

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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Getting into the look of a tigress was 3-4 hour process, says Aneri Vajani



Budget 2024 guarantees strong foundations for Viksit Bharat: PM Narendra Modi

Netanyahu says UN agency for Palestinians must close, Israeli warplanes strike Gaza

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BRIEFLY

Uri accident death count reaches 10 as 2 more succumb to injuries

SRINAGAR, Feb 1 (Agencies): Two persons, injured in a road accident in Baramulla's Uri, have succumbed to their injuries, taking the death count to 10.

Principal GMC Baramulla, Dr Ruby that two more injured persons succumbed to their injuries late last night.

She said that they were referred to SKIMS Soura last night, where they succumbed to their injuries.

They have been identified as Shabir Ahmed son of Abdul Gani and Shabir Ahmed son of Mohammed Abdullah—both residents of Bujithallan.

Eight persons were killed, while seven were injured after a vehicle skidded off and fell into a deep gorge in Baramulla's Boniyar on Wednesday evening.

7 shops, house gutted in separate fire incidents in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Feb 1 (Agencies): At least seven shops and a residential house were gutted in two separate fire incidents in Srinagar late last night, officials said on Thursday.

An official told that seven shops were gutted in a fire at fruit mandi in Parimpora area last night and a residential house was damaged in another fire incident in Bemina area.

He said that the cause of fire was being ascertained.

Gradual improvement in weather in J&K from today afternoon, predicts MeT

JAMMU, Feb 1 (Agencies): Meteorological Department has forecasted cloudy weather with light snowfall at few places in Jammu and Kashmir till Thursday afternoon, and added thereafter will be a gradual improved in the weather.

A MeT official told that on February 1st the weather conditions will

25 crore people came out of poverty in last 10 years: Sitharaman



NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that the government believes in "empowering the poor" and in the last ten years, at least 25 crore people have been assisted to get freedom from multidimensional poverty.

Sitharaman said that fulfilling aspirations and needs of Garib (poor), Mahilaye (women), Yuva (youth) and Annadata (farmers) are the highest priority of the government.

"When the poor become empowered partners in the development process, the government's power to assist them also increases manifold," the Finance Minister said while presenting the

2024 Interim Budget in Lok Sabha.

She said that direct benefit transfer (DBT) of 34 lakh crore rupees using PM Jan Dhan accounts has led to saving of 2.7 lakh crore to the government, which has strengthened the welfare of the poor.

Sitharaman said that 78 lakhs street vendors were given credit assistance under PM Swandhi scheme while end to end support was given to artisans and craftsmen under PM Vishwakarma Yojna.

"Under the PM Kisan Samman Scheme, every year direct cash assistance was given to 11.8 crore farmers, including marginal and small farmers," she said.

She said that Garib Kalyan, Desh ka kalyan

J&K gets Rs 37,277 crore in union budget 2024

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir has been allocated Rs 37,277.74 crore in the interim union budget for 2024-25, which was unveiled by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

According to details available, Rs 37,277.74 crores have been allocated to J&K for the next fiscal year.

Of this, Rs 35,619.30 crore alone have been kept for bridging resource gap in the Union Territory.

This is the last budget of PM Modi led government ahead of the Lok Sabha elections scheduled to be held in April-May this year.

(welfare of poor is welfare of the nation) and country progresses, when they (poor) progress.

On Thursday, after securing President Draupadi Murmu's assent to the interim budget, the Finance

Minister reached Parliament House along with her two ministers of state where the interim budget was approved in the Union Cabinet meeting chaired by PM Modi. This is the last budget of the second term of the Modi government.

J&K Govt orders reshuffle in civil administration

JAMMU, Feb 1: Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered a reshuffle in the civil administration, shifting and posting 100 officers.

In the interest of administration, the following transfers and postings are hereby ordered with immediate effect.

Mr. Pardeep Kumar, IAS, Director, Archives, Archaeology, and Museums, J&K, is transferred and posted as Secretary in the Forest Department.

Mr. Alok Kumar Maurya, IAS, DFO, Social Forestry, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, vice Mr. Navneet Singh, IAS, who shall report to the Department of Forest, Ecology, and Environment for further posting.

Mr. Asif Hamid Khan, JKAS, Director General, Entrepreneurship Development Institute, J&K, is transferred and posted as Member J&K Special Tribunal vice Mr. Raj Kumar Katoch.

Ms. Vivek Sharma, JKAS, Director General, Social Welfare, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Secretary in the Agriculture Production Department.

Mr. Bashir Ahmad Khan, JKAS, Director General, Sheep Husbandry, Kashmir, is



transferred and posted as Secretary in the Social Welfare Department. He shall continue to hold the charge of Director General, Sheep Husbandry, Kashmir, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Sajad Hussain Ganai, JKAS, Additional Inspector General of Registration, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Director General, Development Expenditure Division-I, Finance Department, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Ajaz Abdullah Saraf, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Baramulla, is transferred and posted as Additional Registrar Cooperatives, Kashmir vice Mr. Syed Qamar Sajad.

Mr. Pawan Singh Rathore, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Hospitality and Protocol Department, is transferred and posted as Director, Geology and Mining, J&K, vice Mr. Rakesh Magotra.

Ms. Shubra Sharma, JKAS, Director, Animal Husbandry, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department. She shall continue to hold the charge of the post of Director, Animal Husbandry, Jammu, in addition to her own duties, till further orders.

Dr. Bharat Bhushan, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, is transferred and posted as Director, Social Welfare, Jammu vice Ms. Vivek Sharma.

Mr. Guizar Ahmad Dar, JKAS Additional Director, SKIMS, Srinagar and ex-officio Special Secretary to the Government, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department.

Mr. Ghulam Rasool Mir, JKAS, Director, Horticulture, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to

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Tarun Chugh holds meeting with Kashmir province leaders, discusses upcoming LS polls

SRINAGAR, Feb 1 (Agencies): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary and In-Charge J&K Tarun Chugh Thursday held a meeting with senior party leaders of Kashmir province wherein preparations for upcoming LS polls were discussed.

The leaders in the meeting expressed commitment to putting full forces into the elec-



tions to contribute to the Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's vision of forming a BJP government at the

Centre with improved numbers compared to the last elections.

Chugh also reviewed the status of the ongoing "Viksit Bharat Ambassadors campaign" program, which is being implemented across Kashmir, was also extensively discussed during the meeting. The leaders reviewed the program's impact and explored opportunities to strengthen its reach and impact in the region.

Srinagar-Jammu highway blocked due to shooting stones in Ramban

JAMMU, Feb 1 (Agencies): The Jammu-Srinagar highway, has been blocked due to intermittent shooting stones at certain places caused by heavy rainfall along NHW and snowfall

between Ramsoo and Banihal.

The traffic police recommend avoiding travel on NHW until the road is cleared and advise consulting the traffic control unit before commencing

the journey.

The Mughal road and Srinagar-Sonamarg road are already closed for traffic due to snow accumulation.

Notably, Jammu and

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Avalanche warning issued for 8 districts of J&K



SRINAGAR, Feb 1 (Agencies): Authorities on Thursday issued an avalanche warning in

the higher reaches of eight districts of Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours, officials

said. Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) said a "medium danger" level avalanche is likely to occur at 2400 metres above sea level in the higher reaches of Banihal, Baramulla, Ganderbal and Kupwara districts of Kashmir valley in the next 24 hours.

Similar warnings have been issued in Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch and

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Property of Drug Peddler Attached in North Kashmir: Police

SRINAGAR, Feb 1 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday as confiscated a mini shopping complex comprising four shops belonging to the notorious drug peddler in

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Chamber of Tourism Trade and Industry Katra call on Tourism Secretary

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Chamber of Tourism Trade and Industry Katra, a leading advocate for the tourism industry, presents key tourism issues to Yasha Mudgal, urging immediate attention and collaborative action to address challenges and foster sustainable growth in the sector.

In a meeting held in her office chamber, a delegation from Chamber of Tourism Trade and Industry Katra met with Yasha Mudgal to discuss pressing matters affecting the tourism industry.

The purpose of the meeting was to share insights, propose solutions, and seek the secretary's support in implementing measures to enhance the overall tourism experience and stimulate economic development.

President Raj Kumar Padha along with Atul Sharma Secretary CTTIK congratulated Yasha Mudgal on assuming the charge as secretary tourism J&K UT and honoured her by presenting Mata Ki Chunari and Mata Ki Photo.



During the interaction president Raj Kumar Padha presented several suggestions, recommendations and issues.

Among them include rolling out of new guidelines for registration and renewal of tourism licenses of hotels, guest houses, restaurants and travel offices with minimum NOCs at the earliest.

He impressed upon to devise a policy to carry on pilgrimage promotional activities so that the visiting number of pilgrims should be kept intact and can be directed to nearby tourist destinations of Jammu division.

He emphasized that efforts should be made

to get the PRASHAD scheme sanctioned again for holy Katra town and the projects like redevelopment of Katra town on modern lines by keeping the utilities like electric, wifi and telephone wires underground; beautifying Ban Ganga road, Panthal road, Jammu road and railway road; redevelopment and beautification of Shree Dhar Chowk at Bus Stand Katra; general STP for Katra town as per on the lines of Jammu and Srinagar cities; development of a residential colony for Katra town should be included by revisiting the DPR of PRASHAD Scheme.

He apprised the Sec-

retary that Navratra festival meeting takes place under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner usually around 25 days before the festival.

He requested to hold the said meeting three months before the festival so that Navratra festival can be organized in a big and better way.

He requested to clear the pending payments of all the stakeholders of Navratra Festival at her earliest convenience.

Atul Sharma suggested Establishment of TRC Katra and an officer of the rank of deputy director should be deputed to take care of all the tourism related issues of Katra as well as Reasi district.

He also suggested to set up a museum at a suitable location where Mata Ki Kahani should be showcased through models or virtual tours so that the visiting pilgrims especially the younger generation should know the importance of other temples situated on all the points and ensured her full cooperation and support.

Chamber of Tourism Trade and Industry Katra expressed gratitude to the tourism secretary for the opportunity to engage in this constructive dialogue.

The organization remains committed to working closely with the government to address these issues and contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

Vijay Kumar takes over as ADGP Armed J&K

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Vijay Kumar-IPS on Thursday took over as the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Armed J&K at Armed Police Headquarters J&K in Jammu.

On his arrival at Armed Police Headquarters, Jammu today, ADGP Vijay Kumar was warmly received by the senior Police officers including



Commandants of AP and IR Bns besides officers and staff members of APHQ J&K.

Vijay Kumar, a 1997 batch IPS officer of J&K cadre, while functioning as ADGP Law & Order

J&K was given Addl. Charge of Addl. DGP Armed J&K by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir vide Order No 55-Home of 2024 dated January 27, 2024 issued by Home Department J&K vice S.J.M Gillani-IPS who upon his transfer as Addl. DGP Railways, J&K with additional Charge as Managing Director, Police Housing Corporation, J&K was given a warm send-off.

Dalip Kumar-SSP takes over as Staff Officer to Addl DGP Armed J&K

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Dalip Kumar-SSP took over as the Staff Officer to Addl. Director General of Police (ADGP) Armed J&K at Armed Police Headquarters J&K in Jammu.

Dalip Kumar-SSP succeeds Mahmood Ahmed-SSP who has been transferred as Commandant IRP-21st



Bn. On his arrival at Armed Police Headquarters, Jammu today, Dalip Kumar-SSP was warmly received by the officers and staff members of

APHQ J&K. Dalip Kumar-SSP a 1999 batch JKPS officer was functioning as SSP ACB Jammu and has been transferred as Staff Officer to Addl. Director General of Police Armed J&K by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, vide order No 56-Home of 2024 dated January 27, 2024 issued by Home Department J&K.

Financial Literacy and Investor Awareness Program at MIER College

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: An online Financial Literacy and Investor Awareness Programme was organized by Co-Curricular Committee, MIER College.

Atul Sathe, Krishna Foundation, Mumbai, a Public Charitable trust was the resource person. Heads of SoE and SoSSH, faculty members and students attended the program.

Deliberating on the topic, the resource person emphasized on saving, planning, and budgeting and smart use of digital financial services.

He went on to explain that providing students with financial literacy instruction in a classroom context helps them build a strong foundation for financial security.

Further, it introduces students to fundamental concepts in finance, such as budgeting, saving, and investing. Early acquisition of this knowledge helps

students in developing wise financial habits that could prove beneficial in the long term. He also highlighted the three essential elements of financial literacy, such as keeping an updated budget—which refers to a spending plan—designated savings and preventing identity theft.

Director and principal, Dr. Adit Gupta appreciated the Co-Curricular Committee for organizing the event and said the focus of this programme was to enable individuals to learn the fundamentals of personal finance, make prudent choices regarding investments, and avoid common investment pitfalls.

The program was coordinated by Dr. Reeta Dwivedi. Monika, student of B.Ed. Special Education Semester-I formally welcomed the audience. Hitakshi Bakshi and Mohit, students of B.Ed. semester-I compared the programme and presented the formal vote of thanks.

Budget disappointing for common man: Congress

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: J&K Pradesh Congress has said that the interim budget has brought no relief to the hard pressed common man, salaried class and record number of unemployed youth.

Reacting to the interim budget today, JKPC Chief Vikar Rasool Wani termed the budget as disappointing for the common man and said it was more a list of achievements with focus on elections than the hardships faced by the common man, unemployed youth, farmers and working class in the country.

He said that no relief has been given to the middle

class tax payers, who are hard pressed due to high inflation, the poor is suffering due to unprecedented price hike but there is no provisions to control prices by reducing taxes on essential items and similarly the worst suffering class of educated unemployed whose number has gone from one cr to 4.20 cr under BJP regime, as promise of two cr jobs annually has gone hollow & false.

65 percent of people have claimed that their income has either decreased or remained the same but their expenditure has gone up, so clearly people are

hard pressed due to price escalation. 15.4 cr people have registered for job cards under MG NREGA, which is alarming and reflect the condition of joblessness in the country.

The claims of BJP government don't match the ground and the promises of Acheche Din in 2014 are nowhere, the bringing of black money and depositing into accounts of citizens, two cr jobs, controlling prices of petrol, diesel, gas proved fake.

Modi government is selling dreams eyeing the general elections but people realise the truth of economy in their day today lives.

Dimple expresses disappointment with budget

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, strongly criticized the 2024-25 interim budget, labeling it as highly disappointing for the youths and people of Jammu Kashmir.

Dimple alleged that the budget is anti-poor, anti-middle class, and anti-youth, providing no relief for various sections, including poor families, unemployed youths, traders, and transporters.

He accused the government of lacking a strategy to address the escalating prices and deems the budget as directionless.

Dimple asserted that the budget has failed

to fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of creating two crore jobs annually for the youth.

Furthermore, he highlighted the neglect of Jammu Kashmir's interests, citing the absence of commitments on crucial issues such as the return of power projects, rail lines, and the initiation of metro mono trains.

Dimple also criticized the budget for not addressing demands like including petrol, diesel, and LPG under GST. Overall, he expressed disappointment with the budget's failure to provide relief, economic solutions, and support for various sectors in Jammu Kashmir.

Unruly delay in holding polls weakens democratic institutions in J&K: Manjit

Top News Report

VIJAYPUR, Feb 1: Apni Party Provincial President, Jammu, and Former Minister, Manjit Singh today expressed concern over unruly delay in holding elections for Legislative Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir that has weakened the democratic institutions.

He said that these institutions i.e., elected Govt, Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI), Block Development Council (BDC), Urban Local Body (ULB) should be restored because the people in both the regions of Jammu and Kashmir have been facing the brunt of the administrative rule that ignores the public view

and frame policies as per their wishes.

