

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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BRIEFLY

Two killed, one injured in road accident in Jammu

JAMMU, Jan 14 (Agencies): In a tragic turn of events during the Lohri celebrations, two lives were lost in a road accident at Sohanjana Tehsil of Phallian Mandal area in Jammu District.

The collision, involving vehicles with registration numbers JK08F0233 and JK02CJ8823, occurred on the Ring Road around 2 pm yesterday.

Occupants of the Celerio car, Mohit Bharti and a young woman named Elish, along with Baleno car occupant Happy Kesar, sustained injuries in the unfortunate incident.

Swiftly taken to PHC Sohanjana, they were later referred to Government Medical College Jammu.

Tragically, Mohit Bharti and Elish were declared dead upon arrival, while Happy Kesar of Marh is currently undergoing treatment.

Police have registered a case under the relevant sections of the law at the concerned police station and started further investigation into the matter.

Winter vacations for Jammu Summer Zone Schools extended up to Jan 17

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: The Directorate of School Education Jammu has announced a further extension of winter vacations for schools located in the Summer Zone of Jammu Division.

This decision, according to the official order dated January 6, 2024, is in response to the prevailing winter weather conditions.

According to the order, Directorate has prolonged the winter break for both Government and Private recognised schools.

The order reads that the extended vacation period is now in effect until January 17, 2024, exclusively for students up to the 8th class.

It further reads that to accommodate the extension, schools will operate with revised timings from 11:00 AM to 03:00 PM during this period.

Indian Armed Forces one of the finest in the World: IAF Chief

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): The Indian armed forces have transformed with changing times to meet the challenges of the "entire spectrum of warfare," IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari said on Sunday.

In his address at an event hosted here to mark the 8th Armed Forces Veterans Day, he also asserted that resilient spirit, leadership, and vision of its veterans have laid the foundation of today's armed forces.

The programme held at Manekshaw Centre in Delhi Cantonment was also attended by Navy



Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, various senior officers of the three Services, a large number of veterans or their family members.

"The Indian armed forces, we will all agree, are one of the finest in the world, and have

transformed with changing times to meet the challenges of the entire spectrum of warfare," he said.

The Indian Air Force, in particular, has grown from a very modest beginning just about 90 years ago, to being "one

of the most formidable air forces in the world", the IAF chief said.

This has been possible only through the "sustained efforts and yeoman services" rendered by the forces' veterans over the years, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari added.

"I acknowledge with gratitude the sterling contributions made by all our veterans, whose resilient spirit, leadership, and vision have laid the foundation of today's armed forces," he said.

Today is also a day to poignantly

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Dense fog blankets northern India with no respite from cold wave, visibility drops to zero



NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Northern India woke up to thick fog on Sunday, facing cold wave conditions as visibility dropped to zero at several places including Delhi.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), visibility

was recorded as 'zero for the first time this winter season in Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, Patiala, Ambala, Chandigarh, Palam, Safdarjung (New Delhi), Bareilly, Lucknow, Bahraich, Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Tezpur.

The national capital

shivered in the cold weather, with the average minimum temperature dropping to almost 3 degrees Celsius on Sunday morning.

The minimum temperature in Delhi's Safdarjung area was recorded at 3.5 degrees Celsius. Similarly, the minimum temperature in Palam was 5.9 degrees Celsius in Lodhi Road, 4.0 in Ayanagar, and 4.4 degrees Celsius in Ridge at 8:30 am.

As per IMD data at 5:30 am today, very dense fog was observed in isolated parts of Punjab.

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Army brings under control forest fire in Poonch



POONCH, Jan 14 (Agencies): A massive fire broke out in forest area near Dera ki Gali in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district in the early hours of Sunday.

The Indian Army was able to bring the fire under control with the help of security agencies, saving many lives and infrastructure.

"Prompt and speedy response of #Indi-

anArmy saved many lives and infrastructure, when massive forest fire broke near #DeraKiGali and endangered Civil and Army Infrastructure. With coordinated and synergistic efforts of civ agencies and security forces fire was brought under control in #DeraKiGali," PRO (Public Relations Officer) Defence Jammu said in a post on 'X'.

Earlier in December, a massive fire broke out in the Patlikuhal forest area of Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, destroying forest wealth worth crores of rupees. Large flames of fire were seen erupting out of the forest area.

The PRO Defence also shared a short video clip of the operation in which defence personnel were seen engaged in dousing the flames.

Under the influence of these WDs, he said generally cloudy weather with light rain and snow over "isolated middle & higher reaches is expected during January 16th & 20th night."

MeT rules out any 'significant' weather activity in J&K till Jan 24

SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): Weatherman on Sunday ruled out significant weather activity till January 24 in Jammu and Kashmir despite two Western Disturbances (WDs) next week.

"Dry weather is likely to continue till January 24 with feeble WDs approaching on 16th and 20th evening," a meteorological department official here told GNS.

Under the influence of these WDs, he said generally cloudy weather with light rain and snow over "isolated middle & higher reaches is expected during January 16th & 20th night."

He said overall there is no significant weather activity expected till January 24.

At the same time, the official said that as per indications of different models, there is possibility of light rain and snow at "scattered" places from 25-27. "Will update in coming days more clearly," he said.

He said dense fog with cold day conditions are likely to continue till January 16 over plains of Jammu region.

Meanwhile, freezing weather conditions returned with Srinagar recording a low of minus 4.2°C against 0.2°C on the previous night. The MeT official said that the temperature was 2.1°C below normal for the summer capital of J&K for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of minus 3.0°C against minus 2.0°C on the previous night,

he said. The minimum temperature was 1.0°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, the MeT official said. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 5.5°C against minus 0.6°C on the previous night and it was 1.6°C above normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of minus 2.2°C against minus 1.2°C on the previous night and the temperature was above normal by 1.4°C for the place, the official said.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of minus 4.0°C against minus 0.3°C on the previous night and it was 1.1°C above normal there, the official said.

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Old Cave of Mata Vaishno Devi to remain open for darshan twice a day

JAMMU, Jan 14 (Agencies): The revered old cave of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in Jammu and Kashmir will be kept open for darshan for around 12 hours a day, the religious trust managing the operations and administration of the shrine has said. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) said that the old cave will be open for darshan from 10 am to 4 pm during the day and from 10.30 pm to 5 am at night.

Budgam Police cracks burglary case, one arrested

SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): Police on Sunday cracked a burglary case when they arrested a person and recovered stolen property worth lakhs in Jammu Kashmir's Budgam district.

Police said on January 12, 2024 Magam station received a written complaint from some shopkeepers of Magam Market that their shops had been burgled during the intervening night of January 11 and 12 and goods worth lakhs stolen.

One Sumo vehicle was also stolen which was used by the accused to decamp with the other stolen goods.



A case under relevant sections of law was registered and investigation was taken up, Police said.

During the course of

investigation, some suspects were rounded up resulting in the arrest of the one accused identified as Himayat Hussain Mir a resident of Yagipora Magam.

During the analysis of CCTV footage, it was observed that the vehicle was taken towards Pattan-Sopore axis. Subsequently, teams were sent to various locations and the vehicle was traced near Hygam Sopore.

Goods worth lakhs alongwith a Sumo vehicle have also been recovered.

The investigation into the case is going on, and some more arrests and recoveries are expected, the police added.

Budgam police urged the public to install CCTV cameras as per the directions of the District Magistrate.

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MP Khatana affirms PM Modi's commitment to minority welfare

Top News Report

JAMMU / JAUNPUR (Uttar Pradesh), Jan 14: Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Gulam Ali Khatana highlighted the deep-rooted commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards the welfare of minorities in India. He said that during past nine years minorities have witnessed and taken benefit of the common people friendly schemes of the Modi government.

Addressing the participants of 14th National Senior Women/Men Softball Cricket Championship 2024 at Mohammad Hasan PG College, Jaunpur, MP Er. Gulam Ali Khatana emphasized the government's dedication to uplifting minorities both educationally and economically. He said that PM Modi gave the slogan of Ek haath Mein Koran, Ek Haath Mein Computer symbolizing the importance of following both the religion as well getting well versed in the modern technology. Education is the key to success in the present day world where digital revolution has made it necessary for everybody to get well versed in technology.



Khatana spoke passionately about the pivotal role of education and sports in shaping the future of the youth. "Along with education, we all can shape our future through sports, for which the Government of India is continuously committed towards the youth," he declared. The Chief Guest MP was introduced to all the participating teams, and the championship matches were officially inaugurated under his patronage.

The final match in the men's category unfolded as a thrilling encounter between Uttar Pradesh and Purvanchal. In a 6-over game, Uttar Pradesh set a target of 62 runs at the

loss of 6 wickets. Purvanchal's Farhan displayed exceptional batting prowess with 29 runs on 11 balls during the chase. Purvanchal secured victory by 8 wickets, with bowlers 19 and Harsh taking two wickets each. Farhan was awarded the well-deserved Man of the Match.

The women's final featured a competitive match between Orissa and Bihar. Bihar won the toss and chose to field first, restricting Orissa to 28 runs at the loss of 4 wickets. In an impressive performance, Bihar's batsmen secured all 10 wickets without any loss. Kajal of Bihar, with her stellar contribution, was honored as the Man of the

Match. Ankita took two wickets for her team.

MP Gulam Ali Khatana presented trophies to the winning and runner-up teams, fostering a sense of achievement and recognition among the players.

Mohammad Shahid of Jammu and Kashmir was presented the man of the series award while Kajal of Bihar was presented the woman of the series.

The championship also recognized and honored coaches from various states for their dedication and contributions to the sport. Among those present were Arshad Kamal, Dr. Jeevan Yadav, Shivkumar Gupta, Ganesh Sahu, Shojab, Sheikh Mohammad Shafi, Firdous Ahad, Nazir Ahmed, Merajuddin, Bhupendra Nagpal, Pawan Singh Madan Singh Rathod, Mohammad Shahid, Sanjeev Jha, Shashi Pratap, Vijay Kumar Rupashree, Vinoo D'Souza, Ragini Sonkar, Mohammad Shafiq, and Alankar Gautam.

The program was conducted by Ahmed Abbas Khan, saw umpires Akash Prajapati and Dhanesh Jaiswal ensuring fair play. Kanchan Patel, Priya Garwal, and Saba Rashid served as dedicated scorers for the championship.

Northern Border stable but 'Not Normal': Army's Northern Command Chief



SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): The northern border is stable but "not normal", a top Army commander said on Sunday, referring to the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh region.

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Northern Command, said five of the seven friction points in eastern Ladakh, where the Indian Army and the Chinese PLA are locked in a standoff since May 2020, have been resolved and talks are underway for the remaining areas.

"The northern border area is stable but it is not normal or I can say it's sensitive," he told reporters here.

Apparently referring to Pakistan, the Army commander said the neighbouring country has orchestrated the terrorist attacks in the Poonch-Rajouri region as they did not like the ongoing development work here.

"There was prosper-

ity and improvement in the lives of people in Poonch-Rajouri area. Investments were coming in and people were getting jobs. Our neighbouring country did not like this atmosphere of peace and prosperity. That's why they have been promoting militancy in the area but we have launched counter operations," he said, expressing confidence that they will control militant activities in the coming days.

Lt Gen Dwivedi said the coordination among police, military and local people needs to be improved in the area.

"The number of police stations is being increased while we are carrying out some reorientation as well. This will help us in controlling the situation," he said.

The Army commander said 2023 has been declared as "zero-infiltration year" as no terrorist was able to come in through the Line of Control.

"...But as you said many terrorists are coming. We have taken

action.... If you see last year, only 21 terrorists killed were locals, the remaining 55 were foreigners. In 2022, 121 terrorist recruitments took place but in 2023 only 19 have taken place," he told reporters.

He said a lot of positive changes have taken place in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370.

"A lot of changes have taken place in the past four years. And all the changes have been for good, be it development of infrastructure, tourist arrivals or outside investments. Overall, it is good for the public, and Jammu and Kashmir is playing an important role in nation building," he said.

He was in Srinagar to take part in an Armed Forces Veterans' Day event.

The Armed Forces Veterans' Day is celebrated on January 14 every year as it was on this day in 1953 that the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, Field Marshal K M Cariappa, formally retired from the service.

PM Modi has a holistic vision for J&K's development: Vibodh

Top News Report

RAJOURI, Jan 14: In a recent statement, BJP Jammu and Kashmir General Secretary and former MLC Vibodh Gupta emphasised that Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has a holistic vision for the development of Jammu and Kashmir. Gupta highlighted BJP's role as a catalyst for change, fostering equitable development, peace, and prosperity in the Union Territory. He affirmed that under PM Modi's leadership, Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a new chapter of growth and progress and urged everyone to actively support this vision, echoing the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas'. "From May 2014 to March 2019, more than 150 ministerial visits unfolded. Government vacancies, once entangled in corruption and favouritism, have now been filled through transparent and process-driven methods. Grassroots democracy stands fortified, empowering marginalized sections, including SCs and STs. Road connectivity has been elevated, and each individual in J&K now experiences a sense of safety, security, and integral belonging to the nation", said Vibodh while addressing a public gathering at Muradpur Vibodh



expressed his belief that J&K holds the potential to flourish as the "jewel in the crown of India." He lauded the measures taken by the Modi government to restore peace and normalcy, considering the removal of Article 370 as a pivotal step toward achieving comprehensive development. He emphasized the necessity of a robust government in combating terrorism, highlighting the courageous decisions taken by the Modi Government to quell stone-pelting and isolate Pakistan and separatists from the world map. Speaking on the occasion BJP Rajouri General Secretary Ranjeet Tara praised the Modi government for its unwavering commitment to national security and decisive governance. Tara emphasized

the transformative initiatives undertaken, citing the successful implementation of policies that have bolstered economic growth and enhanced infrastructure. He lauded Prime Minister Modi's visionary leadership, asserting that it has propelled India towards a brighter future. Sarpanch Bahu Ram Sharma also spoke on the occasion and expressed admiration for the Modi government's strong and decisive actions in maintaining law and order. He acknowledged the government's efforts in ensuring the welfare of citizens and applauded the steps taken to empower marginalized sections of society. He strongly asserted that the Modi government is receiving tremendous sup-

port from common people across the country. Senior BJP leader and Advocate Yogesh Sharma praised the emphasis on skill development and education under the Modi government, citing initiatives that have led to increased opportunities for youth in various sectors. He highlighted the government's dedication to fostering an inclusive society, where every citizen, regardless of religion, caste and gender, has the chance to thrive. Other Senior BJP leaders who spoke on the occasion were Sanjay Sharma, Radhish Sharma, Balbir Sharma, Sumit Sharma, Rohit Sasan, Sunil Bakshi, Abdul Shakoor, Amrik Singh, Aryan Bakshi, Rakesh Sharma and Vikas Bakshi.

DGP's public grievance programme scheduled for Monday

SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday informed due to some unavoidable circumstances that DGP J&K Public Grievance program will now be held on Monday.

Police clarified that the public meeting will start from 1030 hrs however the venue will remain unchanged.

"It is inform that the DGP J&K Public Grievances Redressal Programme will now be held tomorrow(Monday, January 15/01/2023) at 1030hrs. The Venue will remain same. Inconvenience is regretted," J&K Police in a post on X said.

Illicit timber worth lacs seized in Budgam: Police

SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday have seized illicit timber worth lacs in Central Kashmir's Budgam district.

A spokesperson said, "Police station Budgam received an information from reliable sources that one person namely

Reyaz Ahmad Itoo S/O Abdul Karim Itoo R/O Atipora Sholipora has dumped illegally acquired timber at his home."

"Acting swiftly, a police party of police station Budgam raided the said house and seized illicit timber comprising of 88 Swans measur-

ing 26.93 Cft. However, the accused managed to flee from the house", he said.

Accordingly, Case FIR No "15 /2024" under relevant sections of law stands registered at Police Station Budgam and further investigation set into motion.

