue of major health risks and chronic diseases caused by exposure to unregulated particle pollutants from roads, tyre, and brake sources.



They argued that immersive VR experiences can provide easy, accessible guidance to the public, policymakers, and city planners.

In the paper, published

in the Royal Society Open Science journal, the team used detailed computational fluid dynamics models to simulate the release and dispersion of these particles from

vehicles, which usually remain invisible to the naked eye.

The VR models were tested with members of the public in Birmingham city centre -- the second largest contributor to PM2.5 emissions from brake and tyre wear.

"Air quality plays a key role in the health and well-being of society. Despite the electric vehicle transition, harmful emissions persist through the release of small particles from brakes, tyres, and roads, into the air we breathe," said Principal Investigator Dr. Jason Stafford from the University of Birmingham.

The models made the non-exhaust pollutants visible within a virtual urban environment, helping people to actually see the dangers with their own eyes and act accordingly to reduce or avoid exposure wherever possible.

Stafford said, "computational models can help us to understand the pollution pathways and identify those key moments in people's daily journeys where exposure risk is highest".

The researchers said the findings also outline how the implementation of VR could lead to a rethink in town and city planning to encourage cleaner air.

Urgent need to integrate climate considerations into health planning: Apurva Chandra

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

There is an urgent need to integrate climate considerations into health planning, said Apurva Chandra, Secretary, at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on Wednesday.

He was speaking at the Climate and Health Solutions (CHS) India Conclave, organised by MoHFW in collaboration with the Asian Develop-

ment Bank (ADB), in Delhi.

"The Climate and Health Solutions India Conclave is a testament to our commitment to building a climate-resilient health system that addresses the unique needs of developing nations like ours. India is leading by example, integrating climate considerations into our health policies and emergency response mechanisms," Chandra said.

"We are proud to collaborate with the Asian Develop-

ment Bank and other global partners to ensure that our health sector is equipped to tackle unforeseen climate impacts and support sustainable development for all. Together, we can achieve the vision of 'One Health, One Family, One Future,' he added.

The two-day conclave aims to address the twin emergencies of climate change and public health by bringing together policymakers, experts, and stakeholders to

develop actionable strategies for India's health sector.

At the event, Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa, emphasised the importance of India's leadership, scale, and size in demonstrating the leapfrogging of development pathways at the intersection of climate change and health for India and the world. "As we confront rising temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, and the growing burden on healthcare systems, it is critical that we

design integrated, sustainable solutions that safeguard the health of our people and our planet," Kant said.

"India's leadership through the G20 Presidency has been instrumental in bringing this issue to the global forefront," he said, calling for collaboration to create "a unique opportunity to shape resilient and adaptive health systems".

The experts also highlighted proactive steps taken by India in integrating climate change

considerations into its public health policies.

"A pivotal moment in this journey was the creation of the Mission on Climate Change and Health, nearly a decade ago, under the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change," said Punya Salila Srivastava, Officer on Special Duty, MoHFW. In 2019, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare introduced the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH)

under the National Health Mission.

Further, India's national action plan on climate change and health has served as a blueprint for nearly all states and union territories to develop their respective state action plans. The next ambition, for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, is for each district to assess their vulnerability and develop tailored climate change and health action plans.

Congress had handed over Haryana to 'dalal' and 'damad', says PM Modi at Gohana rally

AGENCIES
GOHANA, SEP 25

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress, saying that the grand old party during its helm had handed over the state to 'dalals' (middlemen) and 'damads' (sons-in-law).

Stepping up the attack, PM Modi, who returned from his three-day hectic tour of the US on Tuesday night, in a power-packed election speech in Gohana town in Haryana's Sonapat district, said there was no party more "dishonest" than the Congress.

"The Congress 'ne Haryana ko dalalon aur damadon ke hawale kar diya (the state was handed over to brokers and son-in-law," he said. Appealing to vote for the BJP for its record third straight win in the October 5 Assembly polls as the state is now a hub of multinational firms, PM Modi in a frontal attack on

the Gandhi family raked up Robert Vadra's controversial land deals in the state during the Congress government from 2004 to 2014 said, "Haryana ko damad and dalal se bachana hai".

He said: "As the Assembly elections in Haryana are approaching, the Congress is getting weaker. The support for BJP in Haryana is increasing...The entire Haryana is saying 'phir ek baar BJP sarkar'."

Also he warned, "Remember, if the Congress comes to power by mistake, they will ruin Haryana with their infighting. There is a fight going on in Congress here. In Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, their Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister are fighting."

"Voting for the Congress means putting Haryana's stability, and development at stake," PM Modi claimed.

"The world's trust in India has increased in the



past 10 years. When I went to New York, many people from Haryana who grew up in America performed the Haryanavi traditional dance to welcome me... India is progressing after getting free from corruption...Big companies from across the world are eager to invest in India.

"When these companies will invest in India, it will benefit the farmers and youth of Haryana. The BJP has announced that many

industrial cities will be established in Haryana to provide job opportunities to the youth," the Prime Minister said.

Acknowledging a boy amongst the crowd, who had made a portrait of PM Modi, he asked the boy from the dais to handover the photo to his security personnel and promised to write a letter to him.

Taking a jibe at the Congress for "ignoring" the Dalits, PM Modi said,

"Today, the Dalit community of Haryana is once again observing the drama that the Congress is playing. The Congress has always kept Dalits, OBCs (Other Backward Classes) and tribals deprived of participation. It was Baba Saheb Ambedkar who granted reservations to the Dalits. Otherwise, like the OBCs, Dalits would also have to wait for Congress' defeat to claim their rights."

After wrapping up the three-day "successful" US visit, Prime Minister Modi held his second public meeting in Haryana to woo electorates of 22 Assembly constituencies.

Several senior BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, shared the dais with the Prime Minister.

The PM's rally is seen as a crucial political platform as 18 Assembly constituencies falling under the Sonapat and Rohtak Lok Sabha constituencies and four Assembly constituencies of the Panipat district were covered.

Prime Minister Modi held his first rally in Kurukshetra on September 15 by launching the BJP's campaign to retain the helm in the state for the third straight term.

In the 2019 Assembly elections, the BJP, which won 40 seats, well below the 75-plus target, and was six short of a majority in the 90-member Assembly, announced an alliance with the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) led by Dushyant Chautala, a great-grandson of former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal.

The rival Congress had won 31 seats, while the less-than-year-old JJP, which broke away from the state's once major regional Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) owing to family disputes, won 10 seats.

Seven Independents and one each of the INLD and the Haryana Lokhit Party had also won.

NCPCR chief hails SC's decision to enforce 2021 guidelines for safety of children in school

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Chairperson, Priyanka Kanoongo on Wednesday welcomed the Supreme Court's directions for implementation of the 2021 safety rules in schools and said that this would go a long way in safeguarding students. The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed all states and Union Territories (UTs) to enforce the 2021 guidelines issued by the Union government, on the safety and security of children in schools.

Speaking to IANS, Priyanka Kanoongo informed that the Commission has developed a School Safety Manual based on the existing 2021-22 guidelines to ensure the safety of children. These norms define the roles of teaching and non-teaching staff in protecting schoolchildren.

"In October 2021, the Government of India issued a detailed accountability guideline, specifically aimed at ensuring safety in private schools. This process was named the 'Accountability Guideline,' and it was sent to all state governments in October 2021, however, that has failed to yield the desired results," he said.

He further said that the NCPCR has been consistently following up but many state governments have remained indifferent, possibly due to pressure from private schools. In several instances, district administration officials fail to act appropriately, leading to tragic consequences for children. "I welcome the Supreme Court's decision and the Commission will carry out the responsibilities entrusted to us," added the NCPCR Chairperson.

In light of recent sexual assault cases involving children in schools, including in Badlapur, Maharashtra, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) filed a petition seeking the implementation of child safety guidelines across educational institutions nationwide.

Coal imports see marginal increase amid coal-based power generation surge: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Coal imports saw a marginal increase of 0.9 per cent, reaching 90.51 million tonnes (MT) in the April-July period of FY25, compared to 89.68 MT in the previous year to meet the current consumption landscape, the Centre said on Wednesday.