The Former Minister gave this statement during a monthly meeting of the Apni Party leaders here at Vijaypur to review the working of the Party and its units, besides, holding threadbare discussion regarding the existing political situation.

During the meeting, Manjit Singh referred to various development issues, widening work of Jammu-Srinagar Highway as a part of Expressway that has dented the business activities, and constantly posed threat of road mishaps with bad condition of highway from Vijaypur, Bari Brahmana up to Kunjwani.

"The shopkeepers in Vijaypur and adjoining areas along the national highway have suffered badly with the widening work, and more so with regard to the compensation that was insufficient," he said.

He said that had there been an elected Govt in J&K, the local issues would have been addressed as per the wishes of the people while keeping a balanced approach. However, the situation is opposite in the present form of Govt where the babus are not considering the public concerns and proceeding with their planned initiatives even if it compromises the interest of the public.

"Unfortunately, the

developmental works/initiatives taken up by the administration in Jammu and Kashmir could not be completed in a time bound manner, and there was no accountability on the officials despite lapse of time, and passing of deadlines," he said.

He also referred to the exploitation of the local population as contract-based workers in industrial workers.

"The industrial units have hired employees from out of Jammu and Kashmir by ignoring the local youth regarding employment that has caused resentment among the people," he added.

He further said that these issues could only be addressed when

there is an elected Govt in Jammu and Kashmir, but unfortunately the elections have been delayed without citing any reason.

"Several years have passed, yet the Election Commission of India has yet to announce polls for legislative elections in J&K," he said, while resenting the continuation of the administrative rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that the expiry of the BDCs, ULBs, and PRIs terms has further alienated the people and weakened these institutions with the widening of gap between the masses and the administration especially when the schedule for holding elections are yet to be announced.

C.C. No. 7324282

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Higher Education Department
Civil Secretariat, J&K**

Subject:- Appointment of Assistant Professor, Biochemistry in the Higher Education Department.
Reference: Letter No. PSC/DR-HE/AP-Biochemistry/2023 dated 20-10-2023 from J&K Public Service Commission, J&K.

Government Order No. 51 -JK(HE) of 2024
Dated: 29 -01-2024

On the recommendations of the J&K public Service Commission, sanction is hereby accorded to the appointment of following candidate as Assistant Professor (Biochemistry) on regular temporary basis in the pay band of Rs. 15600-39100 with AGP Rs. 6000/- (Pre-revised) Academic Level-10 with pay structure of Rs. 57700/- in the Higher Education Department.

S.No	Name Mr./Mrs.	Parentage	Address	Selection Category
1.	Waseem Feeeroze Bhat	Ahmadullah Bhat	36 Dangarpura Trenz Shopian	RBA
2.	Mohammad Iqbal Sofi	Abdul Ahad Sofi	43 Lawaypora Bandipora	OM
3.	Vikas Bhagat	Subash Kumar	73 Ward No. 2 Shangroo Near Panchayat Ghar Bhalia	SC

Above mentioned Candidates shall report to the Nodal Principal, A.S College, Srinagar/GCW Prade, Jammu within a period of 21 days from the date of issue of this order failing which their appointment shall be deemed to have cancelled without any notice.

The appointment of candidate shall be subject to the following Conditions :-

- The appointees will be on probation for a period of two years from the date of joining.
- The appointment of the above candidates shall be governed by the "New Pension Scheme" as per SRC-400 of 2009 dated 24-12-2009.
- The appointees shall, at the time of joining, produce the following testimonials in original which will be verified by the concerned Principal.
 - Domicile Certificate.
 - Date of Birth Certificate.
 - Qualification and Marks Certificate i.e. NET/SLET/Ph.D. etc and marks cards/degrees.
 - Category certificate as may be applicable to the appointees.
 - Health and Medical Certificate.
 - Any other certificate as required under law.

The salary of the appointees shall be drawn and disbursed after the receipt of the satisfactory report in respect of genuineness of Qualification/Date of Birth/Relevant Category Certificate and subject to production of an affidavit (as per Annexure A) to this order.

The seniority of the candidates shall be determined in term of J&K Civil Services (Classification, control & Appeal) Rules, 1956.

The appointment of the candidates shall remain provisional till time as the certificates get verified by the concerned Principal and found to be in order. In case any certificate is found to be fake, inadequate or not consistent with eligibility requirements, the appointment of the candidate would be deemed to have been and void ab-initio.

The appointment of the candidates shall be subject to outcome of writ petition(s), if any, pending before the Court of law.

By Order of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

DIP/J-14528/23

Sd/-
(Alok Kumar)IRS
Principal Secretary to the Government

No. HED-GAZ/349/2023-04

Dated: 29 -01-2024

Annexure-A to Government Order No.- 51 -JK(HE) of 2024
Dated:- 29 :01:2024

AFFIDAVIT

I, _____ S/o, D/o _____ R/o _____ do hereby solemnly declare on oath that:

(a) My name has been recommended by the J&K Public Service Commission for appointment as Assistant Professor _____ in the Higher Education Department.

(b) I understand that the verification report in respect of the Qualification/Date of Birth/Reserved category certificate has not been furnished by the concerned verifying agency in my case.

I, therefore, undertake that in the event of permitting me to join, pending receipt of the verification report in respect of the Qualification/Date of Birth/Reserved category certificate, I shall have no claim for the post in the event of my being adversely reported upon by the verifying agency found not to be genuine.

DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

The contents of this affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed therein.

DEPONENT

EDITORIAL

GOVERNMENT
BUDGET

With the emergence of welfare states, governments are paying attention to virtually every area of human life. They have to perform various types of tasks to protect their respective areas, to maintain law and order, and to implement schemes for economic and social betterment. Apart from this, they provide social services like education, health, employment and housing to the people.

Needless to say, the government requires adequate resources to perform these functions effectively. Where will this money come from and who will approve the money? The funds required for government expenditure are raised from the country's resources such as direct and indirect taxes and both long and short term loans. The main source of revenue in India is income tax imposed on individuals and companies, including customs and excise duties.

It is not that the government can impose taxes, take loans and spend money as per its wish. Since there is a limit to resources, there is a need for proper budgetary arrangement for allocation of resources to various government activities.

Each item of expenditure should be thoroughly considered and the total outlay for a given period should be arrived at. Prudent expenditure is essential for the stability of the government and the first requirement of prudent expenditure is adequate income. Therefore, planned expenditure and accurate estimation of income are essential elements of sound government finances.

Our parliamentary system of government is based on the Westminster model. Therefore, the Constitution has handed over finance related powers to the elected representatives of the people thereby proving the principle of "No taxation without representation". It is the constitutional responsibility of the Central Government and State Governments to prepare the budget for the approval of the Legislature.

Legislative prerogative over taxation, legislative control over expenditure and executive initiative over financial matters are some of the basic principles of the parliamentary financial control system.

Discussion on the budget begins a few days after it is presented. In a democratic framework, the government is keen to give Parliament full opportunity to discuss various proposals for budgetary provisions and taxation.

Generally, approval of Vote on Account is taken for two months. But if in an election year, or when it is anticipated that it will take more than two months to pass the main grants and appropriation bills, the vote on account may be taken for a period longer than two months.

The budget is discussed in two stages in the Lok Sabha. First, there is a general discussion on the full budget. This discussion continues for 4 to 5 days. In this stage, the broad outline of the budget and the principles and policies underlying it are discussed.

By: Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay

The "pran pratistha" ceremony at the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22 had little to do with religiosity and was essentially an audio-visual spectacle.

Significantly, the event was conspicuous by erasing the lines between religion and the Indian State. This marked a big stride from the blurring of lines between religion and politics per se. The shadow of religion on politics, many would argue, always existed despite the founders of the Indian Republic choosing a secular character for the nation. This darkness became more ominous from the 1980s when the agitation for constructing the Ram temple was started by the Sangh Parivar. It has become all the more conspicuous from 2014 onwards after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office ten months after emphatically declaring: "Yes, I am a Hindu nationalist".

The origins of this agitation followed the deeply revivalist 1983 Ekamata Yagna, when waters from rivers considered holy by Hindus were paraded across the country by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Later, the movement gathered pace from late 1985 after protests by conservative sections among Muslims against the Supreme Court's Shah Bano ruling triggered a panic response from the Rajiv Gandhi government. He eventually passed a law to nullify the verdict. The VHP and leaders of its ideological fountainhead, the RSS, argued this was an instance of the Congress and the Indian State "appeasing" Muslims. Driven by myopic vision, Rajiv Gandhi opted to facilitate opening the lock on the Babri Masjid for Hindu devotees to enter and offer prayers without

restrictions.

Yet, although later Prime Ministers, especially P.V. Narasimha Rao, under whose watch the Babri Masjid was demolished, allowed the issue to remain a ticking time-bomb, no one formally embraced the issue and the movement as thoroughly as Mr Modi has.

There is little ambiguity the central figure on January 22 was not Lord Ram or his idol(s). Instead, the spotlight was more on Mr Modi and the entire ceremony was more of an "event" than a religious consecration. The sheen from the function had earlier faded after the shankaracharyas decided to stay away and it became a celebrity-heavy gathering. Carpet-to-carpet television coverage via video feeds by Doordarshan ensured that nothing else was telecast during the ceremony. Although in days prior to the ceremony, most TV channels had gone "ballistic" insofar as coverage from Ayodhya was concerned, few details were available on its run-order. Viewers were therefore all eyes because they knew little of what was to come next.

Undoubtedly, viewer-interest was high in the live proceedings. In the absence of empirical evidence, there is no knowing whether the semi-constructed temple's inauguration was endorsed by the people. But, given the tumultuous gathering of devotees from the day it was opened to the public, it appears that they have accepted its "incompleteness" without much rancour. There is no indication that they are critical of Mr Modi for also enacting the role of a high priest of Hinduism while being the PM too. It must be recalled that the people have been prepped up for this as it wasn't the first time Mr Modi publicly performed a religious ritual. In 2014, when he first contested

from Varanasi, Mr Modi was first denied permission by the district administration to perform Ganga aarti before the polling day. But after his victory, he did so with then BJP president Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah in full glare of TV cameras after prior intimation to TV channels. Thereafter, on almost every visit to the city, he repeated the act and even went to the Kashi Vishwanath temple, not just as a devotee but to perform religious rituals.

This practice continued throughout his first term as PM in several cities till the "climax" as polling was ending in 2019. At that time, he headed to the Kedarnath shrine and closeted himself alone, with the exception of a camera-person briefly, inside the "cave room" where he appeared to be meditating deeply. The impact this had on voters turning out during the last phase of polling was noted then. Subsequently, in December 2021, three months before crucial Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the PM addressed the gathering at the inaugural of his flagship Rs 800-crore Kashi Vishwanath Dham project in Varanasi. Mr Modi projected more of a "Baba" image than that of a Prime Minister, initially by a prolonged dip in the Ganga while performing religious rituals in a luminous hue of saffron. Later, after performing rituals, while delivering his mandatory speech, Mr Modi donned the role of chief of a monastic order. In the speech, he claimed that virasat (heritage) and vikas (development) go hand in hand. Significantly, whenever Mr Modi refers to Indian heritage, it is intrinsically Hindu, suggesting that the nation does not have any non-Hindu heritage worth its name.

Although Mr Modi merely continued with the past practice of turn-

ing out in Hindu religious attire, his performative act in Ayodhya is different as the temple inauguration came at the end of a watershed agitation, for close to four decades. Further, the event in Ayodhya drew greater public response and critical review because of the buildup, and the importance of the day being underlined by Mr Modi. He said it was "not just a date on the calendar" but "the dawn of a new era". January 22, he added, marked the beginning of "the expansion of consciousness from Dev (God) to Desh (country) and from Ram to Rashtra (nation)". On that day, he said, the foundation for India's "next 1,000 years has been laid".

It is true that on January 22, Mr Modi resembled to the core the high priest of Sanatan Hinduism. However, it must be noted that that scale of the event and the nature of the Ayodhya ceremony was more grandiose and significant. But if detailed scrutiny is made of the Prime Minister's public functions in the backdrop of temples or religious events from the time he assumed office, it would be evident he has been true to his style from the beginning. Significantly, the Supreme Court in November 2019 in its judgment called for a closure to the fierce conflict between Hindus and Muslims based on prejudice and distrust. In the 40 months since the foundation stone for the temple was formally laid, no progress was made towards bringing the curtain down on this bitter dispute. As the ruling party pushes towards another electoral victory even as the controversy surrounding the Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah in Mathura rages on, India stares at a new round of antagonism that may leave deeper scars on the nation's psyche.

Healthy Hair



By: Shahnaz Husain

Many people want supple, shiny, strong, and healthy hair, especially young women. But healthy hair doesn't happen by magic. Achieving and maintaining healthy hair can be harder than you think.

While our genetics play the biggest role, many factors including age, overall health, environmental exposure, medications, and diet are all critical to getting healthy hair and keeping it.

There are a lot of reasons you should care about your hair — and want to keep it healthy — in addition to looking good.

If your hair and scalp are unhealthy, it can lead to itching, inflammation, and untreated chronic skin conditions like eczema, seborrheic dermatitis, and alopecia.

While there isn't a secret shortcut to healthier hair, taking time to keep strands strong is worth the commitment. With small tweaks to your routine, maintaining great hair can be effortless.

Incorporate natural oils into your hair care routine to provide an extra layer of protection and hydration.

Sesame oil, argan oil, coconut oil, and jojoba oil are excellent choices. Have hot oil therapy once a week. Heat oil and apply on the hair. If the hair is dry and damaged, pure coconut oil or pure almond

oil may be applied. Using your fingertips massage the scalp gently, actually moving the scalp in

circular motions. This helps to improve blood circulation to the follicles. Then do the hot towel wrap.

Apply Hair Mask

Curry leaves are said to contain nutritive elements, including antioxidants, which bring back health to

the roots and promote hair growth. Curry leaves contain beta-carotene, which is converted into vitamin

A. This vitamin helps in the production of sebum, the natural oil that keeps the scalp and hair roots moisturized. A well-moisturized scalp is conducive to hair growth.

Make a paste of curry leaves, one tablespoon of honey, and coconut oil and apply to the hair. Wash off after half an hour.

Rinse with Milk

After your shampoo, rinse the hair with milk and leave it on for 5 minutes. Then rinse off with plain water. It would help to add body and shine to the hair. For extremely dry hair, add a little milk to egg yolk and apply on the hair half an hour before shampoo. This is a wonderful nourishing treatment for

dry hair. The hair looks soft, smooth, and shiny.

Egg Hair Mask for Damaged Hair

The B vitamins in eggs, including Biotin (B7) and Niacin (B3), play a significant role in promoting hair growth. The natural oils present in eggs help moisturize the hair, providing a natural shine and

luster. The proteins in eggs can help repair damaged hair by filling in gaps and cracks along the hair

shaft. Eggs can act as a natural conditioner, providing moisture to dry and damaged hair. Apply egg

white on the hair for 15 minutes. If you have dry or brittle hair, use egg whites to moisturize your hair. Use ½ cup of any egg mixture (egg white, entire egg) and apply to clean, damp hair. Leave it for 20 minutes and with cool water. Try this one of the most effective beauty tips for hair and notice the change.

Apply Apple Cider Vinegar

The natural PH of the scalp is slightly acidic, and commercial shampoos can sometimes disrupt this

balance. Apple cider vinegar, with its acidic nature, helps to restore the PH level of the scalp. A balanced PH contributes to a healthier scalp and can enhance the overall condition of your hair. Apple

cider vinegar has natural antibacterial and antifungal properties, making it effective in combating

dandruff and alleviating an itchy scalp. Regular use of ACV can help maintain a healthy scalp

environment and reduce the occurrence of dandruff.

