

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

RNI No. JKENG/2010/39369

Regd. No. JK-435

Vol.-15 Issue-173 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

BRIEFLY

Mother Kills Newborn Daughter by Abandoning her in dry pond to 'Settle Scores' with husband

RAJOURI/JAMMU, Jun 24 (Agencies): A woman allegedly killed her eight-day-old newborn daughter by leaving her in a nearly dry pond under direct sunlight, causing the baby to die from heat, hunger and thirst in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, officials said on Monday.

Police received a report on Sunday about an infant's body lying in a nearly dry pond in Kadma Prat village in Sunderbani tehsil and promptly sent a team to recover it, the officials said.

During investigation, the victim's mother, Sharifa Begum, accused the father, Mohammad Iqbal, of the crime, they said. However, it was found that he had left for Kashmir when the incident took place, the officials added.

This led investigators to focus on the mother, who was later detained for questioning, they said.

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UP DSP demoted to constable after being caught with female constable in Hotel Room

LUCKNOW, Jun 24 (Agencies): A top police official from Uttar Pradesh was demoted to a low rank after he was caught with a female constable at a hotel room in Kanpur after applying for leave. The incident took place back in 2021 when the deputy superintendent of police Kripa Shankar Kanaujia, who was posted in Unnao's Bighapur as a Circle Officer (CO), was caught in the act which exposed his involvement in an extra-marital affair. Following the hue and cry, an investigation process began and finally he was demoted to the post of constable. After an investigation by the DGP, an order was issued against Kanaujia to demote him from his current position. Notably, he was appointed as the Deputy Commander in the 26th Battalion PAC Corps at that time.

On the incident day, the Deputy SP took leave and disappeared after switching off his Closed User Group (CUG) and personal mobile. When his wife attempted to make a call, it was unreachable. In such a situation, she lodged a complaint concerning the possibility of CO Kripa Shankar's

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People need substance, not tantrums, drama, slogans, PM tells Opposition, says government wants to take all along

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): At the start of the first session of 18th Lok Sabha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a direct attack on the opposition saying the country needs "substance, not slogans, tantrums and drama", even as he expressed hope that the opposition will play a constructive role in the new Lok Sabha starting Monday.

Reiterating that the government wants to take everyone along by consensus, the prime minister said people expect the



opposition to be responsible. The PM was speaking moments after the Congress-led opposition announced a boycott of the panel appointed to assist pro-tem speaker Bhartruhari Mahtab to administer oath to new MPs. The Congress has accused the government of ignoring its eight-term MP K Suresh for the post of pro-tem speaker. "People don't expect tantrums, drama and disruptions. People want substance, not slogans."

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Local supporters of foreign terrorists will be booked under EAO: DGP

JAMMU, Jun 24 (Agencies): Police will invoke the Enemy Agents Ordinance, the stringent law which permits life imprisonment or the death penalty for those found aiding or abetting foreign terrorists, DGP Rashmi Ranjan Swain said on Sunday.

The top cop said that this decisive action will serve as a powerful deterrent, dissuading locals from supporting foreign terrorists.

The Jammu region will be cleared of all foreign terrorists within the next



few months, he claimed. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function here, the police chief said

the National Investigation Agency has taken over the investigation in the June 9 terror attack on a pilgrim bus in Reasi district.

He said police here had also arrested six people in connection with the firing incident in Kathua district on June 12 and the case was handed over to the State Investigation Agency.

Ten people, including seven pilgrims, returning from Shiv Khori temple and a CRPF jawan were

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NEET, NET row: Mehbooba urges MPs to voice concerns of students

SRINAGAR, Jun 24 (Agencies): PDP President and former chief minister of Jammu & Kashmir Mehbooba Mufti Monday urged Members of Parliament to voice concerns of students who are in a state of disappointment after uncertainty gripped competitive exams like NEET and NET.

Taking to micro-blogging site X Mehbooba



wrote: "While hundreds of elected Member Parliamentarians will take an oath today after their well earned victories, lacs of

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Search Ops launched after reports of suspicious movement in Udhampur, Rajouri

JAMMU, Jun 24 (Agencies): Security forces launched search operations in Udhampur and Rajouri districts here following reports of suspicious movement, officials said.

There were reports of suspicious movement in the Karlah area of Patnitop prompting police and security forces to launch



a search operation in the vast forest belts, they said. Security has been tightened at the famous Patnitop tourist resort. The operation was still

underway when reports last came from the area, they said.

Security forces and police launched search operations in the Jata area of Kalakote, and Devak and Triyath in Sunderbani area following suspicious movements, they said.

A police officer said the search operation was a "routine exercise".

Minor dies of head injury after toy train 'overturns' at Chandigarh mall

SRINAGAR, Jun 24 (Agencies): An 11-year-old boy died of head injuries after falling from a toy train at Elane Mall in Chandigarh. The victim has been identified as Shahbaz Singh from Nawanshahr in Punjab.

The Indian Express quoting police official said that FIR has been registered and driver (Saurav

of the toy train has been arrested.

Quoting police reports the newspaper said that Jatinder Pal Singh, a resident of Nawanshahr, along with his wife, son Shahbaz, and his cousin's family, had travelled to the city for an outing. They visited Elante Mall, where Shahbaz and his

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Toddler falls from hotel window in Rajasthan's Ajmer, dies

JAIPUR, Jun 24: A toddler died after allegedly falling from the window of a second-floor room of a hotel in Rajasthan's Ajmer, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on Sunday at the Galaxy

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PM should have spoken on NEET issue, 'Exam Pe Charcha' Is long-term commitment to students: Omar

SRINAGAR, Jun 24 (Agencies): National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have spoken over the NEET row instead of attacking the opposition on the first day of Parliament session. "While attacking the opposition is the prerogative of the Hon PM & we



wouldn't expect BJP being humbled in the recent polls to change that, it would

have been in the fitness of things for the Hon PM to spare a few words for the young men & women for whom the #NEET scandal is the only issue that matters," he said on X.

"Exam pe charcha isn't a one off but a long term commitment to the interests & concerns of students," Abdullah said.

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DGP Law and Order, Other officials brief MRT teams ahead of Amarnath Yatra

SRINAGAR, Jun 24 (Agencies): ADGP Law and Order-cum-Commandant General SDRF Vijay Kumar along with IGP Kashmir VK Birdi and other officials briefed joint MRT teams of J&K police, SDRF, BSF and CRPF in view of Amarnath Yatra scheduled to commence from June 29.

An official said that the top



officers also inspected the equipment and briefed the

teams ahead of the Yatra.

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MBA MOTORS

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Amid dry weather forecast till June 28, night temp rises in J&K

SRINAGAR, Jun 24 (Agencies): Amid forecast for dry weather till June 28, night temperature recorded a rise in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

A meteorological department official here told GNS that generally dry weather is expected till June 28 but possibility of light rain and thunder at isolated places cannot be ruled out.

From June 29- July 2, he said, fresh spells of light to moderate rain/thunder-shower at many places are expected. "Hot and dry weather/heat wave is expected over plains of Jammu during June 24-28."

Regarding the temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 15.9°C against 15.7°C on the previous night and it was 0.1°C above normal for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 12.8°C against 12.4°C on the

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Mahant Rajesh Bittu releases devotional album "Khatu Shyam Lakhdattaar"

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Mahant Rajesh Bittu, Chairman of Religious Tourism and Heritage Cultural Trust, along with Sahil Mahajan, Co-Convenor of BJP J&K UT Sanskriti Art Culture Cell, unveiled the devotional album "Khatu Shyam Lakhdattaar" at a ceremony held at the Press Club in Jammu.

The event, organized by Maa Bawe Wali Records, marked the release of the album on YouTube's T-Series channel, showcasing local talent and promoting cultural heritage.



The album featured the devotional song "Khatu Shyam Lakhdattaar," sung by Abhishek Abhi and composed by Sonu Bhagat, with lyrics by Abhishek Abhi. The video production credits

go to Rajesh, with special acknowledgement to Muskaan Rajput for her contributions.

Mahant Rajesh Bittu commended the rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir and the artistic

talents behind the album. He highlighted the importance of promoting such devotional music that resonates deeply with the local community, especially honoring revered figures like Khatu Shyam.

Emphasizing the synergy between religious tourism and cultural heritage, Mahant Rajesh Bittu urged the Tourism Department to include tours to Khatu Shyam at the Kameshwar Temple in Akhnour.

This initiative aims to attract devotees and tourists alike, fostering spiritual and cultural enrichment. Sahil Mahajan underscored the BJP Sanskriti Art & Culture Cell's commitment to nurturing young talent in Jammu & Kashmir. He emphasized the societal importance of supporting creative endeavors that showcase the region's cultural depth and artistic prowess.

Under qualified, underage staff deployed by NTA for conducting NEET, alleges RTI activist



Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Renowned RTI activist Balvinder Singh, accompanied by other members, held a press conference today to expose a significant scandal involving the National Testing Agency (NTA). The NTA is already under scrutiny for a paper leak during the NEET exam on May 5, 2024, and further investigations have now revealed additional disturbing findings. At Kendriya Vidyalaya Miran Sahib, a Sikh girl student was barred from entering the NEET examination centre for wearing a "Kada," an article of Sikh faith, despite her repeated clarifications that the kada is explicitly permitted under NEET's dress code for Sikh candidates, as stated in their official website.

Further investigation has revealed that the NTA gave contract to M/S Innovatiview India

Pvt. Ltd., located at 37, 2nd Floor, Shanti Vihar, Kakardooma, New Delhi, for tasks such as biometric capture, frisking via HHMD, and installing CCTV cameras for live surveillance at various examination centers, including those in Jammu. Shockingly, at Kendriya Vidyalaya Miran Sahib, four out of five staff members deputed were found to be under qualified, lacking a matriculation certificate, and one was underage, being only 16 years old.

These staff members were deployed for the NEET exam, one of the country's most critical competitive exams, without adequate training on NEET guidelines, particularly concerning the dress code for different communities. This raises grave concerns about the competence and integrity of the examination process.

Singh has called for a CBI inquiry into the contract awarded to Innova-

tiview India Pvt. Ltd. for surveillance of examination centers for competitive exams, including NEET. He questioned how the company, which claims on its website to ensure a fair and equitable examination process through advanced security solutions, could subcontract such crucial work to a local security agency in Jammu, resulting in the deployment of under-qualified, underage & untrained staff.

Singh urged the Ministry of Education Government of India to expand the scope of the CBI inquiry from merely investigating the paper leak to also examining the allotment of contracts for biometric capture and frisking. Instead of enhancing transparency, the NTA is undermining the integrity of the exams by deploying inadequately trained and underage staff, thus jeopardizing the fairness of the process for millions of students.

Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust felicitates Top-performing students in Gangyal



Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: A felicitation ceremony was organised by the Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust (Regd.) to honour the meritorious students who had outstanding performance in the Board Examination at Gangyal in RS Pura-Jammu South Assembly Constituency.

Former MLA & senior BJP leader Devendra Singh Rana and former Deputy Mayor Jammu & senior BJP leader Baldev Singh Billawaria were especially present in this felicitation ceremony while parents of the students were also present. Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust (Regd.) honoured the meritorious students who had secured highest marks in class 10th and 12th board examinations of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Jammu & Kashmir Board of Secondary Education (JKBOSE) by giving them mementos.

Speaking on the occasion, Former MLA & senior BJP leader Devendra Singh Rana said that Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust (Regd.) is continuously infusing new energy in the meritorious students by felicitating them so that in future these children can work harder and bring laurels

to their region. He enlightened the students with his motivational lines, "The path to success is not easy, but with perseverance, determination and firm belief in yourself, you can overcome any challenge that comes your way." He said that only those students who have concentration and willpower towards studies, score top marks and bring laurels to their parents, teachers and their region. He said that all these students set their goals and worked hard and achieved success. Rana further said that the success of the meritorious students is due to their hard work, but without the sacrifice and dedication of the parents, it is not possible to achieve such a big success.

While, former Deputy Mayor Jammu and senior BJP leader Baldev Singh Billawaria said that just as there should be a strong foundation for strength, similarly education and guidance are necessary for an excellent life, if there is no direction, we cannot achieve the goal. Parents and teachers are the foundation of life, always respects them, he added. Billawaria said that parents play an important role in taking youngsters forward, earlier parents used to tell children what

to study, but today children themselves decide what they want to study. He congratulated the parents of meritorious students and said that due to your values and good upbringing children have helped them achieve their goals. He said that students should choose the right career for their better future and prepare accordingly.

Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust President Rajiv Sharma said that if children need any kind of help regarding studies, our trust is always ready to help.

During the meritorious student felicitation ceremony, the students gave as much credit for their success to their parents as to their teachers. Expressing gratitude to the Trust for felicitating the meritorious students, the parents said that our children have made us proud by their hard work, this moment has become one of the important moments not only in their life but in our life too.

On the occasion, Rajinder Singh Chib, Harbans Chaudhary, Ranjeet Singh, Puran Verma, Ashok Kumar, Isher Singh (Noni), Rakesh Sangral, Dr. Kuldeep Gupta, Sohan Katal, Avtar Chib, etc were present.

ADGP Jammu flags off Bharat Darshan Tour of Udhampur students

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: The Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu Zone, Jammu, Anand Jain, flagged off the Bharat Darshan Tour for 69 students from various parts of District Udhampur this morning at Gulshan Ground, Jammu. This tour has been organized by the Zonal Police Headquarters, Jammu, under the Civic Action Programme (CAP).

The students, accompanied by two caretakers from District Udhampur, will embark on an enriching journey from Jammu to Delhi, and then from Delhi to Chennai by air.

The Bharat Darshan Tour Programme is scheduled from June 24 to 29, 2024.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, Anand Jain emphasized the importance of such tours

in broadening the horizons of young minds and fostering a sense of national pride and unity. He expressed hope that the students would gain valuable experiences and insights from the diverse cultural and historical heritage of India.

The Civic Action Programme, under which this tour is organized, aims to bridge the gap between the police and the public, especially the youth, by engaging them in constructive activities. This initiative reflects the commitment of the Jammu and Kashmir Police to the welfare and development of the younger generation.

The tour promises to be an educational and memorable experience for the participants, providing them with a unique opportunity to explore the rich cultural tapestry of the nation.

Farooq, Omar convey condolences

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the passing away of Zahid Ahsan Mir brother of Adil Mir Zonal Joint Secretary Chenab Valley Zone, JKNC R/o Batote and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family.

In their messages, Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah prayed for peace to the departed soul and expressed solidarity with other members of the family.

In the condolence message, General Secretary Haji Ali Mohammed Sagar, Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamaal, Ajay

Kumar Sadhotra Additional General Secretaries, Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President Jammu Province, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Provincial Secretary, Khalid Najeef Suharwardhy former minister and Vice President Jammu Province, Sajjad Ahmed Kichloo former minister and Zonal President Chenab Valley, Dr. Chaman Lal Bhagat former MLA, Sajjad Shaheen District President Ramban, Zafarullah Rather District President Doda, Abdul Qayoom Bagwan District President Doda Rural, Mehboob Iqbal Incharge Bhaderwah, Abid Magrey District Vice President Ramban and Arif Mir District Secretary Ramban.

