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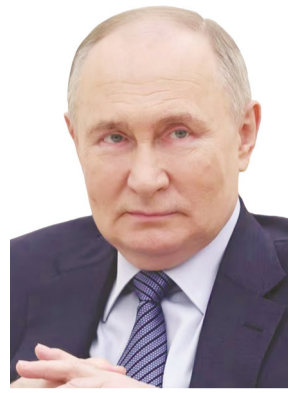


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e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-15 Issue-72 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

4 houses damaged in massive fire in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Mar 13 (Agencies): At least four houses were damaged in a fire incident in the old city of Srinagar late last night, officials said on Wednesday.

Fire and Emergency Service officials said that a fire broke out in a house at around 12.45 a.m. near Pather Masjid Zaina Kadal in the town of Srinagar and spread to the other three nearby houses, causing extensive damage to the property.

The fire tenders were rushed from the nearby fire stations to douse the leaping flames.

There was no report of any loss of life or injury to anyone in the incident, they said.

The cause of the fire is being ascertained, they added.

Police solves burglary case within 12 hrs in Baramulla, 3 arrested

SRINAGAR, Mar 13 (Agencies): Police on Wednesday solved a burglary case within the 12-hour commissioning of crime, arrested three accused persons, and recovered the stolen property in Jammu and Kashmir Baramulla district.

Police Shree received a written complaint from one Abdul Aziz Bhat, alias Bhat Traders, a resident of Sheeri, stating therein that his salesman Zubair Ahmad Mir, a resident of Gantamulla Bala, has stolen hardware, sanitary items, and other items from the shop worth 6 lacs.

Accordingly, a case FIR No. 11/2024 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Sheeri, and an investigation was initiated, the police said, and an investigation team of officers and officials was constituted to look into the matter.

During the course of investigation and analysis, CCTV footage has revealed the involvement of a salesman and his other two associates who were involved in the commission of the crime.

The duo associates were identified as Wali Mohd Bhat, a resident of Bimar Boniyar, and Zubair Ahmad Lone of

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Total of 22,217 electoral bonds purchased from Apr 1, 2019 to Feb 15, 2024: SBI to SC



NEW DELHI, Mar 13 (Agencies): The State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased and 22,030 redeemed by political parties between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year.

In a compliance affidavit filed in the apex court, the SBI said as

per the court's direction, it has made available the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India before the close of business hours on March 12.

It said details, including date of purchase of each electoral bond, names of the purchaser and the denomination of the bonds purchased have been furnished.

The affidavit, filed by SBI's chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara, said the bank has also furnished to the EC details like date of encashment of the electoral bonds, the names of political parties which received the contributions and the denominations of the bonds.

On March 11, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud had dismissed the SBI's plea seeking an extension of time and ordered it to disclose the details of electoral bonds to the EC by close of business hours on March 12.

The apex court had also directed the EC to publish the details

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Lt Governor felicitates medal winners of National & International Competitions for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23

LG inaugurates Synthetic Football Turf at Parade Ground, lays foundation stone of Synthetic Hockey Field at Bandhurakh

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 13: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today felicitated the medal winners of National and International Competitions for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The Lt Governor congratulated all the athletes and coaches on their outstanding performances.

A total 368 sportspersons, from 17 disciplines, received special cash awards amounting to Rs 1.35 crore directly in their Bank accounts through DBT mode. Rs 12 lakh awarded to Aqsa Gulzar and Sohan Kamotra was awarded with Rs 8 lakh cash



award, in Pencak Silat and Chess disciplines, respectively.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor inaugurated a State-of-the-Art Synthetic Football Turf costing Rs 4.83 Cr at Parade Ground, Jammu. He

also laid the foundation stone of the Synthetic Hockey Field at Bandhurakh worth Rs 4.85 Cr.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, we have built modern sports infrastructure,

providing world-class training and mentoring to athletes and all other supports to ensure J&K's sportspersons are able to achieve excellence in national and international sporting events," the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor extended his felicitations to the Para teams and women athletes for their remarkable feat in major sporting events.

He said, the recent successes in Asian Para Games, National Games, National School Games of athletes and players from J&K have kindled brighter hope of an upswing in performances in many more international events.

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Widespread light to moderate rain, snow over J&K during the next 24 hrs: MeT

SRINAGAR, Mar 13: A western disturbance is likely to trigger widespread light to moderate rain or snow in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

Meteorological Centre Srinagar said widespread light to moderate rain or snow, coupled with thunder over Jammu and Kashmir, would occur during the next 24 hours.

The weather will remain partially to

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Election Commission team reaches Jammu to assess LS Poll preparedness in J&K



JAMMU, Mar 13 (Agencies): A team of Election Commission officials led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar reached here on Wednesday to review preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the Union Territory, officials said.

The poll panel team, which is on a three-day tour of Jammu and

Kashmir, interacted with representatives of the NC, PDP, BJP, CPI(M), Congress and the AAP, besides Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer P K Pole and nodal officers of the police in Srinagar on Tuesday.

Officials said the Election Commission team arrived in Jammu on Wednesday afternoon

and began holding meetings with senior officials of various law enforcement agencies.

The team will also meet Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Director General of Police R R Swain before addressing a press conference later in the day, they said.

There has been a growing demand among the political parties in Jammu and Kashmir that the Election Commission should hold assembly polls here simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls or immediately after the general elections.

Meanwhile, police detained National Panthers Party (NPP)

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Priyanka Gandhi voices support for full Statehood demand of people of Ladakh

NEW DELHI, Mar 13 (Agencies): Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday voiced support for the demand of full statehood for Ladakh, asserting that the government should leave its stubbornness and listen to the voice of the people.

The Congress general secretary also shared on X a video of Ladakhi people fasting for eight days demanding full statehood.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "The BJP had promised the people of Ladakh to give full statehood but did not fulfil it. On the one hand there is increasing Chi-



nese occupation and on the other hand there is the silence, broken promises and betrayal of the BJP government — the trust of the people of Ladakh is breaking."

Amidst repeated protests, Ladakh's educationist and environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk along with dozens

of people has been fasting for eight days in minus 15 degrees temperature, she said.

"Today the people of Ladakh are demanding full statehood and security under the 6th Schedule, which is the duty of the government to fulfil," she said.

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GPS-Enabled tracking systems to be installed in J&K poll duty vehicles, Says Official

JAMMU, Mar 13 (Agencies): In keeping with the directions of the Election Commission, Jammu and Kashmir's election department will procure GPS-enabled tracking systems for 12,500 poll duty vehicles for the forthcoming parliamentary elections in the Union Territory. J-K Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Pandurang K Pole has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for companies to procure GPS-enabled vehicle tracking systems for election duty vehicles.

GPS control rooms will be established at the offices of district electoral officers (DEOs) and the CEO for real-time



tracking and monitoring of the movement of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) through the trackers installed in the vehicles carrying them, officials said.

This step is being taken for the end-to-end movement of all EVMs and VVPATs on the pre-poll and poll days to ensure

careful monitoring at all times. Accordingly, all polling parties and sector officers' vehicles will be fitted with GPS tracking devices, they said.

"As per the instructions of the Election Commission of India (ECI) regarding the transportation, storage and security of EVMs and VVPATs, it is imperative

to streamline their handling, including reserve EVMs and VVPATs carried by sector officers for need-based replacement on the poll day," Pole said in the RFP.

He said the GPS tracking devices along with all the necessary hardware are to be fitted and installed in the election duty vehicles. The tentative number of vehicles will be 12,500, he added.

To facilitate this, GPS control rooms will be set up at the DEO and CEO levels to monitor and track the movement of EVMs and VVPATs through the vehicle tracking system and other related infrastructure and applications.

