

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-15 Issue-27 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

India logs 182 New Covid-19 Cases

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): India saw a single day rise of 182 new cases of COVID-19, while the number of active cases of the infection has declined to 1,525, the health ministry said on Sunday.

One death has been reported from Kerala in a span of 24 hours, according to the ministry's data updated at 8 am.

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

After December 5, a maximum of a single-day rise of 841 new cases were reported on December 31, which is 0.2 per cent of the peak cases reported in May 2021, official sources said.

Of the total active cases, around 92 per cent are recovering under home isolation.

"The currently available data suggests that the JN.1 variant is neither leading to an exponential rise in the new cases nor a surge in the hospitalisation and mortality," the official source stated.

India has witnessed three waves of COVID-19 in the past with the peak incidence of daily new cases and deaths being reported during the delta wave during April-June 2021.

At its peak, 414,188 new cases and 3,915 deaths were reported on May 7, 2021.

Since the pandemic began in early 2020, there have been more than 4.5 crore people getting infected and over 5.3 lakh deaths in about four years since then across the country.

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

According to the website, 220.67 crore doses of Covid vaccines have so far been administered in the country.

Two gamblers arrested in Budgam: Police

JAMMU, Jan 28 (Agencies): Police on Sunday arrested two gamblers, seized stake money and playing cards from their possession in the jurisdiction of Police post Humhama area of Budgam district.

A Police spokesperson said, "On a specific information about gambling activities near Salsabeel School Humhama in

Lt Governor chairs 34th University Council Meeting of SKUAST Kashmir



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha chaired the 34th University Council Meeting of SKUAST Kashmir at Raj Bhawan today.

The meeting was attended by Sh Atal Duloo, Chief Secretary; Sh Santosh D Vaidya,

Principal Secretary, Finance Department; Dr Ashok Dalwai, former CEO NRAA; Prof. RC Agrawal, Deputy Director General, ICAR; Dr Mandep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir; Dr. B.N Tripathi, Vice Chancellor

SKUAST Jammu; Sh Mohd Aijaz, Secretary, Planning, Development & Monitoring Department and senior officers.

The Lt Governor commended the significant contribution of SKUAST-Kashmir in the extraordinary growth journey of the Agriculture & Allied sector in J&K UT. The innovation-led initiatives

and holistic approach of our Agricultural Universities are contributing in knowledge-based, Technology-driven and sustainable Agri-economy, he added.

The meeting discussed the comprehensive future road map on developing SKUAST-Kashmir as the leading institution for agricultural education, innovations, entrepreneurship, leadership and research, and make SKUAST a home to several centres of excellence in agriculture & allied sector.

The Lt Governor emphasized on taking the research and innovation from Lab to the Field to increase farmers' productivity. He further instructed for short skill training courses for

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BRO breakthrough on Golden Arc road by building 700 Meter Naushera Tunnel

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Border Roads Organisation (BRO) said that it has achieved a major breakthrough in 'Golden Arc Road' by building the 700 meter-long Naushera tunnel on Akhnoor-Poonch National Highway (NH-144A).

Breakthrough is the time taken for the construction of both ends of the tunnel to meet.

BRO said that Golden Arc Road is an old and highly strategic 200 Km stretch which connects south Kashmir-Jammu region to the west of Jammu.



"The construction of a pivotal infrastructure project National Highway-144A connecting Akhnoor to Poonch reached a significant milestone on Sunday as the breakthrough ceremony for the Naushera Tunnel took place," BRO said.

The officials said that Golden Arc Road connects important border districts of Akhnoor, Rajouri and Poonch.

It said that the tunnel spanning an impressive 700 meters is a crucial link connecting Akhnoor and Poonch.

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1 dead, 17 injured as stage collapses during singer B Praak's event at Delhi's Kalkaji temple

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): A 45-year-old woman died and 17 people were injured when a stage set up for a religious function at the Kalkaji temple here collapsed in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The tragic incident occurred around 12.30 am, they said. The identity of the deceased is yet to be identified.

According to police, a 'jagan' (religious

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"Employment process for 1.5 lakh employees complete": Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the railways is planning to create more employment opportunities, and that the employment process for 1.5 lakh posts is complete.

"We have recently completed the employment process for one lakh fifty-thousand employees and immediately after concluding that, we have started the new process from the selection of assistant Loka pilot (ALP's.) This

is the first step," he said. Vaishnaw highlighted the annual employment procedure and the objective behind it.

"There will be more employment opportunities in technical and non-technical popular categories in Group D. Instead of bunching everything together, our objective now is to have more employment. An annual recruitment process has been commenced so that more and more people can get opportunities," he added.

General Manager East Central Railway, Anil Kumar Khandelwal, said "Railway has started a new recruitment process. The railway will create vacancies every year on a regular basis. Railway infrastructure and operations are increasing every year. The vacancies will be filled on a yearly basis in multiple categories. The recruitment of 5,696 ALP (assistant loco pilots) has already started in this direction as of January 20. The applicants will have opportunities every year to participate in the recruitment process."

He further said that, for some reason, if they are unsuccessful in the current year, they can appear in the next year. "Earlier, the railway used to carry out recruitment once every three or four years. Now the railway will access the vacancies every year

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Dogri folk singer Romalo Ram expresses gratitude to Centre for being conferred Padma Shri Award

JAMMU, Jan 28 (Agencies): Dogri folk singer Romalo Ram expressed gratitude to the central government for honouring him with the Padma Shri Award in the field of art.

"I am grateful to the government. The previous government used to ignore Dogri folk art. For the past 40 years, I have been associated with this art. We have preserved our heritage and worked with renowned people," he said on Saturday.

He further said that he was very thankful to the



government for honouring 'Maa Boli Dogri'.

"This is not only my achievement but also that of my friends who used to sing with me. We have preserved the heritage of Dogri folk music," he added.

There are 132 names on the list of Padma Awardees this year, including two duo cases (in a duo case, the award is counted as one), as per the list below. The list comprises five Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan, and 110 Padma Shri Awards.

Thirty of the awardees are women, and the list also includes eight persons from the categories of foreign non-resident Indian (NRI), person of Indian origin (PIO), overseas citizenship of India (OCI), and nine

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AAP will contest all assembly seats in Haryana on its own, Lok Sabha polls as part of INDIA bloc: Arvind Kejriwal

CHANDIGARH, Jan 28 (Agencies): Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal, on Sunday, said his party would contest all the 90 assembly seats in Haryana on its own, but the Lok Sabha polls would be fought as part of the INDIA bloc.

The Lok Sabha polls are due in April-May while the assembly elections would be held later this year



a few months after the general

elections.

"Today people only have trust in one party, which is AAP. On one side, they see Punjab, and on the other, our government in Delhi. Today, Haryana is seeking a big change. In Delhi and Punjab, people made this big change earlier and now they are happy," he said at his party's 'Badlaav Jansabha' in Jind.

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Light to moderate rain, snowfall over J&K during next 24 Hours: MeT

SRINAGAR, Jan 28 (Agencies): Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecasts light to moderate rain and snowfall over Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours.

Currently, the weather is generally cloudy with light rain and snow at a few places, including the ski resort of Gulmarg, with a significant improvement in the minimum temperature at many stations across

the Kashmir valley.

The MeT office said there is a possibility of light to moderate rain or snow at many places in J&K with heavy snowfall over isolated higher reaches of Kashmir Division, including Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Shopian, Anantnag, and Kulgam districts, from Sunday afternoon to January 29 late afternoon.

It said from January

30-31, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain or snow at many places in J&K, with chances of heavy snowfall over a few higher reaches, while the weather will remain generally cloudy with light rain or snow at many places towards late afternoon or evening on February 1-2.

From February 3 to 4, light to moderate rain or snow can occur at many

places in J&K.

The MeT office said there is a possibility of intermittent light to moderate rain with thunder or lightning in the plains of Jammu Division with light snowfall over higher reaches and moderate snowfall over isolated higher reaches from January 28 (night) to January 31 (afternoon).

It has also issued an advisory that the weather

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EDITORIAL

NEW GLOBAL SYSTEM

The new world which is poised to usher in an era of peace and prosperity is itself dependent on technology for its effectiveness. Technology can break barriers and lead to the forging of the world community into a world citizenship.

In the past decade, the world society was witness to the emergence of new social and political forces driven by developments in technology. The common man is conscious that developments today are qualitatively different from those of the preceding decade.

The new forces have liberated human consciousness from the ideological boxes. The revolution in communication, information and transportation technology is the watershed in the creation of the global system encompassing the whole planet. Technology is creating more and more integration at the world level.

The fear of lagging behind in the technological race compels nations to cooperate and realign. Technology shapes and reshapes ideas, cultures and world views.

Let us hope that the explosion in freedom, triggered by the technology, will lead to a further awakening to formulate plans for global issues related to development for all world citizens.

Electronics and biotechnology promise a new hope for globalization. But to create this new world, effective management, entrepreneurship and innovations will have to be developed and deployed.

The new world offers hope for everyone. For the advanced nations, it is the victory of capitalism. For the socialist nations, it is an opportunity to restructure after 40 years of Cold War, and adopt modern management and technology needed to improve the standards of living with the freedom and flexibility of a democratic society.

For developing nations it is a challenge to demand their fair share and avoid isolation and alienation, to make sure that the tension between the North and the South does not delay development.

The new world is positioned to bring hope of peace and prosperity, cleaner environment, increased dominance of technology and technocrats, new developments and breakthroughs in the field of health, transport, electronics, communication, robotics, biotechnology and the possibility of a world government with fading and, in some cases, disappearing borders with free movements of goods, services and people, ultimately leading to world citizenship-at least for [the technocrats of the world.

Nysbit, in his "Mega Trends" outlines forces which will shape the future of the world. These relate to movement from capital-intensive industrial base to knowledge-intensive information base, forced technology to high-tech, national economy to world economy, short-term to long-term interests, centralized to decentralized administration, institutional to self-help programmes, representative to participative democracy, hierarchical to networking relationships and rather than either-or choices, multiple choices in problem-solving.

The vision of the future in the technology driven new world cannot be based on what seems possible: it needs to be decided according to what has to be made possible. Technology will have to be mobilized to make the essentials possible- and that is the challenge for the new world.

The recent explosion in freedom and realignment of the Eastern socialist and the Western capitalist nations makes it clear that the world is becoming a better place to live in with a potential for peace and prosperity. With the voluntary destruction of warheads, the Cold War has ended, making the world safer and more secure.

Because of the sudden expansion in communication technology, the world is moving closer together, shortening distances and cutting across boundaries. At the same time, the growing disparities between the South and the North are pulling the world further apart.

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2024: Holistic development of personality, Mental Health and Well-being in School Education

By: Prachi Pandey

In general, theoretically, we focus on stress-coping models while practically, we give advice on various stress-coping strategies. However, an important question, i.e the question of how to help students develop the capabilities to deal with academic stress and develop constructive coping strategies remains unanswered. Another equally important issue is how to create an environment wherein there are adequate triggers for motivation while stress does not assume debilitating proportions and starts to adversely impact performance.

Creating a stress-free school environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being involves adopting a holistic, enjoyable and engaging curriculum and pedagogy in schools. This would involve designing a curriculum that is balanced and age appropriate. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) also recommends time allocation in school schedules and specifies specific learning requirements to be completed, placing a renewed emphasis on art, physical education, and wellbeing. Furthermore, maintaining good health and well-being is one of the development goals of the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (2022). Consequently, it employs "play," which is important to the conceptual, practical, and transactional approaches to pedagogy, time and content organization, curriculum structure, and the child's overall experience.

NEP 2020 propagates providing students with plenty of opportunities for participation in sports, arts clubs, eco-clubs, community service projects, etc. Additionally, NEP 2020 emphasizes that each student will participate in an enjoyable course,

chosen by the state and local community and based on local skilling needs, that provides an overview and practical experience of significant vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, and pottery making, among others, during Grades 6-8.

On November 24, 2020, a Policy on School Bag document was developed with an emphasis on lowering the weight of school bags which is being implemented by states and UTs. Further, a number of educational institutions have implemented "No Bags Day," an initiative that encourages students to leave their bags at home on certain days.

Creating a positive learning environment requires re-inforcing capacity building of teachers on stress management. On a similar note, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) developed a complete package named "Training and Resource Material: Health and Wellness of School-going Children" as part of the School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat. It includes a dedicated module on "Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health" which delineates activities pertaining to teachers' and students' mental health and wellbeing. NCERT has also been proactively working to improve the ability of educators and counselors to provide children with emotional and mental health support, as well as assistance in overcoming fear and developing coping mechanisms. The Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling (DCGC), is another resourceful initiative which uses a teacher-counselor paradigm to enable teachers to assist students with academic, personal, and career-related concerns in addition to their teaching duties.

One of the Exam Warrior mantra is that 'Exams test your current preparation, Not You'. Thus, transform-

ing assessment for student development through a multidimensional report that reflects the uniqueness of each learner, peer support and mentoring, is a vital step towards making assessment and evaluation positive and a healthy tool for improvement.

In India, as in any other part of the world, incorporating subjects related to mental health and well-being, into the fabric of the school eco-system is crucial for various reasons. First of all, focusing on mental health in school education can contribute to bridging the rural and urban disparities and ensuring the all students have access to support. A Mental Health Survey for school students was carried out by the Ministry of Education in light of the NEP 2020, which places a strong emphasis on students' mental health and well-being in order to promote holistic development. Emotions of exclusion and loneliness can be made worse by stress. An atmosphere free from stress fosters inclusion, guaranteeing that every student, regardless of background, ability, or diversity, feels supported and welcomed. Towards this end, NEP 2020 encourages putting in place a counselling system in educational institutions for handling stress and emotional adjustments.

Today, with the changing economic landscape and the rise of technology, students need not only academic knowledge but also life skills. Objective and moderate use of technology can have positive outcomes. Mental health education can equip students with skills such as resilience, adaptability, and effective communication to counter negative impact. Moreover, considering the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity, prioritizing mental health will not only help promote inclusivity but also ensure that the mental well-being of all students is considered, irrespective

of their background. Through the "Manodarpan" campaign, which includes a variety of activities with proactive and preventive mental health and well-being services integrated into the mainstream of learning processes, the Ministry of Education is providing psychological assistance for mental health and emotional welfare to families, teachers, and students both during and after the COVID outbreak.