NMC appeals LG to enhance medical allowance

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: President of the National Mazdoor Conference (NMC) Subash Shastri on Monday appealed to the Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Secretary to enhance the medical allowance from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1000 per month.

"Medical allowance in JKUT is Rs. 300 per month for the last two decade as the prices of medicines and other medical related expenditure has increased to a large extent to medical allowance should also be increased at par with central Govt." Shastri said this while addressing a meeting of NMC activists here.

Stressing on the need in releasing of pending DA / DR of 18 months from the month of January 2020 to ending June 2021 Shastri also appealed

the Prime Minister and Union Finance Minister to release the outstanding 3 DA installments arrears blocked while releasing the same to its employees and pensioners 2 years ago.

He said that since the price index and inflation on rise day today which has made salaried class and pensioners to face hardship to manage their lively-hood.

Shastri pointed out that it is the fitness of things that financial assistance so accrued by way of rising Dearness Allowance (DA) is release without any further delay.

Shastri further hoped that the central Govt. will consider the burning demand of both Central/States/UTs employees and pensioners in releasing the 3DA installments blocked arrears in favor of these employees and

pensioners at the earliest.

Shastri also demanded in regularizing the services of daily rated workers working in various departments of JKUT Govt. Under SRO64, implementation of all central labor laws in JKUT, enhancing the wages of DRWs at par with Central Govt. releasing of all pending wages of DRWs besides setting up of 8th Pay Commission, merging of 50% D.A with basic pay pension, restoring old pension scheme.

Among other who were also present in the meeting included Rajan Babu Khajuria, B.S Jamwal, Surinder Kumar, Bhushan Anand, Anil Gupta Ramesh Sharma, Chaman Lal, Birbal, Raman Sharma, Vinod Kumar, Ex-Sarpanch Sukhdev Singh, Ram Singh, Subash Sharma and Ram Lal Sharma.

Government fails to meet power crisis during peak hot: Congress

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Congress has strongly criticized the UT administration and centre government for the failure to regular power supply during the peak hot period of summer season, as a result people suffer a lot especially the common man, the ailing, aged and children.

In a statement, Narinder Gupta PCC, General Secretary (Org) has expressed serious concern over the long scheduled and unscheduled power cuts in the electric power supply and scarcity of drinking water in both urban and rural areas of Jammu District.



He said that UT administration and centre government have failed to meet the requirement of power forcing poor people to cry in the scorching heat. A vast majority of people can't afford invertors and as the power goes off, the aged, ailing and children are worst hit in the situation.

The water supply is

directly related to the supply of power, when there is shortage of power, the water supply automatically affected.

The people of Jammu District, especially in urban areas there is acute shortage of drinking water. Despite paying of Rs. 3000 water rent annually, the Poor people have been compelled to purchase water from the private water tankers.

PCC General Secretary said that at the time of installing smart meters, the PDD assured the general public that after installation of smart meters, there will be no power cuts but it is very unfortunate that consumers are paying heavy electricity bills for

the facility, they are not availing.

Gupta strongly demanded the Govt. to take immediate steps to improve the power supply in Jammu District. The water supply should also be improved, in view of the scorching heat of this summer.

Congress leader further said that the people of Jammu displayed faith in BJP while giving them huge mandate from Jammu region with the hope that their grievances will be taken note of and discrimination with Jammu will end.

However, BJP sidelined issues related to Jammu, the people want development, employment opportunities, better infrastructure and other

basic requirements like adequate water and power supply. Gupta alleged that the BJP is befooling the people on the name of Smart City, where the people are facing problems for the basic needs of life.

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EDITORIAL

Fire Incidents: A Growing Concern

In recent years, the frequency and severity of fire incidents have become a pressing issue globally, affecting communities, businesses, and environments alike.

This alarming trend is particularly noticeable in urban areas where population density, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and climate change factors amplify the risks. The increasing incidence of fires poses significant challenges to public safety, property protection, and environmental sustainability, necessitating proactive measures and comprehensive strategies to mitigate these risks effectively.

One of the primary reasons behind the rising number of fire incidents is rapid urbanization. As cities expand to accommodate growing populations, there is a corresponding increase in residential and commercial buildings, industrial facilities, and critical infrastructure. However, many of these structures may not meet stringent fire safety standards or lack adequate maintenance, making them susceptible to fire hazards. Older buildings, in particular, often have outdated electrical systems, insufficient fire suppression equipment, and compromised structural integrity, further exacerbating the risk.

Human behavior also plays a significant role in the incidence of fires. Misuse of electrical appliances, careless smoking habits, improper handling of flammable materials, and arson are common causes of fire outbreaks. In densely populated urban areas, where overcrowding and socioeconomic disparities prevail, the risk of accidental fires due to negligence or ignorance is heightened. Furthermore, in industrial settings, lapses in safety protocols, inadequate training of personnel, and improper storage of hazardous materials can lead to catastrophic fire incidents with far-reaching consequences.

The impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and erratic weather patterns, contribute to increased fire risks. Heatwaves and dry spells create favorable conditions for wildfires to spread rapidly across forests, grasslands, and urban interfaces. In regions prone to wildfires, such as California, Australia, and parts of Europe, climate change has intensified the fire season, prolonging the period of vulnerability and straining firefighting resources. Additionally, extreme weather events like hurricanes and storms can damage infrastructure, disrupt electrical systems, and increase the likelihood of fires caused by downed power lines or structural damage.

Effective firefighting and emergency response are crucial in mitigating the impact of fire incidents. However, urbanization and infrastructure complexities pose challenges for firefighting operations. Narrow streets, congested traffic, and high-rise buildings can impede access for fire trucks and emergency personnel, delaying response times and compromising rescue efforts. Furthermore, inadequate funding for fire departments, shortage of trained personnel, and outdated equipment hamper the effectiveness of firefighting efforts, particularly in resource-constrained regions.

Addressing the root causes of fire incidents requires a multifaceted approach that includes community engagement and fire safety education. Empowering individuals and communities with knowledge about fire prevention, evacuation procedures, and first aid can significantly reduce risks. Local governments and organizations must collaborate to implement comprehensive fire safety programs, conduct drills, and distribute information on fire hazards and prevention measures. Building resilience within communities through proactive measures, such as fire-resistant construction practices and green building codes, can also mitigate the impact of fires and enhance overall safety.

The increasing frequency of fire incidents poses a significant threat to public safety, infrastructure integrity, and environmental sustainability worldwide. Addressing this complex issue requires coordinated efforts at local, national, and international levels to enhance fire prevention measures, strengthen emergency response capabilities, and promote community resilience. By addressing urbanization challenges, improving fire safety standards, mitigating climate change impacts, and fostering community engagement, stakeholders can work together to reduce the incidence of fires and safeguard lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems for future generations.

Diet guru dies of heatstroke... Will Starmer go 400 paar?

By: Kishwar Desai

It doesn't matter how rich or clever or thin you are because the heat can get you.

One of the smartest doctors in recent times — who revolutionised the way we eat by propagating the 5:2 diet — Michael Mosley — died during a holiday in Greece — of suspected heat stroke. The tragedy was that it took more than five days to find his body, because he had somehow wandered off away from his family — and when his body was found, he was extremely close to habitation, but probably too weak to ask for help. This was a man who successfully introduced us to weight loss through intermittent fasting. He had experimented often with food and diet — and was a health guru on the BBC. His sudden death — and the subsequent hunt for his body — shocked the nation.

Though I loved watching his shows, I never tried his diet or followed his advice — but many people did all over the world. And to think it was just heat and perhaps dehydration that would ultimately destroy him... Fat or thin — life can be taken away in an instant! So diet all you want — but live life to the fullest.

Another person whose life changed so very suddenly —

despite leading what looked like a charmed one — is Catherine, Princess of Wales. Finally she came out in the public after her cancer diagnosis, though she did appear very much more serious than she had been before. There was no public interaction which she had been very good at. She was able to perform her duty surrounded by her children and husband. This was much appreciated as she has been frank about her cancer in recent weeks. Indeed, King Charles as a fellow cancer sufferer had elevated Kate to Companion of Honour in recognition of her determination to go public about her ailment. This has had a very good impact on the way people view cancer.

However, it seems she is now focussed on projecting Prince William as a father, possibly concerned about what lies ahead. A keen photographer, she recently released some lovely photos on his birthday which showed the future King playing on the beach with his children. These only depict Prince William with the children, all rather poignant moments, as she is not in them.

On the more mundane political front, Rishi Sunak faces the prospect of leading his Party to the lowest number of seats in its 300-year history. From a previous high of 365 his party

is expected to get just around 50 seats. Of course, the good news for him is that those who were plotting to replace him such as Penny Mordaunt are set to lose their seats anyway...

And it is the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, who is supposed to go "400 paar".

The Tory losers may yet thank Rishi. The life of MPs is becoming hard. Eight years ago, a woman MP, Jo Cox, was murdered by a fanatical Conservative MP, Sir David Amess, was stabbed by a constituent who came to his office on the excuse of getting some help.

MPs get abused, trolled and threatened on the social media, not just in real life.

This could be one of the reasons why nearly 80 sitting MPs have decided not to run again in the Conservative Party. The anger they face is partly due to the dreadful circumstances like inflation and slow growth and hardship for people who are in the frontline. The reality is that being a member of the ruling party means you get blamed when things go wrong. Unlike in India MPs in the UK do not get homes and offices with security guards. Thus many of them are now opting for a different career altogether. And besides, there is no point running, according to them, when they are likely to lose!

The anger among the people

is made worse by the betting scandal which has just popped up. It seems that people connected with Rishi's campaign and security allegedly laid bets on when the elections were likely to be held. This is a nation that loves to bet on all kinds of things — but to bet on something that was meant to be confidential (and about which there are strict rules, especially if you are in the know) is disastrous.

Speaking of Yorkshire (Rishi Sunak's constituency lies here), if you are planning to visit England, do not miss a chance to visit Castle Howard. It is a spectacular, big castle used as personal property of the Howard family. It is known as the Versailles of England. It was used in the TV production of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. Indeed Waugh had written his famous novel keeping Castle Howard in mind as a model for *Brideshead*. Now the saga of the Castle itself has become like another novel or perhaps a Netflix serial. The master of Howard Castle, George Howard, has decided not to pass on his Castle to his son, despite the fact that the son is on the managing board of the Castle. He has decided to throw the transfer into a contest between his son and various nephews and nieces. They will be questioned as to how they will preserve this monumental pile and the smartest will win the Castle. To have a game show for a grand inheritance seems ripe for reality TV!

The MCQ format should be scrapped in NEET UG for fair assessment

By: Vijay GarG

India is not new to examination scams. Corruption starts young in a country starved of ethics and morality. But the NEET examination scandal that has broken out now would be perhaps the most stupidly organised corruption scandal.

For years, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test for admissions to India's resource-crunched medical colleges has been mired in controversy. In a nation facing a severe shortage of doctors, over 2.5 million hopefuls sit for a three-hour and 20-minute multiple-choice exam, vying for admission to about 10,900 seats across 706 medical colleges throughout India.

As with any highly competitive exam in India, NEET is no exception to cut-throat competition. As a result, there is a thriving industry of coaching centres where teenagers are given shortcuts and simplified methods to conquer the multiple-choice examination.

Instead of comprehending the material, the pressure is on to quickly answer multiple-choice questions. The demand for enrollment in these coaching centres is so high that there are now ones specifically for gaining admission to top-tier coaching centres. This competitive frenzy has a dark side, even without leaked exam papers and unfair grading practices.

The constant emphasis on competitiveness hinders students from impoverished backgrounds

from pursuing higher education. The secondary education system becomes obsolete as success is measured solely on the ability to solve multiple-choice questions within a set time frame. The exorbitant fee for coaching centres makes higher education unattainable for those who are poor.

India's rural areas face a critical shortage of doctors. Nevertheless, the NEET exam is structured in a way that advantages students from affluent families in urban centres. These students secure spots in government medical colleges where their education costs are significantly subsidised by taxpayer money. The NEET exemplifies a system designed to be highly discriminatory against the underprivileged and those from rural India.

It is held under extremely strict conditions that resembles a police state. Invigilators watch closely like hawks, CCTV cameras track every movement, and candidates undergo thorough checks for concealed notes or devices. Fingerprint scanners verify the identity of each test-taker to ensure they match the registered candidate. Even India's nuclear facilities don't experience this level of scrutiny and security.

It's absurd to think that a corrupt system of bureaucrats and coaching centres in Gujarat and Bihar has managed to surpass the thoroughness of this examination. It makes the entire process seem like a joke.

We should thank our stars that out of the two-and-a-half mil-

lion who took the exam, only 67 students could achieve a perfect score of 720 out of 720. Surprisingly, some of these top students have failed in their Class XII exams. Additionally, many students received 718 or 719 marks, which goes against logic and basic math considering the scoring system.

In this exam, answering a multiple-choice question wrongly results in a negative mark, while a correct answer earns four marks. If a candidate doesn't attempt one question, the maximum they can score is 716. Even if one question is answered incorrectly, the maximum possible mark becomes 715. Despite this, NEET evaluators have given marks like 719 and 718; their reasoning remains a mystery.

Their latest justification is that they gave grace marks to some candidates who were delayed in starting the exam. This turns the entire examination from being objective to subjective. There is no transparency in how, why and to whom these grace marks were given.

Some examination centres, especially in Gujarat, are so blessed that they have produced many toppers in a row. The National Testing Agency expects us to believe that the perfect scores of seven candidates from this exceptional examination centre are a coincidence. It is just incidental that the seven have consecutive enrolment numbers. Meanwhile, news is coming from Bihar that question papers were sold for amounts

ranging from Rs 30-50 lakh.

The clandestine advancement of the NEET exam results by 10 days to align with the general election results suggests an attempt to obscure the scandal amid the commotion following the elections. It is disappointing how the courts have taken this farce so lightly and postponed the hearing of the case filed against it to July 8. It has refused to stay in the admission process, thus again denying justice to those who can't beat the system using money, corruption or influence.

If the elected government has any commitment to the youth of the country, they should cancel the NEET results without any delay and order a retest.

This is merely a temporary solution, and in the long run, we need to shift away from the multiple-choice question format for competitive exams. Doing so would dismantle the power of coaching centres and create a fairer environment for everyone. This nation doesn't belong solely to the wealthy and powerful manipulating the system through corrupt and unjust methods. Even if the above statement is not true, shouldn't we at least pretend that there is some justice and fairness left in this country? Or have we lost even that fig leaf of shame in our blatant selfish and competitive pursuit?

