

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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BRIEFLY

Motorcyclist, pillion rider killed in road accident

UDHAMPUR, Feb 12 (Agencies): A motorcyclist and a pillion rider died after hitting a roadside pole in Salora area on Udhampur highway in Jammu and Kashmir. Reports said two motorbike riders got injured after their motorbike skidded on the road and hit a pole on the roadside in Udhampur district. The motorcyclist were on their way to Jammu from Udhampur.

Both injured were rushed to Associated Hospital GMC Udhampur but doctors on duty there declared both brought dead on arrival, the reports added.

The deceased have been identified as Sachin (24) son of Ashok Kumar resident of Ward No. 17 Udhampur and Ricky (21) son of Balwant Raj resident of Ward No. 7 (H. No. 115) Dhar Road Udhampur.

Tarun Chugh mourns loss of Ramban fire victims

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): BJP National General Secretary and In-Charge of Jammu and Kashmir, Tarun Chugh expressed his heartfelt condolences to the family of the three sisters who tragically lost their lives in a devastating fire incident in Tajnihal Danmasta area of Ramsoo Banihal.

Chugh urged the government to provide compensation and support to the grieving family during this difficult time.

"My deepest condolences to the family of the three sisters who tragically lost their lives in a devastating fire incident last night in Tajnihal Danmasta area of Ramsoo Banihal. Urging the government to provide compensation and support to the grieving family during this difficult time," he said.

Warmer Days, Colder Nights in J&K during last 24 Hrs

SRINAGAR, Feb 12 (Agencies): Warmer days and colder nights marked the weather conditions in J&K during the last 24 hours as the night temperature remained notches below zero in Kashmir on Monday.

The Meteorological (MeT) department's

Ex-Navy personnel's release from Qatar jail reflects India's Successful diplomacy: Ashwini Choubey

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Union Minister Ashwini Choubey on Monday said the release of eight former Navy personnel from a jail in Qatar is reflective of the successful diplomacy of the Narendra Modi Government.

Choubey, who is a Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Environment, Forest and Climate change, said the development is a "happy moment" for the country as they were facing a death sentence there and "it was possible only because of Prime Minister Modi".

"All eight former navy personnel were released



from the Qatar jail which reflects the successful foreign diplomacy and the strong leadership of PM Modi. I congratulate them, their families and the country," he said.

The minister was in Jammu to distribute appointment letters to the selected candidates of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)

and other government departments. More than one lakh youths were handed over recruitment letters across the country by the Prime Minister Modi.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the function at the BSF headquarters, Choubey alleged that the opposition parties have no love

for the country and those who are involved in its security. "They only like corruption, oppression, policy of appeasement and familism, while we believe in nation first."

He said the prime minister has developed a culture in the country where 'GYAN' — G for Gareeb (poor), Y for Yuva (youth), A for Anndata (farmer) and N for Nari Shakti (women empowerment) — are the strong pillars to make the country 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

On Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's floor test, he said, "We will emerge as winners in any show of power as serving the

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LG Sinha meets delegation of Ex-MLAs belonging to Scheduled Castes



JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday met a delegation of Ex-MLAs belonging to Scheduled Castes & discussed the Administration's various efforts for community's all-round development.

The delegation also raised the issue of reservation in promotion &

other welfare issues. Lt Governor assured the delegation of appropriate action.

The delegation expressed gratitude to Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi, J&K Administration for ensuring social justice, empowerment of women, youth and socio-economic upliftment of the community.

Santosh D Vaidya to hold charge of J&K's Home Deptt



JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Government has ordered that Santosh D Vaidya, Principal Secretary, Finance Department shall hold the charge of Administrative Secretary, Home department till further orders.

Vaidya has been assigned the charge of crucial Home department after RK Goyal proceeded on central deputation.

J&K Govt orders reshuffle in Police, 16 Officers Transferred

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Monday ordered reshuffle in police by ordering transfer and positing of 16 officers with immediate effect.

According to an order, Anayat Ali Choudhary, IPS, awaiting posting upon repatriation from the Union territory of Ladakh, is posted as AIG (Procurement) PHQ.

One post of Superintendent of Police from the overall reserve shall be utilized for the drawl of the salary of the officer.

Master Popsy, Addl SP Reasi, is transferred and posted as Dy CO IR-7th Bn against an available vacancy.

Ch Iftikhar Ahmed, awaiting posting upon repatriation from the Union territory of Ladakh, is posted as

Additional SP Pulwama, against an available vacancy.

Feroz Ahmad Qadri, Dy CO IR-5th Battalion, is transferred and posted as SP PTWS Kashmir, relieving Showkat Ahmad Dar, Commandant IR-4th Bn of the additional charge of the said post.

Pardeep Kumar, Dy CO IR-2nd Battalion is

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Anand Jain posted as IGP Jammu, Nitish Kumar as IGP CID

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Home department on Monday posted senior IPS officer Anand Jain as Inspector General of Police Jammu zone upon his promotion to ADGP grade.

According to an order, senior IPS officer Nitish Kumar has been posted as IGP CID.

The order stated that the officers shall continue in the present position, with the post declared equivalent in the rank and status to that of ADGP, till held by them.

Three Spl trains to run from Jammu, Katra, Udhampur to Ayodhya

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Indian railways will be operating three special trains from Katra, Udhampur and Jammu to Ayodhya.

Official sources said that a total of three trains will be operating to Ayodhya.

The trains from Udhampur will be operating on February 16, from Jammu on February 22 and from Katra on February 27.

They said that the train number 04680 Udhampur-Ayodhya-Udhampur train will depart from Udhampur at 10:50 am on February 16.

Meanwhile, sources said that train 04610 Jammu-Ayodhya-Jammu Aastha Special will leave from Jammu at 11:55 am on January 20 and in return it will leave from Ayodhya for

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Three sisters charred to death in fire in Ramban

BANIHAL/JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): Three teenage sisters were burnt to death on Monday when a fire broke out at their home in a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, officials said.

The three-storey house in Dhanmasta-Tajnihal village, in Ukhral block, caught fire in the early hours of the day, they

said. The victims Bisma (18), Saika (14) and Saniya (11) were sleeping on the top floor and were unable to evacuate as the fire engulfed the entire house.

Their bodies were found by personnel of the fire and emergency services, the officials said, adding that the cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained.

Government employee dies after collapsing in Office

SRINAGAR, Feb 12 (Agencies): A government employee from the irrigation department lost consciousness while on duty and passed away on Sunday.

Quoting an official, Kashmir Scroll reported that one person, namely Abdul Ahad Wani, son of Abdul Razak Wani, resident of Harwan and employed in the irrigation department, fell

unconscious while on duty at Wangund Tailbal. He said that locals rushed him to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

According to locals, he suffered a heart attack. His body has been taken to his home at Sheikh Mohalla, Harwan.

Meanwhile, the police have taken cognizance and started an investigation.

7 Shanties, 4 cowsheds damaged in overnight fire mishap in Srinagar locality

SRINAGAR, Feb 12 (Agencies): At least seven shanties besides four cowsheds were damaged in a fire mishap on intervening Sunday and Monday night in Zonimar area in Soura, an F&ES official said on Monday.

The official told GNS that four single storeyed GCI sheet roofed cowsheds and seven shanties alongside heap of plastic garbage and dry grass were involved in the fire at Ali Jan Road Zonimar Soura.

"The fire was contained after hours of relentless efforts by the F&ES men assisted by the people

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Former J&K MLC Shahnaz Ganai joins BJP



NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Former Jammu and Kashmir MLC Shahnaz Ganai on Monday joined the BJP, with the ruling party's leaders lauding her work for the Scheduled Tribes and women in the region.

Ganai said the govern-

ment led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done a lot of good work for people and she has been impressed with his philosophy of 'sabka saath sabka vikas'.

This government has empowered every section of society, including those in Jammu and

Kashmir which is undergoing a "transformation", she said, lauding the development in the "new" Kashmir. People want to strengthen Modi and the BJP, Ganai added.

The former National Conference leader joined the BJP in the presence of Union minister Jitendra Singh, the Lok Sabha MP from Udhampur, and party general secretary Tarun Chugh. Ganai lauded the government for extending reservation benefits to SCs, STs and OBCs in the erstwhile state, now a Union

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Three Caught with Fake Aadhaar Cards at Jammu Airport

JAMMU, Feb 12 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir Police apprehended three people, including a woman, who were attempting to board a flight from Jammu Airport using fake Aadhaar cards.

According to reports, two of the suspects hail from Gurdaspur district in Punjab, while the third is from the Kathua district of Jammu.

Officials said that the trio tried to board

a Jammu to Leh flight using a fake Aadhaar card. While two of them successfully passed the security check, the third individual was apprehended. He had created a fake Aadhaar card using the name on the ticket but overlooked that the ticket belonged to a minor.

This raised suspicion, leading to his immediate detention by airport security.

Upon further investiga-

tion, he revealed that two others had also passed security checks using fake Aadhaar cards.

They were identified as Jeena, Charanjit Singh, and Kuldeep Kumar, all of whom are employed in Leh.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police informed that all three have been arrested, and a case has been registered under FIR no. 29 at Satwari Police Station in Jammu,

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ICICI Prudential Life Insurance launches retirement savings product – ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance launched ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings, a tax efficient pension product that enables customers to make systematic contributions and build the desired retirement corpus to lead financially independent retired lives. This unique product is also India's first product which offers customers safety of the capital invested, complimentary health check-ups and make partial withdrawals. Customers can withdraw up to 25% of the contributions made

after a period of three years enabling them to meet liquidity needs. Besides, the annual bonus, as and when declared, has the potential to further bolster the corpus and consequently the annuity.

ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings product empowers customers, upon maturity to withdraw up to 60% of the accumulated savings and receive guaranteed regular life-long pension from the balance amount, enabling financial freedom during the golden years. Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance,

said, "Retirement planning has assumed great importance with the rapidly changing family structures in the country. ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings, a tax efficient product has been designed to enable customers to make regular contributions to build the required retirement fund to be financially independent. We are cognizant of retirement planning being a long-term process and that customers' financial circumstances can change. The partial withdrawal feature of up to 25% empowers customers to meet liquidity requirements

without disrupting the retirement savings plan. This is India's first retirement planning product which offers both partial withdrawals and safety of capital invested. To ensure customers achieve their retirement planning goal, the complimentary health check-up feature which we believe will benefit customers in their planning process. Notably, ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings product provides customers' a component of guaranteed benefit and annual bonus if declared, which has the potential to augment the matu-

ity amount. Besides, customers can make a tax-free withdrawal of up to 60% of the accumulated savings on maturity and convert the balance into an annuity to receive guaranteed life-long income to be financially independent. ICICI Pru Gold Pension Savings is a testament to our commitment to empower customers to achieve their retirement aspirations. The product aligns with the Company's strategy of offering innovative life insurance solutions that cater to the evolving financial landscape and individual needs."

Kashmiri Displaced People Wing (J&K) of DPAP raises genuine demands of displaced people

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: The KDP Wing of DPAP Leaders through Shri Sanjay Dhar President, Shri Piaray Lal Pandita Chairman, Sh. Raj Kumar Ticku General Secretary, Roop Krishen Koul Vice President, Gawhar Wani Spokesperson, Daizy Dhar Mahila Wing President, Renu Razdan Vice President Mahila Wing, Naveen Gosani Youth President and others in a joint Statement have put forth the following detailed demands for earliest consideration of the Concerned Authorities:-

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Migrants is requested to advise all concerned departments to divert their attention for making proper arrangements in advance for the coming Shiv Ratri in all Camps, as well as in Non camp areas viz; Ensuring of proper regular electricity supply, water

supply, checking of markets in advance to curb rate structure, quality of essentials, arrangement of Walnut supply before Shiv Ratri by Horticulture Department, proper sanitation in Camps and so on.

P.M. Package Employees of Valley require to be provided five days special festival leave and salary in advance.

Providing of advance Ration of March in February to the migrants with sanction of five Kgs. special quote of Sugar to migrants on the eve of coming Shiv Ratri.

Constitution of a monitoring team of all Departments to check rates of essential commodities in all Camps before Shiv Ratri to its end.

Providing of bulk Police Force in Camps especially in Jagti Camp since February to March till culmination of Shiv Ratri.

Repairs and renovation of Flats on priority

basis where the condition has deteriorated after spot inspections by concerned authorities.

Deployment of electrician casual labours of Relief Organisation with Line man of Power Department as helpers to ensure regular rectification of mechanical trouble on day to day basis.

Earliest installation of Street Lights and sanctioned CCTVS in Jagti Camp in particular and in other camps in general.

Deployment of Smart City R.buses from Indera Chowk to Jagti over and above already deployed buses including a Lady Special Bus.

The Leaders have appealed the Hon'ble Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Migrants to convene a meeting of all Departments at Jagti and other Camps to assess on spot decisions for mitigation of all the problems being faced by the migrants.

Congress launches nationwide agitation to get the Agnipath scheme scrapped

Supports the 1.5 lakh candidates who were dumped after selection for the armed forces

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12 : NSUI Jammu Kashmir Launched "Jai Jawan Movement" against the 'Agnipath Scheme' here today at JKPC Office, Shaheed Chowk Jammu. President JKPC Shri Vikar Rasool Wani was the Chief guest of the Program.

The function was organized by JKNSUI President Shri Ajay Lakhotra and attended by Former National President NSUI & Member CWC Mr. Neeraj Kundan, PCC General Secretaries Narinder Gupta (Org) & Narinder Sharma,



Chairman Social Media Dept. Jatin K Raina, I/C PYC HQ Ricky Dalotra, Senior NSUI functionaries Bhavanyu Bhagat, Mehmood Kadri, Manas Gandhi, Javed Chauhan, Kamra Mubarak, Tarun Manhas and others.

Speaking on the occasion PCC Chief Vikar Rasool Wani said that

the Agnipath scheme affected a large section of society, as the armed forces would not be in a position to protect the country's vast borders, after some years. He said that country like India don't want soldiers on contract. Only regular soldiers can save the country, adding that the armed forces already

have three lakh soldiers less. After 10 years, there will be only 10 lakh soldiers in India, out of which only three lakh will be regular soldiers. This will weaken our country. We will slip into slavery again.", wani added.

He said that "Army veterans were not consulted and Agnipath is

Modi's brainwave. It has created a divide among soldiers and that's why we are today launching the Jai Jawan Mission.

The young candidates who cleared examinations but were not given appointment letters are sitting in protest at Jantar Mantar.

"We will continue the agitation till we get justice for the 1.5 lakh young individuals and the Agnipath scheme is scrapped," he said. These candidates who were selected but not recruited had earlier met Rahul Gandhi and had been assured full support from the Congress.

DPS Kathua Class-IX organizes inaugural Blessing Party for Class-X Students

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: DPS Kathua witnessed a historic moment as Class IX students organized the first-ever Blessing Party for their seniors, the Class X students. This heartwarming initiative showcased the spirit of unity and support within the school community, marking a significant milestone in the school's history.

The event commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the diya, symbolizing the auspicious beginning of the day. The talented girl band of Class

IX enthralled the audience with soulful melodies, setting the perfect ambiance for the occasion. The energy soared as the girls presented a lively Bollywood mashup dance performance, followed by an electrifying bhangra performance by the boys, showcasing the vibrant cultural diversity of DPS Kathua.

Mr. Vivek Arora, the esteemed Principal of DPS Kathua, graced the event with his presence and addressed the gathering. He extended his heartfelt blessings to the Class X students as they prepare for their upcoming board examinations.

BADC demands special skill training institutes for Poonch

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Jammu and Kashmir Border Area Development Conference (JK-BADC), a registered organization working for the welfare of border residents has urged the government of India and Jammu and Kashmir administration to set up special skill training institutes in border district Poonch wherein the local youth be provided customized special skill trainings so that they become employable.

The organization in its demand stated that though there are already government ITI

and even Polytechnic institutions in the border district but they are not able to cater the current need of the market. He also insisted for setting up same kind of institute for Rajouri district also.

