

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

**Night temp records jump, MeT issues 'yellow warning' amid wet spell forecast in J&K**

SRINAGAR, Feb 17 (Agencies): As Jammu and Kashmir braces up for an extended wet spell beginning this evening, night temperature on Saturday witnessed a jump with only Gulmarg recording below freezing level. Also, the weatherman issued a yellow warning for isolated heavy rain and snow over higher reaches and disruption of traffic on higher passes from February 18-20. There are four types of colour codes signifying the level of caution: green which means no action, yellow—situation to be watched, orange—government agencies need to be prepared for severe weather and red—action needed by the agencies. A meteorological department official said that Srinagar saw an increase by over 4°C, recording a low of 3.0°C against minus 1.6°C on the previous night. It was above normal by 2.0°C for the summer capital of J&K for this time of the year, he said. Qazigund recorded a minimum of 1.0°C against minus 1.2°C on the previous night and it was 1.1°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, the MeT official said. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 0.7°C against minus 4.2°C on the previous night and it was 5.1°C above normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir. Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 2.0°C against 0.4°C on the previous night and the temperature was above normal by 2.9°C for the place, the official said. Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of 3.3°C against 2.4°C on the previous night and it was 3.5°C above normal there, the official said. Gulmarg, the official said, recorded a low of minus 1.2°C against minus 3.4°C on the previous night and the temperature was above normal by 5.6°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir. Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 10.7°C and it was above normal by 0.2°C for the winter capital of J&K. Banihal recorded a

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## Ahead of PM Modi's visit to J&K, Security Forces conduct search for possible Cross-Border tunnels



SAMBA/JAMMU, Feb 17 (Agencies): The Border Security Force (BSF) and the Jammu and Kashmir Police conducted a joint search on Saturday for any possible cross-border tunnel along the International Border in Samba district, amid heightened security in the Union territory ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit next week, officials said.

In the past decades, about a dozen cross-border tunnels which were used to push terrorists, weapons and narcotics from across the border were uncovered by the security forces along the International Border with Pakistan in Samba, Kathua and Jammu districts.

Police had recently announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh to

anyone who helps in locating such tunnels used by "anti-national elements".

Modi is visiting Jammu on February 20 to inaugurate and lay the foundation of 209 projects worth Rs 3,161 crore. He will also address a public meeting at the Maulana Azad Stadium in the heart of Jammu.

As part of the heightened security arrange-

ments in view of Modi's visit, the officials said, the BSF and the police conducted a joint two-hour-long anti-tunneling operation in the Ramgarh sector of Samba district.

The operation started around 9.45 am and search teams did not find anything suspicious on the ground, they said.

The officials said BSF troops guarding the IB and police personnel manning the border posts have been put on maximum alert, especially after the recent ceasefire violation by Pakistan Rangers, and have been asked to maintain a tight vigil on any suspicious movement from across the border.

Besides the border areas along the IB, security arrangements have been beefed up along the Line of Control

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## Banihal-Sangaldan section of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link to open on February 20



JAMMU, Feb 17 (Agencies): The Indian Railways will start train services on the Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan section, a 48.1-kilometre-long significant segment of the country's most ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, on February 20.

"We will get a step closure to realise our dream

to connect Srinagar with Kanyakumari," a source in the railways said.

"The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is one of the most ambitious Himalayan railway projects post Independence," he added.

According to sources in the railways, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate

the section by virtually flagging off a train from Sangaldan.

However, an official confirmation in this regard is awaited.

Talking about the project, a senior railways official said, "Spanning the challenging terrain of the Pir Panjal ranges, the USBRL aims at establishing an all-weather, comfortable and economically-feasible transportation network, connecting remote Himalayan areas with the rest of the country." The USBRL project seeks to integrate the Kashmir Valley with the Jammu region and the national rail network, spanning a total length of 272 kilometres out of which 161 kilometres have already been commissioned.

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## PDD Daily Wager Electrocutted to Death While Repairing Live Wire

SRINAGAR, Feb 17 (Agencies): A PDD daily wager died after he was electrocuted while repairing a live wire in Rajouri village on Saturday afternoon.

Sources said that a 30-year-old PDD daily wager identified as Mushtaq Ahmad son of Mohd Bashir of Draman Kochija was critically injured when he came in contact with live wire while performing duty in Kewal village of Rajouri.

He was immediately taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

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## Farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' March enters fifth day, BKU (Ugrahan) to protest outside BJP leaders' Homes

CHANDIGARH, Feb 17 (Agencies): The Bharti Kisan Union (BKU Ugrahan) will on Saturday hold dharnas outside the residences of three senior BJP leaders in Punjab on the fifth day of the farmers' protest over their various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP.

Apart from holding dharnas outside the homes of former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh, the BJP's Punjab unit chief Sunil Jakhar and senior leader Kewal Singh Dhillon, the union will also hold protests at toll plazas in the state, extending support to the farmers' "Delhi Chalo" call.

On the fifth day of their "Delhi Chalo" march —



called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha — the farmers stayed put at the two border points of Punjab and Haryana as they press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guar-

antee of a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

The farmers from Punjab began their march to Delhi on Tuesday but were stopped by security personnel at the Shambhu and the Khanauri points of Punjab's

border with Haryana. The protesters have stayed put at the two border points since then.

The Gurnam Singh Charuni-led Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni), which is based in Haryana, will on Saturday take out a tractor rally in

solidarity with the protesting farmers.

Union ministers Arjun Munda, Piyush Goyal and Nityanand Rai and farmer leaders will meet on Sunday for the fourth round of talks. The two sides met earlier on February 8, 12 and 15 but those talks remained inconclusive.

On Friday, the Haryana Police released a series of video clips that purported to show several farmers pelting them with stones and attempting to provoke security personnel at the Shambhu border.

In a post on X, the police asserted that "ruckus" cannot be allowed under the guise of the farmers' movement. They claimed 25

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## Sachin Tendulkar visits Bat factory in Pulwama

SRINAGAR, Feb 17 (Agencies): Former legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar on Saturday visited a bat manufacturing factory in Chersoo area of Awantipora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

As per the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Tendulkar visited MJ Sports factory in Chersoo area today and interacted with the workers there.

MJ Sports factory, which manufactures bats, is owned by two brothers Manzoor and Javid of Chersoo.

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## Five senior cops among 19 booked in kidnapping, extortion case of Kutch firm staffer

BHUJ (Gujarat), Feb 17 (Agencies): Two superintendents of police (SPs) and three other senior policemen are among 19 persons against whom a case has been registered in connection with the kidnapping and extortion of an employee of a firm in Gujarat's Kutch district, police said on Saturday.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) on Thursday registered an FIR against two SPs, three DySPs, a sub-inspector, and owners of Electrotherm Limited, among others, nearly a month after the Supreme Court lifted the stay on the Gujarat High Court order directing the probe agency to do the same, they said.

According to a release issued by the CID, Parmanand Seerwani, a resident of Gandhidham in Kutch district, lodged a police complaint against two company owners and 11 others for kidnapping and extortion committed in December 2015.

The probe agency, in the release, did not disclose the exact roles of the accused police officers, citing that it would affect the investigation.

Former Kutch (East) SPs GV Barot and Bhavna Patel and DySPs RD Desai, DS Vaghela and VJ Gadhvi, and sub-inspector N K Chauhan have been named in the FIR, the release stated.

The complainant

worked at Electrotherm Limited in 2011 and later tendered his resignation, which was repeatedly rejected by company owners Shailesh Bhandari and Anurag Bhandari.

The Bhandaris were accused of allegedly kidnapping the complainant when he refused to become the firm's director after trying to resign unsuccessfully, the release said.

In December 2015, Seerwani was allegedly kidnapped and held captive in the company bungalow in Ahmedabad, where he was forced to sign blank papers to give away his properties, along with cash and gold worth lakhs, it said.

A case has been reg-

istered against the accused under sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 347 and 348 (wrongful confinement and extortion), and 364 (kidnapping to murder), among other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act, the release said.

The complainant and his wife had approached the concerned authorities between December 6, 2015 and February 4, 2016 to get an FIR registered against the accused, it said.

However, when no action was taken, they moved the high court for directions to register an FIR, it said.

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## Nearly 13,000 remote area patients attended by “Doctor on Wheels” AI driven free Mobile Telemedicine Clinic: Dr Jitendra

Top News Report

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Nearly 13,000 remote area patients have been attended so far in the far-flung regions of Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency by “Doctor on Wheels”, the first-of-its-kind, state-of-the-art, Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven free Mobile Telemedicine Clinic.

This was stated by here today in a media interview by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh who said that this novel experiment makes use of the latest technology tools whereby the patient attended by the Mobile Telemedicine Clinic is screened, thoroughly investigated and then the consultation is obtained from the concerned super specialist doctor in the one of the leading hospitals in metros like Hyderabad and Bengaluru with whom an arrangement has been tied up for the purpose. This entire exercise of patient examination and providing a prescription is accomplished in around 45 minutes which may otherwise take several days if the patient has to physically go to the hospital, he said.

The majority of beneficiaries of the ‘Doctor on Wheels’ initiative are women, said Dr Jitendra Singh, stating that



out of a total of 11,431 beneficiaries in Doda, Hiranagar and Kathua-Billarwar areas 6,643 were women.

Same trend is visible currently in the fourth phase in remote Dudu Basantgarh in the upper reaches of Ramnagar block of district Udhampur where as many as 835 women have availed consultation out of a total of 1,452 beneficiaries in 56 villages under 22 Panchayats where the Clinic van has camped so far, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh further explained that while the entire process of patient's examination and consultation calls for a very heavy cost, in this case it is being done free of cost to the patients in his constituency through the funds raised from voluntary sources.

The state-of-the-art, Artificial Intelligence (AI) supported “Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels” is possibly the first of its kind Telemedicine Mobile Clinic, Dr Jitendra Singh said.

Its huge success will inspire other similar initiatives elsewhere

across the country as well, he said.

“Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels” functions on the latest methodology wherein a patient can narrate his illness or complaint in his native language and the AI Doctor understands the language and responds to the patient in the same language, said Dr Jitendra.

Dr Jitendra said, this free telemedicine facility overcomes the problems of ‘Accessibility, Availability and Affordability’. He said, the obstacles like quality of services, specialised doctor, distance of travelling and cost of consultation/treatment are targeted and solved efficiently through this facility. Ordinarily, a metro hospital will cost a patient very heavily and may take two to three weeks' time.

