

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2023

Daily Evening Newspaper



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e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-14 Issue-358 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

Court issues proclamation notice against 51 accused in North Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Dec 31 (Agencies): Additional Sessions Court Handwara issued a "proclamation notice" against fifty-one individuals wanted in a case dating back to 2011.

SHO of Police Station Kralgund, sought the proclamation against the accused persons in FIR 73/2011, as they were allegedly involved in offenses under the 2/3 EMICO Act and 121-A RPC.

Despite a non-bailable warrant issued by the court of CJM Handwara to compel the attendance of the accused persons, the warrant could not be executed because the accused individuals could not be located.

Consequently, the Court has now issued a Proclamation against the fifty-one accused and has directed them to appear in court by or before February 2, 2024.

Severe cold in Kashmir, Minimum temperatures several notches below freezing point

SRINAGAR, Dec 31 (Agencies): Kashmir reeled under cold wave conditions Sunday as minimum temperatures across the Valley stayed several degrees below the freezing point, officials said here.

The minimum temperature in the summer capital Srinagar dropped to minus 3.4 degrees Celsius from the previous night's minus 2.8 degrees Celsius, they said.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district which serves as a base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra recorded a minimum temperature of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 4.1 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

The officials said that Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort in Baramulla, recorded a low of minus 3.5 degrees Celsius, down from minus 2.5 degrees Celsius the previous night.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, Kokernag town minus 1.4 degrees Celsius

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Tehreek-E-Hurriyat, once headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, banned by Govt

NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): The government on Sunday declared pro-Pakistan separatist amalgam Tehreek-e-Hurriyat (TeH) Jammu and Kashmir a banned organisation for fomenting terrorism and spreading anti-India propaganda in the Union territory.

Announcing the decision, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the group was found spreading anti-India propaganda and continuing terror activities to fuel



secessionism in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, any individual or organ-

isation found involved in anti-India activities would be thwarted.

"The 'Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, J&K (TeH)' has been declared an 'Unlawful Association' under

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The outfit is involved in forbidden activities to separate J&K from India and establish Islamic rule," Shah wrote on 'X'.

The pro-Pakistan group was earlier headed by deceased separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who was succeeded by Masarat Alam Bhat. Bhat is also known for his anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

Bhat is currently in jail and his party the Muslim

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Jammu train delayed as bomb hoax call by a frustrate jobless triggered alarm

SRINAGAR, Dec 31 (Agencies): Jammu bound Ahmedabad-Jammu Tawi Express got delayed last night as a passenger who missed the train made a bomb hoax call to the authorities, reports appearing in the media said. The man, who was later arrested, was found to be frustrated young man driven to the state of suicide by protracted joblessness.

Identified as Amit Singh, a resident of Raj-

asthan, had boarded the train and then missed it. He rang up the Ahmedabad city police control room claiming there was a bomb on the train.

The train was stopped at Mehsana station, the third stop on the train's route, around 12.30 pm and checked thoroughly for around one and half hours with the help of bomb disposal and dog squads. Nothing suspicious was found on the train.

Police told reports that

there was an unclaimed bag, from which its owners phone number and address was detected. When the police acted on it, they located Amit Singh, the same man who had missed the train.

Singh was arrested and it got revealed that the Rajasthan resident was living in Gujarat but was facing serious unemployment issue and was driven to the point of suicide. He had

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Police announce cash reward upto Rs 12 Lakh to curb 'Anti-National Activities' in JK

SRINAGAR, Dec 31 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Police have announced a cash reward of upto Rs 12.50 lakh for people who provide information & intelligence on trans border tunnels, drones, narcotics, militant activities, and militants in an attempt to curb 'anti-national activities'.

In a post on X, J&K Police said that the people can share such information with district superintendents of the police concerned and the identity of the person will be kept secret.

Police announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh for those who provide information about trans-border tunnels used by anti-national elements.

It announced a Rs 3 lakh reward for those who sighted drones

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8000 fake social media handles identified in J&K: DGP Swain

JAMMU, Dec 31 (Agencies): J&K police wasn't fighting against the gun-wielding terrorists only but also the false narrative being spread by almost 8000 fake social media handlers sitting across with an aim to incite trouble and glorify terrorism, Director General of Police (DGP) RR Swain said Saturday.

"Our battle is not



against Militants only but against the narrative which is being spread by 8000 fake social media

handles—facebook, twitter and instagram. Their handlers are sitting across and their aim is to incite trouble and glorify terrorism. They peddle wrong information. We are acting against them under the ambit of law after differentiating the genuine and not-genuine," he said. "We will act against them under IT Act 61. If need arises, we

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Gold likely to touch Rs 70,000 in 2024, say experts

MUMBAI, Dec 31 (Agencies): Continuing to glitter in 2024 as well, gold price is likely to touch Rs 70,000 per 10 grams in the domestic market on the back of a stable rupee, geopolitical uncertainties and slowing global economic growth, according to experts.

Currently, the yellow metal price is hovering at Rs 63,060 per 10 grams on the commodity stock exchange MCX and around USD 2,058 an ounce in the international market at a time when the rupee is trading above 83 against the US dollar.

In early December, prices skyrocketed again on global tensions in the Middle East, and emerging market participants



anticipated that the rate hike cycle has more or less ended.

While the gold price remained volatile this year, it reached a new high of Rs 61,845 per 10 grams on May 4 in the domestic market and USD 2,083 an ounce in the global markets. Later, the yellow metal touched a record high of Rs 61,914 per 10 grams on November 16,

CommTrendz Research Director Gnanasekar Thiagarajan told agency.

In a reflection of its safe-haven appeal, he said, gold touched an all-time high of Rs 64,063 per 10 grams and USD 2,140 an ounce on December 4.

"We expect an eventual rise to USD 2,400 in 2024, and if the rupee is to be stable, gold is likely to reach around

Rs 70,000 levels. As India faces elections, the rupee could weaken as Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) are expected to lighten up their portfolios, which could further bolster domestic prices for gold," he said.

Kotak Securities Vice President - Head Commodity Research Ravindra Rao said retail jewellery buying might face headwinds from higher domestic prices in India and China while central banks' demand might exceed last year's record if the current momentum continues.

Rao noted that robust central bank buying alongside solid bar and coin demand helped gold prices amid surging

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Happy New Year 2024 to All Our Readers

Police attaches house, car under UA(P) Act in Baramulla



SRINAGAR, Dec 31 (Agencies): Police attached a residential house and a vehicle under Unlawful Activities Prevention UA(P) Act in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district.

"Continuing its crack-

down on harbouring

militants and providing

logistic support to them, police have attached a residential house & vehicle under sections of 25 UA (P) Act in Baramulla", a Police statement said on Sunday.

During the investigation of the case vide FIR No. 104/2023 U/S 7/25 I.A Act, 120-B IPC,

13,16,18,23 UA (P) Act of Police Station Uri, one vehicle was seized which was allegedly used for transportation of illegal Arms/Ammunition from one place to another for militant activities.

"The said vehicle falling within the ambit of proceeds of militancy after obtaining approval from competent authority", reads the statement.

Similarly, during the investigation of case FIR No. 46/2023 U/S 307 IPC, 7/27 Arms Act, and the Section 16,18,19,20 and 38 of UA (P) Act of Police Station, Kreeeri,

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India records 841 New Covid-19 cases

NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): India has logged 841 new cases of COVID-19, the highest in 227 days, while the number of active cases of the infection have been recorded at 4,309, the health ministry said on Sunday.

Three new fatalities due to COVID-19, one each from Kerala, Karnataka and Bihar, have been reported in a span of 24 hours, according

to the ministry's data updated at 8 a.m.

India had recorded 865 new cases on May 19.

The number of daily cases had dropped to double-digits till December 5, but cases have again gone up after emergence of a new variant and cold weather conditions.

The daily numbers were in lakhs at the peak of the pandemic, which began in early 2020 and

has seen more than 4.5 crore people getting infected and over 5.3 lakh deaths in about four years since then across the country.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease stands at over 4.4 crore with a national recovery rate of 98.81%, according to the ministry's website.

According to the website, 220.67 crore

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Dr Jitendra visits River Devika Project site, inspects finishing touches

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Dec 31: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today carried out an on-site review of the River Devika Rejuvenation Project here and inspected the finishing touches in progress on the completion of Rs 190 cr centrally funded Project which is the first of its kind river project in North India and was launched by PM Narendra Modi in 2019.

Dr Jitendra Singh's visit to the project was to see the last minute finishing touches before it is dedicated to the nation, most likely by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in near future.

Built on the lines of 'Namami Ganga', the Project was launched by the Prime Minister in February 2019.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said there had been a



long pending demand for renovation, rejuvenation and beautification, but none of the earlier governments paid any heed. He said, it was only after 2014 that this first of its kind river rejuvenation project was undertaken in North India on the lines of Namami Ganga.

During the over one-hour review, Chief Engineer, UEED, engineers from the PWD and Irrigation Department, officials from the district administration and public representatives were among those present at the site.

The Minister directed officers of the PWD (R&B) and Municipal Council Udhampur for

ensuring dedicated feeder for uninterrupted power supply, besides maintaining cleanliness and beautification of the Ghat area.

Earlier, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the year 2023 has been historic for India on many fronts. It was in this year that India landed on the Moon and attained the Presidency of the G20, the Minister mentioned.

The world is now ready to be led by India, he asserted.

Dr Jitendra Singh was speaking to reporters after listening to the latest edition of Prime Minister's monthly address to the nation through Mann Ki Baat at Saint Thomas' Church

here. He described the Mann Ki Baat programme as one of the many legacies of Prime Minister Modi in the last ten years. He said Mr Modi has been sharing his ideas on many pressing issues and highlighting other matters through his monthly broadcast on Akashvani to lead the nation in addressing them.

Dr Jitendra Singh urged everyone to play their part in realising Mr Modi's vision of a developed India by 2047. In this regard, Dr Singh laid emphasis on maintaining personal fitness as stressed by the Prime Minister in today's Mann Ki Baat. The Minister stated that fit and bodily

sound citizens can channelise their energies to make India a developed nation.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the basis for making "Viksit Bharat" has been laid in the outgoing year. Now, the youth have to work on solidifying that base during the upcoming 25-year journey in the run-up to the target year of 2047.

The Minister said India is all set to emerge as the fourth largest economy next year. Exuding confidence, Dr Singh said that during Prime Minister Modi's 3rd term in office, India would reach the milestone of becoming the 3rd largest economy of the world.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the role of Jammu and Kashmir would be of great significance as India achieves such a feat. Dr Singh said many innovations and the best practices adopted by J&K in areas like agriculture and horticulture are now being replicated in other northern States like Uttarakhand.

Couple charge-sheeted in Rs. 35 lakhs Kitty Party fraud: Crime Branch

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: The Economic Offences Wing – Crime Branch Jammu has charge-sheeted Pinky Gupta and Shiv Partap Gupta in a fraud case related to a Kitty Party scheme. The charge-sheet, presented in the Hon'ble Court, consists of 396 pages and alleges criminal conspiracy, cheating, and defrauding complainants and others by luring them to deposit money in the guise of Kitty parties with promises of hefty interest payments.

The case originated from a written complaint filed by Smt. Neelam Malhotra and others, who claimed that the accused individuals, residents of Green Enclave, Jammu, had enticed them and other innocent people to deposit money with the assurance of substantial returns. Subsequently, the accused allegedly



filed after locking their residence and office, deceiving individuals of their hard-earned money, totaling Rs. 35.00 lakhs.

The preliminary inquiry substantiated the allegations, leading to the initiation of criminal proceedings against the accused with the approval of Crime Headquarters. The formal case FIR was registered in the Police Station, Economic Offences Wing, Crime Branch, Jammu. Throughout the investigation, material evidence, both oral and documentary, as well as scientific evidence, was gathered. The accused,

who were evading arrest outside the UT of J&K, were eventually apprehended by the Crime Branch team.

As a result of the investigation, the case is closed as Challan, indicating that the charges have been formally presented in court. However, criminal proceedings are being separately initiated against the accused for their alleged involvement in defrauding other innocent people. The legal process will determine the outcome of the case and the appropriate actions to be taken against the accused individuals.

BJP Library releases documentary on Article 370

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Ravinder Raina, along with MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, General Secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul and other leaders released a documentary on Article 370 and history of Praja Parishad in the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir. This documentary was also shown on the newly fixed LED in Nanaji Deshmukh Library. The LED will run this documentary on working days for the convenience of the history loving people.

Er. Dil Bahadur Singh Jamwal, Convenor BJP Sawachh Bharat Abhiyan and Er. T.K. Sharma, Co-Convenor of the Abhiyan presented this LED to the library.

Prof. Kulbushan Mohtra Incharge Nanaji Deshmukh Library and Documentation



Department, had organised the event.

Ravinder Raina, while speaking on the occasion, said that Nanaji Deshmukh Library is proving a great asset not only to the party but general public is also visiting here and taking benefit of books related to different subjects, particularly ones on historic moments and developments in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ashok Koul said that the documentary released today is indeed a big source of information on Article 370 and the Praja Parishad movement and the readers will surely appreciate its contents and study material based on facts.

Prof. Kulbushan Mohtra, on this occasion, shared details about the books and the documentaries available in the library

and informed that during the past five years, a number of research scholars have taken help in completing their thesis on various subjects from this library, which is a matter of pride for the party.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta, former ministers Sat Sharma and Sham Lal Sharma, general secretaries Vibodh Gupta and Dr. Devinder Manyal, Waqf Board Chairperson Dr. Drakshana Andrabi, N.E Member and former minister Priya Sethi, J&K BJP Vice-president Anuradha Charak, secretaries Arvind Gupta and Veenu Khanna, Mahila Morcha president Sanjita Dogra, former MLA Ashwani Sharma, Jammu south district president Rekha Mahajan, Mahila Morcha Spokesperson Pooja Grover were prominent leaders present on the occasion.