Dr Shazad Ahmed Malik, Chairman of BADC and former Vice Chancellor in his demand regarding setting up special Skill training institutes in border areas said that the incumbent ITI and polytechnic institutes in the twin border districts are unable of handling the market demand.

The former VC informed that the courses offered in already

established institutions of border districts do not match the standard and quality that is capable to make the youth employable thus it is imperative that when the government jobs are limited and almost negligible for the youth of border areas, the youth be trained and provided skill so that they do not continue to wait for government jobs but start their own entrepreneurs. These special skill training institutes should also have qualified faculty not only from J & K but also from other parts of India who are expert an successful in their own field.

Substandard Bitumen being used for Blacktopping of roads in JKUT: Balvinder

Loss of State Exchequer to the tune of more than 700 crores. Demands CBI Probe

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Renowned RTI activist S. Balvinder Singh has raised alarming concerns about the usage of substandard bitumen in road construction projects across Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory (JKUT). Singh highlighted that the disregard for quality control measures has led to significant financial losses, estimated to exceed 700 crores for the state exchequer.

Singh emphasized the issuance of a comprehensive quality control manual titled "Execution and Quality Control and DLP Enforcement manual dated 03.02.2022" by the then Principal Secretary works Sh. Shailendra Kumar. However, Singh lamented the lack of follow-up and enforcement of these guidelines by the Principal Secretary, resulting in widespread non-compliance by engineers and contracting agencies.

Key violations include the continued use of penetration grade bitumen, despite its ban according to manual guidelines. Singh pointed out that this inferior quality bitumen contributes to frequent deterioration of road surfaces,



causing extensive damage and necessitating frequent repairs.

Balvinder further stated that It is very unfortunate that there is hardly any Hot Mix Plant in having Capacity of 100-120 TPH & even the most of the HMP's (Drum type) are not of 60-90 TPH Capacity. But it is has been observed that the allotments have been made to the Contractors for Drum Capacity of HMP 100-120 TPH. Which is another violation of the guidelines & huge loss to the Government exchequer. As per guideline in the manual Annexure-I, Para No: 2.11(C) Contractor must facilitate dedicated staff consisting of one qualified Engineer, Two Technical assistants for ensuring Quality Control

at Plant and must have well-equipped laboratory for testing facility at HMP site. In absence of these Contractor must not be allowed to proceed with the dispatch of bituminous mixes. But it has been observed that most of Engineers/ Hot Mix Plant holders (HMP) are violating the above mention guidelines.

Singh stated that after submitting an RTI request to the PWD(R&B) Department Jammu and lodging a complaint with Principal Secretary Sh. Shailendra Kumar, Div Com Jammu, and DC Jammu, the Chief Engineer PMGSY hastily issued a corrigendum. However, it only urged to interpret Bitumen S-90 as VG Bitumen, yet failed once again

to specify the Viscosity Grades of Bitumen to be used in different regions under their jurisdiction, in accordance with climatic conditions as prescribed in IS:73-2013 Code.

Despite clear instructions in the manual for all contractors and engineers to use VG grade Bitumen with legible and indelible markings including the manufacturer's name, month and year of manufacture, type of material, grade, and batch number, it has come to light that contractors, under the direction of engineers, are still using spray-painted markings, which is a clear violation of the manual.

Singh said though IS 73: 2013 code defines the grade of Viscosity like 10/20/30 & 40 to be

used as per the climatic condition and temperature of the area i.e VG 20 is suggested for Jammu district but Engineers have allotted works with the specification of Bitumen As VG-10 instead of VG 30.

Singh highlighted that despite substantial taxpayer funds spent by PWD (R&B) Jammu on establishing well-equipped labs at Material Testing Lab (MTL) Nagrota and DIQC Nagrota, shocking revelations indicate a lack of bitumen quality testing, especially for Penetration value and Viscosity Grade. Moreover, it has emerged that no payments to contractors have been withheld based on MTL failure reports of bitumen material, due to the collusion between engineers and contractors. This has allowed contractors to obtain satisfactory reports from private labs, fostering the execution of substandard work driven by vested interests.

In light of these grave concerns, Singh urged the Honorable Lieutenant Governor of JKUT to initiate a thorough investigation by the Crime Branch/CBI to ensure accountability, uphold quality standards, and safeguard public funds.

RGCN organizes seminar on attention, concentration & excellence

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Rajiv Gandhi College of Nursing, Chak Bhalwal Jammu organized seminar on Attention, Concentration & Excellence (ACE) on 12th. February 2024 at their campus, Chak Bhalwal Jammu. All M.Sc (N), PBSc (N) & B.Sc (N) students including Nursing Faculty were present & actively participated and updated their knowledge regarding Attention & Concentration techniques.

The informative session started at 11:00 am, in Auditorium, Ms. Priya Sharma a student of M.Sc Nursing 1st yr welcomed the Eminent Speaker and the delegates. Further the lamp lighting ceremony was performed by Ms. Deepti Jandial, Behavioural Skills Facilitator, Executive Life Coach & Psychometric Assessor) Mr. M.S. Katoch, (Chairman RGCN), Mr. Abhimanyu Katoch, (Managing Director), Mrs. Anjana Bavouria, (Director RGCN) along with faculty members

and students. The programme continued with great enthusiasm by conducting awareness session and live exercises by Ms. Deepti Jandial regarding focus sing on your thoughts and are experiencing ongoing concentration difficulties.

She conducted various activities on how to correct your accuracy & learn a few tricks to reduce the impact or accept the dips as they come. Various mindfulness activities were conducted for the students and staff.

EDITORIAL

AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)/ National Agricultural Research System (NARS) has taken several initiatives for innovation/ development of new technologies in the farm sector across the country like Genetic enhancement of plants/ animals/ fish for higher productivity, mechanization of agriculture and food system, enhancing value, safety and income through food processing, development of energy efficient technologies, farming practices, and promoting technology transfer to the farmers and other stake holders.

During the last eight years (2014-2022), ICAR has released a total of 2122 crop varieties of food crops, oil seeds, pulses, commercial crops, horticultural crops, potential crops and fodder crops which has not only stabilized the production but also increased the productivity and production of food grains in India. The new technologies developed have significantly enhanced the production of food grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, egg and fish; and addressed the farmers' specific needs despite land resource limitations, increasing weather uncertainties, and emerging more virulent pests and pathogens. These agricultural technologies helped in increasing production of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane and milk from 234.87, 17.15, 275.11, 3623.33, 146.31 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 288.03, 27.69, 376.96, 4318.12 and 209.96 million tonnes in 2021-22 respectively. The egg production increased from 78.48 billion in 2014-15 to 129.53 billion in 2021-22.

Further, the strong collaboration of ICAR with government and non-governmental agencies, academic and scientific institutions, industry, and farmers has helped Indian agriculture to sustain natural resources, improve food supply and dietary nutrition profile, and make it globally more efficient and competitive.

The course curricula are revised periodically to make it relevant to the changing requirements of the farming communities. Rural Area Work Experience (RAWEX) has been made essential part of Under Graduate Programmes in Higher Agricultural Educational Institutions which is directly related to the farmers of the respective region. Further, ICAR has been periodically revisiting Syllabi for Degree Programmes after following due process and stakeholders consultations.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has 103 research institutes including four deemed universities, which undertake teaching, research and extension activities. ICAR has also strong collaboration with the State Agricultural Universities (SAU) through 74 All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) and Network Projects for testing the technologies developed by the ICAR research institutes/ centres. Further, keeping in view the emerging threats of climate change to agricultural sector, a project 'National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA)' has also been implemented since 2011 with an aim to enhancing resilience of Indian agriculture to climate change.

ICAR has established 731 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) at district-level to refine the technological interventions suited to various agro-climatic conditions.

We need legal framework to regulate AI, deep fakes

By: Manish Tewari

The rise of deep fake videos targeting all genres of people has raised alarm bells, prompting widespread concern and an urgent need to curb the misuse of deep fake technology. The United States Senate has introduced bipartisan legislation called the Disrupt Explicit Forged Images and Non-Consensual Edits (DEFIANCE) Act. This law would make it illegal to share non-consensual, sexualised images, and videos created by artificial intelligence without the individual's consent. Similarly, the European Union's proposed Artificial Intelligence Act aims to provide strict regulations to address deep fakes. As this technology becomes more available to the public, an increasing number of countries are grappling with the dilemma of deep fakes and how to tackle this issue.

In a policy brief for the International Centre of Counter-Terrorism, entitled the 'Weaponisation of Deep Fakes Digital Deception', the far right Ella Busch and Jacob Ware stated "the words, 'deep fake', are derived from the concept of deep learning, a subset of artificial intelligence-machine learning (AI/ML). Deep learning algorithms are composed of deep neural networks, which simulate the human brain in a way that enables the AI to 'learn' from large amounts of data. Deep learning is unique from machine learning for its ability to process unstructured data, such as text and images, which make it ideal for creating deep fake videos, audio, images, or text. Deep fakes are created using a specific deep learning algorithm called a generative adversarial network (GAN). GANs, first developed by researcher Ian Good fellow in 2014, consist of two neural networks — a generator algorithm and a discriminator algorithm. The generator algorithm creates a fake image (or other form of media) and the discriminator

judges the media's authenticity. The action repeats for hours, or even days, until reaching a stable state in which neither the generator nor the discriminator can improve their performance."

In other words, deep fakes are a type of synthetic media that involves the manipulation of someone's facial appearance through deep-generative methods. Although the technique of mimicking someone's face or voice isn't new, what is revolutionary about deep fake is its reliance on Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs). GANs rely on two AI models that work in tandem. The first AI model, the forger, helps in manipulating someone's face based on the provided sample. The second AI model, the detective, scrutinises the forger's creation and, based on Face Training Data, identifies all the reasons why it's fake. The forger then makes improvements based on the inputs provided by the detective. This process of improvement continues until the detective is unable to find any difference between the real image and the generated image.

Like any technology, deep fakes have both positive and negative uses. Filmmakers are extensively using this technology to translate films, age/de-age actors, help speed film production and reduce its costs. In the field of education, deep fakes can help in creating much more innovative lessons which are far more engaging than the traditional form of learning. It can be used to re-enact historical moments; help understand human anatomy and assist in architecture. It can also be used by medical researchers to develop new ways of treating diseases without actual patients. Deep fakes have numerous benefits to offer.

On the other hand, deep fakes are extensively being used to commit crimes such as financial scams, spread misinformation, and share sexually explicit videos. According to Europol's Innovation Lab, deep fakes could

become a staple tool for organised crimes, as they can be extensively used for bullying, allowing intellectual property violation, facilitating fraudulent documents, manipulating evidence, supporting terrorism, and fostering social unrest and political polarisation. There have been reports that deep fakes were employed in the last Assembly elections to malign opponents, and if no steps are taken, they may be widespread during 2024 general elections.

This writer, himself, was a victim of a deep fake video impersonating his voice that was maliciously circulated the day before polling in the 2019 parliamentary elections. Fortunately, the impersonation was so crude and amateurish that it got caught out and exposed before it could do substantial reputational and electoral damage. Nonetheless, the deep fake did end up creating apprehensions in the minds of a certain section of the electorate.

In response to an unstarred question raised in the Rajya Sabha regarding the regulation of AI and deep fakes, the ministry of information and broadcasting stated that it currently relies on Section 469 of the IPC (forgery for the purpose of harming reputation) and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021), to address the issue of deep fakes. These rules impose an obligation on social media intermediaries to ensure the expeditious removal of prohibited misinformation, patently false information, and deep fakes. Unfortunately, these rules fail to effectively address the issue of deep fakes. Moreover, these rules are highly ambiguous and generic, lacking substantial measures to regulate deep fakes. Even the proposed Digital India Bill fails to provide any provision or principle on which the ministry intends to rely while regulating deep fakes. Thus, there exists a legal vacuum

which results in the failure of properly regulating deep fakes.

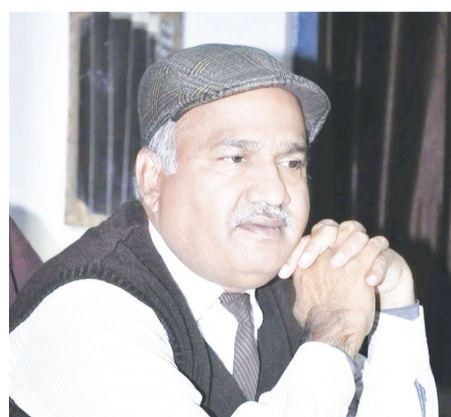
This vacuum has resulted in a rise of AI and deep fake-related crime in India. According to McAfee's survey on AI voice scam, about 47 per cent of Indian adults have experienced some form of AI voice scam which is almost double the global average of 25 per cent. Moreover, according to the UK-based Sumsud Identity Fraud Report, India has witnessed 1,700 per cent growth in the number of deep fakes. This clearly shows that India is severely unequipped and unprepared to keep pace with the rapid advances in technology.

The first Industrial Revolution fundamentally transformed the world by enabling transition from agrarian and manual labour to machine-driven manufacturing. Similarly, the AI revolution holds the potential for a comparable paradigm shift. If India wants to reap the benefits of this AI revolution, then it must ensure that it is prepared to tackle the upcoming challenges.

Europol estimates that by the year 2026, nearly 90 per cent of the online content may be synthetically generated. This shall significantly alter the way we interact with one another, consume information and spend time on the internet. Similar to the United States, and the EU, India also needs a law to tackle the rise of artificial intelligence and deep fakes.

The next Parliament should suo motu constitute a joint committee of Parliament to address this issue, and ensure that proper consultations are carried out with all concerned stakeholders. The objective should be to draft a comprehensive legislation that takes into account the perspectives of all stakeholders, and helps shape a law that would tackle the challenge of deep fakes before it becomes portentously pervasive.

Farming will be done on 'Electronic Soil'



By: Vijay Garg

The world's population is continuously increasing. And we are also seeing the consequences of climate change. It is clear that we will not be able to meet the world's food demands using existing agricultural methods alone. It is necessary to increase agricultural production through new methods. Researchers

at Sweden's Linköping University have developed 'electronic soil', which increases crop production. Researchers have developed an electrical conductor "soil" for soil-less farming, to grow crops without soil. The method is known as hydroponics. With hydroponics, food can be grown even in urban environments in a very controlled manner. Researchers have now developed an electrically conducting substrate (another surface in place of soil), suitable for hydroponic farming. This substrate is called 'e-sil'. Barley plants grown in electrically conductive "soil" grew 50 percent more in 15 days when their roots were electrically stimulated. Hydroponic farming means that plants grow without soil.

It requires water, nutrients and roots. This system enables recirculation of water, so that each seedling gets exactly the nutrients it needs. Therefore this method of agriculture requires very little water and all the nutrients remain in the system, which is not possible in conventional farming. Through hydroponics, we can make maximum use of the limited space available for farming in cities. With this technology, vertical farming can be done in multi-storey buildings and towers in cities. This way in Advance Crops being grown include lettuce, herbs and some vegetables. Generally, grains are not grown using hydroponics method, but in the study, researchers have shown that barley plants can

be cultivated using hydroponics. Electrical stimulation improves their growth rate. In this way, fast growing plants can be obtained with less resources. Electronic clay is made from cellulose, an abundantly available biopolymer. It is mixed with an electrically conducting polymer called PEDOT. Linköping The advantage of Ga researchers' "soil" is that it has very low energy consumption and there is no risk of high voltage. Hydroponic farming can help in areas where environmental conditions are very harsh and cultivable land is very little.

(Vijay Garg Retired
Principal Educational
Columnist Malout
Punjab)

National Open Day celebrated at SMVDU

Top News Report

KATRA, Feb 12: SMVDU successfully organized a day-long first edition of the National Open Day @ SMVDU.

The University opened its gate to the schools and colleges and witnessed a huge footfall of graduating students from across the Jammu and Udhampur regions, excited and eager to explore the possibilities of education in the university.