Despite a growth of 10.18 per cent in coal-based power generation from April to July 2024 compared to the same period last year, imports for blending purposes decreased by 8.2 per cent during the same period.

"This decline underscores India's steadfast commitment to achieving self-sufficiency in coal production and reducing reliance on imports," according to Ministry of Coal.

Non-coking coal imports increased by 2 per



cent during this period, while coking coal imports dropped by 2.6 per cent. In July alone, coal imports rose by 15.9 per cent, reaching 21.81 MT compared to 18.82 MT in July 2023. With the fifth-largest coal reserves in the world, the country stands as the second-largest consumer of coal, driven by a rapidly growing economy.

The ministry said that the current consumption landscape reveals a critical need for imports, particularly for coking coal and high-grade thermal

coal, which are not sufficiently available within domestic reserves.

"This shortfall necessitates imports to support key industries, including steel," it added.

Meanwhile, increase in coal import for power sector is attributed to the substantial quantity of coal import by imported coal-based power plants (designed to utilise imported coal only) -- 17.69 MT during this period, up from 10.12 MT in the corresponding timeframe last year.

Andhra Pradesh CM Relief Fund gets Rs 400 crore donations to support flood victims

AGENCIES
VIJAYAWADA, SEP 25

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has received generous contributions to the tune of Rs 400 crore from various sections of people to support flood victims in the state.

He said political parties, film personalities, social organisations and others contributed to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and termed it a record.

Speaking at a programme organised here to distribute financial aid among the flood-affected people, he said in the face of a calamity, people worked together with an exemplary spirit of unity.

"While facing a huge calamity, we all worked together to tackle it.



People have responded enthusiastically to contribute Rs 400 crore to the CM Relief Fund. This is the highest. No other state would have got this much," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government has released Rs 602 crore for flood relief measures so far. This includes Rs 400 crore given by the donors.

He said 47 people died in the floods while the

total losses were estimated at Rs 6,800 crore. A total of 16 villages were affected.

He said financial assistance was being provided to four lakh people. The government was also assisting people, whose two-wheelers and autorickshaws, kirana shops, and push carts, were damaged.

Heavy rainfall triggered floods in Vijayawada and

the situation aggravated by the breaches in Budameru rivulet, he recalled.

"Along with the officials, I also stepped into the mud. Within a short time we came out of the calamity," he said.

The Chief Minister said officials worked with him for 11 days and made every effort to help the affected people.

CM Naidu said Budameru and Prakasam Bar-

rage never witnessed such massive floods. The flood handling capacity of the barrage is 11.90 lakh and it handled 11.47 lakh cusecs.

He alleged that the negligence of the previous governments led to the flooding in Vijayawada.

He recalled that he first visited Singh Nagar, and after speaking to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, arranged boats and helicopters for rescue and relief operations.

CM Naidu said a large number of food packets and water bottles were distributed among the people in flooded areas. A total of 780 earthmovers were pressed into service. As many as 75,000 houses and roads to a length of 331 km were cleaned with the help of fire engines.

Ready to face any investigation, reiterates Siddaramaiah

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, SEP 25

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday reiterated that he is ready to face any investigation, shortly after a Special Court gave the nod for a probe against him in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam.

Speaking to the media in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah stated, that the Special Court for People's Representatives has given the order of investigation against me on the basis of the order of the High Court under Section 17 A of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

"I have not received the order for the copy yet. Once I get the orders, I will react to the development. I can understand the media's curiosity in this regard. But I am leaving for Kerala now and I will get the order only after my return," he said.

"I stated on Tuesday after the Karnataka High Court's order that we are ready to face the investigation. There is no fear and we will take up the legal battle. I will reiterate the same words today as well," he added.

"The matter has been referred to the Mysuru Lokayukta.

The decision is taken against the backdrop of the complainant hailing from Mysuru and the

order copy is obtained, I will sit with the legal experts and discuss to take a final call.

Answering a question, CM Siddaramaiah stated that though the Lokayukta will probe the matter, the Commission appointed by the state government to probe the MUDA case will continue its probe. The commission will look into the entire MUDA scam.

In a major development, the Special Court for MLAs/MPs in Bengaluru on Wednesday gave the nod for an investigation against Siddaramaiah in the MUDA scam.

Judge Santhosh Gajana Bhat passed the order and designated the Superintendent of Lokayukta, Mysuru district to probe the case. The court has asked Mysuru Lokayukta to submit the report in three months by December 24.

The court said that the case would be investigated under the provisions of 156 (3) of the CrPC.

Snehmayi Krishna, one of the petitioners against CM Siddaramaiah, had submitted a private complaint in the MUDA case with the court.

Following the order, the FIR will be lodged against CM Siddaramaiah and an investigation will be launched.

The investigation officer will have the power to question and arrest CM Siddaramaiah.



MUDA institution is located in Mysuru.

The High Court has already given directions for an investigation and in this background, the Special Court has ordered an investigation," CM Siddaramaiah stated.

When asked about his plans to appeal the orders, the CM stated, once the

order copy is obtained, I will sit with the legal experts and discuss to take a final call.

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'Nitish Kumar an active leader', Upendra Kushwaha dismisses age-related remarks

AGENCIES
PATNA, SEP 25

Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) National President and Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha on Wednesday dismissed comments made about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's age, calling them "baseless and inappropriate".

The remarks in question came from Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahani, who stated that Nitish Kumar has "grown old" and was "forgetting many things", suggesting that he should retire and hand over leadership to the younger generation.

Responding to these remarks, Kushwaha strongly defended Nitish Kumar's work ethic and contributions to Bihar's development.

"The remarks being made about CM Nitish Kumar's age are absolutely objectionable. Anyone making such comments is clearly against Bihar's development," Kushwaha



told IANS.

He emphasised that, despite his age, Nitish Kumar continues to be an active leader, visiting districts, gathering feedback, and reviewing reports.

"Even today, he visits districts, goes to ground zero, takes feedback, and reviews reports. Bihar still greatly benefits from his dedicated service. Any such statements are completely baseless and inappropriate," Kushwaha added.

In addition to defending the Chief Minister, Kushwaha laid out the NDA's plans for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, scheduled for next year.

Will lay siege to police stations if party workers' 'harassment' continues, warns K'taka BJP chief

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, SEP 25

Karnataka BJP chief B. Y. Vijayendra on Wednesday warned to lay siege to the police stations if the "harassment" of party workers continued under the state Congress government.

Addressing media persons at party headquarters in Bengaluru, Vijay-

endra said that police are "harassing" BJP workers in the state, filing FIRs without any valid reason.

He criticised the conduct of officials as an "unpardonable crime" intended to "please" the Congress.

He urged state Home Minister G. Parameshwara to address the "misconduct" of errant officials.

Vijayendra said that in

Srirangapatna, Mandya district, police picked up a BJP worker named Chaya, who was conducting a membership campaign and held her at the police station until midnight.

"The police claimed they would file an FIR. When our workers and leaders rushed to the police station to inquire about the reason, they were told a story about



downloading OTPs, while the harassment persisted as she was kept there until midnight," he stated.

"The incident which occurred on Tuesday was not trivial; it is unacceptable for our woman worker to have been kept at the police station until midnight without cause."

When asked about Eshwarappa's attacks on him, Vijayendra said: "I have noticed Eshwarappa talk-

ing with concern about the BJP.

Let me remind him that he was expelled for anti-party activities. He contested as an independent candidate and lost the deposit in the Lok Sabha election."

"Eshwarappa took to anti-party activities because of love for his son. I feel sad for him," he added.

EAM Jaishankar meets officials from across world for discussions

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, SEP 25

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar has met officials from Asia, Europe and Latin America on the sidelines of the UN high-level meetings to promote bilateral relations and to exchange views on international and regional issues.

He started with new Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barro of France, a country with which India has close strategic and diplomatic ties.

He wrote on X after the meeting that they had "a useful exchange of views on major regional issues".

Barro was appointed foreign minister last week by Prime Minister Michel Barnier who took over after the snap elections.