Senior Advocate Ashok Bhan conferred with prominent citizen award



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Senior Advocate Ashok Bhan, has been awarded a prominent Citizen Award by Mool Chand Sharma Minister Higher Education, at a well attended function organised by Kashmir Peace Keepers (KPL) in NCR region.

The award given to Bhan is in recognition of and honour him for his exceptional contribution to the society.

The award is in great appreciation of his commitment and leadership exemplified the values of the Kashmiri Pandit community inspiring generations and enriching the cultural heritage.

Bhan is also a bar leader and has been elected as senior executive member of the Supreme Court Bar

Association for many years.

He is a chamber door tenant with a leading law Chambers in London.

He has also represented the Republic of India as an International law expert along with a Parliamentary delegation, to UN General Assembly session. He was the first non-parliamentarian representative in UN General Assembly to urge the global community on the issue of cross-border terrorism in the South east Asia.

Along with being a leading senior advocate in India, Bhan is also well recognized as a Track-II diplomat and expert on geo-political conflict resolutions. As an expert, he has represented various parties including the Republic of India at the United

Nation Human Rights Commission in Geneva for several years.

He is also a distinguished fellow with United Services of India (USI), a strategic think tank for Armed forces on Geo-political affairs in India. He is chairman of a think tank-Kashmir (policy and strategy) Group.

He is son of a veteran freedom fighter Sh SN Bhan who was close associate of late Pt Kashyap Bandu ji in the socio-political movement of Kashmiri Pandit Community.

He is also a regular columnist and a public speaker. He regularly speaks at various Universities and writes column in some daily publications including Indian Express, Sunday Guardian & JK leading dailies etc.

SMVDU cricket team wins winter cricket tournament

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: SMVD University staff team won the winter cricket tournament organized by SMVD Narayana Hospital held at SMVD University Sports ground. The final match was played between SMVD University staff team and Unbeatable Warriors team of SMVD Narayana Hospital. The Unbeatable Warriors team set a target of 103 runs while batting first and was bowled out in 19.4 overs. The batting team suffered quick losses in the initial overs and never recovered from them. Mr. Aman Thakur was the pick of bowlers who claimed 4 wickets while Mr. Vishal and Mr. Sarthak took 2 wickets each. In response the SMVD University Staff team convincingly won the match by 9 wickets and reached the target in 17 overs. The chase was led by the captain of the team Mr. Sumit Sharma

and Mr. Surya Pratap Singh who scored 38 and 46 runs, respectively.

The tournament was played in super six format and these teams were divided into two pools. In the prize distribution ceremony Dr. Parvez Singh Slathia, In charge Sports, SMVD University and Mr. M. Muthu Mathavan, Facility Director, SMVD Narayana Hospital congratulated the winners and handed over the prizes to winner and runner up teams. Mr. Mathavan expressed his gratitude towards the university for providing the sports ground and allied facilities for organizing the tournament. Dr. Slathia congratulated the SMVD Narayana Hospital for organizing the tournament and emphasized that such tournaments are necessary for fostering the sportsman spirit and assured that in future more sports events will be conducted on the same lines.



Abhay Bakaya demands de-notification of Gair Mumkin Khad in Jammu District

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Apni Party Youth Wing General Secretary and Spokesperson, Abhay Bakaya today demanded de-notification of Gair Mumkin Khad in Jammu District.

As per a press release, Abhay Bakaya said that the people who have constructed their houses, commercial establishments and lives of thousands of people depend upon the decision of the Govt on Gair Mumkin Khad.

He said that the people live in distress because their property falls in Gair Mumkin Khad area of Jammu District that is yet to be de-notified by the Govt.

"Same type of land in other Districts has

been regularized /de-notified by the Govt in other districts, whereas Jammu District has been ignored and the steps to de-notify the Gair Mumkin Khad have not been initiated," he added.

In these circumstances, he said that it becomes imperative to take a final call and accordingly, de-notify the Gair Mumkin Khad in Jammu District keeping in view the larger interest of the masses.

"Most of the land in Jammu is settled on Gair Mumkin Khad and the decision to avoid de-notification has pushed the commoners to the wall. Hence, a positive decision in favour of the people should be taken," he added.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, JAL SHAKTI PHE DIVISION SAMBA

SHORT NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E-NIT No. PHES/115 of 2023-24 Dated: 29-12-2023 under endorsement no. PHES/18416-29, Dated. 29-12-2023.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, tenders are invited from Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Division, Samba by e-tendering mode from approved and reputed / registered firms/ workshop owner having GST registration /PAN no. having sufficient experience in execution of similar nature of works. The details of works are as follows:

| S. No. | Name of work | Estimated Cost (In lacs) | Earnest Money Deposit | Tender Fee | Time of Completion | Bid Validity | Class of Contractor |
|--------|---|--------------------------|---|------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Providing, Installation, testing and commissioning of pumping machinery along with allied electro-mechanical equipment under Improvement and Augmentation of water supply scheme Purmandal under NABARD (Technical Specification mentioned as Annexure-A) | 23.30 | @ 2% of the Advertisment cost (To be submitted at the time of bid submission) | 500/- | 45 days | 90 days | Registered firms/Workshop Owners |

Major Head - NABARD
Position of AAA - Accorded
Position of Funds - Available

1. The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ), terms and conditions of contract can be seen / downloaded from website [www. jktenders.gov.in](http://jktenders.gov.in) as per the dates shown below:

| | |
|--|--|
| Publishing date of NIT | 29-12-2023 at 04:00 PM |
| Period of downloading Tender Documents | From date: 29-12-2023 to 08-01-2024 up to 4:00 PM. |
| Place (s) | http://jktenders.gov.in |
| Period of Submission of Bids | From Date: 29-12-2023 to 08-01-2024 up to 4:00 PM |
| Date and Time Of Opening of Bids | 09-01-2024 at 03:00 PM |
| Place of Opening of Bids | Office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Division, Samba |

The bids shall be opened online on above mentioned date or any other date convenient to the opening authority in presence of the bidders who may wish to be present.

2. Bids must be accompanied by cost of tender document & bid security deposit as specified in column 3 & 4 of the table payable at Samba pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Division, Samba. Bid security will have to be in the form of CDR/FDR & shall be valid for atleast 90 days. The cost of downloaded tender document shall be in the form of e-Challan through Treasury favouring Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Division Samba and mentioning the name of work by crediting to MH-0215 WSS.

3. **Instruction to bidders regarding E-tending process:**

3.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the download bid submission.

3.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per information technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from approved option as well as from "Bidders Manual kit" on website (www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint vendors.

3.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

3.4 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all below mentioned necessary documents:-

- Scanned copy of e-Challan through treasury towards the cost of tender document mentioning the name of work for which fee was deposited.
- Scanned copy of EMD in shape of CDR/FDR @ 2% of advertised cost duly pledged to Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Samba.

c) **The Performance Security @ 3% in the shape of CDR/FDR/ irrevocable Bank Guarantee shall have to be submitted before award of contract duly pledge to Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, PHE Division Samba.**

- Scanned copies of GSTIN & PAN Card.
- Scanned copies of Experience certificate of having executed similar nature electro-mechanical works in last two years. The experience certificate (satisfactory performance certificate of works executed) shall have been issued by an officer of the rank not below an Executive Engineer of any Government Department/ Semi Government/PSUs.
- Scan properly all documents & convert all scan images into PDF format on 100dpi with black & white option.

3.5 The bid shall be deposited in electronic format only on the web site of (www.jktenders.gov.in) till the end date mentioned in bid submission.

3.6 The details of cost of documents, EMD specified in the tenders document should be the same, as submitted online (scanned copies) otherwise bid shall be rejected.

3.7 The Department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reason whatsoever claimed by the bidder.

sd/-
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Division
Samba

DIP/J-13248/23

EDITORIAL

ADOPT PRICING METHODS

There are many methods of pricing and each one of them is appropriate for achieving a particular pricing objective or combination of pricing objectives.

The three major categories of methods used to establish product prices are cost-oriented pricing, competition-oriented pricing, and demand-oriented pricing. A retailer may use one or a combination of the methods. The most common is cost-oriented pricing.

The cost based pricing methods are based on cost incurred in the production of the goods. Total costs include fixed and variable costs. The pricing may be based on total costs or only on variable costs. A reasonable profit is added to base cost to arrive at the pricing.

Most frequently used method is the cost-plus method. Under this mark-up pricing is done. Mark-up pricing refers the pricing method in which selling price is fixed by adding a margin to the cost price. Mark-ups vary depending on the nature of the product and the markets. Usually if the value of the product is higher the markup pricing will be larger or vice-versa.

Mark-up pricing assumes that demand cannot be known accurately but costs are known. A reasonable mark-up is added to the costs. Then the price as well as mark-up is adjusted by trial and error. The main objective is to maximize profits in the short run without giving up on sales due to excessive prices. This method is adopted usually by distributive trade and marketing firms who do not have any manufacturing of their own.

Another common method of pricing is to determine the price on the basis of variable cost or direct cost. Fixed cost is totally ignored and the firm is only concerned with marginal or incremental cost of producing the products. Variable costs depend on the volume of production. Thus variable cost sets the price after a certain level of output is achieved. This method essentially aims at maximizing the total contribution of the firm towards fixed costs and profit. It does not seek to absorb the total cost in each unit of sale. This method takes into account cost aspects as well as demand aspects.

Rate of return means gain or loss on an investment over a specified period, expressed as a percentage increase over the initial investment cost. This method uses standard costing techniques and identifies the variable and fixed costs of manufacturing, selling and administration involved in producing and selling the product.

All The costs of the three operations are added. And to this total cost the required margin is added towards profit and the total becomes the selling price of the product. For this type of pricing, the company needs to specify the rate of return on its capital invested. Similar to cost plus pricing, the difference is that the mark-up will be based on the target rate of return.

The target rate of return varies with market norm or what management considers a fair return. Useful method to use when a business has invested too much on the project or the products. However difficult to use where a company has too many product lines or competes in markets.

The Growth of Artificial intelligence has Rapidly intruded into every Sphere of Scientific Activities

By: Vijay GarG

Every year, the prestigious scientific journal Nature selects ten individuals who played significant roles in crucial scientific discoveries from that year. The scientific journal compiles an annual list of ten people they believe have had a major impact on science, called Nature's 10. No matter their stance on science, these nominees have made a lasting impression. Reporters and editors at Nature assess people whose positions have significantly influenced science or whose impact on the world is significant as part of the selection process. The list includes short biographies of the people responsible for some of the year's most important discoveries and events.

The compilation also features five people named "ones to watch" for the coming year. This year's list, which was published on December 13, made every Indian proud as it featured our Kalpana Kalahasti, who played a crucial part in ensuring Chandrayaan-3's triumphant

touchdown on the Moon, along with global stalwarts.

But this year's Nature's 10 will be written in the annals of human history, as for the first time, it featured a non-human entity. The AI-based ChatGPT has found a place in the list, along with human scientific counterparts. Why incorporate a computer program into a compilation of individuals who have influenced science in 2023? ChatGPT isn't a human being, but in numerous aspects, this software has significantly and extensively impacted the field of science throughout the past year.

ChatGPT, a chatbot created by OpenAI, was released on November 30, 2022. The AI-based bot ChatGPT has gained wide acceptance among the scientific community, as well as among the public, since 2022. In just five days of launch, ChatGPT crossed 1 million users. By January 2023 (two months after its launch), ChatGPT users grew by 9900% — meaning it gained 100 million active users. According to the latest available data, ChatGPT has around 180.5 million users.

Within a short time of its inception, ChatGPT has found profound acceptance among the research community. It acts as a valuable tool in scientific research across various domains. ChatGPT can assist researchers in performing literature reviews by succinctly summarising and extracting crucial details from an extensive array of scientific journals and articles. It offers succinct summaries of current research, aiding researchers in identifying deficiencies in the literature or locating pertinent studies.

ChatGPT can assist researchers with data analysis by providing insights, hypotheses, or explanations using given datasets. It can assist in the interpretation of intricate findings, providing supplementary viewpoints or indicating possible links within the data. ChatGPT is frequently used by researchers as a writing aid, often to draft sections of research papers, proposals, or reports. The generation of content that is coherent and well-structured can be facilitated by it.

The basic objective of ChatGPT is to maintain discussions reasonably

and compellingly that are consistent with its training data. Nevertheless, in the process of achieving this objective, it, along with other generative artificial intelligence (AI) programmes, is transforming the landscape of scientific endeavour. The advent of this transition has rekindled conversations about the limits of artificial intelligence (AI), the fundamental nature of human intellect, and the most effective ways to regulate the interaction between the two. One of the reasons that a non-human entity was chosen to be included in this year's edition of Nature's 10 is because of this issue.

Nature's list also recognises the creators of such AI-based technologies. Ilya Sutskever, the chief scientist and cofounder of OpenAI, the organization that created Chat GPT, has also found a place among Nature's 10.

*(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist malout)*

Children with Disabilities in underserved Communities face a multitude of Societal and Economic Challenges

By: Vijay GarG

In India, children with disabilities face considerable challenges, often amplified by socio-economic factors. Recent data suggests that a significant number of these children do not receive the necessary medical and educational support. These children are also less likely to attend school compared to their non-disabled peers. Moreover, access to specialized healthcare and rehabilitation services can be limited, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas.

Parents often struggle to identify developmental issues in their children due to a lack of awareness and information. Recognizing signs of disabilities like autism, hearing impairments, or cognitive delays can be challenging without proper knowledge or access to healthcare professionals. Additionally, cultural stigma and misconceptions about disabilities can lead to denial or reluctance to seek help. This delay in identification hinders early intervention, which is crucial for better

outcomes. The limited availability of specialized healthcare services in many regions further exacerbates these challenges.

