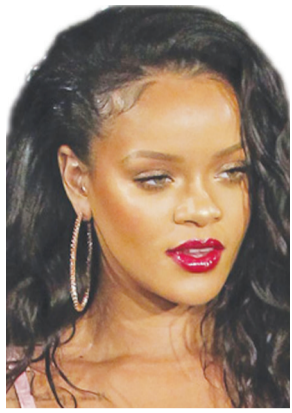


# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, JULY 02, 2023

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

**With only 53 new infections, Active Covid Cases in India dip to 1,490**

NEW DELHI, Jul 2 (Agencies): India has logged 53 new coronavirus infections, while the active cases have declined to 1,490, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday. The death toll was recorded at 5,31,907, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The Covid case tally was recorded at 4.49 crore (4,49,94,281). The national COVID-19 recovery rate has been recorded at 98.81 per cent, according to the health ministry website.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,44,60,884, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.18 per cent. According to the ministry's website, 220.66 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide vaccination drive.

**MeT predicts hot, humid weather forecast in J&K**

SRINAGAR, July 2: Weather department here on Sunday forecast mainly clear, hot and humid weather in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, an official of the meteorological department said that a "brief spell of showers may occur in some areas towards late afternoon and evening".

"Today's maximum temperature in Jammu and Srinagar is expected to remain around 35°C and 30°C respectively." Regarding July 3 and 4, he said, "same weather as today" was expected.

From July 5 evening to July 7, he said, intermittent light to moderate rain at many places of Jammu and Kashmir.

Regarding the minimum temperature today, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 18.3°C against 16.9°C on the previous night and it was 1.2°C above normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 16.4°C against 14.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.9°C above normal for the gateway

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## Amarnath Yatra | Third batch of pilgrims leave for Kashmir

JAMMU, Jul 2 (Agencies): A fresh batch of 4,903 pilgrims left the base camp here on Sunday to join the annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre high cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

With this, a total of 12,807 pilgrims have so far undertaken the pilgrimage since June 30 when Lt Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the first batch.

Over 8,000 pilgrims offered prayers at the shrine on the first day of



the 62-day yatra which commenced from both the twin tracks – the

traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and

the shorter but steep 14-km-long Baltal

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## Fake Amarnath registration racket was rooted in Delhi

JAMMU, Jul 2 (Agencies): In a significant development, the Jammu and Kashmir police in Jammu have successfully dismantled a racket involved in the production and sale of counterfeit yatra registration slips for the Amarnath Yatra. The prime suspect, along with two accomplices, has been apprehended by law enforcement authorities.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Jammu, Chandan Kohli, an investigation was launched after the administration discovered that several devotees possessed fraudulent registration slips during the examination of yatra registration documents. Consequently, a case under Section 420 of the Indian



Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Trikuta Nagar Police Station (FIR 188/2023), and a dedicated team from the concerned Police Station, led by SDPO East under the guidance of SP Jammu South, was entrusted with the task of probing the matter. The investigation unveiled that a man from Delhi was operating the illicit operation, involved in the production of counterfeit registration slips. Acting swiftly, the Jammu Police raided

the suspect's location in Delhi and successfully apprehended him along with two associates. The primary accused has been identified as Harender Verma, son of Devinder Verma from West Rohtas Nagar, Shahadara, Delhi, while the other individuals involved have been identified as Daleep Prajapati, son of Hari Chand, and Vinod Kumar, son of Jagan Nath.

SSP Jammu, Chandan Kohli, revealed that the main accused was responsible for the production of fake registration slips, whereas the two associates facilitated the arrangement of bus services and medical certificates for the devotees. The police

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## J&K registers record breaking GST revenue growth in June 2023



JAMMU, Jul 2 (Agencies): "The GST revenue collected in the month of June 2023 in J&K has registered substantial growth of 58 per cent compared to June of previous financial year", stated Union

Ministry of Finance here today.

This growth percentage is more than three times the National Average and the best in Country among medium and large jurisdictions. The gross GST revenue

collected in June 2023 was 588.68 crore compared to 371.83 crore in June 2022.

Pertinently, India's gross GST revenue for the month of June 2023 stood at 1,61,497 crore, registering a 12 per cent year-on-year rise. It is for the fourth time since the inception of GST in 2017 that the monthly gross GST collection has crossed Rs. 1.60 lakh crore mark.

Commissioner State Taxes J&K, Dr. Rashmi Singh, applauded the

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## Around dozen persons injured in stray dog attack in Kupwara village

SRINAGAR, Jul 2 (Agencies): At least a dozen people including children were injured in a stray dog attack in Glasdajhi Nallah Manzar in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on

Sunday. Officials told that one of them was critically injured and he has been referred to Srinagar hospital for further treatment. He said that rest of the

injured have been admitted to sub-district hospital Kupwara for necessary treatment.

This is the 2nd incident in the area. Earlier, on Saturday half a dozen person were injured.

## Ajit Pawar becomes new Dy CM: Maha sees four oath-taking ceremonies since 2019

MUMBAI, Jul 2 (Agencies): The swearing-in of Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar and several of his colleagues as deputy chief minister and ministers, respectively, on Saturday has meant Maharashtra has seen four oath-taking ceremonies in as many years at its stately Raj Bhavan.

In November 2019, after the Assembly polls and the split between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena, Devendra Fadnis and



NCP's Ajit Pawar were sworn in as CM and Deputy CM, respectively, in an early morning ceremony in Raj Bhavan.

The government lasted just 80 hours as Pawar was unable to cause a

split in his party.

Within a month, Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray was sworn in as CM after his party joined hands with the NCP and Congress to form the Maha Vikas Agahdi government.

Incidentally, Ajit Pawar, who had returned to the NCP, was the deputy CM in this government.

The MVA government fell in June last year after minister Eknath Shinde and 39 MLAs revolted against Thackeray and split the Shiv Sena.

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## Eastern Army Commander flags off Kohima to Kargil Army bike expedition

KOHIMA, Jul 2 (Agencies): Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen R P Kalita on Sunday flagged off 'Kargil Vijay Ride' of the 2nd Naga Regiment from Kohima to Kargil (K2) at the Assam Rifles garrison here. In his address, the GOC-in-C of Eastern Army Command said that it is one of the first ever motorcycle expedition from K2K being conducted to commemorate the commencement of 25 years of Operation Vijay wherein the brave Naga warriors enriched the soil of our northern borders by their blood towards safeguarding the territorial integrity of our motherland.

The 2nd Naga Regiment had valiantly fought and won the Kargil War, he said, adding that this



is a great tribute to celebrate the supreme sacrifice and bravery of the valiant martyrs.

Lt Gen Kalita said that the riders will reach Kargil on the eve of Kargil Vijay Diwas and wished the expedition a success.

The expedition has 25 valiant Mashkoh (2 Naga Regiment) warriors led Lt Col Saini on bikes who will traverse over 3,700 km from Kohima to Kargil cross-

ing through eight states and two union territories.

The team has taken the honourous task of collecting the soil from the villages of the fallen heroes of the Kargil War, along the entire route and carry them as a tribute to the Kargil War Memorial in Drass.

Enroute to Kargil, the team will also interact with all sections of society highlighting the role of the Indian Army in

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## Srinagar Airport inducts three more x-ray machines for baggage frisking

SRINAGAR, Jul 2 (Agencies): Airports Authority of India has installed three more X-ray machines equipped for baggage frisking at the drop gate of Srinagar International airport which will reduce clearance time considerably, officials said on Sunday.

With the installation of three more x-ray machines equipped with associated infrastructure for baggage fising, the number of machines goes up to ten and will help in speedy clearance of baggage and passenger vehicles, a statement from the Airport director said.

This will also increase the movement of vehicles in queues before the drop gate and reduce the processing time considerably.

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SCAN ME!



## Army celebrates Foundation Day of Chandigam, Lolab's sacred place 'Chandi Mata Mandir & Ziarat Peer Dasgir'

### TOP NEWS REPORT

KUPWARA, Jul 2: The Lolab Valley is home of many ancient springs, temples, shrines and ziarat, which are the symbol of religious harmony, peace and tranquility in Kashmir. To add to it Lolab valley offers a rare site in Chandigam village of Sogam block where one year ago Locals of Chandigam and Rashtriya Rifle Battalion of

Gujarpati Garrison put joint effort to re-establish the heritage site of Chandimata mandir and Ziarat Peer Dasgir which are adjacent to each other. Indian Army and Locals of Lolab came together to commemorate the Foundation Day of Chandigam Samras-ta Sthal. The place signifies the unifying bond between the people of different religions when they visit the "Ziarat"

and "Mandir" created within one boundary to negate all the boundaries between each other. A large number of people gathered and attended the event. The popularity of the place has spread across so much that not only regular tourists from various parts of the country but also tourists from other countries have visited here. One such tourist

named Evgenia Izmailova from Russia was present during the celebration of the first anniversary of the establishment of the site. Such events are testimony of a strong bond which exists between the Indian Army and Locals of Lolab and depict the ever existing religious harmony and peaceful coexistence of various religions in the Land of Kashmir.

## Champions of the Month honored at Sport Climbing Competition organized by Tawi Trekkers

### TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: "Champions of the Month" in the various categories of the Sunday Series of Sport Climbing Competitions being organised by Tawi Trekkers J&K, were honoured today in a simple function held during the conduct of 5th round of Sport Climbing competition held at Sprawling Buds ICSE School, Bantalab, Jammu.

Chairman Team Jammu Zorawar Singh Jamwal who is also President of Mountaineering Association of J&K was the chief guest on the occasion who presented gifts to the winners in the presence of Ram Khajuria and Shawetica Khajuria, President and General Secretary of the club and Vishal Shoor, SDPO Damana, Jammu.

Whereas Prarna Charak of Government College for Women, Parade, Jammu who secured first position in all the four rounds in Women's category of the Sunday Series of Sport Climbing Competitions held during the month of June was declared the "Champion of the Month" Aryan Rauthan of Army Public School, Damana who secured the top position in the first three rounds and second in the 4th round of the competition bagged the title of "Champion of the Month" in the Sub Junior



Boys category.

Similarly, Vidur Shoor of G D Goenka Public School Jammu who collected 365 points by securing first position in the first three rounds and third position in 4th round was declared the "Champion of the Month" in the Mini Boys category.

Similarly, Herman Samotra and Manya Verma, both of Sprawling Buds ICSE School who collected maximum points in the four rounds of the competition won the prestigious title of "Champion of the Month" in the Junior Boys and Mini Girls category respectively.

There was not much competition in the Junior Girls and Sub Junior Girls Categories in which Meetal Khajuria of St. Xavier Convent Sr. Secondary School and Jeevika of Sprawling Buds ICSE School were adjudged the "Champions of the Month" after

the 4th round of the competition.

2nd and 3rd position holders in all the categories of the competition were also honoured on the occasion

Meanwhile the 5th round of the Sunday Series of Sport Climbing Competitions was organised today under the over all supervision of Sumit Khajuria, Vice President of Mountaineering Association of J&K. Technical guidance was however, provided by Shivani Charak and Arun Deep Singh, both international climbers.

The over all results were almost on expected lines with Prarna Charak leading others in the women category, Deepak Singh & Jeevika Verma winning in Sub Jr. Boys & Sub Jr. Girls category respectively. The other winners were Ayaana Bhagat in Mini Girls Girls category; Harshveer Singh in Mini Boys cat-

egory; Meetal Khajuria in Junior Girls category and Saksham Slathia in the Junior Boys category.

It may be mentioned here that all the participants of the Sunday Series of Sport Climbing Competitions are ranked on the basis of points gained at every competition and Champion of the month is declared after every four rounds of the competition. It would obviously prepare the climbers adequately for the forthcoming zonal championship and thus facilitate their selection for the Inter Zonal Championship.

6th round of the Sunday Series of Competitions shall be held on 9th July, 2023. For registration and further information interested climbers may contact General Secretary of Tawi Trekkers J&K Shawetica Khajuria on Mob. No. 7006099855.

## Col Mahan inaugurates annual cultural show, Dangal Mela at Mashka

### TOP NEWS REPORT

KATHUA, Jul 2: An impressive day-long Cultural Show and Dangal Mela was organised by Youth Committee Mashka to celebrate annual event where more than 7000 people mostly youth and women have gathered from Hutt, Draman and adjoining panchayats including from Bani Tehsil and neighbouring Himachal Pradesh.

A thrilling and splendid cultural performance was given by prominent Dogri Singer and youth icon of social media Varsha Jamwal and her troupe who had come from Jammu. The event organised at a beautiful venue in the middle of a mango garden overseeing confluence of River Seva and River Ravi adjoining Himachal Pradesh.

Befitting the atmosphere, Dogri sensation made it happening event



by enforcing participants to dance to the tune of Pahadi music and famous Dogri numbers.