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EDITORIAL

NO SMOKING DAY

Every year the second Wednesday of the month of March is celebrated as No Smoking Day. Many people have the habit of smoking, which poses serious risks to health. Smoking often causes lung cancer. After getting into the habit of smoking, it is difficult for people to quit or reduce it. People who do not smoke but come in contact with smokers can also have serious health problems. Due to which they often suffer from asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia. To create awareness among people about the ill effects of smoking and motivate them to quit smoking, No Smoking Day is celebrated every year on the second Wednesday of March. This year, Smoking Prohibition Day or No Smoking Day is falling on 09 March. The day is inspired by No Tobacco Day and is majorly celebrated in the United Kingdom. No Smoking Day was first observed on Ash Wednesday in the Republic of Ireland in the year 1984. Previously, it was celebrated on the first Wednesday of March as it began on Ash Wednesday. However, with time, it shifted to second Wednesday. Now, it is celebrated as an annual event throughout the United Kingdom and in other countries as well. Medical reports during the 1920s linked smoking to cancer and other serious diseases. Since then, many initiatives have been launched around the world to convince smokers to quit their habit. This day was started with the aim of helping addicted smokers to quit smoking forever.

No Smoking Day is a health awareness day that takes place every year with a different theme or theme. Some successful themes have been 'Break Free' and 'Time to Quit'. This day was started to make people aware about the ill effects of smoking and help them quit it in time. Quitting smoking takes a lot of dedication and motivation because for people who smoke regularly, their bodies become addicted to it. If they stop smoking, their body reacts in such a way that they crave tobacco.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) data,

Secondhand smoking causes premature death of about 12 lakh people every year. So this day is a good opportunity for everyone to take the first step towards quitting this deadly habit. According to various researches, it has been found that No Smoking Day has proved helpful for 1 in 10 people who wanted to quit this bad habit. Cough and throat irritation, bad breath and smelly clothes, dry skin and teeth discoloration, serious fetal conditions, heart disease and lung cancer. According to WHO, tobacco kills half of its users. More than 80 lakh people die every year due to tobacco. Of those deaths, more than 7 million are caused by direct tobacco use. Of the 1.3 billion tobacco users worldwide, more than 80 percent live in low- and middle-income countries. No Smoking Day is also special for those people who feel that their loved ones are ruining their lives because of this deadly habit. They can extend their helping hand by providing them the right guidance and support. So if you are a smoker or you know someone who smokes, come forward and take a pledge together against smoking.



By: Shahnaz Husain

If you are frustrated over high cost of beauty parlours and dermatologist in treating skin and hair beauty problems than all you need to do is to squeeze out some fresh lemon juice from your own kitchen and drink lemon water daily and also apply it on your skin also. The sunny yellow fruit will provide smooth, flawless and radiant skin by removing dead cells and act as a natural lightener for hair and skin by regulating acidity and eliminating fat. Lemon is rich in Vitamin B, Vitamin C, Carbohydrates, magnesium and Phosphorus that rejuvenates skin, absorbs the oiliness, cleans the skin pores and improves texture and condition of skin and hair.

Lemon has astringent properties which help in preventing sign of premature aging like wrinkles and fine lines

Beauty Benefits of Lemon

and restore skin elasticity to maintain youthful appearance.

Most of us know that Lemon is a rich source of Vitamin C and have taken it at some time or other. Added to a glass of cold water, it can be most refreshing during hot and humid weather. Taken regularly, it is a preventive against colds and actually strengthens the immune system. We also add it to salads, snacks and food, because its tanginess adds to their flavour. There are a number of ways that the common lemon can be used for beauty too.

Lemon is best taken diluted, adding it to water. You can start your day with the juice of a lemon in a glass of warm water. This combination helps to keep the system flushed and aid the removal of toxins and wastes. This will also reflect on the skin, keeping it clear and glowing. Weight watchers will also find this beneficial.

As a cosmetic ingredient, lemon can be used in various ways. The only thing to remember is not to use it undiluted, as it can be harsh on the skin. On areas where the skin is thicker, lemon can be used by itself. For example, for dark elbows, rub lemon halves and then wash off with water. Over a period of time, it will cleanse the skin and lighten its colour.

Lemon can also be used as a hand lotion. Mix it with rose water and rub it into the skin of the hands. For rough hands, rub granulated sugar and the juice of a lemon together with the hands, till the sugar dissolves. Then rinse off with water. Done regularly, it will help to improve the skin texture.

Oily skins can really benefit from a lemon treatment. Dilute the juice of half a lemon in a glass of water and use this to wash your face. If it seems harsh for your skin, add more water. Gently blot the face with tissue or a clean towel, instead of wiping it. Lemon not only helps to restore the normal acid-alkaline balance, but also reduces surface oil. This treatment can be beneficial during summer, when the skin tends to seem more oily. Some people have sensitive skins. So, if your skin burns or itches with the application of lemon-water, you should not use it.

Honey mixed with lemon juice can be applied on the face daily. While honey moisturizes the skin, lemon juice restores the normal balance and lightens skin colour over a period of time of regular use. For oily skin use one part of honey with two parts lemon juice. For normal and dry skin, use honey and lemon juice in equal quantities.

Lemon can also be used as a

hair rinse. You can add lemon juice to a mug of water and use it as a last rinse, after your shampoo. You can even add it to "tea water". Boil used tea leaves in enough water and cool the liquid. Add the juice of one lemon and use it as a last rinse. This helps to add shine to the hair.

Due to its many beneficial properties, lemon has been used as an ingredient to formulate creams and lotions for skin care. It has been used, along with aloe vera to formulate cleansing gels, helping to get rid of dirt and pollutants, without disturbing the normal acid-alkaline balance. A lemon-turmeric cream has been used as a pre-bath cream and also a soap substitute, for people with dry, dehydrated and sensitive skins. Lemon is a powerful natural cleanser.

When nature has provided us with ideal cosmetic ingredients, why should we use chemicals and synthetic substances? In fact, the human body responds well to natural substances, while it has an in-built resistance to synthetic ones.

(The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India)

Benefits of Microlearning,



By: Vijay GarG

Microlearning is impacting talent acquisition at workplaces

In the pulsating realm of talent acquisition, where the stakes are high, and the competition for top-tier professionals intensifies, organisations find themselves navigating an ever-shifting landscape. The mantra for success is no longer confined to offering competitive salaries and appealing job titles; it now entails a commitment to continuous learning and professional development. In this paradigm shift, microlearning has emerged as a transformative force, ushering in a new era of upskilling strategies that not only attract but also retain the most sought-after talents in the market.

The talent conundrum
In a landscape defined by unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the paradox of

talent abounds. Organisations, armed with enticing job offers and competitive remuneration, find themselves in fierce competition for a finite pool of exceptional individuals. The realisation dawns that to stand out amidst the cacophony of job opportunities, businesses must embrace a holistic approach that goes beyond traditional recruitment tactics. Recent studies underline this shift, emphasising that for 87% of millennials and Gen Z, the consideration of professional development opportunities significantly influences their choice of employer.

The microlearning revolution
Amidst this backdrop, microlearning emerges as a transformative force, reshaping how organisations approach talent acquisition and retention. Unlike traditional training methods that demand extended time commitments, microlearning delivers content in bite-sized, digestible portions, typically lasting between 5 to 10 minutes. The significance of this approach lies not just in its brevity, but in its ability to cater to the modern professional's shorter attention span, resulting in a staggering 17% improvement in job performance compared to traditional methods, as noted in a study by the Journal of Applied Psychology.

Increased engagement
Microlearning has proven to be highly effective in keeping

learners engaged. According to a study by the Journal of Applied Psychology, microlearning modules result in a 17% improvement in job performance compared to traditional training methods. The bite-sized nature of the content caters to shorter attention spans, ensuring higher retention rates.

Time efficiency
Traditional training programmes often demand significant time commitments, leading to potential disengagement. Microlearning, however, delivers content in short bursts, typically lasting 5-10 minutes. This format aligns with the modern professional's schedule, making it 300% more time-efficient, as reported by the Association for Talent Development. The rise of remote work and diverse work schedules necessitates flexible training solutions. Microlearning platforms offer on-the-go access, allowing employees to learn at their own pace and convenience. A study by Deloitte found that 85% of companies with successful microlearning programmes reported increased employee satisfaction due to the flexibility it provides.