The shampoo helps to reduce oiliness and add body to the hair.

Shampooing your hair removes dirt and oils, but over-shampooing can strip natural oils from your hair and scalp. Plus, shampoo that isn't rinsed out fully can build up on your hair, leaving it looking dull and lifeless.

When washing your hair, concentrate on cleaning primarily the scalp, rather than washing the entire length of hair. Washing only your hair can create flyaway hair that is dull and coarse.

Balance of your hair and add shine.

Try to avoid shampoos with harsh ingredients, such as ammonium lauryl sulfate or sodium lauryl sulfate. And remember, cost doesn't necessarily indicate the quality of a product.

Try to get a trim at least every 8 weeks, but push it to 10 or 12 if you don't want to be in the salon so often.

Regular haircuts help avoid damage from the ends up — split ends run up the shaft and weaken the hair, exposing it to moisture loss and tangles. Always opt for a cut every six to eight weeks to prevent damage. If you have bangs, you might need to get them trimmed every 3 weeks so they don't cover your eyes

The same goes for people who are trying to grow out their hair. If you're looking to grow your hair, you might be considering skipping a trim — but reshaping and trimming your hair regularly keeps it looking strong and healthy, as opposed to brittle and thin, while you move through the growing process.

BLSKS start one week special folk media awareness campaign at Akhnoor

Top News Report

AKHNOOR, Feb 1: After attending the Regional Folk Media workshop organized by the Aids Control Society, Health and Medical Education of Jammu and Kashmir Government of Jammu and Kashmir (UT) at regional office Jammu, Sangam Tru Art Production, troupe of Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan (BLSKS) mounted one week special Aids Awareness campaign through Folk media and today presented two programs at Chak Malal, Khour & Bakore Jourian, Block Akhnoor, District Jammu and presented through Nukkad Natak / Short Play "Muskan".

The program was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Onkar Singh, Chak Malal, Akhnoor and Bhavishv Kumar, Nambardar, Bakore, Jourian Akhnoor.

The prominent persons of the area



Madan Lal, Gusha Ram, Suresh Kumar, Dwaraka Dass, were present on the occasion. The Chief Guests speaking on the occasion said HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune System. If HIV is not treated, it can lead Aids. There is currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life. It is not spread through casual contact the people, such as hugging, sharing cutlery or

shaking hands etc. The virus is spread by means of direct contact with an infected person's semen, vaginal fluid, blood or breast milk, they said.

It's also often spread by people who inject drugs (and who use the same needles of infected person).

In addition to the awareness programmes, colorful cultural programs comprising of skits / dances

/ songs etc based on the theme were presented. The items like Musical Nukkad Natak / Play "Vishanu Hai" and songs were specially designed like, Jano Jano AIDS Rog Jano, Maha Mari Mado Aji Corona Jad Cha Ase Mita Deni, Jan Jan Mara AIDS Rog Jaan, HIV Vishanu Hai, Savdhan Savdhan Ae Manav Jati Savdhan and short play written by Dr. M.L Dogra (Chair-

man BLSKS) were presented.

The music was assisted by Raju Bajgal, Music Instructor of Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan, including entrainment program to promote the traditional cultural of Jammu & Kashmir.

This special awareness campaign presented under the overall Direction of Project Director, Aids Control Society, Madan Lal and Aashish Saraf, DA, IEC Division, JKACS, H&ME Deptt.

The singers, musician and actors who performed were K.K.Joshi (Troupe Incharge), Raju Bajgal, Usha Raina, Rahul Kumar, Chahat Chadha, Sudesh Devi Manhas, Sanjeev Kumar Sodhi and students, teachers, youths & general public were presented.

Usha Raina, Troupe Leader, STAP presented vote of thanks for successful conduct of the program.

Shameema expresses grief over eight lives lost in Uri accident

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 1: In a sad moment for the community, Mahila Congress President J&K Madam Shameema Raina expressed profound sorrow and condolences for the tragic incident that unfolded in Boniyar, Uri, resulting in the loss of eight lives.

The unfortunate accident, which occurred in the heart of Kashmir, has left the region mourning the untimely departure of its residents.

The incident, involving eight persons, has prompted to extend heartfelt sympathies to the affected families, acknowledging the pain and sorrow they must be enduring. The community leader emphasized the need for collective support and unity during these challenging times, urging residents to come together to assist those affected by the heartbreaking event.

Shameema Raina further stressed the importance of increased vigilance on roads and adherence to safety measures to prevent such accidents in the future. As condolences pour in from various quarters, the community stands united in grief, emphasizing the resilience and support that define their spirit in times of adversity.

Local authorities are actively investigating the circumstances surrounding the accident, seeking to uncover the causes and prevent similar tragedies. Shameema Raina Ji has called for a



thorough inquiry to ensure accountability and to implement measures that enhance road safety across the region.

As the community mourns the loss of eight precious lives, Shameema Raina remains committed to providing solace and support to the affected families. The tragedy serves as a poignant reminder of the fragility of life, prompting a collective call for greater awareness and responsible behavior to prevent such heart-wrenching incidents in the future.

JD(U) leaders condole demise of Baramulla & Kishtwar accident victims

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 1: JD (U) State President G M Shaheen and State General Secretary Vivek Bali condole the sad demise of Baramulla & Kishtwar accident victims.

G M Shaheen said, "I extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends of those affected by the road accident at Baramulla & Kishtwar."

Shaheen said, "My thoughts are with the effected families during this difficult time, and I hope they find strength and support in the midst of such a heartbreaking and irreparable loss."



Vivek Bali prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and speedy recovery to the injured passengers. Moreover, Bali thanked LG Jammu and

Kashmir Manoj sinha for announcing financial support of Rs 5 Lakh for each family who lost their loved ones in road accident and Rs 1 lakh each for injured ones.

VDG members hold protest at Chiralla, demand release of honorarium

Top News Report

DODA, Feb 1: Village Defence Guard (VDG) members held protest at Chiralla on Thursday in support of their long pending demands.

The protest was held under the leadership of VDG Convenor Basant Raj Thakur and president Jagdev Singh Thakur in presence of other senior members of the unpaid VDGs.

The protesting members of these unpaid VDGs alleged that they are being deprived of their legitimate rights by the LG administration. They said that the



VDS now called VDGs formed during 1995 up to 1999 are being paid since their establishment vide directions

from the Union Home Ministry but unfortunately the VDGs framed after 1999 are not being paid till date despite the

orders regarding the payment of honorarium to VDC members have been issued from the Union Home Ministry

after their reorganisation as VDGs.

The VDG members demanded immediate release of honorarium in favour par with their counterparts. Prominent among others present on the occasion were Suresh Sharma, Rajesh Sharma, Arvind Kumar, Harvind Kumar, Naresh Kumar and Sanjay Kumar.

The protesting VDG members urged the LG J&K and Union Home Minister to redress their grievances on humanitarian grounds and issue formal order for release of honorarium in their favour.

GDCW Kathua organizes lecture

Top News Report

KATHUA, Feb 1: Department of Education, Govt. Degree College for Women (GDCW) Kathua in collaboration with IQAC organised lecture in college library on the topic "How to improve reading habits".

The program was organised under the supervision of Incharge principal Dr Inderjeet Kour.

The main resource



person of the event was Sourabh Dutta, Chief Librarian.

He suggested students to visit library and improve their knowledge

as well as vocabulary. In this technological age students are not accessing libraries whereas libraries are full of all kinds of books that will

help them in their future pursuits, Dutta said. Apart from that, he added, books are a good source of entertainment and understanding the

world around us.

Chief guest of the event congratulated Dr Rachna Devi HOD Education for organising such informative lecture for the students which will benefit them a lot in future.

Dr Jyoti and Sushil Khadotra were also present in the function in which 80 students participated.

Vote of thanks was presented by Dr Jyoti, Deptt of education.

Grand retirement party of ZEO Thathri Amjad Hussain organised



Top News Report

DODA, Feb 1: Teachers of Zone Thathri organised a farewell party to outgoing ZEO Thathri Amjad Hussain Malik who successfully end his service from education department today on 31st January 2024.

DDC Chairman Dhalanter Singh was Chief Guest of occasion. Meanwhile CEO Doda Parshotom Goria, Diet Principal Parkash Lal Thapa, DPO Doda Dr. Anis wani, Worthy SDM Thathri Masood Ahmed

Bichho, Tehsildar Thathri Sahil Randhava and DDC Thathri Sandeep Kumar made this programme more colourful by their presence.

Naseer Ahmed Batt, Sanjay Sharma, Mehboob Alam, Manzor Malik, Rashpal Singh, Rakesh Shivan, Mohd Hafeez, Lok Dev, Tanveer Ahmed Badanu, Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Nayeem Sadiq Mir spoke on the occasion.

All teachers of zone Thathri participated enthusiastically and paid their gratitude and sympathy to ZEO Thathri.

ZEO Thathri who brought revolutionary change in work culture not only in ZEO Office but every school of the zone.

ZEO Thathri put example of transparency, efficiency, honesty, dedicated and corruption free administration for every administrator and official who used chair for their personal benefit.

Every employee of zone gave best wishes to ZEO Thathri for his future life.

Army distributes sewing machines at Charhan

Top News Report

RAJOURI, Feb 1: In its unwavering efforts in maintaining peace and promoting growth of weaker sections of society Indian Army distributed Sewing Machines to girls and ladies of economically weaker families in Chaiban under Panchayat Charhan under Op Sadbhavna.

The event was held in presence of Md Hussain Sarpanch, Charhan alongwith other representatives of Village Panchayat. Enthusiasm and attendance in large number by the villagers was success in itself.

The event was appreciated by one and all. In his token of



thanks the village Sarpanch appreciated the efforts of the

Battalion in ensuring peace and security in the area and assured

solidarity of residents with the Indian Army in all its efforts.

In Chandigarh, the cast of 'Jab Mila Tu' reveals how this unique journey of love and friendship will resonate with today's youth

Not all love stories unfold in the quintessential way of ek ladka aur ladki mile aur pyaar ho gaya; some have to live with their potential partners before falling in love! JioCinema's new series, Jab Mila Tu, is something on similar lines, with actors Mohsin Khan, Pratik Sehajpal, Eisha Singh and Alisha Chopra playing the lead characters. To promote the show, the cast was in Chandigarh for a couple of days.

Jab Mila Tu is a slice-of-life drama that explores a unique journey of love and friendship in today's age. Streaming for free from January 22, eight episodes are already out on the platform and more will be released in the coming weeks. This 24-episodic series is a first one to release four episodes per week. It also marks director Lalit Mohan, and actors, Mohsin Khan and Eisha Singh's digital debut. Created by Nisheeth Neelkanth and Harjeet Chhabra, it is produced by Two Nice Men. The series is also available in Tamil, Kannada, and Bengali.

Character calling Mohsin who is known for playing the role of Kartik in the show



Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai (YRKKH), shares, "In Jab Mila Tu, I play Maddy, who is a passionate, larger-than-life character. But he is also dealing with emotional upheavals. It is about a refreshing young romance that gives me an opportunity to connect with Gen-Z and understand their idea of love. It is off-beat, yet refreshing. I couldn't have asked for a better place than Chandigarh to connect with the youth and experience the

refreshing vibe. Getting into the skin of Maddy's character has been exciting." The actor even shared how his previous character was completely opposite. "If Kartik was a perfect husband, Maddy is much different. But I love playing both the characters. Television has given us so much and we owe everything to the medium. I would never feel bad if years later also people recognise me for my role in YRKKH." Top priority

Pratik, although a newbie in the industry, is already a series or two old on the digital medium. The actor gained fame after Big Boss OTT and since then hasn't looked back. Trying to make a mark with each project, he shares, "I have no qualms in working on any medium as long as I am working, and it's a good story and character. Right now my priority is to do good roles."

Pratik also elaborates on his character Jigar, who is a fan of rockstar Maddy and wants to meet him. Although a Delhiite and a Punjabi, Pratik still faced some challenges, "I am a Punjabi, but I never really spoke the language around family and friends, so it took me some time to crack the role in my mind. I related to Jigar's ambitious nature though."

On the other hand, Mohsin had a fair idea of Maddy's look and traits. He adds, "The moment I knew I was playing a musician, the first name that came to my mind was the legendary Jim Morrison. He has been such an inspiration to me. I also lost as many as 12 kilograms weight to portray Maddy with absolute authenticity."

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who was recently seen in Jailer and Bhola Shankar, has come on board for an untitled dramedy



Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who was recently seen in Jailer and Bhola Shankar, has come on board for an untitled dramedy. The series will be a streaming project and is currently in the pre-production stage. According to a source, the series will feature two actresses, and the casting for the second leading lady is currently underway. The shooting is slated to begin in mid-March or early April.

It is believed that the light-hearted series will be helmed by director Archit Kumar.

The project is being helmed under the digital wing of Dharma Productions' Dharmatic Entertainment in association with Prime Video. This marks her fourth project in the digital realm. Apart from this, the actress has an impressive line-up of projects in her way. Tamannaah will be seen in Vedaa alongside John Abraham and also in a Tamil project titled Arnamai 4.

Getting into the look of a tigress was 3-4 hour process, says Aneri Vajani

Actress Aneri Vajani, who will be seen as a tigress in the upcoming show Baghin, opened up on the intense preparation, calling it a truly life changing journey for her.

The mystical revenge thriller Baghin revolves around the character of Gauri, played by Aneri, who is a simple girl in love with Veer (Zee-shan Khan), but due to unforeseen circumstances, has to get married to Veer's brother Deva (Ansh Bagri).

Some unfortunate events lead her to get possessed by the spirit of a tigress (Baghin), who embarks on a vengeful journey against those responsible for her demise.

About the preparations for her role, Aneri said, "Presenting my first dual character challenge, where I transform from an innocent girl to a vengeful tigress. Getting into the look of a tigress was an intense and cum-



bersome three-four hour process. On top of that we were filming in real locations and in extreme conditions, which added to the challenge of the experience."

"This role marks my foray into filming action for a show, a truly life-

changing journey into the supernatural and mystical. I am sure audiences will be shocked to see me in such fierce avatar on screen," she added.

Baghin will stream on Atrangi OTT from February 8.

Shark Tank India 3: Aman Gupta tears cheque over pitcher's indecisiveness

The new episode of business reality show 'Shark Tank India 3' witnessed a pitch by Anand Nahar along with his brother Amrit, for their fast food brand 'Zorko', leaving not only Ritesh Agarwal, founder and CEO of OYO Rooms, but also the other sharks surprised.

However, the real surprise came when Anand, hailing from Surat, disclosed his previous interest in investing in OYO, narrating his journey of reaching out to the company and even sending a personal email to Ritesh.

After explaining his idea behind opening the fast food chain, the pitcher shared: "Sir I wanted to invest in OYO as well. I had even sent mail and the call centre people couldn't understand what I wanted to say. I used to call continuously but it couldn't happen and then you



reached 10 million."

Anand further verified his claim by sharing a screenshot of the email he sent and Ritesh was amused by the unexpected turn of events.

While the sharks found the pitch and the brothers' entertaining and intriguing, eyebrows

Amrit and Anand gave a counter offer of 100 hours for one per cent equity plus Rs 1.5 crore debt at 10 percent interest for three years.

Listening to their counter offer, Aman said: "I can't commit you hours. If I like you can sit with my team, and me, and can learn. But I can't commit like this. I don't want to make a false commitment. If I feel to do something, I will do otherwise I won't do. Right now I want to support you, your energy is right, you need some directions."