(Vijay GarG Retired
Principal Educational
columnist Malout)

Human-Centric, Hybrid AI opens up new possibilities: Samsung's Won-Joon Choi

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: The world is at the beginning of the most exciting and probably one of the most historic moments in technology. The era of mobile AI is here — which for Samsung opened up by the introduction of Galaxy AI features on the Galaxy S24 series, our first AI phone.

To bring the real-life benefits of generative AI technology to the Galaxy S24 series, Samsung took a hybrid approach to our AI integration. AI offers so many possibilities, and Samsung believes mobile devices are the primary access point for unlocking its potential as users around the globe continue to rely on their phones for most of their day-to-day needs.

The essential role that mobile devices play in everyday life means they are very personal items that people use during many critical and memorable moments.

Samsung understands these behaviors and

believes smartphones should work harder so that users can truly make the most of important moments in a simpler, more intuitive and more epic way. Samsung also recognizes the importance of privacy which is why the brand gives users full control over what they share and what they keep private.

"We believe our hybrid approach is the most practical and reliable solution to meet all these needs and puts Samsung ahead of the curve. We are providing users with a balance between the instant responsiveness and extra privacy assurance of on-device AI and the versatility of cloud-based AI through open collaborations with industry-leading partners in offering a variety of functions they need for daily life," said Won-Joon Choi, EVP & Head of Mobile R&D Office, Mobile eXperience Business at Samsung Electronics.

Samsung made the Live Translate feature

on-device AI based because voice calls are the most basic feature of a smartphone, yet also an intimate and private means of communication. Samsung has committed to empowering users to communicate without language barriers, while at the same time ensuring every communication is safe and private.

"To make this feature a reality, our R&D team worked day and night as part of a collaborative process that truly brought out the best in our teams. From determining the right size of AI language models to training and testing in real-life scenarios, our R&D organizations within the MX business challenged themselves and pushed beyond the limits of what we thought was possible to get this feature running entirely on-device," Choi said.

Samsung's global R&D networks around the world, which are in charge of growing the best talents and developing core technologies

in each region, have also played a pivotal role. Samsung Research Centers around the globe, including Poland, China, India and Vietnam, have dedicated themselves to developing and expanding the languages supported by Galaxy AI. Languages are very cultural, contemporary and localized, so to help people break down language barriers and communicate more naturally, the role of our local R&D offices is even more crucial in opening up new possibilities for users in more regions than ever before.

All these efforts have enabled Samsung to offer something completely new which we are excited to share. Soon, Samsung is extending the power of Galaxy AI beyond Samsung's own native calling app by expanding Live Translate to other third-party message apps to support voice calls. So you can stay in contact with friends or colleagues, communicating on your favorite apps in

multiple languages.

"This exciting news is all part of the extension of our commitment to Galaxy AI and entering the next phase of the mobile AI era. The introduction of Galaxy AI on the Galaxy S24 series was only the start. To deliver a completely new and unique AI experience, we will further optimize the Galaxy AI experience for the upcoming foldable devices. Our foldables are the most versatile and flexible form factor in Samsung Galaxy and when combined with Galaxy AI, these two complementary technologies will together unlock all new possibilities," Choi said.

Samsung is also committed to expanding Galaxy AI experiences across the broader Galaxy ecosystem in a way that only Samsung can. As the mobile AI era moves forward at a rapid pace, Samsung is accelerating mobile AI innovations to meet the needs of not only today, but tomorrow's too.

Dimple calls for Parliamentary debate on restoring Jammu Kashmir Statehood

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Sunil Dimple, the president of Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, in a press conference on Monday demanding action from Indian political parties regarding the state's status and conditions since the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganization into union territories.

Dimple called upon the Indian National Congress (INC) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to initiate a parliamentary debate during the ongoing session on the hardships faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He emphasized the Supreme Court's verdict and urged the restoration of Jammu Kashmir as a state before the upcoming assembly elections.

During the conference, Dimple criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for alleged financial mismanagement, unconstitutional decisions, and the impact of policies such as the abolition of state subjects and Article



370, which he claims have contributed to rising unemployment and other economic challenges in the region.

Dimple also referred to statements by Dr. Karan Singh, a former Sadre Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, questioning Singh's role in preserving the state's history, identity, and culture.

He accused Singh of failing to protect the legacy of the Dogra state and criticized his efforts regarding the Darbar Move and other issues affecting the region. Furthermore, Dimple threatened to initiate mass protests if Jammu Kashmir's statehood is not restored before the assembly elections, and he demanded the return of Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) status

and adherence to the conditions of the Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh.

He urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to announce the dates for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections promptly to allow sufficient time for campaigning. Dimple asserted that their agenda in the assembly would focus on safeguarding the demographic composition of Jammu and Kashmir, reversing BJP's decisions from August 5, 2019, and reinstating special status.

The press conference included other leaders such as Ashok Sharma, Nitin Saini, and Shivam Kumar, highlighting a unified stance among Jammu Kashmir's political figures on these critical issues.

JKTJAC delegation raises issues of teaching fraternity with DSEJ

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, June 24: A delegation from the Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC), led by UT Chief Press and Media Secretary Sukesh Khajuria, Sham Sharma Advocate, and Sukhdev Singh Sumbria, UT Secretary, met with Director School Education Jammu, Ashok Kumar Sharma JKAS, during his visit to Udhampur. They raised critical issues concern-

ing the teaching fraternity, including the inclusion of six In-Charge (I/C) Masters in the recent Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) list despite their relocation after the ATD of Masters last year. Other concerns highlighted were the urgent need for the next DPC to promote eligible teachers, regularization of ReT teachers who completed their service period, release of time-barred arrears for teachers, issuance

of mutual transfer lists pending due to MCC, provision of earned leave for teachers engaged in vacation duties, and the implementation of summer vacations in winter zones due to student health concerns. Director Ashok Kumar Sharma assured the delegation of addressing these issues promptly, underscoring a commitment to resolving each concern to improve educational governance in Jammu and Kashmir.



Dr Daizy Parihar conferred with National Icon Award 2024

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, June 24: Dr Daizy Parihar, who hails from district Kishtwar, the renowned doctor and great social activist who is working tirelessly for the upliftment and care of orphan children so as to achieve physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual well being of them has been conferred with National Icon Award 2024, by the Ministry of Rural Development Gol.

This award has been conferred in the line of series of noble works done by Dr Daizy Parihar towards the well being of downtrodden and poor sections of the society.

Her indomitable grit, faith, dedication and devotion is a live and shining example for all women and girls to learn how to move and overcome the obstacles in your life.



She proved that gender inequality is a myth in present day time. All women and children feel inspired from the magnificent achievement of Dr Daizy Parihar who has showered her deep help and affection, goodwill, compassion, service and charity for poor children. She will be conferred this award on 25th of June 2024 at New Delhi. Times of Kishtwar wished Dr Daizy Parihar much success and plenty of awards in her future life.

BJP murdered democracy demands Statehood before Assembly polls: Rajesh Gupta

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) General Secretary and media head Rajesh Gupta here on Monday accused BJP of misleading the country over constitutional safeguards to J&K.

"I want to tell this to Jammu people and the youth that it was BJP who murdered democracy," Gupta said.

Gupta demanded restoration of Statehood to J&K before Assembly elections.

"J&K economy suffered worst and developments came to a standstill here after the abrogation of Article 370 but BJP continued with coercive apparatus to silence those who raise voice for justice," he claimed adding that every sec-



tion of the society is now suffering.

The BSP leader also said that youth are on roads, border dwellers and traders including shopkeepers and businessmen are bearing the brunt of apathetic and callous attitude of bureaucracy which is ruling the roost in the absence of the elected Government.

Gupta alleged that communalism is being promoted by BJP lead-

ers for short-term political gains. However, Gupta said Jammu lacked civil society, and that "communal politicians" were dominating the space for civil society.

BJP did Hindu-Muslim, and they will carry on doing work like this in future.

"I want to tell this to Jammu people and the youth that it was BJP who murdered democracy," Gupta said.

Rajesh Gupta assured the Muslim community in Jammu particularly those living in Jammu city outskirts Sidhra, Athem, Bajalata etc are all our brothers and sisters and we are there for your support and safety. We all are one we will root out the communal hatred and maintain the communal harmony.

Rapid development possible if Jammu Kashmir is divided into two states: Chandel

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Raju Chandel, a Hinduist Sanatani leader, has proposed dividing Jammu Kashmir into two separate states to facilitate rapid development akin to the progress witnessed in states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

His proposal aims to address governance challenges and foster regional development more effectively across the diverse regions of Jammu Kashmir. Chandel argued that the current governance structure in Jammu Kashmir, as a union territory, is not conducive to efficient administration and development.

He suggested that dividing the region into two states—North Kash-



mir, Baramulla, Ladakh as one state, and Anantnag, Rajouri, Jammu as another—would allow for more focused governance tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of each region.

Under the proposed division, each state would have its own legislative assembly. Chandel contended that this arrangement would eliminate the need for

the current practice of shifting the legislative assembly between Jammu and Srinagar, a process known as the Darbar Move.

This practice not only incurs substantial costs but also disrupts governance and development activities.

Dividing Jammu Kashmir into two states would also lead to significant financial savings. Chandel highlighted that the expenses associated with the Darbar Move, including the relocation of government offices and officials, contribute to unnecessary financial burdens. By eliminating these costs, resources could be redirected towards development initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other critical sectors. Drawing parallels with

states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which were bifurcated to enhance governance efficiency and accelerate development, Chandel asserted that dividing Jammu Kashmir would unleash the region's potential for growth.

He believed that smaller administrative units would foster better governance, faster decision-making, and targeted development interventions, similar to the successes observed in other divided states.

According to Chandel, dividing Jammu Kashmir would not only streamline governance but also empower local communities. Each state would have the autonomy to prioritize and implement development projects tailored to its unique socio-economic and cultural landscape.

HDFC Bank's Vigil Aunty-End of scam sale campaign wins a Silver Cannes Lions

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, announced that it has won a Silver at the Cannes Lions 2024 for the Vigil Aunty - End of Scam Sale (EOSS) Campaign.

The social media campaign, featuring actress Nora Fatehi and Vigil Aunty, has so far acquired a reach of over 28 million and 22 million views. Vigil Aunty is a fictional social media character created by HDFC Bank to spread awareness on digital frauds.

As part of the EOSS Campaign, HDFC Bank used actress Nora Fatehi's star power to replicate the modus operandi of fraudsters and make the public aware of how one can easily be susceptible to deepfakes and frauds.

The Bank created a fake brand and had audiences believe in its legitimacy by creating an Instagram page for 'Lulumelon', making it sound like a genuine brand with exciting offers and deals. The campaign was recognised at the prestigious Cannes Lions for the best use of 'Events & Stunts'.

Ravi Santhanam, Group Head, Chief Marketing Officer and Head - Direct to Consumer Business, HDFC Bank said, "Winning a Cannes Lions for our fraud awareness campaign only adds to our commitment to spreading awareness about the issue, to help customers avoid becoming victims of digital frauds. This recognition is a testament to the exceptional creative talent of our agency partners, FCBKinnect. Working together, we are delighted to have cre-

ated an impactful campaign with an innovative approach. For us, powerful storytelling for a relevant cause was gratifying and we stay committed to making more and more consumers aware about the issue."

Jahid Ahmed, SVP & Head of Digital Marketing, HDFC Bank said, "We are delighted to be amongst the winners at the industry's most prestigious awards, Cannes Lions. Along with our partners at FCBKinnect, we are proud to have created the innovative 'Lulumelon- End of Scam Sale' campaign for digital fraud awareness, subtly leveraging the concept of optimism bias. We stand proud to come up with and take forward this impactful campaign for fraud prevention."

The Vigil Aunty initiative, launched in 2022,

introduced an influencer who urged people nationwide to adopt safe banking habits. The campaign has been instrumental in promoting secure banking awareness and educating the public on various digital fraud techniques employed by fraudsters. Since its launch, the initiative has garnered a substantial fan base of over two million across social media platforms, covering over 60 modus operandi to educate customers on preventive measures against various types of fraud.

Vigil Aunty EOSS campaign has also won one Grand Prix, three Gold, three Silver awards, and two Bronze awards at the Abbyss Award held at Goafest, along with two Baby Elephant awards at Kyoorium and two ET Trendies awards.

105-year-old undergoes successful nailing procedure for arm fracture

Top News Report

KHANNA, June 24: 105-year-old man underwent a successful nailing procedure for his right arm fracture at Ivy Hospital, Khanna recently.

Dr. Sandeep Singh, orthopedic surgeon

ay Ivy who operated upon Kirpal Singh said that such surgery with an aged patient with comorbidities like blood pressure issues and compromised kidney function requires special anesthesia support, post-operative care and

comprehensive rehabilitation.

He said that following the surgery, the patient made a remarkable recovery and was discharged to continue his recuperation at home.

Dr. Sanjay Puri GM operations Ivy Hospi-



tal, Khanna said, "This surgery showcases the skills and dedication of our professionals and serves as an inspiration for the healthcare community."

This underscores Ivy Hospital, Khanna's commitment to innovative

treatments and compassionate care, reinforcing its leadership in the healthcare industry."

Meanwhile Ivy Healthcare Group which is the largest chain of multi-specialty hospitals in Punjab region is known for advanced treatments

and medical excellence. It offers 750+ beds, 38+ specialties, 250+ doctors, 28 ICUs, 20 advanced operating theaters, and 6 cath labs.

Renowned for comprehensive services and cutting-edge technology, Ivy Group prioritiz-

es patient-centered care with a commitment to integrity, empathy, and excellence.

Its highly skilled medical team focuses on improving patient outcomes through innovation and exceptional healthcare delivery.

Sonakshi Sinha, Zaheer Iqbal wed at private ceremony: 'Love has guided us through challenges and triumphs'

"We are now man and wife," longtime actor couple Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal said on Sunday after their low-key ceremony in the presence of family and close friends.

Sonakshi, 37, and Zaheer, 35, wed in a civil marriage at the "Heeramandi" star's sea-facing Bandra West apartment with the blessings of their families and "both of our gods".

The newlyweds shared their news of their wedding in a joint Instagram post.

"On this very day, seven years back (23.06.2017) in each other's eyes, we saw love in its purest form and dedicated to hold on to it.

"Today that love has guided us through all the challenges and triumphs... leading up to this moment... where with the blessings of both of our families and both of our gods... we are now man and wife. Here's to love, hope and all things beautiful with each other, from now until



forever," the couple captioned their wedding pictures.

Both the bride and groom twinned in ivory: Sonakshi wore a saree, whereas Zaheer was dressed in a kurta-pyjama.

Sonakshi's "Heeramandi" co-star Aditi Rao Hydari attended the ceremony along with her fiancé, actor Siddharth as well as actor-friend Huma Qureshi.

The newlyweds will later host a reception for friends and indus-

try colleagues at a fine-dining restaurant in Worli. Sweets were distributed to the media stationed outside the reception venue.