Children with disabilities in underserved communities face a multitude of societal and economic challenges. These include limited access to healthcare, educational opportunities, and rehabilitation services. Financial constraints often prevent families from seeking or continuing treatment, leading to inadequate care. Stigma and lack of awareness in these communities further contribute to social isolation and discrimination, impeding the children's development and integration into society. These challenges not only affect the immediate health and well-being of these children but also limit their prospects in terms of education, employment, and social inclusion, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

To meet these challenges head-on early identification and providing comprehensive support throughout life is essential. Initiatives like

the Cochlear Implant Program have helped over 1200 hearing-impaired children since 2013, while the Little Hearts Program of the Hans Foundation (THF) tackles children suffering from congenital heart defects. Collaborations of NGOs with government healthcare systems ensure broader access to essential medical treatments. The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Neuro-Rehabilitation, established in collaboration with AIIMS, aims to centralise services for children with disabilities, ensuring more accessible and effective care. Indeed, philanthropy can play a pivotal role in elevating pediatric care for children with disabilities and fostering enduring positive impacts. By investing in specialized pediatric care centres, supporting research and innovation, and promoting early intervention programs, philanthropic efforts can significantly enhance the quality of care provided to children facing disabilities. Financial assistance to families, training healthcare professionals, and constructing accessible facili-

ties are additional avenues through which philanthropy can actively contribute.

Advocacy and awareness campaigns serve to educate various stakeholders, while collaboration with government agencies and NGOs ensures a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to pediatric care. Supporting community-based initiatives and fostering long-term partnerships with healthcare institutions and advocacy groups further strengthens the impact of philanthropy. Through these initiatives, philanthropy not only addresses immediate healthcare needs but also works towards creating inclusive environments that empower children with disabilities and their families, ultimately shaping a more equitable and supportive future.

*(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist malout)*

Explore the Top Multimodal Artificial intelligence tools shaping 2024's tech landscape

By: Vijay GarG

Multimodal AI tools, once confined to unimodal input tasks, have evolved significantly, extending their capabilities to encompass text, images, video, and audio. According to Markets and Markets research, the global multimodal AI market is projected to surge from \$1 billion in 2023 to a staggering \$4.5 billion by 2028, highlighting the growing significance of these tools. Navigating through the expanding array of options can be challenging, so let's explore the five best multimodal AI tools for 2024.

1. Google Gemini
Google Gemini, a natively multimodal Language Model (LLM), stands out as a versatile tool capable of identifying and generating text, images, video, code, and

audio. Divided into three versions—Gemini Ultra, Gemini Pro, and Gemini Nano—each caters to specific user needs. Gemini Ultra, the largest LLM, excels in performance, surpassing GPT-4 on 30 out of 32 benchmarks, as shared by Demis Hassabis, CEO, and co-founder of Google DeepMind.

2. ChatGPT (GPT-4V)
ChatGPT, powered by GPT-4 with vision (GPT-4V), introduces multimodality by allowing users to input text and images. With an impressive 100 million weekly active users as of November 2023, ChatGPT supports a mix of text, voice, and images in prompts, and responds in up to five AI-generated voices. The GPT-4V variant ranks among the largest multimodal AI tools, offering a comprehensive user experience.

3. In world AI

In world AI, a character engine, empowers developers to create non-playable characters (NPCs) and virtual personalities for digital worlds. Leveraging multimodal AI, In world AI enables NPCs to communicate through natural language, voice, animations, and emotion. Developers can craft smart NPCs with autonomous actions, unique personalities, emotional expressions, and memories of past events, enhancing the immersive quality of digital experiences.

4. Meta Image Bind
Meta Image Bind, an open-source multimodal AI model, stands out by processing text, audio, visual, movement, thermal, and depth data. As the first AI model capable of combining information across six modalities, Image Bind creates art by merging disparate inputs, such as audio of

a car engine and an image of a beach.

5. Runway Gen -2
Runway Gen -2 takes center stage as a versatile multimodal AI model specialising in video generation. It accepts text, image, or video input, allowing users to create original video content through text-to-video, image-to-video, and video-to-video functionalities. Users can replicate the style of existing images or prompts, edit video content, and achieve higher fidelity results, making Gen -2 an ideal choice for creative experimentation.

*(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist malout)*

BJP leaders along with public listen 108th Episode of Mann Ki Baat Program at Jammu West

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: BJP leaders, including Braham Jyot Satti, and the public in Jammu West gathered to listen to the 108th episode of "Mann Ki Baat."

The event was organized by Parveen Badyal, Vice President of OBC (Other Backward Classes).

Other notable attendees included Tarun Sharma (culture cell bjym), Raja Ram (Social Activist), and prominent citizens.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the significance of the digit "108" on the 108th episode.

He extended New Year greetings and discussed the achievements of the



country in 2023.

Emphasized the importance of maintaining fitness and acknowledged the response to the Fit India initiative.

The PM appreciated the response to the

upcoming Ram Temple inauguration in Ayodhya.

Urged citizens to contribute to a #RamBhajan social media drive by consolidating artwork related to the event.

Acknowledged India's

achievements in sports, including 107 medals in the Asian Games and 111 medals in the Asian Para Games.

Mentioned the impressive performance of Indian players in the

Cricket World Cup.

Highlighted the convenience brought about by innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) in various sectors.

Braham Jyot Satti summarized the episode, expressing admiration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Praised the growth and entrepreneurship fostered by various employment schemes.

Emphasized the BJP's commitment to the "Nation First" ideology and its focus on serving humanity at the ground level.

Overall, the information provided gives a snapshot of the key highlights and reactions to the 108th episode of "Mann Ki Baat" in Jammu West.

Shahadat Gurmat Samagam Grand Programme organizes in Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: A religious and commemorative event related to the Shahadat Gurmat Samagam Grand Programme organized by the Parbandak Committee Gurudwara Mata Gujjar Kour Ji in Jammu. The event included the participation of various Sikh organizations and prominent individuals. The program involved recitation of Shabad Gurbani by Ragi Jathas, and the sacrifices of Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Mata Gujjar Kour Ji were remembered.

The historical account of the sacrifices made by the Sahibzadas and other Sikh warriors in

the battle of Chamkor was highlighted, along with the tragic incident of Sahibzada Jorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fatey Singh Ji being bricked alive by Wazir Khan at Fatey Garh Sahib. The refusal of Wazir Khan to allow cremation until land was purchased, and the subsequent purchase of the land by Dewan Todor Mal using gold coins, was also narrated. The cost of the land was mentioned as 2 billion 50 crore rupees, making it one of the most expensive lands in history.

The Gurudwara Parbandak Committee Mata Gujjar Kour KC Colony expressed gratitude to the Sangat and Shriman Mahant Man-

jeet Singh of Dera Nangali Sahib Poonch. Various Sikh organizations and individuals, including S. Mohinder Singh, S. Rajinder Singh, S. Tejinder Singh, S. Surinder Singh, S. Gagandeep Singh, S. Surjeet Singh, S. Kulwant Singh, and S. Jaswinder Singh Lucky, were acknowledged for their participation in the program.

It's a comprehensive account of the event, acknowledging the religious and historical significance of the sacrifices made by the Sikh community. If you have any specific questions or if there's anything else you'd like to know, feel free to ask.

Sheetal Devi names the "Best Para Women Archer of the Year"

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Duggar Gaurav Adventure Award and the recognition it brings to exceptional achievements in adventure sports. Sheetal Devi, being named the "Best Para Women Archer of the Year," is undoubtedly a remarkable accomplishment.

The involvement of prominent personalities and experts in the decision-making process, as well as the diverse representation in the club's core members, reflects a comprehensive and well-considered approach in selecting the awardee.

The decision to release a colorful souvenir during the grand function to celebrate the 41st anniversary

of the club is an excellent way to highlight the achievements not only of Sheetal Devi but also of other notable individuals, including Shivani Charak, who made history as the first woman from J&K to participate in the Asian Games.

It's commendable that the club has the flexibility to increase the number of awards in a particular year and extend recognition to exceptional individuals from various fields. This approach broadens the scope of the award and allows for the acknowledgment of outstanding contributions beyond adventure sports.

The background information about the institution of the Duggar Gaurav Adventure Award in 2021

and the recognition of all 11 Everest heroes belonging to Jammu in the inaugural year adds historical significance to the award and showcases the commitment of Tawi Trekkers J&K to honoring and celebrating local achievements in adventure sports.

The upcoming grand function in February 2024 promises to be a momentous occasion, and the release of the souvenir will undoubtedly serve as a fitting tribute to the accomplishments of Sheetal Devi, Shivani Charak, and other prominent members of the club in mountaineering, sport climbing, and trekking. It also provides a platform to inspire and motivate others to excel in the field of adventure sports.

SMVDU Student presents Paper at the International Congress on Renewable Energy

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Milind Shukla, a final year student of the School of Mechanical Engineering (SOME) presented a research paper at the International Congress on Renewable Energy held at KREEPA, Cochin, Kerala under aegis of Solar Energy Society of India (SESI) during 07-09 December 2023. The paper discusses the transformation of power grids to smart grids. The presented paper will be published in SESI National Journal. This achievement reflects his dedication and the quality of his research,

and serves as a testament to the rigorous academic standards and opportunities provided by the School of Mechanical Engineering at SMVDU. The School continues to inspire and motivate its students to achieve excellence in their chosen fields while fostering an environment of innovation and academic growth. Milind Shukla's successful participation in ICoRE 2023 is a notable milestone in his academic journey, setting an example for future students and highlighting the University's commitment to promoting research and scholarly endeavours.

Apni Party's acceptance increases among people, says Manjit Singh

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Asserting that the acceptance of the Apni Party has been growing in Jammu and Kashmir, the Apni Party Provincial President, Jammu, and Former Minister, S. Manjit Singh today said that the Party has expanded its roots in Jammu plains with the support of people from various segments of society.

"The people from every nook and corner have joined Apni Party and the Party has gained strength because of the public faith in the leadership of the Party and its politics of telling truth to the people," said Manjit Singh, while addressing a public meeting cum program here at Apni Party office, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The meeting was orga-

nized by District President (Minority Wing) Jammu District, Dalbir Singh and District General Secretary, Jammu (Minority Wing), Harjeet Singh.

During the meeting, dozens of people joined the Apni Party in presence of S. Manjit Singh. Welcoming the new entrants into the Party fold, Manjit Singh hoped that their joining would strengthen the Party at the grass root level.

In his address, he said that the people from across Jammu and Kashmir and from all the regions have shown their faith in the Apni Party because of its policy of ensuring equitable development, protecting resources, land and employment for the local population.

He said that the traditional political parties have failed to do what

was expected by the people. However, they encouraged regional and religious divide in Jammu and Kashmir that has created a situation where the people are no longer trusting them.

"The people have pinned their hopes on the Apni Party. We have committed to provide employment, protest resources, and end any kind of discrimination whether regional, religious or any other type," he said.

He said that the commitment of bringing reforms and upgradation of social, economic and political status of Jammu and Kashmir's people will be fulfilled if Apni Party forms Govt in the erstwhile state.

He said that the present form of Govt has failed to do justice with the people and their style of working has gener-

ated anguish among the people because of their discriminatory approach.

"The developmental projects have come to stand still and the pending payments of the already done works are delaying year by year. From contractors to common man, everyone feels ignored and pushed to the wall without an elected Govt," he said.

He said that the people would have a sigh of relief only when assembly elections are held in J&K, and statehood is restored without further delay.

"There would be no prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir unless an elected Govt replaces the present form of Govt to restore the confidence of the people," he added.

Meanwhile, he took a detailed review of the Party's working in Jammu District.

Prominent among those who were present on the occasion include Senior Vice Provincial President Jammu, Faqir Nath, Provincial Vice President, Jammu, Mohammed Shafi Sheikh, Additional General Secretary, Arun Kumar Chibber, District President, Rural A, Pushap Dev Uppal, Provincial President, Jammu, Youth Wing, Vipul Bali, Provincial President, Jammu, Women Wing, Pavneet Kour, Provincial Vice President Women Wing, Jammu, Neelam Gupta, Provincial President Transport Union, Jammu, Tirath Singh, Provincial Vice President, Transport Union, Devinder Gill, General Secretary Transport Union, Yash Choudhary, Balbir Singh Bawa, Indrapal Singh and others.

Congress party holds district workers convention at Shalimar Kishtwar

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Dec 31: A significant gathering organized by the Kishtwar Congress under the leadership of President District Congress Committee Kishtwar, Adv Mohd Asif Naqeeb. The convention focused on various issues faced by the people of Kishtwar. Naqeeb highlighted the critical issue of free electricity, stating that it is a well-deserved demand of the people of Kishtwar.

The convention discussed the ongoing road connectivity issues in areas adjoining the District headquarters. Plans were discussed to raise the voice for road connectivity and safety in order to enhance accessibility and connectivity for development options.

President District Congress highlighted the ever-rising



unemployment issues. The discussion focused on strategies to make the administration understand and combat unemployment, with an emphasis on creating job opportunities within the district.

Local Employment in Ongoing Projects: Naqeeb stressed the right of locals to have employment opportunities in ongoing projects across District Kisht-

war, aiming to prevent exploitation.

Naqeeb urged the people to vote for the Congress in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, expressing the hope that this would help put an end to what was perceived as anti-people policies of the BJP government.

The lack of proper healthcare facilities for rural areas was highlighted, with a commitment

to making healthcare accessibility and quality a top priority if the Congress is voted to power.

The meeting witnessed a substantial turnout of party workers and the presence of esteemed senior leaders. Notable personalities included leaders from INTUC, Sevalal, senior Congress leaders, and President Youth Congress Kishtwar, among others.

At the end of the meeting, hundreds of people reportedly showed their faith in the secular policies of Congress and joined the party. They were welcomed by Adv. Naqeeb and other senior leaders.

Overall, the gathering and convention served as a platform for the Kishtwar Congress to address the concerns of the community and express its commitment to fostering comprehensive development within the district.