The sharks gave second offer to the founders which was one per cent advisory equity plus Rs 1.5 crore debt at 10 per cent interest for three years.

Amrit and Anand gave another counter offer which was 50 hours for one per cent equity plus Rs 1.5 crore debt at 10 per cent interest for

three years.

Hearing the offer, Ritesh said: "I don't have a problem in committing hours, you can take 20 hours commitment from me, but from Aman's side you have to put your trust and believe him."

Aman further commented: "Ritesh has committed you 25 hours. I am not committing, but I am giving you trust that I will do."

Despite securing a deal from the sharks Ritesh Agarwal and Aman Gupta, the brothers' counter-ask for committed advisory time left Aman frustrated, leading him to tear the cheque in response to their indecisiveness.

Ritesh got frustrated on their indecisiveness, and said he is out. Aman also said he is out, tearing the cheque. "Bhai tu mujhe maaf kar," added Aman. 'Shark Tank India 3' airs on Sony LIV.

Netflix release trailer of Bhumi Pednekar's 'Bhakshak'

The film follows Pednekar as journalist Vaishali Singh as she uncovers the stories of abuse at a girls' shelter home

Streamer Netflix unveiled the trailer of Bhumi Pednekar's upcoming movie 'Bhakshak', about an investigative journalist who tries to expose a heinous crime.

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan's banner Red Chillies Entertainment has backed the crime drama, which is inspired by true events. The film is directed by Pulkit and will debut on Netflix on February 9.

The film follows Pednekar as journalist Vaishali Singh as she uncovers the stories of abuse at a girls' shelter home. It also stars Sanjay Mishra, Aditya Srivastava and Sai Tamhankar.

Khan's wife Gauri Khan is credited as the producer along with Gaurav Verma. The superstar

shared the trailer on his social media handles and wrote, "A story of resilience that needs to be told."

As an actor, Pednekar said she has always looked for "clutter-breaking films" that go beyond the conventional narrative.

"Bhakshak' is also one such film, in fact, it is one of the most significant films of my career. This has been a profound experience and I am very grateful for scripts like 'Bhakshak' and characters like Vaishali Singh that have the courage to tell these powerful narratives," the actor said in a statement.

"I truly believe in the transformative potential of storytelling, and I am committed to choosing roles that not only push



boundaries, and break stereotypes, but also ignite discussions that pave the way for meaningful change.

'Bhakshak' is an important film and I can't wait to share our labour of love with audiences around the world," she added.

Pulkit has directed the film from a script he wrote with Jyotsana Nath.

"This story is deeply personal to me, and shaping the journey of an investigative journalist in her pursuit of justice and truth has been an incredibly enriching experience as a director. My aspiration for this film is to reach audiences across the globe as it makes its mark on Netflix across 190 countries," the filmmaker said.

Documentary on Celine Dion's to raise awareness about stiff-person syndrome



Singer-songwriter Celine Dion hopes to 'raise awareness' about stiff-person syn-

drome through a new feature-length documentary. The 55-year-old singer announced in

2022 that she had been diagnosed with a neurological disorder than affected her muscles, and Celine hasn't shied away from the issue in the documentary I Am: Celine Dion.

She said: "This last couple of years has been such a challenge for me, the journey from discovering my condition to learning how to live with and manage it, but not to let it define me. As the road to resuming my performing career continues, I have realised how much I have missed it, of being able to see my fans."

The documentary, which will be available on Prime Video, will give fans a behind-the-scenes look at Celine's life amid her health struggles.

Budget 2024 guarantees strong foundations for Viksit Bharat: PM Narendra Modi

Says it will empower women, youth, farmers and poor, the four pillars of Viksit Bharat

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the interim budget presented on Thursday is a guarantee of strong foundations for developed India and will empower women, youth, poor and farmers, "the four pillars of Viksit Bharat".

Speaking after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget in Lok Sabha, the PM said the budget was both "inclusive and innovative".

"The Budget has the confidence of continuity and will empower the four pillars of developed India -- youth, poor, women and farmers. The FM's budget is the budget to build the future of India," the prime minister said, adding "a guarantee of strong foundations for developed India by 2047 was inherent in the budget".

Discussing budget highlights, the PM cited two youth-centric announcements -- Rs 1 lakh crore fund on research and innovation and tax exemptions for startups.

"The Budget and its announcements mirror the aspirations of young India," Modi said with the BJP-led NDA government presenting its last financial document before the announcement



of the 2024 Lok Sabha election in which Modi will seek a third straight term in office.

Keeping the future goals in mind, the PM termed 11 per cent rise in capital expenditure to Rs 11,11,111 crore in the interim budget as "historic". He said this had been done while keeping the fiscal deficit in control.

Dwelling on the nuances of the budget, Modi called it a sweet spot "as is said in the language of economists".

"This Budget will not only help build modern infrastructure for the 21st century India but also spur countless job opportunities for the youth," he noted after Sitharaman steered clear of any major pre-poll sops to the surprise of the opposition.

Among budget announcements for common people, the PM listed the decision to upgrade 40,000 normal train bogies to Vande Bharat standards to offer common commuters a comfortable travel experience.

He made special mention of the announcements for women, a major constituency of the BJP, saying, "We set large goals, achieve them and reset bigger goals. We had earlier targeted to ensure 2 crore women to make at least Rs 1 lakh annual income. This target has been raised to 3 crore. After completing four crore rural houses, the government has pledged to build two crore more."

"And Ayushman Bharat

scheme which has proved a great boon for the poor will now also cover ASHA workers, anganwadi workers and helpers," the PM said, adding that the aspirations of poor and middle classes had been adequately addressed in the document.

After Sitharaman announced the scheme to give free power to one crore families through rooftop panels, the PM said, "By selling extra power, each of these families will make Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000 annual income."

Modi had announced this PM Suryodaya Yojana on the evening of January 22, the day he inaugurated the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The Income Tax Remission Scheme announced today was part of the PM's post-budget remarks.

"This scheme will benefit one crore middle-class families. Past government had hung the sword of legacy tax on the heads of common Indians for decades," the PM said.

He listed budget decisions on the use of nano DAP; new scheme for animals; expansion of PM Matsya Sampada Scheme and Atma Nirbhar oilseed campaign as major pro-farmer announcements.

Finance minister presented Modi govt's last budget: Uddhav takes dig at BJP



RAIGAD, Feb 1 (Agencies): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the Narendra Modi government's "last" budget, said Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday, taking a swipe at the BJP-led Centre after the Union Budget was presented.

Addressing party workers in Raigad dis-

trict, adjoining Mumbai, Thackeray stated that Sitharaman said that the budget would focus on four "castes", namely poor, women, youth and farmers.

Thackeray said the government has finally realised that the country has these four sets of people.

"The Modi government presented its last

budget. Want to thank the finance minister because she did it with a very heavy heart and presented the last budget," Thackeray said.

Sitharaman on Thursday presented her sixth straight budget, ahead of the Parliamentary elections.

Sitharaman presented a pre-election budget, which technically is a vote on account and popularly termed an interim Budget to meet the central government's essential expenditure for the first four months of the new fiscal year that starts in April.

A new government elected after the April/May general elections will present the full Budget, likely in July.

Enforcement Directorate arrests 2 in Delhi Jal Board-linked money-laundering case

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): The Enforcement Directorate has arrested a retired chief engineer and a contractor in connection with its money-laundering probe into the alleged irregularities in the tendering process of the Delhi Jal Board, official sources said on Thursday.

Jagdish Kumar Arora, a retired chief engineer, and contractor Anil Kumar Aggarwal have been taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), sources said.

The federal agency had conducted raids in this case in July last year.

The ED is conducting investigation in two separate matters of irregularities in the tendering process of the DJB and its criminal case stems from an FIR of the CBI and from the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi government.

The CBI FIR alleged that officials of the DJB gave "undue advantage" to NKG Infrastructure Limited while



awarding tender to the company for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of electro-magnetic flow metres in connivance with officials of NBCC (India) Limited.

The second allegation pertains to the ACB complaint of November 2022 where it was stated that the DJB awarded a tender for setting up automotive bill payment collection machines (kiosks) in its different offices for facilitating consumers in bill payment.

Probe Agency Searches India Cements Offices In Foreign Exchange Violation Case

CHENNAI, Feb 1 (Agencies): The Enforcement Directorate has conducted searches at the offices of leading Chennai-based cement manufacturer-- India Cements Ltd.-- as part of a foreign exchange violation investigation, official sources said on Thursday.

Two office premises in Chennai and one in Delhi were covered by the federal probe

agency over the last two days, as per provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the sources said.

The probe pertains to the affairs of its associate company India Cements Capital Ltd (ICCL) and transfer of funds abroad worth about 550 crore, they said.

The role of some alleged dubious agents and directors are

under the probe scanner of the ED, they said.

An official comment from the company to a agency query is awaited.

Founded in 1946, the company said on its website that "while retaining cement over the years as its mainstay, India Cements has ventured into related fields like shipping, captive power and coal mining."



FIR against 4 persons after more than 100 tribal students suffer from food poisoning in Thane school

Students were served pulao and gulab jamun following which they experienced vomiting and other symptoms of food poisoning.

THANE, Feb 1 (Agencies): Police registered an FIR against four persons on Thursday, a day after more than 100 students of a private ashram school in Maharashtra's Thane district suffered from food poisoning after consuming the mid-day meal, an official said.

A total of 117 students, including 48 girls, were admitted to the Shahapur sub-district hospital after they suffered from food poisoning on Wednesday, Shahapur tehsildar Komal Thakur told PTI.

The Sant Gadge Maharaj Primary and Secondary Ashram School (residential school for tribal children), where the incident took place, is located at Bhatsai in Shahapur taluka on the outskirts of Mumbai.

The school houses 290 students from Classes 1 to 10 and 168 of them, who were present on Wednesday, were served the food brought from outside, Thakur said.

Students were served food (pulao) and a sweet dish (gulab jamun) following which they experienced vomiting and other symptoms of food poisoning, the official



said. They were immediately rushed to the hospital, she said.

The food was brought from outside on the occasion of the first death anniversary of a villager from Bhatsai, she added.

A case was registered against the school superintendent, headmistress of the primary school, headmaster of the secondary school and a person who brought the food from outside, an official from the district rural police control room said.

They have been booked under Indian Penal Code sections 284 (handling poisonous substance in a reckless or negligent manner, endangering human life), 336 (doing any act which endangers human life or personal safety of others), 337 (causing hurt to any person by committing an act, rashly or negligent-

ly, endangering human life or safety of others) and 34 (common intention), the police said.

Thakur said out of the 117 students admitted to the hospital, seven girls were still undergoing treatment while the others were discharged.

Samples of food items served to the children were collected and sent for laboratory examination, she said.

Senior officials visited the hospital and enquired about the condition of the students.

Families and relatives of the affected pupils also gathered outside the medical facility, prompting the deployment of police to maintain order.

The parents of the affected students and some social organisations demanded action against the school management for their failure to take proper care of the inmates.

After 30 Years, Hindu Priest Prays Inside Gyanvapi Mosque Cellar

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Thirty-one years ago, a Hindu priest of the Vyas family stopped performing prayers inside Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque. Today, Jitendra Nath Vyas, a member of the Vyas family, prayed for the first time inside the mosque next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

This became possible after a district court said a priest can perform prayers before the idols in a cellar of the Gyanvapi mosque, a significant development in the legal battle over the structure.

"Vyas ji's cellar was opened after 31 years for prayers," temple trust president Nagenendra Pandey said, according to news agency. "It was necessary to follow the court's orders, so the district administration made all the arrangements with great promptness," Mr Pandey said, adding the cellar was opened at



10.30 pm on Wednesday.

Ashutosh Vyas, another family member, said they did not enter the cellar, but only priests went inside.

"We are very happy that the cellar opened yesterday after such a long time," Ashutosh Vyas told agency.

The court had told the local administration to make arrange-

ments within seven days to allow people to pray in the cellar.

The order by judge AK Vishvesha came a day after an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) report on the mosque complex was made public.

The ASI survey, ordered by the same court, in connection with a related case, suggested that the mosque was constructed

during Aurangzeb's rule over the remains of a Hindu temple.

Wednesday's order was delivered on the petition of Shailendra Kumar Pathak, who said his maternal grandfather Somnath Vyas offered prayers till December 1993, according to Madan Mohan Yadav, the petitioner's lawyer.

The mosque committee refuted the petitioner's version. The committee said no idols existed in the cellar, so there was no question of prayers being offered there till 1993.

"We are very happy that we have got the permission to resume puja there," Jitendra Nath Vyas said, adding he, family members, and priests performed the puja in the presence of district officials.

The mosque has four 'tekhannas' (cellars) in the basement, and one of them is still with the Vyas family.

SC to hear Friday JMM leader Hemant Soren's plea against arrest by ED



NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday decided to hear tomorrow the former Jharkhand

Chief Minister Hemant Soren's petition challenging his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a land scam money

laundering case.

Soren's senior lawyers Kapil Sibal and Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared on behalf of Soren, mentioned the matter before the top court's bench, comprising of CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, who agreed to hear the matter tomorrow. Both lawyers sought an urgent hearing from the Apex Court.

"We will list this case tomorrow," the CJI said.

"This affects the polity of the country. Can a man be arrested like this?" Sibal argued before the Apex Court and sought an urgent hearing in the case.

During the course of the hearing, Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, pointed out that Soren's arrest was challenged yesterday before the Jharkhand High Court, which is slated to hear the matter today. Sibal replied and

told the SC that they would be withdrawing their petition from the Jharkhand HC.

Soren was arrested on Wednesday night in the case after resigning as the Jharkhand chief minister, and party loyalist and state transport minister Champai Soren was named as his successor.

He was arrested after a marathon seven-hour grilling by the Enforcement Directorate in the case.

Trump runs low on cash for campaign as legal fees drain him, Biden flush with funds

Trump has spent more than he has earned through his donations or self-financing schemes

WASHINGTON, Feb 1 (Agencies): Former President Donald Trump is literally roughing it out in the 2024 presidential race, despite being a front runner for the GOP nomination, as he is facing a cash crunch with legal fees draining him out and as he tries desperately to lock down the Republican nomination spending monies to eliminate Nikki Haley from the competition.

Trump has spent more than he has earned through his donations or self-financing schemes.

As a potential 2024 Trump-Biden general election rematch looms large, President Joe Biden appears money-flush.

Trump's campaign and super PAC both spent more than they raised in their most recent finance reports, while Biden built up more reserves, media reports claimed.

Campaign finance records filed Wednesday show the main super PAC supporting Trump's campaign, MAGA Inc., spent more than it raised in the last six months of 2023 - primarily by transferring back \$30 million to Save America, the main vehicle for paying the former president's prodigious legal fees.

Similarly, Trump's official campaign blew through more cash than it took in over the last three months of the year, NBC reported after perusing the campaign records of both candidates.

That suggests that Trump's recent threats to blackball Republican donors who don't give money to him are about more than just loyalty: He also needs the money, media reports said.

President Biden's campaign in comparison ended the year with \$46 million in cash, far more than the \$33 million Trump's campaign held before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. Flash to the Future, the main super PAC backing Biden, held a little bit more in the bank than MAGA Inc., \$24 million to \$23.3 million, at the end of the year.

Democrats claimed on Wednesday night that Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are stockpiling money for campaign purposes, rather than legal fights like Trump, and are in an advantageous position.

"While Donald Trump lights



money on fire paying the tab on his various expenses, Team Biden-Harris, powered by grassroots donors, is hard at work talking to the voters who will decide this election and building the campaign infrastructure to win in November," Biden's campaign spokesman T.J. Ducklo said in a statement.