On the occasion, Col Mahan Singh (Retd.) DDC Chairman Kathua and local DDC was the Chief Guest who inaugurated the Mela. The DDC Chairman appreciated the initiative of local youth led by Sushil Kumar under guidance of Sarpanch

Hutt Surinder Singh and Veteran Govt Contractor Tilak Singh. He said alongwith development & progress the cultural revolution must go on side by side to preserve and promote our heritage and traditions.

DDC Chairman also presented trophies and incentives to artists, artisans and local achievers including students who secured top positions in

recent CBSE and J&K State Education Board results. He also witnessed Dangal which was organised on the occasion where scores of wrestlers from J&K, Himachal and other states took part.

Earlier, the DDC Chairman was accorded an rousing welcome on arrival at Mashka by local residents and Mela Committee.

## Fiaz Diwan elected as Vice President JK Youth Congress



### TOP NEWS REPORT

POONCH, Jul 2: Fiaz Diwan who was serving as Assembly President haveli, District President Poonch, Secretary of J&K Youth Congress got

elected as Vice President in recently concluded organisational election of which result is announced today.

He hails from Chakroo of haveli tehsil of

district Poonch and got basic education from native village and did his B.tech, M.tech from University of DBU Punjab. During his teenage years he was always passionate toward Social and political activities. He became House Captain during School time. During his B.tech, M.tech he was college CR and university President.

He fought election for the post of JKPYC Assembly President elections year 2018 and emerged victorious with highest number of membership. He enjoys good support from youth of J&K in general and Pir Panjal in particular.

## JKNPP holds meeting of office bearers

### TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: A meeting of J&K National Panthers Party was held today at Jammu under the Chairmanship of its President Vilakshan Singh. Various issues were discussed to strengthen the party at different levels. It was suggested by the members present in the meeting that the State body and the district bodies of the party should be reconstituted. Discussions were also held for the preparations to be made by the party in ensuing Urban Local body and Panchayat elections.

Vilakshan Singh while addressing the meeting said that J&K National Panthers Party is the only party which can espouse the cause of the poor masses and ensure justice to the needy. Singh said that BJP is diverting the mind of the public and is befooling the public on the

core issues. He said that BJP is deliberately delaying assembly elections in UT of J&K as it has foreseen its defeat in the assembly elections.

Singh said that old aged persons, specially abled persons, daily wagers, job aspirants etc all are on the roads. The government has failed to deliver almost on all fronts and the people are suffering due to governmental apathy. Singh said that JKNPP is the only alternative which focuses on the real issues of the public.

Singh asked the party workers to carry the agenda of the party to every corner of the UT. It was also decided in the meeting that the State body of the party shall be reconstituted.

Others who were present in the meeting were Naresh Chib, Balwan Singh, Ravinder Jamwal, Rajesh Gondhi, Sanjeev Verma, etc.

## Ghar Ghar Sampark Campaign: BJP leaders conduct door-to-door public outreach program

### TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: On the successful completion of 9 years of the PM Narendra Modi-led BJP Government, BJP leaders organized a Public Outreach Program at Rajpura Bakshi Nagar, Jammu. Prominent leaders Chander Mohan Gupta (Former Mayor and Vice President BJP Jammu Kashmir) and Braham Jyot Satti (Senior leader and incharge BJP OBC Morcha) graced the event with their presence.

The program was organized by Sanjay Verma and witnessed the participation of Kewal Verma (State Secretary OBC), Perveen Badyal (District Vice President OBC), Suresh Gupta (District Media Secretary BJP), Sanjay Verma (Mandal President Bakshi Nagar OBC), Onkar Verma (Mandal President Talab Tillo OBC Morcha), Ved Pal Sharma (Booth President), Pawan Sharma (Booth President),



Monu, Arya Verma, Druv Verma, Raman Kumar, and Rajesh Kumar.

During the program, the BJP leaders engaged with a large number of people through a door-to-door interaction initiative. They distributed booklets highlighting the achievements of the BJP Government over the past 9 years. Additionally, they provided information about various developmental works and government schemes that are highly beneficial for the betterment of the public.

The enthusiastic response from the people was evident as they expressed their happiness and raised slogans in favor of

India and the BJP. They emphasized that the BJP is the only political party truly dedicated to working for the nation and its citizens.

Addressing the gathering, Chander Mohan and Braham Jyot congratulated the people on the successful completion of 9 ruling years. They highlighted that PM Narendra Modi's government has been working relentlessly to improve the lives of the public, setting a true example of service, good governance, and welfare for the underprivileged.

The leaders acknowledged Prime Minister Modi's dedication and humble nature, commending his launch

of various beneficial schemes that have provided new career opportunities for the youth. They emphasized that over the past 9 years, the BJP has transformed India into a strong and progressive country, generating new employment opportunities and working for the betterment of all segments of society. They expressed gratitude for having a PM like Narendra Modi.

They further mentioned the significant issues that the government has addressed, such as the surgical strike to strengthen the country, the construction of the Ram temple, the removal of Article 370 to

integrate Kashmir into the mainstream, and the ban on triple talaq for justice to minority women. The leaders affirmed that the BJP has strived to fulfill the motto of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, and Sabka Vishwas."

The leaders also highlighted the impact of schemes like Ayushman Bharat, Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna, cleanliness campaigns, Aawas Yojna, and Ujjwala Gas Scheme, underscoring their positive effects on the ground. They noted that through the Jan Dhan Yojana, the BJP government has directly benefited lakhs of people by providing them access to banking facilities.

The BJP leaders expressed their appreciation for the policies of the BJP government, reiterating the party's commitment to being available for the public. They pledged to reach out to as many people as possible through such public outreach programs.

## Speed Ball Association organizes two-day training camp at Sgr



### TOP NEWS REPORT

SRINAGAR, Jul 2: J&K Speed Ball Association organized two days training camp under the banner of J&K Speed Ball Association w.e.f 1st to 2nd July 2023 held at Islamia Mission

High School Kralangri Brein Srinagar in presence of Sunny Nanda, National Speed Ball Chief Coach Of India, Rinu Nanda, Harshdeep Singh and Amar Khushal (International Player). During two days camp

around 40 to 50 boys/girls attended the camp. The whole camp was held smoothly under the guidance of Gulzar Ahangar (HOD Physical Education Department Green Valley School), Shahnawaz Baba was also present.

## EDITORIAL

LAUGHTER IS  
PRAYER

You are here for a unique and noble purpose, not just to eat, sleep and talk. Remember this always, and don't stop smiling.

To grow and to be strong, we need to follow some rules. They are called yama and niyama. The first is ahimsa, non-violence, for it unites you with entire creation. Practice of yoga, of realising that everything is here and everything is part of you is ahimsa. The next is asthaya, not missing what you don't have.

When you begin your day in laughter and love, your life gets divinely enlivened. True prayer is laughing in the morning from outside and from deep inside.

Laughter comes from the centre of our Being, from the core of our heart. Our belly is so full of laughter that the laughter permeates every cell in our body. True laughter is true prayer. When things go all right, everybody can laugh, but when everything falls apart, and yet you laugh, that is evolution and growth. Nothing in life is more worthy than your laughter. Never lose it. Events come and go. Some are pleasant, and others, unpleasant. There is an area deep in you that is left untouched. Hold on to what is untouched. Then you will be able to keep laughing.

Sometimes you laugh just to avoid thinking or to avoid looking at yourself. But when you see and feel within that life is present and intense every moment, nothing can bother you or touch you. That laughter is authentic. You might have observed babies, six months or one year old. When they laugh, their whole body is jumping and bouncing. Every cell in the body is laughing. That is enlightenment. That laughter is innocent, pure, without inhibitions.

Opinions are the impressions we make on our minds. If we have one experience repeated four or five times, then, for the rest of our lives, we tend to see life through those same experiences. We need to be able to see things as they are. When life's essence blooms from within, there is true laughter akin to godliness. Laughter opens us up, opens the heart.

Totally accepting what is and not regretting, is asthaya. Then comes brahmacharya, moving beyond small identifications. Brahma means big, moving into bigger things. The fourth is aparigraha, not taking what people have to give you. Aparigraha is not taking anything from anybody, including insults.

Then there are five rules for your inner development. The first one is shaucha, cleanliness, keeping yourself clean and wearing clean clothes. More important is to be clean from inside. The next rule is santosha, contentment. Be happy. If you don't attempt being happy, nothing in this world can make you happy.

The third is tapa, forbearance, putting up willingly with something that is uncomfortable. If you were asked to sit continuously for 10 hours, you would never do it. But travelling in an aircraft over long distances, you have no choice but to sit, bound by a belt.

Undertake swadhyaya, self-study, observe your mind. When you observe, all the feelings, good or bad, will change. The last rule is Ishwara Pranidhaana, love of the Divine. Surrender to the Divine when you feel you are totally helpless.

## India's Defence Conundrum is Russia Over-Dependence

By: Manish Tewari

The United States of America incurred 39 per cent of the World's Military Expenditure in 2022. It was followed by China at 13 per cent. Russia, despite the Ukraine war, was just at 3.9 per cent and India was at 3.6 per cent followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom at 3.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively. The department of defence (DOD) of the federal government of the United States has a budgetary allocation of \$2.01 trillion for the fiscal 2023. It broadly spends \$829.89 billion in committed obligations and \$192.23 billion contracts and financial assistance.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) announced an annual defence budget of about \$224.79 billion for fiscal year 2023. India, by comparison, has a defence budget of \$72.6 billion in fiscal 2023-24. China spends more than the next 17 Indo-Pacific militaries combined. The US, by contrast, spends 10 times more on defence than what China does. There is, therefore, a very strong case for upping India's defence spending or bringing down the threats and challenges to India's national security.

China's defence spending witnessed a 7.2 per cent increase over fiscal-22. It is the eighth consecutive single-digit enhancement in China's defence spending, with the last double-digit increase of 10.1 per cent recorded in 2015.

Quixotically, the official budget released by the Chinese every year accounts for only a fraction of its actual defence spends. It does not account for a whole range of military expenditure including and not limited to arms imports,

expenses for the People's Armed Police (PAP) and militia/reserve forces, state subsidies to China's military-industrial complex, and earnings from PLA-run businesses. The department of defence of the United States has repeatedly underscored that China's actual military expenditure is at least twice the officially stated figure. Presuming that is correct, it still is eight times less than what the United States spends on its defence needs.

China's objective behind incessantly enhancing its military spending is threefold — meeting the centenary benchmark of ensuring the PLA is on track with its military modernisation programme. The benchmarks inter alia include that the PLA achieves strategic high-end deterrence by 2027 and fulfils the objective of PLA's modernisation by 2035 that should finally culminate into the development of a world-class military by mid-century.

The reason for putting some of these numbers in perspective is to underline the fact that there is a huge gap between the defence numbers of the first four countries. This assertion, therefore, that the United States wants a closer defence relationship with India to only "muscle" into the Indian defence market may not entirely be correct.

The US military industrial complex is hardly able to service the needs of the department of defence. In the financial year 2023, it would award contracts and discharge other obligations worth \$192.23 billion almost two-and-a-half times the total defence budget of India. Moreover, the US defence industry is now substantially engaged in defence of

Europe once again.

Then why does the United States want a closer defence relationship with India. The reasons are purely strategic. As Donald Rumsfeld, the former US defence secretary, had famously remarked, "There are known knowns — there are things we know we know... We also know there are known unknowns — that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know."

The penultimate decade of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the 21st demonstrated to the United States that the only constant in the geo-strategic calculus is the unknown unknown and that is what it must prepare for.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 that heralded the end of the Cold War was such an unknown. 9/11 that defined the US defence posture for two decades was another. Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine was again such an unknown. It is the unknown that the US is trying to hedge against as it seeks to build alliances like the Quad, AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific and other like acronyms around the world.

Herein lies an opportunity for India to build an entirely new approach that can underpin both its defence frameworks and strategic relationships for the 21st century should it choose to do. That relationship and framework has to take into account the challenges, realities and imperatives of the 21st century and really jettison the shibboleths of a previous century that our "tanks — that supposedly think that they think" still pay lip service to. It comes under an overarching rubric called "strategic

autonomy" — a term widely used but little understood by politicians, policymakers, defence planners and even the strategic elite.

How autonomous is India when today, according to data published by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) publication, the Military Balance, more than 90 per cent of the Indian Army's armored vehicles, 69 per cent of combat aircraft operated by the Air Force and Navy, and 44 per cent of the Navy's submarines and warships are of Russian origin? Also, 65 per cent of these vessels are armed with Russian missiles.

There might be valid reasons as to why this dependency came to manifest itself but does this rubric really fit the definition of strategic autonomy? In a situation whereby Russia itself is under tremendous stress with its war effort committed to supplying the Ukrainian front, how much would it be able to spare and supply if the push came to a shove for India? It is a question that neither has been seriously asked much less an answer attempted.