This type of free telemedicine mobile camp solves all the problems especially for those having weak socio-economic background, he said.

For the convenience of patients, the prescribed medicines are also being provided free of cost and in addition, medicine kits containing commonly used drugs are being distributed across the constituency free of cost to all the families in general, Dr Jitendra Singh informed.

The mobile telemedicine clinic “Aarogya-Doctor on Wheels” is an initiative, said Dr Jitendra Singh, to tie up with various doctors of leading super speciality hospitals of the country providing quality healthcare to the remotest and inaccessible areas.

This latest super speciality mobile hospital, inspired by the Prime Minister's Digital Health Mission and Ayushman Bharat, is providing doorstep consultation with doctors and helped bridge the Urban and Rural divide in preventive healthcare, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that the mobile Aarogya clinic is presently being conducted in Dudu Basantgarh in the upper reaches of Ramnagar block of Udhampur under the 4th phase from 17th January 2024.

The majority of beneficiaries of the ‘Doctor on Wheels’ scheme are Women, said Dr Jitendra Singh, stating that out of a total of 11,431 beneficiaries in Doda, Hiranagar and Kathua Billarwar areas of Doda district in J&K, 6,643 were Women.

Same trend is visible here with as many as 835 women availing consultation out of a total of 1,452 beneficiaries in the 56 villages under 22 Panchayats the van has camped in,

he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh, who represents the Udhampur parliamentary constituency that also covers Kathua and Doda districts, said, the first phase of this facility covered more than 60 villages in the far-flung Gandoh area of district Doda where it spent three months. The second phase was conducted along the Zero Line villages of the International Border, and the third phase was held in the upper reaches of Bilawar, where such healthcare facilities are either not available or inadequately available, he said.

The Union Minister said the mobile telemedicine service, the first healthcare service that is delivered via digital mode, is being provided in J&K purely from non-government sources by two Startup groups belonging to North India and South India.

The mantra of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, - ‘Seva, Samparan and Start-up’ is being followed in these free telemedicine mobile services with extraordinary medical facilities for people with low socio-economic background as this government is dedicated to the poor, said Dr. Jitendra Singh.

## Road Safety Month campaign concludes at GDC Darhal



Top News Report

DARHAL, Feb 17: The NSS Unit in collaboration with IQAC of the college organized road safety awareness program as part of the Viksit Bharat @2047 here today.

The Ministry of Road and Highways’ initiative to observe the Road Safety Month from 15th of January to 14th of February in GDC Darhal has successfully come to a close.

The month-long program aimed to promote road safety awareness among students, and to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure their safety on the roads.

Throughout the observance, a series of engaging and informative lectures were organized by the National Service Scheme (NSS) wing in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

of the college.

The program witnessed the active participation of students, as well as the college faculty and administration.

Under the visionary leadership of Dr. M Saleem Wani, Coordinator IQAC and Dr. Mohd Akhlaq, NSS Programme officer, the program successfully spread awareness about various safety measures that can be employed to prevent accidents and promote responsible road behavior. The lectures were delivered by esteemed experts in the field, who shared their knowledge and expertise on road safety regulations, defensive driving techniques, and best practices for pedestrians.

The final function, chaired by Principal Prof Musaraf Shah sb, marked the successful conclusion of the

Road Safety Month. Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Dr. Taseem Ahmed, Dr. Anzar Ahmed, Dr. Asad Imran and other dignitaries graced the occasion with their presence. Principal Prof Musaraf Shah expressed his gratitude towards the Ministry of Road and Highways for their support and emphasized the importance of instilling road safety awareness among the youth.

The successful observance of the Road Safety Month at GDC Darhal not only raised awareness about road safety among the students but also fostered a sense of responsibility towards ensuring safer roads for all.

The college remains committed to organizing such initiatives in the future to further promote road safety consciousness among its students and the community at large.

## BJP is a mission to serve nation, its people: Ashwani

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: BJP senior leader & former MLA, Ashwani Sharma, during his weekly sitting at party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, listened to the grievances of a large number of people in the Public Darbar on Saturday.

Ashwani Sharma also interacted with many of the people who had visited the party headquarter to seek help in resolving their problems.

Ashwani Sharma said that the BJP is not only a political party but a mission to serve the nation and its people. It has a committed cadre, always available in the ground, reaching the doorsteps of the people



and helping them in many ways. He said that the Narendra Modi government, during the last about ten years, has launched large number of welfare schemes for the socio-economic upliftment of the different sections of the society, besides initiating numerous mega projects

of development in various sectors.

Ashwani Sharma further said that the ten years rule of Modi government has been splendid. The government took care of all sections and regions in its schemes, programmes and policies and people, cutting

across their faith, gender, region, has appreciated the good governance model of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He asked the people to support BJP in the upcoming elections of Lok Sabha and return Modi as Prime Minister for third consecutive term.

BJP Media team member Sanjay Bakshi diarized the proceedings of the public darbar and assisted Ashwani Sharma in communicating with the senior officials of different departments.

In the public darbar, the people raised their problems related to repair of damaged house, ownership rights to farmers, permission for construction in government allotted land, replacement of fused street lights, up gradation of the transformer, black topping of connecting road etc. They had, all along come from Nowshera, Sumbal (Kashmir), Bishnah, Kupwara, Nai Basti, Ban Talab, Nagrota, Vijaypur and other areas.

## JKBS honours its brave man Devi Dass Sargotra



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 16: Members of the Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha at a brief function held in Village Garhi here today, honoured Batwal community's brave man: Devi Dass Sargotra.

Speaking on him, the JKBS General Sec-

retary R.L. Kaith said, “Bravery is a unique aspect of a human that allows a person to do a task despite his own fears. One of the most unique things that I have found in brave Devi is that he had a driving force. He faced dangerous and difficult situations in his with

courage.”

Thanking the JKBS members, Devi Dass said, “I am so grateful to be the recipient of this great honour.”

Prominent among others who were present on the occasion included JKBS President Rachhpal Kaith, Subedar and Duni Singh

## Tennis Ball Cricket selection trails from Feb 25

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: J&K Tennis Ball Association is going to conduct two days selection trails at Greenfield Gandhi Nagar Jammu on February 25 & 26, 2024 to select the J&K UT Senior teams (men & women) for participation in the 34th Senior National Tennis Ball Cricket Championship (Men & women) scheduled to be held at Ram-anathapuram (Tamil Nadu) from 2nd to 5th March, 2024.

The selection trails shall start at 11 am under the supervision of Gulshan Rattan (I/C Selection Trails Mob.7006963458).

The participants who are desirous to participate in the selection trails should come in a proper cricketing kit alongwith Adhaar card, Physical fitness certificate & 6 recent passport size photographs.

The participants should also carry with them their personal bat etc.

The screening of the Selected teams team shall be held at the same venue on 27th February 2023 at 11/00 am by the screening Committee of the J & K Sports Council.

It is in place to mention here that the Selected teams shall leave from Jammu on 28th February 2024.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION GANDHI NAGAR  
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**SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
**Short e-NIT No. DGN/70 of 2023-24 Dated 14-02-2024**

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited for the work mentioned below for the Year 2024-25 on monthly basis for **01 Year** from approved and eligible firms which is registered as NGO or as registered with Registrar of Societies/Labour Department of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for each of the following works or Govt. of India duly renewed for the year 2023-24.

S. No	Name of the Work	Name of Divn	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (in )	Earnest Money (in )	Period of Contract	Amount of Work	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1/	Providing Services for Housekeeping / Cleaning - Sanitation of Lok Nirman Bhawan Rail Head Complex Jammu comprising of Basement, G+3 and Parking area	PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar	12.00	600/-	24000/-	01 Year	Rates to be quoted by the bidder on Monthly Basis	(1400 Hrs) on or after 23-02-2024	Firm which is registered as NGO or registered with Registrar of Societies / Labour Department of UT of J&K or Govt. of India duly renewed for the year 2023-24.

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website: <http://jktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	14-02-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 14-02-2024 to 22-02-2024, 1300 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	17-02-2023 on or after 1300 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar
4	Bid submission Start Date	14-02-2024
5	Bid Submission End Date	22-02-2024 up to 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	23-02-2024 on or after 1400 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- 1/ Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar and upload the same i.e treasury challan/receipt, Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar. The CDR/FDR shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar at the time of allotment.
- 2/ The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after due date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder needs not to make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential-submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids
- 3/ The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar, the date for same shall be intimated separately.

.. Sd ..  
(Er. Rahat Gupta)  
Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Division  
Gandhi Nagar

DIP/J-15088/23

## EDITORIAL

## Exam time is naturally stressful

Anyway, exam time is naturally stressful. Apart from having to memorize a lot for the exam, stiff competition on campus, expectations from family and friends and pressure to get good grades, all these factors add to the stress of students during exams.

This exam stress can have a negative impact on any student's learning process and make studying a difficult task, which can affect your grades. Like Aarti, anyone can get trapped in this kind of negative thinking.

However, there are several things that you can keep in mind while preparing for the exams or while the exams are going on or even after the exams, so that you do not get trapped in such negative thinking.

**Things You Can Do While Preparing for the Exam-** When you eat junk food, you feel better at that time, but later it affects your digestion, causing fatigue and lethargy. Therefore, take a balanced diet and keep yourself hydrated; You should have good sleep because when you are well rested, it helps you to remember better what you have studied before when you start preparing again after waking up. Here are some ways to help you get better sleep; Indulging yourself in any kind of physical activity for at least 15 to 20 minutes can refresh your body and mind; Substances like caffeine, nicotine and alcohol increase stimulation, creating more stress instead of reducing it. In their place, healthy alternatives like energy-boosting green tea, fruit or vegetable juices can be found and used; Figure out which relaxation technique works best for you and spend time practicing it. Effective relaxation techniques not only help to improve well-being, but also help a lot in moments of crisis; Like other important hobbies like studying, playing, running, engaging in social activities, listening to music, spiritual activities, journaling, painting, etc., taking guilt-free breaks is equally important. Find out what can help you stay stress-free; By gathering information related to topic dates and resources well in advance of the exam, you can save yourself from last-minute stress; Create an environment of study by keeping yourself away from noise, just like the environment of sitting in an examination hall and taking an exam. This method proves helpful: Following a predetermined routine helps with control, although this is not always possible. It can be beneficial for you to have an estimate of how much time it will take to complete a task.