In summary, a stress-free education is critical to creating a supportive and positive learning environment that supports emotional health, academic achievement, and the acquisition of critical life skills. It prepares students for possibilities and challenges in the future by laying the groundwork for a sound and balanced approach to education. Therefore, it is highly essential that teachers, administrators, parents, and policy makers come together to create a stress-free education for the mental health and well-being of all students. One such innovative interactive program is Pariksha Pe Charcha, which unites educators, parents, students, and the community to create an environment where each child's distinct individuality is valued, nurtured, and celebrated. The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been spearheading this unique campaign for the past six years with the goal of fostering a stress-free environment for youth.

(Views expressed are personal)

Prachi Pandey, Joint Secretary, MoE & Tara Naorem, Principal Chief Consultant, SS, MoE

In the present era of globalization, the whole country is turning into a market

By: Vijay GarG

In the present era of globalization, the entire country is turning into a market. It is worth noting that this market has started commercializing childhood also. As a result, children have started giving their consent according to the market even in expensive purchases like fridge, washing machine, bike, car, furniture along with their consumer goods. The interesting thing is that most of the parents hardly realize that their children have to spend crores of rupees. The marketer has been trapped in the web of horse trading. According to survey reports, television and its advertisements are mainly responsible for bringing children to this point. Children have less discretion. An eight-ten year old child cannot understand that the glowing advertisements on TV are just promotions of goods, far away from reality. Market forces know how to establish their dominance amidst the changing priorities and situations of life. The situation is that the educated and earning classes are divided into nuclear families. parents run around. Due to his busy life, he is not able to give enough time to his children. As a result, children are becoming victims of loneliness and are constantly

in touch with TV channels to share their loneliness. The market system is taking full advantage of this. It specifically sponsors those serials telecast on TV, which show a glittering western style of life free from taboos and traditional values. Whereas the family environment of an average Indian child is completely different from this. baby don't understand the difference. He finds that he considers the TV life as true and wants to adopt it in his life. Additionally, the child in the advertisement greatly appeals to the child audience. Therefore, they not only need the same school bag, shoes, pants, shirts etc., but also the household items should be like the parents of the children in the advertisement. What can we say, in reality, children learn what they see. On one hand, television is creating western style life values among children, on the other hand, advertisements are being used to interest them in order to make their thinking and attitude compatible with the market. It is being adapted. Targeting children is a well thought out marketing strategy. They know that parents who feel ashamed of not being able to give time to their children are forced to accept their children's role in shopping, because it gives them a feeling of con-

verting the growing distance from their children into closeness. This game of market is extremely destructive. This is a direct interference in childhood, which is creating stagnation at the level of natural development of children. As a result, a naive childhood with eyes heavy with dreams. Taking leave. Their place is being taken by boastful, selfish, self-centered and contemptuous children. Earlier, the demands of children used to include needs. Although there used to be some stubbornness and ostentation in the demand for children on occasions like Durga Puja, Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Holi etc. and on family festivals like birthdays, marriages, but now whenever parents go out for shopping, a list of children is in front of them. Is. There is hardly anything necessary in it, most of the things are flashy. Parents should impart simplicity, restraint, contentment and This is not the time to teach thrift. They want to see the children happy by fulfilling their demands. I don't know when he has lost the wisdom to think about what effect this will have on the children of those who do not have much money. Will they get filled with inferiority complex while playing or studying together? Modern Indian society is living with contradictions and the

extreme boil of anger within itself. On one side, there are a few lakh people immersed in prosperity and luxury and their followers are the big middle class. On the other hand, a very large population of life being deprived of basic facilities is suffocating. Can't a child or adolescent of this category have the desire to live a life like the children of an affluent family of their own age group? Inequality was there earlier too, but then the gap between rich and poor was not so wide and there was no tendency for unbridled consumption. Today the old values based on contentment and restraint are being disintegrated. In their place materialism is becoming dominant. It inspires us to fulfill our desires, whether right or wrong. This is the reason for the increase in anger, aggression, rebellion, contempt, violent behavior etc. among the youth. This is a gift. Given the rapid increase in inequality in society, these decadent attitudes are likely to increase further. The major entanglement that this is giving in the fabric of society is definitely a scary picture.

(Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational Columnist MALOUT Punjab)

Army Goodwill Higher Secondary School Hajinar Students Shine at Young Creators Awards 2024

Top News Report

KUPWARA, Jan 28: Students from the Innovation club of Army Goodwill Higher Secondary School Hajinar seized an exciting opportunity to participate in the Young Creators Awards 2024. Fazdha Mushtaq, Raja Affan, and Mohd Yousaf, under the adept leadership of Fazdha Mushtaq, proudly represented the school at the National Level exhibition held at Plaksha University Mohali, Punjab. Out of over 50 projects showcased, their initiative, the "Carbon Monoxide Exhausting System," was selected for the final round.

The involvement of AGS HAJINAR students showcased their



dedication to innovative projects, with a focus on addressing carbon monoxide emissions for environmental sustainability. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Team Bharti Foundation, especially Anil Bhat, Mudasir Shah, and Mir Aatif, for their

continuous support in making our school project a reality.

The event, supported by notable entities like Bharti Foundation, the Indian Army, and Army Goodwill Higher Secondary School Hajinar, highlights our commitment to nurturing young

minds and encouraging them to tackle global challenges. Tahir Gaffar, Bharti Foundation School Coordinator, and Rashid Fareed, ATL Incharge at Army Goodwill Higher Secondary School Hajinar, played pivotal roles in overseeing the project's

development and implementation.

The collaboration among Bharti Foundation, the Indian Army, and Army Goodwill Higher Secondary School Hajinar emphasizes the importance of fostering creativity and environmental consciousness among youth.

We express gratitude to all supporting organizations, mentors, and collaborators who made this experience possible.

The National Level exhibition at Plaksha University served as a platform for these students to showcase their talents, share their vision, and inspire others to engage in similar initiatives for a brighter and greener future.

Survivors of 2005 Snowstorm, Waltengu Nar still awaiting for Rehabilitation

Top News Report

KULGAM, Jan 28: Over 17 years after snowstorm devastated Waltengonard, a tribal hamlet in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, the residents are awaiting reconstruction of their houses.

In 2005 a snow storm swept across the tribal hamlet and shrouded 200 houses. The snow entombed nearly 158 residents in their homes and left several others injured. The catastrophe displaced 1000 residents who are awaiting promised homes for last 17 years.

The Government had promised re-construction of houses within one year but failed to do so. Out of total 128 proposed houses the Government has only managed to re-construct 74 while as 54 families are still homeless. Among the pending houses, the construction work of four buildings is underway and plinth for 11 more houses has also been laid.

The residents alleged that Government's preparations for and response to the natural disaster was woefully inadequate as they could neither predict the disaster nor reconstruct the damaged houses.



Seventeen years is a long time to live without a home. When tragedy unfolded on us, Government promised big things, but did nothing. They let us down," Mohammad Shafi Cheehi told Voice of India (VOI). He accused Government of showing a lax attitude towards the issues. "Government was never serious about the issues," he said, adding they had repeatedly asked the Government to speed up the work but faced disappointments.

An official privy to the details told Voice of India that there were multiple reasons behind the overstretching of the project.

One of them, he said, was administration's inability to manage the funding.

"Issues of funding affected the pace of work all these years. Funds were always there but administration was unable to utilize it properly," he said, adding that unavailability of land also hindered the process.

Another resident, Noor Mohammed said that Government promised them houses within one year but they failed to deliver. "Seventeen years have passed and the Government has only managed to build half the number of houses here, leaving a vast population homeless," he said.

Officials said, that We have rehabilitated 74 families. The construction work of apartments for 12 families is going on, and rest 46 families, who wanted their hutment at a different place, the work for that is also under process."

While talking about the delay in rehabilitating the families, officials said,

"The delay has happened, but now we are hopeful of shifting them to new apartments very soon."

Aryans delegation meets HP Governor

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28 :A delegation from Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh today met with Sh. Shiv Pratap Shukla, Governor, Himachal Pradesh in Himachal Bhawan, Chandigarh.

Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group while greeting the Governor said that tricity has become the most preferred destination among students. While awarding Governor about past 17 years all activities he said that Aryans has emerged as the first choice for needy & deserving students of Himachal Pradesh as various scholarship programs are being offered, added Kataria.

HP Governor attentively listened to all the students welfare



schemes being offered at Aryans Group of Colleges & he also assured his visit to Aryans.

It is to be mentioned that established in 2007, Aryans Group is running 8 different colleges including Engineering, Law, Management, Agriculture, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Paramedical, Edu-

cation etc. The Group is spread over 20-acre lush green land on Chandigarh-Patiala Highway, Near Chandigarh and catering over 4000 students from different parts of the Country. The organization is committed to provide high quality education to its students.

Gurmeet Singh celebrates R-Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: A Republic Day celebration in Jammu, featuring President Beopar Mandal, General Secretary JKPC Singh, and other dignitaries. The event included the unfurling of the National flag at different locations, such as Shahidi Chowk, Ward no. 5 Jammu East, Back Side of DC office, Ward no. 3, and Ward no. 11, Jammu.

During the event, there were pledges made, including promises of "free 350 Units of metered bill" and "free education in J&K" once in power. Additionally, a commitment was made to air condition all government schools.

A diverse group of attendees participated in the celebration,

including prominent members, general public, senior citizens, youth, women, and children. The event concluded with the distribution of Halwa, Chocolates, Sweets, small flags, and Indian Flag Tiranga Tricolor Brass. Tricolor/Tricolour/Tringa Stoles were also distributed to mark the completion of the "Mahautsav of 75th year of Republic day."

Prominent individuals present at the event included Gurmeet Singh, President Beopar Mandal & General Secretary JKPC (Ward no. 3), President Hardavinder Singh, Mohalla President Manohar Joshi, and many others. The list includes various individuals from different walks of life who attended the celebration.

Shiv Sena appeals public to raise their voice on sale of liquor near educational and religious places

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit, continuing its campaign against the sale of liquor near religious places and educational institutions, today visited Janipur and Lower Roop Nagar in Jammu and raised its voice.

Party state chief Manish Sahni said that after the busy Parade Chowk of Jammu and Shiv Market near Jammu Railway Station, today he interacted with the residents of the area, especially women and youth, against the sale of liquor near a private school in Lakkarmandi, Janipur. On which many people expressed strong anger and said that there should be no hearing of the general public. A woman from the area, on the condition of anonymity, said that the prevalence of drug abuse among the youth is increasing day by day and the easy



and doorstep availability of liquor is largely responsible for this. He said that the first step towards drug addiction is liquor shops. At the same time, people of Lower Roop Nagar area expressed strong objection to the sale of liquor near Saibaba Temple and JDA flats, saying that it has become difficult for women to go out after dark. There is a temple a few yards away on both the left and right sides of this liquor shop, due to which the religious sentiments of the people are also being hurt. Sahni said that his

campaign will continue until the sale of liquor is banned near religious and educational institutions. Sahni said that tomorrow voice will be raised against the sale of liquor near Maa Durga Temple in Vikram Chowk.

Sahni has appealed to the common people to be a part of the campaign to take it to its destination. Along with this, Vande Bharat social media channel has been thanked for cooperating fearlessly and capturing the anger of the people on camera.

JKBS constitutes Guru Gyagi Birth Commemorative Committee

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: A meeting of the Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha was held in Guru Gyagi Ashram in Shahzadpur Kothi here today which was attended by a large number of Batwal community members.

To commemorate the 127th birthday of Guru Gyagi Ji on Saturday, February 24, 2024,

Chand Sandhu, Havildar Des Raj Kaith, Darshan Lal, Motan, Thoru Ram Tugga, Dilay Ram Kaith, Rachhpal Kaith, R.L. Kaith, Duni Singh Motan, Darshan Kumar Lakhotra, Panch Joginder Sargotra, Hans Raj Loria, Jagdish Raj Kaith, Master Naresh Kumar Kaith, Master Sat Pal, Waryam Chand Motan and Panch Joginder Kaith as members.



the meeting constituted 'Guru Gyagi Birth Commemorative Committee' with Ex Corporator Rashpal Bhardwaj as its Head while Honey Captain Om Parkash Kaith, Subedar Baldev

Further, the meeting resolved to invite ADGs Garib Dass Kaith as Chief Guest and SSP Mohan Lal Kaith as Guest of Honour of the birth commemorative function.

BADC appeals FM to lay focus on border areas in budget 2024

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Jammu and Kashmir Border Area Development Conference (JK-BADC), a registered organization working for the welfare of border residents has urged the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sithanraman to lay focus on border states and residents of border areas in the upcoming budget 2024, as the border residents are amongst the most vulnerable sections of the society.

The organization in its request to the union government demanded that unlike main land, the people living in the border areas are deprived of even basic needs thus it is imperative that there is special fiscal provision for these areas in the budget.

"The people of border areas are the first pillar of defence from any external aggression and they must not be



ignored, the organization emphasized", the BADC appealed.

Dr. Shazad Ahmed Malik, Chairman of the BADC and former Vice Chancellor also urged the union government to concentrate on strengthening infrastructure in border areas and to provide education, health and employment avenues to the youth of these areas.

He also appreciated the union government and Jammu and Kashmir Administration for clearing 100s of pend-

ing SRO 43 cases and giving appointment letters to the aspirants. Dr. Shazad said the pending compensation cases for border residents who had lost their livestock, houses or got injured in the cross border shelling should also be cleared at an earliest as it would provide a major relief to the people as several such cases are pending in different districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It is pertinent to mention that Union Finance Minister would present interim budget 2024.

G K Educational Trust Kathua celebrated Republic Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: G K Educational Trust Training Partner NSDC, ministry of skill development celebrated Republic Day at GKETR PMKK Kathua. All the students participated enthusiastically in the celebration.

Chief Guest Mr. Mohan Singh, Sarpanch Kalibari was present and they interacted the students and motivated them by sharing his experiences.

G K Educational Trust



is committed to create opportunities and improving the lives of people in the community by skilling them in

particular field. Amar (Director G K Educational Trust) and other staff members were also present.

Bharat Rang Mahotsav is all set to begin from February 1

The festival's theme for this year is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Vande Bharangam, which aims to promote artistic and theatrical harmony across all countries

Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), a theatre festival organised by the National School of Drama (NSD), will begin on February 1 and culminate on February 21.

This 21-day theatre festival, which will take place in 15 cities across the country, will include over 150 performances as well as several workshops, talks, and masterclasses, creating a rich tapestry of Indian and world theatre traditions. In addition, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the Bharat Rang Mahotsav.