Upskilling strategies
It utilises data analytics to identify skill gaps and create personalised learning paths for employees. This targeted approach ensures that training aligns with individual career goals and organisational needs,

enhancing the overall effectiveness of upskilling initiatives. It helps incorporate gamified elements into microlearning modules to boost engagement and create a competitive yet collaborative learning environment. Research by TalentLMS indicates that gamification can increase employee engagement by up to 60%. It implements feedback mechanisms within microlearning platforms to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Regular assessments and feedback loops not only reinforce learning but also provide valuable insights for refining upskilling strategies over time.

In the dynamic world of talent acquisition, staying ahead requires a proactive approach to employee development. Microlearning, with its proven effectiveness and efficiency, emerges as a strategic tool for upskilling, attracting top talent, and retaining a skilled workforce. By embracing the numbers-backed benefits of microlearning, organisations can position themselves as industry leaders in talent development, securing a competitive advantage in the quest for the best and brightest professionals.

(Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational columnist Malout)

Katherine Kubler's docu-series is neither a one-person account nor a revenge saga

To say that *The Program* is an eye-opener would be an understatement. This horrific account of the troubled teen industry in America is so startling, that the first question that pops up is — how can it be allowed to function with such impunity. The series not only answers the question but takes you deep into the quagmire where in the name of behavioural therapy teenagers are meted out greater harm and parents are duped of their hard earned money. Worse still, they are manipulated into believing it is in the best interest of their children.

What makes the documentation so remarkable is not just one thing but several. For one though it's Katherine Kubler, who studied in one such behaviour modification school *The Academy* at Ivy Ridge, and who has made the film, this is neither a one-person account nor a revenge saga. Though she does refer to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, even uses a clip from the film with lines, 'not for their sins against myself, but for their black injustices to others' playing loud and clear, revenge isn't the motive here. Without playing the victim card, yet coming from the heart of an aggrieved insider, she lays bare the trauma teens undergo at these special programmes. No child, deviant



or not, deserves such treatment.

Following the *Tough Love* dictum, which is more like a diktat, students at the WWASP (World Wide Association of Specialty Programmes) were forced to lead such a severe regimented life that their time in such schools pales jail time. Imagine not being allowed to talk or look out of the window and restrained at the slightest hint of rebellion. No wonder one of the ex-students when asked how did it feel when he actually went to a jail for a misdemeanour at the school answers, "It was like being in a five star Hilton hotel."

Yet another big plus of the documentary is how it resists the temptation of dramatising or recreating, the standard trope in docu-series today. But then the material at hand is volatile and

dramatic enough. As Katherine makes us walk the very alleys of Ivy Ridge where all the horror unfolded when she was there in 2005, you don't need any artifice. Corroborating her harrowing experiences are several other men and women clearly and deeply affected by what happened when doors closed on them to the outside world. If the first episode builds with individual reveals, the picture gets bigger and sinister by the time we move into the second and third episode. The rot clearly is not confined to one institution alone but institutionalised. Katherine shares, 'If you want to know the guilty follow who the crime would be useful to,' and takes us onto a money trail. Clearly the documentary has not been made in a hurry. There is purpose, resolve and method

to its craft. Personal accounts, professional opinions, video footage and bit of investigative journalism are woven to create an absorbing exposition. Why even dark humour is peppered across. An expert shares, "New York state had more regulations for dog kennels than they had for programmes for teens," and it's numbing to know there is no FDA for behavioural health. From personal, you even have Katherine's father expressing his feelings, it moves to universal. Camera (cinematography by Peter Castagnetti) follows the proceedings with a similar spirit, focusing intimately but without intruding, as much a witness as we are to the trauma of the sufferers.

The three-part Netflix series rightly states — abuse of the child is the business of anyone who knows about it. As it climaxes on an especially powerful note, 'now you know' indeed knowing this truth is unsettling, leaving you with a big lump in your throat. Katherine, also one of the executive producers reminds us how abuse thrives in silence. For the sake of thousands of students still trapped in such boarding schools, let's hope the documentary makes the right kind of noise. As viewers we sure are shaken and stirred.

Al Pacino explains why he didn't name all Best Picture Oscar nominees before revealing winner



Hollywood legend Al Pacino, who didn't name all the 10 nominees for Best Picture at the recently held 96th Academy Awards before announcing the winner, has issued a

clarification detailing what led to the awkward moment on stage.

He issued a statement amid questions surrounding his appearance during the 2024 Oscars cer-

emony, where he awkwardly presented the best picture category. The actor, who won an Academy Award for best actor in *Scent of a Woman*, simply opened the envelope and said, "And my eyes see Oppenheimer," at the award ceremony. "There seems to be some controversy about my not mentioning every film by name last night before announcing the best picture award," Pacino said in a statement. "I just want to be clear it was not my intention to omit them, rather a choice by the producers not to have them said again since they were highlighted individually throughout the ceremony. I was honoured to be a part of the evening and chose to follow the way they wished for this award to be presented."

Oscars producer Molly McNearney also said in an interview after the Oscars that "it was a creative decision" not to have Pacino list all 10 best picture nominees before announcing the winner.

Sukhmani Sadana ties the knot with Sundeep Gill in an intimate wedding

The wedding season is bustling, and the spotlight falls on yet another actress from the glitzy world of entertainment — Sukhmani Sadana. Renowned for her captivating performances in *Manmarziyaan*, *Sacred Games*, *Tandav*, *The Broken News*, and *Tanaav* among others, Sukhmani tied the knot with Sundeep Gill, a Real Estate Developer from British Columbia, on March 3.

The couple opted for a traditional Punjabi wedding in her hometown, Amritsar, sealing their union in an intimate ceremony attended by family, close friends, and relatives. Actresses Suzanne Khan and Minisha Lamba, Sukhmani's dear friends, were present to share their love and blessings on her special day.



Sukhmani and Sundeep's love story began at an event in Mumbai, where they instantly connected. Talking about her special day, Sukhmani said, "On the eve of March 3, I embarked on a journey that intertwined my past and present, my roots and my dreams. With a heart full of joy and

nostalgia, I chose to celebrate in the heart of my beloved city, Amritsar, amidst the loving embrace of family and friends.

It was a true-blue Punjabi wedding and was a lively affair, resonating with the beats of giddha dancers and tumba players, a true reflection of our vibrant culture."

Dev Patel becomes emotional as 'Monkey Man' gets standing ovation at South by Southwest film festival

Actor Dev Patel was seen fighting back tears after his directorial debut "Monkey Man" received a standing ovation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) film festival.

The much-anticipated India-set movie, also written by the "Slumdog Millionaire" and "Lion" star, had its world premiere at the film gala, held annually in Austin, Texas.

The movie was introduced to the audience by filmmaker Jordan Peele, who serves as a producer of the project.

Inspired by the legend of Lord Hanuman, "Monkey Man" is set in Mumbai and features Patel as Kid, a man on a quest for vengeance against the corrupt leaders who murdered his mother and continue to systemically victimise



the poor and powerless. Post the screening, Patel made his way to the stage and was met with loud cheers and applause from the audiences. Seeing the overwhelming reaction, the actor became emotional.

The actor said he has

been a long-time fan of the action genre and revealed that he was introduced to the story of Lord Hanuman from Hindu epic Ramayana by his grandfather.

"He (the character) really captivated me. He has been sort of an emblem for my father

and many in my family... If you go to any gym in India, there's like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ronnie Coleman and Hanuman. What baffled me growing up was this iconography of this super strong being who could hold mountains in one hand and split his chest open. It reminded me of the iconography of Superman. I was like this is amazing, I wish the world knew about it," Patel said.

The actor said he wanted to take a grounded route to the story. "When you go deep into it, he is sort of a guy who has lost faith in himself and had to be reminded of who he was," he said, adding that he was also inspired by his love for Bruce Lee movies.