'Sawan ka mahina...': Former Jammu and Kashmir CM Farooq Abdullah turns singer; video goes viral

JAMMU / CHANDIGARH, Jan 14 (Agencies): Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Farooq Abdullah has showcased his hidden talent as a singer in a viral



video on X. The video shows Farooq Abdullah singing the classic Bollywood song 'Sawan ka mahina, pawan kare shor', by Lata Mangeshkar and Mukesh, at an event with surprising ease

AAP Jammu starts 5th day BADLAO YATRA from Kamashwar Mandir Akhnoor to Khour area

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: The AAP-Jammu started its 5th day "BADLAO YATRA" on 14th of January, 2024, from Kamashwar Mandir Akhnoor to Khour area & during the Yatra the AAP volunteers were raising slogans against ruling dispensation for their utter failure on all fronts. The AAP volunteers said that since 2014 the BJP has failed to fulfill even a single promise. In spite of the tall claims of the BJP government at the centre, the ground situation is entirely different. Lashing at the central government & accusing it of issuing NADER SHAHI FARMAAN & further lamented the Modi led Government for taking the countrymen for a ride by issuing un-mindful demonetization breaking the back bone of Indian economy in respect

of lowest ever GDP; ill motivated three black Agriculture laws giving benefits to friendly Capitalists & taking the lives of about 750 farmers without showing a single word in remorse & now playing a cruel joke with crores of young qualified, unemployed youths of the country by bringing in AGNI VEER Yojna, Modi Govt. is bound to eat a humble pie like withdrawing 3 farmers laws, the volunteers anticipated. What will youths do after rendering 4 to 5 years service where they have "No PENSION- ONLY TENSION" the AAP volunteers questioned and added that it is entirely against the future of youths of the Nation for which they will not forgive, the Capitalist friendly Modi Government in times to come, the AAP volunteers made a forecast? In



fact, the ruling Party is working on the policy to keep 95% people poor and 5% wealthy to fund & rule which is very dangerous for unity & integrity of Country, the release cautioned.

The AAP volunteers further said that destroying of Constitutional Institutions, auctioning public owned units to friendly Industrialists, brib-

ing Supreme Court of India Judges to be nominated as Rajya Sabha Members, silencing electronic & print Media, enacting most obnoxious & anti-farmer laws & later on nullifying the same, remaining mum over Manipur - Hathras like heinous crimes & episodes, allowing unbridled price rise on kitchen by imposing irrational

GST, letting lose the reign of terror through ED, CBI & IT in case of opposition leaders etc are driving the country for a unitary system of governance which, in near times to come, shall prove very harmful for the countrymen and dangerous for the unity & integrity of the country, the AAP volunteers warned & appealed the masses to read

between the lines & judge for themselves, as to where the country is heading, destroying democracy, democratic Institutions, Constitution & its institutions and auctioning public property in to the hands of friendly Industrialists & throw away the most barbaric & harmful regime to save the country & Democracy. They said that AAP is the only solution of all evils in the society & all traditional Political Parties are the chips of the same block, as AAP has revolutionized & galvanized the lives of Delhiites which can be done here also in J&K if AAP is brought to power. They further said that time has come now when every Indian is appreciative of Delhi Model of governance which, in the first instance, hammers a death blow to the virus of caste, creed &

colour and instead ensures development of all sections of society. In fact, the ruling Party is working on the policy to keep 95% people poor and 5% wealthy to fund & rule which is very dangerous for unity & integrity of Country, the release cautioned.

Prominent among those who joined the "BADLO YATRA" include S/Sh. Romesh Lal Bhagat, Akhnoor, Ashni Matto, Khour, Kuldeep Kumar Rao, Nirmal Mahna, Amit Langer, Rajesh Pangotra, Adv. Dalkinder Kumar Bhagat, Adv. Arvind Bandral, Sameer Choudhary, Sandeep Singh Parihar, Harsh Dev Singh, Omparkash Sharma, Bachan Lal, Jia Lal, Rajat Kumar, Keemti Ram, Vijay Kumar, Karan Matoo, Jogesh Choudhry, Ram Sing., Parshotam Sharma, Kaka Sharma, & hundreds of others.

EDITORIAL

PRICELESS
TIME

“Time is free, but it’s priceless. You can’t own it, but you can use it. You can’t keep it, but you can spend it. Once you’ve lost it you can never get it back.

Yes, it’s sure and certain that time is like a river. As the current of the river flows ahead and never comes back. Same with time. Once lost it can’t be regained.

It’s truly said that, “Don’t count every hour in the day, make every hour in the day count.” we got to be very punctual and study in our lives about time.

Time is the most valuable and precious thing in the world. Also, we should use it for our good as well as for the good of others around us. This will help us and the society to progress towards a better tomorrow. Moreover, we should teach our children the importance and value of time. Also, wasting time will only lead you to cause an issue to you and the people around you.

To effectively utilize the time we must consider some points which will help us in our whole life. This utilization includes setting goals, preparing work lists, prioritizing tasks, and taking adequate sleep and various others.

For effectively utilizing time set long and short term goals these goals will help you in remaining productive. Moreover, they will prove as a driving force that will keep you motivated. Also, this will give the willingness to achieve something in life.

In the beginning, it will feel like a boring task but when you do it regularly then you will realize that it only helps you to increase your productivity. Ultimately, this will force you to achieve more in life.

Prioritizing tasks is a very effective way of managing time. Also, because of it, you will know the importance of various tasks and jobs. Apart from that, if your club and perform a similar activity in a go then it also increases your productivity. Hence, it will help you to achieve more in life.

Being productive does not mean that you engage yourself in different tasks every time. Taking proper sleep and exercising is also part of being productive. Besides, proper exercise and sleep maintain a balance between body and mind which is very important for being productive and efficient.

Although most people do not understand how valuable time is until they lose it. Besides, there are people in the world who prioritize money over time because according to them, time is nothing. But, they do not realize the fact that it is time that has given them the opportunity to earn money. Apart from this, time has given us prosperity and happiness and on the contrary, it has also given us sorrow and grief.

In previous times many kings proclaimed themselves as the ruler of their age and all. But, they forget that they have limited time. Time is the only thing in the world that is limitless. Time can make you a king or a beggar in a movement of seconds.

In conclusion, we can say that time is the greatest gift of God. Moreover, there is a saying that “if you waste time, time will waste you.” Only this line is enough to justify how important and valuable time is.

A farmer has to harvest his crops on time but if he neglects, the birds will eat those crops or untimely rain may destroy it.

A successful man only knows the value of time because he has come up with proper use of time and hard work. So, time should not be procrastinated, instead every single second should be used carefully. Then only a person will touch the sky of success.

Those ‘agony aunts’ who come bearing bad news

By: Krishna Shastri
Devulapalli

I have this aunt. Before my extended family gets their loincloths in a bunch trying to figure out whose mother I’m referring to, relax. She isn’t a relation. She’s an aunt in the Indian sense, like everyone is aunt or uncle.

If lore is to be believed, this aunt, god bless her, has never brought good news to anyone in the last seventy years. When she walks into a room, one automatically knows that, along with the extra-long pallu of her resplendent Kanjeevaram, must come tidings of melancholy, misery or mayhem.

For instance, the last time I ‘met’ her, after having successfully avoided her at a wedding (where I saw the bride, groom and purohit weeping in unison after she’d had a word with them) and a funeral (where she apparently told the already devastated widow of the departed how the recent Chennai flood had brought snakes into an old age home), it was because my luck outran me on my morning walk a couple of days ago. Said aunt iden-

tified me from 400m away and came at me with the speed, precision and ruthlessness of a poet promoting her latest volume at a lit fest.

‘How are you, Aunt Pankajam (name changed, obviously)?’ I mumbled, having failed to duck into a nearby open drain in time.

‘How do you expect me to be?’ she said.

I had no choice but to ask her the question that one never ought to ask her, and yet, somehow, everyone was literally hypnotized into asking. Such was her power.

‘Why, what’s wrong, Aunt Pankajam?’ I said, even as my unmentionable parts braced for impact.

‘What is not wrong would be a better question,’ she said, taking a deep breath.

This meant that the Tam-Brahm version of a Greek tragedy patented by Aunt Pankajam was about to unfold. (I strongly believe that Aeschylus got the idea from one of Pankajam’s ancestors from the Vedic period.)

‘You know what happened to the Kuriakoses?’ Pankajam demanded, and without waiting a second,

continued ‘Well, remember the quiet park they had next to their ancestral bungalow? Some wretched businessman has managed to annex it, and now they’re building a mall there. With all the JCBs and construction workers going in and out, Mrs Kuriakose is now permanently covered in a fine film of grey dust which not only makes her look like a dehydrated version of Swamp Man but has also given her a terrible rash. And poor Mr Kuriakose has gone deaf. In his left ear, too.’

As I saw it, it wasn’t all bad. Mrs Kuriakose was an ardent, loud, and indefatigably off-key singer and this meant that Mr Kuriakose would hear even less of her. It was rumoured that, decades ago, his right ear had decided to malfunction at Mrs Kuriakose’s inaugural concert and remain that way. But I desisted from pointing the tiny silver lining adorning the cloud of dust.

As my eyes slowly glazed over and I longed for my mother’s lap to rest on, Aunt Pankajam narrated an epic tale of distress and destruction starring

the hapless Kuriakoses. I walked away in a daze at about the time she began showing me how Mr Kuriakose was hanging from the gaping jaws of the earth mover and deploying language at the operator that would make a Malayali sailor lose his way to the Gulf.

When I returned home, it took me a good fifteen minutes to remember my wife’s name.

We all have an Aunt Pankajam in our lives. I have three or four, in fact. While the others are not quite in her league, they all revel in bringing bad news. That it might not always be connected to anyone you know doesn’t matter. They get their kicks from dimming your light, deflating your spirit, offing your will to live. They are the ones who specialize in RIP posts on social media. If there is an earthquake in Japan, a rail accident in Germany, a mass shooting on Mars, they’ll make sure you get to hear about it. If they see you coming out of a Laurel & Hardy double bill, they can make your tears of laughter change to tears of anguish in a second.

Only Family Energy and Consciousness can give us Strength to Overcome External Challenges

By: Vijay Garg

You can wander anywhere, but while wandering, there comes a time when you start feeling homesick. The peace we get in our home is not found in the outside world. But on many occasions in our life, such combinations and coincidences arise that we get an opportunity to come face to face with the outside world. When we go to a strange place, in some way or the other we remain dependent on other people for our needs. It is a strange thing that sometimes we get bored even with our daily lifestyle. In colloquial language, one feels the urge to change the air. The thought comes whether we should go on pilgrimage or on tourism, anyway tourism is a special source of knowledge and who has not been enriched by it? Sometimes there is a desire to cross the country’s borders and see the world, due to which we do not hesitate to spend our hard-earned money. Going to a new environment, we also have to make some necessary changes in our normal routine. Have to do. After all, no matter how strong our attrac-

tion towards new people and new routines and lifestyles may be. Yes, but from time to time we start feeling homesick and we return to our homes at certain intervals. Every small and big journey gives us new lessons in our life. Meeting new people, studying their lifestyle and food as well as their ethics and behavior teaches us a lot. Everyone has their own home world, of which everyone is proud. There we are tied by the strings of various types of relationships. But this bond keeps us constantly filled with new energy and inspiration. We address each other differently in the family. Known from. We have to take special care of the dignity of every address. Usually we keep it. We are filled with happiness even at the smallest achievement of a family member. In difficult times of a particular member, we sink into deep depression. Understanding each other’s pain, they make every possible effort to remove it. We discharge our responsibilities towards our family purely out of a sense of duty. When we have performed our duties well, we feel immense satisfaction within ourselves. Realization begins to occur.

The energy received from family does not let us get tired. In all these contexts, it becomes extremely important that we make continuous efforts towards establishing mutual ideological harmony among the family members. It is very natural that each member may have his own unique ideology. Everyone has their own role or they choose new roles with time. It is very natural to look at any subject from different perspectives based on one’s intelligence and discretion. In such a situation, all the family members. It would be much better if we take care of feelings and try to remain united despite ideological differences. Even so, the fabric of unity in diversity is linked to our basic culture. In this regard, we should have our own participation in creating an atmosphere of happiness, peace and tranquility in the family. Otherwise, it has been seen on many occasions that due to lack of mutual harmony, different types of cracks arise in different relationships. Actually, we have to keep in mind the conduct and behavior of the joint family in this context. to do this Only then can we realize our vision of a happy

and prosperous family. All this becomes extremely important because everywhere we get happiness from our home and family only. In fact, only our home and family can give us the divine feeling of immense joy within ourselves, otherwise it has also been seen in practice that despite all the material happiness and prosperity, due to lack of harmony among the family members, the peace of mind has gone far away. . Therefore it is necessary. to achieve real happiness in life For this reason, let us weave such a web of harmonious relationships in our home and family, so that we can remain happy every moment. Otherwise, we might break down while struggling with all the challenges of the outside world. If this ever happens, then we will never be able to experience the importance of this rare human emotion. Only family energy and consciousness can give us strength to overcome external challenges.

(Vijay Garg Retired
Principal Educational
Columnist Malout
Punjab)

Sadhguru Shri Madhuparamhans delivers spiritual lecture

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: Sadhguru Shri Madhuparamhans Ji Maharaj of Sahib Bandagi, while delighting the congregation with the nectar of his sermons in Mishriwala today, said that from this earth man goes to the heavenly worlds to enjoy the fruits of his good and inauspicious deeds. This is the interpretation of all religions. Sahib said a word on karma. Actions should be done after thinking. The whole world is trapped in the trap of karma. Karma is the earth, Karma is the sky. Ram and Krishna were incarnated only through karma. Ravana was killed due to his karma. The heroes of the three worlds also had to suffer the consequences of their actions. The previous people were very nice. They were afraid of committing sins. But



the new generation is not afraid of committing sins. A prostitute performed severe penance. Brahma ji was pleased and asked whether he wanted a groom. Said that he wants a son like you. Then Vashishtha ji happened. Due to karma, Vishnu ji had to come to Vasudev's house. He had asked for a boon to have a son like you. So I had to come myself. There was a good thing about the old people. He knew that he would

get results according to his actions. Whenever we faced suffering, we used to say that what kind of work we might have done to get such suffering. And speaking of which, great men also had to suffer the consequences of their actions. The account of karma cannot be erased by erasing it. The account of karma is not erased not for one birth, but for many births. Therefore, act thoughtfully. The new generation does not understand sin and virtue.

No matter how many measures are taken, one has to bear the consequences of one's actions. Due to Karma, Harishchandra had to work in Kallu Chandal's house. But Sahib is further saying that crores of karmas are destroyed in a moment, when the soul takes refuge in Sadguru.

One told me that accounting for karma is useless. Who is writing the deeds? It takes 4 men to write 24 hours' work. I said do you remember what you did and when you did it? Your home is family, remember. Said he remembered. I said it's a memory. Everything is fed into this. Like there is a memory card in a smart phone. There is so much feed. Similarly, there are 2 trillion cells in the brain.

Everyone has the power to remember 2 main things. There

Dharamraj takes out that memory and shows what he did. Wisdom is formed according to one's actions. The intellect will become polluted due to sinful deeds.

Sahib is saying one thing in the end that even if there are crores of sins, one name will destroy all the deeds. After you name will change. All past deeds will be erased. Wisdom will change. It is said that Sadhguru transforms a crow into a swan by giving a name. A perfect Guru cuts away past karma. Only a complete Sadguru has this power. Not in the rest.

After the name comes a power. Earlier, when you used to commit sins, there was no one to stop you. Now a stopping force comes. That's why Sahib is saying that even if a true Sadguru is found by giving a head, it should still be considered a cheap deal.

CHC Sankoo gets State Award Certification & Accreditation



Top News Report

KARGIL, Jan 14: Community Health Centre (CHC) Sankoo, Kargil on Saturday gets awarded the state for certification by the NHM Union Territory of Ladakh under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS)

MD Director NHM of UT Ladakh Dr Motup Dorje extends his greetings to Chief Medical Officer, Kargil Block Medical Officer Community Health Centre Sankoo and the entire team, for this achievement in excellence Promoting Cleanliness Hygiene and infection Control Practice

in Public Health Care Facilities to the people of UT of Ladakh

Mission Director NHM UT Ladakh had urged to BMO to maintain and improve in performance and strive for the National Certification and accreditation under the National Quality Assurance Standard Program.