India's defence indigenisation programme is still in infancy. A colleague, during a recent meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee of defence, rightly pointed out that the armed forces demand "state of the art" equipment to meet the two-front situation that we are confronted with. How much ever the push may be towards self-reliance there is a yawning gap between the expectations of the "users" and what the Indian defence manufacturing industry is able to offer.

It is, therefore, imperative that old paradigms need to be discarded and a fresh approach that really guarantees "strategic autonomy" in terms of defence preparedness be crafted with dispatch.

## Will ChatGPT spell end of exams and teachers?

By: Shashi Warriar

My professor friend Raghavan dropped in the other day with his shoulders bowed as if he, not Atlas, bore the weight of the earth. "What's up?" I asked, leading him to the sitting room and pouring him a large drink. "It's that time of the year again," he said.

"Monsoons?" I asked, because the rains have been poor and aren't likely to improve. "But..."

"Not monsoons," he said, interrupting me. "Exams. I hate them even more than students do."

I remembered my own mis-spent years in college, when professors were sadists whose idea of fun was telling you that they were holding you back for a semester. And here was Raghavan moaning that he hated exams! I couldn't understand it, and said so.

"I'm not trying to hold anyone back," he said. He smiled weakly. "That would be a reflection on my teaching." "So what's the problem?" I asked.

"A student yesterday showed me what she can do with her cellphone," he replied. "She got a publicly available program to write an answer to practically any question I can ask in an exam. In under five seconds."

"Hasn't Google been around for decades?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "but I'm not talking about a search engine."

"What are you talking about, then?" I asked.

"Artificial Intelligence," he replied. "AI. It's going to throw everything we know out of the window."

I have trouble enough with natural intelligence so I leave the artificial version to others. "How?" I asked.

"Have you used ChatGPT?" he asked.

"I've heard of it," I said, "but have no idea what it does."

"If you ask it a question," he said, "it composes an answer based on data available on the Internet. You can ask in regular English, and the answers are plausible. Ask it to write a recipe book in English for traditional South Indian delicacies, and that's what you'll likely get. A student with a cellphone and an Internet connection can answer practically any question she might face in an exam. It can even write software programs."

"So no cellphones in exam halls," I said.

"That's what's happening," he said. "But the old exams that test your memory are no use. Banning cellphones might help in the short term, but we really have no idea what's coming in the next few years."

I felt reassured: I, too, had no idea, and shared ignorance is a great comfort. "What can we do about it?" I asked.

His answer shook me up. "I've been reading up about AI and its effects," he said. "ChatGPT's old: new tech is far ahead. Nobody's sure, but 'experts' say different things about it. People who develop AI, people who use it to drive

cars and translate languages, and so on. One extreme view is that AI will wipe out humans. The other extreme is that humans can't survive without it."

"Well, so what does this have to do with students?" I asked.

"Students have to know what's coming," he said.

"They need to know the kind of careers they might have. And the worst way to get them to see that is to ban cellphones in exam halls. When they emerge from college and start working, no one's going to tell them to hand in their cellphones before they enter the office, right? And they'll have lots of computers."

"Right!" I said. "Doesn't the university understand that?" "The university thinks differently," he said. "They have to defend whatever they've been doing all these years. Besides, it's a matter of jobs..." A pause, before the truth was out. "AI could replace me."

"How could it do that?" I asked. "Don't you give students individual treatment?"

"I try," he replied, "but I'm limited by the 50-odd students in each class."

"Won't that apply to AI teachers as well?" I asked.

"No," he replied. "The AI teacher works one-on-one. Students log in at individual terminals. The teacher asks a few questions, figures out how much the student knows, and tailors the session appropriately. Each student learns at her own pace, at her own convenience... And, especially in India, in the language she

knows best! The technology to do this already exists... It could destroy universities as we know them."

"Don't universities also do research?" I asked.

"Sure," he said. "They do. Much of it is in the form of PhD theses for certification, which ChatGPT can do free in hours... Besides, AI comes up with more ideas for research than people do. It can construct hypotheses, define axioms, and develop theories faster than a human can."

"So a lot of very educated people are going to be unemployed," I said.

"Yes," he said. "Maybe even judges. An AI system can look up every precedent, work out changes, understand charge sheets, and arrive at a judgment in less than one per cent of the time it takes a human judge. An AI system can make policy decisions better and faster than any politician can, and maybe diagnoses better than doctors. So, better teachers, judges, leaders, doctors... AI can do all that. Aren't you worried you'll be replaced? What do you do?"

I thought for a moment. What do I do? The answer came in a flash. "Well, nothing," I said, "I just bumble around. So an AI system can't very well replace me, can it?"

His face began to go purple in anger. Just when he was going to explode, his phone rang. It was his wife, calling him home, and he had to leave. I saw him to the door, of course, but I still haven't understood why he got mad at me.

# SP Ramnish inaugurates Langar organized by SAYW Society

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: National General Secretary of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society, Raju Chandel said that a huge Langar Bhandara will be organized by Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society at Bhagwati Nagar Baba Purna Nath Temple for the Shiva devotees.

On this occasion, Jammu Head Quarter SP Police Ramnish Gupta arrived inaugurated the Langar to serve the devotees of Shiva.



He was accompanied by Corporator Sucha Singh in which Langar directors Meena Kak and T.K Kank welcomed SP Ramnish who inau-

gurated the Langar by cutting the ribbon and distributed food among the devotees.

On this occasion, Rajkumar Goyal, National

Executive President of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society said that special arrangements have been made for bathing, bathing and

food etc. First of all, devotees were given tea, biscuits, bread etc. in breakfast, Sholay Bhature and Desi Ghee ka Halwa etc. in breakfast, excellent Shuddh Vaishno lunch in afternoon, dinner food etc. is arranged as follows Langar is being run for 24 hours by Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society, which is completely free of cost, cleanliness etc. is taken care of in the langar premises.

Goyal said that Langar is being run by Shri

Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society in Bhagwati Nagar only, no other langar is being run by our society, some fake people are running langar without permission in the name of our organization.

On this occasion the President of Jammu, Charan Singh said that preparations are being made to send a legal notice to the people running fake Langar in the name of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society in the Delhi court soon.

# Govt miserably failed to protect rights of weaker sections: Ajeet

## TOP NEWS REPORT

KISHTWAR, Jul 2: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Senior Leader Ajeet Bhagat asserted that the present government headed by the Lt. Governor has completely failed to protect the rights of Scheduled Caste as well as weaker sections of the society in the Jammu and Kashmir state.

The senior National Conference leader said that the Scheduled Caste and other backward communities had voted overwhelmingly for ruling government at the Centre in the previous elections but the BJP Party has failed to protect their interest. Ajeet Bhagat expressed great disappointment against the Jammu and Kashmir administration for its negative attitude towards the Scheduled Caste and alleged that the present administration is not showing the least concern to addressing the pressing issues of this section of the society.

Ajeet Bhagat said that the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 has not been extended to Jammu and Kashmir State, where their population is 20 per cent. Bhagat stressed upon the need for stepping up efforts to ensure economic empowerment, besides emancipation of the weaker sections so that they can play their useful role in the

society. The senior NC leader asserted that the funds sanctioned for central sponsored schemes with regard to welfare of Scheduled Caste and other backward communities in Jammu and Kashmir have not been fully utilized more than 50 per cent due to poor monitoring mechanism. Bhagat asserted that the government is just wasting public money by conducting Back to Village programme 4 which has turned out to be a total eye wash. Moreover, the Administration has failed to resolve the burning issues likely unemployment, farmers, daily wagers and many more raised and registered during the first three phases, he lamented.

Ajeet Bhagat urged the Administration to first review the result or outcome of the earlier three phases and only thereafter proceed further with the so called mega outreach programme.

The Senior NC leader asserted that the National Conference has always remained committed to protect the rights of Scheduled Caste communities in the past and shall continue to do the same in future too. Bhagat asked the Scheduled Caste Communities to gear up for the upcoming Assembly elections as these could be announced any time now.

# Reetika Thakur Dance Group mesmerizes audience with its scintillating performance at Bani Chhinj Mela

## TOP NEWS REPORT

BANI, July 2: Reetika Thakur Dance Group, known for their captivating performances across India, recently graced the stage at the esteemed Bani Chhinj Mela in Kathua district. This historical event has witnessed an array of talented artists, including the eminent dance group from Himachal Pradesh.

Bani Chhinj Mela, deeply rooted in tradition and recognized as one of the most renowned festivals in the region, captured the attention of spectators from near and far. Reetika Thakur Dance Group,



known for their captivating choreography and unparalleled talent, has enthralled the audience with their mesmerizing performance. The group has left an indelible mark on the hearts of the attendees.

Reetika Thakur, the creative force behind the dance group, expressed her gratitude for the

opportunity to perform in Bani Chhinj for the first time. She was deeply moved by the warmth and appreciation shown by the audience. "It was an incredible experience to perform in front of a crowd," said Reetika. "The culture and people here resonate with the essence of Himachal Pradesh, making us feel

at home even outside our hometown."

The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including the esteemed presence of DIG Shakti Pathak, who served as the guest of honor. Dr. Rameshwar Singh, Yasir Choudhary, Tabsum Sheikh (JKAS), and other notable personalities also attended the

event. Their presence and admiration added to the grandeur of the occasion. The dignitaries presented several awards and accolades to Reetika Thakur Dance Group, recognizing their exceptional talent and memorable performance.

The success and overwhelming response at

Bani Chhinj Mela have further strengthened the reputation of Reetika Thakur Dance Group as one of the most sought-after dance groups in the country. Their previous notable appearances include the Republic Day Parade in Delhi, where they showcased their artistic brilliance to a national audience.

Reetika Thakur Dance Group expressed their gratitude to the organizers of Bani Chhinj Mela for the opportunity to be part of such a prestigious event. They also conveyed their appreciation to the people of Bani for their warm reception and continuous support."

# GDC Mendhar organises swachta campaign

## TOP NEWS REPORT

MENDHAR, Jul 2: The NSS Unit in collaboration with the Department of Economics and Shikshit Bharat Club CSM Government Degree College Mendhar organised a swachta campaign inside the campus.

This cleanliness drive was a part of various social programmes being organised under the overall supervision of Dr. Mohammad Azam, Principal of the institution.

In his message Dr. Azam said that the teachers' and students' role is very important to create awareness on cleanliness. In today's world, the role of social media is important to create awareness



among the people and inculcate a feeling of nationality among them.

The campaign was formally started with the awareness talk presented by NSS Programme officer Dr. Rehfit Naz Kouser. She focused on the need of cleanliness on public places especially around the edu-

cational Institutions for the physical health and mental wellness.

Faculty members along with the NSS volunteers and students tended to remove the plastic bottles, wrappers and other non-biodegradable substances from the main campus. They put all their efforts

to make the college green and clean. This programme was organised with the particular objectives of "plastic free campus" and "waste management".

While addressing to the students Prof. Mur-taza Ahmed, Convener Shikshit Bharat Club stated that It's a need

of the present; all the people should actively participate to clean India to fulfil the dream of Mahatma Gandhi for the protection of the environment, for our safety and protection of our future. It is our fundamental duty to take all efforts to make this country clean and pollution free". On the conclusion of the programme Dr. Tabarak Amin Khan presented vote of thanks to all the faculties and volunteers for organising this cleanliness drive. The other dignitaries who joined hands with the volunteers were Prof. Ayaz Ahmed Choudhary, Prof. Javed Manzoor, Prof. Mohd Akram, Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Prof. Mur-taza Ahmed and Saima Kouser.

# AJBRCEAK mourns demise of veteran trade union leader Sampat Parkash

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: All Jammu Based Reserved Category Employees Association Kashmir (AJBRCEAK) today paid tributes to veteran trade union leader Sampat Parkash.

Vipen Kumar Chairman, AJBRCEAK expressed deep shock over the untimely demise of famous Trade union leader Sampat Parkash died due to cardiac arrest.

Vipen Kumar, Chairman along with President Anil Radha termed it a great loss for employee fraternity, Sampat Parkash was a trade mark in history of trade Unionism in Jammu and Kashmir, who

worked forthrightly for the legitimate issues of employees and earned a good name and fame among employees and common people" Chairman said. He was outspoken and valiant and was sent many time jail for the cause and dignity of employees. At present he was working as state President of Hind Mazdoor Saba which is known as huge trade union throughout the country, and was also president of low paid employees Federation. AJBRCEAK termed the death of Sampat Parkash a huge loss to the cause of employees.

The entire leadership of AJBRCEAK Which includes Kuldeep

Kumar Vice Chairman, Mohan Lal Chief Advisor, Deepak Kumar Advisor, Shashi Goutam Advisor, Navneet Kundal Vice President, Sukhdev Vice President, Lalit Kumar Legal Advisor, Suresh Kumar Convenor, Yashpal General Secretary, Vijay Dutt Secretary, Bharat Bushan Joint Secretary, Ashok Kumar Public Secretary, Virender Mohan Organizing Secretary, Naresh Kumar Bhagat Media Secretary, Hemraj Drafting Secretary, Jarnail Singh Joint Secretary, Deepak Kaith Cashier, Naveen Bhagat Cashier have extended their condolences to the family on the sad demise of veteran trade union leader.