Though Trump's legal troubles make him a martyr before his republican supporters, he is also down in cash for the campaigns paying his legal fees through his various outfits. Trump is rallying GOP voters to his cause without a shred of evidence accusing Biden of using the Justice Department to target him and hamstringing his campaign.

Trump that way is banking on the allegations he faces as a key part of his strategy to defeat Biden in November. They have also proved to be an aid in fundraising and in dispatching Republican opponents. The day Trump's mug shot was released in August, following his arrest in the Georgia election interference case, he raised \$4.2 million online, according to a fundraising report filed Wednesday by WinRed, the GOP's main online fundraising platform. It was the most Trump raised online in a single day last year.

Trump hopes his legal woes will energize the GOP faithfuls for the general election and help him to persuade persuadable voters to oust Biden. Trump continues to be a master of small-dollar fundraising. While 18 per cent of Biden's fourth-quarter haul came from donors who have given the maximum amount to his campaign, only 6 per cent of Trump's cash came from donors who have given the \$6,600 limit, reports said.

That means Trump is well-positioned to go back to the well for more contributions from

donors who can still legally give. Spokespeople for Trump and MAGA Inc. did not respond to requests for comment on their campaign finance filings Wednesday night.

Both Trump and Biden have enlarged their operations during the last quarter of the year as they transitioned from the start-up size of nascent campaigns into more robust general election machines. Trump had 78 people on payroll and Biden had 74 people, according to their campaign disclosures.

Inside Trump's numbers: MAGA Inc., which as a super PAC can legally take in donations of unlimited size, raised \$47.8 million from July 1 through Dec. 31, including \$10 million in contributions from Timothy Mellon, who has also been a supporter of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s presidential ambitions, and more than \$5 million from former Trump administration Cabinet official Linda McMahon.

But the super PAC spent 55.4 million over the same period, leaving it with \$23.3 million in the bank at the end of the year. The \$30 million it spent on transfers to Save America - and, ultimately, Trump's lawyers - is nearly 50 per cent more than the \$20.4 million it paid for ads in the final six months of 2023, according to an NBC News analysis of Wednesday's campaign finance reports.

Trump's campaign took in \$19.1 million from October through December - less than 60 per cent of the Biden campaign's \$33 million haul - and shelled out \$23.6 million.

The campaign spent \$97,000 of that for facility rentals and catering at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida. But the big-ticket items were \$7.6 million for advertising, \$3.7 mil-

lion for legal consulting, \$1.7 million apiece for air travel and staging events, and \$1.6 million for payroll, according to the NBC News analysis.

Since the disclosures of campaign expenditure cover till the end of last year, it's rather difficult to know how much Trump has raised and spent in the month. But he has added a series of high-dollar fundraising events to his calendar in recent days, including one this week near his Palm Beach home, and one at his Mar-a-Lago resort next month, according to an invitee.

Inside Biden's numbers: Without a serious primary challenger, Biden has been able to focus his money on communicating to voters about himself and Trump. Democratic Rep. Dean Phillips of Minnesota, who is running a long-shot bid for the party's presidential nomination, lent his campaign \$4 million last quarter and raised another \$1 million from donors. Biden spent \$19.3 million over the final quarter of the year, with about \$12 million of the total going toward making and placing ads. Add to it the \$2 million for text message outreach to voters, and communications dominated Biden's expenditures.

Aside from those costs, his biggest outlays were for payroll and payroll taxes, which amounted to about \$3 million combined. As an advantage of incumbency, Biden has been able to coordinate fundraising with his national party throughout the campaign season. The Democratic National Committee recently reported that it had \$21 million on hand at the start of this year, and big donors have been piling money into state Democratic Party accounts via the Biden campaign fundraising operation, too.

Because there is a primary campaign on the GOP side, Trump has not been able to use the Republican National Committee - which ended the year with \$8 million in the bank - as an arm of his campaign in the same way. The RNC is officially neutral in the primary campaign, although party Chair Ronna McDaniel has recently called on the GOP to unite around Trump, whom she described as the "eventual nominee."

Australian Police Rescue 3-Year-Old Stuck Inside Claw Machine



BRISBANE, Feb 1 (Agencies): An Australian toddler who clambered into a "Hello Kitty" arcade claw machine and "was in no hurry to get out" has been saved in a smash-

and-grab rescue, police said Thursday.

Queensland police said that during a shopping trip three-year-old Ethan climbed into the machine -- which was filled with stuffed toys --

via the prize dispenser chute.

Police video shows four officers sizing up the problem before shooting the unperturbed toddler to the far side of the glass compartment.

"Police ensured Ethan was at a safe distance before breaking a glass window of the machine in order to free him," Queensland police said. "You won a prize, which one do you want?" an officer jokes after lifting the boy to freedom.

Wing Tips Of 2 Japanese Planes "Scratch" Each Other At Airport, No Injuries Reported

TOKYO, Feb 1 (Agencies): The wing tips of two passenger jets "scratched" each other at a Japanese airport on Thursday morning, an airport operator said, with reports saying no one was injured.

The incident involving the two All Nippon Airways aircraft happened shortly after 10:00 am (0100 GMT) at the domestic terminal of

Osaka's Itami airport, a Kansai Airports spokesperson told the news agency.

"We've been told wing tips of two ANA planes scratched each other," the spokesman said.

No passenger or crew was injured, local media said.

The accident is the latest of a string of mishaps involving Japanese aircraft and air-

ports since the start of the year.

The most serious was a near-catastrophic collision at Haneda airport between a Japan Airlines aircraft and a smaller coast guard plane on January 2. All 379 people on board the JAL Airbus escaped just before the aircraft was engulfed in flames. Five of the six people on the smaller aircraft died.

'No country will respect Pakistan', say citizens after Imran Khan's double sentencing

KARACHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): People in Pakistan's largest city Karachi expressed disappointment over the sentencing of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in two different cases.

Shiza Khan, a resident of Karachi, said the judgements against Imran would tarnish the image of Pakistan.

Shaukat Korai,

another resident, said after the judgement he had no hope from the upcoming election. "Because of the way one political party is being targeted, I don't think the 2024 election will deliver a credible result," Korai said.

Earlier on Wednesday, a Pakistani court sentenced former

prime minister Imran Khan and his wife to 14 years in prison each for corruption, a day after another special court convicted Khan for leaking state secrets and gave him a 10-year prison sentence.

Khan and his wife are accused of retaining and selling state gifts when the former premier was in power.

Netanyahu says UN agency for Palestinians must close, Israeli warplanes strike Gaza

Israel has accused some UNRWA staff of involvement in the October 7 Hamas assault in southern Israel that triggered the war in Gaza.

JERUSALEM, Feb 1 (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for the closure of the UN Palestinian Refugee Agency (UNRWA) as his forces conducted more air strikes in Gaza amid diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire and the release of hostages in the enclave.

Israel has accused some UNRWA staff of involvement in the October 7 Hamas assault in southern Israel that triggered the war in Gaza. Donors including the United States have paused funding pending an investigation, but aid agencies say ending UNRWA operations would wreck humanitarian efforts in devastated Gaza.

The Palestinians have accused Israel of falsifying information to tarnish UNRWA, which was set up to help refugees of the war at Israel's founding in 1948 and to which more than half Gaza's population look to for day-to-day assistance.

"It's time the international community and the U.N. itself understand that UNRWA's mission has to end," Netanyahu told visit-

ing UN delegates, according to his office.

He said UNRWA should be replaced by other aid agencies "if we are going to solve the problem of Gaza as we intend to do".

Earlier, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described UNRWA as "the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza" and appealed to all countries to "guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's life-saving work".

In Gaza, witnesses said Israel had stepped up air strikes on Gaza City, in the north, and bombarded parts of Khan Younis, in the south, despite what appeared to be the most serious peace initiative for months in the Israel-Hamas war.

Hamas, the militant Palestinian group that runs Gaza, is currently studying the proposal, which envisages the release of all remaining hostages seized on Oct. 7. Israel says they number around 136. Hamas has demanded an end to Israel's offensive.

World powers hope to prevent a wider conflict, but tensions in the Middle East remain high after Yemen's



Iran-aligned Houthi rebels said they would keep attacking US and British warships in the Red Sea in solidarity with Palestinians.

Relations between Tehran and Washington are also tense after the deaths of three U.S. soldiers in a drone strike in Jordan that U.S. officials blame on Iran-backed militants. Washington has not yet outlined its response, but Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday they would respond to any U.S. threat.

DEVASTATION Much of the densely populated Gaza Strip has been devastated by almost four months of Israeli bombardment, and most of its 2.3 million residents have been uprooted by fighting that has caused the world's biggest humanitarian crisis.

Gaza health authorities said 26,900 Palestinians had been killed - including 150 over the past 24 hours - so far in the war that was triggered after Hamas fighters stormed into Israeli towns on

October 7, killing 1,200 and taking 253 hostages.

Israel's military said its forces had killed at least 25 Palestinian militants in Gaza in the past 24 hours, and that three Israeli soldiers had been killed - taking to 224 the number of troops killed during Israel's ground offensive.

Smoke rose above Gaza City after the latest air strikes, some of which targeted the headquarters of the Hamas-run interior ministry, Hamas-run media and

residents said.

The Al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza came under fire and tanks pounded areas of Khan Younis around Nasser Hospital, the largest still functioning in the south, witnesses said.

As the health system deteriorates, Palestinian medics say they have formed field medical points to help reach front lines, as treating the wounded in Khan Younis has become increasingly difficult amid street battles and artillery strikes.

"There's a lot of injuries among the displaced who were in the industrial quarter and some schools," said Nassim Hassan, the head of the Emergency Unit at Nasser Hospital, adding that "many of the injured left loaded on carts, tuk-tuks, cars or even on foot."

THREE-STAGE TRUCE A senior Hamas official told Reuters the Gaza ceasefire proposal involved a three-stage truce, during which Hamas would release the remaining civilians among hostages captured on October 7, then soldiers, and

finally the bodies of dead hostages.

The proposal followed talks in Paris involving intelligence chiefs from Israel, the U.S. and Egypt, with the prime minister of Qatar.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations urged Hamas on Wednesday to accept the proposal, saying it would allow more vital food, water and medicine supplies to enter Gaza.

"(Hamas) can continue to dig tunnels, to plan for its next attack, to use civilians and civilian infrastructure as human shields, or it can lay down its weapons and accept the proposal on the table to release every hostage," Linda Thomas-Greenfield told a meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

Palestinians said the fighting in Gaza must end for good.

"Any ceasefire that doesn't end the war and return us to our homes in Gaza City and the north is not worth it," Ahmed, who fled his home in Gaza City for Rafah in the south, said by telephone. "We are exhausted."

Godrej Locks 'Live Safe, Live Free' Study reveals that 49% of Indians still leave their keys with neighbours

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: In a cultural context, Indians have always been known for relying on their neighbours for various things and one such aspect is leaving a spare key of the main door. However, in the changing scenarios with increased crime rates-is that still the safest option? To understand such consumer behaviour Godrej Locks

recently concluded a research study called the 'Live Safe, Live Freely'. Godrej Locks, a business unit of Godrej & Boyce, the flagship company of the Godrej Group, had done this study as part of their annual initiatives for Home Safety Day with the aim to offer unique insights into what the Indian consumers think like when it comes to upgrading their home

safety choices. The report stated that nearly half (49%) the respondents who took part in the study said that if they were a working parent they would leave a spare key with a neighbour, relative, or family member to let their child in. Similarly, more than half (56%) of the respondents said they would hand over their keys to a neighbour to help facilitate deliveries.

Again, nearly half the respondents (46%) said they would feel comfortable leaving a key for a family member with their neighbour even if it was late at night, while more than a quarter (26%) claimed that if they were locked out it would be because the neighbour with the spare key wasn't home. According to Shyam Motwani, Business Head at Godrej Locks & Architectural Fittings

and Systems, "Earlier in most communities it was a norm to not only know our neighbours well, but they were like an extended family and hence such dependency was normalised. However, the world has changed rapidly, especially in urban and rural markets where people are often out of their homes for work or other activities and live comparatively fast paced lives.

Green Propulsion System, developed under DRDO's Technology Development Fund, demonstrates in-orbit

Top News Report

New Delhi, Feb 1: A Green Propulsion System, developed under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme of DRDO, has successfully demonstrated in-orbit functionality on a payload launched by PSLV C-58 mission. This project - 1N Class Green Monopropellant thruster for altitude control and orbit keeping of micro satellite - was sanctioned to a Bengaluru-based start-up Bellatrix Aerospace Pvt Ltd (Development Agency). The Telemetry Data from PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM) at ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Com-

mand Network (ISTRAC), Bengaluru has been validated with ground level solution and is found to have exceeded all performance parameters. This innovative technology has resulted in non-toxic and environment-friendly propulsion system for low orbit space. The system consists of indigenously-developed Propellant, Fill and Drain Valves, Latch Valve, Solenoid Valve, Catalyst Bed, Drive Electronics, etc. It is ideal for space mission with high thrust requirements. The complete project has been carried out by the Development Agency under guidance of Project Monitoring & Mentoring Group of DRDO.

FROM PAGE 1

J&K Govt orders reshuffle in civil administration

the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department. He shall continue to hold the charge of the post of Director Horticulture, Kashmir, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Riyaz Ahmad Wani, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Agriculture Production Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Inspector General of Registration, Kashmir vice Mr. Sajad Hussain Ganai.

Dr. Firdous Ahmad Giri, JKAS, Secretary, J&K Board of Professional Entrance Examination, is transferred and posted as Additional Director, SKIMS, Srinagar and ex-officio Special Secretary to the Government vice Mr. Guizar Ahmad Dar.

Mr. Naseem Javid Chowdhary, JKAS, Director, Sheep Husbandry, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation vice Mr. Imam Din. He shall continue to hold the charge of the post of Director, Sheep Husbandry, Jammu, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Imam Din, JKAS, Managing Director, J&K Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Forest, Ecology, and Environment.

Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Sofi, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, is posted as Regional Director, Survey and Land Records (ex-officio Settlement Officer), Baramulla vice Mr. Khurshid Ahmed Shah.

Mr. Ram Savak, JKAS Director, Horticulture, Jammu, holding additional charge of the post of Director, Agriculture, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Home Department. He shall continue to hold the charge of the posts of Director, Horticulture, Jammu and Director, Agriculture, Jammu, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Raj Kumar Katoch, JKAS, Member, J&K Special Tribunal (Jammu Bench), is transferred and posted as Director, Archives, Archaeology, and Museums, J&K vice Mr. Pardeep Kumar.

Ms. Pumima Mittal, JKAS, Director, Animal Husbandry, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Cooperatives Department. She shall continue to hold the charge of the post of Director, Animal Husbandry, Kashmir, in addition to her own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Vikas Gupta, JKAS, Director, Handloom and Handicraft, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction.

Mr. Suraj Parkash Rukwal, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction, is transferred and posted as Director, Handloom and Handicrafts, Jammu vice Mr. Vikas Gupta.

Mr. Rajinder Kumar Sharma, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Ramban, is transferred and posted as Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute, J&K, vice Mr. Asif Hamid Khan.

Mr. Shabir Hussain Keen, JKAS, Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, is transferred and posted as Secretary, J&K Board of Professional Entrance Examination, vice Dr. Firdous Ahmad Giri.

Mr. Ashwani Khajuria, JKAS, Administrator, Associated Hospitals, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department.

Mr. Kapi Sharma, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department, is transferred and posted as Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd., vice Mr. Pankaj Gupta.

Mr. Syed Qamar Sajad, JKAS, Additional Registrar Cooperatives, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Baramulla, vice Mr. Ajaz Abdullah Saraf.