Dr Parneesh castigates Cong for boycotting Ram Mandir Consecration event

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: Dr Parneesh Mahajan, Convenor, Department of Training, BJP, J&K, has expressed strong disapproval of the Congress party's decision to refrain from attending the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. He contended that this move is indicative of Congress's persistent appeasement strategy, a tactical maneuver aimed at salvaging its dwindling vote bank. In a statement issued today, Dr Parneesh highlighted the Congress party's announcement, revealing that key leaders such as Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, former president Sonia Gandhi, and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, will be absent from the his-



toric event scheduled for January 22. Expressing his disappointment, Dr Parneesh asserted that Congress's decision not to partake in this significant occasion is an affront to the entire nation, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. He emphasized the universal reverence for Lord Ram, not only in India but worldwide, as a symbol of moral and righteous conduct ('Maryada'). He condemned the Congress party for choosing to abstain from an event that holds profound cultural and historical significance.

The senior BJP leader refuted Congress's attempt to rationalize its non-participation by accusing the BJP and RSS of turning the temple construction into a political agenda. He labeled this justification as a feeble excuse and contended that the real motive behind Congress's decision is a desperate attempt to appease a segment of its diminishing voter base. He underscored that such outdated strategies would not resuscitate the party's credibility, as the public can discern the underlying motives behind Congress's decisions. As the nation eagerly awaits the consecration of the Ram Mandir, Dr Parneesh's candid critique sheds light on the political dynamics at play, exposing the Congress party's approach to pivotal national events.

Have started to act against terrorists in Rajouri-Poonch: Northern Army Commander

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Jan 14: The northern army commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi Sunday said that the army has started to act against the terrorists operating in Rajouri-Poonch belt while a special focus is being laid on strengthening the synergy between various security agencies.

Talking to reporters on the side-lines of a function in Srinagar, the northern army commander, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said: "In the last few years, the Rajouri-Poonch area has witnessed prosperity... there was investment and employment.

Our neighbouring country was not able to digest the peace and prosperity and so they are promoting terrorism in the area. We have started to take strong actions in this

regard and you will see that there will be control over it in the coming days..."

He said that the northern border area is sensitive. On the past year, the northern army commander said: "We have declared 2023 as a zero-infiltration year, which means there was no infiltration from the Line of Control in 2023... If you see, among the terrorists that have been killed, only 21 are locals whereas 55 are foreign terrorists," the northern army commander said. Interestingly, the army suffered 20 casualties last year in a spate of attacks in Rajouri-Poonch belt.

He said that in 2022, 122 youth picked up arms and in 2023, only 19 joined terrorism. "We will continue to ensure that local terrorist recruitment is plugged. We are ensuring to further strengthen the synergy among various security agencies," he said

Raj Rattan slams Congress for snubbing Ram Mandir Consecration Ceremony

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: Raj Rattan Raina, a senior leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has expressed strong disapproval of the decision by Congress leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, to skip the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir on January 22.

In a statement issued here today, Raina challenges Congress's explanation for their absence, rejecting their claim that they are avoiding the event due to their belief that the BJP and RSS are using the temple for political gain. He finds this reasoning unconvincing and believes it masks the true motivations behind Con-

gress's decision. Highlighting the historical context, Raina remarked that the

significant initiative during their long-standing rule.

Urging caution among the public, Raina cautioned against trusting parties that prioritize political calculations over national and cultural heritage. He called on people to be discerning and thoughtful in supporting political entities that genuinely uphold the values and aspirations of the nation.

As the nation anticipates the auspicious event in Ayodhya, Raj Rattan Raina's critique sheds light on the contrasting approaches of political parties toward the cultural and religious fabric of the country.



Congress party had ample time to contribute to the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya over the past 70 years. However, he lamented their failure to undertake this sig-

Unemployment in J&K at alarming stage: Ajeet Bhagat

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Jan 14: National Confrance Sr. Leader Ajeet Bhagat said during different under construction Hydroelectric Power Projects under the banner of different multinational companies our skilled, unskilled, semiskilled employee are not recruited as par their desire skill due to that youth of Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban Districts of Chenab Valley Zone diverted it's mind towards frustration, drugs, and in different criminal activities.

The National Confrance Leader said that the constructed different online offline recruiting scheme still haven't any result on ground for proper free and fare recruitment processes by districts administration Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban Districts of Chenab Valley Zone and mul-

tinational companies from past so many years.

Bhagat request to Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo kindly, inter-

vene this issues and recruit our talented and needy youth as earlier as possible only for betterment and developmental point of view in different Companies

8th Armed Forces Veterans Day Celebration

Top News Report

LEH, Jan 14: 8th Armed Forces Veterans Day was celebrated at Hall of Fame, Leh on 14 Jan 2024. On this occasion, a Wreath Laying Ceremony was organised at War Memorial, Hall of Fame, wherein General Officer Commanding, Leh Sub Area and Veterans from Ladakh paid homage to the Bravehearts. A number of War Heroes and Veer Naris from Ladakh also attended the event.

General Officer Commanding, Leh Sub Area interacted with the veterans and Veer Naris

on the occasion and expressed his gratitude to them for their contribution and sacrifice in upholding the security of our nation.

He also assured them of whole hearted support from Indian Army in all their future endeavours and wellbeing. War heroes and prominent Veterans involved in social development activities were also felicitated on the occasion.

The celebration of 'Veterans Day' on 14 Jan every year is a testimony of Indian Army's commitment towards their Veterans and Veer Naris.

Kaiths organise bi-annual congregation of Sankri Devta at Langotian



Top News Report

R.S.PURA, Jan 14: The Kaith Biradari members came in large number at the Dehri of Sankri Devta at Langotian here today and paid obei-

sance to him to seek his blessings for the welfare of their families.

The festivity began with performing of Havan, kirtan and kanjak puja.

The Biradari head

Hony Captain Girdhari Lal Kaith said, Sankri Devta is an important male deity who is worshipped at various places in the Jammu region. He is very kind and compassionate and believed to be protector of Kaith families. Besides, he fulfills one's wishes.

Among those who paid obeisance to Sankri Devta included Messrs R.L.Kaith, Senior Prosecuting Officer Raj Kumar, Er Darshan Kumar, Dr Ravi Kumar, Dr Som Raj, Master Surinder Kumar, Master Ramesh Kumar, Ex Sarpanch Ashok Kumar, Ex ZEO Sunil Dutt, Sebedar Karnail Chand, Subedar Bachan Lal, Havildar Des Raj, Shiv Ram, Dev Raj, Naresh Kumar, Narinder Kumar and Deepak Jyoti.

Two drug peddlers held in Kulgam



SRINAGAR, Jan 14 (Agencies): Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Kulgam police have arrested 02 drug peddlers and recovered contraband substance from their possession.

A Spokesperson said that a police party headed by Incharge PP Mirbazar at a checkpoint established at Zadoora Crossing on NHW-44 intercepted two suspicious persons namely; Mudasir Ahmad Ahangar S/O Nazir Ahmad Ahangar R/O Doru and

Mohd Iqbal Chopan S/O Lal mohd Chopan R/O Shangas carrying nylon bags. After noticing police party they tried to flee from the spot. They were chased and apprehended tactfully. After checking, officers were able to recover 4.2 Kgs of Poppy Straw like contraband substance from their possession. "Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 07/2024 under section 8/15, 29 has been registered at Police Station Qazigund and investigation has been initiated", he said.

Ramayan actor Arun Govil reacts on receiving invitation to Pran Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya: I consider myself lucky

Arun Govil gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this lifetime event. He said that PM Modi has to be credited 'because of the way he has worked'.

Veteran actor Arun Govil, who played the character of Lord Ram in Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan, expressed his happiness on receiving the invitation to the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22. He said that he is looking forward to visiting the city and Ram Lalla's darshan.

Arun told agency, "I am happy that I received an invitation for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, and I am looking forward to going there (Ayodhya) to witness it and for the Ram Lalla darshan. It is a very big opportunity. I consider myself lucky that this has happened in my lifetime; everything is going very well, the atmosphere is positive, the energy is there, and we are all very happy."

Giving credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this lifetime event. He said, "I believe that if we have to give credit to one person, then we will give it to Modi ji because of the way he has worked and spread the



energy throughout, although I have accepted that whenever such work is done, it is not done by one person. The one who has spread all the positive energy is Modi ji. And the rest is collective work; everyone has worked a lot for many years, and many people have made sacrifices and are still working. So, whatever is happening, it's a lifetime event." The ceremony is scheduled to take place on January 22, 2024.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the ceremony at the Ram Temple on January 22. The event has garnered significant attention, with several VVIP guests from India and abroad receiving invitations to participate in the auspicious occasion in Ayodhya.

Vedic rituals for the Pran-Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Lalla (infant Lord Ram) in Ayodhya will begin on January 16, a week before the main ceremony.

A priest from Varanasi, Lakshmi Kant Dixit, will perform the main rituals of the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla on January 22. From January 14 to January 22, Ayodhya will mark the Amrit Mahotsav.

A 1008 Hundi Mahayagya will also be organised, in which thousands of devotees will be fed. Several tent cities are being erected in Ayodhya to accommodate thousands of devotees, who are expected to arrive in the temple town of Uttar Pradesh for the grand consecration.

According to the Sri Ram Janambhoomi Trust, arrangements will be made for 10,000-15,000 people. Local authorities are gearing up for the anticipated surge in visitors around the grand ceremony and are in the process of implementing enhanced security measures and making logistical arrangements to ensure a smooth and spiritually enriching experience for all attendees.

It's action time!: Vir Das set to star in his first-ever film



Vir Das, the Emmy Award-winning actor-comedian, celebrated for his unparalleled comic flair and international acclaim, is set to venture into uncharted

territory with his maiden foray into the action film genre. Recognised as the foremost Indian comedian on the global stage, Vir Das is gearing up to redefine his

artistic boundaries and capture the imagination of audiences worldwide with his debut in an adrenaline-pumping action film.

The untitled action film project is currently in the preparatory stages, with Vir Das set to essay the lead role. The film, expected to commence production in mid-2024, promises to be a thrilling ride that present Vir in a completely new light.

Vir Das, who has conquered the comedy world with his wit and charm, expresses his excitement about this new chapter in his career. "I've always believed in challenging myself and exploring new horizons. Comedy will always be my first love, but the thrill of stepping into the action genre is a whole new adventure.

The prep is intense, and I am diving head-first into this exciting project. I can't wait to bring something fresh and exhilarating to the audience."

My only job is to entertain people: Salman Khan

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan said that as an actor, his biggest and only job is to entertain people thoroughly.

Salman's latest release 'Tiger 3' is now streaming on a digital platform. Talking about the same, he said: "The Tiger franchise has got unanimous love right from the first film be it theatrically, on satellite or on streaming!"

"So, it feels amazing to see how the third instalment of Tiger 3 was first a hit in theatres and now on streaming."

He added: "I'm in close contact with my audience through my social media and I can see the outpouring of love now that Tiger 3 has dropped on OTT."

"As an actor my biggest and only job is to



entertain people thoroughly and I'm happy that Tiger 3 is being enjoyed by people across the world."

Salman further said: "Tiger 3 is a film that is very close to my heart.

So, it felt extremely personal when it became a

hit in theatres and now that it is a hit on streaming within days of its drop."

"Tiger will always be there to entertain people."

"Tiger 3' also stars Katrina Kaif and Emraan Hashmi.

AR Rahman opens up about battling suicidal thoughts: 'We all have dark times...'

AR Rahman recently spoke about his relationship with spirituality at an event. He shared how he deals with emotionally challenging times and credited his mother for teaching him how to handle dark thoughts. He also spoke about how he battled suicidal thoughts.

AR RAHMAN ON BATTLING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Speaking to students at the Oxford Union debating society, AR Rahman discussed his life and career. During the event, he discussed his approach to navigating emotionally difficult moments and acknowledged his mother's influence in guiding him through dark thoughts. Additionally, he recounted his struggle with overcoming suicidal thoughts.

He said, "When I had suicidal thoughts when I was young, my mother used to say, 'When you live for others, you won't get these thoughts'. That's one of



the most beautiful advice I got from my mother."

The musician also spoke about the importance of living for others, a lesson he learned from his mother. Rahman added, "When you live for others, and you're not selfish, there's a meaning to your life. I took it very seriously, whether you're composing for somebody, writing for something, buying food for a person who can't afford

it, or you just smile at someone, these are the things that keep us going. Also, we have a limited knowledge about our future. There could be something extraordinary waiting for you. If you have all these things, and hope, that's what keeps me going. Sometimes, I feel like I've done it all, that I'm in a repetitive cycle, and then you realise there's a bigger role for you."

ON SPIRITUALISM

Responding to a question about why he doesn't talk more about spiritualism, Rahman said everyone experiences dark times and it's important to remember that life is a short journey. "We all have dark times. One thing is definite; it's a small little travel in this world. We were born, and we're going to go. It's not a permanent place for us. Where we're going to go, we don't know. (It depends) on each person's own imagination and beliefs," said the Oscar-winning music composer.

He believes this approach gives life meaning and keeps him going. Apart from composing music, Rahman also sees himself contributing to society through education and mentoring the younger generation. AR Rahman last composed the music for the Hindi film 'Pippa', which starred Ishaan Khatter and Mrunal Thakur.

'Didn't see myself on screen growing up': Alaqua Cox on playing first deaf, native American superhero

The actor, who was born and raised on the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin, said she wants to make people like her feel represented on the screen.

Alaqua Cox, who is deaf and comes from an indigenous community, hopes that her portrayal of Maya Lopez in Marvel's series "Echo" paves the way for better representation of people of colour and diverse abilities in Hollywood.

Born out of Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) show "Hawkeye", the new series focuses on the Lopez, a deaf, amputee and a Native American character.

"I never imagined myself being a superhero because I grew up seeing average superheroes, who were not people of colour.

Being a person of colour and with a disability, it is just so crazy to me that I have this opportunity," Cox told agency in an interview.

The 26-year-old actor first played Lopez in "Hawkeye", the 2021 series starring Jeremy Renner and Hailee Steinfeld, and made such an impact with her

performance that Marvel decided to go ahead with a solo series about the character.

"Hawkeye" was also her first acting gig.

"I found out in the middle of filming that I'll be getting my own show. And I was like, 'No way. This is crazy. I cannot believe it.' And I didn't believe it at first.

Of course, I was overwhelmed at first because that was my first time on set and I'm learning all these new things that I did not know before."

"And then they threw this at me and I came from a supporting actor to going number one on a call sheet. I just feel very proud of that moment," Cox said.

The actor, who was born and raised on the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin, said she wants to make people like her feel represented on the screen.

"My hope is that with diverse communities like us, we can do anything.

I'm a disabled, deaf and indigenous person, and I have all these attributes, but now I'm a superhero. It doesn't matter how I am, what colour I am, what disability I have, I can still achieve greatness."

Historically in Hollywood, Cox said characters of deaf persons were portrayed by those who didn't have the disability but now things are changing.

"I know I didn't see myself on the screen a lot growing up, because a lot of the deaf roles were portrayed by hearing people, and they always used sign language wrong.

So the deaf people might have a sour attitude toward it because they don't think that they can do anything.

"But now we have more deaf people in Hollywood taking on deaf roles.

And so I hope that they will be able to see themselves within these



roles and know that they can go for anything," she added.

"Echo", created by Marion Dayre, follows Lopez as she is pursued by Wilson Fisk aka Kingpin's (Vincent D'Onofrio) criminal empire.

When the journey brings her home, she must confront her own family and legacy.

Besides sharing the indigenous roots and disability with her character, the actor said she had another similarity with the character.

"Maya is a very complicated person, she's full of rage and I don't blame her. She grew up with a lot of traumatic events that happened to her.

In my childhood, since I was three years old, I've had surgeries that lasted a long part of my life because of my amputated leg. I was in the hospital a lot.

"I don't think that's usually normal for a child to have that many surger-

ies. But I grew up in a wonderful family. So, I would say that we have similar childhood traumatic events that happened to us."

The world of arts was totally new for Cox when she started her journey as an actor but Marvel was incredibly supportive of her, she said.

"This was very new to me in the acting world. I was very overwhelmed and so they did guide me and they taught me how to navigate through that. I just had a great support system that provided me with anything I needed.