The festival's theme for this year is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Vande Bharangam, which aims to promote artistic



and theatrical harmony across all countries.

Chittaranjan Tripathy, Director of NSD, expressed great excitement about the upcoming festival, saying, "As we embark on the 25th year of the Bharat Rang Mahotsav, it is truly a momentous occasion that reflects our enduring commitment to artistic excellence and cultural diversity.

Over the past quarter-century, this festival has served as a guiding light, illuminating the rich tapestry of global theatre traditions. The upcoming edition promises to be a grand celebration, showcasing not only the extraordinary creativity within the theatrical realm but also emphasizing the beauty of collaboration.

We are dedicated to fostering the magic of

theatre, providing a platform for diverse voices and narratives to thrive. This year's festivities will not only mark a milestone but also reaffirm our steadfast belief in the transformative power of the performing arts."

The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai will host a grand inaugural celebration on Febru-

ary 1, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of BRM.

At a special event, NSD Chairperson Paresh Rawal will be joined by Ramesh Bais, the Governor of Maharashtra, to officially launch the festival. With the grand opening play, 'Humare Ram', starring actor and NSD graduate Ashutosh Rana.

NSD is launching Rang Haat this year, an annual effort aiming at developing Asia's first global theatre market and promoting international theatrical collaborations. Rang Haat will bring together theatrical artists, programmers, patrons, and supporters to promote the discovery of hidden talent.

Kangana Ranaut gives glimpse of 'lil girl' Pluto, misses her 'bundle of joy'



Actress Kangana Ranaut is an ardent social media user, and she gave an adorable glimpse of her furry friend 'Pluto', sharing how it just brightened up her day.

The 'Queen' of Bollywood, Kangana enjoys 9.7 million followers on the photo

sharing application Instagram. She is often seen sharing updates from her professional and personal life, keeping her fans entertained with the posts.

The weekend post of the 'Gangster' fame actress is just heart melting, as it is a Reel video of her pet dog. In the video, we can see her pet playing in the house, lying on the sofa, sleeping, and cuddling with Kangana.

She captioned the video as: "My phone automatically made a reel of my lil girl Pluto and it popped up on my screen it just brightened my day ... Sharing it with you all, what a lil bundle of joy she is, I have shifted her to Manali post covid because she loves it there, I miss her so much."

The video caught the attention of the netizens and Kangana received love on the post.

On the work front, Kangana was last seen portraying the titular character in Tamil movie 'Chandramukhi 2', and essayed role of Tejas Gill in the action thriller 'Tejas'.

She will be next seen playing the role of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the movie 'Emergency'. Kangana also has an untitled psychological thriller in the pipeline.

Election Commission collaborates with Rajkumar Hirani for short film on voter awareness

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has collaborated with filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani for a short film to spread awareness about voting.

Titled "My Vote My Duty", the short is compiled from video messages by cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar as well as actors Rajkumar Rao, Amitabh Bachchan, R Madhavan, Raveena Tandon, Vicky Kaushal, Boman Irani, Arshad Warsi, Bhumi Pednekar and Mona Singh.

Hirani, who most recently directed Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Dunki", has produced the short film, which was shared by the ECI on its official handle on microblogging site X on National Voters' Day. It is directed by Sanjiv Kishinchandani.

"A short film 'My Vote My Duty' produced by #ECI in association with @RajkumarHirani featuring several



renowned celebrities on the theme 'Value of one vote' was released on #NVD2024," read the tweet.

The film aims to address attitudinal barriers such as indifference and apathy, and inspire citizens to recognise the significance of their votes.

"The most important task in voting. Let's support the country, let's vote for the coun-

try," Tandon said in the video.

Tendulkar said, "Election day is not a day off. It's a day of duty." Kaushal and Singh urged the citizens to check their names in the voter list through the Voter Service Portal.

The celebrities then urged the people to fulfil their duty as voting is considered a symbol of pride in a democracy.

Asif Kapadia on 'The Warrior' Oscars snub: Idea that people speak other languages didn't exist then

Indo-British filmmaker Asif Kapadia says the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) modified the criteria for the best international feature category after his 2002 Irfan Khan-starrer "The Warrior" was ignored at the Oscars.

The film, which marked Kapadia's directorial debut, was the UK's official entry for the Oscars' best foreign language film category, which was renamed best international feature in 2019. However, the Academy disqualified the movie, possibly on the grounds that it was in Hindi.

Kapadia recalled the "funny story" behind the film's Oscar snub on day one of a retrospective on the late Irfan Khan, who had played a ruthless warrior overcome by remorse in the India-set movie.

"It is a funny story. It was shortlisted for the Oscars and then Oscars disqualified because they said, 'How can a British film not be in



English?' The idea that other people speak other languages didn't exist at that point. It was like, 'We Americans speak American, British people must speak English.'

"They couldn't contemplate that anyone could make a British film not in

won the best documentary Oscar for his 2015 movie "Amy", about pop star Amy Winehouse, who died at the age of 27 in 2011.

The filmmaker, who is in his early 50s, claimed that the members of the Academy Awards committee had later apologised to him for rejecting "The Warrior", which had won the BAFTA Award for the Best British Film in 2003.

"The Warrior" changed the rules at the Oscars. For "Amy", I met the people, who are in charge of the committee. It was like 10-12 years later and they apologised. They were like, 'We had a bad pull, it was a mistake, sorry,'" Kapadia said.

The filmmaker is also known for documentaries "Senna" on Formula One racer Ayrton Senna and "Diego", based on the life of legendary Argentine footballer Diego Maradona.

He also recalled that disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Wein-

stein offered him a three-film deal at the time of the release of "The Warrior" but the filmmaker declined it.

"Harvey Weinstein saw the film and loved it. Then said to me that I do a three-picture deal with him. I didn't do the deal. This was 20 years ago. I was uninterested right from the beginning.

"He said, 'We have to sign three picture deals exclusively or else no one will see the film.' I was like, 'That's not the way to do it.' So, I had to sacrifice the film in a way to have a career," the director said.

Weinstein, the studio executive who helped bring to the screen Oscar winners such as "Good Will Hunting", "Pulp Fiction" and "The King's Speech", was accused on sexual harassment by over a dozen women in 2017. He was later charged and convicted of rape, and is serving lengthy prison terms after convictions in New York and Los Angeles.

Madhuri Dixit: 'Dance Deewane' is a melting pot of inclusivity

Actress Madhuri Dixit Nene, who is set to return as judge on the new season of 'Dance Deewane' shared that she feels like revisiting a cherished tradition, calling the show a "melting pot of inclusivity."

After successfully capturing various dance forms in previous seasons and standing out for its inclusivity with the mantra, 'Ab har age ko milega stage', this edition welcomes fresh talent across three generations to compete for the coveted title of the ultimate 'Dance Deewane'.

The evergreen Madhuri gracefully reclaimed her spot on the judge's throne this season and adding a fresh and exciting twist, Bollywood's beloved Anna, Suniel Shetty makes his debut on the judges' panel, bringing a new dimension to the show.

Talking about the

same, Madhuri said: "Returning to the judge's seat for 'Dance Deewane' feels like revisiting a cherished tradition.

This spectacular stage is a melting pot of inclusivity, where dancers from all walks of life, spanning generations, come together to celebrate the art of dance."

"Over the years, I've mentored many dancers, but this edition marks the first time I will be part of dance families united by their unbridled passion for the art. I am thrilled and looking forward to co-judge this season with Suniel Shetty, known for infusing wit and humour onto the stage, bringing a unique synergy," added Madhuri.

Suniel said: "Madhuri and I are sure that this season's deewangi will win over everyone's dhadkan. It will be exciting to watch the inspir-



ing journey that each dancer brings to this stage. In this vibrant dance universe, I want to celebrate not just the choreography prowess but the passion, creativity, and soul that makes each performance special."

He added that he will encourage dancers of all ages to push their limits, believe in their artistry, and evolve as artists.

Providing an extraordinary opportunity for performers spanning three generations, this edition will bring together grandparents, lively uncles, aunts, playful children, caring parents, and spirited nieces and nephews on a magnificent stage.

Laughter queen Bharti Singh will be the host of the show.

Produced by Dreams Vault Media, 'Dance Deewane' will premiere on February 3, on Colors.

Sandeep Sachdev on his role in Pyaar Ka Pehla Adhyaya Shiv Shakti



Sandeep Sachdev, who plays the role of Kamalnath Kashyap in Prateek Sharma's Pyaar Ka Pehla Adhyaya Shiv Shakti, says that he loves how the show is working out for him.

"People know me as Mandira's husband, Kamalnath. My character is picking up slowly with every episode. I can say it with certainty as my followers are increasing on Instagram. It's going on the right track," he says.

Talking about his experience on the sets, he says, "I'm one of the few actors on the sets whose makeup actually doesn't take more than five to seven minutes. And all thanks to my genes.

All the makeup artists are happy ke chalo Kamalnath ji ka makeup toh panch minute me ho jayega."

'Mann ki Baat': Governance of Lord Ram was source of inspiration for Constitution makers, says PM Modi

'The consecration ceremony in Ayodhya brought crores of people of the country together'

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): In his first 'Mann ki Baat' of 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the consecration ceremony at the Ram Temple displayed a sense of collectiveness as it brought crores of people of the country together.

"In Part-III of the original copy of the Constitution, the fundamental rights of the citizens of India have been described and it is note-worthy that at the beginning of Part-III, the makers of our Constitution had allotted due space to the pictures of Bhagwan Ram, Mata Sita and Lakshman ji. The rule of Prabhru Ram was also a source of inspiration for the makers of our Constitution and that is why on January 22 in Ayodhya, I had talked about 'Dev se Desh'... I'd referred to 'Ram se Rashtra'," he said.

He said that he was impressed with the cleanliness campaign carried out at religious places from January 14 to 22 to mark the day of consecration ceremony. He urged people to not stop the campaign.

Modi said that women power was central to the January 26 Parade at the National Capital. "The most discussed element was seeing women power at the Parade... when the women contingents of Central Security Forces and Delhi Police



started marching on Kartavya path, everyone was filled with pride. Seeing the marching of the women's band and seeing their tremendous coordination, people in the country and abroad were thrilled. This time, out of the 20 contingents that marched in the Parade, 11 were women," he said.

The PM said India of the 21st century is thus moving ahead with the mantra of women-led development.

He mentioned Arjuna awardees in which 13 women were awarded with the coveted award.

"These women athletes participated in many major tournaments and brought glory to the flag of India. Physical challenges, economic challenges could not hold up vis-à-vis these courageous and talented players. In the changing India, our daughters, women of the coun-

try are performing wonders in every field. There is another area where women have made their mark, that is self-help groups. Today, the number of women self-help groups in the country has also increased and their scope of work has also expanded a lot," he said.

He congratulated the Padma awardees who have brought significant change without being in the 'limelight'.

"This time, too, Padma honors have been conferred upon many countrymen who, by connecting with the grassroots, have worked to bring about big changes in the society. Away from media headlines, away from the front pages of newspapers, these people have been engaged in social service without any lime-light. We have hardly seen or heard anything about these people earlier, but now I am happy that after the announcement of

Padma Awards, people such as these are being discussed everywhere; people are eager to know more and more about them. Many people from abroad have also been honoured with the Padma Award, whose work is lending new heights to Indian culture and heritage. These also include citizens of France, Taiwan, Mexico and Bangladesh," the PM said.

Modi revealed that the Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with the World Health Organisation has categorised data and terminology related to traditional medicines.

"Through the efforts of both, the terminology related to disease and treatment in Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha medicine has been codified. With the help of this coding, all doctors will now write the same language on their prescriptions or slips. One advantage of this would be that if you go to another doctor with that slip, the doctor will get complete information about it from just that slip. That slip will help one in knowing one's illness, treatment, what medicines one has been taking, for how long the treatment has been going on, what things one is allergic to. Another benefit of this will accrue to those people, who are associated with research work," he said.

Nitish Kumar resigns as Bihar CM; dumps Mahagathbandhan, INDIA bloc; stakes claim to form govt with BJP's support



NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): JD (U) president Nitish Kumar on Sunday met the Bihar Governor and tendered his resignation as the state Chief Minister bringing down the ruling Mahagathbandhan Government which has the RJD, Congress and Left Front as partners, and staked claim to form a new government with the BJP, which he had dumped less than 18 months ago.

Days of intense speculation around Kumar's next moves finally ended today, after he chaired a meeting of JD (U) MLAs at his residence and told them that he was returning to the BJP-led NDA.

After that, Kumar left for Governor Rajendra Arlekar's residence to hand over his resignation.

BJP MLAs now have extended support to Kumar who will stay Chief Minister.

All NDA allies in Bihar, including HAM and LJP, are on board about Kumar's return.

Sources said Kumar will take oath as Chief Minister for the ninth time at 4 PM with top BJP leaders, including party chief JP Nadda, likely to attend.

BJP's Sushil Modi and Renu Devi are

expected to return as Deputy CMs with 18 BJP MLAs likely to be part of the state Cabinet.

The JD (U) will contest 2024 Lok Sabha polls with the NDA.

Together, all NDA partners, including Kumar's JD (U), had won 31 out of 40 segments in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Nitish contested the 2020 state polls with the BJP and won. He quit the NDA in August 2022 over apprehensions that the BJP was attempting to split his party.

The RJD and the Congress then powered him to CM-ship.

Again today, Kumar resigned days after he replaced Lallan Singh as JD (U) chief. Kumar had got a whiff of Lallan working with RJD chief Lalu Yadav to install Deputy CM Tejashwi as CM.

After returning from the Governor's house, Kumar said, "I have resigned as Chief Minister and recommended dissolution of the Mahagathbandhan Government. I had kept silent for days. The situation had come to a passé. We were working in the alliance and others were not. The situation was not going good in the Mahagathbandhan. So, I consulted all my party people and listened to them. So, today I have resigned. Now, wait for other things to unfold. Previous partners will come together and decide the next course of action," Kumar said.

The Governor has asked Nitish to continue as caretaker CM.

Kumar said he had formed a new alliance which did not work out well.

"For one-and-a-half years, we worked in the alliance, but everyone said it was not going well," said Kumar.

1 dead, 17 injured as stage collapses during singer B Praak's event at Delhi's Kalkaji temple

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): A 45-year-old woman died and 17 people were injured when a stage set up for a religious function at the Kalkaji temple here collapsed in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The tragic incident occurred around 12.30 am, they said. The identity of the deceased is yet to be identified.