"I really wanted to touch on the caste

system in India, the idea where the poor are at the bottom, slaving away in these kitchens, then you go to the land of the kings and above them, you have God, a man-made god that is polluting and corrupting religion, and then you have heaven," Patel said.

The actor also asked the film's cast and crew to join him on the stage. The film also stars popular Indian actors Sobhita Dhulipala, Vipin Sharma, Ashwini Kalsekar, Adithi Kalkunte, Sikan-dar Kher, Pitobash and Makarand Deshpande, along with Sharlto Copley.

Patel has developed the movie from a story idea he had. He wrote the screenplay along with Paul Angunawela and John Collee.

Michelle Yeoh clears air on Oscars 2024 stage confusion between her and Emma Stone

The Oscar-winning actress Michelle Yeoh has issued a clarification on what led to the confusion between her and 'Poor Things' actress Emma Stone at the 96th Oscars stage, when the latter won the Best Actress honour.

Michelle along with fellow past Oscar winners and actresses Jennifer Lawrence, Charlize Theron, Sally Field, and Jessica Lange were on hand at Sunday's ceremony to present the award for Best Actress, reports 'People' magazine.

Each actress gave a short speech about this year's nominees—Emma Stone, Annette Bening, Lily Gladstone, Sandra Huller, and Carey Mulligan—before the 'Poor Things' actress was pronounced the winner. Michelle handed



Emma Stone's Oscar statuette to Jennifer Lawrence on the Oscars stage causing confusion.

As Emma Stone walked onto the stage, she told the women that her custom Louis Vuitton gown had ripped

before walking over to Michelle, who was holding onto the statuette.

As per 'People', Michelle, still holding onto the Oscar, walked over to Lawrence, who took it from her hands and presented it to Emma.

After Emma said, "Thank you", she and Lawrence laughed before hugging each other.

The exchange caused moviegoers to voice their confusion online, causing Michelle to clear the air in an Insta-

gram post.

The actress wrote, 'Congratulations Emma!! I confused you, but I wanted to share that glorious moment of handing over Oscar to you together with your best friend Jennifer!! She reminded me of my Bae Jamie Lee Curtis, always there for each other.'

The post included a picture of Michelle smiling from ear to ear as Lawrence handed the Oscar to Emma.

Michelle won the award for Best Actress in 2023 for her work on 'Everything Everywhere All at Once'.

Curtis also starred in the film and took home the win for Best Supporting Actress.

Emma and Lawrence have also been long-time friends, who first met through Woody Harrelson.

Disha Patani & Sidharth Malhotra bond over gym sessions, volleyball during shoot breaks



Disha Patani, who plays an air hostess in the adrenaline-pumping action film *Yodha*, recalled playing volleyball with lead actor Sidharth Malhotra during the shoot breaks.

Disha, who was in the national capital on Monday, along with Sidharth and Raashii Khanna to promote their film, directed by Sagar Ambre and Pushkar Ojha, looked resplendent in a white

silk saree and a matching embellished sleeveless blouse with a sweetheart neckline.

Talking about the fun thing they did during the shoot of the movie, Disha said, "We shot the entire schedule in the plane, and anytime we used to have a break we used to play Volleyball on the sets. So that was the fun thing we had."

PM Modi lays foundation stone of 3 semiconductor facilities, says India delivers on its commitment

Semiconductor projects launched include India's first Fab facility at Dholera in Gujarat, Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility at Sanand in the state, and an OSAT facility in Morigaon in Assam

DHOLERA (GUJARAT), Mar 13 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said when India commits, it delivers, referring to his government's commitment to make the country a semiconductor manufacturing hub.

PM Narendra Modi was virtually addressing people after laying the foundation stone of three semiconductor facilities of about Rs 1.25 lakh crore, which include two in Gujarat and one in Assam.

"This is a historic day as we are taking a strong step towards a bright future," PM Narendra Modi said.

The 'Made in India' semicon-



ductor chips will take the country towards self-reliance and modernity, he said. "When India commits, India

delivers and democracy also delivers," PM Narendra Modi said on the promise to make the country a semiconductor manufacturing hub.

He said the earlier governments committed sums of thousands of crores, but they could not invest thousands of crores for the development of the semiconductor industry.

The three semiconductor projects launched include India's first Fab facility at Dholera in Gujarat, Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility at Sanand in the state, and an OSAT facility in Morigaon in Assam.

CAA implementation ahead of Lok Sabha polls 'dirty vote bank politics' of BJP: Arvind Kejriwal



NEW DELHI, Mar 13 (Agencies): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act ahead of the Lok Sabha polls was a "dirty vote bank politics" of the BJP and asserted that people want this law to be repealed.

With this law, the BJP-led government at the Centre has opened the floodgates for the arrival of a large number of poor minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh into India, he

said at a press conference.

"There are 3.5 crore minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The BJP wants to spend the money of our people in settling poor migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh by giving them houses and jobs here," charged Kejriwal, who is also the Aam Aadmi Party national convener.

He claimed that the BJP stands to gain in the coming elections as poor minorities from the neighbouring countries settling in India will become its vote bank. Implementation of the CAA ahead of the Lok Sabha polls was a "dirty vote bank politics" of the BJP, Kejriwal said.

The country demands scrapping of CAA, he said and asked people to vote against the BJP if the law is not repealed.

The Citizenship Amendment Act seeks to grant citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

Rs 1 lakh to poor women annually, 50 per cent quota in govt jobs: Rahul Gandhi's 'Mahila Nyay' guarantees

DHULE, Mar 13 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday announced five 'Mahila Nyay' guarantees, including Rs 1 lakh annually into the bank accounts of poor women and 50 per cent reservation in government jobs if his party is voted to power in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing a women's rally in Maharashtra's Dhule district as part of his ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', Gandhi also promised that the central government's share in the budget for women working as ASHA, anganwadi workers and those in mid-day meal schemes would be doubled.



A nodal officer would be appointed to educate women about their rights and fight their cases, he said.

The Savitribai Phule hostels will be set up for women in every district of the country, Gandhi said.

Before Gandhi's speech, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge in a video statement said the

'Mahalaxmi' guarantee envisages depositing Rs 1 lakh directly in the bank accounts of poor women annually.

He said "Aadhi Aabadi Pura Hakk", which means 50 per cent quota for women in government jobs.

The Congress guarantees were "pathar ki lakeer" and not a "jumla", Kharge said.

Mamata says 'no ties' with brother after he expresses displeasure over TMC's Howrah candidate

KOLKATA, Mar 13 (Agencies): Shortly after Mamata Banerjee's brother Babun Banerjee expressed his displeasure over TMC re-nominating Prasun Banerjee from Howrah, the TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister said she would disassociate herself from the "greedy" family member. He also hinted on contesting from the same seat as an Independent.

"Sometimes, someone becomes greedy when he grows up. In every election, he creates problems. I do not like greedy persons. From today, I totally disassociate myself with him. From now on, please do not link my name with him. Forget that I had a relation with him. Not only me, other members



of my family will also disassociate themselves from him," Mamata said about her relationship with her young sibling.

The CM also made it clear that the Trinamool Congress would give an all-out effort to secure ex-footballer Prasun Banerjee's victory.

Meanwhile, minutes after Mamata's reaction, Babun made a U-turn and said he would not contest as an independent candidate from

Howrah. "Didi is everything to me. Her every word is blessing for me." When asked about his elder sister's decision to disassociate herself from Babun replied, "It is between sister and brother and it happens in all the families. It is not to be discussed in public."

The discontent over the Lok Sabha polls candidature surfaced within the Banerjee family following Babun's

observation about the party's Howrah candidate Prasun who is a two-time MP. Babun said, "Who cannot qualify Class V exam, he (Prasun) has been made graduate."

"I can never forget the insult that Prasun hurled at me," Babun added.

"I am not happy with the selection of the candidate from Howrah Lok Sabha seat. Prasun Banerjee is not the right choice. There were many capable candidates who were overlooked. I know Didi (Mamata) would not agree with me," Babun voiced.