After his meeting with "dear friend" European Union Commissioner for Climate Action Wopke Hoekstra, EAM Jaishankar posted on X, "Appreciate his support for deepening



India-European Union partnership".

Hoekstra wrote on X, "We look forward to closely working together and further enhancing India-European Union relations in the domains of geopolitics, climate and business."

Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, said on X after meeting EAM Jaishankar, "India is an essential global actor and priority partner for Spain."

"We discussed our bilateral relations, including trade and culture. Also the situation in the Middle East, Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific," he posted.

Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg of Malta, posted on X that he discussed with EAM Jaishankar the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting next month in Samoa and how the group to which both countries belong can find "global solutions to press-

ing global and regional challenges, from sustainable development to the protection of human rights".

They also talked about "further intensifying synergies in areas of mutual interest, including ongoing efforts to expand trade relations between our two countries", he added.

The EAM said on X after meeting Cyprus Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos, "We focussed on ongoing developments in West Asia and their larger implications."

Ukraine came up during the meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Popsoi of Moldova, a neighbour of that country. EAM Jaishankar wrote, "Discussed deepening our partnership in pharmaceuticals, health, education, capacity building and trade."

Following his meeting with Bolivia's Foreign Minister Celinda Sosa Lunda, the EAM posted that they spoke about "advancing

our bilateral cooperation".

"Our bilateral partnership has been steadily progressing in various dimensions," EAM Jaishankar wrote after meeting Hugh Hilton Todd, the foreign minister of Guayana, a country with a large diaspora.

Closer to India, Yemen's Vice President Aidaros Alzubidi wrote on X after his meeting with the EAM that they had an "important discussion on overlapping interests on regional stability and maritime security, including in the Red Sea".

"India's role on the global stage is critical and a partnership I look forward to developing," he added.

EAM Jaishankar wrote on X that he assured him of "India's support for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Yemen".

Strategically located on the Red Sea, Yemen is torn by a civil war and its fallout puts shipping in the area at risk.

Pakistan's ANP chief calls PTI 'political wing' of Taliban

AGENCIES
KARACHI, SEP 25

Awami National Party (ANP) President Aimal Wali Khan has levelled serious accusations against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), calling it the "political wing of the Taliban."

During a press conference held at the Karachi Press Club on Tuesday, Khan alleged that the party facilitated the re-entry of 40,000 terrorists into Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), according to local media reports.

Addressing Karachi's importance, he said, "Karachi is the economic hub and cultural capital of Pakistan, shared equally by all ethnic groups, including Muhajirs, Sindhis, Pashtuns, and Baloch. It's a city that represents the diversity of the entire nation."

In his comments, Khan took aim at PTI's leadership, specifically criticising the party's founder, Imran Khan, saying, "He is no champion of democracy. He only attacks state institutions when it benefits him. If we can make amends with the Sharifs,



does that mean we should also ally with the devils?"

He further claimed that PTI was never an authentic political force, suggesting that foreign elements played a part in its rise, as reported by The Express Tribune.

"The West, particularly Israel, had a hand in PTI's ascension. That's why it was never a legitimate political entity," Khan stated.

Turning to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's political situation, the ANP chief accused PTI of coming to power through an alliance with terrorists and questioned how an election in three provinces be disputed, "yet K-P's elections

are considered fair?" Addressing ongoing security concerns in K-P, the ANP leader highlighted severe governance issues, claiming that more than half of the province is without adequate police control.

He warned of dire consequences if the situation continues unchecked.

Regarding Pakistan's economic challenges, Khan criticised the government's heavy reliance on foreign loans, asserting that no country or household can prosper on borrowed money. He urged an end to extravagant spending and condemned current economic management practices.

25 KILLED, 6 INJURED IN ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE ON LEBANON

AGENCIES
BEIRUT, SEP 25

At least 25 people were killed and six others injured in an Israeli airstrike on houses in southern Lebanon, according to Lebanese military and medical sources.

A Red Cross source told Xinhua news agency on Tuesday that 15 of the victims were Lebanese civilians, while the other 10 were Syrians.

The military sources, who spoke anonymously, said that an Israeli warplane fired four air-to-ground missiles at dawn on several houses in the centre of the village of Nmairiyeh.

The Lebanese Red Cross and civil defence teams transferred the casualties to hospitals in the city of Nabatieh, the sources said.



"Civil defence personnel equipped with bulldozers and cranes spent most of the day removing the rubble of the demolished houses and pulling the bodies from the rubble, most of which appeared disfigured," they said.

According to military sources, Israeli warplanes

and drones carried out 15 raids on villages and towns in southern Lebanon and 11 raids on towns and villages in eastern Lebanon.

Hezbollah's media relations department issued a statement warning that "the Zionist enemy is dropping leaflets with a barcode in the Bekaa region and may send them else-

where."

The statement advised, "Please do not open or share the barcode; destroy it immediately as it is hazardous. It can extract all your information and poses a threat to your safety."

The latest airstrike took place as Israel's military chief, Herzi Halevi, vowed earlier in the day to intensify Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon.

"We should not give Hezbollah a rest" and "should keep on working with full force," Halevi said in a statement.

Since October 8, 2023, Hezbollah and the Israeli army have been exchanging fire across the Lebanese-Israeli border, raising concerns of a broader conflict as the war between Hamas and Israel continues in the Gaza Strip.

Iraqi President condemns Israeli attacks on Lebanon

AGENCIES
BAGHDAD, SEP 25

Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid condemned the Israeli attacks on the southern suburb of Beirut, which resulted in the loss of lives and serious injury to many others.

"It (this development) could lead to an escalation of tensions and conflict, as well as an increase in instability and insecurity. It could also have a negative impact on economic and social development in the region," according to a statement released by the Iraqi Presidency on Tuesday.

The Iraqi President called on the international community to take a firm stance and prevent the outbreak of a "hellish" war in the region, stressing that "if we fail to prevent such an outbreak,



the consequences would be catastrophic."

Rashid also reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to support the Palestinian and Lebanese people, according to Xinhua news agency.

An Israeli airstrike targeted a residential building in the southern suburb of Beirut on Tuesday, killing at least six people and injuring 15 others, local media reported. In a statement, the Israeli military confirmed that Ibrahim

Muhammad Qubaisi, who was reportedly in charge of Hezbollah's missile and rocket operations, was killed in the strike. There has been no comment from Hezbollah on Qubaisi's death.

The airstrike is part of Israel's heaviest bombardments of Lebanon since 2006, which were launched on Monday and Tuesday and resulted in over 550 fatalities and more than 1,800 injuries across the country.

Tunisian PM announces efforts toward sustainable energy model

AGENCIES
TUNIS, SEP 25

Tunisian Prime Minister Kamel Madouri announced that the country is developing a new energy policy to reduce its energy deficit and transition to a sustainable model. Madouri made the remarks on Tuesday at the opening of the Mediterranean Decarbonisation Forum in Tunisia, Xinhua news agency reported.

He outlined goals to reduce energy consumption by 30 per cent and increase renewable energy integration to 35 per cent by 2030, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050.

According to the Tunisian Prime Minister, the policy aims to diversify energy production sources, optimise consumption, and enhance the energy infrastructure.

Targeted bomb blast in Pakistan's Quetta injures 12, including policemen

AGENCIES
QUETTA, SEP 25

As targeted attacks on police officials continue in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, a bomb blast left 12 people injured in Quetta's Bhora Mandi area along the Eastern Bypass, on Wednesday.

The injured included at least two policemen. As per the police sources, the bomb was planted in a motorcycle parked close to a police vehicle.

The injured have been shifted to Sandeman Civil Hospital while a bomb disposal squad cordoned off the area to start a probe into the incident.



The nature of the explosion is yet to be ascertained. Till now, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. However, it is expected that the separatist militant group oper-

ating in Balochistan, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) along with its multiple affiliate groups are responsible for the attack.

The incident comes only two days after a simi-

lar attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district when a police van in a convoy of vehicles carrying several foreign envoys was targeted in a remote-controlled bomb blast. The Swat attack claimed the life of one officer, while four other officers were injured.