According to police, a 'jagran' (religious function) was organised at the Mahant Parishar of Kalkaji temple on Saturday and around 1,600 people attended it.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal condoled the death of the woman and wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"The accident that happened last night during a 'jagran' at the Kalkaji temple is tragic. A woman has died, may her soul rest in peace. I wish for the speedy recovery of the 17 injured people," Kejriwal said in a post on 'X' in Hindi.

"I appeal to people of Delhi to take special care of safety standards in any kind of big event and make arrangements in such a way that no untoward incident happens," he added.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (southeast) Rajesh Deo said no prior permission had been granted for the event at the temple.

"However, sufficient staff was deployed to maintain law and order. There was a gathering of around 1,500 to 1,600 people at around 12.30 am on Sunday," he said.

According to the police, an elevated wooden platform supported by an iron frame was set up near the main stage for the families of the organisers and VIPs.

Around 12.30 am, the elevated platform broke



right from the middle as it could not bear the weight of the people sitting on it and collapsed, injuring those seated on it and close to it on the ground, the DCP said.

An eye-witness, Varun, said there was a large gathering at the temple as singer B Praak was present. "All of sudden, the stage collapsed and those who were sitting close to the stage received injuries. The singer had left by that time," he told agency.

Another person who was present at the temple said he heard a loud noise and saw people running out.

"It was a stampede-like situation. Everyone was running for their lives. I was outside the temple when I got to know that the stage collapsed and some people received injuries," he added.

Among those who had gone to attend the function but returned home early because of the huge rush at the temple, 20-year-old Suman Kanojia of Chirag Delhi said, "I went there with a relative at around 10 pm and returned by 11 pm because it was so crowded. We thought of staying there a little longer but thankfully we didn't."

"There was a huge crowd. There were temple volunteers around to manage the crowd but no policemen," Kanojia added.

Pushpa Singh, 38, of Shahpur Jat too counted her lucky stars. "I went there with another person around 9 pm and it was overcrowded. Even the parking was full of people. We left around 10.30 pm. I am just thanking my luck that we left before it happened."

All those injured in the stage collapse were rushed to the AIIMS Trauma Centre and the Safdarjung and MAX hospitals by police and the public.

"The fire brigade was called to the spot. Seventeen people were stated to have been injured. A 45-year-old woman was brought dead at the MAX hospital," Deo said, adding that a Delhi Police crime team visited the spot later.

The condition of all those injured is stated to be stable, he added. An FIR under sections 337, 304A and 188 of the IPC was registered against the organisers and further probe into the matter has been launched, the DCP said.

Director of Delhi Fire Services Atul Garg said his department was informed about the incident at 12.45 am.

Teams along with three fire tenders were rushed to the site. The kirtan stage had collapsed, injuring some people who were rushed to hospitals, he said.

AFT Bar bodies seek PM Modi's intervention on Defence Ministry filing appeals against disability benefits to soldiers

CHANDIGARH, Jan 28 (Agencies): The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) Bar Associations have sought the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Minister of Law Arjun Ram Meghwal on the issue of the Ministry of Defence filing a large number of appeals against the orders of AFT benches granting relief to defence personnel in matters relating to disability benefits.

"Our association notes with very serious concern the recent humongous amount of litigation let loose upon disabled soldiers, widows of defence personnel and their family members by the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare of



the Ministry of Defence only because of the reason that many of its senior officers were pulled up by various benches of the AFT for non-implementation of its orders lying unimplemented for the last many years," a letter written by the Jaipur Bench of the

AFT Bar Association states.

In a communique addressed to the prime minister and the minister of law and justice, on Sunday, the Chandigarh Bench of the AFT Bar Association has endorsed the letter and expressed its concern

on the issue. "It needs no emphasis that all these AFT orders are based upon existing Supreme Court judgments and the Law Ministry had also directed the withdrawal of all similar appeals from the Supreme Court which was announced with much fanfare by the Defence Ministry in 2019. It is also a policy of the current Government to reduce such litigation to the minimum," the letter states.

The Bar has shown awareness of the fact that soldiers suffer from various medical conditions due to stress and strain, recognised by the rules, which affects their health and longevity. Such a move is bound

to further cause miseries to them.

"It is also well known that a nation is known by the way it treats its military veterans and such a move is not only quite disastrous as far as public image is concerned, but will also result in a blow to public resources, government manpower, public funds and dent the litigants, besides clogging the courts with thousands of cases," the letter adds.

Urging the prime minister and minister of law to intervene in the interest of the nation, the Bar has also requested them to sensitise the officers concerned on the issue of ensuring the welfare and well-being of disabled soldiers.

'Mark my words': Strategist Prashant Kishore after Nitish Kumar goes back to BJP

Kishor said that the newly formed alliance in Bihar will not last until the 2025 Bihar assembly elections

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Political strategist Prashant Kishor on Sunday made a big claim on Sunday, saying that the Janata Dal (United)-BJP alliance formed in Bihar will not last long. His remarks came hours after Nitish Kumar resigned as the Bihar Chief Minister and rejoined the BJP-led NDA to form a new government in the eastern state.

Speaking to reporters, Kishor said that the newly formed alliance in Bihar will not last until the 2025 Bihar assembly elections, which potentially means the JD(U)-BJP government would have a life span of a year or less.

"The formation that

currently exists, in which Nitish Kumar is the face of the NDA and has the BJP's backing, won't exist until the (Bihar) assembly elections. I can give you this in writing," Kishor said.

"And the change will happen within six months of the Lok Sabha elections," the political strategist told reporters.

Nitish Kumar is all set to take oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar for a record ninth time. The swearing-in ceremony will happen at 5 pm on Sunday, with two Deputy Chief Ministers - Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Sinha - and six other cabinet ministers also taking oath.

In 2022, when Nitish Kumar quit the NDA alli-



ance, Prashant Kishor had said that he hoped there would be political stability in Bihar. "Formations are changed when one's political or administrative expectations are not fulfilled," Prashant Kishor had told news agency ANI, while mentioning that since 2013-14, this was the sixth attempt to form a government in Bihar. "Nitish Kumar said

he was starting a new chapter. I hope he fulfils the aspirations of the people of Bihar," the political strategist had said at the time.

Referring to his past prediction that the Mahagathbandhan alliance - comprising Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress as members - would not exist until the 2020 Bihar assem-

sembly elections, Prashant Kishor said he is making similar predictions in the race to 2025.

"Pichli baar bhi maine kaha tha (I had said last time as well)," the political strategist noted.

Nitish Kumar cited the state of affairs being "not right" after the Mahagathbandhan alliance as his reason for quitting. He said that he has been receiving suggestions from everywhere, including his party workers, and he listened to all of them to come to this decision. "The situation was such that I had to quit," the JD(U) veteran said, speaking to reporters after submitting his resignation to Bihar Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

North Korea fires multiple cruise missiles off east coast

Latest launches came days after North Korea fired what it called new strategic cruise missile called 'Pulhwasal-3-31', suggesting it is nuclear capable

SEOUL, Jan 28 (Agencies): North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles off its east coast on Sunday, its second such launch in less than a week, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said.

The missiles were launched at around 8 a.m. (2300 GMT on Saturday) and were being analysed by South Korean and US intelligence authorities, the JCS said, without specifying how many missiles were fired.

"While strengthening surveillance and vigilance, our military is cooperating closely with the United States and monitoring additional signs and activities from North Korea," it said in a statement.

The latest launches came days



after North Korea fired what it called a new strategic cruise missile called "Pulhwasal-3-31", suggesting it is nuclear capable.

North Korea is stepping up confrontation with the United States and its allies, but officials in Washington and Seoul

say they have spotted no signs Pyongyang intends to take imminent military action.

Kim Jong Un's Government is likely to continue or even increase provocative steps, officials and analysts say, after it made strides in ballistic missile

development, bolstered cooperation with Russia and scrapped its decades-long goal of peacefully reuniting with South Korea.

Earlier on Sunday, North Korea's state media KCNA denounced a series of military drills conducted in recent weeks by US and South Korean troops, warning of "merciless" consequences.

"The reality that nuclear war exercises against our republic have been going on like crazy since the beginning of the New Year demands that we be fully prepared for a deadly war," the dispatch said.

North Korea carried out its first test of a cruise missile with possible nuclear strike capabilities in September 2021.

Iran says it has launched 3 satellites into space as tensions grip wider Mideast

The state-run IRNA news agency said the launch also saw the successful use of Iran's Simorgh rocket, which has had multiple failures in the past.



JERUSALEM, Jan 28 (Agencies): Iran said Sunday it successfully launched three satellites into space, the latest for a program that the West says improves Tehran's ballistic missiles.

The state-run IRNA

news agency said the launch also saw the successful use of Iran's Simorgh rocket, which has had multiple failures in the past.

The United States has previously said Iran's satellite launches defy a U.N. Security Coun-

cil resolution and called on Tehran to undertake no activity involving ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. U.N. sanctions related to Iran's ballistic missile program expired last October.

The U.S. intelligence community's 2023 worldwide threat assessment said the development of satellite launch vehicles "shortens the timeline" for Iran to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile because it uses similar technology.

Trump says he feels mentally sharp after Nikki Haley attacks his age, gaffes

WASHINGTON, Jan 28 (Agencies): Donald Trump said he feels "sharper now than I did 20 years ago," reacting to recent attacks on his age and verbal gaffes by Republican presidential rival Nikki Haley.

Trump also said presidential candidates should have to take a cognitive test, apparently a response to a challenge from Haley, who has advocated the same policy, citing the age of Trump, 77, and Democratic President Joe Biden, 81.

Trump was speaking at a rally in Nevada, ahead of the next vote in the Republican presidential nominating race, a caucus in the state on Feb. 8. In recent days, Haley has accused former Republican President Trump of being confused and has questioned his ability to be president at his age.

Trump has recently made some verbal slip-ups. During a speech on Jan. 19 he confused Haley with former Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. On occasion he has appeared to slur his words and he also suggested former Democratic President Barack Obama was still in office.

Trump is almost assured of all of Nevada's 26 delegates because Haley is not competing in the caucus. He attacked both Haley and Biden, trying to knock Haley out of the Republican nominating fight while scoring early points in a likely general election rematch with Biden in November.

Trump's back-to-back wins in the Iowa and New Hampshire Republican contests have all but assured him his party's White House nomination. But he is infuriated that Haley, his last remaining Republican rival, has refused to drop out.

Trump and his allies have begun a campaign to force Haley out of the race before the next major vote in the primary race, in her home state of South Carolina on Feb. 24. Trump has threatened to banish from his political orbit any donors who continue to fund Haley.

Haley has pledged to keep campaigning in South Carolina and beyond.

Shortly after Trump's speech, Haley appeared at a rally in South Carolina. She again said Trump had recently appeared "confused", and said if he wants to take a cognitive test, "he should have no problem getting on a debate stage with me, because that's



the ultimate mental competency test for anyone running for president."

Trump has refused to participate in any of the Republican nominating debates and is refusing to debate Haley.

In his Nevada speech, Trump repeated a demeaning nickname for Haley, calling her "birdbrain". He also accused Haley - a conservative Republican - of being "almost a radical left Democrat".

Trump declared: "It's time to finish this," referring to his nomination fight. He leads Haley in opinion polls in South Carolina and she has no clear path to the nomination.

After Trump's win in the New Hampshire primary on Jan. 23, the Biden campaign issued a statement, saying: "It is now clear that Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee." Turning his attention to Biden, Trump focused much of his speech on the southern border.

Record numbers of migrants have been caught illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border since Biden took office in 2021, and opinion polls show immigration and the border as a top issue in this year's general election.

Trump called the illegal crossing a "catastrophe", an "invasion" and the southern border as an "open wound".

Meanwhile, Biden and his campaign aides have intensified attacks on Trump in recent days, calling him a threat to U.S.

democracy and tying him to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision to end federal abortion rights, an issue that has been blamed with hurting Republicans during the 2022 midterm elections.

UN chief calls on countries to resume funding Gaza aid agency after allegations of militant ties

RAFAH, GAZA STRIP, Jan 28 (Agencies): The secretary-general of the United Nations on Sunday called on countries to continue funding the main agency providing aid in Gaza after several of its employees were accused of taking part in the Hamas attack on Israel that ignited the war four months ago.

The dispute engulfing the biggest provider of vital aid to Palestinians came as US officials said negotiators were closing in on a cease-fire agreement. The emerging deal would bring a two-month halt to the deadliest-ever Israeli-Palestinian violence, which has stoked instability across the Middle East.

Antonio Guterres warned that the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, would be forced to scale back aid to more than 2 million Palestinians as soon as February. The coastal enclave is in the grip of a severe humanitarian crisis, with a quarter of the population facing starvation.

"The abhorrent alleged acts of these staff members must have consequences," Guterres said in a statement.

"But the tens of thousands of men and women who work for UNRWA, many in some of the most dangerous situations for humanitarian workers, should not be penalized. The dire needs of the desperate populations they serve must be met," he added.

He said that of the 12



employees accused of taking part in the attack, nine had been immediately terminated, one was confirmed dead and "the identity of the two others is being clarified." He said all would be held accountable, including through criminal prosecution.

UNRWA has 13,000 staffers in Gaza, nearly all of them Palestinians. It provides basic services, from medical care to education, for Palestinians' families who fled or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its creation - a majority of Gaza's population. It has expanded operations during the war, running shelters housing hundreds of thousands of newly displaced people.

More than 2 million of the territory's 2.3 million people depend on it for "sheer survival," including food and shelter, UNRWA director Philippe Lazzarini said, warning this lifeline can "collapse any time now."

The United States, which is the largest donor to the agency, immediately suspended funding over the weekend, followed by several other countries, including Britain, Germany and Italy.

The Israel-Hamas war has killed more than

26,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, destroyed vast swaths of Gaza and displaced nearly 85% of the territory's people. The Hamas attack in southern Israel killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and about 250 hostages were taken.

PROGRESS IN CEASE-FIRE TALKS

Two senior Biden administration officials said U.S. negotiators were making progress on a potential agreement under which Israel would pause military operations against Hamas for two months in exchange for the release of more than 100 hostages.

The officials, who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations, said that emerging terms of the yet-to-be sealed deal would play out over two phases, with the remaining women, elderly and wounded hostages to be released by Hamas in a first 30-day phase. The emerging deal also calls for Israel to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

More than 100 hostages, mainly women and children, were released in November in exchange for a week-long cease-fire and the release of 240 Pales-

tinians imprisoned by Israel.