Mr. Mohammad Farooq Dar, JKAS, Special Secretary to Government, Agriculture Production Department, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Skill Development Department.

Mr. Akram Ullah Tak, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Budgam, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department, vice Mr. Roshan Lal.

Ms. Jyoti Rani Slathia, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Reasi, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department, vice Mr. Naresh Kumar.

Mr. Sukhdev Singh Samyal, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Patnitop Development Authority, is transferred and posted as Additional District

Development Commissioner, Reasi, vice Ms. Jyoti Rani Slathia, JKAS.

Mr. Naresh Kumar, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Commissioner with Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Roshan Lal, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department, is transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Ramban, vice Mr. Rajinder Kumar Sharma.

Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Shah, JKAS, Regional Director, Survey and Land Records (ex-officio Settlement Officer), Baramulla, is transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Budgam, vice Mr. Akram Ullah Tak.

Mr. Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, JKAS, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants), J&K, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Finance Department.

Mr. Ashish Kumar Gupta, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department, is transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, vice Mr. Shabir Hussain Keen.

Mr. Rakesh Magotra, JKAS, Director, Geology and Mining, J&K, is transferred and posted as Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, vice Mr. Deep Raj.

--Mr. Amarjeet Singh, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Health and Medical Education Department.

Mr. Pankaj Gupta, JKAS, Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, ARI & Trainings Department.

Mr. Naseer Ahmad Wani, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, School Education Department, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department.

Mr. Ghulam Rasool, JKAS, Regional Director, Survey and Land Records (ex-officio Settlement Officer), Rajouri, is transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Kishtwar, against an available vacancy. Mr. Pawan Kumar, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Rajouri, shall hold the charge of the post of Regional Director, Survey and Land Records (ex-officio Settlement Officer), Rajouri, in addition to his own duties, until further orders.

Mr. Ranjeet Singh, JKAS Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Enforcement (Kathua) headquartered at Lakhapur, is transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K SC, ST and OBC Development Corporation, relieving Ms. Ulfat Jabeen of the additional charge of the post.

Mr. Surinder Mohan, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kotranka, holding additional charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Kotranka, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Information Technology Department.

Mr. Deep Raj, JKAS, Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, is transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Agriculture Production Department, vice Mr. Mohammad Farooq Dar.

Mr. Rajnish Kumar, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department, is transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, vice Dr. Bharat Bhusan.

Ms. Shahnaz Akhtar, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Appeal-I, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development, vice Ms. Priyanka Bhat.

Mr. Suram Chand Sharma, JKAS, Joint Director, Youth Services and Sports, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Department.

Mr. Farooq Ahmad Baba, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (IT, Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence), Srinagar, is transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Sonamarg, vice Mr. Alyaz Ahmad Naisroo.

Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Bandy, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag.

Mr. Ved Prakash, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Surinsar-Mansar, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, Youth Services and Sports, Jammu, vice Mr. Suram Chand Sharma.

Mr. Pardeep Singh, JKAS, Joint Director, Handloom, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (Enforcement), Kathua, vice Mr. Ranjeet Singh.

Mr. Devinder Singh Katoch, JKAS, Joint Director, ICDS, Social Welfare Department, is transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Surinsar-Man-

sar, vice Mr. Ved Prakash.

Mr. Soheel Noor Shah, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Health and Medical Education Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department.

Mr. Vinod Kumar Behnal, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sunderbani, holding additional charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Sunderbani, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, ICDS, Social Welfare Department, vice Mr. Devinder Singh Katoch.

Dr. Ravi Kumar Bharti, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Doda, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Higher Education Department.

Dr. Des Raj Bhagat, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bani-Basholi with HQ at Basohli, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Health and Medical Education Department.

Dr. Sunil Sharma, JKAS, Joint Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Home Department, vice Dr. Arvind Karwani.

Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Magray, JKAS, Director, Land Management, Srinagar Development Authority, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, Industries and Commerce (Development), Kashmir, vice Ms. Sumera Shamim. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Joint Director, Industries and Commerce (M&P), Kashmir, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Rajeshwar Singh Charak, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Health and Medical Education Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Transport Department, vice Mr. Raj Mohammad.

Mr. Dil Mir, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baderwah, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar, Baderwah, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kotranka, vice Mr. Surender Mohan. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Kotranka, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Sudershan Kumar, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Doda, vice Dr. Ravi Kumar Bharti.

Mr. Kewal Krishan, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department, is transferred and posted as Regional Transport Officer, Kathua (Headquarter: Lakhapur), vice Mr. Sunil Kumar.

Mr. Sunil Kumar, JKAS, Regional Transport Officer, Kathua (Hq: Lakhapur), is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baderwah, vice Mr. Dil Mir. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Baderwah, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Ms. Sumera Shamim, JKAS, Joint Director, Industries and Commerce (Development), Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Director, Land Management, Srinagar Development Authority, vice Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Magray.

Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik, JKAS, Joint Director Employment, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, vice Mr. Syed Shabir Ahmad.

Paramjeet Singh, JKAS Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Doda, shall hold the charge of the post of General Manager, DIC, Doda, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Indeerjeet Singh, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, is transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (Recovery), Jammu, against available vacancy.

Mr. Devinder Singh Shau, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, Relief Organization (Migrants), Jammu, is transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Patnitop Development Authority, vice Mr. Sukhdev Singh Samyal.

Dr. Arvind Karwani, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Home Department, is transferred and posted as Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants), J&K, vice Mr. Kuldeep Krishan Sidha.

Mr. Syed Shabir Ahmad, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, is transferred and posted as General Manager, DIC, Pulwama, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, vice Mr. Fayaz Ahmad Bandy.

Mr. Satish Kumar, JKAS Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Technology Department, is transferred and posted as Joint Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, vice Dr. Sunil Sharma.

Mr. Rajeev Magotra, JKAS, Principal Excise and Taxation Training Institute, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sunderbani, vice Mr. Vinod Kumar

Behnal. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Sunderbani, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Ms. Priyanka Bhat, JKAS, Joint Director, J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development, is transferred and posted as Joint Registrar, Cooperatives (Audit), Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Narayan Dutt, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Skill Development Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department.

Ms. Renu Kumari, JKAS Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Principal, Excise and Taxation Training Institute, Jammu, vice Mr. Rajeev Magotra.

Mr. Ghulam Nabi Bhat, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, School Education Department.

Ms. Sammer Naik, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, (Appeals-II), Srinagar, is transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Budgam, vice Mr. Shahid Mehmood.

Mr. Shahid Mehmood, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Budgam, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department.

Mr. Pankaj Kumar Anand, JKAS, General Manager DIC, Udhampur, is transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Jammu, vice Ms. Renu Kumari.

Mr. Kartar Singh, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Nowshera, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, ARI & Trainings Department.

Mr. Raj Mohammad, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Transport Department, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department.

Mr. Ajeet Singh, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Basohli, is transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bani Basohli with Headquarters at Basohli, vice Dr. Des Raj Bhagat.

Mr. Anil Kumar Thakur, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Khour, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar, Khour, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Basohli.

Mr. Ashwani Kumar, JKAS, General Manager, DIC, Rajouri, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, Employment, Jammu, vice Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik.

Mr. Mohammad Rouf Rehman, JKAS, Joint Director Education (Central), Kashmir, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, vice Mr. Ghulam Nabi Bhat.

Mr. Vijay Kumar, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, is posted as Deputy Commissioner, Relief Organization (Migrants), Jammu, vice Mr. Devinder Singh Bhat.

Mr. Khalid Hussain, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Poonch, shall hold the charge of the post of General Manager, DIC, Poonch, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mr. Waseem Raja, JKAS, Joint Director, Youth Services and Sports, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as General Manager, DIC, Budgam, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Rajeev Kumar, JKAS, Revenue Attorney with Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Skill Development Department, vice Mr. Narayan Dutt.

Mr. Afaq Ahmed, JKAS, Principal, Revenue Training Institute, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Power Development Department.

Mr. Mir Nasroo Hilal Jeri, JKAS, Project Officer, Wage Employment, (ACD), Shoptian, is transferred and posted as Joint Registrar Cooperative (Audit), Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

Mr. Varunjeet Charak, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kishtwar, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, vice Mr. Indeerjeet Singh.

Mr. Alyaz Ahmad Naisroo, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Sonamarg, is transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, (Appeals-II), Srinagar, vice Ms. Sammer Naik.

Mr. Kishore Singh, JKAS, Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Kathua, is transferred and posted as General Manager, DIC, Udhampur, vice Mr. Pankaj Kumar Anand.

Mr. Fareed Ahmad Kohli, JKAS, Development Officer Handicrafts (Textiles), Jammu, is transferred and posted as General Manager, DIC, Rajouri, vice Mr. Ashwani Kumar.

Ms. Mita Kumari, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner in the State Taxes Department, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Hospitality and Protocol Department.

Mr. Jasmeet Singh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, is posted as Principal, Revenue Training Institute, Jammu, vice Mr. Afaq Ahmed.

Mr. Babu Ram Tandon, JKAS, Deputy District Election Officer, Rajouri, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Nowshera, vice Mr. Kartar Singh.

Mr. Kulraj Singh, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Dudu, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar, Dudu, is transferred and posted as Joint Director, Handloom, Jammu, vice Mr. Pardeep Singh.

Srinagar-Jammu highway blocked due to shooting stones in Ramban

Kashmir experienced a new snowfall, prompting the closure of several roads in the Kashmir region on Thursday. The government swiftly initiated snow clearance operations early in the morning.

In the railway department, officials reassured that train services will continue as usual from Baramulla to Banihal section. However, passengers were cautioned about possible delays attributed to adverse weather conditions. The railway authorities appealed for cooperation to ensure smoother journeys.

Property of Drug Peddler Attached in North Kashmir: Police

Handwara area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

An official said that this action against the drug peddler identified as Farooq Ahmad Dar, son of Mohd Sultan Dar, resident of Lachipora Handwara was taken under section 68-F of the NDPS Act 1985.

"Dar is implicated in the NDPS cases including Case FIR No.316/2017 U/S 8/20 NDPS Act of PS Handwara, Case FIR No. 86/2020 U/S 8/20 NDPS Act of PS Handwara, Case FIR NO.242/2021 U/S 8/20 NDPS Act of PS Handwara and Case FIR NO.36/23 U/S 8/20 NDPS Act of PS Handwara," the official said.

He said that the property was identified as illegally acquired during the investigation/enquiry conducted by Handwara Police, linking it to illicit drug trafficking.

"The owner, a notorious drug peddler, is currently under detention at Kote-bilwal Jammu under the PIT-NDPS Act," the official added.

Avalanche warning issued for 8 districts of J&K

Ramban districts of Jammu division during the next 24 hours, they said.

People living in these areas have been advised to take precautions and avoid venturing in the avalanche prone areas till further orders.

Upper reaches of these districts received light to moderate snowfall during the past several days.

The authorities have also asked the people living in these districts to dial 112 for help in view of any emergency.

Gradual improvement in weather in J&K from today afternoon, predicts MeT

remain cloudy generally with light snowfall at fewer places till Thursday afternoon, thereafter there will be a gradual improvement in the weather.

He said on Feb 2nd the weather will generally remain dry with possibility of over light snow at isolated higher reaches. From February 3 to 4 there is a possibility of light to moderate snow and rain (in Jammu region) at many places.

He added the weather will likely remain dry from February 5 to 12.

The official said that in past 24 hours, the parts of Kashmir valley witnessed snowfall while as parts of Jammu region received rains.

"In past 24 hours middle and higher reaches of Kupwara, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Budgam, Anantnag, Kulgam and Shopian received 10 to 15 inches of snow. Also lower reaches and plains of north, northwest and south Kashmir parts received 6 to 8 inches of snow. Besides plains of central Kashmir has received 2 to 4 inches of snow," the MeT official said.

He also said that in past 24 hours light to moderate rain with thunder over Jammu division with light snow over few middle and higher reaches occurred.

He added due to intermittent moderate to heavy snow since past 3 days over higher reaches the important passes have been closed temporarily.

In this regard travelers are advised to plan their travel accordingly and follow administration and traffic police advisory in letter and spirit.

Union Budget: Centre keeps aside Rs 306.06 crore for ECI to conduct Lok Sabha polls

The total budgetary allocation for the ECI in 2024-25 is Rs 321.89 crore

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): In a year in which the Lok Sabha elections are scheduled to be held, the vote-on-account presented by the Union government on Thursday kept aside Rs 306.06 crore for the Election Commission of India, specifically for the task of conducting elections.

The total budgetary allocation for the Election Commission in 2024-25 is Rs 321.89 crore, of which Rs 306.06 crore is for the expenditure to be incurred in conducting elections.

The amount kept aside for public works is Rs 2.01 crore. The allocation made for adminis-



trative services is Rs 13.82 crore.

In 2023-24, the amount allocated for conducting elections was Rs 312 crore, which was revised upwards to Rs 385.67 crore. The

revised total budgetary allocation in 2023-24 was Rs 466.04 crore.

A large part of the budgetary allocation for preparing for the conduct of the Lok Sabha elections was already

made in the previous fiscal. In the Winter Session of Parliament, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had tabled supplementary demand for grants for 2023-24 in the Lok

Sabha, which included an additional allocation of Rs 3,147.92 crore for election-related expenditure and Rs 73.67 crore for the Election Commission's administration.

A major chunk of the expenditure is on procuring and maintaining electronic voting machines. In the 2023-24 Budget, the Union government had originally made an allocation of Rs 1,891.8 crore for EVMs, and it was revised upwards by Rs 611.27 crore.

According to Election Commission data, the expenditure incurred in holding the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 was Rs 3,870 crore.

Real estate segment upbeat post Interim Budget 2024

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcements of an additional two crore houses under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana and the push towards creating affordable rural housing in India to address the housing gap in the country has been welcomed by the real estate sector.

The additional outlay of Rs 11.11 lakh crore for infrastructure in FY25 is also expected to contribute to the overall growth of the real estate sector in the country.

"We look forward to the launch of the housing for the middle class scheme. It is a much-needed stimulus to address the housing needs of the urban middle class and affordable housing for the urban poor. If there are some tax incentives or urban land allotment schemes, we can build affordable housing in the urban areas which will help the lower middle class and unauthorised colonies to get housing inside the city instead of traveling very far outside the city limits. It will decrease their cost of living and help in reducing traffic and transportation costs," said Nesara B.S, chairman, Concorde.

Different stakeholders in the sector feel that the announcement to construct an additional two crore houses under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana marks a crucial stride in tackling the demand for affordable housing in rural areas while simultaneously fostering economic empowerment.

"The substantial investment in housing infrastructure is anticipated to stimulate economic growth and bring about a positive change



in the lives of numerous families. The government's dedication to narrowing the housing gap is commendable, reflecting a robust effort to promote comprehensive development," pointed out Pratik Kataria, director, Sainath Developers - The House of Kataria, and committee member, NAREDCO Maharashtra.

Real estate stakeholders also feel that the government's continuing efforts in infrastructure development as outlined in the 2024 budget is the right decision. Forty per cent capital allocation on roads, highways, and railways is expected to further reinforce the government's commitment to transformative infrastructure development.

"The National Highways Authority has been doing exceedingly well with the number of kilometres being constructed every day. This will further expand the connectivity between urban centers and surrounding satellite towns giving a boost to housing, and further increase the contribution to GDP from the current 7 per cent to 10 per cent and above. As infrastructure expands to satellite towns, land prices and construction costs become increasingly viable for real estate developers. We appreciate the government's vision in promoting satellite town development through prudent

infrastructure spending. This budget sets the stage for equitable and sustainable urbanization. We look forward to even greater emphasis on this in future budgets," pointed out Pavan Kumar, founder and CEO, White Lotus Group.