"Thank you for showering us with so much love, happiness and kindness on the most important day of our lives! Your support and wishes mean the world to us," read a message from Sonakshi and Zaheer.

Though there was no official

confirmation from the couple, the rumours of their wedding started doing social media rounds earlier this month.

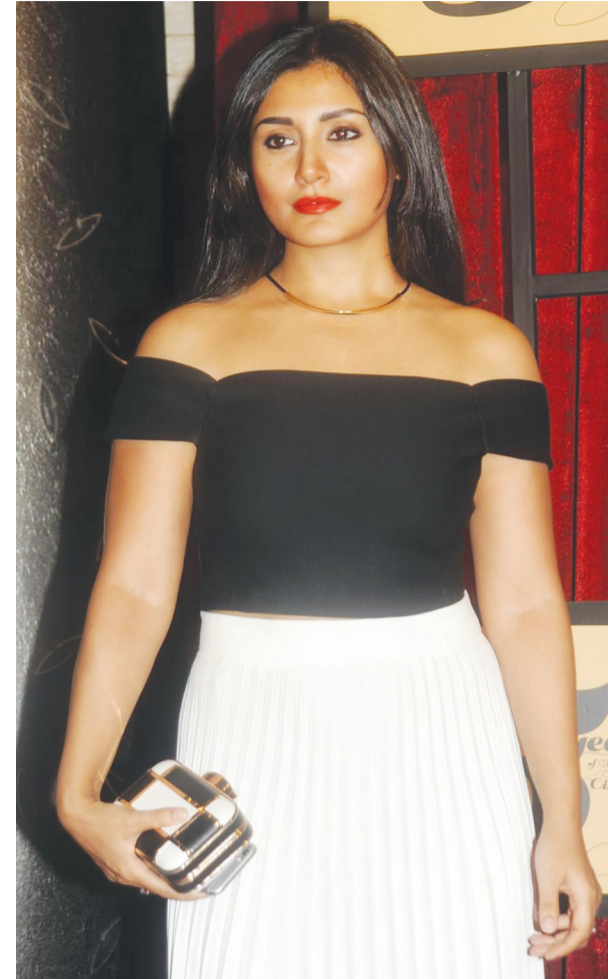
While Sonakshi was last seen in the Netflix series "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar", in which she played the dual role of Rehaana and Fareedan, Zaheer had a special appearance in the action film "Ruslaan".

Sonakshi and Zaheer first collaborated for the music video of the song "Blockbuster", which was released in September 2022. Months later, they co-starred in the comedy drama "Double XL".

The duo didn't publicly confirm their relationship, but were often spotted attending events and social gatherings together.

From attending each other's birthday parties, award wins to going scuba diving on holiday, Sonakshi and Zaheer often gave a glimpse into their lives to fans and followers on social media.

Rimi Sen on disappearing from Bollywood: Mera furniture role hota tha in films



Star of Hungama (2003), Dhoom (2004), Deewane Huye Pagal (2005), Phir Hera Pheri and Golmaal: Fun Unlimited (2006) - and away from the spotlight for the past 13 years, actor Rimi Sen has come out of her hibernation.

The 42-year-old is in the middle of a legal issue and alleges losing 4 crore to a con man. "He pretended to be a rich businessman and took 4 crore from me in parts since 2020,

promising to return it with a high interest. He started making excuses after taking the money, claiming his family got Covid-19 and then he had to go to Canada," she shares, adding that the case was transferred to the authorities some time back, and a chargesheet will be filed soon. "A warrant will be issued against that man for cognisable offence," Sen says.

Even as the investigation goes on, we ask the actor about her disap-

pearance from films.

"Main comedy films kar kar ke thak gayi thi, there used to be not much of a role for me there. Mera sirf furniture role hota tha. I had a good role in only a few, like Hungama and Johnny Gaddaar (2007). The latter didn't work, and that's the kind of work I wanted to do," she tells us.

Sen resurfaced in 2015, for the reality show Bigg Boss and because of her co-production, the National Award-winning film Budhia Singh: Born To Run. Having worked with A-listers such as Akshay Kumar, John Abraham and Ajay Devgn, is she still connected with people in the film industry? "I am not. I can't ask anyone for help. Jab tak gidgiddao nahin, help nahin milti hai. Why won't other people look for their own benefit? Why will someone go out of their way to help someone?" she asks.

Did she find herself in circumstances where she was replaced or her role cut due to someone not being happy with her success? "Stakes are really high in this industry. Talent comes later-you should first know how to handle people. Otherwise kuchh nahin ho sakta, talent pada rahega store room mein. Mujhe nahin aata tha bechna, PR karna," she signs off.

'The timing couldn't have been better': Rajkumar Rao on doing cameo in Vinod Rawat's 'Pushtaini'

Actor Rajkumar Rao, who is set to make a cameo appearance in the upcoming film 'Pushtaini' said he has known its lead actor and director Vinod Rawat since their theatre days in Delhi.

"Our pockets were empty but our eyes were full of dreams," Rajkumar recalled as he spoke about the journey towards their respective careers in the entertainment industry.

Vinod Rawat, known for his work as an acting coach on several notable films, including Hrithik Roshan's 'Kaabil' and 'Super 30,' as well as 'War' and 'Fighter,' marks his directorial debut with 'Pushtaini.'

In 'Pushtaini' Rajkumar will be seen playing a star guiding a newcomer on set, a role he sees as an opportunity to champion compelling storytelling.

"I am happy the film

is releasing now in theatres, at a time when Hindi cinema is already witnessing the audience embracing content-driven stories with wide arms.

The timing of Pushtaini couldn't have been better. It's the time to win, to dream and I'm happy that Vinod's work will now reach a wider audience, including some youngsters in some theatre groups, who must be dreaming



to make it big. Follow your heart, your passion will guide you home," Rajkumar said in a statement.

'Pushtaini,' co-written by Rita Heer, premiered in South Asia at the 2023 Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival.

Sleeper hit 'Munjya' brings to life Marathi folklore

Each time naysayers lament how dull the entertainment business has become, there comes a sleeper hit which proves all the trade pundits wrong. If not too long ago it was Vikrant Massey's '12th Fail', which charmed critics and audiences alike, now it's 'Munjya'. Yet another horror.com from the stable of Maddock Films, perhaps few gave the film a thought or a chance. But with each week, its position at the box office is strengthening. Declared a bona fide superhit, it's even giving big-ticket 'Chandu Champion' a run for its money.

Director Amar Kaushik, who set the ball of horror comedies rolling with the delightful 'Stree', happens to be the co-producer of 'Munjya'. He and Dinesh Vijan decided to back the film for they were taken in by the unusual premise of the Marathi folktale.

'Story first' might be a rarity in Bollywood, but Kaushik, whose recent outing 'Bhedhiya' too touched magical numbers, observes, "Ultimately, the story has to be given the star treatment. New stories, new voices will always find audiences." Not that the director of 'Munjya', Aditya Sarpotdar, is a greenhorn. A fourth-generation filmmaker with a strong grounding in Marathi cinema, he was the ideal choice to take the Marathi folktale forward. Hailing from the same Konkani region in which the movie is set, it was the kind of story he grew up listening to.



Since both the milieu and the tale are akin to 'home', the deeply personal as we have seen with 'Kantara' invariably becomes universal and resonates.

Though the film opened to mixed reviews, for the makers, the audience's reaction is always the litmus test. Trade analyst Sumit Kadel explains why it found favour with viewers, "Post-Covid, audiences' tastes have changed dramatically and instead of serious dramas, they prefer entertaining stuff. 'Munjya' undeniably is a well-crafted entertainer." Sarpotdar nods, "A fair enough assessment; only the audience for serious cinema has not vanished, it has just moved to OTT for more highbrow content."

As they are busy doing surveys and watching

theatrical screenings with audiences, among the many takeaways are, "How more and more families are watching 'Munjya'." The thing about sleeper hits, says Kaushik, is that "audiences own it, promote it and thereafter it soars on sheer word-of-mouth publicity". Precisely why the film did even better in the second week.

Whether over-publicity, a given in tent-pole movies, kills a film or not, it's not as if smaller films don't have a strategy in place. Take the timing of its release. June 7 was a date when no other movie was in competition. Plus, its intriguing trailer had already generated excitement among young audiences. In its making, they followed what Sarpotdar calls 'front-foot dynamics'. Why the film has worked is not as sim-

plistic as being "rooted in Indian folk". Rather, the makers have transformed it into a fun fare with a contemporary feel and touch. Sarpotdar says, "There are jumpscare, laugh out loud moments, a colour palette that promises entertainment; all of which makes for a collective community experience and great theatrical outing." What other production houses and superstars read in 'Munjya's' success can't be foretold. But, yes, more money should go into making of films than stars' fees and expensive CGI effects or not; the story must land. In future, it certainly emboldens the creators of 'Munjya' to be more audacious/experimental in their choices. Yet, with three superhits in Kaushik's kitty, he still can't claim to know which way the box-office cookie will crumble. But, he admits, "As the first audience of our film, we are rather brutal, else audiences will be." While no one will ever know for sure what audiences want, Sarpotdar states, "What one can bet upon is that they don't want run-of-the-mill, recycled content."

At the end of the day, post-mortems are easy and hindsight blesses us with greater vision. And, as they say, 'success has many fathers and failure is an orphan', until a new film takes us by surprise, we are back on the drawing board waiting for another sleeper hit to draw newer conclusions.

Shriya Pilgaonkar joins prestigious jury for Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles



Actor Shriya Pilgaonkar is "thrilled" about joining the jury for the upcoming Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles, where she will be judging the Shorts category. Pilgaonkar, known for her roles in Hindi and Marathi cinema such as Fan (2016), Ekulti Ek (2013), and Aranya (2021), as well as series like Mirzapur and The Broken News, sees this opportunity as a significant step towards her goal of achieving global recognition.

"I have always wanted to establish myself as a global actor, engaging in diverse roles and

participating in film festivals aligns perfectly with that ambition," Pilgaonkar shares.

The 35-year-old, who has also garnered international experience with projects like the French film Un Plus Une (2015) and Gurinder Chadha's British television series The Beecham House (2019), says she eagerly anticipates her maiden experience as a jury member at an international film festival. "I am really excited to watch a lot of films deeply rooted in South Asian culture. It's always inspiring to witness new and emerging storytellers," Pilgaonkar remarks.

The festival, running from June 27 to June 30, holds a special place for Pilgaonkar due to its spotlight on themes from South Asian culture. She views this experience not only as an opportunity to appreciate cinema but also as a learning curve for her aspirations in directing and producing.

"There is so much talent. It really

motivates me. I also wish to direct and produce. This experience is something that will teach me a lot and give me the opportunity to meet a lot of people," the actor adds.

Reflecting on the recent success of Indian films on the global stage, such as Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine as Light winning the Grand Prix at the Cannes International Film Festival, Pilgaonkar expresses hope for more substantial support for independent filmmakers.

"It has been an exceptional year for Indian cinema internationally, but I hope we can provide better financial support through scholarships, grants, and funding. There is so much untapped talent waiting for opportunities," Pilgaonkar emphasises adding international film festivals play a crucial role in promoting authentic storytelling and motivating filmmakers worldwide.

Kritika Kamra confirms playing lead in Vijay Varma's Matka King

Actor Kritika Kamra has confirmed playing the female lead role in upcoming series Matka King, which stars Vijay Varma in the lead role. The actor, who was in talks to play the female lead in the drama series, has shot for small bits while the meaty parts remains to be shot.

Confirming the news, Kritika exclusively tell us, "My character plays a significant role in the evolution of Matka in the 70s and 80s in Mumbai. Matka of course is satta or betting, which is introduced and revolutionised by Vijay's character, who is the Matka king and my character joins him in the journey and shapes it."

The show, which is a drama, is a series of ups and downs in the story and the 35-year-old actor is confident that this is what will hold the audience's attention.

"Betting as we know has lots of ups and downs which changes the journey of the show like a



thriller. But it's an evolution story, a drama," says the actor.

The show is set in the 1960s

on the life of Ratan Khatri, who is considered among the pioneers of betting in India and was known as the Matka King, who changed the gambling form of matka into a huge racket. Varma will be playing the titular role in the film.

Kamra, who will shoot for the series across July, August and September in Mumbai, has dived into preparations. While some reading content has been given to her by director Nagraj Manjule and writer Abhay Koranne.

Asked how is her character in this show different from her previous period show Bambai Meri Jaan's Habiba, the actor says, "Although this is the same era and Mumbai, this show is a different milieu altogether and my character is nothing like Habiba, so I am trying to get familiar with this part of Mumbai, this world and the motivations of my character. Also with the game of Matka and what it was that pulled too many people to it."

Centre imposes wheat stock limits to ensure food security, price stability until March 2025

Under the new rules, traders, wholesalers, and large depots of big chain retailers face a cap of 3,000 tonnes each

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): To reinforce food security and stabilise prices, the Union government on Monday announced the imposition of stock limits on wheat for traders, retailers, big chain retailers, and processors across all states and Union Territories.

The decision, aimed at curbing hoarding and speculative practices, underscores the government's proactive measures in managing essential food stocks.

Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said, "The move is designed to prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation. We aim to ensure sufficient stock availability and stable prices in the domestic market."

The government has issued an order removing licensing requirements, stock limits, and movement restrictions on specified foodstuffs, effective immediately until March 31, 2025.

Under the new rules, retail outlets and individual stores of big chain retailers are allowed



to stock up to 10 tonnes of wheat, an official statement said.

Traders, wholesalers, and large depots of big chain retailers face a cap of 3,000 tonnes each.

For processors, the limit is set at 70 per cent of their monthly installed capacity (MIC) multiplied by the remaining months of the 2024-25 fiscal.

Despite the government's robust wheat procurement of 266 lakh MT this Rabi marketing season, surpassing the required 188 lakh MT, there

are no plans to lift the export bans on wheat, sugar, and non-basmati rice.

"As of now, there are no proposals to remove the export bans on these key items. The bans will remain in effect until further notice to prioritize domestic availability and price stability," said Chopra.

Addressing the issue of wheat procurement, Chopra acknowledged the record production of 112 million tonnes this year. However, he pointed out, "Private traders have been active, purchasing wheat above the

Minimum Support Price (MSP), benefiting farmers. While this is a positive development, we want to assure that we have ample wheat stock and no need to revise the wheat import duty. Additionally, wheat consumption has increased."

The government faced challenges in procuring the required wheat stock from Madhya Pradesh due to poor production caused by adverse weather conditions.

Chopra also dismissed media reports suggesting a wheat shortage, affirming that the country has sufficient wheat supplies. "There is no shortage of wheat in the country. The stock limits are part of our strategy to maintain stable prices and ensure consumer interests," he reiterated.

The Centre's measures reflect its commitment to maintaining food security and price stability, ensuring that consumers are prioritised in its policies and actions.