We start feeling the way we think. What kinds of words are you using when thinking or talking about your test skills? Notice if they are too harsh, full of self-criticism, or unrealistic. Let's check how much truth is there in these thoughts. You have to create an alternative perspective that is more sympathetic to yourself and closer to the truth about the possible outcomes.

Stress increases in many of us just before the exam or while the exam is going on.

This is how stress manifests in students during exams.

Upset stomach, feel like vomiting, sweating palms, dizziness, heart beating loudly, 'Completely going blank', difficulty concentrating, feeling confused/overwhelmed or frustrated, being anxious/crying/grinding teeth/being restless/behavior like hovering here and there and biting nails. Negative thoughts in the mind like 'I can't do this', 'I can't do this'.

These things can help:-

One should try to eat food on time and it may be tempting to study all night, but one should get some sleep before the paper.

When you are dealing with your own anxieties, talking to someone who is also uncertain and nervous before the exam is not a good idea; this will only add to the problems for both of you. Focus on doing certain things to calm yourself (like listening to calming music).

It helps to journal or put down your worries, doubts, and thoughts on paper. And you are less likely to be affected during critical moments. If you're feeling overwhelmed, vent your experience out by simply typing something on your phone or writing it down on a piece of paper.

If you're feeling anxious as you sit down to turn in a paper, pause for a moment, using your breathing to calm yourself. Breathe in and out by counting to three. And repeat this process until you feel better.

Maintain your routine of attending class regularly and preparing assignments as before.

After your exams are over, give your brain some time to relax. But for many of us this time can just be a time of increased anxiety about how I performed in the exam and what will be the result.

## CAA won't target anyone, it corrects an old injustice

By: Sunanda K Datta Ray

The long-overdue Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019 should have been spared the taint of vote-seeking opportunism which the humanitarian measure has acquired from the timing of Union home minister Amit Shah's announcement about its notification and implementation. Contrary to the furore by some Muslims and most Opposition parties, the CAA does not make any substantial difference on the ground. India has always been Hindustan in a larger philosophical sense, and Hindus in neighbouring countries are viewed differently from people of other faiths.

That difference was obvious after the Bangladesh war, when the camps for mostly Hindu refugees around Kolkata were being closed, and inmates forced almost at bayonet point to board military trucks to take them back to the villages of Jessore and Khulna from which the Pakistan Army had brutally evicted them. "Do you regard yourself as an Indian, a Pakistani or a Bangladeshi?" I asked a wiry Hindu peasant who made no secret of his extreme reluctance to be repatriated. "You should regard me as an Indian citizen residing in Bangladesh", he shot back.

Bearing in mind the sad history of the Hindus of East Bengal, now Bangladesh, I could understand his dilemma. Most East Pakistan Hindus were cultivators and fishermen from the more depressed castes. They were also relatively poor.

East Bengal's big zamindars were also Hindu landowners, professional men, bureaucrats and academics who comprised the gentry in undivided Bengal. It was to oust them that the Muslim peasantry voted overwhelmingly for Pakistan. Significantly, while West

Bengal in India did not abolish zamindari until 1954, in East Bengal, the system was done away with in 1950.

Jogendranath Mandal, one of Pakistan's 96 founding figures, epitomised the anguish of this contradiction. As a Bengali Hindu Dalit freedom fighter, he thought he would get a fairer deal in supposedly egalitarian Islamic Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah thought so too and made him Pakistan's first minister for law, justice and labour. But Jinnah's death in September 1948 left Mandal vulnerable. He could not cope either with the West Pakistani bureaucracy's bullying or the Muslim majority rioters in East Pakistan supported by the police and, ultimately, by the rich and aristocratic Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan.

Helpless in the face of atrocities against Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities and subject also to family pressures, Mandal eventually resigned his job and escaped to India.

Other attempted solutions also failed. One was a proposal to exchange religious minorities, like Greece and Turkey. Another was for a new Hindu homeland in a strip of Bangladeshi territory to the west of the river Padma. The 1950 Nehru-Liaquat Ali pact was a third plan to recognise the rights of the Bengali Hindu peasantry to their ancestral fields. However, whatever the Pakistan government agreed to in formal discussions was often negated by local officials who were quick to list the Hindu owners as "evacuees" and their lands, after the 1965 war, as "enemy property".

Nor was there ever any question of replicating in the east the rehabilitation plans that accounted for the west's prosperity. Muslims in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh abandoned substantial properties that the Indian government took over to create a compensation pool for Hindus

from West Pakistan. There was no such divisible property pool in the east. Nor did the Centre's generosity extend to building an equivalent of Chandigarh city, setting up industrial townships for refugees such as the one at Faridabad, or developing areas like New Delhi's fashionable Khan Market, established in 1951 by India's new rehabilitation ministry to create economic opportunities for Partition victims, especially from the North-West Frontier Province and named after Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, an icon of the Independence movement and NWFP chief minister from 1945 to 1947. Long before he became President of India, Pranab Mukherjee contrasted New Delhi's generosity to West Pakistan refugees with its parsimony to Hindus from East Pakistan who were left to fend for themselves. The CAA belatedly attempts to correct that injustice.

The result of the BJP's campaign promises in 2014 and 2019, the CAA provides a fast track for non-Muslim immigrants from Muslim-majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to Indian citizenship. One objection is that selective access militates against the secular ideal and violates Article 14 (equality before the law) of the Constitution. Another is that it will be exploited to disenfranchise Muslims. The renewed call by Akhil Gogoi, an Assam Opposition MLA, to protest against what he calls the "unconstitutional CAA", is a reminder of how deep-seated such fears can be. Sadly, the rhetoric of some Indian politicians only go to fan these fears.

It's not forgotten that Mr Shah had referred derisively to illegal migrants from Bangladesh as "termites". Uttar Pradesh's BJP chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, had promised to cleanse India of other religions, calling this the "century of Hindutva". Another

BJP MLA from the same state, Surendra Singh, warned in 2018 that India would be a "Hindu Rashtra" by this year and that only Muslims who "accepted" India's Hindu culture could stay on. While the Kerala government challenged the CAA in court, several chief ministers refused to implement the law in their states.

Actually, India has moved with circumspection on the question of migrants. The informal term in Bangladesh that migrants without proper papers travel on a "jungle passport" means that a Muslim pays less to the Bangladesh border police and more to the Indian guards, and vice versa if he is a Hindu. Far from turning away Hindus in need of asylum, India operates a tacit equivalent of Israel's Law of Return. Similarly, when the Custodian of Enemy Property compensated Indians who were originally from East Bengal for lost property, he sought no proof. Asked about evidence, the outraged custodian snapped: "A man has escaped with his life and you want me to ask him to produce title deeds?" Under the CAA, no Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan who arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014, will be treated as an "illegal migrant". He/she will be allowed time to apply for Indian citizenship, the qualifying length of residency being reduced from "not less than eleven years" to "not less than five years".

Reservations by some American and international organisations reflect the stand that favouring one group can only be at the expense of other groups. This is a charge that India must strongly rebut. The government can do so most effectively by being impeccably even-handed in its treatment of all communities and curbing the tendency to indulge in abuse, vituperation and majoritarian bullying.

## Democracy can be dodgy: The war in Gaza still plagues UK's Labour Party

By: Farrukh Dhondy

Dodgy are the uses of democracy, which can turn to resembling the toad -- ugly and venomous -- and yet hope springs eternal -- that it wears a precious jewel in its head. (Quite enough of Shakespearean parody -- Ed)

Winston Churchill called it the best worst system, and added that "the best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter". He didn't live long enough to have even a half-minute conversation with Donald Trump supporters in the United States.

Some of these supporters are educated professionals, some are salt of the earth.

What makes them supporters of a -- OK, I won't characterise Dump, everyone knows about his attitudes to race, to women, to immigrants, to other nations, to Nato, to the US Constitution -- and the word Trump is synonymous with ignorance and vulgarity -- but do the MAGA-wallahs care? Oh democracy, our democracy!

And so, move to those countries which don't support, through the one-person-one-vote system, a maniac such as Trump, but support leaders who appeal to voters through pre-democratic or atavistic allegiances: religion, a nostalgia for lost empire, a myth of national greatness, xenophobia, racism...

The vote in several nations of

Europe is predominantly influenced today by a reaction against the mass migrations of populations in a globalised world. There is Giorgia Meloni's post-fascist government in Italy, Viktor Orban's EU-dissenting party in Hungary, Vox in Spain, the "Sweden Democrats", Portugal's Islamophobic Chega... One could go on!

Then there are the "democratic" countries who fall for appeals to religious dogma and ideologies of political antagonism to other religions. Mother democracy gives power to these factions which then commit matricide -- killing the very things like freedom of expression and protection of minorities that democracy should stand for.

But having said all those profound things, gentle reader, I give you now the current, if minor, travesty of the democratic process and appeal -- and that is the story of the coming byelection to the Westminster Parliament in the constituency of Rochdale.

The byelection, owing to the death of Sir Tony Lloyd, the former Conservative MP, has a list of eight candidates.

The Labour candidate, chosen before the closing date for nominations on February 2, is one Azhar Ali. This candidate asserted at a public meeting that Israel had allowed Hamas to carry out the attacks and the taking of hostages on October 7, 2023 in order to have a reason to attack Gaza and seize

territory.

This conspiratorial opinion displeased Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, whose one big play for popularity is distancing himself and the Labour Party from the supposed (though I personally disagree) anti-Semitism embraced and/or allowed by his predecessor Jeremy Corbyn.

The Israeli slaughter in Gaza has put the Labour Party in a bit of a quandary. It is no surprise that the Muslim population of the UK, whose decisive votes have contributed to the election of 31 Labour MPs in this Parliament, are avid supporters of the Palestinians and opposed to the Israeli genocide of civilians and demolishing of Gaza's cities.

Keir Starmer has apparently decided that his stance of coming down hard on any "anti-Semitism" will keep the "red wall" working class voters and the intellectual middle classes on Labour's side and despite their sympathies with Gaza, the Muslim vote will, in substantial numbers, have nowhere else to go.