# Manjit pays obeisance at Baba Sidh Gorla Nath Ji Temple Swankha

## TOP NEWS REPORT

SAMBA, Jul 2: Apni Party Provincial President, Jammu, and Former Minister, S. Manjit Singh today paid obeisance at Baba Sidh Gorla Nath Ji Temple at Swankha.

The Former Minister accompanied by prominent people of the area visited the Temple and paid their obeisance at the famous Baba Sidh Gorla Nath Ji Temple at Swankha.

On this occasion, S. Manjit Singh prayed for peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir. "These religious places unite people and bring the communities to each other. Religious places and festivals are



best occasions when one understands the other. This diverse culture is known as India across the world that needs to be preserved, and protected," he added.

He however appreciated the organizers who made good arrangements for the devotees coming from various areas of J&K, and across the country. Meanwhile, he said

that the administration should provide free pick and drop services by deploying RTC buses for the transportation of devotees to the famous Temple from the main road.

# FICCI FLO's 'She Rises' programme to handpick, train girls for entrepreneurship from July onwards: Varuna

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: Varuna Anand Chairperson FICCI FLO J&K and Ladakh announced 'She Rises' programme from July 1 onwards, to handpick the women start-up aspirants and make them ready for entrepreneurship after their participation in Start-Up festival in October 2023.

In a statement issued here today, Varuna Anand mentioned that 'She Rises' programme is a unique initiative aimed at empowering and supporting individuals who are looking to establish and grow their own businesses. Under FICCI FLO, this programme is well-structured and tailored to meet the needs of



women homepreneurs, entrepreneurs, and innovators. One of the standout features of the aforesaid programme is its wide reach, she added.

"Besides Jammu, the programme will be offered in 15 different cities across 11 states of India, making it accessible to a large number of women entrepreneurs

from diverse backgrounds and regions", Varuna told media persons here.

The handpicked aspirants shall get training under the realms of FICCI FLO with capacity building to remain on forefront. Participants in the She Rises programme will have access to a wide range of resources and opportunities. The programme is designed to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's competitive business environment. The aspirants will have access to learning sessions, mentorship, webinars, networking and funding opportunities, besides training on

making entrepreneurs investment ready," she said.

The Chairperson informed that women above the age of 18 are eligible for the initiative by FLO, applications for which have already been floated and the selected aspirants will be provided training online from July 1, 2023.

"We have targeted Universities across Jammu and Kashmir to handpick those who have completed their graduation", she said adding that FICCI FLO can play a significant role by providing appropriate guidance to upcoming entrepreneurs in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

## Money a by-product, what an actor craves is appreciation: Arshad Warsi

*The actor said it is probably his 'inherently lovable' personality that reflects in his on screen characters and make them more interesting*

There is no bigger reward than audience admiration, says Arshad Warsi, who believes the success of "Asur" season two proves that if viewers love a character, they root for it.

Be it street smart Ballu of "Tere Mere Sapne", devoted sidekick Circuit from "Munna Bhai" films or small time lawyer Jagdish Tyagi in "Jolly LLB", Arshad's filmography boasts of memorable characters.

The actor said it is probably his "inherently lovable" personality that reflects in his on screen characters and make them more interesting.

"The money one earns is a byproduct, but the main thing one craves for is appreciation. You want people to come up to you and say, 'What a film, what a character and I loved you in it'. That's my award and reward. I personally look for that," Arshad told news agency in a virtual interview.

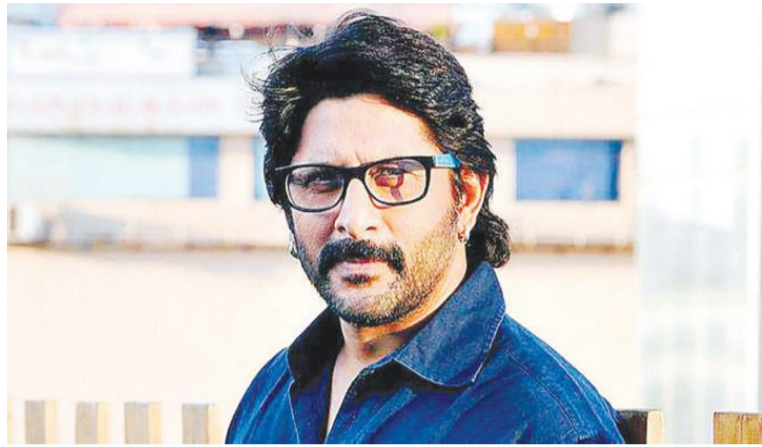
"I think I'm inherently lovable and that part of me comes in whatever I do. It can be a cop, goon, or anything. I want people to appreciate my work, whether it's positive or negative," he added.

It is important for audiences to like and relate to the protagonist, said Arshad.

"If they love the character, no matter what it does, it is appreciated. If they do not like it, it's null and void.

"I've been fortunate enough that there isn't anyone who hasn't liked my work. When a film or series works, that's a cherry on the cake. There is no better feeling than that," he added.

In "Asur 2", the 55-year-



old returns as forensic expert Dhananjay Rajput along side actors Barun Sobti (Nikhil Nair), Anupriya Goenka (Naina Nair), Ridhi Dogra (Nusrat Saeed) and Amey Wagh (Rasool Shaikh).

The second season of the psychological thriller series, which premiered on JioCinema last month, is directed by Oni Sen.

Arshad, who has been receiving acclaim for his performance in the show, said he fell in love with the concept during season one, which premiered in 2020, and coming back was a no brainer.

"I absolutely enjoyed season two. I liked the character the first time I heard the script for season one... It is complex, there are so many layers. I enjoyed working on the first season and the second season is even grittier. I had a great time doing this."

Asked whether successful characters also tend to box an actor in a certain image, Arshad said he has navigated that space quite a few times in his career.

"Usually, actors are divided in terms of genre—action, comedy, romance. Very few manage to fit in all of them. I would like to

believe I'm one of those," he said.

But it is not easy, he said, adding that he used to get characters similar to Circuit from "Munna Bhai" films until recently.

"I credit the storytellers, the directors who imagined me in a (different) role and had faith in me. When Kabir Kaushik asked me to do 'Seher', I asked him if he was sure. I had an image of a comedy actor. Subhash (Kapoor) was sure about me playing Jolly. I'm grateful to them for taking a chance with me and I'm happy I could live up to their expectations." Arshad, who made his cinematic debut with 1996 movie "Tere Mere Sapne", said "waiting" is also an integral part of the process of building credibility as a versatile performer.

"It's tough, especially for guys like me who are not from the industry. Sadly, I've been here for almost 27 years, and I still can't say that I'm part of the industry. Everytime I give a flop, I've to take a long climb to get back to where I was," he said, adding that one has to be strong

enough to say no.

Post "Asur 2", the actor said he is flooded with offers for cop roles and he might take up a few.

"Every second day I get a story with a cop character. But no regrets. There are some which are fabulous and I'm doing some of them," he said.

Arshad believes he has come a long way in his acting journey and evolved into a confident performer.

He credits collaborating with veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah on Abhishek Chaubey's "Ishqiya" (2010), for instilling self-belief in him.

"I've improved a lot. Till the time I did 'Ishqiya', I used to think I was a fluke. I didn't understand why people like me or enjoy my character... But when we finished 'Ishqiya' and I gave a hug to Naseer sahab. He told me, 'Arshad you're a fantastic actor and after many years I was on my toes'. He praised me a lot. And I was like if he is saying I'm a better actor then I must be." As someone who started his acting career at a time when hero-heroine plotlines were quintessential to Hindi cinema, the actor said the OTT has given artists like him a much-needed performance-oriented platform.

"I think so many of us, who did not have a platform, have created a space because of the OTT and are flourishing. That quintessential hero bit is not there anymore. A commercial film still has the same approach. But there is space for everyone now. Guys like me, who don't look like hero types, are finally getting recognised," the actor said.

## Ananya Panday: Let people keep guessing who I'm dating



In the recent months, speculations about a budding romance between actor Ananya Panday and Aditya Roy Kapur have been making headlines. The duo intensified these rumours when they posed together at designer Manish Malhotra's Diwali party last year, captivating everyone's attention. However, Panday chooses to keep her relationship status under wraps.

Without giving any clarification about her relationship status, Panday says, "It's good to be curious, people should keep guessing who I'm dating."

While the buzz around her personal life continues, Panday has faced some setbacks on the work front. Both her films -- Liger, starring Vijay Deverakonda, and Shakun Batra's Gehraaiyan (both 2022) -- failed to gather a significant positive response. Reflecting on these challenges, Panday reveals that she has learnt valuable lessons from these past projects that didn't meet expectations of many.

"No matter how cliché it sounds, it's about the journey and its not about the destination. My lessons are, not giving up and not thinking too much about the outcome but living in that moment and giving it your all," she says.

The 24-year-old feels that when you sign a film, there are a lot of possibilities that can happen, but "you give everything" to the project. She adds, "We (people working on the sets) know how hard it is to make a movie or a show. We

really give it our all, we give it our best, and sometimes that doesn't work out, but that's okay. That shouldn't let you down and you should take whatever you've learnt from that and use it in your next film."

Looking ahead, Panday expresses enthusiasm for her upcoming film, Dream Girl 2, alongside Ayushmann Khurrana., saying, "My character is super bubbly and fun. I have a very important role in what the outcome of the film is. Everything is sort of happening around my character. I don't want to say too much, because there are big surprises in that film." Leaving fans more intrigued and excited, she adds, "Dream Girl 2 is going to be a full on masti laugh entertainer and it will leave you with a message, like the first one did as well."

There is also Kho Gaye Hum Kahan, which Panday is eagerly anticipating. She tells us that her role is more similar to her own self than what she has played on screen. "She is a very real girl and has her own moments. It is very similar to how I am as a person and I know a lot of girls out there who will relate to it a lot." The film would be her second one with actor Siddhant Chaturvedi after Gehraaiyan, who is one of her closest friends in the industry. "I can talk to him about a lot of things and he is a solid support. We don't have to talk all the time, but there is a deep friendship that we found in each other. He is my buddy. I can joke, laugh, fight, everything with him. We are like Tom and Jerry," shares Panday.

"Kho Gaye Hum Kahan is a movie that the young generation needs right now. It's a film about friendship, how the times are now, and how relationships work in a digital age. It's a movie which is needed right now by the younger generation," she further adds, also emphasising that her effort is to always play a different character in every film.

"I don't want to bore myself and the audience as well, so I am always striving to do something different." The actor also expresses her desire to take up an action or thriller project, "because that is something I haven't done yet," she ends.

## Shilpa Shetty reprises her role as the judge for Sony Entertainment Television's India's Got Talent Season

Sony Entertainment Television brings back yet another season of the reality show, India's Got Talent. Shilpa Shetty is set to reprise her role as a judge for another season.

Expressing her excitement about returning as a judge, Shilpa says, "India is racing ahead, backed by a talent pool that is already making its mark at the global level. Be it dance, singing, magic, stunts, or comedy, India has it all. I am ecstatic to be returning as a judge on India's Got Talent, which celebrates 'hunar' in all forms. This being the 10th season, I cannot wait to witness awe-inspiring talent. Being a judge on this platform has been exciting as well as a learning curve. I feel privileged to be a part of the transformational journey of budding talent. India's Got Talent has the ability to change lives, and I am looking forward to discovering unique talents along with my co-judges, Kirron ma'am and Badshah."



## Hailey Bieber slams 'hatred' of those pitting her against Selena Gomez: I want to be able to bring people together

Hailey Bieber is opening up about being pitted against Selena Gomez time and again. After the recent TikTok drama involving the Rare singer that grabbed headlines and also resulted in Hailey getting death threats, she said that the 'vile, disgusting hatred' is completely a false narrative made up to divide two women.

Selena Gomez and Hailey Bieber feud

The online feud started when singer Selena Gomez posted on her TikTok and confessed how she had accidentally over-laminated her eyebrows a few months ago. Kylie Jenner then posted a photo of herself with the caption "this was an accident???" over her brows, and then also shared a picture of her friend Hailey Bieber's brows. Users noted that Hailey (who is married to Selena's ex-boy-



friend Justin Bieber) and Kylie were mean to Selena without any reason.

Hailey Bieber on nasty comments

Now, appearing on the Bloomberg Originals series The Circuit With Emily Chang, when Hailey was asked about the TikTok drama, she said, "I don't think that this is about me, Hailey

Bieber, and Selena Gomez—this is not about this pitting between two women and division between two women. It's about the vile, disgusting hatred that can come from completely made-up and twisted and perpetuated narratives. That can be really dangerous."