Remark by PM Modi, Amit Shah on Constitution not acceptable: Rahul Gandhi

He addresses reporters on the inaugural day of the 18th Lok Sabha session



NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): Accusing PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of "attacking" the Constitution, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said it was not acceptable to the Opposition INDIA bloc parties.

Addressing reporters on the inaugural day of the 18th Lok Sabha session, Gandhi said

no power can touch the Constitution.

The Congress leader also showed a palm top edition of the Constitution to the reporters after making his comments.

"PM Modi and Amit Shah's assault on the Constitution is not acceptable to us. So, we clung to it while taking oath. Our message is clear. No power can

touch the Constitution of India as long as we are around", he said.

Gandhi's remarks came after PM Modi hit out at the Congress over the Emergency imposed in 1975, calling it a "black spot" on democracy "when the Constitution was discarded".

Later writing on X, Gandhi also said that incidents such as the train accident near New Jaijpur station in West Bengal and irregularities in NEET and UGC-NET exams have put the Modi government psychologically on the back foot.

"India's strong opposition will continue its pressure, raise the voice of the people and will not let the Prime Minister escape without accountability", Gandhi wrote on X.

Supreme Court fixes June 26 for hearing Arvind Kejriwal's plea against Delhi High Court's stay order on bail

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Monday fixed June 26 for hearing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea against the Delhi High Court order putting interim stay on his bail in the money-laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam.

A vacation bench of Justices Manoj Misra and SVN Bhatti said it would like to wait for the pronouncement of the high court order on the issue.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal,



sought vacating of the interim stay on the bail order.

ASG SV Raju, appearing for the ED, opposed the plea of Kejriwal, and said the high court is about to pronounce the verdict on its stay application.

The Aam Aadmi Party

(AAP) national convenor, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21, could have walked out of Tihar jail on Friday last had the high court not granted the interim stay relief to the federal anti-money-laundering agency.

What about 10 years of 'undeclared emergency', Mallikarjun Kharge asks PM

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday countered Prime Minister Narendra Modi's blistering attack on the opposition saying even after the moral defeat of the PM, arrogance remained.

He said the PM remembered 50-year-old Emergency but not the last decade of an undeclared emergency.

"PM Modi made a longer-than-usual customary address today. Clearly, even after moral and political defeat, the arrogance remains. The nation was hoping that Modiji would say something on important



issues such as paper leak and train accident in Bengal, but no," said Kharge.

"People expected he would show some sympathy towards the youth regarding the paper leak in NEET and other recruitment examinations, but he did not take any responsibility for the massive rigging

and corruption of his government. Modiji also remained silent about the recent train accident in West Bengal and utter mismanagement of the Railways. Manipur has been in the grip of violence for the past 13 months, but Modiji did not bother to visit the state nor did he express any concern about the

fresh violence in his speech today," said the Congress chief.

He said be it the floods in Assam and the north-east, the backbreaking price rise, the historic fall of the rupee or the exit poll-stock market scam, the PM is mum.

"The Modi government has kept the next census pending for long, and Modi was completely silent even on the caste census. Modiji, you are giving advice to the Opposition. You are reminding us of the 50-year-old Emergency, but have forgotten the last 10 years of undeclared emergency, which was

ended by the people. People have given their mandate against the PM," said Kharge.

He said that despite everything if Narendra Modi has become prime minister, he should work. "People need substance, not slogans, remember this yourself," Kharge told Modi.

He said the opposition and INDIA janbandhan wanted a consensus in Parliament and would keep raising the voice of the people in the House, on the streets and before everyone.

"We will protect the Constitution! Long live Indian democracy," he added.

NEET-UG row: Over 2 dozen students detained during march to Parliament

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): More than two dozen students, some of them NSUI members, were detained while protesting against irregularities in NEET-UG and the cancellation of UGC-NET exams here at Jantar Mantar on Monday.

The Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India (NSUI) had planned a march to the Parliament on the day of the commencement of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha. The students, hold-

ing placards and NSUI flags, gathered in large numbers at Jantar Mantar for their 'Chhatra Sansad Gherav'.

Ahead of the protest, police barricaded the area to prevent students from taking out their march. Heavy deployment of Delhi Police, including paramilitary forces was made at the site.

According to visuals of the protest shared with media, some students tried to go past the barricades, while a few others climbed on the structure.



They were detained by the Delhi Police and taken to different police stations, since no permission was granted for the march, an officer said.

Amid a demand for the cancellation of NEET-UG held on May 5, the

Union Education Ministry has said that the incidents of malpractices were "localised" or "isolated" and it was not fair to jeopardise the careers of lakhs of candidates who cleared the exam rightfully. The CBI has filed an

FIR in connection with the alleged irregularities under Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 420 (cheating) of the IPC, among others.

The UGC-NET for the selection of junior research fellows, assistant professors and PhD scholars was conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on June 18 in two shifts across the country.

The exam was postponed after the government said that the "integrity of the examination may have been compromised".

Woman, 2 daughters die in fire from LPG cylinder leak in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad

GHAZIABAD, Jun 24 (Agencies): Woman and her two daughters were charred to death and three people injured in a fire that broke out at an under-construction house here, police said on Monday.

The blaze, reported at Defence Colony in the city's Teela Mor police station area on Sunday, was caused by a leakage in the LPG cylinder when the woman was cooking.

Nathulal, the house owner, was getting five rooms constructed in the building with the help of Mukesh who was residing with his family there, ACP Shalimar Garden Siddharth Gautam said.

When the fire broke out, Nathulal along with some local people doused

it and rushed the injured to the GTB hospital here, Gautam said.

Mukesh's wife Bhagwati and two daughters Priyanka (16) and Himani (17) suffered 80 to 90 per cent burn injuries and were declared brought dead at the hospital, the ACP said.

Mukesh, his son Ankit, and a carpenter, Sonu, suffered 20 to 30 percent burns while trying to extinguish the fire and are undergoing treatment, he added.

Chief Fire Officer Rahul Pal said Priyanka and Himani got burnt while trying to douse the flames and could not escape as the door had got locked.

The police said a probe is on in the matter. The bodies have been sent for postmortem.

Swimming Coach Arrested For Sexually Assaulting Minor Girl At Housing Society In Thane

THANE, Jun 24 (Agencies): A 42-year-old swimming coach has been arrested in Thane for allegedly touching a 10-year-old girl inappropriately in the swimming pool of a housing society, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on Saturday afternoon when the accused, Mangesh Desle, was coaching the girl.

As per the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, the coach touched her daughter's private parts, a police official said.

Desle was arrested under sections 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman



with intent to outrage her modesty) and 354-A (Sexual harassment of the nature of unwelcome physical contact and advances or a demand) of the Indian Penal Code, and under the Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he added.

Woman killed by 'lover' in UP's Jhansi hours before her wedding, case registered

JHANSI, Jun 24 (Agencies): A 22-year-old woman was shot dead by her alleged lover just hours before her wedding in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi district, the police said on Monday.

The incident happened in the Siddheshwar Nagar area in Jhansi when the woman, identified as Kajal, was getting ready for the wedding at a local salon with

her sisters and other women of the family.

The accused reached the salon and shouted, "Kajal, come out, you have betrayed my love". When Kajal refused to step out of the salon, he barged inside and shot at Kajal's chest. According to the woman's sister, the accused was demanding Kajal to come along and shot her when she refused.

Following the incident,

the police were alerted and Kajal was rushed to Jhansi Medical College in a serious condition where she succumbed to her injuries during treatment.

Based on a complaint, the Jhansi Police registered an FIR in the case and launched a manhunt to nab the accused.

According to SSP Jhansi, S Rajesh, the woman and the accused were from the

same village in Madhya Pradesh's Datia district and already knew each other.

"... The police team reached the spot after recovering information about the incident. I visited the crime scene. The doctors have told us that she died during treatment.

The girl was originally a resident of Madhya Pradesh's Datia... The accused followed the

woman to Jhansi and then conducted the incident...

We have already rushed two teams to Datia for the arrest of the accused.

We are also raiding the homes of the relatives of the accused... Strict action will be taken against the accused," Rajesh said while speaking to the media in connection with the matter.

Gunmen kill 15 police officers and several civilians in Russia's southern Dagestan region

The gunmen open fire on 2 Orthodox churches, a synagogue and a police post in 2 cities

MOSCOW, Jun 24 (Agencies): More than 15 police officers and several civilians, including an Orthodox priest, were killed by armed militants in Russia's southern republic of Dagestan on Sunday, said its governor Sergei Melikov in a video statement early on Monday.

The gunmen opened fire on two Orthodox churches, a synagogue and a police post in two cities, according to the authorities.

Russia's National Anti-Terrorist Committee described the attacks in the predominantly Muslim region with a history of armed insurgency as terrorist acts.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were declared days of mourning in the region.

Dagestan's Interior Ministry said a group of armed men shot at a synagogue and a church in the city of Derbent, located on the Caspian Sea. Both the



church and the synagogue caught fire, according to state media. Almost simultaneously, reports appeared about an attack on a church and a traffic police post in the Dagestan capital, Makhachkala.

Authorities announced a counter-terrorist operation in the region. The Anti-Terrorist Committee said five gunmen were "eliminated". The governor said six "bandits" had been "liquidated". The conflicting numbers couldn't be immediately recon-

ciled and it wasn't clear how many militants were involved in the attacks.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks. The authorities launched a criminal investigation on the charge of a terrorist act.

Russian state news agency Tass cited law enforcement sources as saying that a Dagestani official was detained over his sons' involvement in the attacks.

Melikov said in the video

statement that the situation in the region was under control of the law enforcement and local authorities, and vowed that the investigation of the attacks will continue until "all the sleeping cells" of the militants are uncovered.

He claimed, without providing evidence, that the attacks might have been prepared from abroad, and referenced what the Kremlin calls "the special military operation" in Ukraine in an apparent attempt to link the attacks to it.

In March, gunmen opened fire on a crowd at a concert hall in suburban Moscow, killing 145 people. An affiliate of the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack, but Russian officials also sought to link Ukraine to the attack without providing any evidence. Kyiv has vehemently denied any involvement.

20 Bodies Found As Fire Breaks Out In S Korea Battery Factory: Report



SEOUL, Jun 24 (Agencies): Around 20 bodies have been found at a South Korean lithium battery factory after a massive blaze on Monday, the Yonhap news agency said, with firefighters saying they were still searching the building.

Over 100 people were working in the factory when workers heard a series of explosions from the second floor, where lithium-ion batteries are inspected and packaged, firefighter Kim Jin-young told media.

Some 78 people were confirmed safe but many more were still missing, with Yonhap saying that "about 20 bodies (were) found" at the site, after rescue workers finally managed to get inside.

Kim told media that they had managed to put out the largest fire at the factory and were pulling bodies out of the charred building.

"A rescue team has gone inside and is carrying out search and rescue operations," he said.

Images shared by

Yonhap after the fire broke out showed huge plumes of billowing grey smoke rising into the sky above the factory, with orange flames inside the building. Dozens of fire engines were seen outside.

The vast factory had an estimated 35,000 battery cells on the second floor in storage, with more batteries stored in other areas.

Lithium batteries burn hot and fast, and are difficult to control with conventional fire extinguishing methods.

"Due to fears of additional explosions, it was difficult to enter," Kim said.

"As it is a lithium battery manufacturer, we determined that spraying water will not extinguish the fire, so we are currently using dry sand," he added.

The lithium battery plant is owned by Aricell, a South Korean primary battery manufacturer. It is located in Hwaseong city, just south of the capital Seoul.

Lithium batteries are used in everything from laptops to electric vehicles -- but can be highly

explosive, with airlines, for example, imposing strict regulations on checking devices containing them.

"Mobilise all personnel" South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol issued emergency instructions to authorities, telling them to "mobilise all available personnel and equipment to focus on searching for and rescuing people," his office said.

The president also warned authorities that they should "ensure the safety of firefighters considering the rapid spread of fire".

Firefighting and rescue efforts were ongoing, and the cause of the fire was unknown.

Authorities in Hwaseong sent out a series of alerts to residents warning them to stay inside.

"There is a lot of smoke due to factory fires. Please pay attention to safety, such as refraining from going out," one alert sent by text message said.

"Factory fire. Please detour to surrounding roads and nearby citizens please close windows," another one read.

South Korea is a major producer of batteries, including those used in electric vehicles.

Its battery makers supply EV makers around the world, including Tesla.

South Korea is also one of the world's largest producers of high-end semiconductors, and the government has invested heavily in key technologies including displays and batteries.

9 Dead And Many Buildings Torched As Fresh Unrest Erupts In New Caledonia

NOUMEA, Jun 24 (Agencies): Several buildings, including a police station and a town hall, were set on fire in New Caledonia overnight, authorities said Monday, as the French Pacific territory was hit by a fresh surge of unrest.

"The night was... marked by unrest throughout the mainland and on the island of Pins and Mare, requiring the intervention of numerous reinforcements: with attacks on the police, arson and roadblocks", the High Commission, which represents the French state in the archipelago, said in a press release.

Rioting and looting erupted in New Caledonia in mid-May over an electoral reform plan that Indigenous Kanak people feared would leave them in a permanent minority, putting independence hopes defini-

tively out of reach.

The unrest left nine dead and damage estimated at more than 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion).

The French government responded by sending more than 3,000 troops and police to the territory almost 17,000 kilometres (10,600 miles) from Paris.

In Dumbea, north of the capital Noumea, the municipal police station and a garage were set alight. Four armoured vehicles intervened, an agency journalist said.

Several fires broke out in the Ducos and Magenta districts of Noumea, while police and separatists clashed in Bourail, resulting in one injury, agency learned.

The High Commission reported "several fires were extinguished", particularly in Ducos



and Magenta, adding that "the premises and vehicles of the municipal police and private vehicles" were set on fire.

"Abuses, destruction and attempted fires were also committed in several places in Paita," in the Noumea suburbs, added the High Commission, which said police in Mare had

also been attacked.

On Monday morning, many schools were closed due to the renewed unrest.

On Saturday, seven independence activists linked to a group accused of orchestrating the riots last month were indicted and sent to mainland France for pre-trial detention.

The EU targets Russia's LNG ghost fleet in a new round of Ukraine war sanctions.

The European Union has slapped new sanctions on Russia over its war on Ukraine

BRUSSELS, Jun 24 (Agencies): The European Union on Monday slapped new sanctions on Russia over its war on Ukraine, targeting Moscow's shadow fleet of tankers moving liquefied natural gas through Europe as well as several companies.

In a statement issued at a meeting of EU foreign ministers, the bloc said that it will "forbid reloading services of Russian LNG in EU territory for the purpose of transshipment operations to third countries."

The EU estimates that about 4-to-6 billion cubic meters (141 billion-212 billion cubic feet) of Russian LNG was shipped to third countries via EU ports last year. Russia is suspected of running a "ghost fleet" to evade sanctions and keep up the flow of energy earnings so that it can finance the war.