Terror attacks in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces have surged considerably since 2021, after Afghanistan was taken over by the Afghan Taliban.

According to a report compiled by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS), there has been

a major surge in terror attacks in the both provinces during the current year.

As per the report statistics, the number of attacks in these regions surged from 38 in July 2024 to 59 in August, with at least 29 incidents reported in KP and 28 in Balochistan.

Pakistan government and the military establishment has launched Operation 'Azam-e-Istehkam' in June 2024, which it claims is a kinetic operation with a renewed national counter-terrorism initiative aimed at eradicating terrorism under the country's National Action Plan (NAP).

Trump says his reelection would see 'mass exodus' of manufacturing to US from South Korea, other countries

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, SEP 25

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said that voters will see a "mass exodus of manufacturing" to America from South Korea, China and other countries if they vote for him in November, as he stepped up efforts to court swing voters in a battleground state.

Trump made the remarks during a campaign speech on tax policy in Savannah, Georgia, on Tuesday, as various polls have shown the former president and his Demo-

cratic rival, Kamala Harris, in a tight race with the general election less than six weeks away, reports Yonhap news agency.

"Vote for Trump, and you will see a mass exodus of manufacturing from China to Pennsylvania, from Korea to North Carolina, from Germany to right here in Georgia," he said.

"They're going to come to Georgia from Germany and other places."

Trump also said that if reelected, he would task a "manufacturing" ambassador with carrying out "pro-manufacturing" policies.

"I will appoint a manufacturing ambassador whose sole task -- and it'll be a great one -- will be to go around the world and convince major manufacturers to pack up and move back to America," he said.

He mounted an attack on Harris, calling her a "tax queen" and accusing her of seeking the "largest capital gains tax" in the history of America.

"It's called an unrealised capital gain. That means that you're going to pay a capital gain even if you haven't realised it," he said.

Chile backs India's permanent UNSC membership, Russia calls it 'legitimate aspiration'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Chile President Gabriel Boric Font has joined several world leaders, calling for India's inclusion as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Addressing the general debate of the 79th Session of the General Assembly of the UN in New York, Font supported a reform of the United Nations,

asserting that "the world has changed a lot" since 1945 when 51 countries, including Chile, took the transcendental step of creating the United Nations.

"I listened attentively this morning to the UN Secretary General, President Lula of Brazil, and President Biden of the United States explicitly expressing their agreement to reform the council according to today's times. Who or what is preventing

it? Is there anyone in this assembly who opposes it?" Font questioned during his speech.

"From Chile, I propose that we set a deadline for reform and that when the UN turns 80, it does so with a Security Council in line with the course of current times, in which Brazil from Latin America, India, at least one country from Africa, among others, are part. There is nothing that prevents it, except the lack



of our own will," he added.

On Sunday, following his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra

Modi on the sidelines of the Quad Summit in Delaware, US President Joe Biden, while expressing

his immense appreciation for India's leadership at the world stage, reaffirmed Washington's full support for India's permanent UNSC membership.

"President Biden shared with Prime Minister Modi that the United States supports initiatives to reform global institutions to reflect India's important voice, including permanent membership for India in a reformed U N Security Council," read

the Joint Fact Sheet on India-US Comprehensive and Global Strategic Partnership released after the meeting between the two leaders. At the same time, given the emerging multipolar world order, Russia has also consistently supported the permanent membership of India in the UN Security Council.

On Wednesday, as he arrived in New York for the 79th session of the UN General Assembly,

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov once again favoured a more representative Security Council with new members drawn from a group of developing countries, including India.

Moscow will support the legitimate aspiration of India, Brazil and one of African countries to join the UN Security Council as permanent members, Lavrov told Russian news agency Tass in an interview.

INDIA TO SET UP TRADE PROMOTION OFFICE IN SYDNEY: PIYUSH GOYAL

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday announced the setting up of an office for trade promotion in Australia's Sydney as bilateral trade continues to surge between the two nations.

The trade promotion office, with representatives of Invest India, the NICDC, the ECGC, and other officials related to trade and tourism, along with the private sector represented by the CII, will act as a bridge between investors and businesses on both sides.

Addressing a joint press conference in Adelaide along with Minister for



Trade and Tourism Don Farrell, Goyal said the focus is to upscale the partnerships in trade, investment, tourism and technology.

"India and Australia are working towards strengthening the Economic-Cooperation and

Trade Agreement (ECTA) through the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The ECTA agreement has resulted in market access to both sides and resulted in a significant increase in merchandise trade," he said.

The Commerce Minister highlighted Australia's role in India's journey through greater trade, exchange of technologies, common goals for sustainability, and provision of high-tech services and investment.

"India offers advantages of 4 Ds - democracy, demographic dividend, demand and decisive leadership -- with leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, willing to reform, perform and transform the country," the minister added.

Talking about 10 years of the 'Make in India' initiative, Minister Goyal said the programme provided provisions for 'plug and play' for infrastructure, a single-window system for

approvals, easing compliance burden, decriminalising laws, opening up FDI in newer sectors and encouraging the startup ecosystem, signifying a multi-pronged approach to attract manufacturing in India.

He spoke about a lot of promises between the 'Make in India' and the 'Make in Australia' programme to exchange technologies, and opportunities and encourage businesses to work with each other. According to the government, the India-Australia bilateral trade (in goods and services) has crossed \$48 billion, and it's expected to double to nearly \$100 billion in the next five years.

Petrol, diesel prices may see a cut after Oct 5: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Petrol and diesel prices may be reduced after October 5, according to CLSA, which has based its report on speculation after comments by Pankaj Jain, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, suggesting a cut last month.

The prices have not changed since March 2024. Jain had said that the state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) may consider reducing petrol and diesel prices if international crude prices stay low for an extended period, as per media reports.

The CLSA in its note said, "Maharashtra is a crucial battleground, and the BJP-led alliance may consider lowering fuel prices as a populist move."

According to several media reports, Maharashtra's state elections are expected in early November. Final dates for the state election are likely announced by mid-October.

CLSA report suggests that along with any retail fuel price cut, the government may also raise excise duty on petrol and diesel. At present, the Centre levies an excise duty of Rs 19.8 and Rs 15.8 per litre on the sale of petrol and diesel.

Current excise duty is 40 per cent and 50 per cent lower compared to the 2021 peak.

According to CLSA, every rupee hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel would lead to an additional Rs 16,500 and Rs 5,600 crore collection annually in government accounts.

Excise duty is a tax

levied on the manufacture or production of goods within the country. In the context of petrol and diesel, excise duty is a tax imposed by the Central government on the production or sale of these fuels within India.

Recently, crude oil prices saw a sharp decline in the International Market.

On Wednesday, crude oil benchmark Brent Oil was 74.15 dollars per barrel and WTI was 71.16 dollars per barrel.

The report said the sharp decline in crude oil prices is positive for Indian oil marketing companies like Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation. However, a potential rate cut and excise duty hike make these oil marketing companies vulnerable.

AI hardware and software market likely to reach up to \$990 billion by 2027

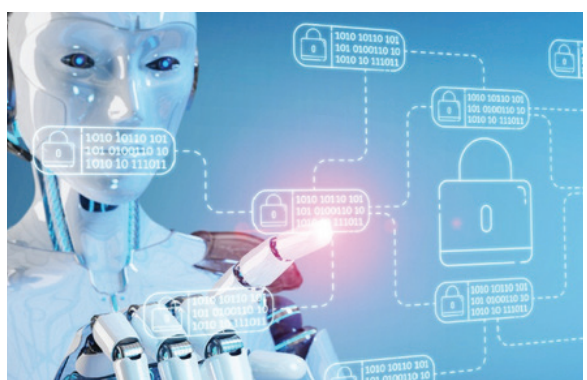
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

The global market for AI-related hardware and software is likely to reach between \$780 billion and \$990 billion by 2027, growing between 40 per cent and 55 per cent annually, according to a report on Wednesday.

Larger data centres could drive costs to between \$10 billion and \$25 billion in five years, as per research by Bain & Company.