"I got an acting coach and a personal trainer. And both of them were deaf, which was very cool and very nice. And there was a deaf consultant that was on set with me, translating all of the lines from English into American Sign Language (ASL)."

Cox recalled being nervous before meeting

D'Onofrio, known for movies such as "Jurassic World", "The Magnificent Seven", "The Eyes of Tammy Faye" and "Dumb Money".

"Vincent, he's just top tier. He's been in acting for a very long time.

When I met him, I wondered why I was so scared. He was so nice, but when the camera's on him, he is so intense.

And of course, I'm deaf when he has to yell at me, I can feel his vibrations through my body. So on camera, I would get a little bit scared, but off camera, he is completely opposite," she added.

"Echo", a five-episode series, also stars Chaske Spencer, Tantoo Cardinal, Devery Jacobs, Zahn McClarnon, and Cody Lightning.

The show, directed by Sydney Freeland and Catriona McKenzie, will start streaming on Disney+ Hotstar from Wednesday.

6, including four of family, die of 'asphyxiation' in Delhi

Two children were among the four killed in Alipur area in outer north Delhi

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Six people, including four members of a family, died allegedly after inhaling toxic fumes from coal braziers in two separate incidents in the National Capital, officials said on Sunday.



Delhi is reeling under severe cold conditions as the minimum temperature dropped to 3.5 degrees Celsius—this winter's lowest—on Sunday morning.

Two children were among the four killed in the incident in Alipur area in outer north Delhi, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Rakesh (40), who was a driver of a water tanker, his wife Lalita (38), their two sons Piyush (8), and Sunny (7), they said.

"On Sunday morning around 7 am, a PCR call was received at Alipur police station, saying one person was found lying unconscious at Khera Kalan village in Delhi. Immediately staff was rushed to the spot," a senior

police officer said.

Police found that the door of the room was locked from inside. "Our teams first broke the glass window and managed to open the door. Later, the team found four people inside of the room in an unconscious state. They were rushed to the hospital, where doctors declared them dead," the officer said.

Police said that the forensic team and the crime team found a coal brazier (angithi) inside the room.

Prima facie, it seems that all

four died due to suffocation, police said. Further investigation and proceedings into the matter has been started under section 174 of the CrPC, they said.

In a similar incident, two Nepali men were found dead in their room after they allegedly inhaled toxic fumes from a coal brazier in Inderpuri area of west Delhi, police said.

According to the police, the deceased have been identified as Ram Bahadur (57) and Abhishek (22).

Police said Bahadur was a driver by profession and Abhishek was working as a domestic help.

"A call was received at 8.30 am that two persons residing in a room are not opening their rented house door," a police officer said.

Police said that it was found that the two men were locked in their third-floor room from the inside.

"The door was forced open and two people were found unconscious. They were rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared them dead," the officer said.

"One 'angithi' with burnt residue was found in the room. There was one window that was found to be closed. No injuries were found on the bodies," said the officer.

Police have started further investigation and proceedings into the matter under section 174 CrPC.

'Ending my family's 55-year relationship': Milind Deora quits Congress



NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): In yet another high-profile exit from the Congress, former Lok Sabha MP Milind Deora quit the party on Sunday morning ending his family's 55-year-old relationship.

Deora is likely to join the Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena.

He was upset about Shiv Sena UBT, an INDIA bloc ally, staking claim to South Mumbai, for the upcoming General Election, a seat Deora wanted for himself.

Deora was MP from South Mumbai in 2004 and 2009 but lost in 2014 and 2019.

Earlier, his father late Murali Deora, a

senior minister under the Congress-led UPA regimes, represented the constituency.

Milind's exit follows a pattern of young leaders quitting the Congress.

Earlier, Jyotiradha Scindia, Jitin Prasad, RPN Singh, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Sushmita Dev and Jaiveer Shergill had resigned from the Congress to join BJP or other parties. Chaturvedi joined Sena UBT and Sushmita TMC.

The resignation could hit Congress prospects in Maharashtra where it is involved in a hard seat-sharing bargain with INDIA parties — NCP and Sena-UBT — for the 42 Lok Sabha seats.

"Today marks the conclusion of a significant chapter in my political journey. I have tendered my resignation from the primary membership of @INCIndia, ending my family's 55-year relationship with the party. I am grateful to all leaders, colleagues & karyakartas for their unwavering support over the years," Deora said announcing his exit from the Grand Old Party.

Congress general secretary organisation Jairam Ramesh said the timing of Milind's resignation had clearly been determined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rahul Gandhi is commending his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Manipur today.

Senior Congress leader T H Mustafa dies at 82

Mustafa was undergoing treatment for various ailments at a private hospital

KOCHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Senior Congress leader and former state minister T H Mustafa died on Sunday at a private hospital here due to multiple age-related ailments.

He was 82 and is survived by wife and eight children, family sources said.

Mustafa was a former Food Minister in the K Karunakaran Cabinet and a five-time legislator. He was undergoing treatment for various ailments at the private hospital where he breathed his last at 5.43 AM, hospital sources told agency.

Leaders cutting across party lines condoled Mustafa's demise.

Kerala Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Mustafa had left his mark on the public life of Kerala as a minister, a legislator and a Congress leader.



Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, V D Satheesan, said Mustafa strengthened the Congress and led it well in Ernakulam district.

KPCC chief K Sudhakaran termed Mustafa's demise as a 'great loss' to the party.

"He has played a major role in strengthening the Congress party in Ernakulam District. He was a great orator and an organiser. He used to help anyone who approached him, without considering their politics or religion," Sudhakaran said.

With the demise of T H Mustafa, Congress lost

a strong leader, AICC General Secretary in charge of Organisation, K C Venugopal, said in a statement. Venugopal noted that Mustafa rose to prominence in the Congress party through the Youth Congress.

"His immense contribution helped in the growth of Congress in the district. He supported the party by even selling his own property," Venugopal said.

Mustafa was the Ernakulam District Congress Committee President for 14 years and functioned as KPCC General Secretary and KPCC Vice President.

Timing of announcement determined by PM Modi: Congress on Milind Deora's resignation

IMPHAL, Jan 14 (Agencies): With its senior leader Milind Deora resigning just before the start of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, the Congress on Sunday alleged that the timing of the announcement of his departure from the party was determined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for headline management to counter the yatra, and asserted that it will have no impact.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh told agency that one Milind Deora goes away but "lakhs of Milinds who believe in our organisation and ideology stay".

Ramesh said Deora had spoken with him over phone this Friday and requested that he wanted to speak with Rahul Gandhi over his concerns over the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) laying claim to the South Mumbai Lok Sabha seat.

Both Milind Deora and his father Murli Deora



had served as MPs from Mumbai South.

"He messaged me on Friday at 8:52 AM and then at 2:47 PM I replied, 'Are you planning a switch?'. At 2:48 he sent a message, 'is speaking to you not possible?' I said I will call you and at 3:40, I spoke to him," Ramesh said.

"He (Deora) said he is concerned that it is a sitting Shiv Sena seat, he wanted to meet Rahul Gandhi and explain to him about the seat and also wanted me to talk to Mr. Gandhi about it," the Congress general secretary said.

"Obviously all this was a farce and he had

made up his mind to leave. The timing of the announcement of his departure was clearly determined by the PM," Ramesh alleged.

Pointing out at the timing of the announcement by Deora, Ramesh alleged that it has been decided by the PM and Deora was "just a puppet".

"The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is in all newspapers, TV, everywhere. So PM is a guru of headline management and has given a headline, 'Milind Deora leaves Congress', but this will have no impact," Ramesh told agency.

"One Milind Deora

goes away, lakhs of Milinds who believe in our organisation and ideology stay. Whether they get ticket or not it does not matter, they get disappointed for a few hours and then again get back to working (for the party). PM has made Milind Deora's going a headline but this will have no impact on our organisation," he asserted.

On his exchange with Deora a couple of days ago, Ramesh also said that Deora was "playing a game" with him.

"He spoke with me two days ago. I used to speak with him, he was a good friend of mine once upon a time," the Congress general secretary said.

In a post on X, Ramesh recalled his long years of association with seven-time Congress MP Murli Deora with great fondness.

"He (Murli Deora) had close friends in all political parties, but was a stalwart Congressman

who ALWAYS stood by the Congress party through thick and thin. Tathastu!" he said.

Former Union minister Deora on Sunday said he had resigned from the primary membership of the party.

In a post on social media platform X, the former South Mumbai Lok Sabha MP said, "Today marks the conclusion of a significant chapter in my political journey. I have tendered my resignation from the primary membership of the Congress, ending my family's 55 year relationship with the party. I am grateful to all leaders, colleagues and karyakartas for their unwavering support over the years."

Deora, who was recently appointed the joint treasurer of the All India Congress Committee, had expressed disapproval at the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) laying claim to the South Mumbai Lok Sabha seat.

Seven booked for marrying off 15-year-old girl in Indore

MHOW, Jan 14 (Agencies): An offence has been registered against seven persons for allegedly marrying off a 15-year-old girl in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, police said on Sunday.

Based on a complaint by an official of the women and child development department, a probe was undertaken into the marriage of

an underage girl from Mhow to a 24-year-old man from Dhar district, Manipur police station in-charge Arun Solanki said.

The wedding took place at a temple in Manpur on November 29, 2023, it was stated.

Documents related to the girl's age were recovered, and the complaint was found correct during the probe, after



which a case under the Child Marriages Prohibition Act was registered on Saturday evening,

the official said. The girl's parents, groom and his father, the priest, who had solem-

nised the marriage, and two others have been named as accused in the case, he said.

Provisions of other acts will be added in the case after recording the statements of the accused, Solanki said.

Child marriage invites two years of rigorous imprisonment or a fine of Rs 1 lakh or both under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

Man posing as casting director dupes 15 aspiring models in Delhi



NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): A conman, masquerading as a casting director, was arrested for allegedly duping over 15 struggling models on pretext of getting them assignments in events and photoshoots, a Delhi Police official said on Sunday.

The accused was identified as Gaurav Khanna (43), a resident of Malviya Nagar, and he was using social media platform Instagram to execute his plans to dupe models, said the official.

According to the police, an aspiring model lodged a complaint at the Kirti Nagar police station alleging that she connected with

Khanna through Instagram, where he presented himself as the casting director of the production house 'ANG Productions'.

"Khanna offered her a portfolio and urged her to make a payment of Rs 20,000. Subsequently, he proposed upcoming selections for a lehenga and jewellery shoot with a reputed company, asking for Rs 75,000," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Vichitra Veer.

In response, she transferred Rs 10,000 via UPI to the specified account. However, upon verifying with the mentioned company, she found that they had no association with ANG

Productions and had no planned shoots in Delhi. A visit to the ANG Productions office revealed that Gaurav Khanna had vacated the premises.

"During the investigation, the team identified Khanna's residential address and apprehended him in Malviya Nagar. At his behest, three mobile phones used in the commission of the crime, along with profile sheets and details of 15 aspiring models, were recovered," said the DCP.

On interrogation, Khanna revealed that he was previously employed in a production house for three years and he cited a low salary as the reason for opening a modelling agency named ANG Productions to quickly earn money.

"He promoted his agency on social media, attracting aspiring models whom he would deceive by promising photoshoots and events with renowned companies," said the DCP.

Milind Deora quits Congress: No compromise on South Mumbai Lok Sabha seat, says Sanjay Raut

MUMBAI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Against the backdrop of former Union minister Milind Deora quitting the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said there would be no compromise on the South Mumbai Lok Sabha seat.

Deora had recently expressed disapproval at the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) laying claim to the South Mumbai Lok Sabha seat.

The undivided Shiv Sena's Arvind Sawant, now with the Thackeray faction, had defeated Deora from the constituency in the 2014 and 2019 General Elections.

"Sawant is a two-time MP. What is wrong with him contesting again? There will be no



compromise on this," Raut asserted.

Queried on Deora quitting the Congress, Raut said, "We knew Murli Deora well and what it is to work for the party and sacrifice for it. If people change loyalties to contest elections, it shows a new trend has started in the state."

Deora was also the head of the Mumbai Congress at one time. He is the son of party stalwart late Murli Deora.

Earlier in the day, former chief minister and Congress Working Committee member Ashok Chavan said Deora wanted to contest from South Mumbai seat but the understanding within the MVA alliance was to not disturb the sitting MP.

Israel PM Netanyahu Says “No One Will Stop Us” As Gaza War Intensifies

“No one will stop us -- not The Hague, not the Axis of Evil and no one else. It is possible and necessary to continue until victory and we will do it,” Netanyahu said.

TEL AVIV, Jan 14 (Agencies): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that no one would stop Israel from achieving victory in its war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip.

“No one will stop us -- not The Hague, not the Axis of Evil and no one else. It is possible and necessary to continue until victory and we will do it,” Netanyahu told a televised press conference as the war in Gaza moves into its 100th day on Sunday.

He was referring to a case brought before the UN’s top court, the International Court of



Justice in The Hague, alleging Israel’s offensive is in breach of the UN Genocide Conven-

tion, and an alliance of Iran-backed armed groups around the Middle East dubbed the

Axis of Resistance.

He said the military assault in Gaza had already “eliminated most of the Hamas battalions” in the besieged Palestinian territory.

But he said that those displaced from northern Gaza would not be able to return to their homes any time soon.

“There is an international law and it says a simple thing -- you remove a population and you don’t allow it to return as long as the danger exists,” Netanyahu said.

“And the danger exists. There is fighting there (in northern Gaza).”

Canada plans cap on international students amid housing crisis

OTTAWA (CANADA), Jan 14 (Agencies): Amid the growing unemployment and housing crisis in Canada, Immigration Minister Marc Miller on Saturday said in the next few months, he will be looking at the possibility of putting a cap on the number of international students living in the country, CTV News reported.

The minister didn’t specify the extent of reduction the government is planning on making in the immigration system.

In an interview to CTV’s Question Period host Vassy Kapelos, the minister said, “This is a conversation the federal government will need to have with provincial governments “to make sure that the provinces that have not been doing their jobs actually rein in those numbers on a pure volume basis.”

“That volume is disconcerting,” Miller said, with reference to the number of international

students in Canada. “It’s really a system that has gotten out of control,” he added.

Miller said he would be looking at the possibility of setting a cap on international students to help reduce the demand for housing in both the first and second quarters of this year.

Asked why his government is only considering a cap now when the idea was floated months ago, Miller said there’s a need to sort out numbers on a federal level before looking with “a little more granularity” at what individual academic institutions are doing in different provinces, possibly profiting off bringing in more international students, CTV News reported.

“We need to be doing our jobs and making sure that we have a system that actually makes sure people have a financial capability to come to Canada, that we’re actually verifying offer letters,” Miller

said, adding, “And now it’s time for us to have a conversation about volumes and the impact that is having in certain areas.” A cap on international students would not be a “one-size-fits-all solution” to housing shortages across Canada, Miller noted.

On the number of international students coming to Canada, far outpacing the number of homes the federal government is planning to help build, Miller also said housing is only part of the calculation when it comes to immigration targets. The pressing need to bring down the average age of the workforce also needs to be taken into consideration, he said.

While not going into specifics, Miller said a cap on international students is something the federal government is considering, “and will continue to consider.” “We have a sense of what those numbers would look like, what



the reduction of those numbers look like, out of courtesy to my colleagues in the provinces, those are discussions that we’re first going to have around the negotiating table,” he said, adding that the financial needs of academic institutions is also a factor.

The federal government has faced criticism for welcoming an increasing number of immigrants--both permanent and temporary residents--while the country faces an acute housing shortage.

Meanwhile, CTV reported citing The Canadian Press, which

cited the internal documents obtained through an access to information request, the federal government was warned by public servants two years ago that its ambitious immigration targets could jeopardise housing affordability.

The Liberals have set targets aiming to bring in 485,000 immigrants this year, and 500,000 in both 2025 and 2026.

Temporary residents, largely comprising international students and migrant workers, are another part of the equation, with more than 3,00,000 of them arriving in Canada in just the third quarter of last year.

Maldives President Muizzu’s party loses Male Mayoral poll amid diplomatic row with India



MALE, Jan 14 (Agencies): In a setback to Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, the pro-India opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has secured a landslide victory in the capital Male’s Mayoral election.