CIA Director Bill Burns is expected to discuss the contours of the emerging agreement when he meets Sunday in France with David Barnea, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel for talks centered on the hostage negotiations.

Despite the apparent progress, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated in a televised news conference late Saturday that the war would continue until "complete victory," including crushing Hamas.

ISRAEL UNDER SCRUTINY AFTER UN COURT RULING

The dispute over UNRWA came as the International Court of Justice ruled Friday that Israel must do its utmost to limit death and destruction in its Gaza offensive.

The top United Nations court has asked Israel for a compliance report in a month, placing added scrutiny on Israel's military. The court's binding ruling stopped short of ordering a cease-fire, but its orders were in part a rebuke of Israel's conduct in its nearly 4-month war against Gaza's Hamas rulers.

The case brought by South Africa to the U.N. court alleged Israel is committing genocide, which Israel vehemently denies. A final ruling is expected to take years.

The court also ordered Israel to urgently get aid to Gaza. The amount of aid entering the territory remains well below the daily average of 500 trucks before the war, and U.N. agencies say distribution within Gaza has been severely hampered by the fighting and delays at Israeli checkpoints.

Israel holds Hamas responsible for civilian casualties, saying the militants embed themselves in the local population. Israel says its air and ground offensive in Gaza has killed more than 9,000 militants.

The offensive caused vast destruction in northern Gaza, where Israel says it has largely dismantled Hamas. The fighting is now focused on the southern city of Khan Younis and a cluster of built-up refugee camps in central Gaza dating back to 1948.

The World Health Organization and the medical charity MSF have issued urgent warnings about the largest health facility in Khan Younis, Nasser Hospital, saying remaining staff could barely function with supplies running out and intense fighting nearby.

WHO footage showed people in the crowded facility being treated on blood-smeared floors as frantic loved ones shouted and jostled. Cats scavenged on a mound of medical waste.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, has increasingly called for restraint and for more humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza while supporting the offensive.

Finns go to the polls to elect a new president at an unprecedented time for the NATO newcomer

HELSINKI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Voters in Finland were electing a new president Sunday at an unprecedented time for the Nordic nation that is now a NATO member with its eastern border with Russia closed — two things almost unthinkable a few years ago.

Polls across the country opened at 9 a.m. (0700 GMT) and will close at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT).

Unlike in most European countries, the president of Finland holds executive power in formulating foreign and security policy, particularly when dealing with countries outside the European Union like the United States, Russia and China.

Some 4.5 million citizens are eligible to vote for Finland's new head of state from an array of nine candidates — six men and three women. They are picking a successor to hugely popular President Sauli Niinistö, whose second six-year term expires in March. He is not eligible for re-election. No candidate is expected to get more than 50% of the vote in Sunday's first round of voting, pushing the race into a runoff in February. Recent polls suggest that former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb, 55, and ex-Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, 65, are the leading contenders.

Stubb, who represents the conservative National Coalition Party

and headed the Finnish government in 2014-2015, and veteran politician Haavisto, an ex-United Nations diplomat running for the post for the third time, are each estimated to garner 23%-27% of the votes.

Finland's new head of state will start a six-year term in March in a markedly different geopolitical and security situation in Europe than did incumbent Niinistö after the 2018 election.

Abandoning decades of military non-alignment in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Finland became NATO's 31st member in April, much to the annoyance of President Vladimir Putin of Russia, which shares a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) border with the Nordic nation.

NATO membership, which has made Finland the Western military alliance's front-line country toward Russia, and the war raging in Ukraine a mere 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) away from Finland's border have boosted the president's status as a security policy leader. Advance vote results will be confirmed soon after polls close and initial results from Sunday's voting are expected by around midnight (2200 GMT). The first round results will be officially confirmed on Tuesday. The likely second round of voting between the two candidates with the most votes is set for Feb. 11.

Thailand and China sign mutual visa exemption

BANGKOK, Jan 28 (Agencies): Thailand and China on Sunday signed off on a visa waiver agreement at talks between their foreign ministers as the two countries look to boost ties.

The deal inked by Thai foreign minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi allows people from the two nations to travel to one another's country visa-free from March 1.

Thai officials hope

the deal will encourage more Chinese to come and boost the kingdom's vital tourism sector, which has struggled to bounce back from the pandemic.

"This agreement is a symbol of our long-lasting friendship, trust and confidence... and help to stimulate the tourism industry in both countries," Parnpree said.

Wang welcomed the agreement, saying Thai and Chinese people "are one family".

Precise details of the visa arrangements were not announced on Sunday, but earlier this month Thai officials said the deal would allow stays of up to 30 days per visit.

Before his talks with Parnpree, Wang held two days of talks in Bangkok with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan covering the sensitive issues of Taiwan and the attacks in the Red Sea by Huthi rebels.

Lovely Research Journey of Prof (Dr.) Emeritus R.K. Uppal

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Dr. Rajinder Kumar Uppal, a prolific writer, a Man of Letters, a distinguished Professor of Emeritus, an acclaimed academician, research stalwart, and the more ingenious guide has won accolades not only in the academic field but also in the genre of research. Presently, he is serving in the most exalted institution, Baba Farid College of Management and Technology (Punjab), as a Professor-cum-Principal. He is also MTC Global Chair Professor: Banking and Finance. He is also appointed Emeritus Professor in SKD University, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan. Dr. Uppal is also Research Professor in the Area of Finance at Indian Institute of Finance, New Delhi. He is Visiting Professor at Trinity Group of Institutions, Jalandhar, KC Group of Institutions, Nawanshahr, Vishisht School of Management, Indore, Lala Lajpat Rai Institution of Engg. and Technology, Moga, Institute of Researchers, Kerala, Kamarajar Institute of Education and Research, TN, Nelson Mandela University and also Visiting Professor in Indus International University, Himachal Pradesh. He is also Professor of Practice in Finance in the Deptt. of Management, Narayana Engineering College: Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. This doyen of economics hails from a very small town near Bhatinda District in Punjab. Belonging to a poor and modest joint-family, his entire childhood was full of struggles even for bare necessities, yet he rose to a very high and eminent position in his life because of his eternal passion for knowledge and learning. Dr. Uppal commenced his teaching career by joining D.A.V. College, Malout in 1987 as a part-time lecturer and rose to the present-day position of Professor-cum-Principal. Dr. Uppal is an accomplished academician, a distinguished author, a collaborative researcher, and an effective mentor to young scholars. He is also a frequent reviewer, discussant, and on session chair for several pro-

fessional organizations. Truly, he is a visionary in the field of banking and finance, with exceptional theoretical and applied contributions in the subject. He also published many national and International Patents based on his research.

Little did he know that this inclination towards a subject could ignite his passion in ways that would lead him to make global records. Completing the Maximum Number of Major Post-Doctoral Research Projects on Banking and Finance, he has registered his name in the India Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, International Book of Records, and World Book of Records.

He completed his post graduation and Ph.D from Punjabi University, Patiala. He is considered as master of professional academic work. Dr. Uppal observed that information technology (IT) is playing a key role in the development and modernization of banks in India. The information technology was also attaining new peaks every year in our country and all these developments were in conformation with the liberalization and globalization wave. As a matter of fact, his research fervor and academic zeal primarily focuses upon banking and finance. He heralded a new era of globally competitive Indian banking system. He authored/edited seventy two books and amongst his prominent books Indian Banking in the Globalized World-2013, Information Technology in Banks- A New Gateway for Success-2018, E-Age Banking - A Future Outlook-2018, Banking with Technology- A New Vision 2020, Managing Transformation in Indian Banks Through E-Delivery Channels-2021 have won an array of laurels. Many of his books are serving as text and reference books in many professional programmes being run by Indian colleges and universities. Through his books, he envisaged the challenges and opportunities regarding the use of e-banking



particularly in public sector banks. He was instrumental in suggesting the reforms in banking and financial sector through e-technology. His prodigious research talent gave him leverage to write as many as two fifty five research papers on banking and finance and since 2017 some of his research papers earned global recognition with Google scholar citation such as 779, h-index 15, and i10 index is 23. He presented ninety five research papers in different national and international conferences. His claim as a researcher was never unfounded as eight of his research papers were lauded at different international conferences held at Hawaii, Indonesia, Finland, Costa-Rica, Australia, London and Pakistan respectively. His insatiable craving for research got stimulus under the aegis of UGC and HRD. As many as seven major post-doctorate research projects were funded by UGC, ICSSR and HRD, New Delhi. He reciprocated successfully and harnessed his research skill with incredible finesse and ease. His able guidance inspired even many young teachers to wade into the ocean of research and He has guided several Ph.Ds and over five dozen M.Phil candidates. Although, it is not possible to circumscribe his comprehensive achievements into a finite space, yet the pile of his degrees and awards speaks volumes of his marvelous eruditeness. His services were acknowledged at different forums from time to time.

He was even awarded Honorary D.Litt by reputed Business University, Costa Rica in 2014. International Peace University awarded honorary D.Litt 2019 and Nelson Mandela University, USA also awarded Doctor of Letters to Dr. Uppal. University of South America also awarded honorary D.Litt. International Journal; Pune conferred the Best Reviewer Award on him. His monumental work encouraged various national organizations to honor such an inclusive academic and research stalwart with Jewel of India Award, Best Educationist Award, Shatya Shiromani Purskar, Pride of India Award and Excellent Research Award by Punjab Commerce and Management Association respectively. This colossal figure earned Life Time Achievement Award from Dashmesh Girls College, Badal for his exemplarily service to the cause of education. Deputy speaker, Punjab assembly, S. Ajab Singh Bhatti also awarded Life Time Achievement award. Malout administration honored Dr. Uppal during 71th R-Public Day celebration due to unparalleled contribution in the field of higher education and quality research. Nelson Mandela University Awarded International Dr. Abudal Kalam Best Economist Innovative Award for the year 2019. He was also awarded Eminence Social Scientist Award by Deshmesh Girls College, Badal. He was also honored during jagat guru shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji birthday (550) Celebration. His name is also

selected for Amity Excellence Award for the Best Academic Author in the area of Banking and conferred during INBUSH ERA 2020, Best Outstanding Researcher Award-2020, Outstanding Researcher-2021 Award, MTC Global Life time Achievement Award-2022, Best Researcher Award-2023 by INSO, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Excellence Award-2023 By International Council of Education, Training and Research, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International Excellence Award-2023 by ICERT, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Global Educator Award-2023 by ICERT

Dr Uppal' contributions to the societal benefits of mankind are beyond speculations. His zeal to bring about change is an inspiration to every young student and researcher to work in a way that helps the world and brings us closer to the idea of global peace. He is an embodiment of passion, perseverance, excellence, critical thinking, and professionalism. He also spoke in G-20 Summit held in New Delhi.

His work and publications is a true asset to the world of economics. His thorough research in the field and several years of experience has contributed vastly to the Indian Banking and Finance Sector. His research papers have compared the thesis and studies of different researchers across the globe over time. This has helped

the Indian economy to understand and take considerable measures into improving the current conditions. Furthermore, Dr Uppal's studies have brought out numerous new and fresh perspectives of looking at the system and transforming it for the better and the growth of the Indian economy. Additionally, his years of experience in teaching and his in-born zeal to educate have revamped his students' lives.

He is presently working in advisory board of editors in national and international reputed research journals. While serving as chief-editor of reputed research journal he explored his worth in other areas as well. He wrote as many as fifty articles for leading Indian Newspapers on current social and economic issues. He was invited for expert talks on the relevant issues by various govt. and private TV Channels and All India Radio, Jalandhar. He designed syllabi of UGC job oriented courses such as e-banking and e-commerce from Certificate level upto advance Diploma. He also mentors young teachers to yield quality research under faculty development programme. He has signed a MOU with Desh Bhagat University to organize seminars/conferences on burning issues. His academic and research works holds promise for his society as his plea of merger of banks eight years back has been implemented by the present Indian dispensation. He has also successfully defended his D.Litt thesis on the very burning topic, "Managing Transformation in Indian banks Through E-Delivery Channels- Challenges and Opportunities" in Utikal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India in 2021. He desires to restructure and revolutionize Indian banking industry by linking it with e-technology thereby ushering a new era of competitive banking system not only at home but also abroad. For him, research is a never-ending process. The loss of human resources due

to cancer has again caused a stir in his indefatigable research mind and he has embarked on a new project i.e An empirical Study of "Loss of Human Resources with the Extensive Penetration of Cancer in the Malwa Belt of Punjab and its Future Perspectives." Infact, he is an asset for the society.

Dr. Uppal is also actively engaged in leadership tasks that correspond with the breadth of his academic vision and energy. He has independently organized National conferences and seminars on issues catering to the current financial milieu. Being an excellent orator, he also chairs, quite frequently, technical sessions in various seminars and conferences across the whole nation. Indeed, Dr. Uppal is an academician, author and scholar, who has been one of the most productive and influential contributors to the field of Banking and Finance that our country has seen in recent times.

In brief, the outstanding educational and research achievements of Dr. Uppal are simply too many to recount within the space of a short citation. Today, the echelon he has attained academically, intellectually, socially and spiritually is even beyond the dreams of majority of the achievers. This erudite scholar's research work and academic excellence promoted various national and international organizations to honor such an inclusive academician. He, truly, is the embodiment of mission and vision of critical thinking, professionalism, excellence and innovation.

Dr. Uppal through his research wishes to implement center- state govt. Policies to modernize the Indian Economy or see New India. Moreover, his research will benefit policymakers, planners, researchers, the Indian banking industry, and others interested in banking studies. He is also honorary Director, Centre for Development Economic Studies (CDES), TN, in the field of Banking and Finance.

Faculty Development Program on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Data Science organized at SMVDU

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: School of Computer Science and Engineering has organized a Five Day Faculty Development Program on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Data Science under Research Project-126 "Setting up of High-End Computing Lab at SMVDU" from 15-19

Jan 2024. The FDP was inaugurated by Prof. (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, SMVDU. The participants were faculty members, technical staff, research scholars, and students from engineering and other disciplines of SMVDU.