The measures will target ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore transfers as well as reloading operations. It also involves a crackdown on the re-export of LNG to third countries via the EU, plus a ban on

new investments to help Russia complete LNG projects it is working on.

A total of 61 new "entities" -- often companies, banks, agencies and other organizations -- were added to the EU's list, including a number of them in China, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Many are accused of circumventing the bloc's sanctions or providing sensitive equipment to Russia.

Around 50 more officials are also being targeted with asset freezes, as well as travel bans. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, as well as scores of lawmakers and several oligarchs are among more than 1,700 people already listed by the EU.

The more than 400 entities previously hit include companies working in the military, aviation, shipbuilding and machine sectors, the Wagner mercenary group, political parties and banks. Around 210 billion euros (\$225 billion) worth of Russian Central Bank assets are blocked in the EU.

Netanyahu says he won't agree to a deal that ends the war in Gaza, testing the latest truce proposal

Hamas has insisted it will not release the remaining hostages unless there is a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

TEL AVIV, Jun 24 (Agencies): The viability of a U.S.-backed proposal to wind down the 8-month-long war in Gaza was cast into doubt on Monday after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would only be willing to agree to a "partial" cease-fire deal that would not end the war, comments that sparked an uproar from families of hostages held by Hamas.

In an interview broadcast late Sunday on Israeli Channel 14, a conservative, pro-Netanyahu station, the Israeli leader said he was "prepared to make a partial deal - this is no secret - that will return to us some of the people," referring to the roughly 120 hostages still held in the Gaza Strip. "But we are committed to continuing the war after a pause, in order to complete the goal of eliminating Hamas. I'm not willing to give up on that."

Netanyahu's comments did not deviate dramatically from what he had said previously about his terms for a deal. But they come at a sensitive time as Israel and Hamas appear to be moving further apart over the latest cease-

fire proposal, and they could represent another setback for mediators trying to end the war.

Netanyahu's comments stood in sharp contrast to the outlines of the deal detailed late last month by U.S. President Joe Biden, who framed the plan as an Israeli one and which some in Israel refer to as "Netanyahu's deal." His remarks could further strain Israel's ties to the U.S., its top ally, which launched a major diplomatic push for the latest cease-fire proposal.

The three-phased plan would bring about the release of the remaining hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. But disputes and mistrust persist between Israel and Hamas over how the deal plays out.

Hamas has insisted it will not release the remaining hostages unless there's a permanent cease-fire and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. When Biden announced the latest proposal last month, he said it included both.

But Netanyahu says Israel is still committed to destroying Hamas' military and governing capabilities, and ensuring it can never again



carry out an Oct. 7-style assault. A full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, where Hamas' top leadership and much of its forces are still intact, would almost certainly leave the group in control of the territory and able to rearm.

In the interview, Netanyahu said that the current phase of fighting is ending, setting the stage for Israel to send more troops to its northern border to confront the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, in what could open up a new war front. But he said that didn't mean the war in Gaza was over.

During the initial six-week phase, the sides are supposed to negotiate an agreement on the second phase, which Biden said would include the release of all remaining living hostages, including male soldiers, and Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza. The temporary cease-

fire would become permanent.

Hamas appears concerned that Israel will resume the war once its most vulnerable hostages are returned. And even if it doesn't, Israel could make demands at that stage of negotiations that were not part of the initial deal and are unacceptable to Hamas -- and then resume the war when Hamas refuses them.

Netanyahu's remarks reinforced that concern. After they were aired, Hamas said they represented "unmistakable confirmation of his rejection" of the U.S.-supported deal, which also received the backing of the United Nations' Security Council.

In a statement late Sunday after Netanyahu's lengthy TV interview, the Palestinian militant group said his position was "in contrast" to what the U.S. administration said that

Israel had approved. The group said that its insistence that any deal should include a permanent cease-fire and the withdrawal of all Israeli forces out of the entire Gaza Strip "was an inevitable necessity to block Netanyahu's attempts of evasion, deception, and perpetuation of aggression and the war of extermination against our people."

Netanyahu shot back and in a statement from his office said Hamas opposed a deal. He said Israel would not withdraw from Gaza until all 120 hostages are returned.

Hamas welcomed the broad outline of the U.S. plan but proposed what it said were "amendments." U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, during a visit to the region earlier this month, said some of Hamas' demands were "workable" and some were not, without elaborating.

Netanyahu and Hamas both have incentives to keep the devastating war going despite the catastrophic toll it has had on civilians in Gaza and the mounting anger in Israel that after so many months Israel has not reached its aims of returning the hostages and defeating Hamas.

The families of hostages have grown increasingly impatient with Netanyahu, seeing his apparent reluctance to move ahead on a deal as tainted by political considerations. A group representing the families condemned Netanyahu's remarks, which it viewed as an Israeli rejection of the latest cease-fire proposal.

"This is an abandonment of the 120 hostages and a violation of the state's moral duty toward its citizens," it said, noting that it held Netanyahu responsible for returning all the captives.

In its Oct. 7 cross-border assault, Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people and took 250 people captive, including women, children and older people. Dozens were freed in a temporary cease-fire deal in late November and of the 120 remaining hostages, Israeli authorities say about a third are dead.

Israel's retaliatory war has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. It has sparked a humanitarian crisis and displaced most of the territory's 2.3 million population.

Grand finale of Summer Camp 2024 showcases remarkable talent

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: The Grand Finale of the Summer Camp 2024, organized by Acharya National Culture Activities, culminated in a spectacular display of talent and creativity at the Abhinav Theatre on Friday. The event, themed as "A Mega Premier Talent Show," celebrated the culmination of weeks of intensive training and cultural exploration among young participants from across the region.

The highlight of the event was the presence of Chief Guest, Rekha Mahajan, District President BJP Jammu South, whose inspiring address emphasized the importance of nurturing artistic talents and cultural heritage among the youth.

The Summer Camp 2024, spearheaded by



organizer Raj Shavotra, aimed to provide a platform for young artists to showcase their skills in various cultural domains including music, dance, drama, and visual arts. Participants demonstrated exceptional creativity and proficiency, leaving the audience spellbound with their performances. "We are thrilled to wit-

ness such incredible talent among our youth," said Rekha Mahajan, Chief guest of the event. "The Summer Camp 2024 has not only showcased their artistic abilities but also fostered a spirit of camaraderie and cultural appreciation."

The Grand Finale featured captivating performances that reflected the

rich diversity and cultural ethos of the region. From traditional folk dances to contemporary musical compositions, each act resonated with the audience, earning enthusiastic applause and accolades.

"We are immensely proud of all the participants who have dedicated themselves to honing

their talents during the Summer Camp," added Raj Shavotra. "Their hard work and dedication have truly made this event a grand success."

The Acharya National Culture Activities extends its heartfelt gratitude to Chief Guest Rekha Mahajan for gracing the occasion with her presence and inspiring the participants with her encouraging words.

Participants included Anaya Gupta Paavika Gupta, Shanaya Sharma, Trisha Kapoor, Ira Sharma, Aryan Dev Singh, Adidev Singh, Ketvi Gupta, Pamreen Kour, Parneet Kour, JASMEH KOUR, Lakshika Agarwal, Aadhya Sharma, Naman Raj Shavotra, Viaan Raj Shavotra, Jiya Shavotra. Guest of Honour were Subash Chander, Ranjit Kumar, Nirmal Mattoo and Pritam Chand.

JKP Wrestler Ishaq Ahmed lifts 59th Aghar Jitto Kesari Dangal Title



Top News Report

KATRA, June 24: Wrestler Ishaq Ahmed (Lallu) of J&K Police lifted 59th annual Aghar Jitto Kesari Dangal title 2024 by defeating wrestler Chandi of Maharashtra in the first main bout that lasted for 19 minutes.

Baba Jitto Dangal committee organized a Vishal Dangal at village Aghar Jitto in District Reasi on the last day of the three days historic mela held every year in the memory of the great revolutionary Farmer. Baba Jitto and Bua Kouri in association with J&K Indian Style Wrestling Association.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi Vishesh Paul Mahajan graced the occasion as chief guest who gave away cash prizes among the Wrestlers. SDM Katra Piyush Dhotra and Tehsildar Katra Jatinder Singh were the Guests of Honour.

Former Joint secretary J&K State Sports Council and President J&K Indian Style Wrestling Association Shiv Kumar Sharma presided over the function.

Dr. Pardeep Kumar, Chairman group of colleges and founder

Director group of companies Delhi was the special guest.

Jugal Kishore Sharma (Bunty) leading Businessman and social activist of Delhi contributed Rs. 35,000 as financial assistance and retired Social Welfare Officer Mohan Lal Kohli contributed Rs. 15,000 to the organizers.

Winner of man bout wrestler Ishaq Ahmed (Lallu) was awarded with Rs. 20,000 along with traditional "Gurj (Gadda) and Aghar Jitto Kesari Patta" by Shiv Kumar Sharma and Jugal Kishore Sharma while runner-up wrestler Chandi got Rs. 11,000 by Sunil Kohli (President) and Retired ZEO and President Awardee Gopal Krishan Komal.

Second main bout was won by Surjit Singh of J&K Police of Reasi who defeated Vishal of Delhi. Winner Surjit Singh was awarded with cash prize of Rs 9,000 while runner-up Ishaq got Rs. 6,000. Third bout was won by Krishan of Delhi who defeated Subnash Singh of Reasi and 4th bout was won by Chain Singh of Reasi of Roun Domel Akhara who defeated Mangal of Delhi. Winner Chain Singh got Rs. 4,000

while runner-up Mangal got Rs. 3,000.

In all 54 bouts were played in the dangal and RS. 2,00,000 was distributed as cash prize among the Wrestlers by chief guest DC Vishesh Paul Mahajan and Shiv Kumar Sharma.

Members of Baba Jitto Dangal committee who helped in the conduct of Dangal included Chela Mohan Lal Sharma (Chairman), Sunil Kohli (President), Romesh Chander Sharma, Gopal Krishan Komal, Jugal Kishore (Bunty) Ex. Sarpanch Krishan Singh (Pappu), Gopal Krishan, Mohinder Kumar, Sohan Lal Raina, and Vinod Verma.

Prominent persons present included Retired ZEO Channay Ram, Chuni Lal, Naresh Kumar (Pappu Lakri), Deepak Wazir and Mast Ram.

Proceedings of the Dangal were conducted by Gopal Krishan Komal, Pappu Lakri and Anil Kumar of Reasi.

Shiv Kumar Sharma President Senior Citizens Welfare Forum Katra (Regd.) along with other members honoured. Prominent social activist Kunj Lal 92 Years of Village Kotli Manotripan by presenting him Mata di Chunari and Haar.

Kandi belt worst hit with drinking water shortage: Manjit Singh 'Jal Jeevan Scheme fails to yield result on ground'

Top News Report

VIJAYPUR, June 24: Apni Party Provincial President, Jammu, and Former Minister, Manjit Singh has said that the drinking water crisis has deepened in Kandi belt as Jal Shakti Department has failed to supply required tap water.

"The water supply scheme Jal Jeevan Mission that was aimed to provide drinking water has not been implemented on the ground," he said, citing complaints from the locals who attended the meeting at Vijaypur.

He said that the administration has not been able to grill the officials



who are responsible to implement the Jal Jeevan Scheme on the ground. Therefore, the situation has compelled the

Kandi belt people to buy the drinking water from the market, he said, and added that the Jal Shakti Department has also not

provided any water tanker to supply drinking water to the kandi belt. He said that the people hire private tankers to

provide them drinking water whereas the Jal Jeevan Scheme has collapsed to yield any kind of result.

He said that the officials of the concerned department are not being held accountable for their inability to implement the scheme on the ground.

Meanwhile, he said that the people were also concerned about the underdevelopment in SC and ST colonies in Parmandal, and other areas of Kandi belt.

He demanded that the neglected residential colonies should be developed, and all basic amenities should be provided in these areas.

FROM PAGE 1

UP DSP demoted to constable after being caught with female constable in Hotel Room

murder. Thereafter, SP Unnao took immediate action with the help of other surveillance and traced his location. The police team immediately reached the spot and caught him with a female constable at a hotel room located in Kanpur. Following this, the DGP suspended him and ordered a departmental inquiry further.

NEET, NET row: Mehbooba urges MPs to voice concerns of students

students across India who toiled day & night to take multiple competitive exams will watch helplessly as their hard work goes down the drain".

"Parliament - India's temple of democracy will stand stark in contrast to the despair & despondency these youngsters have been pushed into. Hope every parliamentarian will rise above party affiliation & raise their voice for our younger generation whose future looks very bleak," Mehbooba added.

People need substance, not tantrums, drama, slogans, PM tells Opposition, says government wants to take all along

The country needs a good and responsible opposition and I am hopeful that our MPs will try to fulfil the expectations of the people," the prime minister said hailing June 24 as the day when the new MPs will for the first time take oath in India's new Parliament building.

The prime minister took the occasion to laud the successful conduct of the 18th general election terming as "huge" the victory of the BJP-led NDA dispensation, the first incumbent government to be re-elected thrice after a gap of 60 years.

"The reelection of an incumbent government for the third time, in a first such development after 60 years, is people's stamp on the intent, the policies and commitment of this government. I assure everyone we will work three times harder and improve all parameters three times in our third term," he said.

In a strong counter to the opposition, the PM said June 25 would mark the 50th year of the "black spot on Indian democracy".

"Tomorrow, we will mark the 50th year of the Emergency when the Constitution was mauled, country converted into a jail and rights suspended. Tomorrow, all Indians will take a pledge to safeguard the Constitution

and keep it alive so that no one ever dares to do what was done 50 years ago," Modi said. He dwelt on the importance of the 18th Lok Sabha and of number 18 in Indian scriptures calling upon young MPs to step forward to advance the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

"In our parliamentary democracy today's day is majestic, one of glory. For the first time since Independence, the oath-taking of new MPs is happening in the new Parliament. This used to happen in the old House earlier. I welcome all new MPs on this occasion, and congratulate all," the PM said.

In the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', the PM, while speaking at the 18th Lok Sabha, was accompanied by MPs from North (Jitendra Singh), South (L Murugan), West (Arjun Ram Meghwal) and East (Kiren Rijiju).

Local supporters of foreign terrorists will be booked under EAO: DGP

killed and scores of others injured in four terror incidents between June 9 and 12 in Reasi, Doda, and Kathua districts. Two Pakistani terrorists were also killed in one of the encounters in Kathua.

"Locals found supporting foreign terrorists will be dealt with by the enemy agents ordinance which carries a minimum sentence of life imprisonment or death. This act, introduced to counter Pakistani raiders or invaders in 1948, is much harsher than UAPA," the DGP said.

He said the foreign mercenaries have no locus standi to be here and that they only come to kill civilians, trigger civil strife, destabilise the government, and force their ideology on the people.