Sikh United Front along with various Sikh organizations conduct emergency meeting

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: An emergency meeting organized by the Sikh United Front along with various Sikh organizations in Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was chaired by S. Sudershan Singh Wazir, Chairman of Sikh United Front Jammu and Kashmir.

Participants included leaders such as S. Mohinder Singh, Bhai Kanhiya Nishkam Sewa Society J&K Chief Organizer, S. Darbinder Singh, President Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, and others from various Sikh organizations.

Manjit Singh G. K, Ex-President Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, and S. Parmjeet Singh Sarna joined Shiromani Akalidal Badal Punjab. The move was welcomed during the meeting.

The need for unity among the Sikh community was emphasized, setting aside minor differences. Discrimination against the Sikh community in various aspects of society was mentioned, and a call to unite for the community's welfare was made.

The historical significance of Akalidal, founded in Amritsar on December 14, 1920, was highlighted. Akalidal was recognized as the only political wing that

assisted the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandak Committee (SGPC) as a task force.

Appeals were made to veteran leaders throughout the country to unite and form state bodies. Bibi Jaggir Kour and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa were urged to join the party for the betterment of the community. Sukhbir Singh Badal was requested to approach veteran leadership for unity.

The meeting expressed concerns about the discrimination faced by the Sikh community and the need to address it. Sukhbir Singh Badal's apology for mistakes was acknowledged, and efforts to fight for the release of Bandi Singhs were emphasized.

The meeting included representatives from various Sikh organizations, motor transport associations, panchayats, youth groups, and Gurdwara committees.

The information provided outlines the key points discussed during the emergency meeting, focusing on unity, political affiliations, and addressing concerns within the Sikh community.

Happy with response, don't make movies with box office in mind: Rajkumar Hirani on 'Dunki'

Commercial success does matter but filmmaker can't focus on it and let it colour their vision, says "Dunki" director Rajkumar Hirani, happy that people have praised his efforts to tell a human story at a time audiences are flocking to action movies.

"Dunki", fronted by Shah Rukh Khan, is based on the illegal migration of people who travel through the dangerous 'donkey route' in search of a better life.

The much-discussed film comes after Shah Rukh's blockbuster "Pathaan" and "Jawan", both high-octane action thrillers that crossed over Rs 1,000 crore each at the box office. "Dunki", which also stars Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal and Boman Irani, is a gentler film and has made Rs 300 crore a success though not at par with the other two films.

"Of course, commercial success matters to me but I try not focus on it at all because the moment you start focusing on it, then you start colouring the kind of film you want to make..." Hirani said.

His last film was "Sanju" in 2018.

"I take three or four years to make a film. This time I took five years to make a story. It should be like... let me make this film whatever the fate of the film is. Sometimes you will get a universal audience, sometimes you will get an audience which is in smaller pockets. India is a massive country and there will be all kinds of audiences liking all kinds of films," Hirani said.

The 61-year-old is known for his unique brand of cinema that focuses on human stories with a touch of comedy and commerciality. His earlier films include the super successful "Munnabhai" films and "3 Idiots" as well as



"PK" and "Sanju".

Hirani said he was not scared at all while making "Dunki".

"It's an Indian story which in Hindi cinema no one thought about. I'm happy with the response. Sometimes it will be massive, sometimes it will be different. It is a successful film and people are going for it and people are liking it. I don't think one should ever worry about box office numbers. If the attention is there, then it's a big trap."

What scares him, he said, is audience expectation.

"I get scared... people expect that 'jo pehle banaya tha wohi humko dekna hai' (We want to something similar to what we saw earlier). With every film, I'm always jumping genres and trying to make something different from 'Munnabhai' to '3 Idiots' to 'PK', 'Sanju' and this," he added.

As a storyteller, Hirani said his goal is to scout for unique subjects and it's the most difficult task.

"For 100 years, cinema has been made and now people are exposed to world cinema and they see all kinds of films, so to find a subject that has not been dealt with is always diffi-

cult." "Dunki" references village homes in Punjab which have concrete planes on their rooftops.

"I initially saw one plane on top of a house and I was like, 'why are they making these planes on top of the house?' Then I discovered that this is kind of a status symbol for people whose children are abroad. Then I dived into it," he said.

Home is an emotion for Nagpur-based Hirani, and he said he could understand the desire to move out of a place for better work opportunities.

"Dunki" to him is also a story of coming back home.

"Most of these people leave their homes eventually to come back, nobody leaves a home thinking that will permanently settle there. They will be like, 'We will go there, make money and come back and retire in my own country' but most don't. So, to me, home is a great emotion and that was more inspiring," the filmmaker said.

During his research for "Dunki", Hirani found there are many English-speaking classes in Punjab where students learn the language in order to fulfil their dream of getting a visa.

It's an interesting world, the director said, adding that he met many people, who followed the donkey route and even attended English-speaking classes in disguise.

"During COVID-19, I went to Punjab and sat in all those English-speaking classes. I would put on a mask and go there and attend it and I would be like, 'I want to do a trial class'. I went to those villages and many of them have become empty as there are just older people staying there, and no young people. I met a lot of people there, families, children and saw those aircraft on top of the houses," he added.

Working with Shah Rukh Khan, who was his first choice for his 2003 directorial debut "Munna Bhai M.B.B.S" and 2009 hit "3 Idiots", has been a long-cherished dream.

More than him, his mother was happy he was finally collaborating with the superstar.

"After my last film 'Sanju', we started meeting more often. During COVID-19 times when not much work was happening, he asked me, 'What are you working on?' I said, 'I've these two-three ideas.' I narrated all the ideas to him and he got fascinated with this one and he was like, if this one develops then let's do it.

"So, it happened organically. All I can say is I had complete joy working with him. As Abhijat (Joshi, writer) describes Shah Rukh, he says, 'This man is pure love'. I had a very happy experience of not only working with him as an actor but also as a human being." According to Hirani, the role of Hardy, who is not fluent in English, was challenging for Shah Rukh.

When Vidya Balan refused to eat as a child without watching 'Sara Zamana'



Taking a trip down the memory lane, actress Vidya Balan revealed how during her childhood, she refused to eat her food if she didn't see the famous song 'Sara Zamana' featuring Amitabh Bachchan on television.

'Sara Zamana', sung by Kishore Kumar, is from the 1981 movie 'Yaarana' starring Amitabh, Neetu Singh, and Tanuja. Vidya appeared for the finale episode of quiz-based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15', along with Indian Pararcher Sheetal Devi.

During the game hosted by Amitabh Bachchan, Vidya recounted her childhood story related to the megastar.

The 'Parineeta' actress said: "I was telling Sheetal backstage. During childhood...You

and I go back a long way, sir."

Big B interrupted and said: "You're mentioning this now."

Vidya then went on to narrate: "You don't know about this. If I didn't see 'Sara Zamana' on TV during childhood, I'd refuse to eat. I feel the same even today when you are before me. Everyone on KBC experiences it. Most people are left speechless."

The 'Maa' fame actress the shared: "Sir, I've witnessed... In this season, I noticed that a lot of people mentioned one person who leaves you speechless. I have a short video for you."

The 81-year-old actor was shocked and said: "Oh, God! Who is it? Play it quickly." The video mentioned Big B's wife Jaya Bachchan. Vidya asked the cine icon how it was.

The 'Brahmastra' actor said: "Thank you so much, Vidya. You reminded me of so many things."

Vidya then said: "I'm a big fan of hers too, sir. I wanted to somehow... bring her..."

She said how everyone in her family is a big fan of Amitabh Bachchan. Vidya was accompanied by her parents, and mother-in-law on the sets of 'KBC 15'.

"When KBC was launched in 2000, my father wrote a letter to you. He posted the letter but maybe you didn't get it. He didn't get a reply and he was dejected. In our family...forget about my family and this country, the whole world is your fan. When I was working with you, he'd tell me every time, 'Can you give you the letter?' I said, 'Please don't!' I would hesitate back then. Today, my father brought that letter," she said.

Vidya's father then handed over the letter to the 'Don' actor. Amitabh said to her father: "Sir, thank you so much. Thank you very much. Thank you."

The 'Kahaani' actress said: "You can read it later, but it's a big deal for him that he could give the letter to you."

Big B said that he will read it as well as reply to it. 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' airs on Sony.

Major hits and misses from Bollywood in 2023

The year 2023 proved lucky for Bollywood and Shah Rukh Khan led the way with "Pathaan" and "Jawan". However, amidst high expectations, there were also some big titles that failed to capitalise on the great theatrical boom of Hindi movies post pandemic, ultimately falling flat at the box office.

Here is the list of some of the major hits and misses of 2023.

Hits

1. "Pathaan" and "Jawan": With the two action titles, Shah Rukh made a triumphant return to leading man roles after a gap of four years. "Pathaan", directed by Siddharth Anand, released in theatres in January and shattered many box office records in the opening weekend and ended its theatrical run with a towering gross box office collection of over Rs 1,050 crore. It also starred Deepika Padukone and John Abraham, "Jawan", a high-octane action entertainer from Tamil director Atlee. The pan-India film, which also featured Nayanthara and Vijay Sethupathi, turned out to be an even bigger hit, grossing Rs 1,150 crore globally to become the biggest hit of SRK's career.

2. "Animal": It was one of the most memorable years of Ranbir's career with the actor delivering the third biggest but also the most divisive film of 2023 in "Animal", directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga of "Kabir Singh" fame. The film drew criticism for its graphic content, extreme violence, and treatment of female characters but since its release on December 1, it has earned over Rs 880 crores in worldwide gross.

3. "Gadar 2": A sequel



to 2000 hit "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha", the Anil Sharma-directed film reintroduced Sunny Deol to mass audiences. The movie, which released in August, turned out to be a surprise hit of the year with over Rs 680 crore in worldwide collection, according to trade websites.

Sunny, 66, reprised his role of Tara Singh in "Gadar 2", set years after the events of the first movie.

4. "Tiger 3": Salman Khan returned as super spy Avinash Singh Rathore aka Tiger in the third part of his eponymous movie franchise. Directed by Maneesh Sharma, the film was released in November. Despite coming in theatres around the time of Cricket World Cup, the movie grossed over Rs 460 crore in worldwide collection. It also starred Katrina Kaif and Emraan Hashmi.

5. "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani": Karan Johar's seventh full-fledged feature not only became one of the highest grossing films of the filmmaker's career, but is also his

most talked-about and progressive movie till date. Released in July, the movie grossed over Rs 355 crore.

"Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" featured Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt with great supporting acts by the likes of cinema veterans Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi as well as actors Tota Roy Chowdhury, Churni Ganguly and Aamir Bashir.

Misses

1. "The Vaccine War": After the controversial-yet-highly-successful "The Kashmir Files", Vivek Agnihotri released "The Vaccine War" in theatres in September. The movie revolved around Indian scientists and their quests to develop an affordable vaccine for India and the world. It earned Rs 14 crore at the box office, according to trade websites.

2. "Tejas": Kangana Ranaut had another forgettable year as "Tejas", which featured her as an Indian Air Force pilot, turned out to be a colossal disappointment at the box office. It was released in theatres in

October and managed to earn around Rs 8 crore, trade websites reported.

3. "Bholaa": Trade pundits were betting big on Ajay Devgn's "Bholaa", the Hindi remake of Tamil hit "Kaithi", but the audiences gave the film a cold shoulder. The film, which released in cinemas in March, earned over Rs 120 crore, just enough to cover its making cost. It was directed by Devgn and also starred Tabu.

4. "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan": Before "Tiger 3", Salman had another big release in "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan", which made its debut in theatres in April, coinciding with the festival of Eid. Despite being headlined by a Bollywood superstar, the film underperformed at the box office, earning around Rs 180 crore.

The movie, which was a remake of Tamil superstar Ajith's hit movie "Veeram", also starred Pooja Hegde and Venkatesh Daggubati.

5. "Adipurush": The Om Raut-directorial, headlined by "Baa-hubali" star Prabhas, was one of the most anticipated titles but was plagued by many controversies. It was released amid much fanfare in June, registering a bombastic score of over Rs 300 crores in the opening weekend.

But poor reviews, coupled with a huge row over its poor dialogues and VFX, took a toll on the movie as it recorded a huge dip in numbers and footfalls in theatres. The film, also starring Saif Ali Khan and Kriti Sanon, eventually grossed around Rs 390 crores, according to trade websites.

"Grateful, anchored, at peace...": Rashmika Mandanna on completing 7 years in industry



Actor Rashmika Mandanna has completed seven years in the film industry.

Marking the special occasion, Rashmika

took to Instagram and penned a beautiful note filled with gratitude.

"Sometimes you just pause and think. Damn! How did it all

happen. When did it all happen. Why did it all happen. And I am so freaking glad - that it all, happened! Grateful. Anchored. At peace. Happy! This is everything that I've always dreamed of..I'd have not realised it and would've kept running towards something I don't even know what, but being with the right people makes you realise that sometimes you should just pause and realise that - this is it! This is what the lil girl grew up dreaming about," she wrote.

Alongside the note, she dropped her happy picture.

Rashmika's post is flooded with heartfelt comments.

"God bless you always," a social media user commented.

"Proud of you," another

one wrote.

Rashmika made her acting debut with the Kannada film 'Kirik Party' (2016). The film was directed by Rishabh Shetty.

In her final release of 2022, Rashmika appeared in the Amitabh Bachchan starrer, 'Goodbye', marking her debut in Hindi cinema. She recently acted in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's 'Animal', which also starred Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol.

In the film, she essayed the role of Ranbir's wife. Prior to 'Animal', she was seen in Sidharth Malhotra-starrer 'Mission Majnu'.

In the coming months, Rashmika will be seen in the pan-India film 'Pushpa 2'. She also has 'Chaava' in her kitty.