Hailey says its disappointing Further adding how she hates

the idea of two women being pitted against one another, Hailey said, "I don't like this whole idea of Team This Person and Team This Person. I'm just not about that. I want to be able to bring people together... I hate it. I've hated it since the beginning. And I think that kind of goes back to a little bit of just being misunderstood when it's like time and time again I don't know why I keep having to say, and we keep having to say, that there is no issue and there is no problem. It's so disappointing that people still behave this way over a man. It's the world we live in unfortunately."

Selena and Justin Bieber were in a relationship for around eight years. Justin broke up with Selena in March 2018. Hailey and Justin got engaged in July 2018 and were officially married by the end of the year.

## Rihanna becomes the first female artist to have ten songs with over one billion streams on Spotify

Badgalriri continues to make waves in the music world, even without a new album on the horizon. The Barbadian entrepreneur recently celebrated a significant career achievement, becoming the first female artist to have ten songs with over one billion streams on Spotify.

It's been seven and a half years since her last album, ANTI, but Rihanna's influence remains undeniable. Beyond her music career, she's ventured into various successful ventures, including Fenty Beauty/Skin and Savage x Fenty collections. Recently, she headlined the Super Bowl Halftime Show, drawing more viewers

than the game itself. She was also spotted in Paris with ASAP Rocky, attending Pharrell's debut show as Louis Vuitton's menswear creative director. Now, rumors swirl as the duo is seen in Barbados, with Rocky shooting a music video. Rihanna proudly shared her milestone on Instagram, captioning her post with a playful nod to her success despite not releasing new music. Fellow industry queen, Nicki Minaj, joined in the celebration, leaving a freestyle congratulating her friend. The artist's impact on culture continues to be undeniable, as she effortlessly breaks records without



new music.

In response to Rihanna's accomplishment, fans praised her, but some couldn't help but jokingly nudge her about the long-awaited new

album. With Rihanna's last full-length album dating back to 2016, fans have been eager for more. Though she has featured on several tracks and contributed

to movie soundtracks, they're eagerly anticipating new original music.

In an Apple Music interview ahead of her 2023 Super Bowl halftime show, Rihanna hinted at a possible musical evolution. She expressed her openness to explore new and unconventional sounds that might surprise her fans.

While her fans eagerly anticipate new music, they can still revel in her previous hits that remain timeless. Rihanna's undeniable talent and influence have solidified her as one of the most prominent figures in the music industry, leaving fans eagerly waiting to see what she'll bring to the table next.

## Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon are back again



Apple TV+ announced that the 10-episode third season of The Morning Show will return on September 13 with two episodes,

followed by a weekly Wednesday release. Along with Aniston and Witherspoon, who are executive producers, the season three

cast is led by returning stars Billy Crudup, Mark Duplass, Nestor Carbonell, Karen Pittman, Greta Lee and Julianna Margulies, along with new cast members Nicole Beharie, playing an anchor on the show, and Jon Hamm.

The Morning Show is produced by the studio Media Res and executive produced by Michael Ellenberg through Media Res, along with Aniston and Kristin Hahn through Echo Films, and Witherspoon and Lauren Neustadter through Hello Sunshine. Mimi Leder serves as executive producer and season director.

## Sabarmati Riverfront soul of social and cultural activities in Ahmedabad, says Amit Shah; launches Akshar River Cruise

*With two engines and a two-hour drive, the 30-metre-long luxury cruise will help boost tourism, he said*

**AHMEDABAD, Jul 2 (Agencies):** The Sabarmati Riverfront has become the soul of social and cultural activities in Ahmedabad, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday as he virtually launched the 'Akshar' cruise on the river that cuts through the city.

Addressing a gathering through video conference, Shah lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying when the latter was the chief minister of Gujarat, he took many initiatives which helped in increasing the tourist footfall in the state.

Shah said when he shifted to Ahmedabad in 1978, he never went to see the Sabarmati river until the riverfront was constructed. The river was then nothing more than a pit of dirty water, he recalled.

"As the then Gujarat chief minister, Prime Minister Modi for the first time imagined a riverfront



and planned for it, and it was constructed during his duration (as CM). The riverfront became known not just in Ahmedabad but also across the country and abroad and became a centre of tourism," Shah said.

"It has become a centre of various activities. Walkers take a stroll in the morning, senior citizens in the evening, and children and youth play here. Today,

the riverfront has become the soul of social and cultural activities on both sides (of the river) of Ahmedabad," he said.

The 'Akshar River Cruise' on the riverfront will be a new attraction for Ahmedabad, he said.

With two engines and a two-hour drive, the 30-metre-long luxury cruise will help boost tourism with attractions such as

live music and tasty vegetarian and Jain food, he said.

The river cruise is equipped with 180 life safety jackets, a fire sprinkler system and emergency rescue boats and has been designed keeping the safety of people in mind, Shah said.

Shah said after becoming the chief minister of Gujarat, Modi gave priority to tourism and worked to make the state a centre of tourism in the country through various initiatives.

Modi invested crores of rupees to create an ecosystem to attract lakhs of tourists by connecting pilgrimage centres, borders with improved road connectivity, he said.

"Narendra Bhai developed tourism using his imagination which led to a rise in the number of tourists from India and abroad. Through various initiatives, Modi gave a new shape to Gujarat tourism," Shah said.

## Shootout outside UP jail: Assailant accidentally killed by accomplice

**BIJNOR (UTTAR PRADESH), Jul 2 (Agencies):** In what seemed to be a scene out of a Bollywood pot-boiler, two gangsters—Vishal Pandit and his accomplice Raunak—opened fire on their rival, Rajan, who was being released after 17 days of judicial custody from jail in Bijnor.

However, Raunak accidentally shot Vishal, killing him on the spot.

The incident happened

on Saturday evening. According to the police, two other persons—including a jail personnel and a police constable—also sustained injuries.

Rajan was lodged in jail for attempted murder since June 13.

Bijnor's Superintendent of Police (SP) Neeraj Kumar Jadaun said, "As Rajan stepped out of the jail, Vishal Pandit and his accomplice Raunak, who had come to target him,

opened indiscriminate firing on the former. Soon after, jail personnel and cops at a nearby jail police outpost turned up to rescue Rajan.

While Rajan was running back towards the jail gate, the two assailants were chasing him brandishing firearms in their hands."

"While Rajan remained unhurt in the attack, Vishal Pandit was hit by the bullet fired by his crime partner Raunak

and succumbed during treatment at the district hospital. In the shootout, one jail guard Ranjit Singh and police constable Rajiv Kumar suffered bullet wounds and are undergoing treatment at the hospital," he said.

The SP further said that Rajan and Raunak have been taken into custody and further investigation is under way after registering an FIR of murder and attempt to murder in the case.

He added that the deceased, Vishal Pandit, had five criminal cases against him, while the two other accused also have a criminal background.

The SP said that the trio earlier worked for the Rachit gang involved in multiple cases of loot, murder and attempt but Rajan left them and formed a separate gang, while Rachit was shot dead in a gang war around two years ago.

## TMC worker killed, several others injured in rural poll violence in Bengal



condition is stated to be stable.

A large contingent of police team has been deployed on the spot, he added.

The police did not mention the number of people detained or arrested after the clashes.

**KOLKATA, Jul 2 (Agencies):** A Trinamool Congress (TMC) worker was killed and several other members of the ruling party and Opposition outfits were injured in clashes in panchayat poll-bound West Bengal, police said.

A TMC worker, identified as 52-year-old Jiyarul Molla, was shot dead in Puhmalancha area at Basanti in South 24 Parganas district late on Saturday night while he was returning home, a police officer said.

The man was taken to a local hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

A local Indian Secular Front (ISF) leader claimed that Molla, who was a close associate of TMC leader Amarul Laskar, was a victim of infighting within the ruling party.

Molla's daughter Manwara, who is a TMC candidate in Kathalberia gram panchayat, also alleged that her father had complained to the police about frequent threats from a rival faction which asked him to quit politics but the law enforcers did not take any action.

"I am a first-time candidate. My candidature

is not liked by another local faction in the party. I demand a high-level probe into the incident," she told reporters.

Local TMC MLA Saokat Molla said the police should probe the matter and take prompt action against whoever is responsible.

With the fresh death, 10 people have been killed so far in West Bengal in poll-related violence since the filing of nominations for the rural elections began on June 9, according to police reports.

Meanwhile, at least 10 people were injured in clashes between CPI(M) and ISF supporters on one side and those of the TMC on the other in Paschim Medinipur district on Sunday, police said.

The incident took place in Krishnapur area in Chandrakona in the morning after the TMC members tried to erect party flags, and faced resistance from opposition activists.

The 10 injured people, who belong to both camps, have been admitted to hospitals, where they are undergoing treatment, another police officer said, adding that their

In another incident, Ibrahim Mollah, TMC candidate in Chaltaberia gram panchayat, was seriously injured when he was thrashed and stabbed allegedly by ISF activists while he was returning home in Bhargar area in South 24 Parganas on Sunday night after campaigning, police said.

TMC leader Saokat Molla alleged that ISF's Bhargar MLA Naushad Siddique was behind the attack as he wanted to unleash a "reign of terror" in the area.

Siddique, however, denied the charge, while counter-alleging that the TMC was threatening and intimidating ISF workers in villages.

"Villagers are rising against the atrocities and 'bomb culture' of the TMC and that is not being liked by the gang patronised by Shaukat Mollah. The ISF believes in peaceful movement by people, not violence," he added.

Around 5.67 crore people are eligible to cast their votes in the three-tier panchayat elections in the state on July 8 for nearly 74,000 seats in zilla parishads, panchayat samiti and gram panchayats.

## Surat woman kills 2-year-old son for lover, watches Drishyam to avoid arrest

**SURAT, Jul 2 (Agencies):** A woman in Gujarat's Surat district killed her two-and-a-half-year-old child and filed a complaint about her child's disappearance. After registering the case, she joined the police in the search for her "missing" child for three consecutive days, but he could not be traced.

As the police investigated the matter, the mother of the child became a suspect and was subsequently arrested.

Nayana Mandavi, a labourer at a construction site in Surat's Dindoli area, went to the police station to report the disappearance of her two-and-a-half-year-old child, Veer Mandavi.

The police examined the CCTV footage from the construction



site where the woman worked but did not see the child leaving the premises. Based on this, they concluded that the child had not left the site. The police questioned the woman extensively about the disappearance of her child, but she did not provide any satisfactory answers.

The police also used a dog squad to search for the missing child, but they did not find any evidence that the child had left the construction

site alive. The woman accused her lover, who resides in Jharkhand, of kidnapping her child.

The police contacted the woman's lover, but they could not trace his location near Surat. He informed the police that he had never been to Surat.

The police faced a significant challenge in determining the whereabouts of the child since he had not left the construction site, and there was no

evidence of abduction. They intensified their questioning of the woman, who eventually confessed to killing her child. However, when asked where she had hidden the body, she initially provided false information.

Initially, the woman claimed that she had buried the body in a pit, but when the location was excavated, nothing was found. She then told the police that she had thrown the body into a pond, but the police did not find anything there either.

Under rigorous questioning, the woman revealed that she had thrown the body into a pit intended for the construction site's toilet.

The child's body was recovered from that location.

When asked about the motive behind kill-

ing her son and hiding the body, the woman explained that she was originally from Jharkhand and had a lover there. He had informed her that he would not accept her if she arrived with her child.

In an attempt to gain acceptance from her lover, the woman killed her son. After committing the murder, she watched the movie Drishyam to learn how to hide the body.

In the film "Drishyam," there is a scene where the body is disposed of after a murder, and the case remains unsolved, with no arrests made.

The woman believed that by following this method, the police would not be able to apprehend her, and she could join her lover in Jharkhand.

## 70 per cent work of India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway complete: Nitin Gadkari

**NEW DELHI, Jul 2 (Agencies):** Around 70 per cent construction work on the ambitious India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway has been completed, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

India, Thailand and Myanmar are working on about 1,400-km-long highway that would link the country with South-east Asia by land and give a boost to trade, business, health, education and tourism ties among the three countries.

"Around 70 per cent work of the project is completed," the minister of Road Transport and Highways told agency



in reply to a question on the progress of the project.

The highway will connect Moreh in Manipur, India with Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar.

The minister did not provide details on the timeline for completion

and operationalisation of the trilateral highway.

The strategic highway project has been delayed.

Earlier, the government was aiming to make the highway operational by December 2019.

## It will help if Assam CM did not poke his nose into Manipur: Chidambaram slams Sarma



**NEW DELHI, Jul 2 (Agencies):** Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday took a swipe at Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over his remarks that the situation in Manipur will improve within 7 to 10 days, saying it would help if the BJP leader does not "poke his nose" into Manipur's conflict and stayed away.

The former home minister also asserted that it would help if Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned as the CM and President's Rule was imposed in the northeastern state for a few months.

Sarma on Saturday said the situation in neighbouring Manipur will improve within 7-10 days, with the state and central governments working "silently" to restore peace.