Azhar Ali, very calculatedly, apologised unreservedly for his remarks and said he was completely mistaken -- and I say "calculatedly" because he didn't mean the apology. He had got his real opinions across to the Muslims of Rochdale and now offered his tongue-in-cheek apology to stop Labour disowning him. Nevertheless, according to reliable newspaper reports, he continued to hold the opinions, or similar

anti-Israeli opinions for which he had apologised. The Labour Party then said that it doesn't support him even though on February 29, when the byelection takes place, his name will appear on the ballot paper as the Labour candidate.

His calculation is certainly that he will get a, possibly decisive, majority of the Muslim vote and enter Parliament as an Independent MP now that Labour has disowned him.

There is, of course, the possibility that it may not happen. He is opposed by one George Galloway, a maverick politician who was once in Labour but was thrown out of the party for obsequiously supporting Sadaam Hussein during the UK-US war against him two decades ago. Galloway went on to win a parliamentary seat in the majority Muslim constituency of Tower Hamlets, defeating the Jewish Labour candidate. He is now campaigning in Rochdale wearing a Palestinian-colours scarf and may draw a substantial portion of the Muslim vote.

The other candidates, from the Conservative, Lib-Dem and Green parties and Independents, are not campaigning on any Palestinian platform, but rather pushing their parties' national and local policies. Except for Simon Danczuk, a former Labour MP for Rochdale who was dismissed in 2017 for sending sexual material to a 17-year-old. He is standing for the Reform UK party, a new extreme right-wing essentially anti-immigration group.

## Army conducts Awaami Milap in Drugmulla

Top News Report

KUPWARA, Feb 17: The Kupwara based Vajr Division as part of ongoing Operation Sadhbhavana to bridge the gap between military and civilian communities organised a unique gathering which provided a platform for the Awaam of Drugmulla block to resolve their administrative problems/issues. The local people also shared their concerns with the General Officer Commanding, 28 Infantry Division & other officers & suggested how the environment can be made conducive for peace in J&K. A total of 90 individuals attended the event



which served as a platform for population of Drugmulla block to voice their concerns with civil administration & Army share their experiences and obtain solutions to the problems and areas of concern. The Army & civil officers listened to the concerns of civilians and gained valuable insights into the challenges faced by com-

munities, while civilians expressed a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices and contributions of Indian Army. The event was also attended by Sarpanch, Ward Members, Teachers, Imams etc. By fostering open communication and mutual understanding, the aim was to cultivate stronger bonds between military, influ-

ential gentry and civilian populations of Drugmulla block and address issues that affects the Awaam. The Kupwara based Vajr Division expressed enthusiasm about the initiative, stating, "We believe in collaboration between military and civilian life. By facilitating meaningful conversations between soldiers and civilians,

we can break down barriers, dispel misconceptions, and build bridges of empathy and cooperation.

It is a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to support the regional population. The Indian Army believes in the transformative power of promoting dialogue, celebrating diversity, building bridges and empowering change. This pioneering effort aligns with the Indian Army's broader vision of fostering positive engagement. The local population were all praise for Indian Army for their efforts towards empowering the partnership between military and civilian society.

## Ajeet objects delimitation notified by Municipal Council Kishtwar

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Feb 17: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Sr. Leader, Spokesperson Ajeet Bhagat has taken strong cognizance over the unholy Delimitation notified by the Municipal Council Kishtwar and has expressed his anguish in the manner in which the rural areas have been taken brought under Municipal Limits, which will have adverse affect to the public residing in Rural, Mandal areas of Kishtwar Town.

Expressing his statement, Ajeet has denounced that there will be long lasting I'll affect over the Employment Reservation under



different categories to the aspiring students viz, the Reservation to the Reserved Backward Areas (RBA) applicants to the extent of 20 percent wil end for ever. The National Conference Senior Leader Ajeet Bhagat said that the Thousands of poor people in rural areas brought under Municipal Council Limitation will loose Jobs under MGNREGA. Whereas, it has been urged the Rural areas

viz, Lachkhazana, Killed, Wassar and PDC Colony up to Sen Petrol Pump via D.C Office Complex Zellana and from Zellana Police Naka point to Sangrambatta and Chowk Hiday upto Tund be excluded from the Municipal limits.

Whereas, the other Rural, Mandal areas via Matta, Sarkoot, Berabhata up to Sarkoot Mandir be brought under Reserved Backward (RBA) area and objection to the inclusion of areas viz, Panditgam, Semana Colony to Zewar be kept under Reserved Backward (RBA) area, which in the Delimitation process has been brought under Municipal limits.

## GDC Vijaypur organises Essay Writing Competition

Top News Report

VIJAYPUR, Feb 17: NSS Unit (KHIDMAT) of Government Degree College Vijaypur in collaboration with Department of English, under the banner of Voting Awareness Campaign organised an essay writing competition on the theme, "Right to vote" under the supervision and guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Vandana Gupta, Principal of the College. More than twenty college students participated in the competition with great enthusiasm, fervour and zeal. The aim of the event was to aware students about the importance to voting in a democracy. The competition started with the welcome address by Prof. (Dr.) Anoop Kumar Bhagat, HOD Sociology. He briefed the students that voting in a democracy is of utmost importance as it lets cit-



izens choose their representatives in forming the government. He further stated that voting and taking part in the electoral process is more than a right. It's a responsibility that each citizen holds to select their leaders. The terms and conditions of the competition were informed by Dr. Naseem Chowdhary, HOD English. In the competition first position was shared by Ruhi Sharma of B.A sem. II & Sheetal of B.A sem. VI; second position was shared by Rebika Kumari of B.A sem. VI & Rupali Verma of B.A sem. IV; third position was shared by

Kajal Devi of B.A sem. VI & Monika Charak of B.A sem. IV. Principal of the College, Dr. (Prof.) Vandana Gupta lauded efforts of all the participants and made sure that all of them register for the upcoming elections. The event was coordinated by Prof. Anita Bhagat, Prof. Mamta Gupta, Dr. Anoop Bhagat Prof. Ritu Bhagat and Dr. Naseem Chowdhary and co-ordinated by Dr. Priyanka Ganjoo, Dr. Radhika Rasyal, Dr. Attied Khawar, Dr. Neelam Kumari, Prof. Sonia Devi and Prof. Mazid Malik. Certificates were distributed to all the participants.

## Batwal Samaj Ekta Manch Punjab to participate in Guru Gyagi Birth Celebrations

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: The Batwal Samaj Ekta Manch Punjab held a meeting at Pathakot which was chaired by Ashwani Chanjotra and attended by a large number of Batwal community members.



The meeting resolved to actively participate in Guru Gyagi Birth Commemorative Function slated to be held on February 24, 2024 at Shahzadpur Kothi in Jammu. The meeting also resolved that Batwal Samaj Ekta Manch Punjab before coming to Jammu on February 24, would take out a Nagar-Kirtan in Pathankot on February 23 to mark the birth celebrations.

## GDC R S Pura organizes awareness lecture on anti helminthes drug administration

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: In the sequence of events organized during the ongoing 7 days special winter camp, NSS Unit in collaboration with Zoology Department organized an awareness lecture on "anti helminthes drug administration" on 17th February 2024. The programme was conducted under the patronage of Principal of the college Dr. Rajni Bhagat and under the supervision of Dr. Chanchal Angral, NSS PO.

The programme began with the welcome address by Dr. Chanchal Angral (NSS PO). She said the very motto of the awareness lecture is to shed light on the importance of anti helminthes drugs in combating parasitic infections that affect millions of people worldwide. Later



awareness lecture was delivered by Dr. Shalini Bhagat, Gynaecologist, NTPHC Chakroi under the guidance of Dr. Monika Kotwal, BMO, R.S.Pura. She stressed that lymphatic filariasis is a dreaded infectious disease transmitted by the round worm parasites Wuchereria bancrofti and causes a disease called filariasis or elephantiasis spread by mosquito vector. Dr. Monika also addressed the students and emphasized on the various methods of eradication of mos-

quitoes including drug administration and vaccination for CA cervix in females. Dr. Renu Manhas and Dr. Jasmeet Singh graced the occasion. About 50 students attended the lecture with great enthusiasm. The programme ended with the formal vote of thanks by Prof. Shifali Abrol, Associate Professor, department of Zoology. Dr. Radhika Mahajan, HOD Chemistry, Dr. Hari Singh and Dr. Sunil Kumar Mangoch, NSS members also attended the programme.

## Principal GDC Thannamandi Commends Geography Department's Innovation

Top News Report

THANNAMANDI, Feb 17: In a commendable display of academic achievement, Principal of Government Degree College (GDC) Thannamandi, Dr. Farooq Ahmed, recently extended appreciation to the Geography Department for their innovative strides. The accolades were specifically directed towards two standout students, Kamran Latief Naik and Rouf Mir from the B.Sc. 4th semester, who participated in a transformative 5-day workshop on 3D printing and new product development at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University. Under the expert guidance of Dr. Gulshan Rashid, Head of the Geography Department, Kamran and Rouf exhibited exemplary dedication and enthu-



siasm throughout the workshop. Their active engagement and commitment to learning not only reflected positively on themselves but also brought acclaim to the college. Dr. Farooq Ahmed, acknowledging the significance of such initiatives in fostering academic excellence and practical skills, lauded the efforts of Dr. Gulshan Rashid and the entire Geography Department. He emphasized the importance of nurturing a culture of innovation and hands-on learning within the institution. Furthermore, Dr. Farooq Ahmed extended hearty congratulations to the deserving students and the Geography Department for their remarkable achievement. He expressed confidence in their ability to

continue making significant contributions to the field of geography and beyond, further elevating the reputation of GDC Thannamandi on a national scale.

## Intra College Volleyball Men Tournament 2024 begins at GDC Udhampur

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Feb 17: GDC Udhampur organized intra college Volleyball Men Tournament 2024 from February 17 to 19, 2024. The Tournament was inaugurated by Prof. (Dr.) Romesh Kumar Gupta, Principal of the college and chief guest of the occasion. NCC Cadets, Suryadev Singh and Kavya Sharma escorted the chief guest to the sports ground, the venue of the match. Principal of the college appreciated



the efforts of the sports committee and motivated the students to excel in the field of sports. He said that sports and games are integral part and parcel of New Education Policy. He further emphasized that for physical

fitness, the students must participate in different sports activities. A total of 4 teams participated in the tournament. First match was played between Raman Team and Shivaji Team. Raman team defeated Shivaji Team with set score 2-0. Another match was held between Ashoka and Tagore Teams, wherein Ashoka team won the game with score 2-0.