The MDP candidate, Adam Azim, has been elected as the new Mayor of Male, a post held by Muizzu till recently. Muizzu resigned from the position to contest the presidential elections last year.

The Maldives media reported Azim’s win as a “landslide” and “victory by a large margin”.

The MDP is headed by pro-India former president Mohammad Solih, who was defeated by Muizzu, a pro-China leader, in the presidential elections.

With 41 boxes counted, Azim has taken a huge lead with 5,303 votes. His

rival Aishath Azima Shakoor of Muizzu’s People’s National Congress (PNC) got 3,301 votes, Maldives’ Sun Online news portal reported.

The poll on Saturday was marked by a low turnout, according to reports.

The Mayoral election victory is expected to revive the political fortunes of the MDP, which still holds a majority in Parliament.

Muizzu, who returned to Male on Saturday after a five-day state visit to China, congratulated Azim and pledged to cooperate with the Male City Council and the Mayor.

Azim said that his victory was a victory for all residents of Male.

Speaking to Mihaaru News, Azim expressed gratitude towards those who supported him and voted for him in the election. He also thanked MDP’s leadership and campaign teams.

The Mayoral polls were held in the backdrop of derogatory comments posted by three deputy ministers of the Muizzu government against Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading to a diplomatic row with India. During his high-profile visit to China, Muizzu sought to align Maldives closer to Beijing.

Muizzu suspended the three ministers after their social media postings, which stirred concern in India and calls for a boycott by Indian tourists who ranked highest in numbers followed by Russia. Chinese tourists figured third.

Coal miner’s son, thorn in China’s side: Taiwan’s new president-elect

China regards him as a “stubborn worker” for Taiwan’s independence and a “saboteur of peace”, warning that the soft-spoken politician would be the cause of “war and decline” for the island.

TAIPEI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Pugnacious, stubborn and a “pragmatic worker for Taiwan’s independence”, veteran politician Lai Ching-te will step into the international spotlight as the democratic island’s next president to navigate an increasingly turbulent relationship with China.

The 64-year-old Harvard graduate rode to victory in Saturday’s election on the promise that he would defend Taiwan’s democracy and resist Beijing’s claims on the island.

His win delivers an unprecedented third consecutive term for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and in his victory speech Lai hailed it as a “victory for the community of democracies”.

“We are telling the international community that between democracy and authoritarianism, we will stand on the side of democracy,” he said.

He has vowed to continue outgoing President Tsai Ing-wen’s policies of building up Taiwan’s military capabilities as a defence deterrence against a potential invasion from China.

But his outspokenness -- which he has moderated in recent months on his path to the presidency -- has drawn the ire of Beijing.

China regards him as a “stubborn worker” for Taiwan’s independence and a “saboteur of peace”, warning that the soft-spoken politician would be the cause of “war and decline” for the island.

“He has a track record of clear, strong de jure independence inclination,” said Alexander Huang, a military expert at Taipei’s Tamkang University.

“Unlike their attitude towards Tsai, China has... identified him as a worker for Taiwan independence.”

Son of a coal miner Unlike most of Taiwan’s political elite, Lai rose from humble origins.

Born in 1959, Lai was raised by his mother alongside five other siblings in a rural hamlet in New Taipei City, after his coal miner father died when he was a toddler.

After undergraduate study at National Taiwan University’s Department of Physical Medicine, Lai completed a masters in public health at Harvard University.

He became a senior doctor at a hospital in southern Taiwan before turning his attention to politics in 1996 during the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.

“My defining moment came as China’s military adventurism... threatened our shores with live fire exercises and missiles,” he wrote in an op-ed for The Wall Street Journal last July.

“I decided I had a duty to participate in Taiwan’s democracy and help protect this fledgling experiment from those who wished it harm.”

He served as a lawmaker, a mayor of the southern city of Tainan and a pre-



mier before he was tapped to be vice president to President Tsai, whom he will now succeed.

Under Tsai’s two-term tenure relations with China plummeted -- with all high-level communications cut off -- as she defended the island’s sovereignty and refused to acknowledge Beijing’s claim over it.

During his campaign for office, Lai stuck to her stance that Taiwan is “already independent”, and does not need to formally declare itself separate from China.

He has also said he is willing to have exchanges with China “on the preconditions of parity and dignity”, explaining that closer ties for economic prosperity should not be traded for Taiwan’s sovereignty.

“Accepting China’s ‘one-China’ principle is not true peace,” he said, referring to a Beijing doctrine that Taiwan is a part of China.

“Peace without sovereignty is just like Hong Kong. It is a false peace.”

“Much fiercer” During his time as premier, he was more vocal than Tsai about the issue of independence, which some say has top allies like the United States -- Taiwan’s main weapons provider -- concerned about how he will handle relations with China.

“The question will be to what extent Lai can stick to the cautious and moderate pathway carved out by Tsai,” said Amanda Hsiao of the International Crisis Group.

Sarah Liu of the University of Edinburgh said a Lai administration would continue on a path of “less economic reliance on China”.

“Through strengthening its international standing, Taiwan will gain more allies to further consolidate its democracy,” she said.

Tsai made a reference to his pugnacity in a campaign ad released this year ahead of the poll.

“You are much fiercer than I am... you step up and fight with others,” she said in a slickly edited commercial that showed the two driving along a picturesque highway.

“But I did it for the safety of my country... because protecting Taiwan’s democracy is the most important,” Lai responded before Tsai handed him the steering wheel.

Five Pakistan troops killed by blast in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, Jan 14 (Agencies): At least five Pakistan soldiers were killed when their vehicle was hit by a bomb blast following a clash with militants in southwestern Balochistan province, the military said Sunday.

The incident happened Saturday in Kech district of the turbulent province, where the military has been fighting a low-level insurgency for decades. “Terrorists exploded



an Improvised Explosive Device on a security forces’ vehicle, which was followed by an intense fire exchange,” the military said in a

statement. “During the operation, five brave soldiers, having fought gallantly, sacrificed their lives and embraced Shahadat

(martyrdom),” it added. Three militants were also killed in the clash, it said.

The South Asian nation of more than 240 million people votes on February 8 in a general election as it grapples with overlapping security, economic and political crises.

No group has claimed responsibility for Saturday’s attack, but ethnic Baloch separatists have been waging an insurgency for years in the

region, which is also riven by Islamist and sectarian violence.

Balochistan is also a major part of a Beijing-backed multi-billion-dollar infrastructure drive known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Baloch separatists have also previously claimed attacks on CPEC projects, and thousands of Pakistan security personnel are deployed in the region to counter the violence.

Brunei’s Prince Abdul Mateen’s wedding: Leaders and blue bloods among 5,000 guests

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Jan 14 (Agencies): Lavish celebrations for the wedding of Brunei’s Prince Abdul Mateen and his wife reached a climax Sunday with a glittering ceremony attended by government leaders and blue-blooded guests from Asia and the Middle East.

Mateen, 32, wore a ceremonial uniform while his 29-year-old bride was in a long white dress and sparkling jewels for the event at the sprawling Istana Nurul Iman palace. They made their first public appearance as a married couple in a procession through the normally sleepy capital Bandar Seri Begawan in front of thousands of onlookers.

The popular prince was one of Asia’s most eligible bachelors until he tied the knot with Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Anisha Rosnah, who is from a prominent family in Brunei. Mateen’s father is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the world’s longest-reigning monarch and once the richest man on the planet.

There was a festive atmosphere in the city with free ice cream on offer and soft drinks for sale as people began to take positions along the parade route hours before it began.

Wearing a traditional formal outfit and matching songkok hat, retired banker Haji

Suhaimin Abas, 66, was among the elite Bruneians to receive an invitation to the wedding ceremony. “This is a very big celebration,” he told agency as he ate breakfast before going to the palace.

Royalty from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Bhutan were listed among the reported 5,000 guests. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos were among government leaders in attendance.

“Once-in-a-lifetime moment” Sunday’s celebration is the highlight of 10 days of pomp and pageantry in the tiny country, whose extreme wealth is derived almost entirely from its enormous oil and gas reserves.

Mateen, a British-trained military officer in Brunei’s armed forces and a helicopter pilot, held court with his wife at the elaborate ceremony before invited guests.

The ceremony was steeped in tradition drawn from Brunei’s centuries-old history as an Islamic monarchy.

The couple stood in the back of an open-top Rolls-Royce waving to onlookers as they weaved through the capital, where their

images have been displayed on street arches and building facades for days.

Many of the sultan’s subjects lined the streets under a scorching sun to catch a glimpse of the couple.

Hajah Aminah Abd Morsidee, 91 who has seen five royal weddings in her lifetime, said she was “happy to see Prince Mateen marrying the beautiful Anisha”.

Schoolteacher Norliha Mohamad Din, 37, said it was a “once-in-a-lifetime moment”.

“I have seen Prince Mateen since he was small,” she said. “I’m very happy for him. This is one way of showing appreciation to the royal family.” As the 10th child and fourth son of the sultan, Mateen is unlikely to ever ascend the throne.

But he appears to have taken on the unofficial role of presenting a modern face for the royal family in a bid to connect with a younger generation of Bruneians raised on social media.

Mateen’s matinee idol looks and well-chiselled body have earned him a massive following on Instagram, where carefully curated photos and videos show him playing polo, dabbling in photography and posing in military uniform.

Utkarsh Bank and Institute of Professional Banking jointly launch Banking PO Program



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited (USFBL) and Institute of Professional Banking proudly announce their collaboration on an innovative Probationary Officer (PO) Program at Baddi University, Baddi. This initiative is aimed to on-board young talents aspiring for a career in Banking, transforming them into successful Bankers.

Collaborating with the Institute of Professional Banking, the goal is to shape the careers of aspiring individuals in the Banking sector, providing them with a comprehensive program that encompasses knowledge and skills in Branch Operations, Banking Products, Sales, Credit,

Customer Service, and other relevant day-to-day banking tasks. Successful candidates completing the program will be awarded a Post Graduate Diploma, along with a full-time employment opportunity with Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited.

Commenting on the collaboration, Govind Singh, MD & CEO, USFBL said, "The Utkarsh Probationary Officer Program is an initiative to on-board young talents keen to pursue a career in Banking. Our collaboration with the Institute of Professional Banking is a testament to our commitment to shape dynamic bankers and contribute to the growth of the banking sector in India."

Present on the occasion,

Mr Gursimran Singh Oberoi, Founder, Institute of Professional Banking said, "Collaborating with Utkarsh Small Finance Bank to build a talent pool in the banking sector is a significant step towards empowering the youth. The one-year Post Graduate Diploma, combined with full-time employment opportunities, ensures a holistic approach to education and career development."

job training, and online weekend classes in banking and finance. Successful candidates will join Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited as Probationary Officers, with the bank reserving the rights for role, grade, location, and department allocations.

Aus, NZ immigration medical examination centre inaugurates



Top News Report

JAMMU / CHANDIGARH, Jan 14: Haryana's first immigration medical examination centre for Australia & New Zealand visa aspirants inaugurated at Paras Health, Panchkula today. The centre will benefit the residents especially students from tricity, Haryana and Himachal.

Dr Dharminder Nagar MD and Dr Santy Sajjan COO Paras Health Group were present during the occasion.

The centre will offer expert panel physicians and radiologists across all specialties. It will provide fast and effective service with the empanelment of experts including Dr Rajesh Gera and Dr Sumit Jain both locum physicians, Dr Sunil Sanga senior locum radiologist & Shaleen Rana locum radiologist.

The centre will offer a hassle-free and quick VISA medical examination experience for the visa medical applicants, said a hospital spokesperson.

Drugs are destroying youth's career and life: Rajesh Kesri

Top News Report

ARNIA, Jan 14: Shiv Sena Hindustan's J&K President Pt Rajesh Kesri today participated in a religious program at village Jangwal of RS Pura Block and listened to the sermon of Swami Maharaj Rajesh Bittu and offered prayers in the temple. Kesri while addressing the people said that today's young generation is lagging behind in celebrating the religious festivals of the country. Some mischievous people are pushing the young generation towards drugs, which is very harmful for the country and the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Kesri further said that as long as the young generation does not obey their parents and respect their elders, drug sellers will dominate the young generation. Today's young generation should also pay attention to the progress of the country and take care of their family and



their health. Attention should also be paid to this because intoxication makes the body hollow from inside like a termite and destroys a person's thinking power, added Kesri. Kesri observed that because of this intoxication the children in the border areas have lost their parents and siblings. They lost their lives at such a young age due to drug addiction. He requested the young generation to respect their elders and also

pay attention towards their religious activities so that their mentality becomes capable of serving the country's progress and become great officers by focusing on their studies and health. Prominent among those present on the occasion include Balveer Kumar, Jangwal Pradhan, Captain Ghara Ram, Captain Omprakash, Rajesh Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Arnia Pradhan, Balwant Saini, Vishwanath, Pradhan Rajkumar, Sanjeev Sharma besides others.

SSH J&K Youth Wing protest against dilapidated condition of rural roads

Top News Report

BISHNAH, Jan 14: Shiv Sena Hindustan (SSH) J&K Youth Wing president, Ganesh Choudhary here today led a protest demonstration of SSH activists against the dilapidated condition of road from Bishnah to Rathana Morh connecting villages Deoli, Laswara, Slade and connecting many other villages. The protesters raised slogans against the District Administration and the concerned R&B authorities for total neglect of the road. Earlier SSH activists and locals assembled at Bishnah and raised slogans in support of their demand.

Speaking on the occasion, Ganesh said road safety seems the least priority for the administration and this is explicitly visible from the deplorable condition of roads which have become death traps for pedestrians especially motorists in border villages. The condition of some roads in the city is so bad that motorists are finding it difficult even to move at a slow pace. He said Bishnah road is in shambles with potholes everywhere after every 400 meter stretch. Everywhere potholes have become death traps for citizens. This phenomenon is

prevailing on road up to Rathana Morh, asserted Ganesh.

There is hardly any road in rural areas which is not in bad condition and become nightmare for pedestrians and motorists, Ganesh said. Despite tall claims of 24x7 developments the condition of roads is pathetic, he added. Blaming the administration for callous towards the bad condition of roads in rural areas, he said several persons have lost their lives while negotiating pothole on roads. They died due to negligence of administration as ensuring safe infrastructure is the duty of Govt.

While raining is said to be the main reason for the erosion, many point out that the poor quality of roads and use of sub-standard material primarily caused extensive damage. But who will bell the cat as the mix hot plants were all belongs to influential persons with political backgrounds, said an officer PWD, preferring anonymity.

Ganesh complained that the administration has failed to take steps to carry out measures to make the roads safe for pedestrians and motorists. In some places, the authorities have taken

up patchwork. But, the improper and sub-standard patchwork which is going on in careless manner has added to the woes of the commuters. "How do we ride cars or two-wheelers if we encounter deep potholes every 10 to 20 meters? We need to negotiate very carefully. Poor roads not only have become cause of frequent accidents but also increase the wear and tear of vehicles," said Ganesh.

Prominent among those present on the occasion include Samba District President Nek Ram, Chairman Vikas Kumar, Bishnah Vice President Shankar Singh, Bari Brahman President Sanjeev Kumar, Bari Brahmana General Secretary, Surinder Choudhary, Arina Block President Rinku Choudhary, Arnia Block Chairman Yashpal, Bari Brahmana Vice President Rahul Kumar, Arina Vice President Bharat Bhushan, Sunita Devi, Reena Devi, Sonia Choudhary, Rajni Devi, Tripta Devi, Santosh Devi, Madhu Devi, Suman Devi, Sonia, Sumit Devi, Prabhu Dayal, Mohanlal, Bhushan Kumar, Tarseem Lal, Rakesh Kumar, Pritam Kumar, Balkar Chand, Yash Pal, Sukhvinder, Gourab Kumar, Bari-brahmana President Sunita Devi Garo Devi.

Trailblazing Performance BMW Group India Celebrates Highest-ever Annual Sales in 2023

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: BMW Group India has continued its record-breaking success in 2023 by posting the best-ever annual sales (January – December) – for all three brands – BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad. BMW Group India delivered 14,172 cars (BMW and MINI) and 8,768 motorcycles (BMW Motorrad). BMW sold 13,303 units and MINI 869 units.