Real estate experts are of the opinion that the interim budget presented today has further strengthened the government's commitment towards long-term social and infrastructure development. "The 11.1 per cent increase in infrastructure outlay which is 3.4 per cent of GDP will further enhance the railway, roads and logistics infrastructure of the country. The three new economic railway corridors identified under the PM Gati Shakti program are massive projects with the potential to grow economic hubs and boost the development of the tier-II and tier-III cities along their alignment. The intention to complete two crore housing units in the next five years will aid the 'Housing for All' mission of the government. Additionally, the proposed boost to housing for the middle-class living in sub-par accommodation is also a welcome inclusion. We look forward to the details of this as we expect this to have great long-term ramifications," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and managing director, Knight Frank India.

EV segment sees positivity in Union Budget as FM focuses on infrastructure, jobs

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): The stakeholders in the EV segment feel that the Interim Budget focused on key sectors and one of the promising ones is Electric Vehicles (EV). The initiatives will enhance and fortify the EV ecosystem by bolstering manufacturing and charging infrastructure.

The Interim Budget of 2024 mentioned plans on accelerating the EV ecosystem through the expansion of charging and manufacturing infrastructure in the country. Additionally, the encouragement of greater adoption of e-buses for public transport networks through payment security mechanisms is a notable benefit which will not only pave the



way for increased EV sales and adoption but also open doors for burgeoning job opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures within the sector.

"Such efforts remain dedicated to driving India's green mobility revolution forward. There is also an anticipated outcome in the form of economic empowerment which will equip the youth with valuable technical skills,

ensuring a robust workforce for the manufacturing of EV chargers, and associated equipment. We look forward to the July budget where the focus will be on Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME II) scheme and much-anticipated FAME III scheme," remarked Pratik Kamdar, CEO and Co-founder, Neuron Energy.

Players in the EV

segment feel that it is encouraging to see the focus on research and innovation which can further grow the EV ecosystem. Players expect that the government rolls out details of the scheme in the coming days for growing the EV public charging infrastructure.

"The availability of public chargers across the country will significantly grow. his will also break the 'range anxiety', the biggest barrier for EV adoption in our country. The government's support in providing financial assistance and support to EV manufacturing will encourage entrepreneurs to do deeper innovation in the battery management segment and other technologies.

Growth in EV charging infrastructure will also generate employment opportunities for the youth as companies will be on a look out for people with technical know-how of running and maintaining charging infrastructure. EV companies will also enjoy a deeper vendor ecosystem providing battery and other components for building make in India EV vehicles," observed Dinesh Arjun, Co-founder and CEO, Raptee Energy.

The emphasis on improving manufacturing and charging infrastructure has aligned perfectly with many EV players along with the adoption of electric buses as it will aim for a more environmentally responsible tomorrow.

Experts laud govt move on vaccination of girls against cervical cancer

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday made a slew of announcements related to healthcare, including vaccination of girl children. Presenting the interim budget for the year 2024-24, Sitharaman said the government plans to set up more medical colleges by utilising existing hospital infrastructure and will set up a committee to examine the matter.

The minister also said that the government will encourage vaccination for girls in age group of 9 to 14 years for the prevention of cervical cancer.

"Our Government will encourage vaccination for girls in age group of 9 to 14 years for prevention of cervical cancer," she said, without revealing the details.

Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the cells lining the cervix, which is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that connects to the vagina. Most cervical cancers are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted infection. However, not



all women with HPV develop cervical cancer, and other factors like smoking, a weakened immune system, and certain genetic factors can increase the risk.

When diagnosed, cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable forms of cancer, as long as it is detected early and managed effectively, according to the World Health Organization.

WHO Representative to India, Dr Roderico H. Ofri, applauded the government proposals saying initiatives to upgrade existing hospital infrastructure, harmonization of maternal and child care implementation, and introduction of HPV vaccination for cervical cancer prevention will further strengthen systems and healthcare services across the

country. "WHO welcomes investments in these areas and will continue to support the Government of India in achieving health for all and meeting its disease elimination goals," he said.

Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairman and Managing Director, Medanta Medicity, lauded the emphasis on anganwadis, women's health, and the vaccination for young girls against cervical cancer.

"All these things are very important addition to what we have. But more importantly, offering of Ayushman coverage for Anganwadi workers and ASHA workers is a big move. I think that will go down very well and boost the morale of our frontline health workers," he said.

Gut microbiota influence severity of respiratory viral infection: Study

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): According to researchers from Georgia State University's Center for Translational Antiviral Research and the Institute for Biomedical Sciences, the composition of the gut microbiota determines how vulnerable mice are to respiratory virus infections and the severity of these infections.

The findings, published in the journal Cell Host & Microbe, report that segmented filamentous bacteria, a bacterial species found in the intestines, protected mice against influenza virus infection when these bacteria were either naturally acquired or administered.

This protection against infection also applied to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19. To maintain this protection, the study noted that segmented filamentous bacteria required immune cells in the lungs called basally resident alveolar macrophages.

In this study, the researchers investi-

gated how differences in specific microbial species can impact outcomes of respiratory virus infections and how they might do so, which hasn't been well defined previously.

They studied mice with discrete microbiome differences and mice differing in only the presence or absence of segmented filamentous bacteria. Viral titers in the lung were measured several days after infection and varied significantly depending on the nature of the microbiome of the different animal groups.

"These findings uncover complex interactions that mechanistically link the intestinal microbiota with the functionality of basally resident alveolar macrophages and severity of respiratory virus infection," said Dr. Andrew Gewirtz, co-senior author of the study and Regents' Professor in the Institute for Biomedical Sciences at Georgia State.

The study found that in segmented filamentous bacteria-negative mice, basally resident alveolar macrophages were quickly depleted as respiratory virus infection progressed.

Is 36-hour fasting good for your health? What experts say about Rishi Sunak's weekly routine

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Agencies): UK PM Rishi Sunak's 36-hours fasting routine at the start of the week has aroused interest of fitness-conscious or those aspiring to lose weight. Sources close to Sunak told the Sunday Times that the PM starts his rigorous fast at 5pm on Sunday and continues it till 5am on Tuesday to reset and detox his system. In this fasting window, he is allowed to have water, tea or black coffee. Sunak in a recent interview that appeared on ITV's mid-morning show on January 30 spoke about his weekly wellness routine, saying, "I wish I was as disciplined as has been reported. Like all of us, I start the week with the best of intentions and then you hit contact with reality at some point." Sunak further said that he loved his food and "eats a lot of sugary pastries the rest of the week."

What is the Monk Fast, the 36-hour fasting pattern?

Experts say Rishi Sunak's diet pattern where he fasts for 36 hours every week is popularly known as the Monk Fast and it's a kind of intermittent fasting. In combination with exercise, the fasting



pattern can help cut fat and retain body muscle mass. Not eating for 36 hours at a stretch can help facilitate the removal of damaged cells and encourages regeneration of healthy cells. It also has a positive impact on hormone regulation, as per dietitians.

Experts say the Monk fast could be especially beneficial for Rishi Sunak considering it can enhance decision-making skills and cognitive prowess. Fasting for extended periods is associated with boosting brain power.

Dr Priyanka Rohatgi, Chief Nutritionist, Apollo Hospital, sharing the benefits of the dietary pattern says it helps in weight loss, preserving lean body and also aids in regeneration of healthy cells, which has anti-ageing benefits.

"Engaging in the Monk Fast, a 36-hour fasting regimen, alongside resistance training

proves to be effective for weight loss, particularly in shedding fat while preserving essential lean body mass. This combination can contribute to a healthier body composition. The Monk Fast activates autophagy, a natural cellular process that facilitates the removal of damaged cells and encourages the regeneration of healthy cells. This mechanism not only provides antiaging benefits but also acts as a protective measure against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and neurodegenerative conditions," says Dr Rohatgi.

Dr Rohatgi says fasting for 36 hours can have positive effects on blood sugar levels and this is particularly beneficial for individuals aiming to manage or prevent conditions related to blood sugar irregularities.

Key to unlock potential

Rathour outlines the importance of being patient with the likes of Jaiswal, Gill and Iyer

VISAKHAPATNAM, Feb 1 (Agencies): The likes of Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer deserve patience amid their current poor run, said India batting coach Vikram Rathour, urging his wards to tackle England's aggression with intelligence in the second Test here.

The Indians lost the opening Test in Hyderabad by 28 runs despite having a 190-run first-innings lead. England managed to shock the home favourites with their Bazball approach as Ollie Pope scored a match-winning 196.

The second Test starts here on Friday, with India looking to draw parity.

"There are young batters in our team who have not played much Test cricket. So, we need to be a bit patient with them. Batters like (Shubman) Gill, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal and (Shreyas) Iyer will eventually start getting big scores, I'm sure of it," Rathour said.

Although Jaiswal played a knock of 80 in the first innings of his fifth Test, Gill and Iyer failed to fire, continuing their struggles in the format. While Gill has played 21 Tests, Iyer



has appeared in 13 games.

Gill hasn't scored a 50 in his last nine Test innings, while Iyer also has been off-colour.

Rathour said he expects better application from the side's batters in the second Test, where the home team will once again miss the services Virat Kohli.

"There's a difference between playing with intent and playing attacking cricket. I want them to play with intent. If there is the opportunity to score some runs, they should take it," Rathour said. "They need to decide by looking at the surface and conditions. So, the batters need to

possess that intelligence as to which is the best or safest shot on the surface," he explained.

England used the sweep shot quite well to blunt the effectiveness of the Indian spinners, but Rathour said it's not a stroke that can be added overnight to a player's repertoire.

"...you need to be prepared for that by practising it. If you add more shots to your game, it's always beneficial. We played traditionally. The strength of strong areas is going straight when it comes to using our feet. We can keep doing that, and of course, if we can add

more shots and score through the square of the wicket, that's always an addition," he said.

Sarfraz or Patidar? Rathour said it "will be tough" to pick between Sarfraz Khan and Rajat Patidar in the second Test against England.

After the first game, India faced injury concerns with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul being ruled out of the second Test.

This forced the selectors to add uncapped Sarfraz Khan, Sourabh Kumar, Washington Sundar and Rajat Patidar to the squad.

"It will be a tough choice. What value they bring to the team, of course, is that they are superb players. We have seen how well they have done in domestic cricket in the last few years," Rathour said. "On these kind of wickets, I think they can really add a lot of value to the team."

The playing XI will be finalised keeping in mind the conditions. "It (pitch) is difficult to predict. It will turn, maybe not from the first day, but eventually, it will turn. That's how the wicket looks like," he said.

Indian Davis Cup team travels to Pakistan after 60 years; Indian High Commission hosts them



ISLAMABAD, Feb 1 (Agencies): The Indian High Commission hosted the national Davis Cup team, travelling to Pakistan for the first time in 60 years, ahead of its clash against the Asian neighbours at the Islamabad Sports Complex. Geetika Srivastava,

the first woman to head the Indian High Commission in Pakistan, accorded a warm welcome to the Indian players and officials on Wednesday.

The last time an Indian Davis Cup team travelled to Pakistan was way back in 1964. The bilateral sporting

ties between the two nations have been hit due to diplomatic tension.

"It's an honour to host the national Indian team here. It's a historic occasion that an Indian team is visiting Pakistan after such a long time. All of us here wish the team well for the match against Pakistan," Shrivastava said.

The High Commission officials mingled with the players and asked questions about the game.

India and Pakistan will clash on February 3-4 in a World Group I tie. The winner will stay in Group I while the losing team will be relegated to Group II.

India have never lost a tie to Pakistan in Davis Cup history.

Ranji Trophy 2024: Prithvi Shaw returns to Mumbai squad ahead of Bengal match after recovering from knee injury

KOLKATA, Feb 1 (Agencies): In a big boost, opener Prithvi Shaw is set to make a return to the Mumbai squad in the Ranji Trophy 2024 season. Shaw was deemed fit to play again by the National Cricket Academy and was added to Mumbai's Ranji team ahead of the match against Bengal in Kolkata, that begins on February 2.

Shaw was on the sidelines from competitive cricket after he suffered a knee injury in August 2023. This happened when the youngster was representing Northamptonshire in England's domestic tournament, the One-Day Championship, against Durham. He went on to miss last year's Vijay Hazare Trophy as well as the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for Mumbai.

Shaw underwent rehabilitation with the medical staff at the NCA in Bengaluru. The 24-year-old will return to cricketing action after 6 months and will look to fine-tune his batting skills ahead of the IPL 2024. Shaw will represent Delhi Capitals in the 17th edition of the league and will look to make an impact after a quiet season with the bat last year. The Mumbai batter made his international debut for India in 2018 and represented his team in 5 Tests, 6 ODIs and 1 T20I.

Ranji Trophy's most successful side, Mumbai, would look to retain the top spot in the group stage as they take on Bengal. Shaw, with attacking prowess



at the top of the order, would look to contribute with the bat as Mumbai looks to book the quarter-final berth.

BOOST TO MUMBAI SQUAD

The Mumbai team lead Group B in the points table with 20 points, having won 3 out of the 4 games they played with 1 loss. Sarfraz Khan, who received his maiden India call-up for the 2nd Test match against England at Vizag, would not be part of the team. However, Shaw's inclusion will bolster Mumbai's batting attack as they face Bengal at the Eden Gardens on Friday.

Mumbai's updated squad for Ranji Trophy 2024 after Prithvi Shaw's return Ajinkya Rahane (c), Prithvi Shaw, Jay Bista, Bhupen Lalwani, Shivam Dube, Amogh Bhatkal, Suved Parkar, Prasad Pawar (wk), Hardik Tamore (wk), Suryansh Shedge, Tanush Kotian, Atharva Ankolekar, Aditya Dhupal, Mohit Avasthi, Dhawal Kulkarni, Royston Dias, Sylvester D'Souza.

Bazball is in England's blood, believes Crawley

VISAKHAPATNAM, Feb 1 (Agencies): England opener Zak Crawley said that most of his teammates have become better players since embracing the ultra-aggressive Bazball approach, which is way more compatible with their natural game than the traditional "take-your-time" strategy.

England are yet to lose a Test since pioneering Bazball under their New Zealand coach Brendon McCullum.

"I suppose it (Bazball) comes quite naturally as a lot of our teams are playing more aggressively. The mindset when I first came to England was to back-light or take your time and build a long innings and I didn't think that came naturally to me and a few of the others," Crawley said today. "A lot of us play a bit better under this regime," he added.

After India's loss in spin-friendly conditions in Hyderabad, there is a lot of chatter surrounding the possible nature of the



Vizag wicket. However, Crawley isn't much concerned about it.

"They're absolutely a top side in their own conditions. There are four games left, we have got to stick to what we do well and hopefully results come from there," he said.

Conditions apply England's Ben Foakes feels the Indian wickets are among the hardest for wicketkeepers as they require frequent improvisa-

tion and a tough mind prepared to deal with things occasionally going wrong.

Foakes, who made a Test comeback after 11 months, effected the stumpings of a well-set Ravichandran Ashwin and Mohammed Siraj in the first Test. He also scored 34 in a crucial 112-run partnership with the star of the match Ollie Pope (196) that gave England the decisive lead.

"In conditions like this, it's about trying to think on your feet and learn because it's not natural conditions (for me)," the 30-year-old told a website.

"I've obviously kept away a lot and kept to spinners, but I find that Indian pitches, with the variable bounce, are up there with the hardest. The more extreme the conditions you know things are occasionally going to wrong so you just have to mentally strong enough to put it out of your mind," he added.