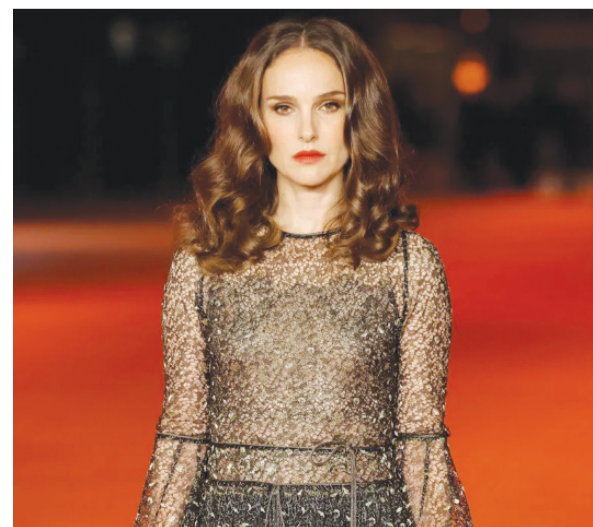
Mind game: For Natalie Portman, psychology and acting are very similar

Black Swan actress Natalie Portman believes that acting and psychology are 'very similar'.

The actress took a break from her career to pursue a degree in psychology from Harvard University.

She thinks it helped her work because doing both successfully involved being 'observant'.

Asked if her degree had been useful in her work, she said: "I think it's very similar - in acting you're trying to imagine you're people do the things they do and what forms them. Psychology is very much the same practice. The first thing they teach is



observing - it's watching people, noticing patterns and behaviour."

Meanwhile, in May December, Natalie plays Elizabeth, an actress preparing to play a real-life figure and she admit-

ted essaying someone based on a real person can feel 'vampiric', even when she is trying to be empathetic. She said: "That's a classic trope of literature and theatre. You read Chekhov, and

he's questioning whether storytelling is stealing from people's lives. I think every artiste questions himself or herself."

She added, "Am I stealing from real people to feed my art - like a vampire? It can be 'vampiric', but I think you can approach it in a way that's more generous, more about empathy and trying to imagine someone's life, as opposed to trying to steal someone's life". The 42-year-old actress made her movie debut in Leon when she was 12 and had her first Broadway role was four years later in The Diary of Anne Frank. She enjoys working on stage and screen in different ways.

India brimming with self-confidence, imbued with spirit of self-reliance: PM Modi

Prime Minister also emphasises on physical and mental health

NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the country is imbued with the spirit of 'Viksit Bharat' and self-reliance, and asserted that this spirit and momentum has to be maintained in 2024 as well.

In the 108th episode of 'Mann ki Baat' radio broadcast, Prime Minister Modi also emphasised on physical and mental health and highlighted several unique efforts for 'Fit India'.

During the broadcast, Isha Foundation founder Sadhguru, Indian Women's Cricket Team Captain Harmanpreet Kaur, chess legend Vishwanathan Anand and actor Akshay Kumar shared their fitness tips.

In his remarks, Modi said India is brimming with self-confidence and is imbued with the spirit of 'Viksit Bharat (developed India)



and self-reliance.

"We have to maintain the same spirit and momentum in 2024 as well," Modi said.

He also said that India becoming an 'innovation hub' symbolises the fact that "we are not

going to stop".

India, he said, accomplished many special achievements this year, including the passage of the women's reservation Bill.

The Prime Minister also said that the entire country is

enthused about the Ram temple in Ayodhya and people are expressing feelings in different ways.

"You must have seen that in the last few days new songs and bhajans have been composed on Shri Ram and Ayodhya. Many people are writing new poems as well.

"I have also shared some bhajans and songs on my social media. It seems that the world of art is becoming a participant in this historic moment in its unique style," he said.

"A thought comes to my mind that should we share all such creations with a common hashtag? I request you to share your creations on social media with #SHRIRAMBHAJAN," Modi said.

6 killed in massive fire at glove factory in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar



CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (MAHARASHTRA), Dec 31 (Agencies): At least six people were killed in a massive fire that broke out at a hand glove manufacturing company in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in the early hours of Sunday, officials said. According to Fire Department officials, the blaze erupted around 02:15 am at

the factory in Waluj MIDC area.

"We received a call at 2:15 a.m. When we reached the site, the entire factory was on fire. Locals informed us that six people were trapped inside. Our officers entered and recovered six charred bodies," Mohan Mungse, a fire officer, said.

"Extinguishing work is currently in progress," he added.

Earlier, locals claimed at least five workers were trapped inside the building. Fire Department officials later confirmed the deaths of six people in the fire incident.

Workers said that the company was closed, and they were sleeping when the fire broke out.

"10-15 workers were sleeping inside the building when the fire broke out. Some managed to escape, but at least five were trapped inside," one of the workers had told ANI.

Meanwhile, fire dousing operations are ongoing, and the exact cause behind the fire is not ascertained yet.

On the run for 31 years, Maharashtra man finally held for murder

MUMBAI, Dec 31 (Agencies): A 62-year-old man wanted in a murder case and believed to be dead has been nabbed after 31 years by Mumbai Police from Nalasopara area in neighbouring Palghar district, an official said.

The accused, identified as Deepak Narayan Bhise, was tracked after the police got his wife's mobile phone number. He changed multiple locations before settling in Nalasopara where he was living in a rented accommodation with his family for the last two years, and used to take tree cutting contracts, the official said.

Bhise was accused of killing one Raju Chikna in 1989 and for murder bid on another person - Dharmendra Saroj.

He was granted bail in the murder case in 1992



but he never turned up for the case hearing in court. In 2003, the court declared him absconding and asked the police to trace him, the official said.

"Whenever police visited Bhise's residential address at Tulaskarwadi in suburban Kandivali, local people would tell us he might have died but we kept looking for him," he said.

During the search, police managed to get the mobile phone number of Bhise's wife and tracked him down

to Nalasopara from where he was nabbed on Friday night, he said.

Bhise had settled in the locality with his wife, two sons and a daughter and used to take contracts for cutting trees, the official said.

Kandivali police station sub-inspector Nitin Satam said, "Accused Bhise have been arrested under Indian Penal Code Section 307 (attempt to murder) and lodged in a jail in Thane after being produced in a court. Further investigation is under way."

Punjab, Bengal Republic Day tableaux not aligned with theme: Defence Ministry

NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): Facing criticism from Punjab, Delhi and West Bengal, the Ministry of Defence on Sunday clarified that their tableaux were not included in the Republic Day Parade as they were not aligned with the broader themes of this year's tableau.

Their criticism of tableau not being selected for the Republic Day Parade is not objective and unfounded, it said in a statement.

Reacting to media reports, citing separate reactions from Punjab and West Bengal Chief Ministers, the Ministry of Defence said that "there is a well-established system for selection of tableaux for participation in the Republic Day parade as per which the Ministry of Defence invites proposals for tableau from all states, Union Territories (UTs), Central ministries and



departments.

"The tableaux proposals received are evaluated in a series of meetings of the expert committee for selection of tableaux comprising eminent persons in the field of art, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, choreography, etc.

"The expert committee examines the proposals on the basis of theme, concept, design and its visual impact before making its recommendations. Due to time

allotted for tableaux in the overall duration of the parade, shortlisting of tableaux is done by the expert committee which leads to participation of the best tableaux in the parade."

For the Republic Day parade, 30 states and UTs had shown their willingness to participate in it, including Punjab and West Bengal.

Out of these 30 states and UTs, like every year, only 15-16 of them will be finally selected to present their tableaux

in the Republic Day Parade.

It said the tableau proposal of Punjab was considered in the first three rounds of the meeting of the expert committee. After the third round of meeting, the tableau could not be taken forward by the committee for further consideration for not aligning to the broader themes of this year's tableau.

However, the tableau proposal of West Bengal was considered in the first two rounds of the meeting of the expert committee, it said.

After the second round of meeting, the tableau could not be taken forward for further consideration for not aligning to the broader themes of this year's tableau.

In the past few years, the tableau of Punjab was shortlisted for the Republic Day Parade six times in eight years from

2017 to 2022, while the tableau of West Bengal was selected five times in eight years—in 2016, 2017, 2019, 2021 and in 2023.

As states have to be treated equally, it is essential that states should be given the opportunity to display their tableaux as per a formula, the Ministry of Defence clarified.

The Government of India is preparing a three-year programme covering all states and UTs which will be shared with all them. Hence, the criticism by these states is baseless, it said.

Moreover, the states and UTs not being selected for the Republic Day Parade are being invited to showcase their tableaux in Bharat Parv at Red Fort during January 23-31 in accordance with the MOU signed with the states and UTs, it added.

95 detained after cops raid rave party in Thane; drugs seized

THANE, Dec 31 (Agencies): At least 95 people were detained after the police raided a rave party near a creek in Maharashtra's Thane in the early hours of Sunday, an official said.

Officials of the Crime Branch Unit V Wagle Estate and Unit II Bhiwandi conducted the raid at an open space in a remote area near Vadavali Creek at around 3 am, the official said.

At least 95 persons, including five women, were found partying at the site and have been detained, Deputy Commis-



sioner of Police (crime) Shivraj Patil said.

The police have arrested Tejas

Kubal (23) and Sujal Mahajan (19), who organised the party, he said.

The police recovered 70 gm of charas, 0.41 gm of LSD, 2.10 gm of ecstasy pills, 200 gm of ganja and alcohol from the scene, and also seized 21 motorcycles, the official said, adding that the total value of the seizure was Rs 8 lakh.

An offence has been registered under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act against the accused and only two persons have been arrested so far, he said.

Rahul Gandhi's 'Bahubali' barb at PM Modi over Vinesh Phogat returning awards



NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over two-time World Championship medalist Vinesh Phogat's decision to return her Khel Ratna and Arjuna awards. The move came amid a controversy surrounding the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) involving former chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Singh.

On Saturday, Vinesh Phogat left her Arjuna and Khel Ratna awards on the pavement of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) before being stopped by the police while she was on her way to PM Modi's residence. She had decided to return her awards as a mark of protest over the election of Sanjay Singh, an aide of Brij Bhushan Singh, as the WFI president. In a tweet, Rahul

several female wrestlers accused the former WFI chief of sexual harassment.

Phogat's decision came days after Olympic medalist Bajrang Punia and Deaflympics champion Virender Singh Yadav returned their Padma Shri awards. Rio Games bronze medalist Sakshi Malik quit wrestling after Sanjay Singh's election as WFI president on December 21.

However, the Sports Ministry had suspended the newly-elected WFI and Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur has written to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to form an ad hoc committee to oversee WFI affairs till the time the suspension lasts.

Earlier on Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi made an "impromptu" visit to an 'akhara' in Haryana's Jhajjar district and met a group of wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia amid the controversy.

A senior Haryana Congress leader from the district said Gandhi reached the 'Virender Akhara' in Chhara village early in the morning and interacted with the wrestlers.

Dalit Teen Pushed Into Hot Oil Cauldron For Protesting Sexual Harassment

NEW DELHI, Dec 31 (Agencies): In an incident shocking in its brutality, an 18-year-old Dalit woman working at an oil mill was pushed into a cauldron with hot oil when she protested sexual harassment. The incident, which took place at Baghat in Uttar Pradesh, has left the teenager with serious burns. She has been moved to Delhi for treatment.

The three accused, including the mill owner, have been arrested.

A complaint filed by the woman's brother yesterday says members of his family worked at an oil mill at Dhanaura Silvernagar village. His sister was working at the mill when the accused -- mill owner Pramod and associates Raju and Sandip -- started harassing her. When she protested, the accused allegedly hurled casteist abuses. They then pushed her into the cauldron full of hot oil, her brother has said.

In a statement recorded from her bed



at a Delhi hospital, the 18-year-old said the accused misbehaved with her and verbally abused her before pushing her into the cauldron.

The woman has suffered burns on more than half of her body, with her legs and arms seriously scalded.

Based on her brother's complaint, the police registered a case under sections relating to attempt to murder, assaulting a woman and under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. "We have arrested the three accused and further action is being taken," Circle Officer Vijay Chaudhary said.

Job scam offering money to 'impregnate' women busted in Bihar, 8 arrested

PATNA, Dec 31 (Agencies): Eight people were arrested in Bihar's Nawada for allegedly luring men into a fraudulent scheme that offered them money for 'impregnating' women who were not able to conceive a child with their partners.

The group, known as 'All India Pregnant Job (Baby Birth Service)', used to operate through social media platforms, assuring men an opportunity to earn money by 'impregnating' women. According to the police, the accused charged a registration fee of Rs 799 from those who showed an interest, followed by additional demands for security money ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000. The arrests were made after the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Bihar Police conducted a raid on the premises associated with Munna Kumar, believed to be the mastermind behind this extensive cybercrime network. Although the police were successful in capturing eight members of the racket, several others managed to escape during the operation.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Kalyan Anand confirmed the arrests and stated that the men were part of a larger nationwide cyber syndicate.

During the arrests, authorities seized nine smartphones and a printer from their possession.

The senior police official said that interrogations into the case were ongoing and that more arrests were likely to be made.

Shelling kills 21 in Russian city of Belgorod following Moscow's aerial attacks across Ukraine

110 people are wounded in the strike, making it one of the deadliest attacks on Russia since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine

MOSCOW, Dec 31 (Agencies): Shelling in the centre of the Russian border city of Belgorod on Saturday killed 21 people, including three children, local officials reported.

A further 110 people were wounded in the strike, said regional Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, making it one of the deadliest attacks on Russia since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Russian authorities accused Kyiv of carrying out the attack, which took place the day after an 18-hour aerial bombardment across Ukraine killed at least 41 civilians.

Images of Belgorod on social media showed burning cars and plumes of black smoke rising among damaged buildings as air raid sirens sounded. One strike hit close to a public ice rink in the heart of the city, which lies 25 miles (40 km) north of the Ukrainian border and 415 miles (670 km) south of Moscow. While previous attacks have hit the city, they have rarely taken place in daylight and have claimed fewer lives.