The FDP focused on Deep Learning and Machine Learning,



offering a platform for academics and industry professionals to explore theoretical and practical approaches to problem-

solving using these techniques. The FDP promoted the exchange of ideas, skill enhancement, and collaboration

among researchers in the field. The coordinator of the event was Dr. Baijnath Kaushik, Head SoCSE, and Prin-

cipal Investigator of the project RP-126. The resource persons were Prof. Haider Banka (Head, CSE, IIT Dhanbad), Prof. Nitin Aulak, (Assistant professor, IIT Ropar), Prof. P. Radha Krishna (CSE, NIT Warangal), Prof. Amit Prakash (IPU Delhi), Prof. Sudip Mishra (CSE, IIT Kharagpur), and Prof. M. Srinivas

(CSE, NIT Warangal). The coordinator of the workshop extended their gratitude towards Sh. Ajay Kumar Sharma, Registrar SMVDU, Sh. Neeraj Gupta, Finance officer, and Ms. Tripti Saitu Gupta, Deputy Registrar (S&P) for their valuable support and encouragement in the smooth conduct of this FDP. The coordinator

also extended his sincere appreciation to all the resource persons. The coordinator also appreciated the organizing committee—Dr. Akshima Chadha, Dr. Yusera Farooq Khan, Abhigya Mahajan, and Sudip for their technical support for this Faculty Development Program.

FROM PAGE 1

Lt Governor chairs 34th University Council Meeting of SKUAST Kashmir

the students and also to conduct a detailed study on yield gaps. The meeting also deliberated on the reforms to promote start-ups and entrepreneurship, opening up new frontier areas to drive smart and intelligent farming practices, besides resetting of goals and mandates of the University in tune with National Goals and Priorities. The Council gave in-principle approvals to various agenda points presented during the meeting including the setting up of Centre of Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning in Agriculture (CAIML); SKUAST-K Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (SKII)Centre and to establish the Division of Agro-Meteorology at FOH, Shalimar. Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir presented the Progress Report of the University. The latest edition of Agri Rise- an Agricultural Education Digest on Agri-entrepreneurship was also released on the occasion.

"Employment process for 1.5 lakh employees complete": Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

and carry out the recruitment process. The first notification of 5,696 loco pilots has

already been issued on January 20. Now the candidate will get more opportunities in railway," he added.

BRO breakthrough on Golden Arc road by building 700 Meter Naushera Tunnel

"There are four major tunnels on this stretch viz Kandi tunnel, Sungal tunnel, Naushera tunnel and BhimberGali tunnel," BRO said. The BRO said that last year on November 25 breakthrough of the Kandi tunnel was achieved signifying the efforts of BRO towards providing connectivity across the areas of Rajouri and Poonch.

"The progress of the National Highway has taken pace and the project is expected to be completed by 2026 before its specified time," BRO said. Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan DG Border Roads said that BRO is spearheading crucial road projects to connect remote areas with major centers in the Jammu-Poonch region. The Jammu-Poonch link, advancing rapidly, is on track for completion in the next few years," he said. On building Defence infrastructure along the LoC, DG BR said that development of defence infrastructure is a continuous process and Border Roads Organisation is committed towards strengthening of defence infrastructure by building and upgrading strategic roads all along the IB, LC and LAC. He said that BRO and Project Sampark

is steadfast in its commitment to create, connect, care and save lives of the citizens of its area of responsibility. "It believes in the adage 'Roads Build Nation' and rededicated itself to the construction of border roads infrastructures to spur socio-economic progress," he said.

1 dead, 17 injured as stage collapses during singer B Praak's event at Delhi's Kalkaji temple

function) was organised at the Mahant Parishar of Kalkaji temple on Saturday and around 1,600 people attended it. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal condoled the death of the woman and wished for the speedy recovery of the injured. "The accident that happened last night during a 'jagan' at the Kalkaji temple is tragic. A woman has died, may her soul rest in peace. I wish for the speedy recovery of the 17 injured people," Kejriwal said in a post on 'X' in Hindi. "I appeal to people of Delhi to take special care of safety standards in any kind of big event and make arrangements in such a way that no untoward incident happens," he added.

Dogri folk singer Romalo Ram expresses gratitude to Centre for being conferred Padma Shri Award

posthumous awardees.

The Padma Awards, which were instituted in 1954, are one of the highest civilian honours of India and are announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order), and Padma Shri (distinguished service). The award seeks to recognise achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. The Padma Awards are conferred on recommendations by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. The Awards Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes the Home Secretary, the Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members. The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval. Last year, the government announced 106 Padma Awards, including three duo cases. The list then comprised six Padma Vibhushans, nine Padma Bhushan, and 91 Padma Shri Awards. Nineteen of the awardees were women, and the list also included two persons from the category of foreigners: NRI, PIO, OCI, and seven posthumous awardees.

AAP will contest all assembly seats in Haryana on its own, Lok

also extended his sincere appreciation to all the resource persons. The coordinator also appreciated the organizing committee—Dr. Akshima Chadha, Dr. Yusera Farooq Khan, Abhigya Mahajan, and Sudip for their technical support for this Faculty Development Program.

Sabha polls as part of INDIA bloc: Arvind Kejriwal

The AAP will contest all the 90 assembly seats in Haryana on its own, but the Lok Sabha polls would be fought as part of the INDIA bloc, Kejriwal said. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was also present at the event.

Light to moderate rain, snowfall over J&K during next 24 Hours: MeT

system may lead to the temporary closure of roads in higher reaches and important passes, including Sinthan Pass, Mughal Road, Sadhna and Razdan Pass, Zojila, etc., particularly from January 28 to 31. Travellers are advised to plan their trip accordingly, the MeT office warned. Farmers have been advised to withhold irrigation and fertiliser applications and drain out excess water from orchards and fields during the wet weather period. There would be a significant drop in daytime temperature during the period, it said. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of 4.3°C above normal against the normal of -1.0°C on Sunday. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 13.3°C on the previous day, which was 5.8°C above normal during this period of the season. The other stations of the Valley had a low of Qazigund -0.6°C, Pahalgam -0.8°C, Kupwara 2.1°C, Kokernag -0.1°C, and Gulmarg -3.5°C, respectively, the MeT office said.

Tata teams up with France's Airbus to manufacture helicopters in India

The partnership between Tata and Airbus for the FAL aligns with India's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, promoting local manufacturing capabilities.

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Tata Group has joined hands with Airbus to establish the country's first private Final Assembly Line (FAL) for helicopters, in a big boost for India's 'Make in India' initiative.

The FAL will be responsible for putting together Airbus' popular H125 helicopter from its civil range.

This collaboration is a noteworthy milestone, as it represents the first instance of the private sector in India establishing a facility for helicopter manufacturing.

The establishment of the FAL aligns with the government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant



India) initiative, aimed at promoting indigenous manufacturing capabilities.

This partnership builds on the existing cooperation between Tata and Airbus, who are already

working together on the production of the C-295 transport aircraft in the state of Gujarat.

Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), a subsidiary of the Tata Group, will be leading

the charge in setting up this facility in collaboration with Airbus Helicopters.

The announcement of this venture coincided with the visit of French President Emmanuel

Macron to India as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day celebrations.

During Macron's state visit, discussions were also held on potential collaboration in the defence sector, including the prospect of French engine maker Safran aiding in the production of fighter jet engines in India, an official told agency.

France is currently the second-largest supplier of arms to India, and talks around Safran's involvement included a 100 per cent transfer of technology in design, development, certification, and production.

Ola CEO's Krutrim secures \$50 million, becomes India's first AI unicorn

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Krutrim, the AI startup founded by OLA CEO Bhavish Aggarwal has achieved unicorn status by securing \$50 million in funding.

The investment, led by Matrix Partners India and other notable investors, values Krutrim at an impressive \$1 billion, making it India's first AI unicorn.

Krutrim launched its language model just a month ago.

The company, whose name means "artificial" in Sanskrit, is not just stopping at language models.

The startup is actively involved in developing data centres and has plans to produce servers and supercomputers dedicated to the AI ecosystem.

In a LinkedIn post, Krutrim announced the successful closure of its first funding round, marking a historic moment for the company and a remarkable achievement for India's tech landscape.

Bhavish Aggarwal, the Founder of Krutrim, expressed his enthusiasm for building India's complete AI computing stack, stating, "India has to build its own AI, and at Krutrim, we are fully committed towards building the country's first

complete AI computing stack."

Trained on over 2 trillion tokens with a focus on Indian data, it powers generative AI applications across various Indian languages.

Krutrim's linguistic prowess extends to conversational AI assistants that fluently understand and speak multiple Indian languages.

Krutrim's family of Large Language Models, including Krutrim base and Krutrim Pro, is designed to offer advanced capabilities, including multimodal features and broader knowledge.

The model can seamlessly switch between languages and engage in discussions on diverse topics, from Bengali poetry to Bollywood movies and creative masala dosa recipes.

The beta version of Krutrim is set to be available for consumers in February 2024, with an additional offering as an API for enterprises and developers seeking to create AI applications.

As India joins the global race to build large language models, Krutrim's achievement adds a significant milestone to the country's efforts in creating its own AI systems.

International Maritime Arbitration Centre to come up in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): In a move to bolster its maritime arbitration services, India will launch the India International Maritime Arbitration Centre (IMAC) in the financial capital Mumbai.

As per highly placed sources, the arbitration centre will provide a range of dispute resolution services, including mediation, arbitration, and hybrid mechanisms.

The centre will be established under the stewardship of the Indian Maritime University's Mumbai Port Campus and will be funded by the Indian Ports Association (IPA) and Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL).

"The IMAC Secretariat, slated to be built

as a world-class facility, will house all the amenities, including a fully equipped conference area and meeting rooms.

The government has to finalise the appropriate name, establish administrative mandates, and develop by-laws and internal procedures," a person in the know of the development told this paper. He said the centre would be operational in an year's time.

This international body will be akin to the London Maritime Arbitrators Association (LMAA) and the Tokyo Maritime Arbitration Commission (TOMAC).

This body will also be free from compulsory appointment by the government or public sector undertak-

ings (PSUs) to provide impartial oversight and governance for fair and equitable dispute resolution processes within the maritime sector, as per sources.

The proposal suggests including specific panels like SAROD-Ports under institutions like the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA). This aims to help parties use these specialised panels for resolving disputes, promoting customised and industry-specific arbitration solutions. Another important part of the proposal is creating a panel of experienced professionals with a background in commercial or technical shipping. They would work as Maritime Arbitrators.

US becomes world's biggest economy in 2023, beats China

WASHINGTON, Jan 28 (Agencies): The United States has overtaken China to become the world's largest economy in 2023, with a 6.3 per cent rise in gross domestic product (GDP) compared to China's 4.6 per cent gain.

It was earlier predicted that China would outpace the US in economic growth.

The US economy appears to be in a stronger position than China as it emerges from the challenges posed by the pandemic.

At the beginning of 2023, concerns were raised about the possibility of a US recession due to the Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates in response to decades-high inflation.

In contrast, China was anticipated to experience a booming recovery as it fully reopened its economy post-Covid-19 lockdown.

However, recent GDP data has



unveiled a different narrative, showcasing the US economy's resilience.

The real, inflation-adjusted growth for the US in the fourth quarter of 2023 was 3.3 per cent, following a 4.9 per cent expansion in the third quarter.

China, on the other hand, faces challenges, including a prolonged real estate crisis, its worst deflation streak in 25 years, declining exports in 2023,

and a surge in youth unemployment.

Local governments are burdened with excessive debt, and suspicions surround the accuracy of the claimed 5.2 per cent economic expansion by the Xi Jinping government.

Economists often gauge a country's economic size using nominal GDP, where the US has now taken the lead.

While some consider purchas-

ing power parity, which adjusts for price differences between countries, as another measure, nominal GDP is widely regarded as a more reliable indicator on the global stage.

A significant factor contributing to China's economic challenges, according to Peterson Institute for International Economics President Adam Posen, is President Xi Jinping's authoritarian rule, he told Bloomberg.

Posen argues that Jinping's exercise of arbitrary power has heightened economic vulnerabilities, causing households and small businesses to hoard cash due to uncertainty about future developments.

Posen suggests that the US may witness a surge in productivity growth, allowing the economy to expand without generating inflation.

However, uncertainties remain about the Federal Reserve's strategy to return US inflation to its 2 per cent target.

Promoting locally practical methods may cut snakebite deaths: Study

Tamil Nadu has high numbers of four venomous snakes whose bites can seriously affect humans

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Promoting locally practical methods -- with the support and understanding of people -- may reduce the number of individuals bitten by venomous snakes and save many lives, according to a study conducted in Tamil Nadu.

The researchers surveyed 535 people in rural agricultural communities in Tamil Nadu, asking what anti-snakebite measures they take, and what stops them doing more to protect themselves.

Tamil Nadu has just 5 per cent of India's population, but an estimated 20 per cent of the country's snakebite deaths happen in the state, they said.

The findings, published in the journal Conservation Science and Practice, show that most people (69 per cent) take steps to prevent snakebites, but the measures taken don't always reflect evidence-based advice.

Of the people who took steps to prevent snakebites, more than half (59 per cent) exclusively



used measures supported by evidence and government guidelines.

These include keeping homes and surroundings clean and tidy, and using torches at night, the researchers, including those from Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, said.

However, 41 per cent relied fully or partially on measures not recognised by research or official advice—such as sprinkling salt, garlic, turmeric or bleach as deterrents, they said.

"The really important point is to find solutions that work in a certain location, and that people

find practical and easy to use," said Harrison Carter, who led the study as part of a master's at the University of Exeter, UK.

"For example, some farmers in Tamil Nadu have previously been given boots for protection—but many work in paddy fields, where boots immediately get stuck in the wet ground. The most obvious—and yet easily overlooked—option is to talk to people and ask them what they need," said Carter, now at the University of Oxford.

Of the people in the survey who took no

protective measures, almost half said that on reflection, they felt they should.

By working with local partners who have the trust of their communities, simple measures can be promoted to make a real difference, the researchers said.

About 1.4 lakh people die each year from snakebites worldwide, and another 4 lakh are left with permanent disability, they said.

The World Health Organization now recognizes snakebites as a "neglected tropical disease," and has committed to halving snakebite deaths and disabilities by 2030.

Tamil Nadu has high numbers of four venomous snakes whose bites can seriously affect humans: the spectacled cobra, the Russell's viper, the saw-scaled viper and the common krait, according to the researchers.

These snakes are widespread in tropical regions and their approach to bite prevention could also be applied across the topics, they added.

Sepsis, tropical fever most common causes for community-acquired acute kidney injury in India: Study

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Sepsis and tropical fever were found to be the most common causes of community acquired-acute kidney injury (CA-AKI) in India, whereby kidneys fail to filter waste from the blood, according to a new research published in The Lancet Regional Health-Southeast Asia journal.