The Open Day was organized by the university to provide a chance to the school and college students to visit and experience the university first hand.

The students were provided a vivid and detailed depiction on the courses being offered and on accommodation and other facilities in the campus.

More than 250 students belonging to different academic streams, accompanied by their faculty



members participated enthusiastically in the event. The participating colleges included GDC Reasi, GDC Udhampur, Women Degree College Udhampur, Parade College Jammu, GDC Akhnoor, GDC R S Pura, GDC Paloura among others.

The programme started with the morning session at the Matrika auditorium. The Associate Dean, Alumni and International affairs, Dr. Mir Irfan welcomed the visiting students and briefly explained the purpose and importance of the event.

He urged the students to utilize the opportunity to learn about the current trends and updates on technologi-

cal advancements in the area they wish to pursue. Prof. Balbir Singh, Dean (Academic Affairs) showcased the details of the academic programmes being offered by the university and emphasized on the limitless opportunities for knowledge and career building through these programmes. Dean, Students Welfare, Prof. Raghendra Mishra gave an insight of the accommodation, cultural, sports and other related facilities provided to the students in the university campus. The Honorable Vice Chancellor, SMVDU, Prof. Pragati Kumar also addressed the guest students and faculty.

He accentuated the invaluable role of such open day events in decision making for a student's prospective career. He also assured that the university shall be very soon organizing the second edition of the event. In the afternoon session the students visited the various departments of the university, interacted with the faculty and students, inspected and queried on the ongoing research in various labs.

They were guided by the NSS volunteers of SMVDU to a tour around the hostels, library and other campus facilities. The visiting students showed immense visible exhilaration throughout the tour. During the

feedback in the evening session the students narrated their excitement and shared their enriching experience and the take away of the tour. In the end the vote of thanks was presented by the Dean, Alumni and International affairs and coordinator of the event Dr. Yugal Khajuria.

The event was very effectively coordinated by the Coordinator and Co-ordinators of the event, Dr. Ratna Chandra, Dr. Shafaq Rasool, Dr. Sakshi Arora, Dr. Mir Irfan, Dr. Ankush Raina, Dr. Gautam Narula, Dr. Vijay Kumar Sharma under the initiative and guidance of the Honorable Vice Chancellor, SMVDU, Prof. Pragati Kumar.

GDC Kathua organisee lecture on 'Journey of literature from vedic period to modern age'

Top News Report

KATHUA, Feb 12: In continuation to organising a series of interdisciplinary lectures

tion and Coordinator IGNOU Dr Ram Singh. The lecture was delivered by resource person Dr Yashpaul Sharma, Head Department of

holistic role in the personality development of the students.

The programme ended with formal vote of thanks by Prof



to enhance the knowledge of the students, today Department of Education GDC Kathua organised third lecture on the theme - Journey of literature from vedic period to modern age.

The programme started with formal welcome address by Head Department of Educa-

Urdu GDC Kathua. In his lecture he threw light on the various development aspects of literature from vedic age to modern period. He impressed upon the student to develop the habits of reading literature. He further said that literature is the mirror of society and it plays a

Anil Verma Assistant Prof Department of Education. About 120 students attended the programme.

The lecture was organised under the patronage of Principal Prof Seema Mir and supervision of Head Department of Education GDC Kathua.

DC Doda discusses issues of Ex-Servicemen at Zila Sainik Welfare Board Meeting

Top News Report

DODA, FEBRUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, chaired a meeting in the mini hall of the DC office complex to address issues and grievances concerning the ex-servicemen of the district.

Present at the meeting were officials and non-official members of the Zila Sainik Welfare Board, including the Zila Sainik Welfare Officer, Wing Commander Tirath Singh (Retd), besides ACR, SP Headquarter, Programme Officer ICDS and representative of the concerned department.

During the meeting, several concerns were brought to light, including proposals to name government educational institutes, the clock tower in Doda, and the Ganpat Bridge after the name of Martyrs of the district who sacrificed their precious lives for the nation. It was also highlighted that some prominent government assets may be named after Subidar Chuni Lal,



a recipient of the Vir Chakra, Sena Medal, and Ashoka Chakra. Other issues discussed included holding of rallies by army authorities, renovation of existing and construction of new assets, renewal of weapon licenses for ex-servicemen, permission for cricket coaching, and concerns regarding ECHS clinic facilities.

In response to the ex-servicemen's concerns, the DC assured that all issues and grievances would be addressed promptly. He specifically addressed the need for medical specialists at the ECHS clinic and promised to resolve the entry problem near ECHS clinic soon.

Additionally, he emphasized the district administration's unwavering support for army personnel and their causes, expressing

solidarity and respect. The DC sought collaboration of the Board in the promotion of "Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan" and suggested organizing fitness camps to prepare future defence service candidates.

The meeting underscored the commitment of the district administration to the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. By addressing various concerns and pledging support, the DC demonstrated a proactive approach to ensure the well-being and recognition of those who have served the nation. The collaborative efforts between the administration and ex-servicemen aim to create a supportive environment and uphold the honour of those who have dedicated their lives to the defence of the nation.

Major set back to opposite Political parties in Doda

Top News Report

DODA, Feb 12: Prominent personalities of District Doda; Chenab Rescue President & Hardcore NC Leader Mushtaq Ahmed Shiekh and his Wife Former Councillor MC Doda Ward number 1, Zareena Begum, Pharma Businessman & Congress Worker Hardeep Manhas along with hundred of people joined Bharatiya Janta Party today in Presence of J&K UT Vice President Shakti Raj Parihar, District President Doda Vijay Mohan Thakur, Parliamentary Constituency Gen Sec Org Vipan Sharma, District President BJYM Doda Ravinder Singh Thakur, Chief Spokesperson Adv. Raman Pardeep, Mandal President Doda Manjeet Pathania & other senior leaders of BJP

Mushtaq Ahmed Sheikh and His Wife Former Councillor Join BJP with Hundreds of Supporters at Party HQ in Doda. In a momentous turn of events and under Party Joining Programme, Mushtaq Ahmed Sheikh, the founder of Chenab



River Rescuer, and his wife, who triumphed in the elections for Ward Number 1 with a remarkable margin, have officially joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The ex-councillor's victory in the elections showcased the overwhelming support they garnered from the people of ward 1.

This significant step was taken at the BJP party office in Doda, with the presence and guidance of BJP State Vice President Shakti Raj Parihar, along with District President Vijay Mohan Thakur and other distinguished party members. The joining of Mushtaq Ahmed Sheikh and his wife along with hundreds of their supporters to the BJP highlights the party's commitment to the welfare of the nation & people as well.

MVD Doda conducts Road Safety Awareness Campaign

Top News Report

DODA, FEBRUARY 12: The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) organized a road safety awareness campaign across different locations in the district as part of the ongoing celebration of National Road Safety Month. The celebrations took place in Doda, Gandoh, and Gawari, aiming to educate the public about safe driving practices and the importance of road safety.

In Doda, the event was held near the district police line at Bhagwah Bus stand, with the presence of ARTO Doda. The focus was on highlighting various insurance schemes, with the Zonal Manager of J&K Bank, Doda, providing information about insurance policies for the driver community. On-the-spot forms were filled out and referred to respective bank branches. Additionally, emphasis was placed on responsible driving behavior, particularly regarding over speeding, avoiding



mobile phone use while driving, and preventing overloading, as these are significant contributors to accidents in the Chenab Valley.

In the far-flung areas of Gandoh and Gawari, Inspector Robin Parihar and MVD officials led the road safety awareness events. The gatherings attracted a large number of local inhabitants and drivers. Extensive awareness sessions were conducted, focusing on specific precautions required for driving in hilly areas. The emphasis was on understanding the unique challenges of mountainous terrain and adopting appropriate safety measures to prevent accidents.

National Road Safety Month serves as a crucial period for raising awareness about road safety across the

country. It provides an opportunity to educate individuals about safe driving habits, traffic rules, and the importance of following regulations to prevent accidents and save lives.

Driving in hilly areas presents its own set of challenges, including steep slopes, sharp curves, and unpredictable weather conditions. Drivers must exercise caution, maintain control over their vehicles, and avoid distractions while navigating mountainous roads. Adequate vehicle maintenance, adherence to speed limits, and using appropriate gear are essential for safe travel in such terrains. Additionally, staying alert to signs of landslides, road closures, and other hazards is vital to ensuring a smooth and secure journey.

Dimple protests demonstrations against PWD R&B, JMC

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Sunil Dimple president mission statehood jammu Kashmir leads a strong protest rally, demonstrations on Janipur High Court Road, against the smart city project, PWD, JMC, ERA, against the bad conditions of Jammu city, Amphalla, New Plot Janipur High Court roads & worst traffic problem in Jammu.

Addressing the protestors Sunil Dimple warned the government to immediately start the black toping and construct the main road, drains, all foot paths damaged by smart city projects, PWD R&B, JMC, for Jio, reliance cable works, otherwise people will start massive agitation.

Dimple alleged the whole traffic system has failed in Jammu city and



especially on the Janipur road.

Dimple demands LG manoj sinah has said the plan to improve the traffic scenario, is lying with the government.

He demands LG the construction of ring road and start Metro train, from Amphalla Manda to Janipur High Court, Roop Nagar, Bantalab to Akhnoor.

He demanded the Lt governor to start metro mono rail and construct an exclusive four

ways circular ring road from Amphalla manda to Janipur High Court, Roop Nagar, Bantalab, Kot Bhalwal to Akhnoor. He demanded the LG for construction of flyovers at Rehari Chungi Jewel Chowk and solve traffic problems.

He said no development took place in the west assembly constituency in the last ten years.

Dimple alleged knee deep trenches have developed on the VIP

main roads of Jammu and all the roads of Jammu and West Constituency are in very bad conditions and bikes, scooters cars accidents taking place due to trenches, khadey on the roads.

He alleged the ERA sewerage main holes have broken and the vehicle, cars, bikes fell in to the sewerage holes due to broken whole covers.

Dimple alleged the PWD R&B, JMC, have done substandard quality black toping with the guarantee of three years but the roads washed away within first rain and contractors run away.

He alleged all the roads west constituency, Sarwal, Rehari, Bakshi Nagar, Top Sherkhania, Patoli, Talab Tillo, Shakti Nagar, Krishna Nagar, Resham Ghar and people are protesting

against the PWD R&B. but no one is listening the plight of the people.

Dimple alleged the Jammu West Constituency is the most backward, dirties and undeveloped constituency of the J&K UT, and whoever visits in the localities of the constituency, heaps of garbage, dumps, deteriorated roads, JMC choked overflowing drains water of sewerage welcome the people.

Dimple urged upon LG Manoj Sinah to hold CBI crime inquiry of the funds allotted to PWD R&B and the JMC as both are doing very substandard work of drains and black topings.

The prominent market presidents addressed the demonstrations are Rajinder Bhargav, Kewal Krishen, Surinder Kumar, Vicky Dogra and many others.

GMS Ghou Manhasan organises exposure visit to food Craft Institute Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 12: To provide exposure to basic vocational skills of Hospitality and Protocol under NEP-2020, Government Middle School Ghou Manhasan organized a field visit for students of upper primary classes to Food Craft institute Nagrota Jammu. Principal GHSS Ghou



Manhasan (Cluster Head), Renuka Nagpal, flagged off the trip in presence of staff members. The faculty members of FCI Jammu aware students about various vocational and skill based courses run by the institute and provide career counselling regarding Hospitality and Protocol. The students toured the institute and visited

various departments of the institute. The trip was organized under the Vocational Education intervention of the Directorate of Samagra Shiksha JK UT. The Incharge Middle school Ghou Manhasan on behalf of school Education Department JK UT thanks Principal of institute, Jyoti Bhati for making the visit successful.

This Valentine, love gets a tad complicated as Kiran Shergill and Sabby Suri fight for Preet Baath's affection in the upcoming Punjabi movie Majnoo

Punjabi movie Majnoo is a love triangle and those giving the three dimensions to the story are Preet Baath, Kiran Shergill and Sabby Suri. The movie adds a new element to their career graphs too. It's for the first time that Preet, Kiran and Sabby are doing a romantic film. Preet, who has made a place for himself in the industry as an action hero, looks at it as an opportunity to do some comedy and show his loving side to the audience. "My character is with two women simultaneously. I can't say he is cheating on anyone but he is also aware of what he is doing, yet he is innocent." If this is sounding confusing, Preet is convinced that when you watch the movie, it will all make sense!

Directed by Suzad Iqbal Khan, who has assisted Ram Gopal Verma in the past and had only directed Hindi movies before Majnoo,

forays into Punjabi cinema. Likewise, Kiran too is a newcomer. She began her film career with this project and it's more like homecoming for her. "I am from Mohali but was living in Mumbai since 2013. I've acted in TV serials and music videos, and this is my first film. Although post-production delayed its release and in between my second film Siyasat streamed on Zee5, but I still call Majnoo my film debut." Happy team

To feature as lead in a Punjabi film is a matter of pride for Kiran. And Sabby, who too has shifted base to Mumbai, shares the same sentiments. "The director was looking for someone fair and tall to play an NRI in the film and I cleared the look test. I play the parallel lead in Majnoo and it was real fun working in this movie. Preet has such a good sense of humour that we would keep laughing while working.



Kiran is also a sweet person. There was no competition between us as lead actresses. We worked as one team."

Preet is busy showcasing multiple shades of acting by choosing diverse subjects. He says, "With each new project that I sign, I intend to bring to the

audience an actor who tries and does all kinds of roles.

In this one, they will see me doing some comedy, some serious emotions, showing internal conflicts of a young boy."

Kiran, on the other hand, is excited to be getting work in Punjabi

movies with another project in her kitty. "After almost 10 years of hard work, I've reached a point in my career where I am being offered lead roles in films. To be able to work in Punjabi gives me great satisfaction."

Mumbai calling Sabby has her mind in Mumbai, where she thinks opportunities are aplenty. "I've always wanted to be an actor. I love Punjabi films and would continue to work in them, but I also want to try Hindi cinema. I think because I was in Mumbai, I got an ad with Bobby Deol. Soon, I have a song releasing with Terence Lewis. I often get modelling assignments too. More than anything else, we can keep improving our skills as so many workshops in acting, dancing, action and more are organised in Mumbai."

Bigger plans for a better future, these actors are on their way to leave an impression with Majnoo!

Nora Fatehi says influencer culture dominates this era



Actress Nora Fatehi, who essays the role of an influencer in her upcoming theatrical movie Crakk, feels that it's the era of influencers currently. The actress along

with the star cast of Crakk spoke with the media at the film's trailer launch at a multiplex in the Andheri area of Mumbai.

About influencers on social media, the

actress said that it takes a lot to be an influencer and it's a lucrative career choice given the amount of money it brings in and the flexibility that it offers.

Since the rise of social media platforms and the advent of 4G, the content has revolutionised. Features like Reels have not just given many influencers and digital content creators, it has also given a boost to India's creative economy as every creator is finding their audience.

"It's the era of influencers. Today, every kid wants to be an influencer, it's a real job and people make a lot of money from it. But, it's not an easy job. You need to have a personality that will attract people to you. My character in the film is named Alia and she has a unique personality that adds a different dimension to the narrative," Nora said.

Produced by Vidyut Jammwal & Action Hero Films, the film, written and directed by Aditya Datt, is set to hit theatres on February 23.

Jon Bon Jovi still on road to recovery after vocal cord surgery

Singer Jon Bon Jovi has said that he's still on the long road to recovery after undergoing surgery to treat a vocal cord injury.

The Grammy-winning Bon Jovi's frontman confirmed that he had a 'major reconstructive surgery' and reflected on the impact it has had on his life during a Pollstar Live panel and a Hulu panel for the Television Critics Association.

"It's been a difficult road, but I found a doctor in Philadelphia who did something called a medialisation because one of my cords was literally atrophying", he explained in video footage taken at the event.