Russia's Defence Ministry said it identified the ammunition used in the strike as Czech-made Vampire rockets and Olkha missiles fitted with cluster-munition warheads. It provided no additional information.

"This crime will not go unpunished," the ministry said in a statement on social media.

The Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed on the situation,



and that the country's health minister, Mikhail Murashko, was ordered to join a delegation of medical personnel and rescue workers traveling to Belgorod from Moscow.

Russian diplomats also called for a meeting of the UN Security Council in connection with the strike. Speaking to Russia's state news agency, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Britain and the United States were guilty of encouraging Kyiv to carry out what she described as a "terrorist attack". She also placed blame on EU countries who had supplied Ukraine with weapons.

"Silence in response to the unbridled barbarity of Ukraine's Nazis and their puppeteers and accomplices from civilized democracies will be akin to complicity in their bloody deeds," the ministry said in a statement.

Earlier on Saturday, Moscow officials reported shooting down 32 Ukrainian drones over the country's Moscow, Bryansk,

Oryol, and Kursk regions.

They also reported that cross-border shelling had killed two other people in Russia. A man died and four other people were wounded when a missile struck a private home in the Belgorod region, on Friday evening, and a 9-year-old was killed in a separate incident in the Bryansk region.

Cities across western Russia have come under regular attack from drones since May, with Russian officials blaming Kyiv. Ukrainian officials never acknowledge responsibility for attacks on Russian territory or the Crimean Peninsula. However, larger aerial strikes against Russia have previously followed heavy assaults on Ukrainian cities.

Russian drone strikes against Ukraine continued on Saturday, with the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reporting that 10 Iranian-made Shahed drones had been shot down across the Kherson,

Khmelnitskyi, and Mykolaiv regions.

Local officials reported that three people had been killed by Russian missiles: a 55-year-old man in Kherson, a 43-year-old man in Stepanivka, and a 32-year-old in Chernihiv.

On Friday, Moscow's forces launched 122 missiles and dozens of drones across Ukraine, an onslaught described by one air force official as the biggest aerial barrage of the war.

Apart from 39 deaths, at least 160 people were wounded and an unknown number were buried under rubble in the assault, which damaged a maternity hospital, apartment blocks, and schools.

Western officials and analysts recently warned that Russia limited its cruise missile strikes for months in an apparent effort to build up stockpiles for massive strikes during the winter, hoping to break the Ukrainians' spirit.

Fighting along the front line is largely bogged down by winter weather after Ukraine's summer counteroffensive failed to make a significant breakthrough along the roughly 1,000-km (620-mile) line of contact.

Russia's ongoing aerial attacks have also sparked concern for Ukraine's neighbours.

Poland's defence forces said on Friday that an unknown object had entered the country's airspace before vanishing off radars, and that all indications pointed to it being a Russian missile.

Netanyahu says Israel must control Gaza's border with Egypt, war to last months



CAIRO / GAZA / JERUSALEM, Dec 31 (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to retake control of the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt, expanding Israel's mission to neutralize Hamas in a conflict it says it expects to last for months.

"The war is at its height," Netanyahu told reporters on Saturday of the fighting since Oct. 7 when the Palestinian militant group Hamas and its allies infiltrated Israel, killing 1,200 people and capturing 240 hostages.

He said the Philadelphia Corridor buffer zone that runs along Gaza's border with Egypt must be in Israeli hands.

"It must be shut," Netanyahu said. "It is clear that any other arrangement would not ensure the demilitarisation that we seek."

He did not elaborate, but such a move by Israel would be a de facto reversal of its 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, placing the enclave under exclusive Israeli control after years being run by Hamas.

Netanyahu's comments about the buffer

zone came as Israeli military forces pressed ahead with an offensive that the prime minister reiterated will last "for many more months." Following Hamas' surprise October incursion, Israel launched a full-scale attack in Gaza, displacing nearly all its 2.3 million residents and killing at least 21,672 Palestinians, according to health authorities in Gaza, with more than 56,000 injured and thousands more feared dead under the rubble.

Residents and medics said Saturday's fighting was focused in al-Bureij, Nuseirat, Maghazi and Khan Younis in central and southern Gaza. Hamas media reported on Saturday that Abdel-Fattah Maali, a senior member of the group's armed wing, was killed in an Israeli strike in Gaza. It said Maali, originally from the West Bank, was freed during a 2011 prisoner swap and expelled to Gaza. The reports did not specify when he was killed.

Israel says 172 of its military personnel have been killed in the Gaza fighting. The conflict has sparked concerns it

could spread across the region, potentially involving Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen that have exchanged fire with Israel and its US ally, or targeted merchant shipping.

Israel cited progress in destroying Hamas infrastructure, including a tunnel complex in the basement of one of the houses of the Hamas leader for Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, in Gaza City. Troops also raided the Hamas military intelligence headquarters and an Islamic Jihad command centre in Khan Younis, and destroyed targets including a weapons foundry, a military statement said.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad -- both sworn to Israel's destruction -- issued statements saying their fighters destroyed and damaged several Israeli tanks and troop carriers in attacks across Gaza on Saturday. They also said they fired mortars against Israeli forces in Khan Younis and Al-Bureij as well as in northern Gaza.

Washington has pressed Israel, so far unsuccessfully, to scale down the war by moving to targeted operations against Hamas leaders, and end what President Joe Biden has described as "indiscriminate shelling." Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas, and says the militant group puts civilians in danger by using them as human shields. Hamas denies it.

North Korea to launch new spy satellites, build drones as it warns war inevitable

Pyongyang says US, its allies increasing tensions

SEOUL, Dec 31 (Agencies): North Korea vowed to launch three new spy satellites, build military drones, and boost its nuclear arsenal in 2024 as leader Kim Jong Un said US policy is making war inevitable, state media reported on Sunday.

Kim lashed out at Washington in lengthy remarks wrapping up five days of ruling party meetings that set economic, military and foreign policy goals for the coming year.

"Because of reckless moves by the enemies to invade us, it is a fait accompli that a war can break out at any time on the Korean peninsula," he said, according to state news agency KCNA.

He ordered the military to prepare to "pacify the entire territory of South Korea," including with nuclear bombs if necessary, in response to any attack.

Kim's speech comes ahead of a year that will see pivotal elections in both South Korea and the United States.

Experts predict North Korea will maintain a campaign of military pressure for leverage around the U.S. presidential elections in November, which could see the return of former President Donald Trump, who traded in both threats and historic diplomacy with Kim.

"Pyongyang might be waiting out the U.S. presidential election to see what its provocations can buy it with the next administration," said Leif-Eric Easley, professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden says it is open to talks, but it imposed new sanctions as North Korea pushed ahead with more missile tests banned under United Nations' sanctions.

The U.S. also increased drills and deployed more military assets, including nuclear-armed submarines and large aircraft carriers, near the Korean peninsula.

PRESSING FORWARD

Kim said the return of such weapons had completely transformed South Korea into a "forward military base and nuclear arsenal" of the United States.

"If we look closely at the confrontational military actions by the enemy forces... the word 'war' has become a realistic reality and not an abstract concept," Kim said.

Kim said he has no choice but to press forward with his nuclear ambitions and forge deeper relations with other countries that oppose the United States. North Korea has deep ties with both China and Russia.

"North Korea is preparing for further escalation of tension with Washington and Seoul, for at least a year or more, and its hard line policies are likely to be accompanied by efforts for dialogue as well ahead of the U.S. election," Yang Uk, an analyst at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies said.

"Kim is building on his success of the spy satellite to do three more because he knows satellite capabilities are powerful targeting tool



for better nuclear command and control." South Korea holds a parliamentary election in April that could impact the domestic and foreign agenda for conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, who has maintained a hawkish stance toward Pyongyang.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) warned on Thursday that "there is a high possibility that North Korea could unexpectedly conduct military provocations or stage a cyberattack in 2024, when fluid political situations are expected with the elections."

Pyongyang has now ruled out the possibility of unifying with South Korea, and the country must fundamentally change its principle and direction toward South Korea, Kim said.

"North-South relations are no longer a kinship or homogeneous relationship but have completely become a relationship between two hostile countries, two belligerents at war," he said, calling the South a colonised state completely dependent on the United States for national defense and security.

Kim also promised to develop the economy, including the metals, chemicals, power, machinery and railway sectors, while modernising wheat facilities to boost production.

One key policy goal is to invest in science and technological research at schools, he said.

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

In the past year, North Korea says it successfully launched its first military spy satellite and test fired new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), seen as having the range to deliver a nuclear warhead to anywhere in the United States.

A new reactor at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex appears to be operating for the first time, the U.N. nuclear watchdog and independent experts said this month, which would mean an additional potential source of plutonium for nuclear weapons.

North Korea has not tested a nuclear weapon since 2017 but in recent years has taken steps to resume operations at its testing site.

Kim said 2024 would

see further military development, including strengthening the nuclear and missile forces, building unmanned drones, expanding the submarine fleet and developing electronic warfare capabilities.

The fleet of spy satellites would represent the first such capability for the North.

That successful launch in November was preceded by two failed attempts last year when its new Chollima-1 rocket crashed into the sea.

The move raised regional tensions and sparked fresh sanctions from the U.S., Australia, Japan and South Korea.

Pyongyang has yet to release any imagery from the new satellite, leaving analysts and foreign governments to debate its capabilities.

The apparent success also came after Russian President Vladimir Putin promised to help North Korea build satellites.

South Korean officials said Russian aid likely made a difference in the success of the mission, though experts said it was unclear how much help Moscow could have provided.

6.5 magnitude earthquake shakes Indonesia's Papua region, no casualties reported

JAKARTA, Dec 31 (Agencies): A powerful earthquake shook Indonesia's easternmost region of Papua early on Sunday, but there were no immediate reports of serious damage or casualties. The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.5 earthquake was centred 162 kilometres northeast of Abepura, a suburb of Jayapura, the capital of Papua province. It happened at a depth of 10 kilometres.

Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysical Agency said there was no danger of a tsunami

but warned of possible aftershocks as the earthquake was centred on land. According to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii, there was no tsunami threat from the earthquake. With a population of just 62,250, Abepura is one of Indonesia's least populated towns. In February, another shallow earthquake shook the province, killing four people who were unable to escape when a floating restaurant collapsed into the sea.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 270 million people, is frequently hit by earthquakes and volcanic

eruptions because of its location on the "Ring of Fire", an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake on November 21 killed at least 331 people and injured nearly 600 in West Java's Cianjur city. It was the deadliest in Indonesia since a 2018 quake and tsunami in Sulawesi killed about 4,340 people.

In 2004, an extremely powerful Indian Ocean quake set off a tsunami that killed more than 230,000 people in a dozen countries, most of them in Indonesia's Aceh province.

US destroyer shoots down anti-ship missiles fired from Yemen

WASHINGTON, Dec 31 (Agencies): An American destroyer shot down two anti-ship ballistic missiles fired from Yemen Saturday as it responded to a call for help from a container ship that was hit in a separate strike, the US military said.

The missiles were launched from territory controlled by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a social media post, describing it as the "23rd illegal attack by the Huthis on international shipping" since November 19.

The Huthis have repeatedly targeted vessels in the vital Red Sea shipping lane with strikes they say are in support of Palestinians in Gaza, where Israel is battling militant group Hamas.

CENTCOM said the USS Gravely and USS Laboon -- both destroyers -- responded to a request for assistance from the Maersk Hangzhou, a Singapore-flagged, Denmark-owned and operated container ship that reported being struck by a missile while transiting the Red Sea.

While responding, the Gravely shot down the missiles, which were fired "toward the ships," it said.

The attacks by the Yemeni rebels --

who have said they are targeting Israel and Israeli-linked vessels -- are endangering a transit route that carries up to 12 percent of global trade, prompting the United States to set up a multinational naval task force earlier this month to protect Red Sea shipping.

The latest round of the Israel-Hamas conflict began when the Palestinian militant group carried out a shock cross-border attack from Gaza on October 7 that killed about 1,140 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

Following the attack, the United States rushed military aid to Israel, which has carried out a relentless campaign in Gaza that has killed at least 21,672 people, also mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

Those deaths have sparked widespread anger in the Middle East and provided an impetus for attacks by armed groups across the region that are opposed to Israel.

US forces in Iraq and Syria have also repeatedly come under fire from drone and rocket attacks that Washington says are being carried out by Iran-backed armed groups.

MP Ghulam Ali Khatana attends VBSY in Poonch

Highlights crucial role of self-employment in fostering economic independence

Top News Report

POONCH, Dec 31: Member of Parliament, Ghulam Ali Khatana, today participated in the ongoing Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, a nationwide campaign dedicated to raising awareness and ensuring widespread implementation of flagship government schemes.