David Crawford, chairman of Bain's Global Technology practice, said that Generative AI is the prime mover of the current wave of change, but it is complicated by post-globalization shifts and the need to adapt business processes to deliver value.

"Companies are moving beyond the experimentation phase and are beginning to scale generative AI across the enterprise. As they do, CIOs will need to maintain production-grade AI



solutions that will enable companies to adapt to a landscape that is quickly shifting," Crawford mentioned.

Three key areas of opportunities - bigger models and larger data centres, enterprise and sovereign AI initiatives, and software efficiency and capabilities - could enable the AI hardware and software market to come close to a trillion-dollar industry in the next three years.

AI workloads could grow 25 per cent to 35 per cent per year through 2027, Bain estimates. As AI scales, the need for computing power will

radically expand the scale of large data centres over the next five to 10 years.

AI will spur growth in data centres, from today's 50-200 megawatts to more than a gigawatt.

These changes are expected to have huge implications on the ecosystems that support data centres including infrastructure engineering, power production, and cooling, as well as strain supply chains. The AI-driven surge in demand for graphics processing units (GPUs) could also increase total demand for certain upstream components by 30 per cent or more by 2026.

Leadership, communication skills twice more in demand than AI/ML: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Demand for human skills such as leadership, communication and emotional intelligence is twice more in demand than the knowledge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), finds a report on Wednesday.

The report by workforce agility solutions maker Cornerstone OnDemand, provides a comprehensive overview of skills demand on the rise, an analysis from the past five years and indicators for future trends and demand forecasting.

The report highlights that AI, ML job postings are on the rise -- increasing by 65 per cent since 2019, and GenAI-related job postings have seen a 411 per cent surge.

Yet, the demand for human skills, or soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence was found to outpace the need for



digital skills globally. Human skills were found two times more in demand than digital skills, revealed the report.

Communication, interpersonal collaboration and problem-solving were the top human skills-related job postings, the report said.

"Keeping a close watch on changing skills and workplace trends in real-time across the market is

essential for forecasting and staying competitive," said Mike Bollinger, Global VP, Strategic Initiatives at Cornerstone.

"This report not only reveals the workforce readiness gap, that skills are evolving faster than organisations and individuals can keep pace with, limiting innovation and adaptability, but also emphasizes the importance of retaining criti-

cal human or 'soft' skills within your organisation," he added.

The report showed that job postings in Augmented Reality (AR)/ Virtual Reality (VR) soared by 154 per cent in the past five years.

Further, India was found to lead with 4.1 per cent of its job postings focused on AI/ML, reflecting its growing role in the global AI landscape. Germany and Japan follow

with 2.5 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively.

While GenAI skills are concentrated in industries like software development and IT consulting, there is a rising demand in financial services, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and banking.

The demand for remote and flexible work has seen a 39 per cent increase. Australia has the highest number of job postings looking for remote or flexible workers (22.8 per cent), followed by Germany (21 per cent), New Zealand (20.3 per cent), the UK (18.8 per cent), the US (15 per cent), Spain (11.6 per cent), Japan (9.7 per cent) and India (6.3 per cent). France (4.9 per cent) and Italy (1.4 per cent) ranked among the lowest.

The report covered data from more than 200 countries and territories, including job postings, resumes, government data, and other data points in 11 languages.

September 25: Sensex trades flat, Power Grid and M&M top gainers

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 25

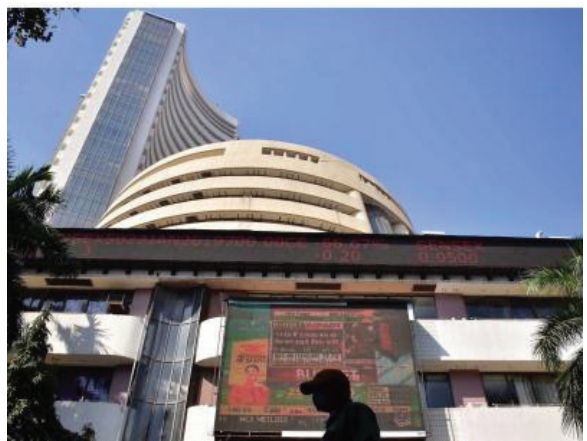
Indian equity markets were trading flat on Wednesday following mixed global cues.

At 9:55 a.m., Sensex was up 21 points or 0.02 per cent at 84,935 and Nifty was down 4 points or 0.02 per cent at 25,934.

In the early trade, market trend remained positive. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE) 1,170 shares were in the green and 1,155 in the red.

A mixed trend was seen in the midcap and smallcap stocks. Nifty midcap 100 index was down 200 points or 0.33 per cent at 60,650 and Nifty smallcap 100 index was up 34 points or 0.18 per cent at 19,473.

Among the sectoral indices, Fin service, pharma, metal, media, energy and infra were major gain-



ers. IT, PSU Bank, FMCG, realty and consumption were major losers.

In the Sensex pack, Power Grid, M&M, HDFC Bank, Maruti Suzuki, Tata Steel, ICICI Bank, L&T and UltraTech Cement were the top gainers. Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Wipro, JSW Steel, HUL, Tata Motors and TCS were the top losers.

Mixed trading is taking place in Asian markets. The markets of Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Bangkok are trading in the green. The markets of Seoul and Jakarta are trading in the red. US markets closed in the green on Tuesday.

According to the market experts: "The Chinese monetary stimulus measures lifted the Chinese

and Hong Kong markets yesterday and if the rally continues it is possible that FIIs will move more funds to invest in these markets which are highly attractive on valuations. In India metal stocks rallied in response to the Chinese stimulus measures."

"The gush of domestic liquidity, which is the main driving force behind the rally in India, is likely to keep the market resilient. If Nifty is to go past 26,000 decisively and sustain there, it has to be led by the Bank Nifty. There is more steam in this segment," they added.

The foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 2,784 crore on September 24, while domestic institutional investors extended their buying as they bought equities worth Rs 3,868 crore on the same day.

Indian economy projected to grow at 7.1 pc in FY25: Moody's Analytics

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 24

The Indian economy is projected to grow faster at 7.1 per cent this fiscal (FY25), Moody's Analytics said on Tuesday, as the country continues to remain resilient amid global uncertainties.

In its new Asia Pacific outlook, the global credit ratings kept the country's growth forecast unchanged at 6.5 per cent for 2025 while projecting faster growth of 6.6 per cent in 2026.

Moody's Analytics projected better inflation outcomes, as it reduced India's inflation forecast to 4.7 per cent from the 5 per cent predicted earlier. The country's inflation remained below 4 per cent



in July and August.

The 2025 and 2026 forecast was unchanged at 4.5 per cent and 4.1 per cent, respectively.

For the Asia Pacific region, Moody's raised the 2025 forecast to 4 per cent from 3.9 per cent as projected earlier.

Exports have been a key

driver for the region, but growth rests on an unstable footing. Key export drivers such as chips are losing steam. Global goods demand has been soft. And China's policy-led ramp-up in exports has sparked protectionism abroad, said Moody's.

Earlier in the day, S&P

Global Ratings retained India's growth forecast at 6.8 per cent for the fiscal 2024-25. The global ratings said that 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. The rating agency also retained India's growth forecast for FY 2025-26 at 6.9 per cent.

According to the report, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) considers food inflation a hurdle for rate cuts.

"Our outlook remains unchanged; we expect the RBI to begin cutting rates in October at the earliest and have pencilled in two rate cuts this fiscal year (year ending March 2025)," said the report.

Occupancy in flexible office spaces cross 80 pc across major Indian cities

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, SEP 25

The occupancy levels of flexible office spaces in India has crossed 80 per cent across major locations as IT companies drive the demand, a report said on Wednesday.

Prime office locations such as Mumbai

(94 per cent), NCR (92 per cent), Bengaluru (86 per cent) and Hyderabad (84 per cent) continue to attract corporations, driving greater demand for flexible office spaces, according to the report by Knight Frank India.

To meet this demand, flex-space operators have significantly increased

their office space take-up, leasing an estimated 52.9 million square feet from 2017 to the first half this year, with a robust CAGR of 22 per cent.