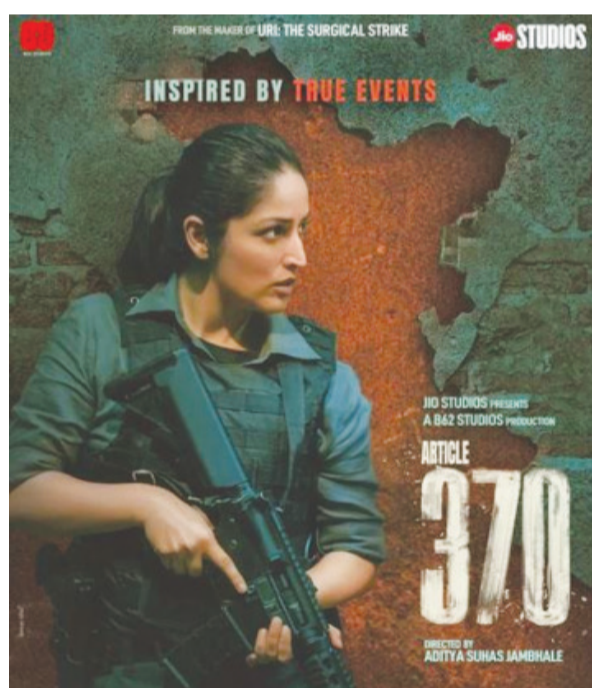
'Article 370' director: Country needs to know how this mission was carried out

Filmmaker Aditya Jambhale has shed light on the making of the upcoming film 'Article 370'. He said that the country needs to know how this mission was carried out.

'Article 370' is a genre-defining action political drama that delves into the narrative surrounding the abrogation of the article and the authentic portrayal of Kashmir's situation.

Speaking of the abrogation and 'Article 370', the director said, "This mission was carried out in a secretive way and the most important goal of the mission was that there should be no blood shed of the innocent and that's what makes it a magnum opus operation."

"So, a lot of the infor-



mation is not available in the public domain," he added.

Jambhale then shared details about the

research undertaken to ensure the film's authenticity.

"We went through months of research.

There is so much drama involved in this mission which started in 2014 and finally culminated in 2019. We had legal consultants on the set to help us with the protocols so we don't digress from the real story."

"We had to go step by step to compile all these sensitive details into a cinematic experience of two hours, which was a big challenge. The country needs to know how this mission was carried out," he said.

The filmmaker said he would be happy to say as a director and screenplay writer of the film, that they were able to share 80 per cent of information which is not available in the public domain.

"Nobody is aware of

the backstory and that is the main drama that we are able to show in this film."

Speaking of his vision for the film 'Article 370' he said, "My target as a filmmaker is that even a student in class six after watching the film should be able to tell how the Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019, and spark an interest."

"All the events in the film are authentic and portrayed realistically, which was a goal we all had for the film and we were able to achieve it," he concluded.

'Article 370' by Jio Studios and B62 Studios promises a captivating blend of adrenaline-pumping action and thought-provoking political drama.

Dakota Johnson talks about her character in superhero action film Madame Web



Hollywood actor Dakota Johnson is currently awaiting the release of her upcoming superhero action thriller film Madame Web.

As per a statement, Madame Web tells the standalone origin

story of one of Marvel publishing's most enigmatic heroines. The suspense-driven thriller stars Dakota Johnson as Cassandra Webb, a paramedic in Manhattan who develops the power to see the future... and

realises she can use that insight to change it. Forced to confront revelations about her past, she forges a relationship with three young women bound for powerful destinies...if they can all survive a deadly present.

While talking about her character in the film, Johnson said in a statement, "When you meet Madame Web in this movie, it's her origin story. It's how Cassie became Madame Web. So, we start when she's a young woman. Ultimately in the comics she ends up being an old woman who develops a neurodegenerative disease. But since we are starting way back when, she's a paramedic; she's kind of an everyday hero, she is a complex woman." Madame Web stars Dakota Johnson, Sydney Sweeney, Celeste O'Connor, Isabela Merced and Tahar Rahim

Akanksha Puri makes comeback as host of Mr & Mrs Runaway Model



Actress Akanksha Puri is set to dazzle audiences once again, this time in a new role as the host of MTV's upcoming show Mr & Mrs Runaway Model. With her transition from actor to host alongside co-host Umar Riaz, Puri proves her versatility and talent knows no bounds.

Scheduled to premiere on March 1, the show is already generating buzz, with fans eagerly counting down the days until they can witness Puri's stellar performance.

Anjali Barot is enjoying her stint in Hustlers— Jugaad Ka Khel

Amazon miniTV recently premiered its entrepreneurial drama, Hustlers- Jugaad Ka Khel, which is being applauded for bringing an inspiring narrative to the forefront. The series follows the story of Sanjay Sharma, a street-smart and determined small-town boy. The narrative revolves around his journey as he takes the risk to follow his passion, making his name in the start-up space despite constant comparisons with his family.

Anjali Barot, who essays the role of Vanshika in the series, recently shared her reason for being drawn to its storyline. She expressed, "While the story is set against the backdrop of the start-up boom in 2010, I think it truly resonates with anyone who has challenged stereotypes and dared to take the plunge to pursue their passion. That's what impressed me the most when I first read the script. Coming from a humble family



background with no film connections, quitting a secure job to pursue acting was a major decision for me. While relatives and family friends always nudged my parents to ensure that I pursued a more secure career path, it was my parents who stood by my decision. So, when I read the script, I knew I wanted to be a part of this journey."

Vishal Vashishtha, the main protagonist portraying the role of Sanjay Sharma elabo-

rated on what sets the series apart, shedding light on its intriguing narrative. "The story is unique because it goes beyond the startup, focusing on a person's journey and experiences. The series conveys that life itself is full of experiences and ideas. One has to be aware and present in the moment to identify it. And then it is followed by our perseverance, courage, and dedication to achieve the desired goal," he stated.

BJP government has given 1.5 times more jobs than preceding government did in 10 years: PM Modi

Hands over recruitment letters for government jobs to more than one lakh youngsters via video-conference during a Rozgar Mela programme

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his government had given 1.5 times more jobs in its 10 years than the previous dispensation did in the same duration.

Handing over recruitment letters for government jobs to more than one lakh youngsters via video-conference during a Rozgar Mela programme, Modi slammed the previous government for taking an inordinately long time to complete recruitment exercises and said it bred bribery.

The prime minister said his government had brought transparency and is working to ensure that recruitment is done in a time-bound manner.

Youngsters now believe that they all have equal opportunity and can find a place for



themselves in the government system through hard work and talent, he said.

The prime minister asserted that the measures taken by his government, be it a scheme for rooftop solar power for one crore homes or the massive investment in infrastructure, had

been creating a lot of employment opportunities.

With over 1.25 lakh start-ups, India is the third largest eco-system in the sector, and youngsters are launching new firms in even smaller cities, he said, adding that it is creating lakhs of jobs.

The government has extended tax rebates to start-ups and has announced a fund of Rs 1 lakh crore for research and innovation, Modi said.

Accusing previous governments of not paying due attention to the railways, he said the entire sector is amid a transformation.

"They neglected the common people's expectations," Modi said, attacking the previous governments.

On the occasion, he also laid the foundation stone of phase I of the integrated complex 'Karmayogi Bhavan' here. This complex will promote collaboration and synergy among various pillars of 'Mission Karmayogi'.

The recruits will be joining the government in various ministries and departments, according to a statement issued earlier.

Suvendu Adhikari Among 6 BJP MLAs Suspended From Bengal Assembly



KOLKATA, Feb 12 (Agencies): Six BJP MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, were suspended today after they staged protests in the House over the unrest in Sandeshkhali. Besides Mr Adhikari, Agnimitra Paul, Mihir Goswami, Bankim Ghosh, Tapasi Mondal and Shankar Ghosh were suspended for the remaining part of

the current session or 30 days, whichever is earlier.

From the beginning of the question hour, BJP legislators today raised slogans against the Trinamool Congress government for the unrest in Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district, which has snowballed into a major political controversy.

The BJP legislators squatted on the floor of the House, raising slo-

gans. Speaker Biman Banerjee then allowed Trinamool Congress MLA Sobhandeb Chatterjee to move a motion for the suspension of the BJP legislators. Subsequently, the BJP MLAs were suspended by the Speaker.

A large number of women in Sandeshkhali held protests over the last few days, alleging that local Trinamool leader Sheikh Shajahan and his "gang" captured swathes of land by force and sexually harassed them.

They demanded the arrest of Shajahan who has been absconding since last month after a team of the Enforcement Directorate that went to raid his house in an alleged ration scam was attacked by a mob.

Former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan resigns from Congress; may join BJP

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan has resigned from the Congress in a pre-election jolt to the party.

Sources close to Chavan say he will join the BJP.

Chavan is the second top Maharashtra Congress leader to resign from the party after former Union minister Milind Deora, who had joined the Shiv Sena.

Chavan is learnt to have submitted his resignation as an MLA to the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker and



may join the BJP in New Delhi. Chavan was unhappy

with the functioning of state Congress chief Nana Patole.

"DMK Stands For Dynasty, Money Swindling, Katta Panchayat": BJP Chief

CHENNAI, Feb 12 (Agencies): BJP chief JP Nadda on Monday slammed the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu as a party that stands for "dynasty, money swindling and katta panchayat (kangaroo courts)". A rich state like Tamil Nadu has poor leaders, he said during a statewide footmarch by his party in Chennai.

"Do you know the meaning of DMK? DMK stands for dynasty, money swindling, katta panchayat. Karunanidhi, Stalin, Udhayanidhi...only Stalin family. They are not ashamed of corruption. A state minister is languish-



ing in jail for 200 days and still keeps his post. What type of democracy you're having?" he said

The BJP chief was pointing to Chief Minister MK Stalin, his father and former chief minister M Karunanidhi and minister-son Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Further sharpening his attack on the DMK, a key contender in the opposition's INDIA alliance, Mr Nadda said that instead of a promised Horticulture Research Centre, DMK has established a "Corruption Research Centre". "The state's contribu-

tion can't be forgotten. DMK leadership lacks wisdom and respect for democracy," he added.

Mr Nadda, however, remained silent on AIADMK, a former ally. The AIADMK, a rival of the DMK, had snapped all ties with the BJP last year following setbacks in two consecutive elections that it had contested in alliance with the saffron party.

The BJP chief also pointed to Bharat Ratna being awarded to late agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan and said, "Tamil Nadu is special for the Prime Minister and it is the heart of the BJP leadership."

The DMK has termed Mr Nadda's criticism as "signs of jittery" with party spokesperson A Saravanan saying, "JP Nadda is frustrated that they are losing. Let them first list what have they achieved in the last 10 years."

The BJP, which neither has a prominent presence in the state nor an alliance with a major regional party, is counting on its state chief and former IPS officer K Annamalai's footmarch to rally support ahead of the national elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to participate in the outreach event later this month.

Journalist Soumya Vishwanathan murder case: Delhi High Court grants bail to four life convicts

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): The Delhi High Court, on Monday, granted bail to four convicts serving life imprisonment in the murder case of TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan.

A bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Girish Kathpalia suspended the sentence of Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Singh Malik and Ajay Kumar till the pendency of their appeals challenging their conviction and sentence.

The bench noted that the convicts have been in custody for 14 years.

The high court had on January 23 asked the Delhi Police to respond to the appeals filed by the four convicts.

Vishwanathan, who worked with a leading English news channel, was shot dead in the early hours of September 30, 2008, on Nelson Mandela Marg in south Delhi while she was returning home from work in her car.

A special court had on November 26, 2023, awarded two life terms to Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik and Ajay Kumar under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal



Code (IPC) and Section 3(1) (i) (committing organised crime resulting in the death of any person) of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

The court had made it clear

that the sentences will run 'consecutively'.

The fifth convict, Ajay Sethi, was handed down three years of simple imprisonment under Section 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) of the IPC.

It, however, set off the three-year sentence against the time Sethi had already served, noting he remained in custody for more than 14 years and underwent incarceration during the trial for offences under the IPC and MCOCA for conspiring to abet, aid, or knowingly facilitate organised crime and receiving proceeds of organised crime.

5 charred to death as car catches fire after colliding with bus on Yamuna Expressway in Mathura



NOIDA/MATHURA, Feb 12 (Agencies): Five people were charred to death on Monday as their car caught fire after a collision with a bus on the Yamuna Expressway in Mathura, police said.

The incident took place near the 117th milestone on the Agra-Noida carriageway of the expressway under the Mahavan police station limits in the

morning, a senior officer said.

"There was a collision between the bus and the Swift car. So far it has come to light that a tyre of the bus burst, it went out of control and overturned on the road. The Swift car coming from behind hit the bus and both vehicles caught fire," Mathura SSP Shailesh Pandey said.

The occupants of the bus managed to evacuate, but those in the car could not and all five were charred to death, Pandey said.

He said one of the deceased had been identified and efforts were on to contact his family.

Further legal proceedings are being carried out, the officer added.

Delhi man arrested month after killing wife, burying her body in forest

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): A 19-year-old man has been arrested more than a month after he allegedly strangled his wife to death and buried her body in a forest near Ashok Vihar in Delhi, said police today.

According to Delhi Police, Vicky murdered his wife Sapna (23) and, with the help of his brother, buried her body in the forest near Ashok Vihar in December last year. Sharing details, the police said, "The incident pertains to December 26, when Vicky, who had an argument with Sapna, first strangled her to death under the influence of alcohol and then buried her in the forest with the help of his brother."

Police said Vicky then fled from home and the incident came to light only after Sapna's mother, Savitri, lodged a missing report of both with the police.

"Almost a month after Vicky and Sapna had gone missing, Savitri lodged a missing report with the police on January 25, after which a search operation was conducted to find them. However, the police had no clues on their whereabouts," said the police.

Incidentally, on February 8, a dog got

stuck in the pit at the very place where Vicky had buried his wife's body.

"We received a PCR call that a dog had got stuck inside a pit in the jungle area. During the rescue operation for the animal, the police discovered Sapna's body," said the police.

Initially, the police did not know whose body it was but after matching several missing reports, it became clear that it was Sapna's body, after which the police started an investigation. With the help of technical surveillance and human intelligence, the police found that Sapna's husband was involved and Vicky was nabbed. According to the Delhi Police, Vicky confessed that he had murdered Sapna. Vicky said Sapna was also addicted to alcohol and that she had given birth some time ago but their child had died due to anaemia. As per the accused, after the child's death, the duo had regular fights and on December 26, the fight between them escalated and Vicky strangled her to death. The police have registered a case of murder and arrested Vicky.

A search is under way for his brother, who helped the accused bury the body.

1 Dead In Blast At Firecracker Warehouse In Kerala, 25 Houses Damaged

KOCHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): One person died and 16 others including women and children sustained injuries in a massive blast at an illegal firecracker warehouse operated from a residential area at Tripunithura near here on Monday, police said.

The condition of four injured persons is reportedly serious and they were rushed to Kalamassery Medical College from a nearby hospital for expert care.

According to the district administration, the victim was identified as Vishnu hailing from Thiruvananthapuram but other details were not available immediately.

Over 25 houses and some shops in the vicinity were severely damaged and two vehicles were charred completely in the explosion. Though the exact cause of the blast is yet to be ascertained, Fire and rescue personnel who rushed to spot said a huge cache of firecrackers brought to the warehouse was suspected to have exploded together.

A senior Fire and Rescue Department official confirmed that it was a massive blast, tremors of which were felt several km away.

He said the tremors were felt even at the local fire station and they proceeded to the

spot alarmed by the huge sound of the explosion. The blaze was soon brought under control but it had already caused heavy damage in the vicinity and surrounding areas, the officer said.

"We had no clue that a firecracker warehouse was being operated in this thickly populated area. Those who operated it did not seek any permission for the same," the Assistant Station Officer told the media.