Secretary, Mining, Dr. Rashmi Singh, DDC Chairperson Poonch, Deputy Commissioner Poonch and DDC Vice Chairperson Poonch were also present on the occasion. The event, held at Degree College Poonch, witnessed enthusiastic participation from diverse segments of society. The campaign, highlighted through an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) van, showcased remarkable success stories of beneficiaries who have thrived under multiple schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), UMEED, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM Kisan), Poshan Abhiyan, Old Age Pension and more. Notably, a pivotal moment included a message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, personally delivered through the IEC van, underscoring the government's commitment towards nation's development. Various government departments contributed to the vibrancy of the event by setting up stalls



at the venue, presenting a visual narrative of the myriad schemes and programs actively being implemented in the district. On the occasion, PRIs, locals, and students came together during the event to take a collective pledge for a Viksit Bharat, symbolizing dedicated commitment towards advancement and progress of our nation. The 'Meri Kahani Meri Zubaani' segment featured impactful first-hand accounts from beneficiaries, showcasing the tangible benefits and positive changes brought about by the government's welfare programs. Addressing the event, Er Ghulam Ali Khatana emphasized the significance of the Viksit Bharat Yatra, elucidating its role as a transformative nationwide journey aimed at promoting government schemes. He underscored the significance of various welfare schemes during his address. He, while emphasizing that awareness is pivotal for successful implementation of government initiatives, highlighted how informed citizens play a crucial role in overall success of these programs. Member Parliament

also highlighted the pivotal role of self-employment in fostering economic independence and underscored the transformative potential embedded within these initiatives. He added that the main motive to conduct such programmes is to educate public and analyse if the benefits of the government schemes is reaching at ground level or not. Secretary expressed gratitude for the participant's active involvement and commended the district administration for successfully organizing the program. She urged the people to visit stalls set up by different departments to get familiar with the procedures of different schemes run by the government. She underscored the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra's role in creating awareness, bridging gaps for inclusive development, and fostering engagement with government schemes. On the occasion, Member Parliament handed over keys of houses to beneficiaries under PMAY (U) besides presenting permission letter for PMAY houses, cheques of mobilization advance to BLC beneficiaries, sanction letter for high tech polyhouse under HADP, Golden

Cards to beneficiaries, loan sanction letter of J&K bank under different self employment generation schemes and keys of passengers vehicles under MUMKIN scheme. Besides, school bags were also handed over to school girls in addition to a signature campaign organised by the Social Welfare Department under the Beti Padho Beti Bachao initiative. Meanwhile, Vice Chairman DDC Council Poonch, shared his experience of how he took the benefit of Centrally Sponsored Scheme like IDDS in setting up a Dairy Business. He added that there are many self-employment schemes run by the government and everyone should take benefits of the same for employment generation. The event concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by the District Development Council Chairperson Poonch, Tazeem Akhter. Among others, Joint Director Mining and DC State Taxes Enforcement, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development, ACP, Chief Medical Officer, and other District officers, officials, PRIs and public attended the event.

Kavinder welcomes banning of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, says noose against anti-India brigade to be further tightened

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Kavinder Gupta, senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister has welcomed the Govt's decision banning the separatist organization Tehreek-e-Hurriyat of Syed Ali Shah Geelani under UAPA and intensifying efforts in the direction of totally demolishing the terror infrastructure by punishing those involved in the disintegration tirade against the nation. He said that it is the result of zero-tolerance policy of Modi Govt towards separatists and terrorists that the noose against such anti-India brigade has been tightened the most never ever witnessed before. He expressed this in his address during functions held under 'Booth Jan Samvad Abhiyan' at Ward No: 22 and 51 here today. The senior BJP leader said that as of today the figures on record speak of the Govt's strong determination to wipe out terrorism from the roots. The very fact that there has been a decline of 63 per cent in terror-related incidents as compared to the last year and recruitment of terrorists also having gone down with besides strike calls and stone-pelting totally declined today is ample indication of the success achieved by Govt's zero-tolerance policy against the enemies of the nation within and outside. He said that the crackdown on the terrorists and separatists will be further intensified by the Govt in the coming time. He said that organizations like Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and its ilk were responsible for separatism and terrorism in J&K and post Article 370 abrogation the Govt's zero tolerance policy delivered unprecedented results. He said that there are still some more anti-India elements on the move and very soon they will be handed over strictest punishment by the nation's security forces. He assured that each and every person involved either actively or remotely in this bloody campaign against the nation and its people will definitely face the tune of law in the coming time. Meanwhile, Kavinder Gupta while highlighting the aim of 'Booth Jan

Samvad Abhiyan' said that BJP's commitment to inclusive governance as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' has fostered a sense of belonging with renewed spirit and confidence among the people today. He urged the party functionaries to reach out to each booth and engage in Samvad explaining to the people the schemes and historic initiatives taken by the Prime Minister Modi led BJP Government with the aim to benefit and uplift the poor and downtrodden in the society. Rajkumar Tarkhan, former Chairman JMC and Corporator also addressed the gathering at Ward No: 51 Channi Himmat. He urged the foot soldiers of the party to be proactive and remain present among the people at the grass roots level leaving no stone unturned in ensuring unprecedented success to the party in the 2024 Parliamentary elections. Prominent among others present on the occasion were Jagdish Raj Proch (Ward President), Aru Dutta (Addl Sect. District Jammu), Surinder Singh Charak, Vinod Gupta, Mahavir Gupta, Mirza Baghat, Dinesh Kumar, Manohar Lal, Dinesh Kumar, Deepak Kumar, Anand Lal Sharma, Parshotam Gupta, Tarsem Lal, Vimal Sharma, Krishan Lal, Bittu Choudhary, Thoru Ram, Chandher Shekhar, Manohar Lal, Devinder Kumar Sharma, Rishi, Pintu Pandita, Deep Raj, Devinder Singh Charak, Noor Hussain, Nazir Ali, Gul Mohd, Lal Din, Peer Mohd, Alif Din, Khush Mohd, Majid Ali, Abdul Sheen, Abdul Meen, Jhon Hussain, Khan Mohd, Farman Hussain, Mohd Rafiq, Nazir Choudhary, Lal Mohd, Shean, Sarab Din, Mohd Saleem, Vinod Sharma, Mahesh Sharma, Chaman Lal Sharma, Omkar Sharma, Rajinder Gupta, Ramesh Sharma, Naresh Sharma, Rattan Lal, Pankaj Sharma, Rakesh Kumar, Balwinder Kumar, Satish Gupta, Deepak Kumar, Susheel Gupta, Sunil Sharma, Jagdish Kumar, Rashpal Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar, Shah Mohd, Fareed and Sadiq Ahmed. [31/12, 18:00] kavinder gupta: Kavinder welcomes banning of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, says

noose against anti-India brigade to be further tightened. JAMMU, DEC 31: Kavinder Gupta, senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister has welcomed the Govt's decision banning the separatist organization Tehreek-e-Hurriyat of Syed Ali Shah Geelani under UAPA and intensifying efforts in the direction of totally demolishing the terror infrastructure by punishing those involved in the disintegration tirade against the nation. He said that it is the result of zero-tolerance policy of Modi Govt towards separatists and terrorists that the noose against such anti-India brigade has been tightened the most never ever witnessed before. He expressed this in his address during functions held under 'Booth Jan Samvad Abhiyan' at Ward No: 22 and 51 here today. The senior BJP leader said that as of today the figures on record speak of the Govt's strong determination to wipe out terrorism from the roots. The very fact that there has been a decline of 63 per cent in terror-related incidents as compared to the last year and recruitment of terrorists also having gone down with besides strike calls and stone-pelting totally declined today is ample indication of the success achieved by Govt's zero-tolerance policy against the enemies of the nation within and outside. He said that the crackdown on the terrorists and separatists will be further intensified by the Govt in the coming time. He said that organizations like Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and its ilk were responsible for separatism and terrorism in J&K and post Article 370 abrogation the Govt's zero tolerance policy delivered unprecedented results. He said that there are still some more anti-India elements on the move and very soon they will be handed over strictest punishment by the nation's security forces. He assured that each and every person involved either actively or remotely in this bloody campaign against the nation and its people will definitely face the tune of law in the coming time. Meanwhile, Kavinder Gupta while highlighting the aim of 'Booth Jan Samvad Abhiyan' said that BJP's commitment to

inclusive governance as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' has fostered a sense of belonging with renewed spirit and confidence among the people today. He urged the party functionaries to reach out to each booth and engage in Samvad explaining to the people the schemes and historic initiatives taken by the Prime Minister Modi led BJP Government with the aim to benefit and uplift the poor and downtrodden in the society. Vinay Gupta, Ayodhya gupta, ved Parkash, Ranjeet Singh, Neha Mahajan,lovish Gupta. And Rajkumar Tarkhan, former Chairman JMC and Corporator also addressed the gathering at Ward No: 51 Channi Himmat. He urged the foot soldiers of the party to be proactive and remain present among the people at the grass roots level leaving no stone unturned in ensuring unprecedented success to the party in the 2024 Parliamentary elections. Prominent among others present on the occasion were Jagdish Raj Proch (Ward President), Aru Dutta (Addl Sect. District Jammu), Surinder Singh Charak, Vinod Gupta, Mahavir Gupta, Mirza Baghat, Dinesh Kumar, Manohar Lal, Dinesh Kumar, Deepak Kumar, Anand Lal Sharma, Parshotam Gupta, Tarsem Lal, Vimal Sharma, Krishan Lal, Bittu Choudhary, Thoru Ram, Chandher Shekhar, Manohar Lal, Devinder Kumar Sharma, Rishi, Pintu Pandita, Deep Raj, Devinder Singh Charak, Noor Hussain, Nazir Ali, Gul Mohd, Lal Din, Peer Mohd, Alif Din, Khush Mohd, Majid Ali, Abdul Sheen, Abdul Meen, Jhon Hussain, Khan Mohd, Farman Hussain, Mohd Rafiq, Nazir Choudhary, Lal Mohd, Shean, Sarab Din, Mohd Saleem, Vinod Sharma, Mahesh Sharma, Chaman Lal Sharma, Omkar Sharma, Rajinder Gupta, Ramesh Sharma, Naresh Sharma, Rattan Lal, Pankaj Sharma, Rakesh Kumar, Balwinder Kumar, Satish Gupta, Deepak Kumar, Susheel Gupta, Sunil Sharma, Jagdish Kumar, Rashpal Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar, Shah Mohd, Fareed and Sadiq Ahmed.

DC Samba inspects renovation work on Mohargarh Heritage Site

Top News Report

SAMBA, Dec 31: Deputy Commissioner Samba, Abhishek Sharma visited the Mohargarh Heritage Site today to review the ongoing works under the "Revival of Heritage" project. The Mohargarh Heritage Site is a historical fort located in the Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is one of the places in Jammu that has a rich cultural and architectural legacy. The "Revival of Heritage" project aims to restore and preserve the heritage structures and promote them as tourist attractions.

During his visit, Sharma inspected the progress and reviewed the quality and pace of the work. He directed the executing agency to expedite the work and ensure quality standards. He also interacted with the locals and highlighted the importance of the heritage sites as the historical milestones of a nation and source of inspiration for the future generations. He further underscored the importance of the community ownership of the heritage sites. He also announced plans for creating better facilities and amenities to make Mohargarh an attractive tourist destination. He said that the project would boost

the local economy and generate employment opportunities for the youth. "I hope that the Mohargarh Heritage Site will soon become a popular attraction for tourists and visitors from across the country and the world" he added. He said that the site would showcase the glorious history and culture of Samba District. He also reviewed the augmentation of WSS for Samba town. He was accompanied by Tehsildar Samba, PWD Department Engineers, Revenue and field officials, and Sarpanch Mohargarh.

about cybercrime and the fact is that this crime is going under-reported and affecting more people than what police actually know. "We are upgrading the system and lot more needs to be done to prevent cybercrimes," he said, adding that large amount was traced and given back to the people who were cheated through internet fraud and digital world frauds.

FROM PAGE 1

Tehreek-E-Hurriyat, once headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, banned by Govt

League of Jammu Kashmir was declared a banned organisation on December 27. Jammu train delayed as bomb hoax call by a frustrate jobless triggered alarm. planned to travel on the train to Jodhpur and commit suicide there. The unclaimed bag, among other things, carried a bottle of pesticide intended for Singh's desperate act of self-harm. After missing the train and triggered the bomb hoax, Singh had hopped on to another train and was detained at Unjha railway station. Police have detained him, lodged an FIR, sent him for medical check-up. He is likely facing two charges - one making a hoax call and another making an attempt to kill himself. Police announce cash reward upto Rs 12 Lakh to curb 'Anti-National Activities' in JK from across the border and provided information about the person receiving such drones. As per the document, "Rs 2 lakh reward

each has been announced for people providing information about inter-state narcotics modules, people talking to Pakistan-based terrorists and separatists in jails and persons talking to or communicating with terrorist handlers across the border or with their agents within J&K and branding citizens as informers." Police also announced Rs 1 lakh cash reward for persons providing information about those inciting and encouraging people to join terrorist ranks and pick up guns. "Rs 2 lakh to Rs 12.50 lakh reward has been announced for those giving specific information about the presence of terrorists, resulting in successful operation leading to arrest or combat, and cash rewards will be provided as per category of A, B and C," police said. 8000 fake social media handles identified in J&K: DGP Swain will catch-hold of them through Interpol." Narco-Terror links found in Turkey, Canada, Paris: The year 2024 will witness a decisive battle against narco-terror. "The links between narco-terror, separatism and terrorism was already nailed in 2022," he said. "Links of narco-terrorism have been found in Kashmir to Jammu to Punjab and Delhi. Other links including the handlers were traced in Paris, Canada and Turkey. In the recent case of the Ramban narco-terror module, the mastermind was traced in Turkey." Cyber Crime, a lot more needs to be done: DGP Swain said that police are mindful

Police attaches house, car under UA(P) Act in Baramulla. one residential house of Farooq Ahmad Bhat a resident of Wanigam Payeen on land situated at Wanigam Payeen was attached for allegedly harbouring militants, it said. India records 841 New Covid-19 cases doses of Covid vaccines have so far been administered in the country. Gold likely to touch Rs 70,000 in 2024, say experts bond yields and a strong US dollar throughout the year, as the US Federal Reserve raised the interest rates to a 22-year high. "The central banks' buying has turned out to be a major demand driver for physical gold since the last few quarters. Record high domestic prices and uneven monsoon weighed on Indian jewellery consumption

while the Chinese economic downturn led to an increase in the jewellery demand from the top consumer nation," he said. On the price front, Rao said Comex gold has once again taken resistance near USD 2,080-2,090. Even though rates might stay higher for some time, the current geopolitical environment, slowing global growth, and economic uncertainties further increase the appeal of the yellow metal, he added. All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) Chairman Saiyam Mehra said the volatility in gold prices impacted sales, and in spite of 30-35 lakh weddings, the business will be the same as in 2022. "With the US Fed reducing rates, and continuing geopolitical tensions, the weak rupee will further boost gold prices, which is likely to touch USD 2,250-2,300 and Rs 68,000-70,000 in 2024. The high prices will impact sales further in 2024, and the business is likely to remain at the same level as 2023," he said. World Gold Council Regional CEO Somasundaram PR said gold prices touched historic highs globally during the year due to various factors that accentuated its role as a safe haven and hedge against inflation. In the September quarter, gold price was 12 per cent below last year. However, demand for 2023 will be marginally below the last year at 700-750 tonnes, though the value of investments in gold will be higher, he said. According to him, the redemption of the first tranche of sovereign gold bonds in November at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) in excess of 12 per cent has also added to the attraction of gold among the investor community and strengthened conversations around gold as a portfolio diversifier in these uncertain times.