The year closed on a high note as all three brands clocked their highest sales for Quarter 4 - BMW 4,306 (+41%) | MINI 287 (+54%) | BMW Motorrad 1,990 (+3%). Quarter 4 of 2023 was also the best-ever quarter for BMW and MINI. December 2023 saw the highest-ever monthly sales for BMW and MINI.

Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "2023 has been a record-breaking milestone year for BMW Group India. All three brands – BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad –

have delivered their highest-ever sales. We have the most desirable brands and luxurious products. We have created bespoke experiences and services that ensure complete peace of mind and freedom to enjoy unlimited driving pleasure. As we change the game, our sight is set on increasing the market share and setting new benchmarks."

Vikram Pawah added, "BMW Group India has successfully retained its leadership in the electric luxury car segment for the second consecutive year. By blending driving pleasure with zero emissions, our luxurious offerings resonate with a growing clientele embracing a progressive and sustainable mindset. We continue to set the pace in the Indian electric luxury vehicle market with the most diverse and innovative product range, designed to cater to diverse customer needs. A perfect example is the BMW iX which is the highest selling luxury electric vehicle in India. With

proven strengths, future-oriented technologies and a robust premium charging network, we are confident of taking this to the next level."

BMW Group Electric Vehicles (EV) continued leadership in the luxury segment for second year in a row by registering a three-fold growth with 1,474 units. The BMW iX remains the largest selling luxury electric vehicle in India. BMW Group continues to dominate the luxury electric market with the most versatile portfolio - BMW i7, BMW iX, BMW i4, BMW iX1 and MINI SE. Launch of the first-ever BMW i7 and first-ever BMW iX1 further elevated the enthusiasm. Robust charging infrastructure in premium segment at BMW Group dealer network in 35 cities played a vital role in ensuring user confidence. MINI 3 Door Cooper SE is the highest selling premium electric hatchback in the country.

BMW India – 13,303 units (+18%)
BMW Luxury Class

which includes the BMW 7 Series, BMW i7, BMW X7 and BMW XM grew by +88%. The dominance of the BMW 7 Series as best-in-class was underlined by its win as the 'Premium Car Award 2024' at the prestigious Indian Car of the Year (ICOTY) awards. The 'Power of Choice,' encompassing petrol, diesel, and electric drivetrains, amplified appeal of the 7.

BMW Sports Activity Vehicles (SAV) which contributed 54% to annual sales volume saw the best-ever sales growing by +24%. The new X1 was the highest selling SAV with 20% contribution to overall sales. The X7 claimed spot of second highest deliveries.

The new BMW 3 Series was the highest-selling sedan with a share of 20% in sales.

MINI India - 869 units (+22%)

The locally produced MINI Countryman was the most popular model, dominating with a share of 55%. Sales for the electric MINI 3-Door

Cooper SE more than doubled, becoming the second-highest selling MINI model at 28%.

BMW Motorrad India - 8,768 units (+20%)

BMW G 310 models registered an impressive growth of +19% and maintained a share of 88% in overall sales. The core bikes available as completely built-up units saw a growth of +33%. Among core models, growth was determined primarily by the high-end GS adventure and RR sports segment.

Highest-ever BMW and MINI 360°

Customers enjoy great value and complete peace of mind with the 360° finance solution from BMW India Financial Services which offers attractive low monthly instalments, assured buy-back, flexible end of term options and an opportunity to upgrade to a new car amongst other benefits. 8 out of 10 cars financed by BMW India Financial Services are through BMW and MINI 360°.

FROM PAGE 1

Indian Armed Forces one of the finest in the World: IAF Chief

remember all the veterans who laid down their lives for the nation, the IAF chief said, adding, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty."

The IAF, the youngest of the Services, is only 91-years-old. And, as of December 31, 2023, "we have on record, 2,21,204 veterans," he said.

The IAF chief shared that it has been a diligent effort to reach out to each and every veteran.

"I am aware there are teething issues, we are taking up these issues constantly with the service providers and the Controller General of Defence Accounts," he said.

In his address, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhary also shared some data regarding SPARSH and other initiatives.

The System for Pension Administration (Raksha) or SPARSH is a web-based system for processing pension claims and crediting the pension directly into bank accounts of defence pensioners without any external intermediary.

"In the year gone by, 1.85 lakh legacy pensioners have been migrated onto SPARSH," the IAF chief said.

The Navy chief, in his address, underlined the contribution made by the veterans to the armed forces.

"I can say with conviction that our armed

forces of today are a product of the visionary leadership, unflinching efforts and selfless service of our veterans. I would like to assure each and every one of you that we will leave no water uncharted in carrying forward this legacy," Admiral Kumar said.

So, towards that end, Navy's efforts have been focused on being a combat-ready, credible, cohesive and future-proof force, he said.

"While pursuing our many operational commitments, the 'Bharatiya Nav Sena' remains committed to ensuring the welfare of our ex-servicemen," the Navy chief added.

The Navy has been following a multi-pronged approach of proactive outreach, positive interaction, and persistent communication to address various issues faced by our veteran community, Admiral Kumar said.

He noted that the outreach programme has been expanded.

"We are aware that the serving Navy is a transit Navy, while the veteran Navy is a permanent Navy, that is where finally all of us will reach," the Navy chief said.

The Indian Navy is privileged to have the continuing benefit of "your experience and wisdom", and, it looks forward to "your invaluable guidance, unstinted support and forthright suggestions to help us better address issues faced by both the services as well as the veteran community," he added.

Dense fog blankets

northern India with no respite from cold wave, visibility drops to zero

Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, and East Uttar Pradesh, while dense fog conditions were observed in isolated parts of Jammu, Chandigarh, West Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and South Interior Karnataka.

As per IMD data, visibility was recorded below 200 meters in Jammu division, Punjab, Delhi, West Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and Tripura on Sunday morning.

Also, moderate fog was observed in Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

Following dense fog conditions in the national capital, the Delhi police advised commuters to drive slowly and maintain proper distance.

The traffic was impaired in several parts of Delhi as thick fog caused low visibility.

More than 20 passenger trains were delayed due to dense fog and low visibility in the national capital.

According to Northern Railways, three trains are delayed by around six hours, namely Amritsar-Nanded Express, Katihar-Amritsar Express, and Jammu-Tawi-Ajmer Pooja Express.

At least four trains are running late by 3-3.30 hours, including Azamgarh-Delhi Kaifiyat Express, Puri-New Delhi Purushottam Express, Rewa-Anand Vihar Express, and Kamakhya-Delhi Junction Btahmputra Express, as per the railways' data.

Further, according to the railways, four

Delhi-bound trains, namely Prayagraj-New Delhi Express, Ambedkarnagar-Katra, Hyderabad-New Delhi Express, and Manikpur-Nizamuddin Express, are running behind schedule by around 2-2.30 hours.

In addition to these, as many as 11 trains are running late by around 1-1.30 hours. This included Kanpur-New Delhi Shramshakti Express, Saharsa-New Delhi Vaishali Express, Rajendranagar-New Delhi Express, Pratappgarh-Delhi Junction, Indore-New Delhi, Vasco-Nizamuddin, Chennai-New Delhi, Ferozpur-Mumbai Express, Amritsar-Mumbai Mail, and Bikaner-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Express.

Delhi airport authorities also issued an advisory for flyers following dense fog in the region.

The flight operations are likely to get affected due to the fog, airport officials said. Departure of a Delhi-Pune flight of Vistara airline was also delayed by about an hour on Sunday due to dense fog and poor visibility.

As per the airport officials, dense fog conditions continue to prevail in the region, causing zero visibility, and the Runway Visual Range (RVR) at all four runways continues to remain at 50 to 100 meters.

CAT III-B has been operational, they said. A CAT III-B is an automated system that helps with a precision approach and landing when the runway visibility is at a distance no less than 50 feet (15m) and is at a visual range that is less than 200 meters and most certainly not less than 50 meters.

The condition is likely to continue for the next two to three hours, they said.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) across Delhi dipped into the 'severe' category in several areas as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) amid the cold weather conditions.

AQI in Anand Vihar was recorded at 478, in JLN at 465, in IGI Airport (T3) at 465, and in ITO Delhi at 455.

MeT rules out any 'significant' weather activity in J&K till Jan 24

Gulmarg, the official said, recorded a low of minus 1.2°C against minus 1.0°C on the previous night and the temperature was 6.7°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir.

Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 2.5°C against 4.0°C on previous night, and it was the season's coldest night and below normal by 4.5°C for the winter capital of J&K.

Banihal recorded a low of minus 0.8°C, Batote 3.9°C and Baderwah 1.1°C, he said.

Kashmir valley is under 'Chillai-Kalan', the 40-day harsh period of winter, which will end on January 29. However it does not mean an end to the winter. It is followed by a 20-day-long period called 'Chillai-Khurd' that occurs between January 30 and February 19 and a 10-day-long period 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold) which is from February 20 to March 1.

Interim Budget 2024: Will standard deduction of Rs 50,000 get a hike?

Amongst the key expectations is a potential increase in the standard deduction limit from the current Rs 50,000. But is there a case for an increase in the standard deduction limit?

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): The Interim Budget 2024 is just around the corner and the middle-class taxpayers are holding their breath, hopeful for some relief in the form of income tax concessions.

If Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposes it in the interim budget 2024 scheduled for February 1, ahead of the general elections, it would provide a much-needed boost to the wallets of salaried individuals.

Amongst the key expectations is a potential increase in the standard deduction limit from the current Rs 50,000. But is there a case for an increase in the standard deduction limit?

A report from Anand Rathi talks about how a higher standard deduction is needed for salaried taxpayers to ease taxes for middle and lower-income groups without many investment options.

Understanding standard deduction

The concept of standard deduction was first introduced in India in 1974. In 2018, as part of broader tax reforms, it was reinstated to replace tax benefits for transport allowance and reimbursement of medi-



cal expenses.

The standard deduction that salaried individuals can claim against their taxable salary income, without the trouble of furnishing proof of actual expenses or investments made.

Stagnation since 2019 It has been nearly five years since the standard deduction underwent a revision, with the last adjustment taking place in 2019.

In the interim budget of February 2019, the standard deduction limit was set at Rs 50,000, but it was restricted to the old tax regime. A subsequent move in Budget 2023 extended this benefit to taxpayers opting for the new income tax regime as well.

The case for an

increase: Why Rs 50,000 may not be enough?

Several reasons underscore the need for a revision in the standard deduction limit:

1. Rising inflation: With inflation on the upswing since 2019, the current standard deduction seems inadequate to meet the escalating living costs for salaried individuals.

"Periodical revision of Standard Deduction is required to account for the rising cost of living expenses incurred by the salaried class," an Anand Rathi Advisors Limited report said.

2. Equity in tax benefits: Increasing the standard deduction aligns the tax benefits for job earners with those deriving income from busi-

ness or profession, who can claim deductions for related expenses.

3. Work-from-home dynamics: The lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has made remote work a permanent fixture for many. Increased spending on home office infrastructure calls for a higher standard deduction to offset these expenses.

"Increasing the standard deduction would compensate employees for increased electricity cost, food expenses, infrastructure cost etc," the report mentioned.

4. Increase in indirect taxes: Raising standard deductions will help people who earn a salary spend more on things, indirectly boosting the government's GST revenue.

"An increase in standard deductions will lead to a greater ability of the salaried class to spend on items which will indirectly increase the GST revenue for the government," the report explained.

5. Massive surge in medical bills: The tax advantage for getting money back on medical expenses was taken away with the introduction of the standard deduction. And since medical costs are going up, the limit for the standard deduction should too.

"The tax benefit on reimbursement of medical expenses was withdrawn with the introduction of standard deduction. Rising medical costs, the standard deduction limit should also be enhanced," it said.

Further, a higher standard deduction can incentivise more taxpayers to embrace the new income tax system, streamlining the process and making it more attractive.

A boosted standard deduction injects spending power into the hands of taxpayers, especially those with fixed incomes like pensions. This can bolster economic growth by supporting consumer spending.

Vedanta Resources faces second S&P downgrade amid "distressed" bond extension

This is the mining company's second downgrade within the same week, following Moody's corporate family rating and senior unsecured bonds downgrade



NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Global credit rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) has downgraded Vedanta Resources to among its lowest ratings, citing a "distressed" bond extension move, marking the second downgrade of the company this week.

This is the mining company's second downgrade within the same week, following Moody's corporate family rating and senior unsecured bonds downgrade.

The distressed bond extension, a financial tool often used by companies facing financial difficulties, allows Vedanta to postpone the repayment of its debts. While this might provide a short-term respite, it raises concerns about the company's long-term financial health.

S&P lowered Vedanta's issuer rating to "SD" or "selective default" from the previous "CC" grade. This shift indicates S&P's belief that Vedanta has defaulted on certain payments but is expected to fulfill other obligations in a timely manner.

This latest downgrade is a consequence of Vedanta's decision to extend the maturities of three US dollar-denominated bonds. S&P viewed this move as "distressed" and expressed concern over the proposed transaction's terms, deeming them insufficient compensation for the maturity extension and some cash flow subordination to a new financing facility.

This development follows earlier downgrades by S&P in September

and December and by Moody's in September. These earlier rating adjustments were prompted by apprehensions about Vedanta's cash requirements.

Vedanta, burdened with a substantial \$6.4 billion in outstanding debt, including a sizeable \$4.5 billion payment due by fiscal 2025, has been actively seeking ways to fortify its financial position. Last week, the company announced receiving bondholders' support to restructure some of its near-term debt.

Anil Agarwal, the Chairman of the Vedanta Group, has been spearheading efforts to reduce debt, including an unsuccessful attempt to privatise the company in 2020 and plans to split Vedanta into six distinct entities.

Bladder cancer: New techniques improve treatment outcome

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Five years back, a 50-year-old woman was diagnosed with advanced bladder cancer. Reluctant about bladder removal, she opted for the creation of an artificial bladder. She underwent chemotherapy, followed by surgery and had an artificial bladder created. Today, the Kerala-based woman, who completed the treatment without any complications, remains well and cancer-free.

In another case, a 55-year-old Delhi resident who was detected with the same cancer, robotic surgery was performed as the disease had not yet spread elsewhere. The patient was back to daily routines within two weeks.

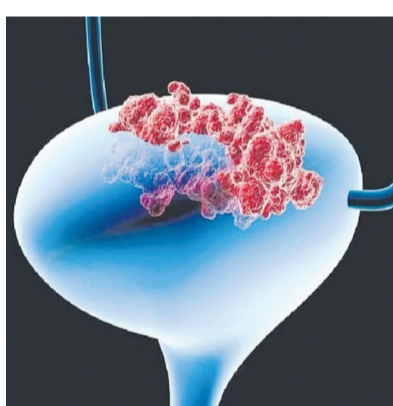
New treatment methods like artificial bladder created using one's tissues and robotic surgery are improving outcomes and standard of living. "Nowadays, this is done with robotic surgery, which reduces the morbidity of the procedure. These are advantages in the current era with new treatment methods like robotic surgery," said Dr Giniil Kumar P, professor and HOD of Urology, Amrita Hospital, Kochi.

Bladder cancer is a common type of cancer detected in both men and women, but its prevalence is high in men. Though both men and women can get bladder cancer, it is prevalent in men nearly four times more compared to women, with incidence rates of 9.5 per lakh males and 2.4 per lakh females globally.

"With proper evaluation and early diagnosis, bladder cancer can be treated completely," said Dr Vimal Dassi, director of the department of urology, uro-oncology, robotics and kidney transplant, Max Healthcare, Vaishali and Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

Bladder cancer begins in the cells of the bladder - a hollow muscular organ in the lower abdomen that stores urine. As per GLOBOCAN 2020, an online database providing global cancer statistics and estimates of incidence and mortality in 185 countries for 36 types of cancer, bladder cancer is ranked 17 in incidence and 19 in mortality in India.

"After prostate cancer, bladder



cancer is commonly found among those above 60 years of age, especially men," said Dassi.

"Though smoking increases the chances of bladder cancer, in India, a lot of bladder cancer is not directly linked to smoking, and even non-smokers can get bladder cancer," said Giniil, who treated the Kerala-based woman. He added that genetic abnormalities can also cause aggressive bladder cancer. Other reasons for the disease are advanced age and exposure to certain chemicals.