He had hit out at the Congress and alleged that the opposition party is showing its concern when "relative peace has come in the northeastern state".

More than 100 people have lost their lives in the ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur since clashes first started on May 3. In a tweet, Chidambaram said, "CM, Assam has promised that peace will return to Manipur in a week.

It will help if CM, Assam did not poke his nose into Manipur's conflict and stayed away.

"It will also help if Mr Biren Singh resigned as CM and President's Rule was imposed for a few months," Chidambaram said.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Dibrugarh on Saturday, Sarma, the convener of the BJP-led North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), said, "The situation in Manipur is improving day by day. I am of the view that in the next one week to 10 days, there will be more improvement." Sarma claimed there has been "a lot of improvement" in Manipur in the last month.

## Heavy rains cause floods in Gujarat; Dharampur gets 234 mm in 24 hours

**AHMEDABAD, Jul 2 (Agencies):** Heavy rains in several parts of Gujarat created a flood-like situation and led to many villages getting cut off, officials said on Sunday.

Some parts of Valsad and Navsari districts received extremely heavy rainfall in a 24-hour period till Sunday morning, data from the State Emergency Operation Centre revealed.

Several villages were cut off as roads were flooded or had been washed away, with the National and State Disaster Response Forces (NDRF and SDRF) engaged in operations to rescue stranded people, officials said.

A three-year-old girl died after falling into a well while scooping water out of her flooded house there on Friday, while bodies of two men who had gone missing after heavy rainfall were found on Saturday by a rescue team, police added.

Villages in Limbdi taluka of Surendranagar district were cut off due to the flooding of approach roads, with seven people being rescued by local residents from one of the villages, state government officials said.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Gujarat government was taking all efforts to provide relief to people amid heavy rains.

He said, "The government is working hard to provide all possible help to the people affected by the flood-like situation in many places due to heavy rains in Gujarat. Talked to Chief Minister @BhupendraBajaj and got information about the situation."

"Teams of NDRF and SDRF as well as local administration are busy helping people in these areas.

The central and state governments stand with the people in these difficult times," Shah tweeted.

In the last 24 hours, the state has received 32 millimetres of average rainfall, with Dharampur taluka in Valsad district leading with 234 mm, the SEOC

said. It said 205 talukas of the state received a significant amount of rainfall, with parts of Valsad, Navsari, Junagadh, Amreli, Chhota Udepur, Ahmedabad and Surendranagar districts receiving between 100-234 mm of rain.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heavy rains were very likely at isolated places in the districts of south Gujarat and Saurashtra till Monday morning.

The IMD, in its latest forecast, also said several parts of Gujarat are likely to receive light to moderate rainfall during the next five days.

## Sporadic violence, but calmer night in France after family buries teenager

45,000 cops deployed, over 2,000 people arrested

PARIS, Jul 2 (Agencies): Rioting across France appeared to be less intense on Saturday, as tens of thousands of police had been deployed in cities across the country after the funeral of a teenager of North African descent, whose shooting by police sparked nationwide unrest.

President Emmanuel Macron postponed a state visit to Germany that was due to begin on Sunday to handle the worst crisis for his leadership since the "Yellow Vest" protests paralysed much of France in late 2018.

Some 45,000 police were on the streets with specialised elite units, armoured vehicles and helicopters brought in to reinforce its three largest cities, Paris, Lyon and Marseille.

At 0145 (2345 GMT) Sunday morning, the situation was calmer than the previous four nights, although there was some tension in central Paris and sporadic clashes in the Mediterranean cities of Marseille, Nice and the eastern city of Strasbourg.

The biggest flashpoint was in Marseille where police fired tear gas and fought street battles with youths around the city centre late into the night.

In Paris, police increased security at the city's landmark Champs Elysees avenue after a call on social media to gather there. The street, usually packed with tourists, was lined with security forces carrying out spot checks. Shop facades were boarded up to prevent potential damage and pillaging.

The interior ministry said 1,311 people had been arrested on Friday night, compared with 875 the previous night, although it described the violence as "lower in intensity". Police said almost 200 people had been arrested nationwide on Saturday.

Local authorities all over the country announced bans on demonstrations, ordered public transport to stop running in the evening and some imposed overnight curfews.

The unrest, a blow to France's



global image just a year from holding the Olympic Games, will add political pressure on Macron.

He had already faced months of anger and sometimes violent demonstrations across the country after pushing through a pension overhaul.

Postponement of the state visit to Germany is the second time this year he has had to cancel a high-level event because of the domestic situation in France. In March, he cancelled King Charles's planned state visit.

### FUNERAL OF TEENAGER

Nahel, a 17-year-old of Algerian and Moroccan parents, was shot by a police officer during a traffic stop on Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre.

For the funeral, several hundred people lined up to enter Nanterre's grand mosque. Volunteers in yellow vests stood guard, while a few dozen bystanders watched from across the street.

Some of the mourners, their arms crossed, said "God is Greatest" in Arabic, as they spanned the boulevard in prayer.

Marie, 60, said she had lived in Nanterre for 50 years and there had always been problems with the police.

"This absolutely needs to stop. The government is completely disconnected from our reality," she said.

The shooting of the teenager, caught on video, has reignited longstanding complaints by poor

and racially mixed urban communities of police violence and racism.

Nahel was known to police for previously failing to comply with traffic stop orders and was illegally driving a rental car, the Nanterre prosecutor said on Thursday.

Macron has denied there is systemic racism in French law enforcement agencies.

There is also a broader anger in the country's poorest suburbs, where inequalities and crime are rife and French leaders have failed for decades to tackle what some politicians have called a "geographical, social and ethnic apartheid."

### SHOPS RANSACKED

Rioters have torched 2,000 vehicles since the start of the unrest. More than 200 police officers have been injured. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on Saturday, adding that the average age of those arrested was 17.

Justice Minister Eric Dupont-Moretti said 30% of detainees were under 18.

More than 700 shops, supermarkets, restaurants and bank branches had been "ransacked, looted and sometimes even burnt to the ground since Tuesday", Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said.

In Marseille, where 80 people had been arrested on Friday, police said they had detained 60 people.

"It's very scary. We can hear a helicopter and are just not going

out because it's very worrying," said Tatiana, 79, a pensioner who lives in the city centre.

In Lyon, France's third largest city, police deployed armoured personnel carriers and a helicopter.

The unrest has revived memories of nationwide riots in 2005 that lasted three weeks and forced then President Jacques Chirac to declare a state of emergency, after the death of two young men electrocuted in a power substation as they hid from police.

Players from the national soccer team issued a rare statement calling for calm. "Violence must stop to leave way for mourning, dialogue and reconstruction," they said on star Kylian Mbappe's Instagram account.

The South Winners supporters group, an influential fan group for Olympique de Marseille, called on the city's youth to "be wise and show restraint".

"By acting in this way you are dirtying Nahel's memory and are also dividing our city."

Events including two concerts at the Stade de France on the outskirts of Paris were cancelled, while LVMH-owned fashion house Celine cancelled its 2024 menswear show on Sunday, creative director Hedi Slimane said on Instagram.

With the government urging social media companies to remove inflammatory material, Darmanin met officials from Meta, Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok. Snapchat said it had zero tolerance for content that promoted violence.

The policeman whom prosecutors say acknowledged firing a lethal shot at Nahel is in preventive custody under formal investigation for voluntary homicide, equivalent to being charged under Anglo-Saxon jurisdictions.

His lawyer, Laurent-Franck Lienard, said his client had aimed at the driver's leg but was bumped when the car took off, causing him to shoot towards his chest. "Obviously (the officer) didn't want to kill the driver," Lienard said on BFM TV.

## Hundreds of dolphins, sea lions wash up dead or sick in California amid toxic algal bloom



CALIFORNIA (US), Jul 2 (Agencies): Hundreds of sea lions, dolphins are sprawled across the beaches in Southern California, either dead or sick and exhibiting abnormal behaviour, agency reported.

As per agency, officials have received more than 1,000 calls in recent weeks from beachgoers, tourists and residents reporting sick, dying and dead sea mammals washed ashore from Santa Barbara to San Diego County, amid a growing toxic algal bloom in the waters off the coast.

A stranding coordinator with NOAA Fisheries, Justin Greenman told CNN that the wave

of dead or sick animals is "one of the largest in memory. It's completely overwhelming," he said.

And, Greenman said, it doesn't appear to be ending any time soon.

Marine-life experts believe the harmful algal bloom is to blame,

though they are waiting on test results to confirm it. The algae, Pseudo-Nitzsche, produces a neurotoxin called domoic acid, which can be poisonous for seabirds and fish once ingested. It can then travel across the food chain to larger marine animals like dolphins, sea lions and even humans, according to agency.

Humans too can get

sick from domoic acid if they eat contaminated food, although seafood is tested for this toxin to prevent it from reaching dinner tables. The California Department Of Health specifically warned against eating "sport-harvested mussels, clams or scallops from Santa Barbara County" after high levels of the toxin were detected there.

Co-founder and managing director of Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute Ruth Dover said they have responded to more than 100 dead sea lions and 300 live sea lions exhibiting signs of ingesting domoic acid in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

The death toll for dolphins is now up to 100, the group said, which Greenman describes as unusual, particularly in how this bloom appears to be affecting species that typically dwell far from the shore, as per agency.

## Russia launches first overnight drone attack on Kyiv in 12 days: Military

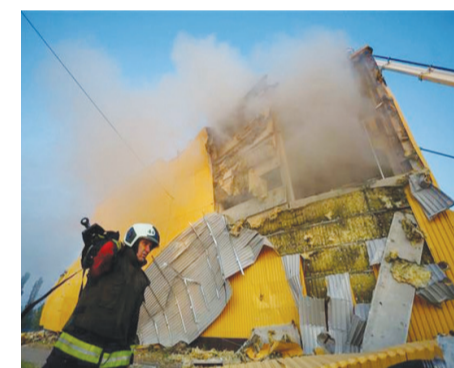
KYIV, Jul 2 (Agencies): Russia launched an overnight drone attack on Kyiv and the surrounding region after a 12-day break, with air defence systems destroying all the weapons on their approach, Ukrainian military officials said on Sunday.

The country's air force said that the attack included eight Iranian-made Shahed drones and three cruise missiles which were shot down.

"Another enemy attack on Kyiv," Serhiy Popko, a colonel general who heads Kyiv's military administration, said in a post on the Telegram channel.

Three private houses were damaged as a result of falling drone debris in the Kyiv region, injuring one person, the military head of the region, Ruslan Kravchenko, said on his Facebook page.

Agency witnesses heard blasts



resembling the sound of air defence systems hitting targets. There was no immediate information about the scale of the attack.

Kyiv, its surrounding region and a number of central and eastern Ukraine's regions were under air raid alerts for about an hour after 2 am local time (2300 GMT).

## Twitter will limit how many tweets users can read, says Elon Musk

WASHINGTON, Jul 2 (Agencies): Twitter is limiting how many tweets per day various accounts can read, to discourage "extreme levels" of data scraping and system manipulation, Executive Chair Elon Musk said in a post on the social media platform.

Verified accounts were initially limited to reading 6,000 posts a day, Musk said, adding that unverified accounts will be limited to 600 posts a day with new unverified accounts limited to 300.

The temporary reading limitation was later increased to 10,000 posts per day for verified users, 1,000 posts per day for unverified and 500 posts per day for new unverified users, Musk said in a separate post without providing further details.

Previously, Twitter had announced it will require users to have an account on the social media platform to view tweets, a move that Musk on Friday called a "temporary emergency measure." Musk had said that hundreds of organizations or more were scraping Twitter data "extremely aggressively", impacting user experience.

Musk had earlier expressed displeasure with artificial intelligence firms like OpenAI, the owner of ChatGPT,



for using Twitter's data to train their large language models.

Twitter was down for thousands of users on Saturday morning, according to outage tracking website Downdetector.com.

Nearly 7,500 users across the social media platform reported issues with accessing the app during the peak of the outage at around 11:17 AM ET.

The social media platform had previously taken a number of steps to win back advertisers who left Twitter under Musk's ownership and to boost subscription revenue by making verification check marks a part of the Twitter Blue program.

## Syria says it repels Israeli strike, anti-aircraft missile fragments hit Israel

The Israeli strikes are part of an escalation of what has been a low-intensity conflict continuing for years with a goal of slowing Iran's growing entrenchment in Syria, say experts

AMMAN, Jul 2 (Agencies): Syria said it repelled a missile salvo on Sunday from Israel, where police reported that remnants of a Syrian anti-aircraft missile struck a remote town without causing injuries.

Israel has in recent months intensified strikes on Syrian airports and air bases to disrupt Iran's increasing use of aerial supply lines to deliver arms to allies in Syria and Lebanon, including Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Syrian state media said air defences intercepted Israeli missiles across central parts of the country, downing most of them.

A Syrian army statement said missiles that flew over parts of Lebanon's capital Beirut hit locations in the vicinity of the city of Homs, resulting only in material damage. Agency could not



immediately confirm the report.