Both the matches ended in neck to neck competition and finally team Raman and Ashoka booked their place in the final match. The students who played exceptionally well were Nasir Beg, Ansh Sharma, Aryan, Ankush Kumar, Ajay Singh, Neshad Ali, Kapil and Rishav Singh. Principal of the college chaired the Prize distribution ceremony as a chief guest and presented the trophies to the winner teams.

## CRPF organises free Medical Camp in Asham Sonawari

Top News Report

BANDIPORA, Feb 17: Under its civic action program, a free medical camp was organized by 45 Battalion Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Asham village of Hajin Tehsil in North Kashmir's Baniptora district on Saturday. The camp was inaugurated by PRI Nisar



Ahmad in presence of Apoorwa, commandant of 45 Bn CRPF. He was accompanied by Rajiv Ranjan, other officers and local eminent personalities were present during the camp. Commanding Officer 45 Bn CRPF, Apoorwa, said that 45 Bn CRPF assured the local public that CRPF has always been helping the Kashmiri people and putting all out efforts for peace, prosperity and development of the society. He added that they will con-

tinue to conduct such a civic programme for the benefit of the local public in future. Our aim to organise this free medical camp is to reach out to the general public. We are providing treatment for common diseases, seasonal illnesses, and also if there is a need to involve expert and we are providing that, he

added. A local resident namely Mohammad Sultan of Asham after getting a check-up said that they are very thankful for this camp. The medicines are quite expensive outside. We have to spend Rs 1000-2000 on them in the market. The doctors are also very good. People are getting check-ups done quite smoothly. A large number of people gathered to the health camp organised by 45 battalion CRPF.

## Dimple asks PM Modi to announce restoration Statehood, assembly, parliament elections



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: President Mission Statehood, Sunil Dimple urged PM Narendra Modi to announce the

restoration of J&K statehood and the holding of assembly elections along with parliament election in J&K during his visit to Jammu. Dimple demanded

to start Darbar move, return of J&K power projects back, employment package for the educated youths, regularization of the all daily wage workers.

## In Chandigarh for an event, poet-lyricist Irshad Kamil goes down memory lane and recollects fond memories of City Beautiful

"Coming to Chandigarh for me is like 'a-low-on-battery-cell-phone-gets-its-charger,'" said poet and lyricist Irshad Kamil, who graduated from the Panjab University and also worked with news agency. As he visited Mulk Raj Anand Auditorium, Arts Block I, PU, for an event, 'Chandigarh Language Congress', Irshad talked about the theme — 'Towards a Comparative Cosmopolis: Language, Culture and Hybridity'.

About his initial years, Irshad joked that he always wanted to prove that he was an intellectual. "I used to love local papers which featured poems and other literary items. I sent my poems to them, but those were never printed! Later, I worked as a journalist for many years. Later, I thought Chandigarh was not taking my talent seriously and moved to Mumbai."

Irshad paid due regard to his teachers sitting in the crowd and veteran Punjabi poet Surjit



Patar, who also had a session. He said, "All these seasoned writers and teachers are making me nervous. You have grown up

reading Patar ji, you cannot just say anything before him. I hope I am making sense. Also, as a lot of youngsters are sitting here, I

am trying to say things in a way that they don't come across as a lecture to them. I always try to connect to youngsters."

Irshad candidly talked about the difference in writing poems and songs, "It's way different. When you write poems, it's for yourself and readers who would like to indulge in such writing. But when it comes to film songs, there are a lot of things that come into play.

The characters, music producer and the situation plays a part in writing a song, but then there is also the pressure that the song should be a commercial hit, catchy and something to hold your attention for a longer period."

As for social media, Irshad said, "Much has changed, the focus of young budding writers is to give quantity and not quality, which is something they should work upon if they would like to stay in this profession for long."

## Shakira to release her latest album 'Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran' on March 22



Singer-songwriter Shakira is busy in the studio, as she has been 'rebuilding herself' with her brand new album. The 47-year-old Latin singer, who split from footballer Gerard Pique in 2022, after more than a decade together, has so far released 11 studio albums since she was a teenager. She announced that her latest album *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran* will be out on March 22. Shakira shared, "While writing each song I was rebuilding myself. While singing them, my tears transformed into diamonds, and my vulnerability into strength."

The new album will feature eight tracks along with the previously released hit singles, including *Music Sessions Vol. 53* with Bizarrap, *TQG* with Karol G, *Te Felicito* with Rauw Alejandro, *Copa Vacía* with Manuel Turizo, and more.

The *She Wolf* singer has not released an album since 2017 when *El Dorado*, which was mostly sung in her native language Spanish, spawned the singles *Chantaje* and *Me Enamore*. Prior to that, Shakira released the self-titled record that served as her fourth English language album overall. It contained the hit single *Can't Remember To Forget You*, which also featured Rihanna.

## Rashmika Mandana to appear on 'No Filter Neha' Season 6

The sixth season of the podcast *No Filter Neha* will feature Rashmika Mandana as the next guest.

The show is gearing up for a brand new format, which will stream on JIO TV and JIO TV PLUS.

Hosted by actress-producer, Neha Dhupia, the show has already created a buzz for its upcoming season with an impressive lineup, including Shahid Kapoor, Kartik Aaryan, Tiger Shroff and Kriti Sanon.

The addition of Rashmika Mandana, known for her charm and versatility, adds a new layer of excitement to the talk show, as she joins Neha Dhupia in a candid conversation.



## Kavita Chaudhary of 'Udaan' fame dies due to cardiac arrest

Actress Kavita Chaudhary, who played the iconic characters of Lalita ji and IPS officer Kalyani Singh in the Doordarshan series *Udaan*, passed away due to cardiac arrest in Amritsar earlier today. She was 67. Kavita was cremated in the presence of family, including Ajay Sayal, nephew, her niece, and close friends.

Inspiring an entire generation of women though her onscreen avatar of an ambitious and gritty women IPS officer in *Udaan*, Kavita Chaudhary had shared that her role in the popular show had been inspired by her own elder sister, Kanchan Chaudhry Bhattacharya, who was the second woman IPS officer after Kiran Bedi.

Born and brought up in Amritsar, Kavita did her



schooling from Shri Ram Ashram School and later pursued her higher education from the Hindu College. She later went to the Natinal School of Drama. "Kavita and her sister Kanchan were both quite ahead of others, always striving to do something that broke stereotypes. Despite hailing from an affluent business family, both worked hard to make their own mark and succeeded. Now, with both of them gone, it is a great loss to city community, who had seen them achieve many milestones," shared AshokSethi, a city-based businessman and friend of Kanchan Chaudhary.

Kavita's ancestral home is inside Hall Gate. Though her screen time was limited

to *Udaan*, Kavita later produced two film based on police force. Her now iconic character of an intelligent and informed housewife, Lalita ji in the *Surf* advertisements had made her a popular face among audience in the 80s and 90s. Her role as IPS officer Kalyani Singh in *Udaan*, a progressive show about women empowerment during the time when women, in general, were still aspiring to break gender and social barriers, was considered as a milestone in Indian television history for its premise and character development. She not only acted in the show, but also co-wrote the story.

Several actors and artists who knew her expressed grief on her demise.

## Gurpreet Singh says each hurdle became a stepping stone for him



Gurpreet Singh, who was last seen as Prakash in *Chaand*

Jalne Laga, made his acting debut as Sujal in *Kahiin Toh Hoga* in

2005. Looking back at his journey, he says, "The journey had its share of financial and emotional challenges, coupled with moments of indecisiveness. However, each hurdle became a stepping stone, contributing to personal and professional growth. Looking back, I'm immensely satisfied with the choices made and the lessons learnt."

Kids these days have a lot of options to choose from as far as picking a career is concerned and Gurpreet feels, "The landscape has evolved. While parental guidance is invaluable, it's essential to explore one's unique path. Embracing differences fosters creativity, bringing fresh perspectives."

So what advice would he give to struggling actors? "Embrace your uniqueness and stay persistent. Success often comes from resilience, continuous learning and authenticity. Find joy in the process, and let passion be your guiding light," Gurpreet says.

## When Kristen Stewart hospitalised due to anxiety attack



Actress Kristen Stewart has revealed her anxiety got so bad at the height of her *Twilight* fame that she was admitted to hospital and given a sedative. The 33-year-old actress has revealed she began suffering mental health issues after shooting to international stardom in the *Twilight* movies.

Her sleep troubles continued for years until she met her fiancée Dylan Meyer, who helped get her into a healthy routine after they moved in together.

## Mouni Roy says it is not easy to survive in the entertainment industry

Actress Mouni Roy, who is gearing up for her upcoming OTT show *Showtime*, has spoken up about the challenges she faced in the industry, most notably of being typecast. The actress said while it may be a fair industry, but it's not easy to work in it by any stretch of imagination, as each day presents a new challenge, and it demands a lot from its artistes.

Mouni Roy said, "I've been typecast, yes, of course. But I've also been very, very lucky with directors who had the vision to see me in different roles, in different parts. Like *Emraan* said that it may be a fair industry, but I truly believe it is a very difficult industry too. And along with hard work, come a lot of challenges. There is that ongoing struggle that you cannot deny."

She added, "There is no shortcut to hard work. And I truly believe work begets work. When you are focused on a project, whether it's a dancing or an acting part, if you



give your 100 per cent, if you somehow get into the skin of the character and justify it, I think sooner or later you're going to land that next role. And that's been the only mantra of my life." The series also stars *Emraan Hashmi*,

*Mahima Makwana*, *Rajeev Khandelwal*, *Shriya Saran*, *Vishal Vashishtha*, *Neeraj Madhav*, *Vijay Raaz* and *Naseeruddin Shah* in pivotal roles. Created by *Sumit Roy*, *Showtime* is set to stream on March 8 on *Disney+ Hotstar*.

## BJP winning 370 Lok Sabha seats will be true tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, says PM Modi at party's national council meeting

Modi says 'lotus' is party's candidate in Lok Sabha elections; exhorts members to ensure its win

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that BJP winning 370 Lok Sabha seats will be a true tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who fought for scrapping Article 370.

Speaking at the party's two-day national council meeting, Modi said that 'lotus', BJP's poll symbol, is the party's candidate in Lok Sabha elections and exhorted the members to ensure its win.

As many as 11,500 delegates arrived in the national capital on Friday to take part in the BJP



National Council meeting over the weekend.