"These fighters do not fall in the purview of investigation and only deserve kinetic action... I have always said that we will win this fight with the help of the people, with village defence guards, special police officers and in support of central armed forces," he said.

Swain said terrorism was wiped out from Jammu in 2005, 10 years after it spread its tentacles to the region, and vowed to eliminate it again. "We are determined and confident of eliminating all the terrorists within the next two to three months."

He said special courts will be set up for trials of those arrested under Enemy Agents Ordinance.

"There are two angles to it - one is, all I have to prove is that there was a foreigner and the person has assisted him," he said.

Asked about the presence of Pakistani regulars among the terrorists operating in Jammu region, he said, "It hardly makes any difference. It is a matter of tactics, for us he is an enemy whether he has come from a uni-

formed background, a jail or a terror factory." He added, "We will try to minimise such losses with the help of training, determination and tactics. We will defeat the enemy and if they think we are shying away just from the fear of losses, they are mistaken."

Asked about the terror attacks in Jammu region, he said police have made six arrests from Kathua and also made a breakthrough by arresting a conspirator in the Reasi terror attack case.

"Reasi terror attack case was handed over to NIA and similarly, the Kathua case was given to SIA. We actively consider handing over terror attack cases to professional agencies so that the investigation is carried out in a sustained way to unveil the conspiracy, identify those who facilitated, aided and abetted the crime and bring the culprits to book," he said.

On two attacks in Doda district that left seven security personnel, including two policemen, injured, he said the incidents happened during a seek-and-destroy action and investigation of the incidents is on.

Minor dies of head injury after toy train 'overturns' at Chandigarh mall

cousin took a train ride around 9:30 pm on Saturday.

The two boys were sitting in the last compartment of the toy train. During the ride, the compartment shabbaz was in allegedly overturned, causing him to fall and sustain severe head injuries. His cousin escaped unhurt.

Shabbaz's family rushed him to Government Medical College & Hospital at Chandigarh Sector 32 for treatment, but he succumbed to his injuries. His body was handed over to his parents after an autopsy. "We were informed about the unfortunate incident involving one of the service providers working on our premises on the night of June 22, 2024. Our emergency response team rushed the victim to a hospital who succumbed to his injuries and the local police station was informed immediately. We are fully cooperating with the local authorities in this regard and deeply sympathise with the family," Nexus Elante Mall said in a statement.

Toddler falls from hotel window in Rajasthan's Ajmer, dies

Palace in Diggi Bazaar. Hansmukh Bhai and his wife Afreen had come on a pilgrimage to the Ajmer Sharif dargah from Surat in Gujarat and checked into the hotel with their four children, including one-and-a-half-year-old Kartik, Clock Tower SHO Dinesh Chaudhary said.

PM should have spoken on NEET issue, 'Exam Pe Charcha' Is long-term commitment to students: Omar

He was responding to the prime minister's remarks in Parliament premises on the first day of the 18th Lok Sabha.

"People expect good steps from the opposition but it has been disappointing so far," the prime minister had said in Parliament premises.

"India needs a responsible opposition and people want substance not slogans. They want debate, diligence not disturbance in Parliament," Modi said.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti also hoped that Parliamentarians will rise above party lines and raise the NEET issue in the House.

"While hundreds of elected Member Parliamentarians will take oath today after their well earned victories, lacs of students across India who toiled day & night to take multiple competitive exams will watch helplessly as their hard work goes down the drain. Parliament - India's temple of democracy will stand stark in contrast to the despair & despondency these youngsters have been pushed into. Hope every parliamentarian will rise above party affiliation & raise their voice for our younger generation whose future looks very bleak," she posted on X.

The CBI has filed an FIR in connection with alleged irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance exam NEET-UG held on May 5. The agency is also taking steps to bring under its ambit cases registered in various states by police.

Abdullah congratulated all the members of Parliament who are taking oath today and demanded that MP-elect from north Kashmir Lok Sabha seat Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer be released.

"I congratulate all the Members of Parliament who are taking their oaths today, including those representing the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a momentous occasion for our democracy. It is important to acknowledge that while the people of North Kashmir have elected Engineer Rashid, he should be given the opportunity to take his oath and represent his constituents," he said.

Rashid defeated Abdullah in the Lok Sabha polls by a margin of over two lakh votes.

"It is equally important to recognize the injustice faced by those imprisoned, who are unable or unwilling to participate in elections. Our Members of Parliament will vociferously demand justice for all prisoners, including Engineer Rashid. We will also demand the immediate transfer of these prisoners held

in jails outside J&K back to jails in Kashmir, pending their release," he added. Abdullah said his party's "main demands will be a broader amnesty for all individuals detained after August 5, 2019".

Mother Kills Newborn Daughter by Abandoning her in dry pond to 'Settle Scores' with husband

"She broke down during interrogation and confessed to the crime," an official said.

According to the officials, Sharifa had a confrontation with Iqbal and to settle scores with him, she murdered the infant by leaving her alone in a dry pond under direct sunlight and later put the blame on him.

A case of murder and other offences have been registered against Sharifa at the Sunderbani police station and further investigations are going on, they said.

DGP Law and Order, Other officials brief MRT teams ahead of Amarnath Yatra

He said that they were also accompanied by DIG South Kashmir, DIG Armed, Commanding Officer NDRF and Commanding Officer SDRF.

He said that 13 teams of J&K police, 11 teams of SDRF, 8 teams of NDRF, 4 teams of BSF and 2 teams of CRPF were briefed by the officials and were sent off for further deployment at yatra routes.

Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to commence from June 29 and will concluded on August 29 this year.

Amid dry weather forecast till June 28, night temp rises in J&K

previous night and it was 1.6°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said. Pahalgam recorded a low of 9.6°C, same as on the previous night and it was normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 13.7°C against 12.4°C and it was 0.5°C below normal, the official said.

Kupwara town recorded a low of 14.6°C against 13.6°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 0.2°C for the place, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a minimum of 9.5°C against 7.6°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 0.6°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Jammu, he said, recorded a low of 29.7°C and it was below normal by 3.4°C for the winter capital of J&K. Banihal recorded a low of 13.4°C, Batote 16.5°C and Baderwah 14.5°C, he said.

Massive Fire destroys Maratha Basti; BJP leaders visit area, appeal to DC to vacate illegal settled Rohingyas

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: A massive fire broke out yesterday in Maratha Basti, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, destroying the entire area into ashes. The fire caused significant damage to homes and shops, destroying materials, breaking windows, melting water tanks, and heating walls, leading to substantial financial losses.

BJP leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, Rajeev Charak, the Prabhari of Jammu District, and Advocate Ishant Gupta, the J&K BJP State IT Head, visited the site to assess the situation. They spoke with the affected residents &



shopkeepers, listened to their concerns, and assured them that they would discuss solutions with the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Jammu to resolve their issues at the earliest.

Rajeev Charak expressed concern about

the incident and highlighted the significant loss suffered by Raju Sharma & Vikas Sharma, a scrap dealer. Charak said that the cause of the fire is still unclear, but it is suspected that either children playing with fire or a short circuit might be respon-

sible. He emphasized that Rohingya Basti is an unauthorized settlement of Rohingya refugees from Burma, who are not permanent citizens of India, work as laborers for the railway.

He added that there are reports that they illegally stored oil from tankers and even sold it, which might have contributed to the fire, leading to the complete destruction of the area and causing losses to nearby shopkeepers.

Charak appealed to the DC, Jammu stressing that Trikuta Nagar is a posh colony and a sensitive area due to the railway station situated nearby which is visited by a large number of people/yatris

from across the country. He urged that such settlements should be relocated to safer areas and also demanded strict action against those who settled these people in the area and even offered employment to them.

Advocate Ishant Gupta also appealed to the DC Jammu, highlighting that the fire has severely impacted local children, as their books have been destroyed and families have lost their homes. With rising temperatures, there is a risk of further harm to people's lives. Therefore, he urged DC Jammu that immediate steps should be taken to rehabilitate these families to ensure their safety and well-being.

ABRSM Thathri Unit addresses educational challenges, acknowledges local initiatives



Top News Report

THATHRI, June 24: The Akhil Bhartiya Rashtriya Sheikshik Mahasang (ABRSM) Unit Thathri convened a crucial meeting at Chiralla, graced by District President Suresh Kumar and State Vice President Sanjay Sharma.

The meeting focused on resolving key issues

faced by students and teachers, aiming to formulate strategies for enhancing the school environment.

Members discussed various concerns affecting their area, highlighting the commendable efforts of GHSS Thathri Principal B D Sharma, also in charge of the Zonal Education Office, for timely disbursement of CEA and DA

arrangements to employees. Pending CEA payments for some staff were assured to be processed soon. Attendees included local unit leaders such as Kehar Singh, Balbir Singh, and Papu Kumar, alongside Zonal body representatives Chander Manhas, Janak Singh, and Lok Dev, who contributed significantly to the meeting's success.

AIIMS Jammu conducted "Fire Safety Awareness Programme" at its Campus in collaboration with JK Fire & Emergency Services

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Jammu, in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Fire & Emergency Services (JKF&ES), Command Rajouri Poonch, successfully conducted a comprehensive Fire Safety Awareness Programme today at the AIIMS Jammu Campus. The programme aimed at enhancing the fire safety knowledge and preparedness of the staff and students, ensuring a safer environment within the campus. The program was attended by faculty members, senior nursing officers, nursing officers, all fire and security staff, hospital attendants, and housekeeping staff. Additionally, the senior engineer (Civil and Electrical) and his team, along with officers and staff from

ACIL, also participated in the program.

The session was conducted by Er Himanshu Gandotra, Assistant Director, JK Fire & Emergency Services, who played a pivotal role in the organization and execution of the programme. His expertise and dedication to fire safety were instrumental in making the event a success. He provided detailed explanations about various types of fire extinguishers, their anatomy, and working mechanisms. Key points included: The importance of checking the pressure gauge of fire extinguishers, ensuring it is in the middle at the time of use. He also advised and emphasized awareness of the "Emergency Evacuation Plan," which will be available for every building on campus. Demonstrating the PASS method (Pull the pin, Aim the Nozzle

at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle slowly, and Sweep from side to side) and highlighting considerations like the direction of the wind.

He also shared tips on protecting oneself if someone catches fire, explaining methods such as "Stop, Drop, and Roll."

He also explained the concepts of "starvation and smothering" processes to extinguish fires effectively. The Fire Safety Equipment Display, the Fire Safety Training, Practical demonstrations of fire extinguishing techniques, Mock evacuation drills will be performed in upcoming days to familiarize participants with the emergency evacuation routes and protocols. This exercise aimed at ensuring a swift and orderly evacuation in case of an actual fire emergency.

NBF affiliated with LPGEF meets CEO Kishtwar to address educational issues

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: The JK UT NBF, affiliated with All J & K Low Paid Government Employees Federation (LPGEF), on Monday held a significant meeting with Chief Education Officer Kishtwar, Romi Kumar Vishast.

Chaired by UT Chairman NBF Pritam Dhiman, the delegation included Chief Patron LPGEF Noor Hussain Malik and District President LPGEF Manjoor Ahmed Kichloo. During the meeting, Chief Patron Noor Hussain Malik extended congratulations and a warm welcome to CEO Kishtwar Romi Kumar Vishast on his recent appointment.

Chairman NBF Pritam

Dhiman raised various concerns regarding the teaching fraternity, with a particular emphasis on the Transfer Policy, highlighting its crucial role in ensuring quality education through rotational service utilization.

The fruitful one-hour discussion concluded with CEO Kishtwar affirming that prioritizing the quality education of students remains their primary focus.

The delegation included notable members such as DP LPGEF Kishtwar Manjoor Ahmed Kichloo, Secretary Raj Singh, Rakesh Dhiman, and others, all of whom contributed to the constructive dialogue aimed at enhancing educational standards in the region.

Demand intensifies for Duggar Satellite Channel in Jammu to safeguard cultural heritage: NAUP

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: In a fervent appeal to preserve the unique cultural identity of the Dogras and promote the Dogri language, Shikha Bandral, General Secretary, National Awami United Party (NAUP) intensified calls for the establishment of a dedicated satellite channel for Jammu.

Addressing the media today, Bandral underscored the critical importance of such a channel in honoring the rich heritage of the region.

Highlighting the long-standing demand of the people of Jammu, Bandral expressed solidarity with artists and citizens advocating for the launch of a Dogri satellite channel.

She lamented the historical neglect of this issue by successive governments, despite the optimism following the abrogation of Article 370.

Bandral emphasized the significance of a 'Dogra certificate' as a vital identity marker for Dogras, drawing parallels to the ST certificates granted to Pahadi-speaking people.

Bandral emphasized the significance of a 'Dogra certificate' as a vital identity marker for Dogras, drawing parallels to the ST certificates granted to Pahadi-speaking people.

DDC chairperson Ramban discusses formulation of District Capex Plan 2024-25

Top News Report

RAMBAN, June 24: Chairperson District Development Council, Ramban, Dr. Shamshad Shan on Monday chaired a meeting of council regarding formulation of District Capex Plan 2024-25, here at conference hall, Maitra.

The meeting was attended by the Vice-Chairperson DDC, Ramban, Rabia Beigh and DDC members.

The senior officers including ADDC, Roshan Lal, CPO, Shakeeb Ahmed, ACD, Shrinath Suman Executive Engineers of PWD (R&B), Jal Shakti Department, JPDCL, PMGSY, REW, CMO and other senior officers of the concerned departments were present in the meeting.

During the course of meeting sector wise

ceiling under the district Capex Budget for the year 2024-25 was conveyed to all the district officers besides the guidelines and directions to formulate the sector wise and work wise Action plan was also discussed in detail.

The Chairperson directed all the officers to ensure the formulation of the plan in consultation with DDC members besides stress for the formulation of a multi-layer perspective plan that will yield maximum to the public benefit. She also asked members to focus on completion of ongoing projects besides projecting only those works/projects which shall complete in stipulated time frame keeping in view the working period of current financial years.

It was also exhorted

upon all DDC members and officers to formulate the development plan in accordance with the ceiling conveyed to them and to ensure the best use of available resources.

Threadbare discussion on key sectors and schemes which are part of the District Development Plan likewise, MGNREGA, PMAY, Jal Jeevan Mission, were held in the meeting and necessary directions were passed to the concerned.

Special thrust was laid on Health, Employment, Education and Power. For the Drinking water plan, Jal Shakti department was asked to implement all the schemes effectively to provide tap water supply to all left out habitations during the current financial year.

Relief in GST depicts positive mindset of Govt for promoting ease of doing business: CTF

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Chamber of Traders Federation (CTF) in a review meet complimented PM Modi and FM Sitharaman for great financial relief to traders.

Announcements with regard to GST by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is a significant first positive step of the newly elected Union Government and GST Council towards providing ease of doing business, observed Neeraj Anand, Patron CTF who is also member GST, Grievance redressal committee J&K besides National Vice-President CAIT.