An Israeli military spokesman said warplanes struck targets including a Syrian air defence battery from which an anti-aircraft missile was launched towards Israel.

After a mid-air explosion heard

across Israel, remnants of the Syrian missile landed in Rahat, a town some 180 km (110 miles) south of the armistice line between the countries, Israeli police said. There was no word of any casualties.

Local media showed what

appeared to be the blackened front end of a large missile, standing upright in an open area among residential buildings, and tail-fins in a field.

The Israeli military said its warplanes were unscathed.

The Israeli strikes are part of an escalation of what has been a low-intensity conflict continuing for years with a goal of slowing Iran's growing entrenchment in Syria, Israeli military experts say.

Tehran's influence has grown in Syria since it began supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that started in 2011.

Fighters allied to Iran, including Hezbollah, now hold sway in areas in eastern, southern and northwestern Syria and in several suburbs around the capital.

## Taiwan celebrates linguistic diversity at annual music awards

The love of music had 'eliminated language boundaries between different ethnic groups': Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen

TAIPEI, Jul 2 (Agencies): Taiwan celebrated linguistic diversity at the Golden Melody Awards late Saturday with big wins for singers who primarily sing in Mandarin, at one of the most prestigious entertainment events in the Chinese-speaking world.

The awards celebrate not only Mandopop but

also artists singing in Taiwanese - also known as Hokkien - Hakka and indigenous languages, a visible sign of the government's efforts to promote tongues other than Mandarin.

While Mandarin remains Taiwan's main language of education and government, other languages are strong-

ly encouraged and supported. In China, despite constitutional protections for minority tongues, in practice only Mandarin is promoted.

Veteran star Julia Peng was named best singer in Hakka, despite never recording an album in the language before, while Enno Cheng won for best female singer

in Taiwanese and best Taiwanese album, a language she does not speak.

"My friend asked me, why don't you sing good songs in Chinese?", Peng said upon receiving the prize in Taipei. "I don't think there should be language restrictions on singing," Cheng, speaking in Mandarin,

thanked the Taiwanese language for "teaching me how to bow my head and slow down".

In the indigenous language category, the Paiwan singers Kasiwa and Matzka rapped and sang in their native tongue, with Kasiwa getting the prestigious jury award.

While Taiwan has

only 23 million people, its music scene has an outsized influence in the Chinese-speaking world, in part due to creativity unhindered by censorship.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen wrote on her Facebook and Instagram pages that at the show the love of music had "eliminated

language boundaries between different ethnic groups."

"Here, no matter what language everyone uses - Taiwanese, Hakka, indigenous languages, Mandarin, English and Japanese, - they can all sing freely, which also brings us together."

Disco queen Ouyang Fei Fei, one of two spe-

cial contribution award winners and as famous for her big hair as her big voice, broke through in Japan in the 1970s singing in Japanese.

"Singing and performing have always been my dream. If I can, I will continue to sing and never give up," Ouyang, now 73, told the audience.





# Aim to double every four years: HDFC Bank MD after merger

**HDFC Bank began the day one after the merger with a rebranding exercise, wherein it is putting up its colours at all the over 500 branches and offices of HDFC Ltd**

MUMBAI, Jul 2 (Agencies): Having successfully executed the merger with parent HDFC, HDFC Bank's managing director and chief executive Sashidhar Jagdishan said the country's largest lender aims to double every four years.

In a letter to the over 4,000 employees from HDFC who joined the bank's rolls, Jagdishan said the future is bright, and the work on realising the potential of the merger starts now.

"The runway for financial services and mortgage, which are so underserved and under penetrated, is going to be very large. HDFC Bank - the combined entity - with a large and growing distribution and customer franchise, more than adequate capital, healthy asset quality and profitability, will be best positioned to capture growth. The pace at which we aim to grow - we could be creating a new HDFC Bank every 4 years," he said.

HDFC Bank began the day one after the merger with a rebranding exercise, wherein it is putting up its colours at all the over 500 branches and offices of HDFC Ltd.

The erstwhile HDFC's corporate headquarters at Ramon House already sports the HDFC Bank branding, and officials estimated that the entire exercise will be over in the next 24 hours.

It can be noted that dedicated teams have been put in place to make the merger as seamless as possible, right since its announcement on April 4 last year. As part of the USD 40 billion all-share deal, the biggest in Indian corporate history, HDFC Bank had committed to absorb all the over 4,000 employees of its parent.

"Our work starts from today, in realising the potential of what this merger holds for us," Jag-



dishan wrote.

To realise its growth aims, Jagdishan said the bank will be adding about 1,500 branches every year for some years to better serve the middle class and upper segment of the country.

It will continue investments on the digital front as well which, Jagdishan said, will make HDFC Bank into a 'technology company into banking', and added that the same will get unveiled over the next three years.

The bank will be assessing its people on the basis of how they conduct governance and compliance, teamwork and their ability to delight customers, he said.

The canvas being offered to the HDFC Ltd employees is large—both professionally and personally, the email said, adding that an external expert was appointed to arrive at the right formula for inducting people into the bank and deciding their role in the hierarchy. Jagdishan said the cost-to-revenue ratio of HDFC at 0.04 per cent was the lowest for any mortgage company in the world, and thanked its leadership, including Deepak Parekh, Keki Mistry and Renu Karnad, for creating such an institution.

He said from a customer perspective, the home loan is a very emotional product which establishes a great bond between the financier and borrower and

added that HDFC Bank would like to harness the same bond.

"The penetration levels of the home loan product in its (HDFC Bank's) customer base and the extent the distribution has been leveraged, is quite low. This is an opportunity! The runway for growth is going to be large and for a long time to come," Jagdishan said.

HDFC Bank will move from sales management to a relationship management model because of the opportunity to cross-sell that exists within the franchise after the addition of mortgage finance, insurance and asset management subsidiaries, Jagdishan said.

"The velocity of product sales and the reduced touch points to serve the customer will be a game changer with this 'power of bundling,'" he added.

HDFC Ltd, the parent of the country's largest private sector lender, merged into HDFC Bank on Saturday, with boards of both entities clearing the plan first presented on April 4 last year. HDFC Ltd, the largest pure-play home financier, ceases to exist 44 years after it was founded.

The USD 40-billion merger, the largest such deal in Indian corporate history, is driven by a changing regulatory landscape, which limited the advantages for HDFC continuing as a non-bank lending entity.

Post-merger, HDFC Bank will

become the fourth most valued lender in the world, and narrow the gap by asset size with state-owned SBI to be the second largest Indian bank.

The total business of the merged entity stood at Rs 41 lakh crore at the end of March 2023. With the merger, the networth of the entity would be over Rs 4.14 lakh crore.

The combined profit of both entities was to the tune of about Rs 60,000 crore at the end of March 2023.

With the deal getting effective, HDFC Bank will be 100 per cent owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41 per cent of the bank. Every HDFC shareholder will get 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares they hold.

The board of directors of HDFC Bank in consultation with the board of directors of HDFC Limited has fixed July 13, 2023, for determining the shareholders of HDFC Ltd who would be issued and allotted the shares of HDFC Bank, it added.

Besides, July 13 has been fixed for the continuation of warrants of HDFC Limited in the name of HDFC Bank.

The board has fixed July 12, 2023, for the transfer of non-convertible debentures while July 7 for the transfer of commercial papers of HDFC Ltd in the name of HDFC Bank.

The merged entity brings together significant complementarities that exist between both entities and is poised to create meaningful value for various stakeholders, including respective customers, employees and shareholders of both entities from increased scale, comprehensive product offering, balance sheet resiliency and ability to drive synergies across revenue opportunities, operating efficiencies and underwriting efficiencies, a statement said.

# Tata Motors posts 1 pc rise in total domestic sales at 80,383 units in June

**Domestic CV sales were down 4 per cent at 33,148 units as against 34,409 units in the year-ago month**



NEW DELHI, Jul 2 (Agencies): Tata Motors reported a 1 per cent rise in total domestic sales at 80,383 units in June 2023 as against 79,606 units in the year-ago month.

Domestic passenger vehicle sales, including electric vehicles, were at 47,235 units as compared to 45,197 units in the same month a year ago, a growth of 5 per cent, Tata Motors said in a statement.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said the passenger vehicle industry in Q1 FY24 witnessed

a robust demand driven by new launches, especially in the SUV segment and EVs.

"Tata Motors continued its growth trajectory registering quarterly sales of 1,40,450 units in Q1 FY24 and recording a growth of 8 per cent over Q1 FY23," he added.

In the EV segment, he said the company posted its "highest-ever quarterly sales of 19,346 in Q1 FY24, registering a growth of 105 per cent over Q1 FY23".

"This growth is driven by a strong market response to Tiago EV while demand for other EVs was sustained," Chandra said.

Going forward, he

said, "We expect the demand to remain robust with the onset of the festive season in the second half of Q2FY24. The supply side situation remains stable." On the commercial vehicles (CV) front, total sales were down 8 per cent at 34,314 units as compared to 37,265 units in June last year.

Domestic CV sales were down 4 per cent at 33,148 units as against 34,409 units in the year-ago month, the company said.

Tata Motors Ltd Executive Director Girish Wagh said the company's CV domestic sales in Q1 FY24 were at 82,225 units, 14.1 per cent lower than Q1 FY23 sales.

"Looking ahead, the promising monsoon and continuing infrastructure thrust by the government auger well for the CV industry, even as it faces the headwinds of high interest rates, fuel prices and inflation," Wagh said.

# Loneliness may increase risk of heart disease in diabetes patients

PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC), Jul 2 (Agencies): Researchers have found that among people with diabetes, loneliness poses a larger risk for heart disease than diet, exercise, smoking, and depression.

The results of this study were published in the European Heart Journal, a publication of the ESC.

"The quality of social contact appears to be more important for heart health in people with diabetes than the number of engagements," said study author Professor Lu Qi of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, New Orleans, US. "We should not downplay the importance of loneliness on physical and emotional health. I would encourage patients with diabetes who feel lonely to join a group or class and try to make friends with people who have shared interests."

"Loneliness and social isolation are common in today's societies and have become a research focus during the last years, especially driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous digitalisation of society," 2 state Kahl et al. in an accompanying editorial. Loneliness refers to the quality of social contacts, while isolation refers to the quantity. They add: "The human species is inherently social by nature. Humans not only require the presence of others but rely on meaningful social relationship[s] to develop into healthy adulthood. As individuals, we strive to belong to a family, a peer group, a community. These social interactions with family, friends, neigh-

bours or colleagues are paramount for our physical and mental well-being."

Patients with diabetes are at greater risk of cardiovascular disease and are more likely to be lonely than their healthy peers. Previous studies in the general population have found that loneliness and social isolation are both related to a higher likelihood of cardiovascular disease. This study in patients with diabetes examined whether patients who were lonely or socially isolated were more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than those who were not.

The study included 18,509 adults aged 37 to 73 years in the UK Biobank with diabetes but no cardiovascular disease at baseline. Loneliness and isolation were assessed with questionnaires, with high-risk features allocated one point each. High-risk loneliness features were feeling lonely and never or almost never be able to confide in someone, for a total score of 0 to 2. High-risk social isolation features were living alone, having friends and family visit less than once a month, and not participating in a social activity at least once per week, for a total score of 0 to 3.

The researchers analysed the association between loneliness, isolation and incident cardiovascular disease after adjusting for factors that could influence the relationships including sex, age, deprivation, body mass index (BMI), medications, physical activity, diet, alcohol, smoking and control of blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol.

During an average

follow-up of 10.7 years, 3,247 participants developed cardiovascular disease, of which 2,771 was coronary heart disease and 701 was stroke (some patients had both). Compared to participants with the lowest loneliness score, the risk of cardiovascular disease was 11% and 26% higher in those with scores of 1 or 2, respectively. Similar results were observed for coronary heart disease but the association with stroke was not significant. Social isolation scores were not significantly related to any of the cardiovascular outcomes.

The researchers also assessed the relative importance of loneliness, compared with other risk factors, on the incidence of cardiovascular disease. Loneliness showed a weaker influence than kidney function, cholesterol and BMI, but a stronger influence than depression, smoking, physical activity and diet.

Professor Qi said: "Loneliness ranked higher as a predisposing factor for cardiovascular disease than several lifestyle habits. We also found that for patients with diabetes, the consequence of physical risk factors (i.e. poorly controlled blood sugar, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and poor kidney function) was greater in those who were lonely compared to those who were not."

He concluded, "The findings suggest that asking patients with diabetes about loneliness should become part of standard assessment, with the referral of those affected to mental health services."

# Water fast could help with weight loss, but benefits may not last long

**Metabolic benefits, such as lower blood pressure and cholesterol, seem to disappear shortly after the fast, finds study**

CHICAGO (US), Jul 2 (Agencies): Water fast, in which participants consume only water for a period of time, may help with weight loss, but it's unclear how long it will remain, according to a study from the University of Illinois at Chicago. The researchers also found that the other metabolic benefits of water fasts, such as lower blood pressure and cholesterol, seemed to disappear shortly after the fast.