Meanwhile, BJP chief J.P. Nadda on Friday opened an exhibition on 'Viksit Bharat' at Bharat Mandapam, the venue of the party's meeting.

The council will pass two resolutions, including a political resolution, which is expected to hail PM Modi for his "stable and firm leadership over a decade", and renew the call for the BJP to cross the 370-seat mark and the ruling NDA coalition to go past 400 in the 543-member Lok Sabha.

## Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' Enters PM's Constituency Varanasi



VARANASI, Feb 17 (Agencies): The Rahul Gandhi-led 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' of the Congress today entered PM Modi's constituency Varanasi on the second day of its Uttar Pradesh leg.

Rahul Gandhi, along with the party's state president Ajay Rai and other congress leaders, stood atop an open jeep and toured the busy Gudauli area of the

temple town. Mr Gandhi also visited the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) leader Pallavi Patel and the Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA from Sirathu also joined the yatra in Varanasi.

The yatra on Friday entered the state from Bihar at Chanduali where it halted for the night.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has said that he will join the yatra in Rae Bareilly.

The yatra will traverse through Uttar Pradesh before entering Rajasthan. The east to west Manipur-Mumbai yatra will traverse 6,700 km through 15 states and aims to highlight the message of 'nyay' (justice) while meeting common people on the way.

## Pregnant Woman Gang-Raped, Set On Fire In Madhya Pradesh

MORENA, Feb 17 (Agencies): A 34-year-old pregnant woman was allegedly raped by three men and set on fire in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district, and is battling for her life in a hospital, police said on Saturday.

The victim, who sustained 80 per cent burns, is undergoing treatment in Gwalior, an official said.

The incident occurred in Chand Ka Pura village, around 3 km from Ambah town, on Friday, he said.

The victim went to the village to work out a compromise with a woman who had accused her husband of rape, inspector Alok Parihar of Ambah police station told agency.

The victim was, however, allegedly

raped by three men who were present in the woman's house. Later, the trio and the accused woman poured fuel on her and set her ablaze, the official said.

A video has been shared with the police in which the victim, being rushed to a hospital in a vehicle, is heard saying that she was first gang raped, and then the accused woman and the men had set her ablaze, he said.

The victim's husband, who is out on bail in the rape case, has handed the video to the police, Parihar said.

While the victim has recorded her statement with the magistrate, the police were yet to record her statement, he said, adding that the investigations are underway.

## Arvind Kejriwal wins trust vote, dares BJP to seek votes ahead of Lok Sabha polls

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal won the trust vote in the Delhi Assembly on Saturday and dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek votes for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Kejriwal also said his party, the Aam Aadmi Party, was the biggest challenger to the BJP and that is why it is under attack from all sides.

"Go seek votes in the coming polls by saying you want to end the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, if they end the Vidhan Sabha, I will keep working for you (Delhi voters)," Kejriwal said during a discussion on the motion of confidence he moved in the Budget session of the assembly.

Further, Kejriwal asserted that even if the BJP wins this year's Lok Sabha polls, the AAP will "liberate" the country from the saffron party in the 2029 elections.

"If the BJP is afraid about its future, then it is only because of the AAP. That's why they



want to break the AAP. If the BJP doesn't lose the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, then the AAP will surely make the country free of the BJP by 2029. The AAP was formed just 12 years ago. There are nearly 1,350 parties in the country. The AAP applied for its registration on November 26, 2012, it has now become the third-largest party in the country after the BJP and Congress," Kejriwal said.

The Delhi Chief Minister, who is also the AAP convenor, said his government has a majority in the House, but it needed to bring the motion of confidence because the BJP was trying to poach party MLAs and topple his government.

no AAP MLA had defected. Two MLAs are in jail, some are unwell, and some others are out of station.

"The way they (BJP) have attacked the AAP and arrested our ministers, people across the country are aware of this. They think that people are fools, but they are not. Now discussions are being held in parks and people are asking 'Does PM Modi want to crush Arvind Kejriwal?' Even children are asking this question because they have arrested so many of our ministers. Our number 2, number 3, and number 4 are in jail, and talks are being held that soon number 1 will be arrested. This is happening because AAP is BJP's biggest challenger in the entire nation," the Chief Minister said.

Kejriwal also alleged that the BJP, through control over the Services department and the bureaucracy, was obstructing the work of his government.

"They claim to be Ram bhakt, but they stopped

medicine for the poor people in our hospitals. Did Lord Ram ask to stop medicine for the poor people?" he said.

Kejriwal said he has faced attacks in the past, been slapped, got ink thrown on him, and now they want to arrest him.

On Friday, Kejriwal moved a motion of confidence in the Assembly.

This is the third motion of confidence by the Kejriwal government in the last three years. It comes amid the AAP's claims that the BJP wanted to break the party by offering money to its MLAs and toppling its government in Delhi.

previous confidence motions came in August 2022 and March 2023, amid AAP allegations that the BJP was carrying out "Operation Lotus" to poach its MLA.

The AAP has an overwhelming majority in the Delhi Assembly, with 62 MLAs in the 70-member House.

The Opposition BJP has eight MLAs, of whom seven are currently suspended.

## Temporary Structure Collapses At Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, 11 Rescued

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): At least 11 people trapped under the debris of a collapsed temporary structure at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in south Delhi were rescued today, officials said.

The incident occurred at 11 am, police said.

A Delhi Fire Services official said a call

was received about the pandal (temporary structure) collapsing at the stadium. Initially, two people were rescued from under the debris. Later, nine more people were brought out.

A police officer said most of the injured are workers.

"The pandal was being erected for a wedding

function near Gate No 2. The injured have been taken to AIIMS trauma centre for treatment," the officer said, and added no casualties have been reported so far.

Personnel from the police and the fire department, and ambulances are on the spot, the officer added.

## 21 stray dogs shot dead in Telangana village, police launch probe

HYDERABAD, Feb 17 (Agencies): In a disturbing incident, 21 stray dogs were shot dead by unidentified perpetrators in a village in Telangana. An FIR has been filed under the Arms Act and the Animal Cruelty Act, but no suspects have been identified so far.

The incident occurred in Ponnakal village in Mahabubnagar district. The village is just 2 km away from a National Highway.

The unidentified assailants armed with

firearms carried out the massacre, which also left several other dogs injured.

The Animal Husbandry Department conducted the post-mortem examination of the dead dogs, revealing the gruesome nature of the killings.

Addakal Sub-Inspector of Police, Srinivas, raised suspicion that the dogs were poisoned and shot at close range, possibly with locally-made weapons.

The absence of CCTV cameras in the village and along the high-

way has complicated the investigation. But authorities have initiated steps to install surveillance cameras.

The motive behind the incident is yet to be ascertained.

A clues team has been deployed to gather evidence, including identifying the empty cartridges found at the scene.

The police also revealed that two dogs died without gunshot wounds, suggesting that they might have succumbed to poisoning.

## 15 commercial units, some houses gutted in fire in Mumbai, nobody injured

MUMBAI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Around 15 commercial units and some houses were gutted in a fire that broke out in a residential structure in Mumbai's Govandi area early on Saturday, in which nobody was injured, an official said.

The fire brigade received a call alerting it about the blaze at 3.55 am, he said.

"Around 15 galas (commercial units) located on the ground floor and some houses on the first floor were gutted in the fire that broke out in a chawl at Bainganwadi in Adarsh Nagar area of Govandi," the fire brigade official said.

The fire, which was tagged as level one (minor), engulfed some electrical wirings and installations, plastic sheets, household items, wooden planks and furniture, among other things, he said, adding that the blaze was doused after five hours of efforts.

Four fire engines and as many jumbo tankers were pressed into service for the firefighting operation, he said.

"Nobody was injured in the incident and the exact cause of the fire is being ascertained," the official added.

## 9 killed, several injured in explosion at firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu



CHENNAI, Feb 17 (Agencies): At least nine people died, and several others were injured on Saturday in an explosion at a firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district.

According to locals, the magnitude of the blast was so high that four buildings, in addition

to the firecracker factory, were destroyed.

The factory was owned by a person named Vijay and was located in the Vembakottai area of the city. After the incident, police and a team from the fire department rushed to the spot and admitted the injured to a local hospital where they are getting medical

treatment.

According to the police, seven people died on the spot while two succumbed to their injuries while being on their way to the hospital.

The preliminary investigation suggested that the accident occurred in the chemical mixing room of the factory, police added.

Further investigation into the case is underway.

Earlier last year, eight people, including three women, were killed, and several others sustained injuries after an explosion took place at a firecracker factory in the state's Krishnagiri.

## At least 8 wagons of goods train derail in Delhi's Zakhira

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): At least eight wagons of a goods train derailed in Delhi's Zakhira on Saturday. The incident happened near the Zakhira flyover, in Chara Mandi.

A team of railway officials and fire brigade rushed to the spot as soon as they received the information about



the incident. A video showed the moment wagons

derailed from the tracks. According to the details, the goods train

was carrying iron sheets at the time of the accident.

Railway police said the possibility of casualties in the incident was not ruled out.

Another video from the accident spot showed derailed bogies on the railway track. A rescue operation on the tracks was underway.

## Congress In Telangana Not Sincere In Conducting Caste Survey: K Kavitha

HYDERABAD, Feb 17 (Agencies): Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLC in Telangana K Kavitha on Saturday alleged that the Congress government in the state is not sincere in conducting the caste survey as it passed only a resolution in Legislative Assembly without ensuring statutory backing.

The resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on Friday to take up a caste survey gives false hope to the backward classes, she said.

Doesn't the government know that the survey would not stand legal scrutiny without statutory backing, Kavitha, daughter of former CM K Chandrasekhar Rao, said on X.

Questioning as to why the state government is not taking into consideration the experiences of Bihar and Karnataka, she demanded that legislation be made on the caste survey immediately.

Asked by reporters on the buzz about an alliance between the BJP

and BRS for the Lok Sabha polls, she said the matter is beyond her understanding or capacity and that she does not have awareness about it.

The Telangana Legislative Assembly on Friday passed a resolution to take up a comprehensive door-to-door household caste survey in the state to plan and implement various plans for the progress of the backward classes, SC and ST citizens and other weaker sections.







## Paytm shifts nodal account to Axis Bank to ensure continuity of transactions

The move will allow continuity of Paytm QR, Soundbox and card machine

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Fintech firm One97 Communications -- owner of the brand Paytm -- has shifted its nodal account to Axis Bank from Paytm Payments Bank.