Making it clear that the exact cause of the explosion was yet to be known, he said they were relying on the information provided by the local people who said that the mishap happened when firecrackers were unloaded to the warehouse from a vehicle.

"Local people said the warehouse was being operated in the area for some time and firecrackers were stored as part of a local temple festival. We have to verify such details. But, we had no information about its operations so far," the officer added.

Meanwhile, local residents are yet to recover from the impact of the unexpected massive explosion which shook the area.

The roofs of many two-storey buildings in the locality were found to be severely dam-

aged. Doors and windows of many houses were blown off from the wall by the impact of the explosion and cars parked in porticos were destroyed after bricks and tiles fell upon them. Even tall trees could be seen charred completely due to the fire with remnants of the blast spotted several metres away.

"We have lost everything...My house is completely damaged. There are no doors and windows...how can we stay here?" a shocked woman in the locality said.

An elderly man was seen sharing the happiness of not losing his life while a teenager boy could be seen shivering under the impact of the huge blast.

Authorities said an investigation was launched into the illegal storage of a huge cache of firecrackers in a thickly populated residential area.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Venna George gave instructions to ensure expert medical care to those injured in the blast.

The district medical officer has already taken steps to ensure necessary care to those admitted in Kalamassery Medical College and Ernakulam General Hospital, she said in a statement.

Israeli attacks kill 37 in Gaza's Rafah, many were asleep when strikes hit

Israel launched a special forces operation that freed two Israeli hostages in Rafah amid air strikes early on Monday

JERUSALEM, Feb 12 (Agencies): Israel launched a special forces operation that freed two Israeli hostages in Rafah amid air strikes early on Monday, which local health officials said killed 37 people and wounded dozens in the southern Gaza city.

An air strike was carried out to allow the forces to be extracted, he said.

The air strikes caused widespread panic in Rafah as many people were asleep when the strikes started, said residents contacted by agency using a chat app. Some feared Israel had begun its ground offensive into Rafah.

Israeli planes, tanks and ships took part in the strikes, with two mosques and several houses hit, according to residents. The Israeli military said on Monday it had conducted a "series of strikes" on southern Gaza that have now "concluded", without providing further details.

Before previous assaults on Gaza cities, Israel's military



has ordered civilians to leave without preparing any specific evacuation plan.

US President Joe Biden told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday that Israel should not launch a military operation in Rafah without a credible plan to ensure the safety of the roughly 1 million people sheltering there, the White House said.

Aid agencies say an assault on Rafah would be catastrophic. It is the last relatively safe place in an enclave devastated by

Israel's military offensive.

Biden and Netanyahu spoke for about 45 minutes, days after the U.S. leader said Israel's military response in the Gaza Strip had been "over the top" and expressed grave concern over the rising civilian death toll in the Palestinian enclave.

Netanyahu's office has said that it had ordered the military to develop a plan to evacuate Rafah and destroy four Hamas battalions it says are deployed there.

Hamas militants killed 1,200

people in southern Israel and abducted at least 250 in their Oct. 7 incursion, according to Israeli tallies. Israel has responded with a military assault on the Gaza Strip that has killed more than 28,000 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Netanyahu said in an interview aired on Sunday that "enough" of the 132 remaining Israeli hostages held in Gaza were alive to justify Israel's war in the region.

Hamas-run Aqsa Television on Sunday quoted a senior Hamas leader as saying any Israeli ground offensive in Rafah would "blow up" the hostage-exchange negotiations.

Egypt warned on Sunday of "dire consequences" of a potential Israeli military assault on Rafah, which lies near its border.

"Egypt called for the necessity of uniting all international and regional efforts to prevent the targeting of the Palestinian city of Rafah," its foreign ministry added in a statement.

Joe Biden's re-election campaign opens a TikTok account to reach young voters



WASHINGTON, Feb 12 (Agencies): US President Joe Biden's re-election campaign has joined TikTok to reach young voters ahead of the presidential election in November. The video-sharing platform owned by Chinese tech giant ByteDance is, however, under review in the US for potential national security concerns.

Some US lawmakers have long called for the app to be banned over concerns that the Chinese government could access user data or influence what people see on the app.

Last year, the Biden administration ordered government agencies to remove TikTok from federal government-owned phones and devices.

TikTok has maintained that it would not share US user data with the Chinese government and has taken sub-

stantial measures to protect the privacy of its users.

Biden campaign advisors said in a statement it would "continue meeting voters where they are", including on other social media apps like Meta Platform's Instagram and Truth Social, which is owned by former U.S. President Donald Trump.

The campaign is taking "advanced safety precautions" for its devices and its presence on TikTok was separate from the app's ongoing security review, a campaign official added.

Trump, the Republican frontrunner in the presidential race, does not have an official account on TikTok.

The video posted by the Biden-Harris HQ TikTok account made light of a fringe conservative conspiracy theory that the Super Bowl was rigged in favour of the Chiefs, in order for pop superstar Taylor Swift, who is dating Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, to announce an endorsement of Biden.

Amid rapid-fire questions asking the president to choose from one of two options, Biden was asked if he was "deviously plotting to rig the season, so the Chiefs would win the Super Bowl" or whether the Chiefs were simply just a good football team.

"I'd get in trouble if I told you," Biden joked.

TikTok used by Indonesian presidential candidates to draw young voters

JAKARTA, Feb 12 (Agencies): In an effort to woo the young voters of Indonesia, the three candidates who will contest the presidential election on Wednesday (February 14) are posting videos on TikTok, where they can be seen dancing and also answering questions in real-time during livestreamed sessions. The video-sharing platform has 125 million users in Indonesia, second only to the US.

At an Indonesian presidential campaign event, 22-year-old voter Irene Putri Aisyah was busy uploading everything she saw, from cute dances to cooking demonstrations, to the short video app.

But experts say the platform is also flooded with problematic content that attempts to manipulate young voters, who make up over half of about 205 million registered voters in the country.

In this new online battleground, Prabowo Subianto, a once-feared military man, has rebranded himself as a cuddly statesman. Videos of his awkward dance moves, reminiscent of local martial arts, have got millions of

views, inspiring others to mimic him.

When the frontrunner faced stinging barbs from rivals in a televised debate, women supporters shared videos of themselves crying for Prabowo.

Rivals Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo have also ramped up their presence on the app, answering questions in real-time during livestreamed sessions or sharing videos of heartfelt encounters with voters.

"TikTok is the most appealing app for first-time voters, so it does have a big influence as a platform to campaign and propagate election-related information," said Anita Wahid, a researcher who has worked with TikTok on issues related to online trust and safety.

Enduring Popularity During the campaign period, TikTok became Indonesians' second-most used source of information on politics, after television, according to a January survey by pollster Indikator Politik Indonesia.

"We can easily find information about Prabowo on TikTok," voter Irene said.

But experts have flagged that some of this information may be incorrect.

Endah Triastuti, a communications researcher at the University of Indonesia, says that because of such content, many young voters may not be aware that Prabowo has been forced to deny allegations of human rights abuses during his time as special forces commander.

Manipulated images and 'deepfake' videos of the candidates have also circulated widely.

TikTok says on its website its policy is to remove "harmful misinformation" and work with fact-checkers to flag or debunk it. Political ads and fundraising are also banned on the platform.

"We prioritise protecting the integrity of elections on our platform so that our community can continue to enjoy creative and entertaining TikTok experiences," a TikTok spokesperson said in an email.

Young voters prefer to see candidates create fun content, which explains the app's enduring appeal and success in this election, said researcher Anita Wahid.

Pakistan's Bilawal Bhutto, Shehbaz Sharif agree to 'save country' after 'unstable' poll results; Nawaz Sharif could be prime minister

LAHORE, Feb 12 (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari held a meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif.

The two parties have agreed "in principle to save the country from political instability".

According to a report, the PML-N would take the post of prime minister, and the posts of the President and Speaker will be set aside for its partners if an alliance is agreed upon.

Similarly, the post of deputy speaker could be given to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) or any of the Independent members joining the coalition. Besides, the PML-N may keep the finance ministry, and other ministries will be distributed among allies with mutual consultation, according to the report.

As per sources, the decision regarding the nomination for the positions of the Senate chairman and deputy chairman will be made in consultation with the allies after the Senate elections.

The leaders of two parties spoke about the overall situation of the country and political cooperation in the future, according to the statement released by PML-N president on X. Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari agreed to cooperate politically to bring the nation to political stability.

According to the statement, the PPP leadership will put forward the proposals of PML-N in the Central Executive Committee meeting. The delegation of PML-N included Azam Nazir Tarar, Ayaz Sadiq, Ahsan Iqbal,



Rana Tanveer, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Malik Ahmad Khan, Marriyum Aurangzeb and Shaza Fatima.

In a post on X, the PML-N president said, "Lahore: President PPP Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met former Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif at Bilawal House. In principle consensus on political cooperation between Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan Peoples Party. In the meeting, the overall situation of the country and the political cooperation in the future were discussed in detail. Lahore: The leaders agreed to cooperate politically to bring the country to political stability."

"The leaders of both parties agreed in principle to save the country from political instability. In the meeting, both parties consulted on the situation and discussed the proposals. PPP leadership will put forward the proposals of PML-N in the Central Executive Committee meeting. The majority of the people have given us a mandate; we will not disappoint the people, expressed the opinion of the leaders. The PML-N delegation includes Azam Nazir Tarar, Ayaz Sadiq, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana

Tanveer, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Malik Ahmad Khan, Marriyum Aurangzeb and Shaza Fatima," it added.

Meanwhile, Secretariat of the PPP Chairman stated that it was the PPP's first meeting with PML-N over the government's formation. The two parties discussed government formation.

In a post on X, Secretariat of the PPP Chairman stated, "Lahore: First official contact of Pakistan Muslim League-N with the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party for government formation. PML-N President Mian Shahbaz Sharif reached Bilawal House to seek cooperation from the Pakistan Peoples Party in government formation. President PPP Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and former Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif discussed government formation." "Azam Nazir Tarar, Ayaz Sadiq, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Malik Ahmad Khan, Maryam Aurangzeb and Shaza Fatima are included in the delegation of PML-N. Your proposal regarding cooperation in government formation will be discussed in the Central Executive Committee meeting tomorrow, PPP leader-

ship's reply to PML-N," it added.

Earlier in the day, Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P) convener, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, said that discussions during a meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders did not involve any talks regarding the formation of the next government, Pakistan-based Dawn reported.

Speaking to reporters in Karachi, Siddiqui said the polls have created a challenging situation in Pakistan and stressed that all parties must play their part in moving the country out of crisis. He said, "The stability of democracy is more important than anything else." He emphasised that no discussion has yet taken place about the formation of the government, according to the Dawn report. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said it has not yet been confirmed whether the MQM-P will get any share in the government or not.

His remarks came shortly after the PML-N released a statement saying that the two parties had reached a "principle agreement" to work together in the next government, according to Dawn report.

In a statement posted on X, PML-N leader Marriyum Aurangzeb said that PML-N and MQM-P leaders agreed on political cooperation. She noted that an in-principle agreement was reached between PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and the MQM leadership. The delegation of PML-N was led by former Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif, while MQM-P's delegation was led by Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui from MQM.

US Defense Chief Lloyd Austin "Admitted To Critical Care Unit": Pentagon

WASHINGTON, Feb 12 (Agencies): US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has been admitted to the critical care unit as he undergoes treatment for a bladder issue, the Pentagon said late Sunday, in a statement citing his doctors.

"Tonight, after a series of tests and evaluations, the Secretary was admitted into the critical care unit at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for supportive care and close

monitoring," the statement read.

Austin's hospitalization comes weeks after it emerged that the 70-year-old had kept previous hospital stays secret and had not immediately informed US President Joe Biden of a cancer diagnosis, sparking criticism as the United States faces crises in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Austin effectively vanished from the public eye for treatment for prostate cancer in



December and again in January after suffering complications from the procedure.

This time, the public was alerted around two hours after he was

sent to the hospital on Sunday afternoon, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks "assumed the functions and duties" of defense chief just before 5:00 pm

(2200 GMT), according to Pentagon spokesman Pat Ryder.

"At this time, it is not clear how long Secretary Austin will remain hospitalized," added the latest statement, attributed to Dr John Maddox and Dr Gregory Chesnut of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland.

"The current bladder issue is not expected to change his anticipated full recovery. His cancer prognosis remains excellent."

Ready to fight for victory in poll: Rishi Sunak



LONDON, Feb 12 (Agencies): British PM Rishi Sunak has said he is "totally up for the fight" of pitching his policies to the electorate to win another term for the governing Conservative Party as he prepares for a general election expected to take place in the second half of the year. In an interview this weekend, the 43-year-old British Indian leader said he had reasons to be optimistic

because the economy was "pointing in the right direction" and that the "future is going to be better".

"At the beginning of this year there is a sense that the country is pointing in the right direction," he told a newspaper. "Because economic conditions have improved, because the plan is working, you are starting to see mortgage rates come down and we have been able to cut taxes. I do believe those pressures are starting to ease and that hopefully over the course of this year, we can continue to make even more progress," he said. In a message as much for the voters as for the rebels within his own Tory ranks, the Conservative leader reiterated his plan to cut taxes for the hardworking people of the country.

Historical Bhadarwahi Festival "Kanchoth" celebrated with religious fervour in Bhadarwah

Top News Report

BHADARWAH, Feb 12: World famous Bhadarwahi Festival Kanchoth locally having aboriginal cultural significance was celebrated here today in different parts of Chenab Valley region in which people associated with Bhadarwahi linguistic affiliations took part in it enthusiastically giving due respects to the age old legacy of the Sub-Himalayan races and generations.



In rest of other parts of the country, festivity of Karvachoth is interwoven around the custom where women folk observe 12 hours long fast for the well being and long life of their husbands. Having literally different significance, yet mid winter celebrations finding little similarity with said Karvachoth, two days long festival tracing origin in the Naga cult is celebrated in Bhadarwahi culture dominated regions of erstwhile dis-

trict Doda which comes to be popularly called as Kanchoth.

Like before, festival of Kanchoth was celebrated with enthusiasm and religious fervour in erstwhile District Doda of Jammu region and as many families from the district who have migrated and are living in Jammu, also celebrated the festival with same fervour and cultural gaiety.

"In fact, the festival envisages a message for the union of two souls and the sustainability of

respect and honour for each other in the marital union of husband and wife," said Monika Sharma wife of Dr Sanjeev Kumar-a resident of Mohalla Khakhal Bhadarwah adding, "The women folk keep fast for their husbands and offer special prayers for their good health, long and healthy life."

It is to be noted that as a symbol of festivities and celebrations, the wives dedicate themselves by undergoing fast for the entire day on the name of their

husbands, visit the temples to perform special Pooja, clad in traditional marriage dress while wearing ornaments and looking like newly-wed bridegrooms. In large groups, they are seen going jointly to the temples of Lord Shiva and Parvati and offer special Pooja carrying Pooja Samagries (items) in pots (Thali).

The special feature of this festival which makes it exclusive from other related festivals is in itself unique in the entire world. "On this day when the daughter in law is adorned in wedding cloths fitted with bridegroom's jewellery is venerated none other than the mother in law. In this activity, mother in law bows and touches the feet of her daughter in law and gives her blessings to her praying for long life and fortunes of her entire family," another elderly lady Sangeeta Kotwal resident of Vasakdera told while elaborating on

the festivity adding further that people wait for snowfall on this occasion which is certainly fulfilled by Lord Shiva. "As the legend goes, it is a belief that Lord Shiva had presented snow seat (Chakla) to Parvati on this day as a gift on their wedding, so the snowfall on this day is considered as the blessing for the followers," she further stated.

This element of awe reverence is in itself a testimony to the fact that there is equal respect to the daughter in law as it is for the daughters which places Bhadarwahi culture in its peculiar sanctity and incomparable assortment of social organisation and development. The magnitude of this festival, makes the society to understand the respect, honour and dignity between husband and wife as also to other family members besides the cultural discipline among the families here in this part of land.