He added, that if needed, "I will contest as independent candidate from Howrah Lok Sabha seat. I am a registered voter of Howrah."

The aggrieved Baner-

jee family member also ruled out the possibility to jump ship to the BJP. "As long Mamataadi is here, I will never quit TMC and neither will I join any other political party. I am connected to sports. And yes, I know many BJP leaders who, too, are connected to sports," he said.

Reacting to Banerjee's candidature, Babun said, "Who cannot qualify Class V exam, he has been made graduate."

Mamata, however, used her decision to disassociate herself from her brother as a political tool to blunt BJP's allegation accusing her of practising dynasty politics. "I believe in people's family. My decision disassociating myself with him (Babun) proves that I don't believe in dynasty politics," she said.

National Cadet Corps "World's Largest" As Rajnath Singh Approves Expansion

NEW DELHI, Mar 13 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) with an addition of 3,00,000 cadets.

The expansion is expected to cater to the increasing demand for the NCC from educational institutions throughout the country, the defence ministry said.

"Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for expansion of the National Cadet Corps with the addition of three lakh cadet vacancies,"

it said.

"From just 20,000 cadets in 1948, the NCC will now have a sanctioned strength of 20 lakh cadets on its roles making it the largest uniformed youth organisation of the world," the ministry said in a statement.

It said the expansion plan encompasses the establishment of four new "Group Headquarters" and the addition of two new NCC units.

"With NCC being offered as an elective subject as per the National Education Policy 2020, the expansion will be a step



towards meeting the aspirations of the youth towards playing a pivotal role as future leaders of the nation," the ministry said.

"The far reaching impact of this expansion will lead to proportionate distribution of vacancies

across all States and Union Territories and would reduce the waiting list of institutions aspiring for the NCC," it said.

An important facet of the expansion plan involves the proposal for employment of ex-

servicemen as NCC instructors for leveraging their skills and vast experience.

"This noble initiative will ensure quality training to the NCC cadets and would generate employment opportunities for the veterans," the ministry said.

It said the expansion signifies a dedication to shaping future leaders embodying discipline, leadership and service.

"The NCC aims to make a transformative impact, fostering an environment where youth meaningfully contribute towards nation building," it said.

National Investigation Agency detains man from Ballari in Rameshwaram Cafe blast case

BENGALURU, Mar 13 (Agencies): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case has detained a man from Ballari district, sources said on Wednesday.

The man is said to have 'some resemblance' with the prime suspect, sources said.

"NIA sleuths are interrogating him to know his whereabouts on March 1 when the blast took place", they said.

The accused wearing a cap and mask placed

a low-intensity bomb kept in a backpack in the popular eatery at Brookefield area near Whitefield here that went off injuring nine people.

The NIA has announced Rs 10 lakh cash reward for information leading to the arrest of the bomber, and also released CCTV pictures and videos of the suspect.

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said earlier this week that sleuths investigating into the blast have

"in a way" identified the suspect, and efforts are on to nab him.

He had said the investigators are verifying the suspect's identity and are "getting closer to him".

"Investigations are going on, we are closing in, in a way who the person (the suspect) is has been identified. It has to be confirmed and he has to be nabbed."

On the trail of the suspect, the sleuths investigating the case had visited Tumakuru, Ballari, and Kalaburagi districts.

Ahmednagar to be renamed 'Ahilyanagar', Maharashtra approves proposal

MUMBAI, Mar 13 (Agencies): Maharashtra's 'Ahmednagar' will be renamed 'Ahilyanagar' after the 18th century Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar.

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal to rename the city.

The government's proposal to rename the city was first announced by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in May last year.

The name of Ahmed-



nagar city was derived from Ahmed Nizamshah, who founded the Nizamshahi dynasty and Ahmednagar town in the 15th century.

In 2022, the names of Aurangabad and Osmanabad were

changed to Sambhaji Nagar and Dharashiv respectively.

Aurangabad and Osmanabad were named after Mughal emperors Aurangzeb and Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan.

Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh announces to fight elections, days after withdrawing from Asansol

ASANSOL, Mar 13 (Agencies): In a major political development, days after he withdrew his candidature from Bengal's Asansol constituency, Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh on Wednesday announced that he will fight the elections.

In a post on X, Pawan sought people's blessings and cooperation.

"I will contest elections to fulfil the promise made to my society, people, and mother. Your blessings and cooperation are expected. 'Jai Mata Di', he said on X.

However, the Bhojpuri singer has not yet announced the constituency and the party from which he will fight the elections. Earlier, Pawan Singh withdrew

from the race for the Lok Sabha on March 3.

Taking to his official handle on X, the singer confirmed that he was pulling out of the contest 'due to some reason'.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to the top leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party. The party trusted me and declared me as the candidate from West Bengal's Asansol but due to some reason, I will not be able to contest the elections from Asansol," Singh posted from his X handle.

Adding to the intrigue around his decision to stand down from the contest, the national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee of the ruling Trinamool Congress, who is also the nephew of Chief



Minister Mamata Banerjee, tagged the Bhojpuri singer's post with a comment reading, "The indomitable spirit and power of the people of West Bengal".

After Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh decided not to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls from Asansol, Congress leader Pawan Khera said that on one hand, the BJP is raising the

issue of the Sandeshkali incident, and on the other hand, it is fielding singers like Pawan Singh to fight polls.

Pawan Khera also questioned whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi was aware of Pawan Singh's image.

"This is an interesting case. All the agencies are under the control of the Prime Minister. Wasn't he aware of Pawan Singh's image? Now he gets to know that after 24 hours. This depicts what kind of government there is in the country. All the agencies are there to keep an eye on the opposition. It is obvious now that people like Harsh Vardhan are taking retirement because this is the era of Pawan Singh," Khera told agency.

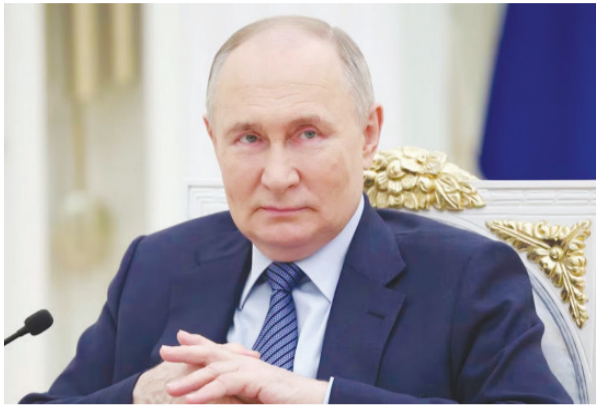
Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if threatened, Vladimir Putin tells state media

Asked if he has ever considered using battlefield nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Putin responds that there has been no need for that

MOSCOW, Mar 13 (Agencies): President Vladimir Putin said Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if there is a threat to Russian statehood, sovereignty or independence.

Speaking in an interview with Russian state television released early on Wednesday, Putin said he hoped the US would avoid any escalation that could trigger a nuclear war, but emphasised that Russia's nuclear forces are ready for it.

Asked if he had ever considered using bat-



tlefield nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Putin responded that there had been no need for that.

He also voiced confidence that Moscow

would achieve its goals in Ukraine and held the door open for talks, emphasising that any deal would require firm guarantees from the West.

Scary sight: Japan's 1st private-sector rocket explodes seconds after launch

TOKYO, Mar 13 (Agencies): A rocket that was supposed to become Japan's first from the private sector to put a satellite into orbit exploded shortly after take-off on Wednesday, a livestreamed video showed.

Online video showed the rocket called Kairos blasting off from Wakayama Prefecture, in central Japan, a mountainous area filled with trees, but exploding midair within seconds.

A huge plume of smoke engulfed the area, and flames shot up in some spots. The video then showed spurts of water trying to put out the



blaze. There were no reports of injuries, and the fire has been brought under control, according to the fire department in Kushimoto city, Wakayama.