In January-June period, flexible workspace operators leased 7.17 msf, a 6 per cent increase compared with H1 2023.

This accounted for over 21 per cent of total

commercial real estate transactions.

"With GDP growth projections for FY25 reaffirming India as the fastest-growing major economy, the demand for innovative office spaces is soaring," said Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India.

Occupiers are now

looking beyond basic amenities to focus on employee well-being, and flexible office space operators are well-positioned to meet these evolving demands, he added.

Managed offices now constitute 65 per cent of the flexible workspace market, while co-working spaces account

for the remaining 35 per cent.

Coimbatore, Jaipur, Nagpur and Mysuru are the top choices for tier 2 cities for expansion, said the report.

The IT sector dominates the flex space industry, driven by the need for scalability, flexible lease terms, and a collaborative environment fostering

innovation, particularly in tech hubs like Pune, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru.

The other services sector, including professional services, digital marketing, tourism, and creative industries, also has a strong presence in cities like Chennai and NCR.

The BFSI sector, while

less dominant, favours flex spaces in financial hubs like Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

Manufacturing firms are increasingly utilising flexible workspaces for their administrative and managerial operations, particularly in cities with a strong industrial base, the report mentioned.

Women's T20 WC: Poonam Yadav predicts India, Australia to advance from group A

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

As the Women's T20 World Cup draws near, spinner Poonam Yadav shared her thoughts on the Indian women's team preparations and potential ahead of the tournament. She delved into India's team composition, their group stage opponents, and what she believes will be key to their success.

India's campaign kicks off on October 4 against New Zealand, followed by an eagerly awaited clash with arch-rivals Pakistan on October 6. After facing Sri Lanka again on October 9, they will conclude the group stage against Australia on October 13. All matches are set to take place in Dubai.

Poonam highlighted the tactical decisions captain Harmanpreet Kaur may have to make, particularly regarding the balance between pacers and spinners in the playing XI.

"If the dew factor becomes significant, captain Harmanpreet Kaur may opt for a team combination that includes one or two spinners. While she has shown confidence in the pacers, given the pitch's bounce, she may also consider using Asha Shobana, a wrist-spinner. Wrist spinners can turn the ball on any type of track, and their pace is



generally slower.

She further emphasised Deepti Sharma's role as a pivotal player in India's bowling attack, suggesting that both Sharma and Shobana could feature prominently in the World Cup, depending on conditions.

"Deepti Sharma will undoubtedly play a key role in leading India's bowling attack. It's possible that both Deepti Sharma and Asha Shobana could be included in the playing eleven. However, given Harmanpreet Kaur's preference for pacers, it's likely she will primarily rely on them," Poonam told Star Sports.

Previously, India suffered a disappointing loss in the 2020 T20 World Cup final against Australia

and narrowly missed out on victory in the 2017 ODI World Cup, falling just nine runs short against England. The 2023 T20 World Cup semifinals ended in a similarly heartbreaking defeat to Australia, further fueling the desire to clinch the coveted title.

India's group also includes Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and Pakistan, with each posing unique challenges.

While Yadav acknowledged that Sri Lanka would be eager to defeat India again, she expressed confidence in India's history of World Cup success against them.

"I think Australia and India from our group will advance to the next stage, with Australia being a for-

midable opponent. India's performance in T20Is over the past two years has been impressive, with strong batting, bowling, and fielding.

The team combination looks excellent, but Australia will undoubtedly pose a significant challenge. Sri Lanka will also be eager to defeat India again, though India has a history of success against them at the World Cup level. The match against Pakistan will be intriguing, but I am confident we will win.

"As for New Zealand, we played them in the same pool in 2018, and we defeated all the teams except Sri Lanka. Although we lost in the semi-finals, I believe our current team

combination, positive environment, and Shafali Verma's crucial role will help us succeed. Her ability to quickly score 60-70 runs in the first six overs can put the opposition on the back foot, and I hope she continues to play this role," she said.

Poonam also pointed out how Shafali Verma's explosive batting at the top of the order could be a game-changer. "Her ability to quickly score 60-70 runs in the first six overs can put the opposition on the back foot, and I hope she continues to play this role," she remarked.

The 33-year-old spinner also touched on the improvements within the Indian team under the guidance of coach Amol Mazumdar. "Coach Amol Mazumdar has focused extensively on improving the team's fielding and fitness.

He also organized a 10-day skill camp. I believe things are improving, and all the girls in the camp have been working hard.

"When you're part of such a camp, you gain clarity about your playing position, who plays a key role at which position, and where you should be bowling. It helps rectify mistakes, ensuring you don't repeat them in the World Cup. I'm confident Team India will win the World Cup," she concluded.

Global Chess League: 'It is building concrete schedules for fans to enjoy', says Nihal Sarin

AGENCIES
LONDON, SEP 25

Just over a week is left for the start of the second season of the Global Chess League, Indian Chess grandmaster Nihal Sarin, who will be competing for PBG Alaskan Knights, expressed that the league building infrastructure and concrete schedules for fans to enjoy.

The second season will take place in London between October 3 to 12 and Nihal, who will return as a Prodigy this year, said that he enjoys the unpredictable nature of the tournament.

"I am quite excited about returning for the tournament, especially considering how the whole thing went last year. All the top players are also playing this year, and hence, I am looking forward to it," the 20-year-old said. "Global Chess League is an interesting concept because the team format means that sometimes we have to play by keeping our chances on other boards in mind. Those dynamics are always complex, and point scoring depends on team strategy. No one can predict how it pans out, which makes it exciting," he added.

In its first season, the Global Chess League revo-



lutionised the sport with its unique team format. The first-of-its-kind franchise-based league features a total of six teams consisting of six players in each team - one Icon player, two Superstar men players, two Superstar women players, and one Prodigy in each team.

"My aim this year is to carry out my team's requirement for my board to the best of my abilities. The scoring system in this league invites a change of style in different colors, making it all the more exciting. The plans keep on evolving. Even though it is hard to track other games, I try to pick up a few things from a few moves players make to figure out what is going on," Nihal delved deeper into his strategy for the

upcoming season. The first season of the Global Chess League in Dubai captured the imagination of chess fans globally. It brought eyes from all around the world towards the sport with unique elements, including a vibrant commentary set-up and dynamic visual elements. Nihal said that the league is making the sport exciting for the fans to watch.

"I think the fan base that we build around chess is, in the end, the reason to play this game. People are now watching your moves and finding joy and entertainment- something that has not happened with chess outside of Viswanathan Anand's World Championship matches before and Indian team performances in Olympiads.

India-Germany bilateral series will revive spirit of hockey in Delhi: Harmanpreet Singh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, SEP 25

Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh expressed his excitement ahead of the two-match bilateral series against Germany, saying the series is about "reviving the spirit of hockey in the capital".

The two-match series is set to be played on October 23 and 24 at the iconic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium. It series will mark the return of men's international hockey to the capital after a decade, with the last match at the venue played in January 2014 during the Hockey World League Final - Men's Round 4.

Speaking about the upcoming series, Harmanpreet said, "Playing in front of home fans in Delhi after so many years is truly special for us as a team. The Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium holds a lot of history and memories and to lead the team



here will be a huge honour. The energy of playing in front of our home crowd is unmatched, and I know the fans will turn up in big numbers to support us."

He further added, "Germany is one of the top teams in world hockey, and playing against them will be a great challenge for us. It's important for our preparation as we gear up for major tournaments ahead. We are working hard, and this series will

give us the opportunity to test ourselves against a very strong opponent."

On the return of international hockey to Delhi, Harmanpreet remarked, "It's been over a decade since Delhi has hosted an international hockey match, and we are excited to bring the sport back to the capital. This series is not just about the two teams playing; it's about reviving the spirit of hockey in Delhi.

We hope this will inspire more young players from the region to take up the game."

Notably, this two-match series is not only a highlight for Delhi but also part of Hockey India's vision to promote the game across the country. In recent years, Hockey India has expanded its efforts beyond Odisha, which has become a hub for hockey, to bring the sport to other cities.