"In 2024, apart from the economic developments, the trajectory of gold prices will be largely dependent on the dollar index and geopolitical situation," he said. Gem Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) Chairman Vipul Shah said 2023 was a tough year for the exporters, mainly due to a decline in demand in the key markets following a rise in interest cost, geopolitical issues and China continuing to remain closed even after Covid. "However, the situation has started to improve, and we expect things to improve in 2024, as interest rates are expected to come down, and we hope geopolitical issues will be resolved, boosting the global economy. We also expect the China market to open after remaining closed for a long period," he added. Severe cold in Kashmir, Minimum temperatures several notches below freezing point and Kupwara minus 3.8 degrees Celsius. There was some snowfall and rains in Kashmir during December which resulted in the prolonged cold wave conditions, they said. Kashmir is under the grip of the 40-day harsh winter period 'Chilla-i-Kalan'. The chances of snowfall are the highest during this period and most areas, especially the higher reaches, receive heavy snow. 'Chilla-i-Kalan' will end on January 31. However, the cold conditions will continue even after that with a 20-day 'Chilla-i-Khur'd' and a 10-day 'Chilla-i-Bachha'.

"Lok Jan Kalyan" is the essence of Bharatiya Janata Party: Vinay Gupta

Top News Report

JAMMU, 31 Dec: Lok Jan Kalyan is the essence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and it has been in service of the people since its inception. This was stated by BJP senior leader and Seh Prabhari Jammu North Vinay Gupta, while addressing the general public of Jammu South to mark the BJP party's ongoing Booth Jan Samvad abhiyaan public outreach program in Booth no.111,112 & 113, ward no.58, Dashmesh Nagar in Gandhi Nagar Mandal of Bahu Constituency in District Jammu South. Vinay was accompanied by District Vice President and Mandal Prabhari Narinder Koki, Mandal President and Cantonment Board Vice Chairman Bharat Bhushan, program main speaker Payush Sahni, Sat Choudhry, Subash



Choudhry, Vijay Dogra, Vicky Dogra, Mitu Sharma, Rajni Gupta, Shilpa and others who were present on the occasion.

In direct camaraderie with the general public, Vinay Gupta elaborates that PM Modi is a "kind-hearted noble soul" and always committed, and devoted to the national interest of the public. He claimed that the policies of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had secured

a political resolution to the "protests and sporadic incidents of insurgency and infiltrations" in Jammu and Kashmir. Vinay added that he would like to credit the "Modi Sarkaar", primarily the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, for always exhibiting and keeping confidence in the general public of J&K.

Vinay lauds that the BJP government has made such arrangements that no matter where you go in the

country, you will continue to get free ration and the Modi-led government has given you the facility of a 'One Nation One Ration Card'. He said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's unwavering commitment to social justice is widely acknowledged. Emerging from humble beginnings and belonging to the lower strata of society, he comprehends the challenges people face and their aspirations for opportunities. The Modi government has intro-

duced various schemes that have significantly improved the lives of weaker sections, ensuring their social and economic empowerment," Gupta stated while engaging with residents during the outreach program. He indicated that Modi's leading government successfully a long decade has not only transformed lives but also helped the poor in overcoming poverty", Vinay educates and informs that more than 13 crore people have come out of poverty in the last 5 years alone. He said that 13 crore people have successfully broken the barrier of poverty and become part of the neo-middle class in the country under the umbrella of PM Modi's swift moves. He is fully confident that "People should re-elect the Modi government in 2024, Gupta added.

BJP cheats the people of Jammu and entire UT: Rajesh Gupta

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) General Secretary Rajesh Gupta, said in the last nine years BJP has done nothing for the public except give suffering.

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

He said, Jammu is ruined under the BJP administration. Everywhere there is a hue and cry. Not a single citizen of Jammu is satisfied with the dictatorial attitude of the BJP-led government. They have multiple miseries through their anti-people decisions and measures despite brewing resentment among the people.

Gupta said in a statement on Sunday that people are waiting eagerly to teach a lesson to the BJP for allegedly failing to fulfil the promises made



before coming to power at the Centre and in J&K. Gupta said that people should elect those who will ensure that their voice is heard. "People of J&K want a credible voice to represent their aspirations and must give a chance to new and honest persons he added.

"The people of J&K remember BJP for unleashing countless miseries on the State and its people. People still recount the numerous instances of BJP and its leaders committed from time to time. The treacherous role played by the BJP and its leadership is an open secret," he said, adding, that now the responsibility rests on people to choose between forces inimical to the State's

integrity and those who have lent immense sacrifices for the protection of the State's communal harmony and brotherhood.

"Now, it is up to people to discern between the ones who stand for their rights and who trampled them. However, people have made it a point to show such forces as are inimical to the State they have the right to place. In the end, it is the people whose resolve will prevail," he said. The BSP leader said that the public would teach a lesson to the BJP in the J&K Assembly elections. It will kick the dust in the coming J&K assembly polls," Gupta said.

He said that now the time has come to save Jammu from the cruel clutches of the BJP and he would revive and make stronger Bahujan Samaj Party. Rajesh Gupta also extended new year 2024 greetings to people of J&K. He said new year may bring peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir UT.

Balwant Thakur' Hindi play 'Jaal' staged by Natrang Jammu



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: Balwant Thakur's hard hitting Hindi play 'JAAL' staged here today at Rani Park, Jammu under the direction of Neeraj Kant. At the very outset while addressing the gathering, Natrang Director Balwant Thakur said that while bidding farewell to 2023 and welcoming 2024 Natrang chose to present a play which addresses the biggest challenge of the contemporary times. The menace of drugs amongst youth is all set to take its toll. Before it becomes 'Udia Jammu', it becomes the responsibility of every one to come forward and fight out this growing menace before it grips every home. Natrang being a responsible cultural institution has volunteered by taking this message to every nook and corner of the region through the effective use of theatre. In a very effective manner this powerful play 'Jaal' innovatively showcases as how the Drug-menace is ruining the generations like a rapid fire, crippling the developing nations like India. The youth of the country, the largest energetic and most productive human resource of the country, sometimes unknowingly slip into this dangerous trap of drug menace.

The play 'Jaal' was not

based on any one storyline but as an experiment Balwant Thakur has woven multiple stories in one theme focusing on the spread of drug menace like a mesh, this taking the toll of the strongest workforce of the country. Jammu is no exception. We are a witness to lots of youth losing lives. In a sequence a young boy is shown struggling for a good company after his passing of the school and entry in the college. He is isolated for not being the consumer of intoxications. All around him treat him like a child which really frustrates him and to prove that he has grown-up as a young man now, he finds the easiest way and demonstrates his coming of age by consuming a variety of intoxications. In another sequence a rural inhabitant particularly the men-folk are shown drowned in the menace of alcohol. All the miseries of the village like poverty, domestic violence, and other ailments are attributed to the constant growth of consumption of alcohol in the village. In a sequence the daily routine of a villager is shown who consumes the whole of his daily earnings in alcohol. Being drunk completely he has loses his way home. By the time a local escorts him to his place where in the

middle of the night this drunken man starts beating his sleeping wife and kids for not receiving him on his arrival. When the escort intervenes to save the poor lady and children, he is blamed for having malicious intentions towards his wife. This fight further messes up when a drunken man after losing senses damages his household belongings as well. The play unfolds a series of incidents where people influenced by drugs, alcohol and other intoxications create hell for themselves as well as for others. Many precious lives are being charred in this fire of the growing drug menace which is to be fought unitedly to bring them out of the mesh of drugs menace. Through this play Balwant Thakur has tried to make an appeal to save mankind from this dragon who is extending its constituency day by day.

Actors who outshined in their respective performances and left an impact of their acting included Neeraj Kant, Aadesh Dhar, Kananpreet Kour, Vishal Sharma, Abhimanyu Choudhary, Sanket Bhagat, Kushal Bhat and Chaitanya Shekhar. The show was ably conducted by senior actor of Jammu stage Rajinder Narang and coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

LG directives to attend grievances/ complaint of citizens not being heeded: TMF



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: There is frustration and dissatisfaction expressed by Team Mask Force chairman Vijay Sharma regarding the lack of response to public grievances and complaints by the authorities, specifically the LG (Lieutenant Governor) and the JMC (Jammu Municipal Corporation) grievances cell. The press release states that despite directives from the LG to address public grievances and complaints promptly, there has been a significant delay in attending to them.

An example is cited, specifically the grievances lodged by Vijay Sharma himself regarding the encroachment of a road in front of his house at 45B/D Gandhinagar Jammu.

Despite the passage of months, there has been no resolution or response from either the LG grievances cell or the JMC grievances cell.

The statement men-

tions that no reply has been received from either the LG or the JMC grievances cell regarding the lodged complaints.

Vijay Sharma draws a parallel between the unaddressed grievances and what he refers to as political "jumla" (empty rhetoric) and "jumalebazi" (political theatrics).

Specific comparisons are made to promises made by political figures, such as the Prime Minister's promise of creating 2 crore jobs annually and the declaration of bringing back black money from Swiss banks, which are described as unfulfilled.

The press release concludes with a strong expression of frustration, suggesting that the directives from the LG to promptly address grievances seem to be mere rhetoric, similar to other unfulfilled political promises.

It's important to note that this information is based on the provided text, and without additional context or official responses, it represents one perspective on the matter. In situations like these, it is common for various factors and perspectives to be at play, and a comprehensive understanding often requires insights from multiple sources.

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

Groundbreaking success in delivering govt schemes directly to citizens: Raman Suri

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: In a historic turn of events, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary initiative, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, has emerged as a beacon of success, breaking the shackles of past inefficiencies in delivering central government schemes. Revealing this triumph, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) J&K Executive Member Raman Suri highlighted that it is for the first time that the Prime Minister is receiving direct feedback from both the administration and the common people.

Raman Suri emphasized that the success of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra serves as concrete evidence that citizens are now reaping real-time benefits of Union Government-sponsored key schemes, including Ayushman Bharat, Har Ghar Jal, digitization of land records, and the mission to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages, alongside various self-employment initiatives.

Underlining the metic-

ulous feedback mechanism established by Prime Minister Modi, Suri emphasized its role in transparently showcasing the impact of schemes, such as the declaration of ODF Plus villages, increased access to tap water, and illuminated village homes. He particularly commended the digitization of land records, which has empowered the citizens to safeguard their interests and avoid becoming victim to the ills like corruption.

Viksit Bharat Yatra, initiated by Prime Minister Modi in November 2023, is heralded as a transformative movement, enabling the government to gather vital information about the implementation status of flagship schemes across the nation. With ambitious plans to cover 2.60 lakh Gram Panchayats, 4000 urban local bodies, and engage with approximately 2.50 crore citizens within the next month, the Yatra signifies a groundbreaking shift in governance.

For the first time in independent India's history, Prime Minister

Modi is directly engaging with beneficiaries, transcending geographical barriers to understand the on-ground realities of the deserving citizens residing in remote areas. Success stories from Jammu and Kashmir as well as other states illustrate the tangible impact of Ayushman Bharat, with beneficiaries expressing gratitude for timely interventions and coverage of medical expenses through the Ayushman card.

Beyond mere statistics, the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra encapsulates transformation in the laughter of children with access to clean water, the pride of a farmer securing his land deed, and the hope in the eyes of a mother ensuring healthcare for her family. Raman Suri applauded the PM's unwavering commitment to inclusive development, ensuring that no citizen is left behind. Viksit Bharat is not just a promise; it is a journey marked by tangible improvements and countless lives being transformed.

Kashmiri displaced people wing (J&K) of DPAP party extends heartfelt new year greetings to the people in 2024

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 31: The leaders of the KDP wing of DPAP, including Sh. Sanjay Dhar (President), Piaray Lal Pandita (Chairman), Roop Krishen Koul (Vice President), Gowhar Wani (Spokesperson), Raj Kumar Ticku (General Secretary), Daizy Dhar (Mahila Wing President), Vijay Karihaloo (Vice President

Kashmir), Deepak Fotadar (General Secretary Non Camps), Amrita Bhat (Mahila Vice President), Renu Razdan (Mahila Vice President), Geeta Koul (Vice President Non Camps), Shikha Koul (Women's Youth President), Neha Mian (Mahila Unit Vice President Jagti), Naveen Gosani (Youth President), Rahul Raina

(Youth Vice President), Anjali Pandita (Mahila Unit President Jagti), Avtar Krishen Ladhoo (Unit President Jagti), Ravinder Singh (Secretary), Charanjeet Singh (Publicity Secretary), Vikas Koul (Secretary), and many others, extend warm congratulations to the people of India, both within the country and abroad, and especially

to the people of J&K, on the advent of the new year 2024.

The leaders express their heartfelt wishes that the new year brings peace and prosperity to J&K and pray for happiness and smiles to grace the faces of citizens. They extend their wishes for good health to all, hoping that the government of India and the government of

Jammu & Kashmir will prioritize the resettlement and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Displaced Hindus. They highlight the community's three decades of exile and express hope for a positive change in the coming year.

The leaders conclude by invoking the Almighty's blessings for happiness among the people of the country.