The study was published in Nutrition Reviews.

According to Krista Varady, professor of kinesiology and nutrition and the study's lead author, there do not appear to be any significant negative effects for those who adhere to water fast or a similar fast in which they consume very few calories per day.

"My overall conclusion is that I guess you could try it, but it just seems like a lot of work, and all those metabolic benefits disappear," Varady said. She stressed, however, that no one should undertake one of these fasts for more than five days without medical supervision.

Varady, an expert on intermittent fasting, said she wanted to study water-fasting because she suddenly started getting contacted by journalists last fall who wanted to hear what she thought about it. She figured if she was going to comment, she should investigate the existing research.

The new paper is a literature review of eight studies on water fasting or Buchinger fasting, a medically supervised fast that is popular in Europe where people consume only a tiny amount of juice and soup a day. Varady's team looked at the results from each of those papers to see what story they cumulatively tell about the fasts' impact on weight loss, as well as a number of other metabolic factors.

Only a few of the studies in the review tracked whether participants gained back the weight they had lost once the fast ended. In one of those, people gained back all they had lost in a five-day water fast within three months. In two other studies, only a small amount of the lost weight returned, but those studies encour-



aged participants to restrict their calorie intake after the fasts ended.

In contrast, it was clear that the metabolic benefits of the fasts disappeared soon after the fasts ended. Improvements to blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels were short-lived, returning to baseline levels quickly after participants started eating again.

Some of the studies included participants with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, who suffered no ill effects from the fasting, though they were monitored closely and had their insulin doses adjusted while

fasting. The most common side effects of these prolonged fasts were similar to those from intermittent fasting, Varady said, such as headaches, insomnia and hunger. There were no serious negative effects in the studies, such as metabolic acidosis or death.

She did note that the participants in these prolonged fasts lost about two-thirds of their weight in lean mass and one-third in fat mass. This is the opposite of what happens most of the time during weight loss, where more fat is lost than muscle. It makes sense that these

extreme fasts would have this result, she said, because "your body needs a constant intake of protein. If it doesn't have that, then it draws from muscles." Varady's research into intermittent fasting has looked at how well the regime works for weight loss, as well as at specific questions, such as whether intermittent fasting affects fertility -- she found it does not.

Varady said she would encourage someone hoping to lose weight to try intermittent fasting instead of water fast, "because there's a lot more data to show it can help with weight management."



# 9yrs of PM Modi: Door to door campaign to reach out to public is BJP's Mantra, says Vinay

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Senior leader and Seh Prabhari Jammu North Vinay Gupta will undertake an intensive door-to-door campaign at Cornol colony in Gandhi Nagar Mandal of Bahu Constituency in Jammu District South. The event was organized by Bharat Bushan BJP Gandhi Nagar Mandal President and Vice-Chairman Cantonment Board Jammu. During the door-to-door visit, Vinay Gupta interacted with the public and highlights the development and welfare initiatives of the Modi-led government on the successful completion of nine years at the Centre.



Gearing up the party cadres for the mass contact program, Vinay Gupta told the media that the party would seek suggestions from the people to fine-tune the implementation of the Central schemes so that the benefits reached the targeted groups in the J&K. He said PM Narendra Modi is popular not only in India but also across the globe. Vinay also

distributed pamphlets on the various welfare schemes of the central government and highlights the achievements of "9 saal Bemisaal" among the people. Speaking on the occasion, Vinay set a slogan "Poore hui aas, ghar ghar huaa vikaas" (aspirations have been fulfilled, and development has reached houses in

J&K) Vinay stated that providing two doses of coronavirus vaccines to all free of cost was a 'big achievement'. Believing in the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', vaccines were provided to the needy globally, he added. Describing the opposition parties coming together ahead of the 2024 elections as an 'opportunistic move',

Vinay said the people of the union territory of J&K would not believe those with a track record of corruption. He claimed that the BJP had provided a 'corruption-free' government at the Centre. Vinay expressed confidence that the BJP would come to power in J&K in the next Assembly election.

Bharat Bhushan President BJP Gandhi Nagar Mandal and Vice Chairman Cantonment Board Jammu, Narinder Koki District Vice President, Rachit Khosla Mandal General Secretary, Mohit Raina, Sr Gurdalay Singh, Ramesh Gupta, Lovisha Gupta, Sushila Sharma, Priyanka Sharma, Shant Bakshi, Rajesh Sharma and others accompanied him during the door-to-door campaign.

# IWC Jammu Samparak & IWC New Gen celebrate Doctors' Day at CARE-N-CARE Hospital



## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: IWC Jammu Samparak and IWC New Gen organized a special event to celebrate Doctors' Day at CARE-N-CARE Hospital in Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. The event aimed to honor a group of esteemed doctors for their contributions to the field of medicine. Among the doctors recognized were Dr. S. Swaran Singh, Dr. Param-

jit Singh, Dr. Adeb Singh, Dr. Sukanya, Dr. Rajinder Singh, and Dr. Manjeet Kaur (Administrative Officer) of the hospital.

Dr. Swaran Singh, renowned for his administrative and medical expertise, was acknowledged alongside other leading specialists in the faculty. The event saw the active participation of club members, including President Reva

Raina, Vice President Ravinder, Secretary Anila Mengi, Kusum Kesar, Anita Goel, and Ambika Samnotra.

During the event, Vice President Ravinder Kaur shed light on the significance of celebrating Doctors' Day, emphasizing the invaluable contributions doctors make to society and the importance of recognizing their dedication and service.

# Natrang features 'Rehearsal' under Sunday Theatre Series

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: Natrang featured 'Rehearsal', a play in Hindi written by Lakshmi Kant Vaishnav and directed by Neeraj Kant today at Natrang Studio Theatre Kachi Chawni in its weekly Theatre Series, Sunday Theatre. In the play the writer has very satirically mocked on the people who want to do something without its proper knowledge and also without possessing the basic eligibilities of the field. The play 'Rehearsal' very interestingly portrays the rehearsal scenario of a play where the cast is all women. Though they (Kitty-mates) want to present a good show but their approach is not good enough and too much immature. The basic ingredients which are required to mount a professional theatre production like discipline,



punctuality, team spirit, self-motivation, neutrality of the mind etc were all missing in these ladies and they were instead full of the traits like jealousy, gossip, lack of coordination and egotism. The rehearsal becomes a free for all situation where everyone reveals her mind in a dramatic manner. Though there is a director also but because of her own limitations and lack of mettle, she is not able to control

the team. Where these ladies were required to act with compassion towards their fellow artists they had their own whims and fancies, few of them even had proud in their mind as their husbands are at higher posts resultantly they seek pampered treatment. Finally the rehearsal which was shown in the play Rehearsal ended up to be a chaos leaving a stern message that we need to be disciplined

and committed to create a meaningful work of art. Young champs who performed in the play included Vrinda Gujral, Manvi Bhushan, Saanchi Dutta, Saanvi Anand, Mehak Chib, Reet Sethi, Gun Sethi, Shranaya Mahajan and Prial Gupta. The lights of the play were operated by Mahikshit Singh and the show was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

# 9yrs of Modi Govt 'Golden Period' of India: Sat

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 2: On its ongoing Mahajansampark Abhiyaan of Public outreach programme today former minister Sat Sharma CA, District President BJP Jammu and Councillor Parmod Kapahi, JKUT BJP secretary Ayodhya Gupta and other leaders started door to door campaign at Booth No- 82 ward 30 of Talab Tillo Mandal, It was organised and managed by BJP Talab Tillo Mandal President Keshav Chopra. The leaders went around many localities, fixed stickers outside houses distributed books, pamphlets and other material having details of the works and achievements of the 9yrs of Narendra Modi government.

While interacting with the Locals Sat Sharma CA said that Narendra



Modi govt during its 9yrs tenure has done commendable work. Many developments projects have been started, Every section of the society have been taken care of in the schemes of Modi government, these 9 yrs are golden period of the country sat further added.

While Interacting Parmod Kapahi & Ayodhya Gupta said during

the 9yrs of modi government, it has changed the fortunes of the people, Modi govt has done lot of work to uplift weaker sections of the society Keshav Chopra while speaking to the locals said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 9yrs are unmatched, common man has availed the benefits of several schemes like Ayushhman Bharat,

Pradhan Mantri awas yojna, Free Ration to BPL families and many more, Keshav also asked the locals to read the material and share it with others too.

Dr R.K Gupta, Sanjeev Gupta, Rahul Nargotra, Vikas Kumar, Sonali Gupta, Bablu chand, Tarsem lal and others were also accompanied the leaders during the campaign.

# JKTJAC holds monthly meeting, demands resolution of genuine issues of teaching fraternity

## TOP NEWS RPEORT

UDHMAPUR, Jul 2: A monthly meeting of Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC) held at Udhampur today on 02.07.2023 under the leadership of UT President Vinod Sharma. The meeting was attended by the JKTJAC representatives from all the zones of the district. While speaking on the occasion Vinod Sharma raised the genuine and burning issues of the teaching fraternity and sought the attention of LG and Principal Secretary School Education for the resolution of the same. Raising the burning demand of transfer policy for teachers appointed under ReT scheme he demanded the provision of comprehensive transfer policy in their favour. He said that these teachers have been



working in the same schools for last more than 20 years even after the clear directions from Hon'ble High Court and CAT that they be transferred within the district like General Line Teachers. "But in absence of Transfer policy thousands of these teachers including females are suffering badly" he said. He demanded inclusion of these teachers in ATD. Demanding regularisation of ReTs who

have completed 5 years ReT period he said that they are waiting for their regularisation for a long time and suffering badly. Other demands highlighted in the meeting included: Conversion of RRETs to Teachers Grade II/III so that their salary get released, Conversion of EVs to ReTs as they are suffering badly; Conversion of head-teachers posts into non plan posts of masters to

resolve the salary issue of the masters; Raising Grade of teachers at par with their counterparts in other UTs; Filling up of vacant posts of CEOs / Principals/ ZEOs/Headmasters, DPC of more teachers to masters as only about 500 teachers have been promoted as masters in last 9 years. He also demanded the settlement of GP fund ( Refundable and non refundable ) cases of teaching and non

teaching staff of education department which are lying in different treasuries for last 4 to 5 months due to which they are suffering badly. On the occasion, he also demanded provision of DDO Powers in headless Zones and schools of the UT.

Others who also spoke on the occasion include Sham Sharma, Suresh Khajuria, Ashok Seth, Pritam Goswami, Ravinder Singh Rathore, Suresh Sharma, Sandeep Sharma, Vipen Raina, Anil Kumar, Ranjit Singh, Binder Kumar, Anuradha Kumari, Raj Pathania, kanta Devi, Ashok Singh, kewal Sharma, Jai Parkash, Amar Dev Singh, Ajay Singh, Ravinder Atri, Sunita Devi, Parveen Singh, Surinder Singh, Susheel Singh, Ramesh Kumar, Sunil Singh, Kuldeep Sharma and others.

# Economic package 'cruel joke' with POJK refugees: NDPI Chief

## TOP NEWS REPORT

JAMMU, Jul 02: National Democratic Party Indian (NDPI) J&K UT Chief Rajesh Gupta strongly raised the issue of PoJK refugees who feel cheated and betrayed. Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) refugees, registered in 1947 but that was actually a betrayal with the refugees. Terming the package as a "cruel joke" with the displaced persons, Rajesh Gupta while addressing a workers meeting on Sunday here said, the Union Government has undermined sanctity of the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC), which had recommended Rs 30 lakh for each refugee family of 1947 in its final report. The PSC in October, 2014, had suggested that Rs 30 lakh should be given to each refugee family of 1947 as compensation. The past government



framed a resettlement package for PoJK refugees and forwarded it to the Central government but instead of the recommended relief of Rs 30 lakh per family, only Rs 5.5 lakh per family was sanctioned by the current government. A large number of eligible families are still deprived of the relief, he claimed. NDPI president said present administration virtually betrayed with POJK refugees by paying them such a paltry sum of Rs. 5.50 Lakhs, which turned out to be merely few thousands to the refugees", Gupta said. e further said that the

Department Related Parliament Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by BJP leader, Venkaiah Naidu had submitted their report in year 2014, with several recommendations including payment of Rs. 30 Lakhs per family to refugee families, reservation of seats for refugees out of total 111 seats of legislative assembly, along with some other recommendations.

"No other committee is higher than the parliamentary standing committee and it was headed by ruling party leader but if current government didn't accept its recommendations in the tenure of nine years and then who will do that", the NDPI leader rued. Others who addressed the meeting were Umesh Manhas, S.Kuljeet Singh, Tilakraj, Sandeep Anand, Rajiv Luthra, Mushtaq Khan, Govind Sharma and others.