Last year, Chennai hosted the Men's Asian Champions Trophy, while Ranchi welcomed both the Women's Asian Champions Trophy and the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifier.

This November, Rajgir, a city in Bihar, will host the upcoming Women's Asian Champions Trophy, adding another chapter to the growing footprint of hockey in India. Now, with international hockey returning to Delhi, Hockey India is ensuring the game continues to thrive in different regions.

Midfielder Rodri 'out for long time', says Man City boss Guardiola

AGENCIES
MANCHESTER, SEP 25

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has said injured midfielder Rodri will be out of action "for a long time" but the club is still waiting for doctors to confirm the severity of the knee injury sustained by the Spaniard.

Rodri limped out of a Premier League draw with Arsenal last Sunday and has since been undergoing tests to determine the extent of his injury. He picked up an apparent knee injury after colliding with Arsenal midfielder Thomas Partey during a Manchester City corner.

Speaking to the media after Tuesday night's 2-1 Carabao Cup win over Watford, Guardiola said, "Still we don't have the definite. Will be out for a long time, a while. But there are some opinions that it may be less than we expect. Right now I can't tell you. We're waiting on the last phone calls from



the doctors. What he has and what type of surgery he has to get."

"I expect (we will find out) tomorrow, we will know it. The Club will inform. He's feeling okay, strong. He's just waiting," he added.

Rodri is probably the best defensive midfielder in the world due to his ability to both break up opponents' attacks and keep the rhythm of possession. The 28-year-old

has been at the heart of all of Guardiola's successes in recent seasons, playing at least 50 games for City last season without tasting defeat as he won the Premier League.

However, Guardiola will not allow his players to feel sorry for themselves while we wait for the No.16's return. "I feel so sorry for Rodri and for Oscar Bobb too but what are we going to do? Guys we are with you and

you have the best medical department. Three months without Erling (Haaland) and five without Kevin (De Bruyne) we won the Premier League in spite of many things."

"You have to go for it. This is the challenge. It's nice. Always happens. What you have to do. I'm sorry it's a pity. Let's go. Go to Newcastle to try to win the game. It is what it is. Me as manager can reflect what we can do better," said Guardiola.

Despite Rodri's injury, the City boss has faith in his squad that they can still compete for silverware without the outstanding holding midfielder in world football.

"We don't want it but we will have a good season. I trust my players. I need to find a solution. Rodri is irreplaceable. Of course it's a big blow for us. In football it happens. My duty is to find a solution to be competitive and continue to be there. A problem for our opponents.

ISL 2024-25: Chennaiyin FC aim for victory against debutant Mohammedan SC in home opener

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, SEP 25

Chennaiyin FC will aim to extend their winning start in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season when they face newly-promoted Mohammedan SC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai on Thursday.

The two-time ISL champions began their campaign with a thrilling 3-2 victory over Odisha FC at the Kalinga Stadium, bringing an end to the Jugernauts' 569-day unbeaten streak at home. Head coach Owen Coyle is keen for his side to maintain their momentum as they gear up for the first home



game of the season after a 12-day break.

"First and foremost, we're delighted to be back at home," Coyle said at the pre-match press conference.

"It feels like a long time since we've played, especially after a strong run

towards the end of last season. It's always special to perform in front of our home fans. While it's been 12 days, the schedule has worked in our favor. Some teams have played three games in this period, while Mohammedan SC have played twice. The boys are

hungry and excited to play again."

New signing Lalrinliana Hnamte, who showcased moments of brilliance in his Chennaiyin debut against Odisha, echoed Coyle's excitement and is eager to experience his first match at the Marina Arena in front of the passionate Chennaiyin FC supporters. Hnamte was one of five new signings featured in Coyle's starting XI for the season opener.

Coyle also confirmed that there are no fresh injury concerns ahead of the match. He offered praise for Mohammedan SC, expressing enthusiasm for the challenge posed by

the ISL debutants.

"Coming away from home, we'll see if they [Mohammedan SC] make any tactical changes, given that their first two matches were at home. Whether they decide to sit deep or stand toe-to-toe with us, we'll be ready. I hope they do come out and play. Those are the games I enjoy the most," Coyle stated. This will be the first-ever meeting between Chennaiyin FC and Mohammedan SC in the ISL. Mohammedan have played two matches so far, suffering a loss to NorthEast United and earning a draw against FC Goa.

ICC Rankings: Pant climbs to sixth in Test, Gurbaz breaks into top 10 in ODI

AGENCIES
DUBAI, SEP 25

India's wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has re-entered the top 10 Test batting rankings, cementing his return to form after a long gap as the latest ICC rankings across the format shake-up, with several of the world's top players making significant moves across Test and ODI formats after a thrilling week of international cricket.

Pant's standout performance in the second innings of India's victory over Bangladesh in Chennai propelled him to sixth place in the Test batting

rankings, earning him 731 rating points.

The wicketkeeper batter joined compatriot Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is in fifth place with 751 points, after his own half-century in the same match. Meanwhile, Indian captain Rohit Sharma remains in the top 10 despite slipping five places, now sitting at tenth with 716 points after a disappointing outing with scores of under 10 in both innings against Bangladesh.

In the bowling department, Sri Lanka's Prabath Jayasuriya grabbed attention with a spectacular performance in Galle. Jayasuriya took

nine wickets against New Zealand, climbing five spots to eighth in the Test bowling rankings with 743 rating points.

Fellow Sri Lankan Asitha Fernando, however, slipped down to 13th. On the batting front, Kamindu Mendis moved up to 16th, while Dhananjaya de Silva made his presence felt in the all-rounder rankings, moving up five spots to 18th. In ODI cricket, Afghanistan's rising stars made history. Rahmanullah Gurbaz, the young sensation, leaped 10 spots to eighth in the ODI batting rankings after scoring his seventh century before turning 23.

DEO reviews Poll preparedness for 63-Bani Assembly Constituency

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

District Election Officer (DEO) Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas (Deputy Commissioner Kathua), today chaired a key meeting with Sector Officers and Sector Police Officers in the Office of the Returning Officer for the 63-Bani Assembly Constituency to review the preparedness for the upcoming election.

During the meeting, it was decided that polling parties assigned to 94 polling stations within the 63-Bani AC - 33 in Lohai Malhar and 61 in Bani - will be paired at Government Degree College (GDC), Kathua. These teams will be dispatched for polling on September 29, 2024, and are expected to reach their respective locations in Bani and Lohai Malhar by the evening of the same day.



The DEO directed the Returning Officer, Bani to ensure appropriate lodging and boarding arrangements for the polling parties assigned to Bani. Similarly, the RO for Billawar will oversee lodging and boarding for those assigned to Lohai Malhar.

As decided, on September 30th, the polling parties for the 61 stations in Bani and 33 stations in Lohai Malhar will be deployed to conduct polling, which is scheduled for October 1, 2024. Following the polling, the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be returned and deposited at GDC Bani and GDC Billawar.

On the following day, all EVMs will be transported

to GDC Kathua for the counting of votes.

Dr. Minhas emphasized the crucial role of Sector Officers and Sector Police Officers, reminding them of their responsibilities at their respective polling stations. "Ensuring transparent polling process, maintaining fairness and neutrality at all times is the primary job of teams". "Strict action will be taken against anyone attempting to influence or intimidate voters," he further stated.

The DEO also addressed concerns and queries raised by the Sector Officers and Sector Police Officers, ensuring clarity on all aspects of the polling process.

Home Voting continues on Day-2 in Baramulla

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 25

On the second day of the Home Voting process in District Baramulla, polling teams continued to traverse through all the seven assembly constituencies, navigating remote and challenging terrains to ensure that eligible voters, even in the district's most far-off areas, were able to cast their votes.

Aimed at empowering elderly voters aged 85 and above, as well as individuals with a minimum 40% benchmark disability, this facility aligns with the guidelines set by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The process is set to continue until September 26, 2024. A total of 661 home voters have been identified in the district, comprising 287 elderly voters aged 85 and above, classified as AVSC (Absentee Voters in the Senior Citizens category), and 374 voters with disabilities, categorized as AVPD (Absentee Voters with Disabilities).