Tokyo-based startup Space One, behind the rocket launch, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Live footage on public broadcaster

NHK relayed a voice announcing to the crowd gathered to watch the takeoff from a safe distance. NHK showed debris scattering from the sky, and later charred

pieces strewn about on the ground. The cause of the problems was still under investigation, according to NHK.

The launch was already delayed several times, with the last postponement coming on Saturday, after a ship was spotted in a risk area, according to Japanese media reports.

If it had succeeded, Space One would have been the first private company to put a rocket into orbit.

Tokyo-based Space One was set up in 2018, with investments from major Japanese companies, including Canon Electronics, IHI, Shimizu and major banks.

11 Indonesians survive days in sea after boat capsizes, 22 missing

JAKARTA, Mar 13 (Agencies): Eleven Indonesian fishermen survived after three days at sea clinging to their capsized boat, rescuers said Wednesday as they searched for at least 22 crew still missing after the weekend incident that left two dead.

The boat with at least 35 crew capsized on Saturday in waters off the remote Selayar Islands in South Sulawesi Province before the 11 were found stranded on two separate atolls after days floating in the sea.

Their boat capsized in bad weather during Indonesia's rainy season, according to the local search and rescue agency.

"They had been floating in the sea for three days, they were carried away by the current to Selayar waters," local government official Andi Caco Amras told agency Wednesday. The two victims were

found on separate islands.

The fishing boat departed from a North Jakarta port on March 3 to Lombok Island in West Nusa Tenggara Province. The navy and rescue volunteers were helping with the search efforts.

"The joint team will conduct a search and rescue operation and they have departed... this morning," local search and rescue official Andi Raswan said. He said it would take rescuers five hours to reach the location. The survivors were found after local fishermen spotted them and alerted authorities, state news agency Antara reported.

Amras said survivors said they held out for three days at sea by wearing life jackets and tying themselves to the boat.

"They were carried away along with the boat to the Selayar islands. The boat was

turned over, the bottom was at the top," said the official.

The vessel of 93 gross tons was carrying "equipment to catch fish such as fish traps, nets, rocks, ropes, coconut leaves and fishing rods," he said.

Amras said 35 people were on the boat with 22 missing while the rescue agency gave a higher toll of 37 and 24 missing. It is common in Indonesia for the number of actual passengers on a boat to differ from the manifest.

Authorities received reports about the incident early Tuesday but said bad weather had hampered their efforts. Marine accidents are a regular occurrence in Indonesia, a Southeast Asian archipelago of around 17,000 islands, due to lax safety standards.

In 2018, more than 150 people drowned when a ferry sank in one of the world's deepest lakes on Sumatra island.

Nobel Literature laureate Mo Yan is accused in patriotism lawsuit of insulting China's heroes

TAIPEI, Mar 13 (Agencies): His writing won China's first Nobel Prize for Literature, but is it patriotic enough for Xi Jinping's China? That's the question at the centre of a high-profile lawsuit now driving a debate about nationalism in China.

Patriotic campaigns have become more common in recent years in China, as online nationalists attack journalists, writers or other public figures they say have offended the country's dignity, but it is unusual for a figure as prominent as Mo Yan to be targeted.

Patriotic blogger Wu Wanzheng, who goes by 'Truth-Telling Mao Xing-huo' online, sued under a law that carries civil penalties and, in some cases, criminal punishments for perceived offenses against China's heroes and martyrs.

Wu claimed Mo's books have smeared the Chinese Communist Party's reputation, 'beautified' enemy Japanese soldiers and insult-



ed former revolutionary leader Mao Zedong.

The lawsuit filed last month demands that the author apologise to all Chinese people, the country's martyrs and Mao, and pay damages of 1.5 billion yuan (\$209 million) - 1 yuan for each Chinese person. He also requested that Mo's books be removed from circulation.

Wu based his grievances on the 2018 law that made insulting heroes and martyrs a crime punishable by up to three years in prison.

The law is part of President Xi's campaign to fight 'historical nihilism', a phrase the party uses for any interpretation of historical events that runs counter to its official narrative.

Mo, whose real name is Guan Moye, won the Nobel in 2012. He is known for portraying rural life in China and delving into some of the downsides of the country's rapid economic development.

"Literature and art should expose the darkness and injustice

of society," he said in 2005 while accepting an honorary doctorate from a Hong Kong university. But the 69-year-old has had few conflicts with Beijing.

In 2011, he became vice chairman of the state-backed Chinese Writers Association. After he received his Nobel, a top party official praised him as an 'outstanding representative' of China's rising economic might and international influence.

It seems unlikely that Wu will win the lawsuit. The Chinese government has not formally commented on the saga, but state-run tabloid Global Times on Tuesday published a story quoting a recent speech by Mo, indirectly signalling support for the author.

The blogger said on Chinese social media platform Weibo that a Beijing court rejected his first lawsuit because Wu failed to provide Mo's home address. His current lawsuit is based on part of the 2018 law that

would hold someone civilly liable if they insult or slander 'heroes and martyrs to the detriment of the public interest'. The Associated Press could not independently verify his claims because the court has not made the documents public.

Sharp-tongued media commentator and former editor of Global Times Hu Xijin also criticized Wu, calling his attempt to sue Mo a "farce" and a "populist" act. On Weibo, Hu decried support for the action as "a very alarming trend in online public opinion". In return, Wu threatened to sue Hu too.

Online, discussion was divided: Some called it a reflection of growing nationalism in China and others condemned the accusers. The controversy has trended on Weibo, where the hashtag #MoYanbeing-sued had been viewed around 2 million times. At least one other related hashtag has been censored.

Two killed, 26 injured after explosion at a restaurant in China

The explosion is suspected to have been caused by a gas leak at a fried chicken shop in Yanjiao township, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

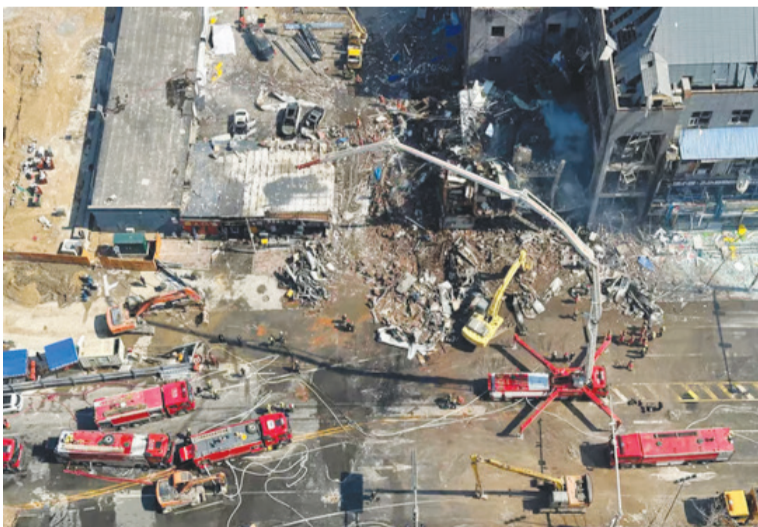
SANHE, Mar 13 (Agencies): A huge suspected gas explosion at a restaurant in northern China killed two people and injured 26 more during Wednesday rush hour, state media reported, causing severe damage to buildings.

The blast occurred just before 8:00 am (0000 GMT), state broadcaster CCTV said, in a residential area in the city of Sanhe, Hebei province, less than 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of the centre of Beijing. CCTV reported at 1:30 pm that two people had since died and that 26 were injured.

The fire has been extinguished, it added. The explosion was suspected to have been caused by a gas leak at a fried chicken shop, state media reported.

"I heard a great big bang... which scared me stiff," a seller at a local market said.

"Outside, I saw clouds of black smoke," they added. Another seller said they also heard a "huge bang" from the blast site, in a bustling area of squat apartment blocks about six or seven floors high. An agency team at the scene also observed police waving oncoming traffic away from an entrance to the neigh-



bourhood where the explosion occurred.