The move will allow continuity of Paytm QR, Soundbox, card machine after the March 15 deadline set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as per a regulatory filing.

The RBI has advised customers and merchants of Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) to shift their accounts to other banks by March 15, giving 15 more days to the beleaguered entity to close most of its operations, including deposit and credit trans-



actions.

"The company has also shifted its nodal account to Axis Bank (by opening an escrow account) to continue seamless merchant settlements as before.

"This arrangement is expected to seamlessly replace the nodal account that OCL was using with Paytm Payments Bank. Paytm Payment Services Ltd

(PPSL), OCL's wholly owned subsidiary has already been using the Axis Bank services since its inception," Paytm said in a filing.

The nodal account of Paytm is like a master account in which all its customers, merchant transactions are settled.

The RBI in the list of FAQs has clarified that Paytm QR code, Paytm Soundbox or Paytm

POS terminal will continue to work after March 15 if it is linked to other banks instead of PPBL.

"We are committed to providing seamless service to our merchant partners, with focus on compliance and regulatory guidelines. We assure our users that the Paytm app, and our pioneering devices like Paytm QR, Soundbox, Card Machine will continue to work as always.

"The shift of the nodal account to Axis Bank (by opening an Escrow Account) will ensure seamless merchant settlements as before. We strive to continue to empower Indians, contributing significantly to the country's financial

inclusion journey," a Paytm spokesperson said.

The RBI has advised PPBL customers to obtain a fresh QR code linked to an account with another bank or wallet to receive payments after March 15.

"You may also change your bank account details (in which you receive payments) through your service provider," Paytm management had said earlier this month.

Paytm will also work with other banks to change the virtual payment address linked to PPBL that merchants use for accepting transactions, so that there is no disruption in their transactions after the RBI set a deadline.

## Adani Realty outbids L&T to clinch Rs 30,000 crore Bandra Reclamation project

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Adani Realty pipped Larsen & Toubro to emerge as the highest bidder for the redevelopment of the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation's (MSRDC) 24-acre prime land at Bandra

Reclamation close to the Bandra-Worli.

Adani Realty offered 23.15% revenue share to the state government body while Larsen & Toubro offered 18% share of the project's revenue.

The final decision will be taken by the MSRDC Board next week.

MSRDC invited bids for the prime land parcel facing Mahim Bay and along the sea link approach road, which



has a casting yard and the MSRDC office. This plot is allocated for commercial as well as residential use in the Development Control and Promotion Regulations 2034 and valued at an estimated cost of ₹30,000 crore.

The land parcel has a potential development area of 45 lakh square feet. Residential prices in Bandra Reclamation

are pegged at around ₹83,000 per square feet.

As per the bid terms, Adani Realty will have to share higher of either Rs 8,000 crore or 23.15% gross revenue earned from the project with MSRDC.

The timeframe set for fulfilment of these conditions is 10 years from the handover of the land parcel to the developer.

## Should PPF and bank FD investors bet their money on sovereign gold bonds?

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Investing in SGBs provides a hedge against inflation, unlike PPFs or FDs, which have been hit by inflation over the years. The reason is that the prices of gold, which form the base of SGBs, are generally inversely proportional to the economic conditions. When the economy weakens, or inflation rises, the prices of gold rise, thereby protecting the investors' purchasing power.

Sriram BKR, Senior Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, says, "Though gold could not be a similar alternative to fixed income options, those keeping money in FDs and PPF, looking for diversification apart from equities, gold could be a choice for such investors. Gold

apparently is the next best-performing asset class in India, next to equities, going by the past 10 to 15 years of data. SGBs offer a fixed interest of 2.5% per annum on the investment amount, payable semi-annually. Additionally, SGB gives investors an opportunity to participate in the price appreciation of gold if it were to happen over a longer term."

SGB has an overall tenure of 8 years, and premature withdrawal is allowed after 5 years. Sriram says, "Over a nearly 34-year period, data suggests that if one remained invested in gold, the outcomes were favourable. For 5-year duration, the average returns stood at 9.1%, with positive returns occurring 83% of the time and returns

exceeding 7% in 55.5% of cases. Similarly, for an 8-year period, the average returns remained at 9.1%, with positive returns observed 96% of the time, and returns surpassing 7% in 57% of instances. When factoring in the SGB interest, the likelihood of positive returns and returns exceeding 7% would likely improve for both 5 and 8-year spans. Notably, for an 8-year investment horizon, positive returns were observed 100% of the time."

"Apart from this, capital gains arising on maturity are exempted from long-term capital gain tax, and SGB is eligible for indexation benefits on the transfer of bonds. This is a clear and exclusive advantage that comes with SGB," he added further.

## Rs. 2.1 lakh crore accumulated through bank accounts under Jan Dhan scheme: Anurag Thakur

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday inaugurated the 2024 Annual Government and Institutional Business Meet of the Federal Bank and asserted that under the Jan Dhan scheme around 45 crore bank accounts have been opened.

Addressing an audience of the officials and employees of the bank, the Minister at the very outset, congratulated Federal Bank for an all-time high share price.

Recalling the mood when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Thakur said that a lot of people had rebuffed it as a non-starter.



"But today the government can proudly boast of having opened 45 crore bank accounts under the scheme. The corpus under the Jan Dhan accounts is a mammoth 2.1 lakh crore rupees that is part of the banking ecosystem," he said.

Reminiscing the time before the current government, Thakur said

that before 2014 the government was known for policy paralysis. Since 2014, the credo has shifted to Reform, Perform, Transform. The banking sector is today out of the clutches of debt and at an all-time high performance.

The Minister stated that when the country was hurt by economic offenders before 2014, it

was the current government that came out with the Economic Offenders Bill and is still fighting cases abroad to get all the offenders back to India. The gross NPA has reduced to 3.2 per cent, and the return on assets has seen a rise from 0.5 per cent to 0.79 per cent in 2023.

He went on to state that a similar mood prevailed when digital payments were promoted by the government after demonetization but today the smallest of payments is being made by BHIM UPI.

These are examples that have taken India from Fragile 5 to the top 5 economies of the world and will take the country to 3rd largest economy soon.

Thakur said that the government's efforts, with a mix of accountability and transparency, have brought 25 crore people out of multidimensional poverty in the past ten years and this a proof of people benefiting from Government schemes.

The Government can proudly proclaim that a hundred per cent of government expenditure on social sector schemes is reaching the beneficiaries due to the implementation of the JAM trinity.

The Minister ensured that the government will keep taking bold initiatives and is resolute to take India to the top 3 economies in another five years and a developed country by 2047.

## Salt substitutes lower hypertension risk in elderly adults by 40 percent



NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Researchers have unveiled a remarkable finding that could revolutionize the way we approach hypertension in older adults. The study, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, suggests that replacing regular salt with a salt substitute can significantly reduce the risk of high blood pressure without increasing the likelihood of low blood pressure episodes, offering a flavorful solution to a pressing health concern.

Lead author of the study, Dr. Yangfeng Wu, Executive Director of Peking University Clinical Research Institute in Beijing, China, emphasised the significance of the findings, stating, "Our results showcase

an exciting breakthrough in maintaining blood pressure that offers a way for people to safeguard their health and minimize the potential for cardiovascular risks, all while being able to enjoy the perks of adding delicious flavor to their favorite meals."

The study, known as the DECIDE-Salt trial, involved 611 participants aged 55 years or older from 48 care facilities in China. The participants were divided into two groups, with one group replacing usual salt with a salt substitute, while the other continued to use regular salt. The results revealed that individuals who used the salt substitute were 40% less likely to develop hypertension compared to those using regular

salt, marking a significant advancement in the field of cardiovascular health.

Commenting on the study, Rik Olde Engberink, a researcher, nephrologist, and clinical pharmacologist at Amsterdam University Medical Center's Department of Internal Medicine, commended the findings, stating, "The study provides an attractive alternative to the failing strategy to reduce the intake of salt worldwide," while emphasizing the need for continued effort and adoption of salt substitutes early in the food chain by the food industry.

The study's implications extend beyond the realm of hypertension prevention, offering a promising approach to cardiovascular risk management and overall health maintenance. As the World Health Organization identifies hypertension as the leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease and mortality, this research paves the way for a flavorful and effective strategy in the prevention and control of hypertension and related conditions.

## Himachal Pradesh Budget 2024: Govt hikes MSP for milk

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Presenting his second state Budget, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday announced hiking the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of cow milk and buffalo milk.

The MSP on cow milk has been raised from

₹38 to ₹45 per litre and buffalo milk from ₹38 to ₹55 per litre, he said.

The CM announced Rajiv Gandhi Prakriyat Kheti Yojna, under which 36,000 farmers -- 10 farmers from every panchayat -- will be trained in natural farming techniques.

Sukhu further said universal cartons will



be introduced for apple packaging and horticulture tourism will be encouraged.

He reiterated the state government's resolve to make Himachal Pradesh a green state by 2026.

He said the state government announced a special package of ₹4,500 crore for disas-

## Experts call for concerted efforts to tackle tobacco menace in India

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (Agencies): Government officials and health experts have underscored the urgent need for collaborative efforts across various sectors to address the pervasive issue of tobacco use in Indian society. Dr. Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services (DGHS) for the Government of India, emphasised the critical role of multi-sectoral intervention in navigating towards a healthier future. He highlighted India's position as the fourth-largest global producer of tobacco in 2021, emphasising the magnitude of the challenge.

Dr. Sutapa B Neogi, Director of the IIHMR-Delhi and president of the 6th National Conference on Tobacco or Health, highlighted the grim reality of tobacco use in India, where over 10 lakh people die each year from tobacco-related illnesses. She stressed the importance of uniting to combat the dual burden of smoking and smokeless tobacco, which currently affects nearly 29 per cent of Indian adults. The conference aims to serve as a platform for pro-



fessionals, researchers, and policymakers to exchange knowledge and best practices in tobacco control.

Dr. L Swasticharan, Additional DDG in the Directorate General and Director (EMR) at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, expressed concern over the involvement of youngsters in tobacco consumption and the resultant global impact. He emphasised the economic burden and the imperative to strengthen measures such as the NTCP and WHO-MPOWER initiative, highlighting the importance of multi-sectoral action at the national, state, and district levels to prioritise tobacco taxation and raise funds for a smoke-free India.