While sepsis refers to the presence of pus-forming bacteria or their toxins in the blood or tissues, tropical fever is the infection characterised by fever and unique to or prevalent in tropical or subtropical regions.

Conducted across nine tertiary care centres in India, the study also found that the most common comorbidities in these CA-AKI patients included hypertension and diabetes.

The team of scientists, including those from Sanjay Gandhi Post-graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Uttar Pradesh, and Madras Medical College, Tamil Nadu, observed that presenting CA-AKI patients to tertiary care units was associated with high mortality.

They also found that a significant number



of these patients progressed to developing chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The findings underscored the high mortality risk among patients from most deprived socio-economic groups, the researchers said, urging for immediate attention for targeted interventions. Previous evidence has found CA-AKI to be common in India and other low and middle-income countries (LMICs).

For the study, the team included 3,711 CA-AKI patients older than 12 years and admitted to either the inpatient or emergency departments of the participating hospitals. They defined CA-AKI as "AKI occurring outside the hospital setting - typically in the community or home setting". AKI recently replaced the

term "acute renal failure".

The researchers constructed the participants' clinical, demographic, and socioeconomic profiles, along with collecting data regarding their risk factors and causes, comorbidities, complications and patient outcomes.

The team followed up each patient for renal outcomes at discharge and at one and three months after the onset of AKI, with patient outcomes being classified as survivor or non-survivor.

They analysed the data and found that the highest prevalence of AKI was in patients 55-64 years of age, with women being more likely to present with advanced AKI stage 3.

The most common pre-existing comorbidity was found to be

hypertension (21.4 per cent), followed by diabetes mellitus (19.1 per cent), chronic liver disease (11.7 per cent), and coronary artery disease (4.2 per cent).

The researchers said that patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension were more likely to develop stage 3 AKI. Of the total 3,711 patients, 58.1 per cent lived in rural areas and over one-third consumed alcohol regularly, the researchers found.

Upon performing statistical analyses, the researchers found that older age (over 65 years), alcohol abuse, hypertension, inability to urinate, low platelet count and low socioeconomic status were "significant" predictors of mortality. The mortality risk in patients with AKI was higher in the most deprived group, they said.

"This is the largest registry-based study to report CA-AKI in India. The registry included multiple centers representative of rural and urban populations and major tertiary care centers from north to south and west to eastern parts of India," the researchers wrote.

Rohan Bopanna wins men's doubles title at Australian Open; becomes world's oldest Grand Slam winner

It is Bopanna's second Grand Slam title, having won the French Open mixed doubles with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017

MELBOURNE, Jan 28 (Agencies): Rohan Bopanna became only the third Indian to win a men's doubles Grand Slam title, taking the Australian Open crown with partner Matthew Ebden following a commanding win over Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, here.

In a high-quality game of tennis, second seeded Bopanna and Ebden won 7-6(0) 7-5 against the Italian team in the final that lasted one hour and 39 minutes.

Only the iconic Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi have won Major titles for India in men's tennis while trailblazer Sania Mirza did it in women's tennis.

For Bopanna it is his second Grand Slam title, having won the French Open mixed doubles trophy with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017.

At 43, Bopanna also became the oldest Grand Slam champion in men's tennis. He bettered the record of Jean-Julien Rojer who, at age of 40, had lifted the French Open men's doubles trophy in 2022 with Marcelo Arevalo.

Bopanna was playing his third men's doubles final at Grand Slam events, having ended runner-up at US Open twice (2013, 2023).

"A couple of years ago I said in a video message, I am going to call it a day because I was not winning matches. I went five months without winning a match. I thought that was the end of my journey but my perse-



verance, and (something) inside me kept me going," Bopanna said after his triumph.

"It really changed so many things, I got a wonderful partner to get me to all the laurels," he added.

Bopanna is already assured of becoming the new number one on Monday when the ATP rankings will be updated. At 43, he will be the oldest player to be perched on top of the ranking pile.

Bopanna acknowledged the contribution of his Australian partner Ebden and his American coach Scott Davidoff in his success story.

"It was not possible, if I had not this fantastic Aussie partner by my side, so thanks to Matty. We had a fantastic season last year and for me to win my first men's Grand Slam here at the Asia-Pacific is special.

"Tennis is such a great teach-

er and Scott has been a great teacher who has been with me for over a decade. It was a tough, tough journey, this victory is as much yours as much it is mine," Bopanna said.

On a lighter note, he said, "I have my in-laws here. The last time they came I won my first mixed doubles. I don't know why they do not come more often."

Ebden, who had won men's doubles, too, praised the Indian.

"Age truly really is not even a number for this guy. He is a champion, he is a warrior, I am forever grateful to you and your amazing team, thank you mate!" said Ebden.

It was such hard-fought battle at the Rod Laver arena that the contest featured only one break of serve when Vavassori dropped his serve at love in game 11 of the second set. There were not many break points on offer either.

The second seeds had break-

points in successive games in the beginning of the contest. However, the Italians saved both to stay on even terms.

In game two, off Bolelli's serve, Vavassori hit a volley at 30-30 but Bopanna hit a return long.

In game four, the Italians were again down a break point when at 30-30, a return from Bopanna jumped off the net chord to give the second seeds a free point. However, Vavassori served well to save that point as well.

Serving 4-5, and 30-all, Bolelli was under pressure again but pulled off a powerful cross court forehand which was away from Bopanna's reach and then served huge to make it 5-all.

Ebden's serve came under pressure in game 11 in which he faced a breakpoint, but, after playing deuce points, the Australian closed the game with an ace.

In the tie-breaker, Bolelli's serve was broken twice as the second seeds zoomed to a 5-0 lead without losing a point on their serve.

Vavassori too lost his serve to hand their rivals six set points. They converted the first, Ebden finding a forehand winner down the line. The second set too was tight and there was no break of serve until Vavassori lost his serve at love under pressure.

Ebden came serving for the championship and they closed the match with Bopanna executing a fierce overhead smash on a return from his rivals.

Premier League: Virgil van Dijk aims to make Jurgen Klopp's finale at Liverpool 'the best time he's ever had'



LONDON, Jan 28 (Agencies): The fandom of Premier League giants, Liverpool, were left shocked by the sudden announcement of their successful manager, Jurgen Klopp, leaving the club at the end of the season.

However, the Reds' skipper Virgil Van Dijk aims at making the German manager's last few days with the club memorable with success.

One of Klopp's pivotal signings as the Reds' manager came with Dutch centre-back Van Dijk, who later took over the role of captain of the side from English defender Jordan Henderson. Gunned by the announcement, the Dutchman believes that it will only add on to Liverpool's motivation as they move on ahead with the season.

Liverpool is in a very comfortable and promising position in the current football season.

The club currently stands at the top of the Premier League table and have also secured their place in the Carabao Cup Final. Klopp's side are still in contention for the FA Cup and the UEFA Champions League, leaving the doors open for a treble or beyond.

"Of course this is massive, it's massive news in football... It will maybe even give you an extra boost to do that extra or maybe enjoy it a little bit even more together and make the last part of the season, the last bit of the manager's time at the club, the best time he's ever had." Virgil Van Dijk told Liverpool's website about Klopp's departure.

With the scope of winning multiple silverware in Klopp's final season with Liverpool, Van Dijk, while acknowledging the massiveness of the German's departure, believes it is the ideal setup for the players to

give a deservedly ideal parting gift to their manager.

"We have a lot of targets still to achieve this year and why not finish the season on a high and together with celebrations for the boss as well," Van Dijk added.

The 56-year-old German surprised the football world by revealing his choice to step down at the end of the 2023-24 season. This concludes his highly triumphant nine-year tenure at Anfield, during which he successfully turned a struggling club into one of the biggest names in Europe. Klopp led the Liverpool side to become UEFA Champions League winners in 2019 and a Premier League title in the same year, which came after a long 30-year wait.

Van Dijk also explained how he and his teammates will be focusing on the season, without this news affecting their performance, which he believes as something that will be equally demanded by the manager.

"For me personally, my mindset is making sure our goals that we have and our targets that we are trying to achieve don't get disrupted by the news... That's what the manager wants as well," Van Dijk added.

Ranji Trophy: Manoj Tiwary Piles Up Another Ton As Bengal Dominate Assam

GUWAHATI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Skipper Manoj Tiwary's 100 was among the highlights for rampant Bengal who reduced Assam to 99/8 on the second day after piling up 405 in their Ranji Trophy Group A contest in Guwahati. Tiwary, who became only the fourth Bengal player to score 10,000 runs for his state on the opening day, resumed at 68 not out and piled up his 30th first-class ton, making 100 off 264 balls with nine fours. However, the veteran Anustup Majumdar could only add five runs to his overnight total as he was dismissed for 125 (253 balls, 16 fours).

The 39-year-old Tiwary's effort took Bengal to a strong 405 in the first essay, with their total getting a further push by half-centuries from Karan Lal (52) and Suraj Sidhu Jaiswal (52), who both added 74 for the eighth wicket.

Bengal bowlers then got into the act here at the ACA Stadium in Barsapara to dismantle Assam. Denish Das's 50 and Saahil Jain's unbeaten 36 notwithstanding, Mohammad Kaif (3/32), Jaiswal (3/25) and Ankit Mishra (2/22) left Assam reeling at 99/8 at stumps, still a massive 306 runs behind in the first innings.

Mumbai conceded 126 run lead against Uttar Pradesh

It was not a happy homecoming for Mumbai at the Wankhede Stadium with the Ajinkya Rahane-led side conceding a huge 126-run lead in the first innings to visitors Uttar Pradesh on the second day. UP captain Nitish Rana smacked a 120-ball 106 (12 fours, 5 sixes) and Samarth Singh's 63 (107 balls, 8 fours) powered them to 324 in reply to Mumbai's moderate 198.

Royston Dias (3/54) and Shivam Dube (3/32) shared six wickets between them but could not stop UP from gaining advantage.

In reply, Jay Bista (15 not out) and Bhupen Lalwani (9 not out) ensured Mumbai remained



unscathed at stumps, trailing by another 102 runs in the second essay.

At Patna, hosts Bihar were bolstered by Sakibul Gani's 120 not out (199 balls, 13 fours, 2 sixes) and fifties from Piyush Singh (51) and Bipin Saurabh (60).

Bihar were ahead by 43 runs against Kerala.

At the Moin ul Haq Stadium, Bihar were dominant on the first day despite Shreyas Gopal's resistance, who was eventually dismissed for 137 with his contribution rescuing Kerala to a large extent.

Bihar reached 270/5 in reply to Kerala's 227.

India batter Hanuma Vihari missed a double century as he was dismissed for 183 (347 balls, 21 fours, 3 sixes), with his knock pushing Andhra to a huge first-innings score of 431 against Chhattisgarh despite a fine 77/5 from Ravi Kiran.

In their reply at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium, Chhattisgarh reached 118/3 when stumps were drawn as they trailed by another 313 runs in the first innings.

Jagadeesan hits triple ton as TN take complete control against Chandigarh

Narayan Jagadeesan followed up his double ton in the previous game with a magnificent triple century to help Tamil Nadu declare their first innings at a massive 610 for 4 on the second day of their Ranji Trophy Group C match against Chandigarh.

The 28-year-old Jagadeesan struck 321 off 403 balls with the help of 23 fours and five sixes after beginning the day on 108 as TN took complete control of the match.

Two other batters, Pradosh Ranjan Paul (105) and Baba Indrajith (123) also hit centuries as TN took a massive 499 first innings lead. Chandigarh were bowled out for 111 in 47 overs.

TN had made 221 for 1 in 41 overs on first day. They added 389 runs and declared at 610 for 4 in 126.1 overs to shut the door on Chandigarh.

Jagadeesan, the opening batter and wicketkeeper, had made unbeaten 245 in TN's first innings in their innings and 129 run win over Railways in their previous game.

In their second innings, Chandigarh were 1 for no loss in two overs. They were trailing by 498 runs with two days remaining.

RCB's Heather Knight pulls out of WPL 2024, South Africa's Nadine de Klerk named replacement

BANGALORE, Jan 28 (Agencies): England's Heather Knight has pulled out of the upcoming Women's Premier League (WPL) 2024 after having to make a choice between franchise and international cricket. Knight was a part of the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) after joining the team last season.

As per a report on ESPNcricinfo, the England and Wales (ECB) said that players taking part in the WPL would not be eligible for selection for the first three T20Is against New Zealand.

Even as the WPL is scheduled to end on March 17, England's first T20I against the White Ferns is on March 19 at the University Oval in Dunedin. Earlier, Lauren



Bell of the UP Warriorz also withdrew from the WPL, after which Chamari Athapaththu, who went unsold, was picked.

Alice Capsey (Delhi Capitals), Nat Sciver-Brunton and Issy Wong (Mumbai Indians), Danni Wyatt and Sophie Ecclestone (UP Warriorz) and Kate Cross (Royal Challengers Bangalore) are the other English cricketers set to take part in the WPL. For now, there is no update on their

participation in the T20 league.

RCB, in the meantime, have roped in South African all-rounder Nadine de Klerk as a replacement for Knight. The 24-year-old Klerk went into the auction at a base price of INR 30 lakhs, but could not find a buyer. She will now play alongside the likes of Smriti Mandhana, Ellyse Perry and other big names.

In 46 WT20Is thus far, Klerk has scored 419

runs at an average of 26.18 and a strike-rate of 98.35. Her top score of 37 not out came against Pakistan Women back in May 2019 at the Willowmoore Park in Benoni.

Klerk has also been effective with the ball, having taken 35 wickets in WT20Is at an economy rate of 7.19. She got her best figures of 4-0-7-3 against Sri Lanka back in August 2022 in the Commonwealth Games match at the Edgbaston in Birmingham.

RCB failed to make their way through to the playoffs last time around after also losing 5 matches in a row. In the auction for the 2024 edition, they brought in Georgia Wareham, Kate Cross, S Meghana, Simran Bahadur, Sophie Molineux, Ekta Bisht and Shubha Sathesh.

Recovering From Ankle Injury, Hardik Pandya Begins Bowling Full Tilt



NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Agencies): Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya has begun bowling full

tilt after rehabilitation from his ankle injury, clearly indicating that he is on course for the

upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League where he will captain Mumbai Indians. Pandya, who sustained an ankle injury during World Cup last year, was seen bowling here in a video footage shared on his Instagram. "I feel good to be back. My journey started 17 years back at this same ground," said Pandya, who was seen sending down a few deliveries while also doing some running drills and exercises.