"Occupational and environmental exposure, such as tobacco dyes, are the other factors that could lead to bladder cancer. Those working as rubber professionals, hairdressers, painters and leather workers are at increased risk of bladder cancer," added Dassi.

There are two types of bladder cancer. The first is non-muscle invasive, in which the tumour is removed via transurethral route using a cystoscope - endoscopy is done through the urinary tract - followed by intravesical therapy.

The second is muscle-invasive bladder cancer or metastatic bladder cancer. It is advanced bladder cancer in which the tumour has invaded the bladder wall and spread outside the bladder. This requires surgery.

"Treatment modalities for urinary bladder cancer encompass a range of options tailored to individual cases. These may involve surgical interventions, chemotherapy, immunotherapy and radiation therapy. Selecting a particular treatment strategy depends on the stage of cancer, overall health status and specific patient considerations," said Dr Satish Pawar, senior consultant and head of sur-

gical oncology, CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

While Cisplatin or carboplatin are the main chemotherapy drugs, there are various newer drugs and immunomodulatory agents for advanced cancer cases where patients do not respond to routine chemotherapy drugs.

"A significant breakthrough was when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Enfortumab vedotin (Padcev) and Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) on December 15 as newer drugs for first-line treatment for those in advanced cases," said Dassi.

However, patients with metastatic bladder cancer are often elderly and unfit to receive chemotherapy. In such clinical scenarios, immunotherapy such as Atezolizumab/Pembrolizumab as monotherapy can be a reasonable option. "Immunotherapy drugs have better safety profile than chemotherapy and can be easily tolerated in patients who are ineligible for platinum-based chemotherapy," said Dr Randeep Singh, senior consultant and director of medical oncology, Narayana Super Speciality Hospital, Gurgaon.

"The primary treatment of early urinary bladder cancer is surgery involving partial or complete removal of bladder along with lymph nodes in the same region (radical cystectomy)," said Singh.

"Robotic surgery offers many advantages such as reduced blood loss, minor scars, quicker recovery, improved outcomes and enhanced visualisation of the surgical field, coupled with patient satisfaction in the treatment of bladder cancer," added Dr Mohan Keshavamurthy, senior director, of Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru, and chairman, renal sciences speciality council, Fortis Healthcare.

Dr Akash Shah, consultant, urological and robotic oncoSurgeon, HCG Cancer Center, Borivali, Mumbai, said vigilance towards painless blood in urine, frequent urination, urgency or burning micturition are symptoms not to be ignored. "Apart from medical interventions, lifestyle modifications like quitting smoking, avoiding workplace irritants and maintaining hydration can mitigate risks."

Breastfeeding in infant's first three months linked to lower obesity risk in childhood

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Consistent breastfeeding in the first three months after birth was associated with a lower risk of developing obesity in childhood, according to a new research.

The findings were observed in infants fed either exclusively through breastfeeding or through a mix of breastfeeding and baby formula, and that it did not depend on the mother's pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI).

The research, led by scientists from the Michigan State University in the US, found that the link between breastfeeding and obesity appeared stronger for children whose mothers were 'obese' before pregnancy, compared to women 'overweight' before becoming preg-

nant.

A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered 'overweight', while a BMI of 30 or higher is considered 'obese'.

The team also found that each additional month of breastfeeding correlated with a significantly lower child BMI z-score, which refers to the BMI of children and adolescents.

"Our findings highlight that each additional month of breastfeeding, whether a consistent amount or exclusively, may contribute to a lower weight later in childhood, especially for mothers who had obesity before pregnancy," said Gayle Shipp, assistant professor at Michigan State University, and lead researcher of the study published in the journal Pediatrics.

While previous research has shown breastfeeding to protect children against obesity and other chronic conditions, the researchers said that this relationship had not been studied much in women with obesity.

So they wanted to examine the link between breastfeeding women who were overweight and obese prior to pregnancy and their child's BMI z-score between 2 and 6 years of age.

For the study, the researchers looked at BMI measurements of 8,134 pairs of mothers and kids at 21 study sites in 16 US states and Puerto Rico. The researchers calculated BMI and BMIz scores from measurements taken at study visits,

medical records, or self-reported data for the mother and child.

The researchers examined two different breastfeeding situations: children who received any breastfeeding in three months or received and children who received exclusive breastfeeding for three months.

The first measure includes allowing for baby formula or other food apart from breastfeeding and the second refers to breastfeeding with no formula feeding or other food, the team explained.

"Health professionals can use this study's findings as an opportunity to encourage and promote breastfeeding among all women, especially those who have obesity," said Shipp.

AI used to remove severe blood clots from 62-year-old patient for first time

GURUGRAM, Jan 14 (Agencies): A 62-year-old patient, who had a blood clot in his lung and in a deep vein in his leg, was treated using Artificial Intelligence technology at Medanta Hospital in Haryana's Gurugram.

According to doctors, this "ground-breaking technology" minimises blood loss, reducing complications such as anemia, in addition to expediting patient recovery. "Instead of opening the chest and the arteries, you can suck out the blood clots. The AI aspect is where you can suck out the clots without sucking out the blood. In the past we would have to do a major operation, and there would be an element of risk as well," Dr Naresh Trehan, cardiologist and Chairman of the Medanta Hospital said.

Narendra Singh, a pilot by profession, was admitted to the emergency room with short-

ness of breath, sudden leg pain, and swelling. "Using the Penumbra Flash 12 F catheter, the blood clots were removed. This approach navigated complex veins and provided immediate relief from pain and swelling. The patient was cleared for discharge within 48 days with follow-up treatment instructions," Dr Tarun Grover, who performed the procedure, said.

Unlike old surgical methods, this procedure is done with local anaesthesia and the patient is awake to witness the procedure himself, the doctor explained. Dr Rajiv Parakh, an Endovascular specialist also stated, "Unlike other procedures that

may result in considerable blood loss and longer recovery, Penumbra Lightning minimises such risks. It ensures quicker rehabilitation, reduces complications and improves overall recovery time."

"The introduction of this technology signifies a remarkable advancement in aiding individuals afflicted with pulmonary embolism, enabling faster recovery and improved outcomes," Dr Naresh added.

The Medanta has also piloted a PERT (Pulmonary Embolism Interventions and Response Team) programme, to improve awareness about this condition which can turn fatal even for youngsters.

Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma the focus in second Afghanistan T20I tie

Their approach to batting in Sunday's game at Indore will dictate discussion on the squad India should pick as they build-up to the T20 World Cup

INDORE, Jan 14 (Agencies): Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are no strangers to the spotlight. If the scrutiny feels a bit different right now, it's because they are polarising opinion on whether they merit a place in the India set-up for perhaps the first time since they established themselves. It's a legitimate discussion in the T20 scheme of things given that they hadn't played for India in the format for 14 months before their recall for the Afghanistan series.

The debate is likely to linger all the way through the build-up to the T20 World Cup. For the time being though, Sharma and Kohli have an opportunity to get runs and show that they can mould their game to the ever-changing demands of the shortest format. Sharma didn't enjoy a smooth beginning to the three-match series in Mohali, run out for zero off the second ball of the innings after a mix-up with Shubman Gill.

Kohli missed that game to celebrate his daughter's birthday. Both will be hoping to launch big hits with impactful knocks in the second T20I at Indore's Holkar Stadium on Sunday, against an Afghanistan attack missing the injured Rashid Khan.

While Sharma and Kohli are second to none when it comes to run-making ability, the way they score their runs has to probably change. With run rates constantly on the rise in the T20 format, India's batting template seemed archaic when they endured back-to-back disappointments in T20 World Cups



in the UAE and Australia in 2021 and 2022. Sharma and Kohli were at the forefront of these campaigns and their omission for the T20s India played in 2023 seemed to imply that the selectors were moving on.

But having been picked for these matches against Afghanistan, it's likely that both will embark on that journey to the Caribbean and United States in June. That they are in prime form isn't to be contested. In the ODI World Cup two months ago, Kohli topped the run-scoring charts with 765 runs in 11 innings at an average of 95.62 while Sharma finished second with 597 runs at 54.27.

The India skipper's approach at the 50-over marquee event came as a breath of fresh air, showing that he's willing to attack from the outset. But it's also pertinent to note that his T20 returns have dipped alarmingly in recent years. In 2022, he was averaging below 30 and striking at under 140 in T20Is.

He hasn't crossed 400 runs in an IPL season since 2019.

In Kohli's case, he is an ace chaser who can tailor his approach as per the asking rate. His mastery was illustrated emphatically during his unbeaten 82 against Pakistan at the 2022 T20 World Cup, steering India to a four-wicket victory in a run chase of 160 from 31/4. But when India are batting first, his approach tends to occasionally border on overcaution.

In the time that Sharma and Kohli were away from the T20 set-up, the youngsters have been able to make a strong impression. Whether it's Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rituraj Gaikwad or Rinku Singh, they have all had their moments to suggest that India's supposed second line of T20 batters is ready for the responsibility. Consider adding Shivam Dube to this list after the left-handed batter struck an unbeaten 40-ball 60 in the first T20I at Mohali.

"It was a very good performance in the last match. I hope to do even better for the team. The plan is to perform well and keep contributing with bat and ball," Dube told reporters ahead of the second T20I.

Dube certainly solidifies the bench strength, but most of these youngsters could argue that their time is now as another T20 World Cup looms. Particularly Jaiswal and Rinku, who have done all that was asked of them in recent months. Jaiswal's 15 T20Is for India have yielded 430 runs at a strike rate of 159.25. Jaiswal was unavailable for the first T20I due to a sore groin, but he's likely to slot in at the top of the order alongside Sharma if he has recovered. "As of now, we will be opening with Rohit and Jaiswal," India coach Rahul Dravid had said on the eve of the opening game.

Even more irresistible is the case made by Rinku lower down the order. His breakthrough came at last year's IPL, where his exploits included plundering five sixes in the final over against Gujarat Titans seamer Yash Dayal. The 26-year-old hasn't put a foot wrong for India either, returning 278 runs in 13 T20Is at a strike rate of 180.51.

It's unclear who among these many contenders will eventually make it to India's 15-member squad. With India having only two more T20Is before the World Cup, a clearer picture may emerge only when IPL commences.

Yuvraj Singh hints at mentoring role to prepare Team India for challenges ahead



KOLKATA, Jan 14 (Agencies): World Cup-winning hero Yuvraj Singh hinted at a potential mentorship role in the future to mentally prepare the Indian cricket team for the challenges ahead. India have waited endlessly in their quest for an ICC trophy, with the team suffering another defeat in the 2023 World Cup final against Australia last year.

India won the Champions Trophy under Mahendra Singh Dhoni in 2013, while their last World Cup triumph came in 2011.

"I feel that we have played a lot of finals but not won one. I was part of one of the finals when we lost to Pakistan in 2017," the 42-year-old said while inaugurating 'Yuvraj Centres of Excellence' at Merlin Rise here.

"In the coming years, we definitely need to work on, as a country and as an Indian team, performing better under pressure.

"Australia have won six World Cups, and we have (won) two. How we win major championships is something we need to work on," added Yuvraj.

India have lost two consecutive World Test Championship finals (2021, 2023) and exited the 2015 and 2019 ODI World Cups at the semifinal stage. India, after emerging champions in

the 2007 T20 World Cup, were ousted in the 2014 final and lost in the last-four stage of the 2016 and 2022 editions.

Expressing concern, he said, "I feel, yes, there is something (missing). When the big moment comes, our physical preparation is there, but mentally we need to make those decisions.

"I think, that is something I was talking about—motivating the young guys, teaching them how to handle pressure and play their game. That's been our challenge. We have the game, and we have guys who can bat under pressure, but the whole team has to do that, not just one or two guys.

"Mentoring is something I love to do. In the coming years, when my kids are settled, I want to give back to cricket and help the young guys get better. I think we face a lot of mental challenges in big tournaments. I believe in the mental aspect, I can really come in and work with these guys in the future.

"I feel that I can contribute a lot, especially in the middle order. I have the confidence to work with the young guys, addressing not only their technique but also the mental challenges that come with cricket."

IPL route
The stylish former India all-rounder indicated he would like to be a mentor of an IPL side.

"Let's see what opportunities I get, but my priority is my kids right now. Once they start school, I will have more time. So I can pick up (coaching). I love working with the young guys, especially my state boys, and I feel that mentoring is something that I would love to do, and definitely to be part of one of the IPL teams, I'm definitely looking at.

"I asked Mr Ashish Nehra (Gujarat Titans) for a job, but he declined it. So, let's see where else I can get a position, but at the moment, I have to balance."

"So, definitely in the coming years, I want to give back to cricket and help the young guys get better. I can contribute a lot."

"Hasn't Grabbed His Chance": Ex India Star Names Player To Be Dropped For Virat Kohli In 2nd T20I

NEW DELHI, Jan 14 (Agencies): Following India's win over Afghanistan in the first T20I, former Indian opener Aakash Chopra expressed his disappointment with Tilak Varma's recent performances, saying that he has not grabbed his opportunities fully and might have to make way for Virat Kohli and Yashasvi Jaiswal in upcoming matches of the three-match series. A half-century by Shivam Dube and a cameo by Jitesh Sharma helped India secure a six-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first T20I of the three-match series at Mohali.

On his YouTube channel after the match, Aakash said, "After Rohit (Sharma) and Shubman (Gill) got out, Tilak Varma was there and Shivam Dube was sent up the order. Tilak Varma played well for some time but then also got out off (Azmatullah) Omarzai's bowling. Tilak Varma has not grabbed his chance fully."

"Will Tilak Varma play the next match? I feel he might get dropped because if both Virat Kohli and Yashasvi Jaiswal become available, who will go out? No one can leave Shivam Dube out nor will anyone touch Rinku Singh. Do not know about Shubman Gill but I feel Tilak Varma might be dropped for the next match," he added.

In 16 T20Is so far, Tilak has scored 336 runs in 15 innings at an

average of 33.60 and a strike rate of 139.41, with two half-centuries.

But following a great debut series in West Indies, Tilak's performances have not been at his very best as he has scored just 163 runs in 10 innings at an average of 23.28, with one fifty.

Aakash Chopra was also critical of wicket-keeper-batter Jitesh Sharma's dismissal, urging him to convert his fine starts to solidify his spot in the team, with Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson also battling for his spot as glovesmen.

"Jitesh played a good knock. Let me put my hand up and say that Jitesh played well but he will have to be mindful that he needs to finish matches because he could have done that. He is batting so beautifully."

"If he converts his 31 runs to 45-50 and finishes the match, there would not be any doubt, because his place is not yet cemented. It is going to take some time because, for that slot, Sanju Samson is there for sure, don't rule out see him bat down the order in the IPL, and Rishabh Pant's name can come if he gets fit," he concluded.

Coming to the match, put to bat first by India, Afghanistan had a good start, with skipper Ibrahim Zadran (25 in 22 balls, with two fours and a six) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (23 in 28 balls, with two fours and a six) adding 50 runs for the

first wicket.

After Indian bowlers reduced Afghanistan to 57/3, A 68-run partnership between Azmatullah Omarzai (29 in 22 balls, with two fours and a six) and Mohammed Nabi (42 in 27 balls, with two fours and three sixes) bringing them back into the match. A solid partnership between Najibullah Zadran (19*) and Karim Janat (9*) at the back end of the innings took them to 158/5 in 20 overs.

Axar Patel (2/23) and Mukesh Kumar (2/33) were the pick of the bowlers for India. Shivam Dube got one wicket.

In the chase of 159, India lost skipper Rohit Sharma for a duck on his return to T20Is. Shubman Gill (23 in 12 balls, five fours) showed intent but could not convert his start into a big score. A 44-run stand between Shivam Dube and Tilak Varma (26 in 22 balls, with two fours and a six) brought India back into the match. Later, a 45-run stand between Shivam and Jitesh Sharma (31 in 20 balls, with five fours) took India close to a win. Dube scored his second T20I half-century, getting 60 in 40 balls with five fours and two sixes and joined forces with Rinku Singh (16*) to win the game for India.

Mujeeb ur Rahman took two wickets for Afghanistan, while Omarzai got a wicket. Dube got a 'Player of the Match' award for his all-round show.