From a police cordon on the north side of the blast zone, they could see a tower of grey smoke a few hundred metres (yards) away, with what appeared to be a crane positioned near it.

Destroyed Footage online circulated by state media showed a huge explosion that sent plumes of smoke and fire across a busy road.

Another video on social media showed what appeared to be a building that had completely collapsed as well as several destroyed cars and debris

strewn across the street. The blast blew out shop facades opposite, footage shared on video-sharing site Douyin showed.

The uploader said the explosion took place 200 metres from her home. Rescue workers rushed to the scene, with the local Langfang fire department saying 36 emergency vehicles and 154 personnel had been dispatched.

A merchant working at a nearby store told state-run Jimu News she had been in her shop when she heard a bang. She ran out of her store and saw a building on fire, she said, adding that "the whole building was virtually

destroyed".

Accidents common Explosions and other deadly accidents are common in China due to lax safety standards and poor enforcement.

Last month, at least 15 people were killed and 44 injured in a fire at a residential building in the eastern city of Nanjing.

In January, dozens died after a fire broke out at a store in the central city of Xinyu, with state news agency Xinhua reporting the blaze had been caused by the "illegal" use of fire by workers in the store's basement. That fire came just days after a late-evening blaze at a school in central Henan province killed 13 schoolchildren as they slept in a dormitory.

Domestic media reports suggested the fire was caused by an electric heating device. And in November last year, 26 people were killed and dozens sent to hospital after a fire at a coal company office in northern Shanxi province.

Last June, an explosion at a barbecue restaurant in the northwest of the country left 31 dead and prompted official pledges of a nationwide campaign to promote workplace safety.

Ex New Zealand MP Pleads Guilty Over Shoplifting Allegations

The 43-year-old pleaded guilty on Wednesday at Auckland District Court to four counts of shoplifting, an official told agency.



WELLINGTON, Mar 13 (Agencies): Former New Zealand lawmaker Golriz Ghahraman pleaded guilty to shoplifting on Wednesday, a scandal that has derailed the centre-left politician's once-promising career.

Ghahraman, the first refugee elected to New Zealand's parliament, stepped down from her political duties on January 16, citing the need to address her mental health.

Soon after, police charged the rising star of the Green Party with shoplifting from boutique clothing stores.

The 43-year-old, who previously served as her party's justice spokeswoman, pleaded guilty on Wednesday at Auckland District Court to four counts of shoplifting, an official told agency.

A former human rights lawyer, Ghahraman said at the time of her resignation that work-related stress had led her to "act

in ways that are completely out of character.

"I am not trying to excuse my actions, but I do want to explain them. I have let down a lot of people," she said at the time.

Iran-born Ghahraman moved to New Zealand as a child with her family when they were granted political asylum.

After studying law, she became a United Nations human rights lawyer working on international criminal tribunals before entering parliament in 2017.

Prior to the allegations becoming public, Ghahraman had been criticised for her prominent involvement in a string of pro-Palestine protests.

Former Green Party co-leader James Shaw has said Ghahraman suffered "continuous threats" since the day she entered parliament and that pressure had intensified before her offences.

CUJ hosts live streaming of Prime Minister's India Semiconductor Mission 2024 Launch

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 13: Central University of Jammu (CUJ) hosted the live streaming of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India's highly anticipated Semiconductor Mission 2024 launch today.

Vice Chancellor, Central University of Jammu, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Watched Live Streaming along with deans, directors, faculty members, and enthusiastic students, gathered a large turnout at the university auditorium.

The Prime Minister's India Semiconductor Mission 2024 launch marks a pivotal moment for the nation's technological advancement, with significant implications for various sectors including telecommunications, electronics, and defense. Through this initiative, India aims to strengthen its position as a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing and innovation.



Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor, CUJ expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to witness this historic event firsthand at the Central University of Jammu,

emphasizing the university's commitment to promote technological excellence and empower the next generation of innovators. The event enhances the univer-

sity's dedication to providing its students and faculty members with access to transformative experiences and cutting-edge developments in the field of technology.

Empowering J&K students: Shree Amar Kshatriya Rajput Sabha continues scholarship initiative

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 13: Under the leadership of President Pavitar Singh, Shree Amar Kshatriya Rajput Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir, has disbursed scholarships totaling Rs 50000 to deserving students from the Economically Weaker Section, continuing its commitment to support education and upliftment within the community.

Ashish Katoch, Organising Secretary of Shree Amar Kshatriya Rajput Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir, emphasized, "The Sabha is dedicated to the welfare and brighter future of the Rajput Community in J&K."

"To date, the Sabha, has distributed a commendable sum of Rs 11,12,000 in educational scholarships, benefiting numerous students of the Rajput community and empowering them to pursue their academic aspirations, particularly those from the Economically Weaker Section (EWS)," he added.

The generous financial support, made possible through the contributions of Four Hundred Eighty (480) members of the Rajput community, underscores the collective commitment to nurturing and supporting the educational endeavors of fellow Rajput community members.

In addition to its schol-

arship initiative, SAKRS J&K provides financial assistance under various welfare initiatives, addressing the diverse needs of the community. A total disbursement of Rs 20,94,000 has been made under education/sports scholarships, marriage assistance, widow pension, family pension, old age pension, and other funds.

Under the visionary guidance of President Pavitar Singh, a retired judge, the SAKRS J&K remains steadfast in its efforts to promote educational, social, and cultural initiatives, strengthening community bonds, and fostering progress within the Rajput community.

Lecturers call on Chief Education Officer Kishtwar

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 13: Lecturers of District Kishtwar, on Wednesday called on Chief Education Officer Kishtwar, RK Visheshta under the leadership of Pardeep Koul, District President, All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum Kishtwar.

Others who were part of the delegation include Sandeep Rathore, Ram Saroop Sharma, Jagdish Raj, Suresh Mattoo, Abdul Khaliq, Arshad Hussain Dev, Rajesh Sharma.



The delegation presented a memorandum to Director School Education Jammu, Ashok Kumar Sharma through Chief Education Officer

Kishtwar. The delegation, in the memorandum, has requested the Director to withdraw 2nd endorsement to above mentioned order of Administrative Department (with an additional enclosure) as the same letter already stands endorsed vide Director School Education Jammu's No DSEJ/Trg/2024/1693-1702 dated 23.01.2024 with two enclosed formats A and B of Administrative Department. The memorandum said

the information as sought stands already submitted by CEOs concerned to Director. The forum added that DSEK hasn't added any additional enclosure. The ongoing examinations were also discussed at length. The Forum assured the CEO to provide all possible support for conducting free and fair examination besides, providing congenial atmosphere to students so that they perform to the best of their abilities.

CS for making robust plan for savings made in JTFRP projects



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 13: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday while reviewing the pace and progress of World Bank funded Jhelum & Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) impressed upon the concerned to make a robust plan for around Rs 140 Cr savings amount out of the total outlay for 213 sub-projects funded under it.

Besides the CEO, ERA the meeting was also attended by Principal Secretary, Higher Education; Commissioner Secretary, I&C; Secretary, PWD; Secretary, Health; Secretary, School Education; MD, JKPC; Commissioner, SMC besides other officers.

Srinagar based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During this meeting the Chief Secretary directed for considering some significant works for upgradation of infrastructure in our education, health, disaster management and livelihood generation here so that these savings are spent on a positive developmental front in a time-bound manner.

He asked for identifying the works that are critical

and of most emergent nature to be taken up shortly and completed before December this year. He enjoined upon the concerned authorities to assess the viability of such projects beforehand and take measures accordingly to ground them within the onset of upcoming working season.

Dulloo also stressed on holding consultations among different departments to ascertain their urgent needs regarding augmentation of their capacities and mitigating of disaster management capacity (22 projects) and Contingent Emergency Response (74 projects).

He even asked about the issues faced in completion of ongoing projects and the dates for their completion. He emphasized on ensuring that all the ongoing and newly taken up works are completed before December this year, which is the deadline of this project as well.