The 30-year-old is bracing up for extreme conditions in the rest of the series as well.

"There is a good chance the next one is going to be a tough one. You're in the game, so it's nice as a keeper. It's obviously a very hard place to keep, and you're aware of that. You're going to have some tough moments or a tough day. But you'd rather be in the game than watching the ball do nothing in front of you," he added.

Hurt India eye sweeping changes in approach against England's 'Bazball' in second Test

VISAKHAPATNAM, Feb 1 (Agencies): An under-pressure and under-resourced India will need to think out of the box to counter England's fearless bunch of 'Bazballers' in the second Test beginning here on Friday.

India are seldom stretched at home but following a dramatic loss in Hyderabad, they have plenty to ponder and the absence of injured Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul has made their task tougher.

Three years ago, the mighty hosts found themselves in a similar situation having lost the opening Test to England at Chennai but bounced back to win the series.

However, the Joe Root-led side was a different breed then and this time India plan to fight-back against a team that has redefined the way Test cricket is played and defied all probability to win the series opener after conceding a 190-run lead on a turning track.

England batters, led by Ollie Pope, swept and reverse swept their way to success in the first Test, taking Rohit and his bunch by surprise, while making the most potent spin trio in the world look ordinary.

India won't have the luxury of fielding Jadeja in this game but Ashwin, four shy of the 500-wicket milestone in Tests, and Axar will need to redraw their plans to come back hard at their uber-aggressive opponents who are sure to employ the sweeping tactics irrespective of the conditions.

"It's important that we respond and come up with some plans and some strategies and see how we can make him play those shots from probably even more difficult lengths and be even more disciplined and even more meticulous with our execution," India head coach Rahul Dravid had said after the 28-run defeat last week. "I thought a little bit of our execution went off. Not by much. Credit to him (Ollie Pope), but we were a little bit off and, hopefully, in the next Test match, if we get our execution right, then I hope he makes a mistake," he added.

Kuldeep Yadav is expected to play in Jadeja's absence and it remains to be seen if India go in with only one pacer in Jasprit Bumrah and play another spinner, possibly off-spinning all-rounder Washington Sundar. Uncapped left-arm spinner Sourabh Kumar has also been added to the squad.

Not just India's lethal spinners were tested against Bazball, their batters' struggles on turning tracks also came to the fore as left-arm spinner Tom Hartley transformed a seemingly forgettable debut into a match-winning one. Rohit, perhaps, was the only frontline batter who looked assured in the second innings while the young brigade, especially Shubman Gill, were guilty of playing the turning ball with hard hands. The defensive approach of Gill, who had a breakout 2023 in the shorter formats, contributed to his downfall. With Virat Kohli set to return in the third Test, there

will be immense pressure on the likes of Gill and even Shreyas Iyer to deliver here in Vizag.

The home team batters are not as comfortable as their English counterparts in playing the sweep but they need to find a way to match the visitors' high-risk play. Rajat Patidar, who was also a part of the squad in Hyderabad, is likely to replace Rahul. After scoring a bagful of runs in domestic cricket, Sarfraz Khan has finally got the selectors' nod and would be desperate for an India cap.

However, the management will have a closer look at conditions before taking a final decision on the playing 11.

England, on the other hand, might sense a golden opportunity to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series that can severely mount pressure on the Indians.

The way Stokes used and backed his resources in the opener was a captaincy masterclass. The call to give an extended spell to debutant spinner Hartley in the first innings despite Yashasvi Jaiswal's brutal assault and learning from how Ashwin and Co. bowled spoke a lot about the leadership style of Stokes, who calls himself a great observer of the game. The tourists also have a point of concern after experienced left-arm spinner Jack Leach has been ruled out of the match because of a knee injury.

Young off-spinner Shoaib Bashir might come in place for him but that also has ruled out coach Brendon McCullum's desire to field an all-spin attack.

"If the wickets continue to spin as much as what we saw in the first Test as the series goes on, look, we won't be afraid to play all spinners or a balance of what we've got," head coach Brendon McCullum had told SEN Radio. Pacer Mark Wood had failed to make an impact in Hyderabad and the visitors might think of giving a go to veteran James Anderson or younger names in Gus Atkinson or Ollie Robinson as their accuracy can bring higher value on a slow, low pitch. The ACA-VDCA stadium has staged two Tests till date and the pitch usually favours the batters in the first innings.

England have thrown down the gauntlet with a sensational result and it remains to be seen what kind of surface India go with as they seek to draw parity.

A downright turner could backfire on the hosts, though they would be tempted to take that punt.

Squads: India: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shreyas Iyer, KS Bharat (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah (VC), Avesh Khan, Rajat Patidar, Sarfraz Khan, Washington Sundar, Sourabh Kumar.

England: Ben Stokes (captain), Rehan Ahmed, James Anderson, Gus Atkinson, Jonny Bairstow (wicketkeeper), Shoaib Bashir, Dan Lawrence, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ben Foakes, Tom Hartley, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Mark Wood.

Smooth sailing for Vishnu, books Paris berth



ADELAIDE, Feb 1 (Agencies): Asian Games bronze medalist Vishnu Sarvanan became the first Indian sailor to qualify for successive Olympics. A Subedar from the Mumbai-based Army Yachting Node, the 24-year-old secured qualification for the Paris Games by finishing 26th out of 152 participants in ILCA-7 at the World Championships here. He thus becomes the first Indian sailor to make the cut for the Paris Games.

Vishnu secured the top rank among the Asian countries. He concluded the competition with an overall score of 174. Following the standard rule, his lowest score of 49 was subtracted, resulting in a net score of 125.

The windy conditions made the race challenging. "I can't even hold my phone now, fingers have become numb, legs are destroyed. But it's all worth it. You get to go to the Olympics," Vishnu said.

Vishnu could not qualify from the

Asian Championships in Thailand in December and he took the setback in his stride. "Setbacks are always nice to have. It kept me focused," he said. "All the top-10 finishers here were in their 30s, more than 10 years older than me. I can learn from their experience. It's good for me," he added.

At Tokyo Olympics, Vishnu competed in the men's laser category and finished 20th in a field of 35. Vishnu hopes to make it to the finals at the Paris Olympics, while the ultimate target is to get a medal at Los Angeles 2028.

"In reality, a top-15 finish will be my goal, but if I make the top-10 and reach the medal race it will be very good. I know how difficult it is going to be. Let's see how it goes," he said. "For me, 2028 is the real chance where I can win an Olympics medal. I have age on my side and will have time to improve," he added.

Sailing may not be a followed sport in the country but he believes that it can be made popular by winning a medal. The sport requires heavy investment, something he could afford because his father Ramachandran Sarvanan is a retired Army officer and former sailor.

After being initially coached by Alex Dennishook, Vishnu has been trained by Milan Vujasinovic under TOPS for the last two years. "I hope I can be the one who can inspire a generation," he said.

NCC Jammu group shines in R-Day Camp 2024; Cadets, Staff receive prestigious awards

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: The National Cadet Corps (NCC) Jammu Group has once again demonstrated its commitment to excellence in the Republic Day Camp (RDC) 2024, with an impressive display of discipline and dedication that led to several commendations and medallions.

In a remarkable achievement, Cadet Rohit Sharma from MAM College Jammu and Cadet Anamika Bali from GDC Poonch have been awarded DG NCC Commendation Cards for their outstanding contributions during the Republic Day Camp.

Their leadership skills and commitment to the NCC values have been



recognized by the Directorate General of NCC. Furthermore, the Medallion winners, namely SUO Kaviya Raina from Polytechnic College Jammu and Cadet Rahul Sharma from GDC Akhnoor, have showcased exceptional skills and teamwork, earning them well-deserved accolades. The recognition doesn't stop with the

cadets; the support staff has also been acknowledged for their outstanding performance. Second Officer Arti Chopra of APS Nagrota and Permanent Instructor Havildar Balwinder Singh of 5 J&K Bn NCC have been awarded Medallions, highlighting their crucial role in shaping and guiding the cadets. These commenda-

tions account for an impressive 10 percent of participants, a testament to the commitment and hard work exhibited by the NCC Jammu Group. The NCC Battalions' meticulous selection and training process have played a pivotal role in preparing the cadets for such prestigious events. One notable highlight includes the superior

performance of Cadet Rohit Sharma, who served as the Commander of the Guard of Honour for various dignitaries, including the Vice President, Defence Minister and all three service Chiefs. This prestigious role underscores the high standards of training and leadership instilled by the NCC in its cadets.

The NCC, as an organization, takes immense pride in its role as a facilitator for young individuals to realize their dreams. The commendations and awards received by the cadets and staff are a testament to the NCC's commitment to nurturing future leaders and instilling values of discipline, leadership, and teamwork.

Streamline management of Balidan Stambh to encourage tourism: SSP

Top News Report



JAMMU, Feb 1: Col SS Pathania, President Sainik Samaj Party (SSP), JK UT expressed deep concerns on present management of Balidan Stambh, Jammu and urged Lt Governor to change and streamline the management for better upkeep/ maintenance and to be more friendly for tourism.

He said that Balidan Stambh Jammu is a unique and exquisite asset, immortalizing the memory of our army, local police, and central armed police forces, who made the supreme sacrifices, while guarding our borders and ensuring the security and sovereignty of our nation.

Present management is having dual responsibilities ie upkeep and maintenance is being looked after by Army and protection including access control is being executed by local police, he said adding that control by one agency by UT government will certainly pay great dividends in terms of maintenance, upkeep and effective monitoring.

Tourism Department must be assigned the

task to promote this beautiful memorial and also organise various cultural events in the amphitheatre already existing, he said.

Ideally located in the centre of city, huge potential exists to optimise the tourism potential and invoke the feelings of patriotism, nationalism in outside visitors and our young generation, he said adding that schools must be encouraged to visit and learn about the sacrifices made by our heroes and pay them tributes.

People of Jammu region too should play their role in promoting the venue and take their guests, to enjoy the ambience of this beautiful asset.

May Fair Schools students win medal in Speedball C'hip

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: May Fair Schools students added another to their cap. Nitik Thakur of Class 8th won bronze medal in U14 age group on Inter State Speedball Championship held recently at Delhi.

He is practicing under guidance of chief coach of India, Sunny Nanda.

He was accompanied by Sunny Nanda and Amir Koushal School Speedball Coach.

Abhey Basur, Direc-



tor May Fair Schools appreciated the efforts of Amir and specially

Sunny Nanda for preparing the students for National Level.

Avinash slams BJP over 'delay' in holding polls in J&K

Top News Report

SAMBA, Feb 1: Demanding a timeline from the BJP for holding Urban Local Bodies, Panchayat and Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Avinash Attri, Youth Leader Samba alleged the saffron party is shying away from the democratic exercise as it fears defeat.

"How long shall the people be deprived of elections to Urban Local Bodies, Panchayats and Assembly? The only reason for the delay in holding elections is that the BJP

fears defeat and its negative fallout on the next year's Lok Sabha elections," Avinash said.

Attacking the BJP over the "delay" in holding assembly elections, Avinash said the party has been deliberately shying away from the exercise for the last five years despite their "claims of mission 50 plus".

Quoting reports claiming that the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Panchayat polls will be held after the parliamentary elections next year, he said the BJP is now running away from holding elections to grassroots-level institutions.

Aryans honours Punjabi Singer Actor Gippy Grewal

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: The Punjabi Singer & Actor Gippy Grewal was honoured by Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, near Chandigarh and entire star cast of Warning-2 movie during upcoming Warning 2 movie promotion.

Gippy and other star casts of movie including Prince Kanwaljeet Singh, Jasmin Bhasin, Dheeraj Kumar, Raghveer Boli, Rahul Dev, Raj Singh Jhinjar, Harinder Bhullar, Pardeep Cheema, Seven



Chahal etc enthralled audience with the performances.

On the occasion, Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group honoured Gippy Grewal. He mentioned that

earlier also Gippy has participated in Aryans event in Chandigarh in various event. Kataria extended his best wishes to the entire Starcast for the Warning-2 movie.

Aadhar seeding camp organised by ESIC in Jammu



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: To facilitate ease of seeding and authentication of Aadhaar Numbers of Insured Persons & their family members Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Regional Office, Jammu conducted Aadhar Seeding Camp in the premises of Monalisa Stores Private Limited situated at Digiana Jammu.

Hundreds of IP's and their dependents visited the camp and availed benefit of Aadhar Seeding. The camp was closely monitored by Regional Director (In-Charge) Dushyant Pande.

He informed that holding such camps create

a more secure and supportive work environment, promoting the well-being of employees and their families.

It ensures that employees have access to medical care and financial assistance during various life events, contributing to their overall job satisfaction and productivity.

He further added that ESI Corporation, Jammu & Kashmir will regularly hold such camps in future enabling employees working in various units to avail benefits of ESI Scheme.

He further thanked Vinod Kumar Sachdeva (Director) of M/s. Monalisa Stores Private Limited for this exemplary initiative.

Maj Gen RK Sachdeva hails Ex-NCC Cadet Manju Bhat

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Maj Gen RK Sachdeva, Additional Director General (ADG) NCC had an enriching meeting with the accomplished ex-NCC Cadet Manju Bhat, who once belonged to 1 J&K (Girls) NCC Battalion, Srinagar while being a student of Vishwa Bharti School, Srinagar.

Ex-Cadet Manju Bhat's illustrious journey includes her active participation in the Republic Day Camp 1979 (RDC-79) and completion of various camps, such as ALC, BLC, RCTC, and Snow Skiing Course.

Notably, she was adjudged the best cadet in RDC and best firer in ALC, showcasing her exceptional skills and commitment.

Currently residing in Canada, Ex-Cadet Manju Bhat, a proud alumni of Vishwa Bharti School, continues to radiate enthusiasm and dynamic leadership.

Her remarkable achievements extend beyond the NCC, as she has served as the



Director/President of various organizations.

Expressing her gratitude, Ex-Cadet Manju Bhat attributes much of her success to the NCC, praising its role in shaping her current dynamic personality.

The meeting with ADG highlighted the profound impact of NCC's training on her, which continues to make significant contributions to society.

The NCC community extended heartfelt congratulations to Ex-Cadet Manju Bhat for her accomplishments and wishes her continued success in all her future endeavors.

Social Activist Keshav Chopra felicitated

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: Renowned Social Activist and Chairman Samvedna Society Keshav Chopra was on Thursday felicitated by Director Handicrafts & Handlooms Jammu Vikas Gupta for his remarkable contribution in the field of social work and humanity.

Vikas Gupta highly praised the selfless initiative taken by Keshav Chopra who has been working very hard to uplift the weaker sections. He also wished



Keshav success for his future endeavours.

Keshav Chopra appealed to the people to come and help the deprived sections of

the society. Keshav also thanked Director Vikas Gupta for appreciating his work and said that this award will motivate him to work further hard.

Kaith Biradari congrats ASI Raj Kumar on his retirement

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 1: The Jammu and Kashmir Kaith Biradari Shiromani Committee members today congratulated ASI Raj Kumar Kaith on his retirement and wished him good health, happiness and success as he moves forward.

While his close associate Kishan Lal Loria said, "As you retire, may your days be filled with the love of family, the warmth of friendship, and the beauty of new experiences."

Retiree ASI Raj Kumar thanked the Kaith Biradari members for adding to the joy of his retirement with their well wishes.

Kaith Biradari members includ-



ed Messrs Hony Captain Kamal Dass, Naib Subedar Kaku Ram, Havildar Des Raj, Rachhpal Kaith,

R.L.Kaith, Madan Raj Kaith, Birender Kaith, Naresh Kumar and Jagdish Raj.