GDC Udhampur Organises National Pulses Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: To commemorate National Pulses Day, the Department of Botany, Govt. Degree College, Udhampur organized a poster competition among the students of the college under the patronage of worthy Principal of the college Prof.(Dr.) Romesh Gupta. The event was organised to showcase the diverse significance of pulses in agriculture, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. Students from various disciplines enthusiastically participated in the event, creating visually stunning posters that captured the essence of pulses. The theme of the event is to emphasise the role of pulses as a vital component of global food systems. The competition provided a platform for budding artists to express their creativity while raising awareness about the importance of pulses. Every poster depicted unique creativity of the students to signify the diverse aspects of pulse cultivation, highlighting their nutritional value, ecological benefits, and contributions to food security in the food chain of human beings. From vibrant illustrations of pulse varieties to informative infographics detailing their role in soil enrichment and climate



resilience, the entries demonstrated the multifaceted nature of pulse crops. The competition was adjudicated by the Judges, comprising of senior faculty members of the college viz., Dr Shobhna Sambyal, Dr Anita Sharma and Dr Firdous Ahmad Itoo. The posters were evaluated on various criteria including visual appeal, expression of content, relevance to accuracy of theme and overall impact. The first prize was won by Amit sharma of Sem IV, Second prize was secured by Himshikha of sem IV and the third prize was won by Tamanna and Sunidhi of Sem VI. The competitors fostered a healthy competition and stimulated dialogue on topics ranging from sustainable agriculture practices to innovative approaches for enhancing pulse production. While speaking on the occasion Dr. Neena Sharma, HOD (Botany) briefed the students about the ben-

efits of the pulses. She explained the students about how the pulses being leguminous plants enrich the soil with nitrogen content making it healthier and fertile for other crops, the pulses constitute a wholesome diet as they have high content of proteins along with fibres. They also contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. She motivated students to promote the growth of pulses for a healthier and prosperous society. Other members of the department including Dr Rozy Bamba, Prof. Shivani Sharma and Dr Richa Bharti also commended the participants for their creativity and dedication for promotion of awareness about pulses. As National Pulses Day celebrations came to a close, the poster competition left a lasting impression, inspiring individuals to reflect on the significance of pulses and their role in building a more resilient and nourished world.

Public of Kishtwar demands high level enquiry in Hakoo Padder accident urges CS of J&K for immediate transfer of ARTO Kishtwar

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Feb 12: While expressing deep anguish over the loss of life of three persons including newly born baby public of Kishtwar demands high level enquiry into accident of overloaded Sumo vehicle at Hakoo Padder and also urged worthy Chief Secretary Jammu and Kashmir for immediate transfer of ARTO Kishtwar who miserably failed to check the menace of overloading of vehicles and rash driving in Kishtwar.

Yesterday, a Tata Sumo Gold vehicle bearing number JK 17-7378 while on way from Gulabgarh to Hakoo Pallali met with a tragic accident near Hakoo on Machail Gulabgarh road axis. The vehicle was fully overloaded carrying a total of 15 passengers which was more than the permissible limits. Out of 15 passengers, 03 persons died and 12 others were injured, 04 seriously injured who were later shifted to GMC Jammu. The said accident has again send whirlwinds of shock waves and despair among the residents of Chenab valley and once again refreshed the memories of fatal bus accident which happened at Assar few months back in which 38 persons lost their lives. Both these heartbreaking accidents of overloading in commercial vehicles has raised eye brows and put question mark over the

fair working of traffic and transport authorities including ARTO Kishtwar since many things are left unanswered by traffic and transport authorities while taking lame excuses on one or other pretext.

The prominent personalities and public of Kishtwar have in one voice urged Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar

Dr Devansh Yadav IAS that all summum bonum and glorious achievements which he made during his tenure in public infrastructure, education sector, health and medical education, tourism, revenue and other sectors, the same focus is required be taken in case of transport department so as to minimize road accident and human fatalities. They also requested newly appointed *SSP Kishtwar Abdul Qayoom JKPS* to take strict action against traffic violators and expressed their stoic hope that the people of Kishtwar will surely be benefitted with the acumen and experience of SSP Kishtwar in the regulations and smooth traffic and transport management system in Kishtwar district.

Also, request was made to Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor UT of Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha and worthy Chief Secretary JK Shri Atal Dullo to personally monitor the issues of growing incidents of fatal road accident in Chenab region and

take some immediate necessary action to prevent road accident in erstwhile district Doda comprising of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban. Public were of the opinion that by organising few district road safety camps in recent past at main town Kishtwar and Chatroo Sub division with series of photo and video shoots the authorities of ARTO Office Kishtwar boasts of having done tremendous work but in fact they failed to achieve not an inch of the desired target since a not a single camp has been organised in the interior parts of the district like Drabshalla, Bounjwah, Sarthal, Karool, Anjole, Keshwan, Gulabgarh, Atholi, Sohal, Nagseni, Padyarna, Thakarie, Palmar, Trigam, Wani, Dangooru, Dachhan, Marwah and Warwan where cases of overloading and rash driving are reported through the general public. Why step motherly treatment is given to these areas by ARTO Kishtwar is a million dollars question. It was also said that whether organising camps at main town of Kishtwar is just a mere eye wash and main mea culpa of ARTO Office which is just to withdraw bills at rapid speed in view of end of financial year and this also speaks of sub optimal utilization of government exchequer thereby defeating the aims and objectives of capacity building camps. There is no iota of doubt that ARTO

Kishtwar and traffic authorities deployed in Kishtwar are showing lack luster approach in dealing the menace of overloading of commercial vehicles/rash driving particularly in interiors of Kishtwar district.

While our reporter Deepak Sharma also talked to *Transport Commissioner J&K Sh Rajinder Singh Tara JKAS* on phone, the worthy Transport Commissioner assured that a threadbare enquiry will be conducted in whole episode of sumo accident at Hakoo Padder in which 03 precious human lives were lost and several other injured. He also expressed his sympathy towards bereaved families and prayed for speedy recovery of injured. He further emphasized and requested Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar to issue necessary instructions not to ply vehicles on such roads which are yet not approved or given green signal for traffic / transport movements by the executing agencies and also take strict action against the defaulters. He further stated that he will also personally take stock of the whole situation and will review the functioning of traffic management and traffic road safety scenario in Kishtwar district and will take action in case if any laches are found on part of transport authorities of District Kishtwar behind Hakoo accident.

Aryans celebrates Basant Panchmi with Gaiety & Enthusiasm



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura today celebrated Basant Panchmi with full vivacity and enthusiasm at its campus. The College was decorated with yellow flowers, kites & rangoli. Everyone wore yellow, Green clothes

and Yellow sweets were also distributed among all.

After Sarswati Puja, the students participated in various competitions including kite flying, fancy dress etc organized on this day. The Kite king, Best Dress up & Basant Queen title were given to students.

This year Basant Panchmi will be celebrated on 14 February. It is to be mentioned that according to the Hindu calendar, Basant Panchmi festival falls on the fifth day (Panchami) of the Hindu month of Magha. The festival is usually considered to mark the onset of spring in India.

FROM PAGE 1

Ex-Navy personnel's release from Qatar jail reflects India's Successful diplomacy: Ashwini Choubey

people is our top priority unlike 'Thug-Bandhan' (referring to INDIA bloc) which is misleading the public. "Now is the time for a massive developmental boom and elimination of the corrupt, misanthropes, family dynasts in the country," he said in an apparent reference to the forthcoming parliamentary elections. He said the JD(U) is an old ally and friend of the BJP. "He (Kumar) deviated for a few days but returned and if anyone from a family returns, he is like any other member. We are not weakening our allies but the opposition alliance is weakening the country," he said. On opposition leaders visiting the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya after skipping the consecration ceremony on January 22, he said, "Our Constitution speaks about Ram and we have imagined a Ram-like king and a country like his kingdom. We have vowed

to strengthen democracy to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat and we are moving forward in this direction." Earlier, addressing the gathering at the Rozgar Mela, he said it was the 12th such event in the country under the leadership of PM Modi, who has provided lakhs of jobs to the unemployed youths in both private and government sectors over the years. "The situation is no different in J&K. After the abrogation of Article 370, the guns and explosives in the hands of the youth were replaced with books, computers and pens and today, we are happy to distribute job letters to the selected candidates," he said.

J&K Govt orders reshuffle in Police, 16 Officers Transferred

transferred and posted as Addl SP SIA, against an available vacancy. Sunil Kumar Kesar is posted as SP PC Doda, against an available vacancy. Prithpal Singh is posted as Dy.CO IR-7th Battalion, against available vacancy. Zafar Iqbal Nawaz, is posted as Addl. SP Handwara, against an available vacancy. Bashir Ahmad, is posted as Dy CO IR-21 Battalion, against an available vacancy.

7 Shanties, 4 cowsheds damaged in overnight fire mishap in Srinagar locality

present at the site", the official said. "During the incident, the roofing of the cowsheds and shanties was partially damaged in the incident", the official added.

Former J&K MLC Shahnaz

Ganai joins BJP

territory. "We will work together to ensure a hat-trick (of win) for Modi," Ganai said, referring to the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Modi's presence has ensured that Pakistan does not dare to foment trouble in border areas and people there live peacefully, she said. Her father Ghulam Ahmed Ganai was a minister in Jammu and Kashmir. Praising the changes in the region, Singh said over two crore tourists visited a region which earlier made news for terror acts.

Three Spl trains to run from Jammu, Katra, Udhampur to Ayodhya

Jammu on February 22. They further said that train 04606 Katra-Ayodhya-Katra will leave from Katra on February 27 at 10:25 am and on return it will leave from Ayodhya on February 29. All 22-coach trains will have stoppages at Ayodhya Cantt via Udhampur, Jammu, Kathua, Pathankot, Jalandhar Cantt and Ludhiana Cantt.

Three Caught with Fake

Aadhaar Cards at Jammu Airport

citing Sections 419, 420, 467, and 468. The investigation is underway. The tickets were initially booked by a businessman in Leh for his family but were sold to the trio at significantly reduced rates. The tickets, valued at 15-20 thousand each, were sold for four thousand each. To cut costs, they resorted to creating fake Aadhaar cards for their travel.

Warmer Days, Colder Nights in J&K during last 24 Hrs

statement said the day temperature increased across J&K during the last 24 hours as the night temperature at most places remained below normal. Srinagar had minus 3.6, Gulmarg minus 4.5 and Pahalgam minus 7 as the minimum temperature. Leh town in Ladakh region had minus 13.7 and Kargil minus 19.7 as the minimum temperature. Jammu city had 8, Katra 7.8, Batote 4.9, Bhandarwah minus 0.8 and Banihal 3.8 as the minimum temperature.

Crisis-hit SpiceJet plans to lay off around 1,000 staffers as part of cost cuts

The airline which has a fleets of 30 aircraft has around 9,000 employees

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): SpiceJet plans to hand out pink slips to at least 1,000 employees in the coming days as the airline works to significantly reduce costs and streamline operations of its depleted aircraft fleet, officials said on Monday.

Faced with financial woes, legal battles and other headwinds, the no-frills carrier might ask more staff to leave as there is excess manpower now compared to the number of planes in service. A final decision on the quantum of layoffs is expected this week, one of the officials in the know said.

The airline has around 9,000 employees and is now looking at reducing the strength by 10-15 per cent, the official said, adding that layoffs are necessary to reduce the overall



costs and annual savings could be up to Rs 100 crore.

A reduction of 15 per cent would mean around 1,350 people will lose their jobs.

The second official in the know said that layoffs are expected across departments and the final list is being prepared. People from the management and consultancy are working on chalking out the contours of letting staff leave, and all the departments have been asked to give their inputs, the official added.

There was no official

comment from SpiceJet on the proposed job cuts.

The second official explained that the airline has stopped operations on certain RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme) routes and at those stations, there is excess manpower, especially staff with lower salaries. Relocating such people will be a challenge, the official noted.

Currently, SpiceJet has a fleet of little over 30 aircraft apart from 10 planes that are on wet lease.

During a meeting with the airline's senior

officials last month, SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh emphasised the importance of judicious spending and that he will personally oversee all major expenditures.

The carrier will prioritise fleet upgrades, enhance on-time performance and cost-cutting measures will be implemented to streamline operations, according to an internal note last month.

SpiceJet, which has undergone multiple ownership changes since inception and is currently helmed by Ajay Singh, is in the process of raising funds from various investors.

On January 26, the carrier announced that it has received Rs 744 crore as the first tranche of the total Rs 2,250 crore proposed to be raised through the issuance of securities

on a preferential basis.

There were reports that there has been a delay in raising the requisite funds.

The airline has also availed funds worth around Rs 1,000 crore under the government's Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) and Singh has committed to infuse Rs 500 crore.

In recent times, SpiceJet also witnessed lessors taking legal recourse to take back their leased aircraft due to non-payment of dues.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets and the domestic air traffic is on an upward trajectory. However, SpiceJet has been struggling for some time now. In 2023, the carrier flew 83.90 lakh passengers and had a domestic market share of 5.5 per cent.

Stock market sees volatile trading in morning session

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Equity benchmark indices witnessed see-saw movements in early trade on Monday, mainly tracking mixed trends in global markets.

Opening on a positive note, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 52.48 points or 0.07 per cent, to 71,647.97 points in early trade. However, it shed the gains and fell 147.85 points or 0.21 per cent to 71,447.64 points.

Similarly, the broader Nifty rose 30.70 points or 0.14 per cent to 21,813.20 points before declining 44.60 points or 0.20 per cent to 21,737.90 points.

In the Sensex pack, Wipro, HCL, Tech Mahindra and Infosys were the major gainers while PowerGrid, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were among the laggards.

V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Finan-



cial Services, said that rising US bond yields may trigger selling from foreign institutional investors. "So, the tug of war between the bulls and the bears is likely to continue."

"Apart from positive economic cues, a major factor supporting the market is the sustained flows to the market through mutual funds... however, the frothy valuations of the broader market are a matter of concern. From the long-term perspective, safety is in large-caps," he added.

In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 and China's Shanghai Composite were trading marginally higher. Hong Kong's

Hang Seng was in the red.

On Friday, European markets closed in the negative territory while the US stocks ended on a mixed note.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.52 per cent to USD 81.76 a barrel on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) purchased shares worth Rs 141.95 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

On Friday, Sensex climbed 167.06 points or 0.23 per cent to settle at 71,595.49 points while the Nifty gained 64.55 points or 0.30 per cent to close at 21,782.50 points.

Willing to work with 'important player' Paytm: Axis Bank CEO Amitabh Chaudhry

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Arjun Chowdhry, the lender's Group Executive, noted that talks with Paytm are on, though only for the bank's 'general business and not any specific business.'

Calling Paytm an 'important player,' Axis Bank MD and CEO, Amitabh Chaudhry, on Monday stressed that the private sector lender is willing to work with the Noida-based fintech major.

Chaudhry made the remark at the launch of Axis Bank's '2023 Burungdy Private Hurun India 500,' as per Moneycontrol. Speaking at

the same event, however, Arjun Chowdhry, Group Executive, Axis Bank, said that though discussions are on with Paytm, these are for 'general business and not specific to any business.'

Subject to regulatory approval, and if the regulator (RBI) allows us to work with Paytm, of course we will work with them. They are an important player," Chaudhry said.

Chowdhry, meanwhile, highlighted: 'Discussions with Paytm are for our normal business services. Post the development that happened on January 31,

we are discussing new things.'

He was referring to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) crackdown on Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL), Paytm's banking arm, due to PPBL's 'persistent non-compliances.' The measures include a ban on accepting fresh deposits and doing credit transactions after February 29.

A recent report stated that to ensure that the fintech giant's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) remains available for use, One97 Communications Limited, Paytm's parent firm, is

focusing on the third-party payment app (TPAP) route.

To this end, the report added, Paytm aims to use three or more banks, including Axis Bank, for new virtual payment addresses (VPA) for users of its UPI services.