Transfer News: Juventus eye Jordan Henderson on loan deal from Al-Ettifaq

ROME, Jan 14 (Agencies): Adding to the long-going saga about Jordan Henderson wanting a move away from Saudi Pro League side Al-Ettifaq, the player might have just received a call of good fortune with an interest from an Italian club.

Henderson's move to Saudi Pro League side Al-Ettifaq has turned into somewhat of a mishap for the 33-year-old English midfielder. Even after signing top names like Georgino Wijnaldum and roping in former Liverpool player Steven Gerrard as coach, Al-Ettifaq has not had the best season so far as they sit eighth in the points table.

Amongst the others who are having a tough time at the Saudi club, Jordan Henderson is someone who might have received a decent getaway card in his career. As the January transfer window drew closer, Henderson has been linked to a move away from Al-Ettifaq with



many club names supposedly interested in his services.

According to renowned Italian sports journalist Gianluca Di Marzio, Serie A giants Juventus, are now looking more than likely to bag Henderson's services within January. Henderson, who is said to be having difficulty adapting to the Saudi Pro League, both on and off

the pitch, has been desperately looking for a move away from Saudi, insisting on a move back to Europe.

The implications of a Juventus move for Henderson

Juventus reportedly considers Henderson to provide strength to their squad, making them offer a loan-deal for the player. Amid Al-Ettifaq's poor run of

form in the league and a brutal kick to his reputation following his move to Saudi, Henderson could also face a huge payout if the Juventus move pulls through.

Upon his move in July, reports indicated that Henderson's contract in Saudi Arabia spans up to three years, with a weekly value of nearly 700,000 euros (892,000 USD) - over three times his Liverpool salary. If he departs in January, there's a potential obligation for the player to repay 7 million euros (9 million USD) in taxes.

Henderson was widely criticised for his move to the Saudi side due to him being one of the leading names to support LGBTQ and ultimately moving to a country where homosexuality is deemed illegal. This move might give Henderson a last drive to save whatever's left of his off-field reputation.

IND vs AFG: First-ever bilateral series vs India a step in right direction for Afghanistan, says Jonathan Trott



INDORE, Jan 14 (Agencies): Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott has backed the senior men's side to play many more bilateral series while adding that their first-ever bilateral series against India is a 'step in the right direction.'

Afghanistan played a one-off Test match against India in 2018 and now the 2 teams are squaring off in a

3-match T20I series. India are leading the T20I series 1-0 against Afghanistan as the visitors suffered a six-wicket loss to the hosts in the series opener. The next match will be played at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore today.

Ahead of the 2nd T20I match, Trott addressed the press conference and praised his team's progress over the years to finally play a bilateral

series against a cricketing giant like India.

"The bilateral series (against India) is a step in the right direction for our side. It's an indication of the progress made by the side," said Trott.

However, Trott feels that Afghanistan deserves to play bilateral series against other nations as well. Afghanistan are yet to face South Africa, Australia or England in bilateral matches.

"Hopefully, it can happen all over the world and not just in India. We want to play as many series as possible in other countries as well."

Trott acknowledged that the Afghan players have experience of playing franchise

cricket and have played against international stars across many leagues. However, he feels that the experience and exposure provided by a bilateral series is unmatched.

"The more cricket we play as a team, the better it is for us. The players will get more exposure. At the moment, their exposure is limited to franchise cricket. This is the first bilateral series against India, and it's a big occasion for the side. Individually, the players have been around the world, but we hope to go to countries as a team," Trott said.

Trott's contract as the head coach of the team was extended for a year by the Afghanistan Cricket Board after his successful stint with

the team. Afghanistan showcased their readiness to face bigger opposition with their successful ODI World Cup 2023 campaign.

They managed to beat former World Champions like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and England and thrashed Netherlands and even came close to defeating the eventual champions Australia, before Maxwell produced one of the greatest knocks in white ball cricket. Afghanistan managed to win 4 out of the 10 matches to finish off in the 6th spot in the league stage.

The team will be playing against Sri Lanka, followed by Ireland in their preparations for the T20 World Cup, which begins from June 1.

Silver jubilee of Haryana Women Commission

Prabhu Razdan

JAMMU/ NEW DELHI, Jan 14: While highlighting achievements of women in multiple fields, Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Friday said Indian women excel in every sector bringing laurels to the country globally.

The Governor exhorted the girls to focus on education, the most powerful weapon for a change.

Haryana Governor Dattatreya was speaking at the concluding ceremony of the two day Silver jubilee of Haryana Women Commission in Surajkund on Delhi-Haryana border on Friday.

"I being Chancellor of Haryana Universities am witness to a change, woman have become", Dattatreya said, citing an example of a recent University convocation where maximum gold medals were awarded to girl students.

Elaborating on several government schemes meant for women, Haryana Governor said that beti bachav beti padav campaign launched from Haryana has considerably improved sex ratio in Haryana.

He said society and the Governments don't tolerate atrocities to women suggesting girl student present at the venue to learn judo karate for self defence.

He said Haryana was



the first state in the country which reserved 50 percent seats for women in village Panchayats.

The Governor appreciated the efforts of Haryana Women Commission led by Renu Bhatia, its Chairperson for uniting Women change makers through the silver jubilee celebration of Haryana Women Commission.

Dattatreya, and other dignitaries present released report of Haryana Woman Commission also.

Earlier, multiple panel discussion on different subjects related to women were held.

It may be mentioned it was for the first time in the history of Haryana Women Commission, two days International Women Summit was held began at with Women activists from across India and abroad, girl students, dignitaries from different countries participating.

The Summit marked silver jubilee of creation of Haryana Women Commission in 1999. The Summit was inaugurated by Rekha Sharma, Chairperson of National Women Commission on Thursday.

Host of the Summit, Renu Bhatia, Chairperson of Haryana Women Commission said that the Summit was organized to showcase achievements of Women in multiple fields and to celebrate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's number of Women centric initiatives like Beti Bachav Beti Padav, reservation to Women in Parliament and State assemblies.

She said the idea behind organising the International Women Summit on Haryana soil was to empower women in diverse fields and in this regard provide an opportunity for women to promote gender equality in business world, enhance

economic & educational empowerment, address health concerns facing women, enhance global collaboration in business domain etc.

Among the speakers on Friday who spoke were Nazneen Bhasin, DIG, Haryana, Ranjita Mehta from Haryana Balvikas Parishad, Bala Bhattarai from Shakti Samuha, anti human trafficking, Nepal, Nivedita Anandmayee, spiritual preacher etc.

On Thursday Darakhshan Andrabi, Chairperson of Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board,

Shahida Parveen, DSP with Jammu & Kashmir Police shared her experience while fighting terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mesmerizing cultural programmes Showcasing art, culture and heritage of Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and many other places also held

leaving the audience spell bound.

Kanta Singh, Deputy representative, India women wing of United States, Ranjita Pai, Chairperson of Goa State Women Commission, noted broadcaster Salma Sultan, Maimansa Malik, noted anchor, Gauri Sawant, transgender activist from Mumbai, Shabnam "Mausi", the first transgender Indian to be elected to public office MLA to Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly, ambassadors of some countries also spoke on Thursday.

According to organisers of the summit, Haryana State Commission for Women (HSCW), a beacon of empowerment, advocating for women's rights in Haryana serves as a statutory body dedicated to upholding the fundamental rights outlined in the Constitution of India. With a core focus on issues such as dowry, molestation, domestic violence, adultery, rape, gender inequality, and female feticide, HSCW plays a crucial role in addressing and amplifying women's voices.

[13/01, 12:31 pm] Bangroo 2: Caption: Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya along with Chairperson Haryana Women Commission Renu Bhatia and others at Silver jubilee celebration of Haryana Women Commission at Surajkund.

Natrang stages play 'Adhi Raat'



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan14: The play 'Adhi Raat' written by Shankar Shesh was staged under the Sunday Theater series of Natrang. The play was directed by Mohammad Yasin who has received Junior Fellowship and Junior Scholarship Award for his excellent performance in the cultural field. Shankar Shesh's play 'After Midnight' raises big questions on the justice system of the country.

The main character of the play is a thief, who takes a sharp dig at the justice system with his questions. He tells that in this justice system, the person who is influential, capitalist, rich, gets away even after committing a big crime, while the poor gets killed in it. In the beginning of the play 'After Midnight', a thief is shown going to steal in a judge's house, but in reality he has entered the judge's house not to steal but to get himself caught by the police. He has seen a journalist being murdered in a chawl of Mumbai. This murder was done by a rich builder. That's why he wants this secret buried in his chest to reach the police. He fears that if he falls into the hands of the culprits of this case, he will be killed

That's why he wants to go to jail, so that he can stay safe. As soon as he enters the judge's house, he asks them to hand him over to the police, but this is not possible because the house phone is dead. In such a situation, he has a long dialogue with the judge, in which he exposes many flaws in the justice system. The judge is greatly impressed by this. He presents evidence related to the murder before the judge, on the basis of which the police takes action. The dialogues of the play are so tight that they keep the audience engaged. The suspense of the play does not allow the curiosity of the audience to be quenched and they remain captivated till the end. Brijesh Avtar Sharma as the judge and Sushant Singh Chadhak as the thief played their respective characters very effectively. Abhinav Sharma left a mark even with his small role. Lighting was done by Vishal Sharma. Sound control was done by Gopi Sharma and Kushal Bhatt.

About the director of the play Yasin has directed five plays so far and has received applause from the intelligentsia of the theatre. Yasin, who emerged as a child artist in 2001, has so far performed 500 times in more than 100 plays. Along with children's plays, I also got the opportunity to work in big plays of Natrang. Today he has acted in more than seventy plays with Natrang including Baba Jitto, Mahabhoj, Ghumai, Aap Hamar Kaun Hain, Mere Haak Ki Dhoop Kahan Hai. Has also participated in international festivals like Jammu & Kashmir Festival London, Commonwealth Games and Theater Olympics. Not only this, Yasin has till now received a scholarship for the preservation of Kashmiri culture. Apart from this, in the year 2018-19, he has also received Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture for the origin of Dogri Theatre. Apart from this, Yasin has worked as a coordinator and technician in drama festivals organized by Sangeet Natak Academy. He has also worked as an assistant to the country's renowned directors Adil Hussain, Harish Khanna, Bansilal Kaul and Moti Lal Kemmu. Following his father's path, Yasin also uses his pen. He also writes articles in many newspapers and magazines and is also doing research on ancient genres.

Narinder felicitates Kabaddi medal winners in 7th National School games

Top News Report

RS PURA, Jan 14: Social and political activist Narinder Sharma today felicitated medal winners of Kabaddi in 7th National School Games, held in Haridwar recently in a function at Kotli Shah Doula. During the felicitation function, Narinder also congratulated coach of team Gaurav Kumar on their outstanding performance and expressed his commitment to support the promotion of Kabaddi in future championships.

Speaking on the occasion, Narinder said J&K

various fields, but there remains untapped potential in sports. To unlock this potential, it is crucial to make children fall in love with sports from a young age. By nurturing their passion, we can create a generation of sports aficionados who will drive India's transformation into a true sporting nation. Embracing sports as an integral part of our lifestyle will foster a lifelong commitment to physical activity, excellence, and contribute to a healthier and more productive nation, added Sharma.

Narinder further said that it is imperative to create



adequate infrastructure like well-maintained public playgrounds, sports facilities, and community centres. This needs collaborative efforts of local authorities, educational institutions, and sports organizations. Children are natural explorers who discover their passion through new experiences. To develop their love for sports, it is crucial to expose them to a diverse range of sports early on, allowing them to find one that resonates with their interests and strengths.

While sports like cricket and hockey have historically been popular, it is important to introduce children to other sports such as basketball, tennis, badminton, and athletics. Schools play a vital role in this process as children spend a significant portion of their active engagement time there, added Narinder.

Narinder observed that J&K has excelled in

Give at least two options for admissions in one academic year: FSFTI/PUCA



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: "When Indian students are going to other countries for Higher Education in 4 times in a year (Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter) then why Indian students are given only chance to take admission once in a year for pursuing Higher Education?"

This was said by Dr. Anshu Kataria, President, Punjab Unaided Colleges Association (PUCA); Federation of Self Financing Technical Institutions (FSFTI), All India & Chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh in an AICTE workshop wherein more than 700 Colleges from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Rajasthan, Chandigarh etc. participated.

Why restrictions are for Indian students: In 2018, 5 Lakhs; 2019, 5.86 Lakhs, 2020, 2.5 lakhs even in Covid restrictions; 2021, 4.4 Lakhs; 2022, over 7.5 Lakhs went abroad.

While in 2023, enrolled are 8.5 lakhs students for Higher education in various 4 academic batches for study abroad programs. On the other hand as per All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi & University Grants Commission (UGC), in India students can take admission only once in a year. If he fails to get admitted due to any reason, his entire year gets spoiled. Why these restrictions are for Indian students as well as for educational Institutions?

Despite of UGC order students can't write exam in local languages.

Kataria also said that as per UGC notification 1-2/2023 dated 29th November, 2023 the students have been allowed to give examinations in local languages but this also has not been implemented in many states of India. As per New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, AICTE has also

developed the content for approx 11-12 Local languages for students but state affiliating government universities are not implementing & Technical students are facing problems during examinations which is matter of concerns."

Kataria urged AICTE & UGC to intervene at the earliest & to allow students to write examination in their own languages.

He also urged AICTE to file review the petition in Supreme Court so that the only cutoff date for admission can be made flexible and like abroad, students may get the chance for admission in various course.

It's worth mentioning that as per Supreme Court dated 13th Dec, 2012, CIVIL APPEAL NO. 9048 OF 2012; Parshavanath Charitable Trust Versus All India Council for Technical Education, the cutoff date of admissions is 15th August for technical courses.

Senior Citizenship are not burdens but assets to the society's



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 14: Members of Senior citizens Rejuvenation Centre's came together to celebrate Lohri at its Centre's in Sector 5 Trikuta Nagar, under the Chairmanship of Sh Baldev Raj Gupta, President SCRC.

In the environment of chilly cold, Seniors citizens participated in celebrations of Lohri Festival with great fervor.

Dr Shreyansh Kumar Jain State yoga Commissioner & Advisor SCRC, explained about the roll of Senior Citizens in the society, Members of the Centre frequently engage in volunteer work, contributing their time and skill to Charitable Organisations and community projects. In our changing society, the welfare of older adults has become increasingly important. Senior citizen's homes also known as retirement communities or assisted living facilities,

Mr KS Samyal, Patron SCRC threw light on Encouraging lifelong learnings, Seniors exemplify the importance of lifelong learning by actively pursuing personal growth throughout their lives. Their commitment to continuous self-improvement detas an

have engaged as pivotal contributors to the evolving landscape. Sr citizens are significant and invaluable components of our society. Sr citizens offer crucial caregiving assistance and emotional support to their families. Their presence is a source of stability & comfort, helping families navigate the challenges of aging.

Mr Bharat Bhusan Gupta (Retd Chief Engineer), describing activities of Seniors in various groups & social activities, enriching their communities with their experience and wisdom. Their involvement contribute to the development of thriving, close-knit communities.

Mr TC Taggar, Secretary managed distribution of Parsad. Mr Sansar Chand Gupta, President Sri Hari Parbhu Sanstha, Chanted Gaytri Mantra and Shanti path with offering of Argh to Agnidev Bhagwanji.

inspiring example for people of all ages.

Mr Sudershan Gupta, very senior & Esteemed member shared on view of vast knowledge and experience held by senior citizens benefits society by fostering learning and mentorship. They pass down their insights to the next generation, enriching society in various fields. Other members who contributed with their knowledgeable views on the rights and duties of Senior citizens are..

S/Sh Dalip Gupta, SS Slathia, Ashok which, Surinder Singh, NK Shawney, TR Puri, Vinod Gupta, Narinder Gupta, Karan Sharma, Bharat Gupta and others.

Mr TC Taggar, Secretary managed distribution of Parsad. Mr Sansar Chand Gupta, President Sri Hari Parbhu Sanstha, Chanted Gaytri Mantra and Shanti path with offering of Argh to Agnidev Bhagwanji.