"I am giving it all I got, every single day," Pandya, who was named Mumbai Indians captain in place of highly-successful Rohit Sharma on December 15 following a high-profile trade from Gujarat Titans, has been out of action after sustaining the injury in November during World Cup clash against Bangladesh.

He missed the home T20I series against Afghanistan earlier this month.

Natrang presents hindi play 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran'

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Natrang presented a new Hindi play 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran' here today at Natrang Studio Theatre in its weekly Sunday Theatre series under the direction of Neeraj Kant.

The play 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran' is the story of an arrogant king who is used to hearing false praises and who feels that if he is not around, his subjects will become orphans, majority may go crazy and may commit suicide by jumping into the sea. The play begins in the court of Raja Abhiman Singh where he wants to know from his minister what the people think about him. He asks the queen about herself and what kind of man she thinks the king is. He wants to know from Royal Pandit Gungani as what kind of king he is? All three shower praises him. On this King Abhiman Singh says that this means that he should rule the kingdom for another



hundred years. With this the court is adjourned.

In the next scene, the king, who was sleeping at night, gets startled by the arrival of Yamdoot, sits up on the bed and asks Yamdoot who he is and why he has fallen into the clutches of death like this. When Yamdoot tells that he has come to take him to hell on the orders of Yamraaj, the king tells that he himself is Prajapal, Lokpal, Mahipal, Dandpal and Mahakaal on earth. Doesn't Yamraaj know this? But Yamdoot starts carry-

ing the king with a rope around his neck. The king shouts a lot but Yamdoot does not listen. In the end, Yamdoot and the king agree that if even three people love the king, then Yamdoot will leave him here and will return to Yamlok empty handed. Yamdoot asks the king to lie down and puts a white sheet on him and then the queen, the Minister and the royal Priest are called individually. But since these three praise the king falsely, none of them want that the king's life should be spared

and he should live longer anymore. The queen says that after the king's death, her son will become the king and she will become the queen mother, hence the king must die. Minister and Pandit who are tired of giving false praises and are now satisfied that they will not have to tell any more lies. After everyone leaves and after listening to their thoughts, the king finally requests Yamdoot to take him to Yamlok and the play ends. This is how the king comes out of his falsehood and is exposed to the real world. The play carries a very relevant social message and the artists were successful in portraying the same very effectively.

Natrang young artists who performed in the play included Sanket Bhagat, Vishal Sharma, Chaitanaya Shekhar, Vandana Thakur and Kushal Bhat. The lights and the music of the play were executed by Neeraj Kant whereas the show was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

Dimple gets life elimination threat from Pakistan militants organization



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Sunil Dimple, the president of the Mission Statehood Jammu and Kashmir, has received a life threat from a Pakistan-based militant organization.

In response to the threat, Dimple has publicly communicated his commitment to his mission of strengthening Jammu and Kashmir, stopping bloodshed, and fighting against Pakistan-sponsored ter-

rorism. He has also expressed pride in the security forces and authorities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, Dimple has directly addressed the terrorists, stating his dedication to promoting communal harmony and brotherhood among various religions. He has even gone as far as offering to meet with the militants at a location and time of their choosing.

Additionally, Dimple has informed relevant authorities, including LG Manoj Sinha, DG of J&K Police Swain Sahib, and others, about the threat. He has requested enhanced security for himself, his family, and his residence due to the perceived danger.

It's important to note that the situation involves potential international elements, as the threat is claimed to come from a terrorist organization operating in Pakistan. In such cases, law enforcement and security agencies typically take necessary measures to investigate and address the threat.

If you have any specific questions or if there's more information you're seeking, feel free to ask.

NHM employees hold convention; frame District Jammu and Block level Unions



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: In its mission to bring all categories of employees under the ambit of the National Health Mission on one platform, a one day district level convention cum get together of NHM employees of District Jammu was held at Samriti Bhawan Jammu on Sunday (28-01-2024). The meeting was presided over by Senior NHM representative of Jammu Division, Provincial President Jammu Dr Vikas Sharma, Divisional President RNTCP Association Jammu Dr Soni Singh Sambhal, DAM NHM Jammu Ms Rashmi Singh besides other Sr Representatives of the Association and was attended by Medical Officers, Management and Paramedical Staff of the different block of the District Jammu.

The meeting was organized to unite all NHM employees and to discuss the issue of strengthening the organization at gross root level at district as well as each block level, which got overwhelming response from more than 200 employees who actively took part in the convention.

During the convention, the speakers raised various issues related to the welfare of the NHM employees and meaningful solutions to their issues.

Meanwhile, a district level body for Jammu Dis-

trict was also framed on this occasion in which Ms Rashmi Singh was elected as new District President while Geetanjali Jasrotia as Sr Vice President, Dr Sushant Sharma as Vice President, Dr Aishwarya Wazir as General Secretary, Mr Sunil Kathmaria as Secretary, Mr Sandeep Arora as Treasurer, Mr Surinder Singh as Co Treasurer, Dr Rohit Kumar as Spokesperson and Baby Devi as Coordinator where as in the District Advisory Committee Dr Parminder Kour was elected as Chairman while Dr Nazish Suhawardy and Mr Bhanu Partap Singh as Member Secretary of the Association.

Similarly, the new District Association of Jammu also constituted Block Units after due consents from every block in which Mr Riaz Malik was elected as Block President for Binsah, Mr Ajay Seth of Akhnoor, Dr Rashmi for R S Pura, Mrs Parminder Kour for Dhansal, Mr Goutam Saini for Marh, Dr Danish for Chowkichora, Mr Ajay Kumar for Kot Balwal, Mr Rakesh Kumar for Pallanwala, Mr Sudanshu Mani for Jammu Urban and for Sohanjana Block, the Block President shall be nominated later on and other portfolios at block level in the coming days.

While speaking on the occasion, the newly elected President Jammu Ms Rashmi Singh thanked all

the participants for honoring and entrusting her the responsibility of the Block President, promising to work sincerely and dedicatedly for the welfare of our fellow employees, we can work towards resolving the pending cases and particularly focus on the various concerns. They said the current Chief Secretary, Health Secretary and Mission Director NHM have shown a positive and proactive approach, and we believe we can collectively achieve positive outcomes for the betterment of the employees in the time to come.

In the meeting, all the employees of District Jammu unequivocally expressed satisfaction in the leadership of Dr Vikas Sharma, the Divisional NHM President and also pledged full support to him and his organization. The leaders highlighted the current working environment and the scenario in which the employees are working and underscored the need for proper planning for the betterment of the fraternity.

The leaders threw light on the problems being faced by the employees and debated the methods to be adopted to arrive at solutions. JKNHMEA Jammu remains fully committed to its mission of advocating for the rights and well being of NHM employees in J&K UT. The organization will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders and govt authorities to work towards the resolution of the issues of its employees in a more effective and focused manner.

NSF celebration of 159th birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: National Secular Forum (NSF), University Unit organized a program in Jammu University, and on the birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai who laid his life for the country.

Amid slogans "Lala Lajpat Rai - Amar Raha" 'Bharat Mata ki jai', they paid tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai and garlanded the portraits of the son of soil.

Dr. Vikas Sharma Coordinator Jammu District Urban and Zonal Secretary, JKNC was the Chief Guest and Dr Sukhdev Singh President NSF presided over the function. Vikshay Vashist State Secretary NSF was the guest of honour.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Vikas Sharma appreciated the efforts of NSF members to come forward and organize these functions.

He said that Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the foremost leaders who fought against British rule in India. He was popularly known as Punjab Kesari (Lion of the Punjab). He also said that the right tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai would be to launch the struggle for restoration of full status of Jammu and Kashmir State.

On this occasion, he said that we all should take oath not to sit silent and continue our endeavor to regain Jammu and Kashmir State. He said that J&K suffered immensely due to misadventures of the Centre. Post abrogation of statehood people here were suffering due to rising unemployment, inflation and discrimination.

Sukhdev Singh also addressed this occasion and light on the life of Lala Lajpat Rai. Lala Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865 in village Dhudike, in present day Moga district of Punjab. Lala Lajpat Rai joined the Government College at Lahore in 1880 to study Law. While in college he came in contact with patriots and future freedom fighters like Lala Hans Raj and Pandit Guru Dutt.

He founded the Indian Home League Society of America and wrote a book called "Young India". The book severely indicted British rule in India and was banned in Britain and India even before it was published. He was able to return to India in 1920 after the end of World War.

Vikshay Vashist, State Secretary NSF, also spoke on the occasion.

Roshan Sharma, Jammu District President delivered the welcome address, Mohd. Umar Farooq President University Unit was delivering the vote of thanks.

Among those who were present on the occasion included, Vikas Sharma, Abhishek Uppal, Vineet Gupta, Aditya Khajuria, Aditya Kargotra, Tufail Reyaz Khan, and others.

Vijay Bakaya, other leaders visit Balaji Temple at Sidhra



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Apni Party General Secretary, Vijay Bakaya along with other Party leaders, visited Balaji Temple at Sidhra to participate in a langar.

The langar was organized by Provincial

President, Apni Trade Union, Jammu, Raj Sharma. There was a long, unending stream of devotees who had come to the temple for darshan.

Bakaya and other members of the Apni Party served langar

khichdi and curds to all devotees and prayed for peace and harmony for all.

Bakaya said that in view of the increasing foot falls at the temple, the infrastructure-like approach should be improved.

He was accompanied by Additional General Secretary, Arun Chibber, Vice President, Jammu Province, Adv Nirmal Kotwal, Provincial Secretary - Incharge Membership Drive, Dr Rohit Gupta, Youth Wing, General Secretary-Spokesperson, Abhay Bakaya, Vijay Mangotra, and others.

J&K Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sabha Honoured BSP President Darshan Rana

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: Newly appointed State President of Bahujan Samaj Party Darshan Rana was honored for his good work during a program organized by All Jammu and Kashmir Sri Guru Ravidas Sabha at the Gurudwara of Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Maharaj in Krishna Nagar, Jammu. Other officials of All Jammu Kashmir Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha were also specially present during this honorable function organized under the chairmanship of Sabha President Peeran Dita. On this occasion, President of the Sabha Peeran Dita said that recently Darshan Rana has been given the responsibility of the post of President

of Jammu and Kashmir by Bahujan Samaj Party and after getting the responsibility, Darshan Rana is continuously working for the betterment of the society. Due to which he has been honored by his assembly today! He said that even before this, he has been making continuous efforts for the betterment of the society and especially he has always raised the voice of the backward and needy people of the society. He said that the objective of Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha is to encourage people working for the betterment of the society, due to which he has been honored today by the Sabha. On this occasion, BSP State President Darshan Rana thanked all the members of All Jammu

and Kashmir Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha and said that he thanks the President of the Sabha and his entire team for the honor given to him by the Sabha. He said that he will work with full honesty and hard work to fulfill the responsibility given to him by the party and will become the voice of the people of the backward class of the society. He said that better work is being done continuously by Guru Ravidas Sabha Jammu and Kashmir and the work of uniting the people has also been done by the Sabha. On this occasion, other officials of the Sabha also expressed their views and congratulated Darshan Rana on being made the state president of Bahujan Samaj Party.

Madhu Paramhans delivers sermons during Satsang

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JAMMU, Jan 28: Sadhguru Shri Madhuparamhans Ji Maharaj of Sahib Bandgi today in Satwari, Jammu, while enjoying the nectar of his sermons in thousands of Sangat who had come from far and wide, said that just as water bubbles up and ends, so is the world. This world is a figment of your mind. This hasn't happened. The western philosopher Goethe also said this. Said that the world has not happened. This is my creation.

Man takes birth. Doctors see minutely that it is a child. You were in such a subtle form. Sahib is saying one thing here that the world is created by the mind. The world exists only through the mind. The body is the whole mind. The senses are the mind.

Man is wandering for sense taste. The world is experienced through the senses of action and knowledge. The mind itself is telling that this is mother, this is father, this is enemy, this is friend.

For centuries, our ancestors were following a belief that the Sun God was revolving around the earth riding on his chariot. Newton's theory proved that the Earth is rotating and the Sun is in its own place. But now scientists have proved that the Sun is also roaming with its family. Now scientists are saying that there are many creations in the galaxy.

In this way, Sahib did not deny the belief that we had been following God for centuries, but beyond that, he gave us the secret of the immortal world, the land of wonderful souls. Gave the message of true devotion to



the true man.

One who removes someone from the wrong path and brings him on the right path, he is Sahib. Looks lovely. One who brings even

one living being towards true devotion, gets a reward equal to the donation of crores of cows. It is a big thing to add someone to the stream of devotion.

Sahib ji said that famous people can know that some power is working with them by seeing the changes within them. That power has changed you from a crow to a swan. What difference does the name make? You were living before also. Were going on earlier also. Were working earlier also. Like one is walking in darkness and one is walking in light. This is the difference. Earlier you were not able to imitate even after knowing what was right and wrong. Now you are able to walk on the true path. It made a difference. You don't have to bring anything from anywhere. Everything is filled with you.

There is happiness and sorrow in this world. Just like a sea storm capsizes big ships. But the submarine cannot be overturned. Now look at the science of

our country, how much has been achieved. These submarines were built later. But our saints mentioned earlier. It does not matter to those who have God in their heart, whether they do any work or not. Where there is sunlight, it does not matter whether the lamp is lit or not. Those who find the boat under water will float. Under water i.e. submarine. It does not matter to the one who has Paras, whether he has accumulated wealth or not. He is rich. Sahib is not saying that everything is filled within this Ghat. Riddhiyas, Siddhiyas all are there in it. Just imagine, extremely tiny sperm, which cannot be seen even with these eyes. He is watching the whole world. It is filled with everything. It is said that Sindhu is contained in the point. You don't have to sacrifice anything. The entire

universe is in this body. Diamonds, pearls, sun, moon, stars all are in it. Science is a small child of the soul. Today knowledge of minerals is being taken. Wasn't it there before? India is the oldest country. The knowledge of divine power was also first given to the world from India.

Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh are also there in this. Kartar is also in this. There are three worlds in this. Sahib is saying that the Guru is also present in this. But only a knowledgeable person can know. Only he who is blessed by Sadguru can know.

We have learned everything. Was taught to eat, was taught to read, was also taught to walk. Everything was taught. But man could not know his existence. No one is wise without knowing the soul. That soul is you.