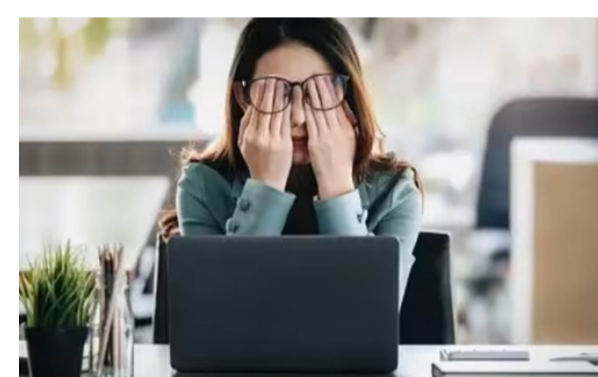
Lenders such as Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank support multiple fintechs through the third-party route, it noted.

A typical VPA a mix of the brand name of both the fintech and the latter's partnering lender. In Paytm's case, the address ends with @paytm.

Age-defying mind: Best ways to keep your brain young and healthy at workplace

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): It is no secret that maintaining an age-defying or youthful and healthy brain is essential for optimal performance and overall well-being in today's fast-paced work environments that need us to be on our toes 9 to 5, amid neck-breaking competition. If you are wondering about what holistic approaches individuals should adopt to nurture their brain health and thrive in the dynamic workplace environment, read on as we got you sorted with some expert advices.

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Sonal Arora,



Country Manager at Gi Group Holding India, shared, "We advocate for a workplace that nurtures vibrant minds. Embracing a culture of continuous learning, cross-functional collaboration and diversity is not only impactful from a business perspec-

tive for the organisation but it also helps us remain agile as individuals. Further staying physically active, making right nutrition choices and engaging in mindfulness helps to manage stress and promote mental resilience. These steps go a long

way and can help team members thrive during their professional journey. Encourage these holistic approaches to create an environment which helps to unlock innovation, boosts productivity and long-term cognitive vitality."

Discover the thrill of cricket like never before, exclusively on HT. Explore now!

According to Atul Tiwari, Chief HR Officer at Spice Money, prioritising cognitive well-being (body, mind and soul), can help one embrace the elixir of a youthful mind within the confines of your workplace.

As UPI launches in Sri Lanka and Mauritius, PM Modi calls it 'uniting partners with India'

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): On Monday (February 12), India launched its unified payments interface (UPI) system in Sri Lanka and Mauritius. RuPay card services were also introduced in Mauritius as part of this strategic initiative.

"For the three friends (India, Mauritius and Sri Lanka) in the Indian Ocean region, this is an important day," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during the launch. "We are connecting our historical ties digitally. With fintech connectivity, not just cross border payments, but cross border connectivity will also strengthen. India's upi is playing a new role - uniting partners with India," he added.

The launch will enable availability of UPI settlement services for Indian nationals travelling to Sri Lanka and Mauritius as well as for Mauritian nationals travelling to India. The extension of RuPay card services in Mauritius will enable Mauritian banks to issue cards based on RuPay mechanism in Mauritius and facilitate usage of RuPay Card for settlements both in India and Mauritius.



The virtual ceremony witnessed the participation of Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Governors of the central banks of the three countries.

"Both countries will benefit from UPI as it will increase the speed of digital transformation and will benefit tourism in our countries. Indian tourists will also prioritise destinations which accept UPI. People from Mauritius coming to India will have to buy fewer hard currencies and we can transact in our own currencies in real-time at a lower cost. Eventually we can also move towards peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions as well," the PM added.

PM Modi also said that India has a "neighbourhood first" policy and its aim is to ensure peace, security and development of the entire Indian

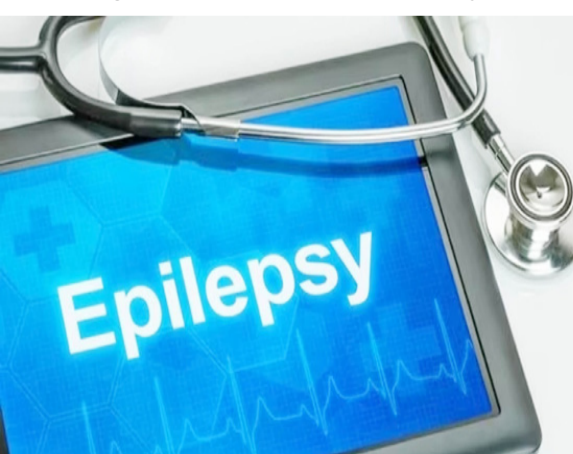
Ocean region.

"India has emerged as a leader in Fintech innovation and Digital Public Infrastructure. Prime Minister has placed a strong emphasis on sharing our development experiences and innovation with partner countries. Given India's robust cultural and people-to-people linkages with Sri Lanka and Mauritius, the launch will benefit a wide cross-section of people through a faster and seamless digital transaction experience and enhance digital connectivity between the countries," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The Centre has been pushing to export its UPI system along with the RuPay network - which is a rival to Mastercard and Visa - to a number of countries. Earlier this month, NPCI International Payments, in partnership with Lyra, a French e-commerce and payments firm, had announced the acceptance of UPI in France starting with tickets to the Eiffel Tower. Singapore, Bhutan, and the UAE, among others, also accept UPI.

International Epilepsy Day 2024: 5 myths regarding epilepsy and seizures

NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): The lack of awareness about epilepsy and seizures is a startling reality that often goes unnoticed and while many people have a general understanding of what epilepsy is, there remains a significant gap in knowledge about the



condition and its impact on individuals' lives. This International Epilepsy Day, it is crucial to recognise that epilepsy is not merely experiencing occasional seizures and can profoundly affect someone's physical, mental and emotional well-being. In an interview with Zarafshan Shiraz of

HT Lifestyle, Dr Pankaj Agarwal, Senior Consultant Neurologist and Head of the Department of Neurology at Global Hospitals in Mumbai's Parel, shared, "This lack of awareness can lead to stigmatization and discrimination against those living with epilepsy, further

complicating their everyday experiences. An inadequate understanding of epilepsy can result in delayed or improper treatment for those affected by the condition. We aim to bust myths regarding epilepsy and seizures." He dispelled the myths surrounding epilepsy and seizures -

EaseMyTrip set to build 5-star hotel near Ayodhya Ram temple



NEW DELHI, Feb 12 (Agencies): Online travel services provider Easy Trip Planners Ltd has announced that its proposal for a 5-star hotel near the newly inaugurated Ayodhya Ram temple has received in-principal nod from its board.

The hotel will be located less than 1km from the temple.

EaseMyTrip, which is one of the joint venture partners, said it will invest up to Rs 100 crore in Jeevani Hospitality Pvt Ltd, which is head the project. This will amount to 50 per cent of the total paid-up share capital of the JV Company on a fully diluted basis via equity swap, said EaseMyTrip.

"Looking ahead, we're intensifying efforts to grow our air ticketing business and enhance our presence in non-air segments such as hotels, holidays, and transportation on a global scale," Easy Trip Planners Co-founder and CEO Nishant Pitti said.

he latest development comes after the travel tech platform reported a 9.56 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 45.68 crore in the December quarter, the Easy Trip Planners, which operates under the brand, revealed in a regulatory filing. This is up from the consolidated net profit of Rs 41.69 crore in the same quarter last fiscal.

Consolidated revenue from operations during the third quarter was pegged at Rs 160.79 crore compared to Rs 136.15 crore in December 2022 quarter, it added. Total expenses stood at Rs 105.05 crore as against Rs 82.6 crore in the same period a year ago.

"We are expanding our retail footprints domestically and exploring both organic and inorganic growth opportunities. These initiatives are aligned with our ongoing commitment to driving continued growth, providing comprehensive travel solutions, and ensuring a seamless experience for our customers," Pitti added.

India have real battle on their hands, says Ian Chappell ahead of Rajkot Test against England

The Indian team will be bolstered by the return of the KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja, who have been included in the squad for the remaining three Tests.

MELBOURNE, Feb 12 (Agencies): Former Australia skipper Ian Chappell feels England under Ben Stokes will give India tough competition in the remainder of the Test series but backed the hosts to win it.

The marquee five-match series is locked at 1-1 after India and England pulled off thrilling victories in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad respectively.

"As the home side India should eventually win a tough series, but it has a real battle on their hands," Chappell wrote in his column for 'ESPNcricinfo'.

"England under the aggressive leadership of Stokes are a far cry from the poorly captained Joe Root team that capitulated against spin on their last tour of the country," he added.

In their previous tour of India



in 2021, England, playing under Joe Root, had surrendered the Test series after winning the opener.

While star batter Virat Kohli will not be part of the series, the India team will be bolstered

by the return of the KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja, who have been included in the squad for the remaining three Tests.

"India is a strong side and they also have a good leader in Rohit Sharma. They will be

greatly strengthened by Ravindra Jadeja's and KL Rahul's recovery from injury, but that Virat Kohli will not return for the rest of the series is a blow."

Shreyas Iyer has been dropped for the remainder of the series. The 29-year-old made 35, 13, 27, 29 in the opening two Tests and was guilty of not building on the starts.

"Hopefully the selectors will now stop overestimating Shreyas Iyer's batting ability and learn to value Kuldeep Yadav's wicket-taking capability more.

"This India versus England contest is shaping up as it should: a tough five-match encounter between two talented sides," Chappell added.

The third Test will begin in Rajkot on February 15.

Maxwell smashes fifth T20I ton, equals Rohit's record



ADELAIDE, Feb 12 (Agencies): Glenn Maxwell continued his imperious form as he smashed a 55-ball 120 not out to equal Indian skipper Rohit Sharma's record of most centuries (five) in the T20I format. Batting at No. 4, Maxwell unleashed his fury

against the West Indies bowlers, smacking 12 fours and eight sixes to bring up his century in 50 balls.

His knock propelled Australia to a mammoth 241/4. In reply, the hosts restricted West Indies to 207/9 to win the second T20I by 34 runs. "It was

good fun," Maxwell said. "I've always relied on my hand speed to get me out of trouble... and it really seemed to work for me today."

Maxwell's last nine international scores now read 106, 41, 201 not out, 1, 2 not out, 12, 104 not out, 10 and 120 not out. "I feel really comfortable in this format. I think over the last probably 18 months, I've felt really good about my batting and really good about my game," he said.

Maxwell was the fastest to reach five centuries, touching the landmark in 93 innings, compared to Rohit's 143 innings.

Travis Kelce was 'never in doubt' of Kansas City Chiefs winning the Super Bowl LVIII

LAS VEGAS, Feb 12 (Agencies): The Kansas City Chiefs clinched back-to-back Super Bowls with their win in Las Vegas on Monday, February 12, with a 3-yard touchdown by Mecole Hardman from a Patrick Mahomes throw at the dying moments of the game. Hardman's match-winning touchdown gave the Chiefs a close-call win over the San Francisco 49ers by a scoreline of 25-22.

Despite the high-value nature of the game with many stars in the lineup of both teams, the majority of the eager eyes were on the Chiefs' popular tight end Travis Kelce. The 34-year-old was on the wagon of a lot of hype even before taking the field on Monday, a major portion of it fuelled by his relationship with Grammy-winning singer Taylor Swift.

Kelce put in an effective performance at the Allegiant Stadium in Nevada on Monday, making 9 catches for 93 yards during the game. Irrespective of the tight nature of the game between the two sides, Kelce in his post-match comments said that he was fully confident of his side bagging the win.

"Never a doubt in my mind. We've got the best quarterback in the league, we've got the best offensive line in the league, and we've got the most determination out of any team in the NFL and you saw all that tonight," Travis Kelce said.

The tight-end emphasised that his confidence in the Chiefs was not lim-



ited to the Super Bowl, but has been the same throughout his stint with them.

"I guess at this point I take it for granted, but I know we're in every single game I've ever played in, no matter what the score is or no matter how much time is left, that guy's got magic in his right arm," Kelce said.

KELCE'S PROMISE TO GIRLFRIEND TAYLOR SWIFT

Kelce did not shy away from mentioning his girlfriend after the match, dedicating the win to Taylor Swift. Kelce mentioned that on the day Swift earned her fourth career Grammy for album of the year the previous week, he informed her that he would "have to hold up his end of the bargain and bring home some hardware, too."

The Ohio-born American footballer acknowledged the big nature of his side's win and talked about how much it means to him.

"I'm going to go ahead and enjoy this and everything that just happened," he said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I've been able to go through three times now. It gets sweeter and sweeter every time," Kelce added.

From beating cancer to firing Ivory Coast to AFCON glory: Sebastien Haller's incredible comeback story

ABIDJAN (IVORY COAST), Feb 12 (Agencies): Borussia Dortmund striker Sebastien Haller became a national hero for the Ivory Coast after guiding his side to their third AFCON title with a late goal against Nigeria in the Final on Monday, February 12.

It was Nigeria who surprised everyone after taking an unlikely lead against the hosts with a powerful header by their skipper William Troost-Ekong in the 38th minute, giving his side a vital lead at the end of the first half. However, the Elephants maintained their composure even after going behind, spearheaded by a defensive masterclass by Calvin Bassey early in the second half.

Ivory Coast's emphatic turnaround came with Franck Kessie's header from a Simon Adingra corner, sending the home crowd into a frenzy. Their winning step came in the final nine minutes of the game when Haller converted another Adingra cross, which they managed to hold on to till the end.

HALLER'S COMEBACK STORY

Even before the Elephants took the field on Monday, all eyes were on Sebastien Haller. Numerous football enthusiasts across the globe were wishing glory for the player who came



back to footballing action only a year after being diagnosed with Testicular cancer in 2022.

2022: Haller joins Borussia Dortmund from Ajax

After two massively impressive spells with Dutch club Ajax, during which he won two Eredivisie titles and emerged as his side's top UEFA Champions League goalscorer, Sebastien Haller was recruited by German club Borussia Dortmund. He was brought in as a replacement for their star striker Erling Haaland, who had recently moved to Manchester City.

Many considered this move as a significant step in his career, especially due to his impressive goalscoring record, which placed him on the Champions League record board alongside the likes of Cristiano Ron-

aldo, Lionel Messi, and Robert Lewandowski.

JULY 2022: Cancer diagnosis

Only two weeks into his stint in Germany, during Dortmund's pre-season training camp at Switzerland, Haller complained about abdominal discomfort to the team doctors and was then sent for a consultation to a urologist.

Upon diagnosis, to the worst of any human's imagination, a testicular tumour was discovered on Haller, which marked the beginning of his tumultuous recovery journey.

The 29-year-old underwent surgery to remove his entire cancerous testicle, which was followed by chemotherapy. The following two months, Haller spent the majority of his time making rounds of the hospital,

in the hope of regaining fitness and only dreaming about returning to footballing action.

January 2023: Back on the field

After being declared fit only in December 2022, Haller, who had been training as extensively as possible, travelled with his Dortmund teammates for their pre-season camp in Spain.

It was on January 10, 2023, when Haller stepped back onto the footballing field for a friendly between Dortmund and Fortuna Dusseldorf. After winning his biggest battle, the player's comeback was met with a round of applause from his teammates, the opposition and all the crowd at Marbella's Dama de Noche football centre.

February 2024: Glory

During this time, Haller successfully turned his story into an inspiration for many battling their own struggles, regardless of their location in the world.

Haller's goal in the 81st minute of the AFCON final against a strong Nigeria, marked the culmination of two comeback stories simultaneously. One was his personal journey, and the other was that of his national team, which, at the outset of AFCON 2023, appeared unlikely to advance past the tournament's group stages.

Like senior team, India U19's unbeaten campaign ends with loss to Australia in final

BENONI (SOUTH AFRICA), Feb 12 (Agencies): A fresh chapter was added to the script of Australia's domination over India in the ICC World Cup finals when they bagged the Under-19 title with a 79-run victory here.

Batting by choice, the Aussies posted a healthy 253/7 as India were forced to mount the highest chase in a youth World Cup summit clash.