Dr. Yutaro Setoya, Team Lead for NCDs and Comorbidities at the WHO India Coun-

try Office, reinforced the urgency to address the increasing burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India, primarily attributed to tobacco use. He commended the country's efforts while emphasizing the need for holistic eradication strategies and prevention initiatives targeted at youngsters.

Dr. Jagdish Kaur, Regional Advisor for Tobacco Free Initiatives at the World Health Organization's South-East Asia Regional Office (WHO-SEARO), emphasised the urgent need for comprehensive policies to regulate surrogate advertisements of tobacco products, particularly smokeless tobacco. These policies are crucial to protect public health and prevent the exploitation of loopholes in advertising regulations.



## Daughters of J&K should express gratitude to PM Modi for visiting: Rekha

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) District President Jammu South Rekha Mahajan, stated in context with the upcoming mega public rally that daughters of J&K should express gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for visiting on 20 February at Maulana Azad Stadium, Jammu union territory of J&K.

She urged all daughters, particularly those from rural and urban areas of Jammu South, to join this mega rally as it is considered a historic moment. Rekha said Article 370 was a hurdle for the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"It gave only separatism, terrorism, nepotism, and corruption to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. She counted that J&K could not develop like the rest of the country. But now, the future of the citizens here will improve," she said, adding that



J&K which was known as paradise on earth, would again attract the world.

While interacting with the group of women, under the Shakti Vandan program (NGO and Self-help group Sampark Campaign) Rekha Mahajan hails the efforts of women.

She said that no Prime Minister since Independence has been as sensitive as PM Modi has

been towards daughters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always supported and encouraged Indian women in every field.

Rekha along with Co-Convenor of the Abhiyaan Divya Jain, Ex-Councillor Narinder Singh, Sarojini Sharma, and others had an interaction and had a cup of tea with ladies doing work for the wives of the army and also did

a workshop on zumba for the well being of the community at Sainik colony of Bahu Constituency in Jammu South.

Rekha added that Modi ji is coming to Jammu after the abrogation of Article 370, a constitutional provision, which had turned the females born in this erstwhile state into second-class citizens and the abrogation of the controversial provision of the constitu-

tion has brought smiles and a sense of belongingness to the own land on the faces of females, as the decision of the Modi led government has given them equal status at par with other citizens of J&K and it is indeed a great honor for all of us.

Rekha Mahajan highlights that the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme will be extended so that more youth can take advantage of it and "local youth especially from Jammu region will receive employment.

Public sector units and big private sector companies will be encouraged to create jobs for the local youth in the state.

Rekha Mahajan elaborates that India is witnessing a rapid transition from women's development to women-led development, we have developed a multi-pronged approach in our strategy under the leadership of our honorable Prime Minister.

## Women in large numbers should attend PM Modi's public rally: Sanjita

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 27: Jammu and Kashmir BJP Mahila Morcha President, Sanjita Dogra, chaired a meeting of Jammu District Mahila Morcha, which was attended by the three Mandal Presidents and their teams.

The meeting was convened to discuss the upcoming visit of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to Jammu, and public rally to be held on February 20, at M.A. Stadium, Jammu.

Sanjita Dogra, in the meeting, also reviewed the ongoing Shakti Vandana programmes and stressed on reaching maximum Self-Help Groups and NGOs run by women in Jammu and Kashmir and garner their support for the party.

Sanjita Dogra, while stressing upon the Mahila Morcha teams of the three mandals of the Jammu District to reach every area of their Mandal, contact the women and brief



them about the PM's visit and appeal them to reach the Public rally venue on February 20 in large numbers.

Sanjita Dogra said that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has launched a large number of welfare schemes for different sections of the society, with women too getting adequate share for the first time.

The women in Jammu and Kashmir have availed the benefit of various schemes, many of them are even the beneficiaries of more than one scheme of the Modi government, she said.

The Mahila Morcha President said that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, during his

public rally, should see massive attendance of women and the Mahila Morcha has to put more efforts to ensure that the women reach M.A. Stadium in large numbers to listen to the Prime Minister. She said that the PM has done a lot for the women and as such, the women too should convey their thankfulness to the Prime Minister through their presence in the public rally.

Mahila Morcha General Secretary Reema Padha, BJP District President Kuldeep Kandhari, Morcha Office Secretary Arti Koul, Chakshu, Meenu, Jyoti Devi, Anuradha Sharma were prominent among those present in the meeting.

## BJP VDG Cell holds meeting at Jhiri

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: Jammu and Kashmir BJP Village Defense Guard (VDG) held meeting at Jhiri in Akhnoor Assembly constituency and was attended by local VDG members in large numbers.

Former MLAs Rajeev Sharma and Krishan Lal, senior leader Munish Sharma, Convenor VDG Cell Basant Raj Thakur, VDG Co-Convenor Ramesh Katoch were the prominent leaders, who addressed this meeting.

Rajeev Sharma Ex-



MLA and Akhnoor district President, said that the VDG's are discharging their duties like strong force and their contribution has been splendid.

Krishan Lal Ex- MLA, spoke on the services rendered by VDG's in

remote and far-flung areas and added that their task is no less than the security forces.

Munish Sharma applauded the role of VDG's and said that their genuine demands should be fulfilled at the earliest.

Basant Raj Thakur said that the issue of transferring of gun to the next in the family after the demise or retirement of the serving VDG members, is very well in our notice and is being taken up at the appropriate plate forms and expressed hope that the matter would be considered sympathetically.

He also discussed the issue of the unpaid VDG's and said that the same is also taken up regularly with the concerned authorities.

Ramesh Katoch said that the presence of VDG's has induced

a sense of security among the minorities in areas of Doda, Baderwah, Kishtwar, Ramban, Rajouri, Poonch, Bani, Basohli and they have even sacrificed their lives in anti-insurgency operations.

Prominent among others present in the meeting included BJP Mahila Morcha spokesperson Pooja Grover, BJP Akhnoor Mandal President Swaran Singh, Khour Mandal President Manga Ram, Capt. Shoba Ram, Raj Kumar and others.

## GHSS Dhakhar students visit GDC Khour

Top News Report

KHOUR, Feb 17: About 50 students of Govt. Higher Secondary School Dhakhar along with their teachers visited the Govt. Degree College Khour as part of the celebration of the viksit Bharat event on Saturday.

During their visit the students visited different labs viz Computer lab, Science Labs, and the Library of the college. The aim of the

event was to give exposure to the students for pursuing higher studies. During this visit the worthy Principal, Dr. T.K. Sharma, gave motivational and encouraging lecture to the students for achieving their aimed goals in life.

Dr. Anjana Sharma, HoD Computer Sciences and Viksit Bharat @2047 committee members organized this event under the able guidance of the

Worthy Principal.

Sunny Dogra delivered a lecture on basics of IT equipments to the student. Heads of all Departments have welcomed the students during their visit to their respective Departments.

The students interacted very enthusiastically with the faculty members of the college and express their gratitude to the Principal & faculty members.

## Govt Polytechnic Jammu organizes certificates distribution function

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 17: Government Polytechnic Bikram Chowk Jammu today distributed Certificates to the trainees of two batches in Tailor (Darzi) on the successful completion of the Basic Skilling Training and also started the skill training under PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Carpenter (suthar) trade.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme training was conducted under the leadership of worthy Secretary Skill Development Department Kumar Rajeev Ranjan.

The certificates were distributed today to the trainees by Director Skill Development Department (SDD) Sudershan Kumar in presence of Leena Padha, Mission Director, Skill Mission J&K along with Principal Government Polytechnic Jammu, Er Arun Bangotra, G.M Bhat Joint Director Skill



Development Department and faculty of the college.

Principal Er. Arun Bangotra extended a warm welcome to all the dignitaries and trainees under Vishwakarma Scheme and highlighted the basic objectives of the scheme by recognition of artisans through PM Vishwakarma Certificate as well basic training of five to seven days and advanced training of 15 days or more, with a stipend,

providing modern voucher toolkit of Rs 15000 free of cost to trained Vishwakarmas besides linkage with credit based soft loans and marketing support for expansion of their business.

While addressing the trainees, Sudershan Kumar Director Skill Development Department enlighten on PM Vishwakarma Scheme which is an ambitious initiative of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and it aims to

provide recognition, training, tool kits, certification, marketing support and soft loans to empower the craftsmen and artisans of our country who immensely contribute towards the economy of our nation as a whole.

He commended the efforts of Principal Government Polytechnic Jammu Er Arun Bangotra and his team for successfully conducting the training under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

While speaking on the occasion Leena Padha Mission Director, Skill Mission J&K encourage the trainees to leverage their skills and open up their own business and earn the livelihood and contribute to the nation's economic growth.

While speaking on the occasion, several trainees expressed their gratitude towards the administration of the college for successful and smooth conduct of their training.

Other present on the occasion were Er. Inderjeet Singh workshop superintendent, Raj Kumar HOD Mechanical Engineering, Manjeet Singh HOD Electrical Engineering Surekha Rani, Sanjogita Mehra, Sandeep Singh and Amit Kapoor Instructors of Government Polytechnic Jammu, and various craftsmen were also present on the occasion.

## Bharat Darshan tour programme by 89 Bn BSF Tangdhar

Top News Report

TANGDCHAR, Feb 17: Karnah Kupwara: In line with BSF's commitment to fostering goodwill along the LOC, the 89 Bn BSF, Tangdhar, proudly presents a Bharat Darshan tour programme, set to unfold on Saturday.

Under the guidance of Brindavan Prasad Sah, Offg Comdt, 89 Bn BSF, and S S Ahmad, Second-in-Command, along with Dr. Abhishek



Sharma, CMO (SG), eager students from various government schools – Govt. Higher Secondary School Kandi, Govt. Higher Secondary School Tad, Karnah, Govt. High School Hajitra, Karnah, and Govt. Middle School Hajinar, Karnah – will embark on a memorable journey to Kolkata, West Bengal.

Over the course of 7 days, these young learners will immerse themselves in the vibrant culture and heritage of

Kolkata, exploring its iconic landmarks and soaking in the essence of the City of Joy.

Additionally, they will have the opportunity to visit nearby sites of historical and cultural significance, offering a glimpse into the rich tapestry of India's multicultural diversity. This tour promises to be an enriching experience, providing students with invaluable insights into the progress and diversity of our beloved nation.