These teams have been navigating the most remote and difficult areas to ensure that all registered voters have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

Elderly and PwD voters who exercised their franchise through the home voting facility expressed their gratitude towards ECI and DEO for providing them the opportunity to exercise their democratic right from the comfort of their homes.

Out of the 49 polling teams deployed in the district, 24 have been assigned to the challenging terrains of the 09-Uri and 11-Gulmarg Assembly Constituencies. These teams have been navigating the most remote and difficult areas to ensure that all registered voters have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

General Observer Bani inspects Assured Minimum Facilities in Polling Stations

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

General Observer for 63-Bani Assembly Constituency A.N Khanum on Wednesday visited two key polling stations, PS Gatti and PS Neka to review preparations for the upcoming elections scheduled for 1st October 2024. The Observer's visit focused on reviewing the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) at these polling stations and ensuring they are equipped to facilitate a smooth voting process. During the visit, the Observer assessed the readiness of polling infrastructure and emphasized the importance of ensuring accessibility for all voters, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. The Observer interacted with local officials and polling staff to ensure all arrangements are in place for a free, fair, and transparent electoral process.

The Observer made an earnest appeal to the residents of the 63-Bani Assembly Constituency to exercise their democratic right by casting their votes on 1st October 2024.

"Voting is not only a right but a responsibility. I encourage all eligible voters in the constituency to come out in large numbers and make their voices heard. Every vote counts," the Observer remarked.

The visit to PS Gatti and PS Neka comes as part of the General Observer's broader efforts to ensure all polling stations within the constituency adhere to the required standards of preparedness and accessibility.

CEO visits Rajouri on Poll Day; monitors voting process

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 25

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Jammu and Kashmir, P K Pole, today visited Rajouri on the polling day to ensure smooth voting process across all five constituencies of the district including Nowshera, Darhal, Rajouri, Kalakote and Thanamandi.

District Election Officer (DEO) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, briefed the CEO regarding polling process in the district. He informed that high voter participation was witnessed in all the five constituencies with no report of any major incident. Adequate arrangements were in place to ensure voters' convenience and maintain order at polling stations, he added.

P K Pole inspected the district's Control Room, which plays a vital role in coordinating polling activities and addressing any emerging issues.

The CEO utilized the webcasting system to randomly check the status of several polling stations across all five assembly constituencies. This digital monitoring allowed him to assess the behavior



of polling staff, transparency and overall security arrangements without the need for physical inspections. Through webcasting, real-time footage of various polling booths, especially those in far-flung and remote areas, was reviewed, providing a comprehensive picture of election day activities.

In an interaction with the Control Room staff, PK Pole appreciated the technology-driven approach that enabled remote monitoring of polling stations. He remarked, that "Use of technology, such as webcasting, ensures that elections are conducted with greater transparency and accountability. It allows us to keep a close eye on polling activities, ensuring that the electoral process

is free, fair, and smooth." He commended the efforts of the district administration under the leadership of DEO Abhishek Sharma for successfully managing the election process across the district's diverse terrain. He also appreciated the special arrangements made for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and senior citizens, ensuring their participation in the democratic process. The deployment of security forces at sensitive polling stations was also lauded.

PK Pole emphasized the importance of adhering to the Model Code of Conduct and ensuring that every eligible voter exercise his franchise without facing any undue influence or hindrance.

Series of Voter Awareness activities under SVEEP organized at Teetwal, Tangdar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, SEPTEMBER 25

In a spirited effort to boost voter participation in upcoming Assembly Elections 2024, on the directions of District Election Officer, Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, a series of vibrant voter awareness programmes at Teetwal (LoC) and Tangdar as part of the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative were held today.



The mega events witnessed huge participation of first time voters, field functionaries, senior citizens and common people.

Supervised by District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Abdul Majeed Dar, impressive SVEEP events engaged a large number of youth, first time voters and citizens. The initiative aimed to enhance understanding of voting-related processes and promote electoral literacy, particularly among first-time voters, preparing them for the upcoming legislative assembly Elections 2024.

Local artists and

speakers emphasized the initiative's commitment to inspiring young voters and strengthening the democratic setup to empower citizens. They urged people, especially youth, to propagate the message of electoral participation to their families, relatives, and communities, emphasizing the significance of their role in nation-building through elections. They reiterated that a well-informed electorate is

fundamental to ensuring a vibrant and representative democracy. Earlier, a mega SVEEP Rally of first time voters, youth and citizens was held from the country's first Polling Station, Seemari -01 (at Zero Line) which attracted the attention of people living on the other side of the LoC (POK). The rally went through the banks of river Kishan-ganga and culminated at Teetwal Stadium with a voter pledge.

SVEEP Activities organized across schools in Assembly Constituency Hiranagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 25

In a concerted effort to boost voter awareness and promote electoral participation, a series of SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) activities were successfully organized at various schools across Assembly Constituency 68-Hiranagar. These events were designed to educate students and the wider community about the importance of voting and encouraging informed, ethical participation in the democratic process. The activities were held at multiple educational institutions, including Government High Schools and Senior Secondary Schools, where students actively participated in a range of awareness programs. These included debates, skits, poster-making



competitions, and interactive sessions on the significance of voting, with a special focus on first-time voters. The program also emphasized the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifi-

able Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), helping students understand the electoral process and the steps involved in casting a vote. Resource persons from the Election Department, along with local Booth Level Officers

(BLOs), were present to guide the participants and provide detailed information on voter registration, the importance of ethical voting, and the impact of informed electoral participation. SVEEP is a crucial initiative to ensure that every eligible voter, especially the youth, is empowered with the knowledge and responsibility to participate in the electoral process," said AC Nodal Officer Priya Lakshmi (CDPO Hiranagar). "We are committed to creating an informed and active electorate that contributes to a healthy democracy."

These SVEEP activities were well-received, with students showing a keen interest in understanding their civic duties and encouraging their peers and families to register and vote in the upcoming elections.

KNOW DENGUE FOR NO DENGUE WE CAN PREVENT OURSELVES FROM DENGUE

- DENGUE**
- Dengue is a viral disease.
 - It is transmitted by the bite of Aedes mosquito.
 - Dengue Fever is a severe, flu-like illness.
 - Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) & Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) are more severe forms of disease, which may cause death.

- SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**
- High grade fever.
 - Frontal headache.
 - Pain behind the eyes which worsens with eye movement.
 - Muscle and joint pains.
 - Rashes on the body.
 - Pain abdomen.
 - Nausea and vomiting.
 - Bleeding from gums and nose, blood in vomiting and black motion (blood in stools), small hemorrhagic spots on skin. Cold clammy limbs low B.P & shock in severe cases. If not treated timely death may occur.

- PREVENTION**
- Avoid water stagnation in & around the house.
 - Empty water reservoirs regularly like storage utensils, air coolers, plant pots, drums, flower pots and bird baths etc. Destroy and dispose off junk items like old tyres, coconut shells, disposable glasses and used cold drink bottles etc.
 - Keep water tanks and other water containers tightly covered with lids.
 - Use mosquito repellents/ Anti mosquito creams.
 - On leaving home, do not wear clothes that expose arms and legs.
 - Use mosquito nets while sleeping.
 - Use netted screens for doors & windows to prevent entry of mosquitoes.
 - Avoid sleeping on terrace to prevent mosquito bites.

- MANAGEMENT**
- On having symptoms of dengue go to the nearby health institution.
 - The tests and treatment are available free of cost in Govt. Health Institutions.
 - Don't go for self medication.
 - For first aid for high grade fever in inaccessible areas and during odd hours you can use tablet Paracetamol and tepid sponging as fist aid.
 - Don't take pain killers and any other medicines without the consultation of Doctors.
 - Most of the Dengue cases are mild and can be treated at home. Take adequate fluids like coconut water, lassi, fruit juices and ORS etc. Take fresh fruits & vegetables and adequate rest in case of symptoms of Dengue

ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST BY
STATE PROGRAMME OFFICER/STATE MALARIOLOGIST, J&K
DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES, JAMMU
DIP/J-5157/24 Date: 25-9-24