But Uday Saharan's side floundered in the final step to glory, stumbling to 174 all out as the relentless Aussie bowlers led by pacer Mahli Beardman (3/15) and off-spinner Raf MacMillan (3/43) did not give them any breathing space.

This was Australia's fourth U19 title and first since 2010. In a way, they also washed away the pain of losing to India in the title matches in 2012 and 2018.

Many would view this result as a continuation of Australia's win over India in the senior World Cup last year at Ahmedabad.

Pacer Callum Vidler started Australia's victory march by packing off Indian opener Arshin Kulkarni, inducing an edge to stumper Ryan Hicks.

From that point, India simply



failed to stitch together any meaningful partnership as frontline batters, including skipper Saharan (8), Musheer Khan and Sachin Dhas (9), departed without making any real contributions.

Beardman broke through the defence of Musheer (22) with a delivery that kept a tad low. The pacer then tempted Saharan, the tournament's highest run-getter, with a slightly wide delivery and the batter's slash ended in the hands of Hugh Weibgen at point.

Beardman later dismissed opener Adarsh Singh, who was India's highest scorer on the day

with a 77-ball 47, to bulldoze the Indian batting unit with pace and bounce.

If the Indian batters could not cope with the hostility of Beardman, a disciple of the legendary Dennis Lillee, they could not counter the guile of MacMillan, Australia's lone spinner today.

MacMillan was introduced in the 20th over and he dismissed Dhas off his first ball, a regulation catch to Hicks behind the stumps. India were reduced to 68/4 then, and the ouster of the free-flowing Dhas was a body blow to their chances.

The spinner also bagged the

wickets of Aravelly Avanish and Raj Limbani, preventing any late Indian fightback. Murugan Abhishek (42 off 45 balls) tried gamely in the company of Naman Tiwari, adding 46 runs for the ninth wicket, but the task proved beyond his reach.

However, the Australian batters too can claim the right amount of credit for this triumph. No one really made a tall score but they fired collectively around Harjas Singh (55 off 64 balls) to give the Antipodeans a competitive total to defend amidst strikes by Indian pacers Limbani (3/38) and Tiwari (2/63). Harry Dixon (42 off 56 balls) and skipper Weibgen (48 off 66 balls) also made crucial contributions.

Brief scores: Australia: 253/7 in 50 overs (Harjas 55, Weibgen 48, Peake 46*, Dixon 42; Limbani 3/38, Tiwari 2/63); India: 174 all out in 43.5 overs (Adarsh 47; Beardman 3/15, MacMillan 3/43).

253 Australia's total was the highest in the final of the U19 World Cup. This is Australia's fourth U19 title and first since 2010. They avenged their losses to India in the title matches in 2012 and 2018

Suresh Raina back in yellow, to captain Uttar Pradesh team in inaugural edition of Indian Veteran Premier League



DEHRADUN, Feb 12 (Agencies): Suresh Raina will be donning yellow jersey again as he is set to return to competitive action in the inaugural edition of the Indian Veteran Premier League (IVPL). Suresh Raina will lead Uttar Pradesh team in the first edition of the Twenty20 tournament.

As Raina prepares to lead VVIP Uttar Pradesh, it marks a journey back to his roots, relishing his formative years when he first took the bat for his home state. Often regarded as one of the greatest T20 players for India, Raina is thrilled to be part of the IVPL to showcase his dynamic batting prowess and captaincy for VVIP Uttar Pradesh.

"Hello everyone. I'm Suresh Raina and I'm super thrilled to be part of the Indian Veteran Premier League. I will be playing for Team VVIP Uttar Pradesh. This is the chance to play with veteran cricketers once again," Raina said in a statement.

Joining Raina in VVIP Uttar Pradesh are former IPL champions Rajat Bhatia and former Australian all-rounder Dan Christian. With their collective experience and skill, the team is poised to make a formidable impression in the IVPL, which is slated to be played from February 23 to March 3 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Dehradun.

Organised by the Board for Veteran

Cricket in India (BVCI) and managed by 100 Sports, the IVPL is set to bring in together veterans such as Sehwag, Munaf Patel, Suresh Raina, Rajat Bhatia, Chris Gayle, Praveen Kumar, Yusuf Pathan, Herschelle Gibbs, and many more.

Praveen Tyagi, the Acting President of BVCI and Chairman of IVPL said, "The veteran cricketers will infuse a new energy for Veteran Cricket in India. We welcome Suresh Raina to the IVPL family and I'm sure fans will be happy to see him back on the field." The participating teams include VVIP Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan Legends, Red Carpet Delhi, Chhattisgarh Warriors, Telangana Tigers, and Mumbai Champions. Each team is a powerhouse of talent, as cricketers legends and regional stars come together to relive their passion for the game. Each team will have four to five iconic players from across the World.

7-day NSS Special winter camp begins at GDC R S Pura

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: A seven days special winter camp is being organized by the NSS unit of Govt. Degree College (GDC) R.S.Pura from February 12 to 19, 2024 under the Patronship of principal of the college Dr. Rajni Bhagat and supervision of Dr. Chanchal Angral, NSS PO.

Every year, special winter camp is organized with a duration of seven days in different part of the country involving NSS volunteers to undertake the scheduled activities.



In this context, a week long NSS winter special camp was inaugurated today with the theme "Youth for eco development".

The program started with the lighting of ceremonial lamp by the worthy principal of the college and other faculty members.

At the outset, the principal of the college, motivated the participants for such activities as students through such activities develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility. The programme began with the welcome address by Dr. Chanchal Angral (NSS PO).

She said the very motto of organizing such camp is to motivate the NSS volunteers to serve for the community development.

She exhorted that such camps provide unique opportunity to the NSS volunteers for group living, collective experiencing sharing and constant interaction with the community.

After the inaugural ceremony a cleanliness drive was conducted in the college campus where about 40 students participated and cleaned different areas of the college and segregated degradable and degradable waste.

The programme ended with the formal vote of thanks by Dr. Hari Singh. Prof. Shifali Abrol and Prof. Nitti Chibber also attended the programme.

Principal of the college appreciated the hard work of the NSS coordinator and volunteers.

NGO Anti Crime Bureau organizes Langar at Uttarbeni Devsthan

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: On the holy day of Moni Amavasya, Anti Crime Bureau, NGO organized Langar for the devotees at Uttarbeni Dev Sthan.

This program was organized by Anti Crime Bureau Chairman Sham Lal Gupta in which members of his team were also present.

Gupta told that his organization does social work from time to time, his organization believes in doing good work for the people and provides wedding items



to the daughters of poor families.

Gupta also thanked Police Station Incharge Ajay and the other members present were Councilor Sahil Gupta from Municipal Com-

mittee Bishnah and Team members Anchal Sharma, Rakesh Kumar, Tushar Diga, Rohit Kumar, Vansh Kumar, Ayan Mehra, Suraj Kumar and Bunty Kumar.

Pioneering Change, Fostering Hygiene, Empowering Women Together: J&K Bank

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: J&K Bank is thrilled to share a significant achievement in its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) collaboration with Live for Others - Being Helpful Foundation.

The initiative, known as "Mission R-SAP (Remove Shyness Apply Pads)," is dedicated to fostering awareness about menstrual hygiene and its taboo in society. It involves the distribution of over 500,000 sanitary napkins and the facilitation of over 100 awareness seminars across all 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

The overarching objective is to reach 50,000 individuals, challenging societal taboos surrounding menstruation in our society.

Kupwara, as the 14th district to successfully concluded this mission, witnessed the distribution of upwards of 20,000+ sanitary napkins and the delivery of three impactful aware-



ness lectures, engaging over 2020+ people.

These seminars were conducted in various government and private schools, such as Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Kupwara, Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Handwara, & Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Langate. The resource persons for these seminars included Ayesha Farhana, Gulnaz & Hafsa Arshid.

Urfee, Vice-President, Kashmir Province LFO-BHF, expressed excitement about the positive impact of 'Mission R-SAP' on women's health, and the team eagerly looks forward to

expanding the initiative to other districts.

LFO-BHF extended gratitude to the Director School Education Kashmir, C.E.O Kupwara, and the Principals of all participating schools.

Special thanks were conveyed to J&K Bank for organizing this impactful activity through their CSR fund, as acknowledged by Mr. Sheikh Shahid, member of LFO-BHF.

Key contributors during this transformative initiative included Maroofa Shah, Danish Nabi Kumar, Haadi Hameed, Seema, Sheikh Shahid, Humaira Rashid, Saqib Rehman, Dr. Tahir and others.

DC reviews working of Rural Development, Revenue Departments

Top News Report

DODA, Feb 12: Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh today reviewed the working of Rural Development and Revenue Departments, here at a meeting attended by key functionaries including the newly posted officers in the recent Administrative reshuffle by the government.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Pran Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sudershan Kumar, DPO ICDS Paramjeet Singh, ACR Sanjeev Kumar, ACD Manoj Kumar, ACP Musharaf Haff, SDMs, Tehsildars, and BDOs attended the meeting.

The DC exhorted the Revenue and RDD officers to prepare an action plan for combating illegal mining, drug abuse, bovine smuggling, encroachment of government land and other illegal, anti-social and anti-peace activities.

The DC urged the officers to put in synchronised efforts to meet the expectations of the common man, while keeping a close eye on the troublemakers.

Harvinder Singh emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability and timely public services delivery. He urged them to submit reports timely and ensure punctuality of staff in the government offices.

The DC asked officers to adopt modern technology and e-office for record-keeping/processing and services delivery.

The RDD officers were urged to ensure completion of approved works by the end of this financial year. The DC impressed upon officers to ensure their availability in their jurisdiction and take every possible step to provide seamless services to people at their doorsteps, through the online mode.

DC Rajouri reviews progress of work on JJM Works

283 schemes nearing completion



Top News Report

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Om Prakash Bhagat today chaired a meeting to assess the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission schemes, aiming to ensure clean drinking water access to rural communities.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the crucial aspects of high-quality work, timely project completion, and effective supervision to achieve the goals of the Jal Jeevan Mission. The discussion highlighted significant advancements in Rajouri, with 298 JJM schemes having 660 components with estimated cost of Rs 1974.77 cr have been sanctioned in the district.

Regarding component-wise status of the implementation of the JJM works, it was informed that out of 205 borewells, the work on 196 borewells is completed. As for the dugwells, out of 24, work on 2 is completed, while the rest are in progress. Additionally, out of 107 rapid sand filtration plants, work on 99 has been initiated. Furthermore, under Overhead Tanks (OHTs), out of 9, 5 have been completed.

To accelerate the implementation of these schemes, the Deputy Commissioner directed officers to adopt a results-driven approach, adhering to strict timelines. Through focused efforts and dedicated work, the mission is rapidly transforming into a reality, promising a healthier and happier

life for the residents of the region.

For the schemes where the work has not been started yet, the Deputy Commissioner directed officers to promptly address issues hindering the initiation of work on such schemes. Ensuring a swift resolution, he emphasized the need for immediate action to kickstart the projects at the earliest.

The DC emphasized the need for a holistic approach towards water management, emphasizing that it is not just about providing access to clean drinking water but also about preserving and sustainably utilizing these vital resources.

This meeting was a testament to the commitment of the District Administration to implementing the Jal Jeevan

Mission effectively, ensuring that rural areas have access to a basic necessity - clean drinking water.

Overall the meeting was a constructive platform for officers to share their experiences, exchange ideas, and find solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission. The Deputy Commissioner directed them to continue working with dedication and commitment to achieve the mission's objectives.

CPO, Mohammad Khurshid; SE Hydraulics, Bharam Jyoti Sharma; XEN Jal Shakti Nowshera, Vipin Kumar; EXEN Jal Shakti Mechanical, Manoj Gupta and AEEs of the Jal Shakti Department attended the meeting.

BJP can't befool farmers, youths & women across the country with 'Election Jumla Guarantees': AAP-J&K

Top News Report

The Sr. AAP leaders, S/Sh. Ram Singh Chauhan, Kuldeep Kumar Rao, Romesh Lal Bhagat & Omparkash Sharma, in a joint statement issued here have expressed great wonder and astonishment as to how some prominent leaders of ruling dispensation, used to call as "MUFT KI REWARI" the welfare steps of Arvind Kejriwal for Delhi people and later on for PUNJAB people, are now openly promising & doling out subsidized LPG cylinder, electricity & water, "Muft Ka Rashan" for 5 years, from January, 2024, etc forgetting that same leaders criticized Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal for free electricity, world class health care for all, free bus fare for women, world class education for all, 4-DHAM free YATRA for Senior citizens etc etc.

The AAP leaders further said that shame on those who once criticized Kejriwal are now following his foot prints clearly establishing that Delhi Model of

Governance, is most beneficial for the welfare of general masses and that of BJP promises LPG cylinders @ Rs 500 to the people in poll bound states, why don't they implement the same in 10 other states they rule in the country the AAP leaders asked, otherwise it can safely be presumed that it is another JUMLA they are accustomed of throwing very now & then just to befool the masses particularly at the occasion of general elections, the AAP leaders maintained. They further said that people of the country are now fed up with the false promises & JUMLAS of ruling Party leaders especially Prime Minister & also asked about the Modi's MSP guarantee on all crops? & that countryman has virtually decided to teach them a lesson in times to come. The country is being dragged towards unitary type of government & that is why all other leaders of BJP are missing in the print & electronic media and only one face is being given prominence under a calculated plan which



is harmful and dangerous for the democracy and unity & integrity of the country, the AAP leaders cautioned. The AAP leaders further questioned that all the promises made to the countrymen by Modi or his government have turned futile & that nobody is ready to trust his so called guarantees, now called "JUMLAS", as Mr. Modi thumping his 56 inch, in a public meeting in BHOPAL had openly accused Ajit Pawar of Maharashtra of engulfing 70,000 crores and strangely he made him Dy. Chief Minister the other day; the AAP leaders wondered & asked about Modi Ji, s MSP Guarantee? Where as it is Mr. Kejriwal who founded the culture of public guarantees in Delhi as also

Punjab & has proved as synonyms before the masses and that is why there is no taker of Modi washing Powder in Delhi UT, MCD or Punjab, they claimed.

They further said that the slashing of LPG prices by Rs 200/= per cylinder as a gift to women folk on the eve of RAKSHAS BANDHAN since 2014, the AAP leaders, termed it as fear of huge public resentment and describe it as another trick to hoodwink common countrymen to fall in the trap of Bhartya Jhoot Party (BJP). They further said that entire countrymen are now awakened & know about the JUMLAS of ruling dispensation, as per renowned economists, the increase in the prices of LPG from Rs. 410/= per cylinder

in 2014 to Rs. 1150/= in 2023, has added Rs.8,35,000 crores and now sensing the mood of common masses rebate of Rs.200/= per cylinder is nothing short of a joke but direct attempt to befool the masses and cautioned the public not to fall into this trap & forecast that more such "Drama Baazi" shall be seen in new next few days in view of Lok Sabha elections in the country. The AAP leaders further said that as against 8,35,000 crores collected on account of increase in the prices of LPG they have already declared as loan of Rs. 12,00,000 crores as NPA advanced to their Industrialist friends, they maintained, not to talk of granting MSP to farmers or granting 2 crore jobs to unemployed & highly educated youths per year since 2014 or decreasing GST on Atta, rice, milk, curd, edible oil etc etc maintaining that their countdown has already begun since back in HP, Karnatka, Delhi, Punjab & MCD elections, the AAP leaders lambasted.

JKBS invites all to participate in Guru Gyagi Birth Celebrations



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 12: Members of Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha (JKBS) invite all to participate in Sri Guru Gyagi Birth commemorative function slated to be held at Shahzadpur Kothi on Saturday, February 24, 2024. The festivity is to begin

with performing of Havan from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.; singing of Guru Gyagi hymns from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Langar from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The function will be held under the supervision of Guru Gyagi Birth Celebration Committee headed by former Corporation Rashpal Bhardwaj.