In her presentation, the CEO, ERA, Dr Syed SehrishAsgar briefed the meeting about the accomplishments made so far under JTFRP. She gave out that 213 sub-projects under different components were taken up at an estimated cost of Rs1810

Cr. She further informed that out of these 186 projects had been completed in the UT at an expenditure of Rs 1363 Cr.

Dr Sehrish further revealed that the major components include reconstruction & strengthening of Critical Infrastructure (40 projects), reconstruction of Roads and bridges (31 projects), Restoration of Urban Flood Management Infrastructure (13 projects), Restoration and Strengthening of Livelihoods (26 projects), Strengthening Disaster risk management capacity (22 projects) and Contingent Emergency Response (74 projects).

In addition it was revealed that the project was pivotal in introducing rigid pavement in roads, preparation of a digital risk database, building a semi arched trussed bridge, building schools with BALA (Building as a Learning Aid) feature, building first state of the art Emergency Operation Centre and introduction of Green Hospital Building here in the UT besides augmenting and upgrading critical infrastructure and damaged infrastructure across the districts of J&K.

Ajeet urges ECI to ensure Ballot papers voting in Parliamentary Election

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 13: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference senior leader, Spokesperson Ajeet Bhagat, citing concerns over possible manipulation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), urged the Election Commission of India to ensure that the upcoming parliamentary elections use ballot papers.

Senior National Conference leader Ajeet Bhagat said that EVMs have the potential to be tampered with, leading to an unfair election process. While advocating the revival of traditional paper ballots, they seek to ensure utmost transparency and integrity in the democratic

exercise. Recognizing the importance of parliamentary elections in a democratic country like India, Bhagat stressed the need for a system that instills trust and confidence in voters. He emphasized that the essence of a functioning democracy lies in ensuring that every vote is accurately counted, leaving no room for doubt.

The senior National Conference leader Ajeet Bhagat emphasized the need for simultaneous parliamentary and assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that the absence of a popular government in the region would increase the hard-

ships faced by the people. Bhagat also demanded the central government to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir before the upcoming assembly elections. Ajeet Bhagat encouraged the party workers to prepare for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and ensure that the important achievements of the party reach every nook and cranny of the district.

The National Conference leader highlighted the importance of supporting Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, urging the party members to unite and contribute to the equitable development of Jammu and Kashmir.

DDC Nutnussa inaugurates upgradation macadamization of inner links of Kandi-Nutnussa Road

Top News Report

HANDWARA, Mar 13: The R&B road Macadamization ceremony were held at Kandi Nutnussa Handwara area of District Kupwara with a cost of 2.60 Crore in Phase 1st.

The Road was inaugurated by DDC Nutnussa Advocate Zahoor Ah Magray along Exn R&B Handwara Farooq Ah Shah, AEE Mohd Hussain, JE Mushtaq Ah along others.

Meanwhile residents of Kandi, Nutnussa are highly thankful to R&B Division Handwara especially Exn, AEE, JE and Employees of M/s Khan Constructions Headed by Prop. Mohd Anwar Khan.

On the other side Residents of Kandi-Nutnussa and adjacent areas are highly thanked the higher officials and DDC Nutnussa Adv Zahoor Ah Magray, for fulfilled their long pending Demand. The locals of the area lauded the initiative saying that it solves many of their problems, one of them being accidents on the road due to potholes other it was difficult to walk during winters. People had a lot of troubles, there were accidents taking place here every now and then. We appreciate the work being done," said Nazir Ah, a local resident who was present at the site to witness a first-hand account of the work.

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Total of 22,217 electoral bonds purchased from Apr 1, 2019 to Feb 15, 2024: SBI to SC

shared by the bank on its official website by 5 pm on March 15. In a landmark verdict delivered on February 15, a five-judge Constitution bench had scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme that allowed anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordered disclosure by the EC of donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients by March 13.

Ordering the closure of the scheme, the top court had directed the SBI, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of the electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019, till date to the EC.

Lt Governor felicitates medal winners of National & International Competitions for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23

The Lt Governor said that our Sports icons are the true inspiration for the youth of Jammu Kashmir and the efforts of the government to take sports to villages, far-

flung and border areas have bridged the decades-old gap between talents and the opportunities.

Adequate sports infrastructure, new sports policy, upgradation in the quality of coaches, youth engagement drives at Panchayat Level, LG rolling trophy and various other initiatives will create a robust sports culture involving all sections and secure attractive career track for athletes, he said.

A total of 702 sports projects have been completed in the last few years. Two athletic tracks, one each at Jammu University and Kashmir University; five synthetic hockey fields and two synthetic football fields have been constructed at Pulwama, Srinagar, Jammu, Poonch, Nagrota. Further, more athletic tracks, synthetic hockey and synthetic football fields are coming up at Jammu, Poonch, Sopore, Srinagar, Shopian, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Jagti Nagrota and Rajouri, the Lt Governor further added.

The Lt Governor commended the endeavours of Sports Department, Sports Council and associations for promoting sports activities in Jammu Kashmir.

He also highlighted the commitment of J&K Administration towards the welfare of the sportspersons bringing laurels to the country and the Union Territory. We are determined to complete the recruitment process of sportspersons at the earliest, he added.

The Lt Governor interacted with the sportspersons and handed over sports kits and equipments to the budding players. Sh Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt

Governor; Sh Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; Ms Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council; senior officials, eminent sports personalities and youth in large number were present.

Widespread light to moderate rain, snow over J&K during the next 24 hrs: MeT

generally cloudy today, with the possibility of widespread rain or snow in most of the places in Jammu and Kashmir.

The weather is likely to remain dry from March 15 to March 20, the MeT office said. Gulmarg and the tourist hot spot of Pahalgam recorded subzero temperatures, while other stations also witnessed a slight drop during the intervening nights of Tuesday and Wednesday. However, the temperatures were recorded above normal in all the stations of the Kashmir Valley during this period of the season.

Srinagar witnessed a slight drop in the night temperature, recorded at a low of 5.4°C during the intervening nights of Tuesday and Wednesday, against the 5.9°C recorded the previous night. It was 1.7°C above normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

Qazigund on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway in south Kashmir recorded a low of 3.4°C against the 5.8°C, while the picnic spot of Kokernag also settled at 4.2°C against the 4.4°C recorded the pre-

vious night. The night temperature at Pahalgam dropped to -0.5°C from 1.7°C a day ago. However, it was 0.7°C above normal for the famous tourist hot spot of south Kashmir.

The temperature at the ski resort of Gulmarg slightly improved by a few notches and was recorded at -1.2°C against -1.6°C the previous night. It was 2.1°C above normal for the valley of meadows in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Wednesday.

Kupwara had a low of 4.5°C against 4.0°C the previous night. It was 2.2°C above normal for the frontier Kashmir district on Tuesday, the MeT office said.

Election Commission team reaches Jammu to assess LS Poll preparedness in J&K

chairman and former minister Harsh Dev Singh along with his several supporters after they tried to stage a protest outside Nirvachan Bhawan here against the "delay" in holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Despite being a recognised political party, we were not allowed to meet the visiting Election Commission team in Srinagar yesterday at the behest of the BJP," Singh told reporters while being whisked away by police.

Priyanka Gandhi voices

support for full Statehood demand of people of Ladakh

The Government should leave its "stubbornness" and listen to the voice of the people of Ladakh, Priyanka Gandhi said.

GPS-Enabled tracking systems to be installed in J&K poll duty vehicles, Says Official

"This is a tentative number, subject to change based on the actual requirements calculated after the declaration of elections. The installation of GPS tracker devices will be done inside the vehicles," he explained.

The vehicles will be stationed at various locations across Jammu and Kashmir, with the specific locations provided by the respective DEOs, he added.

Police solves burglary case within 12 hrs in Baramulla, 3 arrested

Budmulla Sheeri, who were accordingly arrested, and stolen property worth 5 lacs was also recovered from their possession. Further investigation is going on, and more recoveries are expected, the police said.