Neeraj Anand complimented

leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and FM Nirmala Sitharaman for such a positive step and expressed hope that GST taxation will stand more simplified and rationalized.

Anand said that these announcements will relieve traders from huge amount of financial burden and it also reflects the mindset of the Government in ensuring ease of doing business for the traders.

He further said that the recommended waivers on interest and penalties, extension of input tax credit deadlines, and the reduction in litigation and pre-deposit requirements will provide much-needed relief to taxpayers. These

measures will enhance compliance and support the business community, particularly MSMEs. The additional exemptions and recommendations to curb inflation and reduce costs for essential services demonstrate a balanced and considerate approach to economic growth and taxpayer support. Neeraj also appreciated the GST Council recommendations related to accommodation services, providing relief to students and working professionals.

Neeraj further demanded that some form of amnesty or settlement for the high-pitched demands raised during the first three years of GST implementation in the country be provided

as many MSMEs and traders all over the Country could not go for appeals in cases of high-pitched demands because of the mandatory requirement of pre-deposit before filing an appeal.

The GST Council has now recommended reducing the quantum of the pre-deposit required for filing appeals under GST. This will provide significant financial relief to assesses. He added.

The GST Council's recommendation of exempting Compensation Cess levied on imports in SEZ by SEZ Unit/developer for authorized operations from 1st July 2017 is also a welcome move and will make SEZ products cost-competitive, said Anand.

Adani Ports begins trading on Sensex after Wipro excluded; ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel to gain weight



MUMBAI, Jun 24 (Agencies): The shares of Adani Ports & SEZ started trading on the 30-stock benchmark index, BSE Sensex, from Monday after the index was restructured to exclude Wipro.

Following Adani Ports inclusion in the Sensex basket, brokerage firm Nuvama stated that it expects passive inflows of \$259 million along with the addition of 14.9 mil-

lion shares. It also said that Wipro's exclusion might result in outflows of \$170 million.

This development comes as the Adani Group chairman, Gautam Adani, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the company, saying the "true measure of success is our ability to stand firm in the face of adversity."

"Perseverance never more evident than what

we demonstrated last year. Adani Group fought back against attacks on integrity, and reputation by foreign short sellers. Proved no challenge can weaken the foundations of the Adani Group," Adani was quoted as saying by NDTV.

Stocks that are slated to see their weights increasing in the Sensex basket amid rejig include top 10 firms ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel and Infosys as well as Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel and IndusInd Bank.

On the other hand, stocks expected to witness a weight loss include Top 10 firms like Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ITC besides the likes of Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti Suzuki and Larsen & Toubro.

Quant Mutual Fund responds after SEBI probe into front-running allegations

NEW DELHI, Jun 24 (Agencies): Amid market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) investigation into Quant Mutual Fund over front-running allegations, the fund house has revealed that it is fully cooperating with regulatory reviews.

For the unversed, front running is the act of trading in a stock, mutual fund or other financial assets while possessing insider knowledge of a future transaction.

SEBI officials have searched the Asset Management Company's (AMC) offices in Hyderabad and Mumbai in connection with the probe, claimed a report by Moneycontrol. The report, quoting sources, alleged that the profits from the front-running operations amounted to Rs 20 crore.



Amid the probe, the AMC, founded by Sandeep Tandon, confirmed that it received inquiries from SEBI.

"Recently, Quant Mutual Fund has received inquiries from SEBI, and we want to address any concerns you may have regarding this matter. We want to assure you that Quant Mutual Fund is a regulated entity, and we are always fully commit-

ted to cooperate with the regulator throughout any review. We will provide all necessary support and continue to furnish data to SEBI on a regular and as-needed basis," Quant Mutual Fund stated in a clarification issued to its investors on Sunday.

Quant Mutual Fund, which is the fastest-growing AMC in the country, currently has an asset under manage-

ment (AUM) of more than Rs 84,030 crore up from Rs 100 crore in 2019. It has five fund managers across 27 funds and maintains 79 lakh folios.

The latest probe comes two months after Aditya Birla Mutual Fund faced a similar front-running probe. SEBI later allowed the four applicants in the case to settle the case by paying more than Rs 2.8 crore. A voluntary debar-

ment of six months from the securities market was also imposed on them.

In February 2023, Viresh Joshi, the former chief dealer of Axis Mutual Fund, and 20 others were banned from securities markets in connection with an alleged front-running case linked to the fund house.

In April, SEBI gave nod to changes to its regulations, including improve surveillance, internal control measures and escalation processes in a bid to curb fraudulent transactions after seeing a rise in number of front-running, insider trading activities and misuse of sensitive information. Dealers and fund managers are also required to record all communication during market hours except face-to-face and out-of-office interactions.

T20 Cricket World Cup: Near perfect India take on under pressure Australia in final Super 8 game

GROS ISLET, Jun 24 (Agencies): India will be out to derail Australia's T20 World Cup campaign when they take on their shocked and under-pressure opponents in their final Super 8 game here today.

A third straight win for India will not only make them the group toppers and send them to the semifinals, it will also substantially threaten Australia's chances of progressing through to the semifinals following the unexpected loss to Afghanistan.

Australia don't have the destiny in their own hands and will be keenly tracking Afghanistan's final game against Bangladesh.

India, who have had to endure heart-breaking defeats at the hands of Australia in major ICC events, would like to see a premature exit of their strong rivals.

On fine-tuning their game ahead of the knockouts, India don't need to do much having ticked all boxes in their back-to-back wins against Afghanistan and Bangladesh.



Both Rohit and Virat Kohli played innings of substance against Afghanistan, while Shivam Dube, who had not been able to perform his role, answered his critics with a crucial knock.

Rishabh Pant has been getting dismissed off reverse hit often and it is something he would like to correct. The biggest positive for India in this tournament has been the all-round effort of Hardik Pandya, who has now come to the party with the bat to complement his incisive spells.

Kuldeep Yadav has taken little time to come up with match-winning contributions and he would be relied on for wickets in the middle overs.

With the team playing three Super 8 games with as many days of travel in between, the management will be tempted to rotate players but is unlikely to do so. India, who arrived in Saint Lucia on Saturday night, chose not to train ahead of the Australia game considering the hectic travel involved.

Smart batting

India have found their batting template for the World Cup, skipper Rohit said after the team beat Bangladesh. A string of attacking cameos powered India to their highest total in what has been a low-scoring tournament so far.

"I thought we played really well today, adapted to the conditions," Rohit said. "Overall, we were clever with the bat and we used the conditions really well with the ball. Only one player got fifty but we still got to 196. In T20, you don't need that many 50s or 100s. You can put pressure on the opposition in other ways. And all our batters tried to do that from the start. That's how we want to play going forward, of course while respecting the conditions too," he added.

"We have a lot of experience in our squad and I back the players to make those decisions. With Hardik in form, that puts us in very good stead going forward," he added.

Jordan grabs hat-trick, England enters semis



BRIDGETOWN, Jun 24 (Agencies): Pace bowler Chris Jordan celebrated his return to the England side with a hat-trick in the land of his birth to set the defending champions up for a crushing 10-wicket victory over

the United States and a place in the semifinals.

After dismissing the United States for 115 from 18.5 overs in their final Super Eight group match, England captain Jos Butler (83 not out), who effortlessly lofted five sixes in an over off

left-arm slow bowler Harmeeet Singh, and Phil Salt (25 not out), stroked their way to 117 without loss from 9.4 overs.

After being asked to bat first, the United States lost their last five wickets in six balls.

Lionel Messi Turns 37: Staggering Records, Accomplishments Of Argentinean Football Star

BUENOS AIRES, Jun 24 (Agencies): The legendary Argentine footballer Lionel Messi, often called the 'greatest footballer of all time', celebrates his 37th birthday on Monday. Messi born in Rosario, Argentina, in 1987, recently, won his eighth Ballon d'Or, setting a new record. The next player is the Portuguese icon Cristiano Ronaldo, who has won five Ballon d'Or awards. At the age of 13, Messi's family along with him shifted to Barcelona where the club assisted him in treating his growth hormone deficiency. The Argentinean began his career with FC Barcelona's U14 squad. He moved up the ranks fast, leaving an impression on everyone with his extraordinary talent and skills. He made his club debut as a senior at the age of 17 against Espanyol, and the Blaugranas (another name for FC Barcelona) relied heavily on him. The 37-year-old became the team's youngest star to appear in the competition at the time.

Messi played for the Spanish club for 17 years, during which time he won 10 La Liga titles, 4 Champions League crowns, and 7 Copa del Rey medals. He has scored an astounding 474 goals in La Liga, making him the league's all-time top scorer.

Messi stunned the whole world when he emulated Diego Maradona's goal of the century in 2007. In a match against Getafe at Camp Nou during the first leg of the Copa del Rey semifinal, the footballer dribbled past six Getafe's defenders to score the goal.

In 2009, Messi won his maiden UEFA Champions League title. Barcelona defeated Manchester United in the final with a scoreline of 2-0. In the final, the Argentina national football team skipper scored a goal in this match through a header.

In a 3-0 victory for Barcelona over Real Valladolid in 2020, Lionel Messi scored his 644th goal. Messi broke the record for most goals scored for a single



club by doing this. Pele, a legendary Brazilian who scored 643 goals for Santos FC, owned the previous record.

The Argentinean national player joined the French 1 League club Paris Saint-Germain and played for the club from 2021-2023. He played a total of 58 games where he managed to score 22 goals for the side.

In 2023, Messi joined the David Beckham-owned Inter Miami. So far he has played 18 matches where he has gone on to score 13 goals.

August 2005 was Messi's first international appearance. He replaced an injured player against Hungary. However, his tragic international debut was short-lived as he was sent off minutes after hitting Vilmos Vanczak.

During the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Messi's team, Argentina, took home the gold medal. To help La Albiceleste (another name for Argentina) win their second consecutive Olympic gold, Messi set up the game-winning goal. In the final, they defeated Nigeria 1-0.

In the 2021 Copa America final, Argentina defeated Brazil 1-0 while playing at the Maracana Stadium. With this win, Messi's lengthy quest for his first significant international championship came to a conclusion.

The FIFA World Cup trophy that Lionel Messi won in Qatar in 2022 was the highlight of his career. In the championship match, Messi scored twice against France. After a 36-year break, Argentina became the world champions via penalty shootout.

T20 World Cup 2024: Cool South Africa edge out West Indies to enter semi-final

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), Jun 24 (Agencies): South Africa's golden generation of white-ball cricketers took a big step towards erasing the 'eternal chokers' tag by keeping their composure to enter the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup, beating a formidable West Indies by three wickets in a thrilling rain-truncated Super 8s game here.

After part-time magician and full-time wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi (3/27), along with his slow bowling colleagues Keshav Maharaj (1/24) and skipper Aiden Markram (1/28), restricted West Indies to a manageable 135 for 8, South Africa achieved the revised target of 123 with five balls to spare.

The Proteas were 15/2 in two overs when rain disrupted proceedings.

With this win, South Africa topped Group 1 followed by defending champions England as the second semifinalist from it.

Tristan Stubbs (29 off 27 balls), one of the most talked-about among young T20 batters, set up the chase in company of Heinrich Klaasen (22 off 10 balls) for the South Africans.

But it was Marco Jansen (21 not out off 14 balls), who hit a beautiful six down the ground off



the first ball of the 17th over bowled by left-arm pacer Obed McCoy to seal the deal.

Equally praiseworthy was Kagiso Rabada's copybook cover drive off Roston Chase when South Africa required 9 off 7 balls.

In a contest that was headlined by the most revered names in T20 history, two under-rated cricketers held forte.

Barbados' Roston Chase (52 and 3/12), who year-after-year goes unsold in the IPL and Jansel, who displayed the less talked-about virtue of composure, much required in down-the-wire chases.

It was an unfair rain-rule in the 1992 ODI World Cup that saw South Africa bow out of the semi-finals against England and often the Proteas found ways to

lose important games of cricket.

But on Sunday night in North Sound, the one-hour rain delay did a world of good for their batters as the pitch suddenly became better for batting with the ball skidding and coming on easily.

Also unforgettable was how left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie (1/20), lost his length. Hiw only over cost 20 which did contribute a lot to the co-hosts' defeat.

In a game full of T20 prima donnas, it was the Stubbs, Klaasens, Millers and Markrams who had the last laugh over the Andre Russells, Rovman Powells and Nicholas Poorans.

On a track where ball wasn't always coming on to the bat, the South African spin troika was excellent with five wick-

ets shared between Markram, Keshav Maharaj and Shamsi for 79 run in 12 cumulative overs.

Skipper Markram, who opened the bowling did a stellar job by removing opposition's most destructive batter Nicholas Pooran (1), inviting him to go for a heave, only to hole out at long-off.

Kyle Mayers (35 off 34) and West Indies' most useful player across formats—Roston Chase (52 off 42 balls) -- carried out a commendable rescue act with 81 runs added for the third wicket in little under 11 overs.

At 86 for two, the duo had built the platform for a respectable total with big hitters like Andre Russell and Rovman Powell still in the dug-out but things changed

drastically due to the way Shamsi and Maharaj bowled.

Both were not afraid to toss the ball up and entice the batters to go for expansive drives and it did pay dividends.

Maharaj bowled a dream delivery for a classical left-arm spinner to get rid of West Indies skipper Powell.

Maharaj flighted one above his eyeline, drawing Powell forward but it dipped late and then turned away after pitching only for De Kock to complete the stumping.

Shamsi, at the other end was dead accurate, not trying to turn too much, and pitching his deliveries in the leg-middle line not giving batters room to manoeuvre. Both Mayers and Chase were dismissed trying to free the shackles.

Skipper Markram's planning was impeccable and Kagiso Rabada was only brought into the attack in the 18th over and bowled a couple of overs.

Andre Russell, who hit a couple of sixes off Anrich Nortje, could have inflicted more damage but a direct throw from the bowler during a Rabada over found the all-rounder short of his ground and ended the hosts' chances of crossing the 150-run mark.

AFG vs BAN Predicted XI, T20 World Cup 2024: Taskin Ahmed to return for Bangladesh?

KINGSTOWN, Jun 24 (Agencies): Afghanistan and Bangladesh will be up against each other in a crucial Super 8 clash of the T20 World Cup 2024. The match will take place on Monday, June 24 (Tuesday, June 25) at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown, St Vincent. Both teams are still in the race for a berth in the Super 8. The Afghans will be high on confidence after they defeated Australia by 21 runs.

However, head coach Jonathan Trott said that they need to brush up their batting before facing Bangladesh in the do-or-die clash. Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran have been the standout bat-

ters for Afghanistan, but apart from them, none of their batters have scored a half-century. Gulbadin Naib's 49 not out against Papua New Guinea remains the highest score by their middle order batters.

Gulbadin has also been excellent with the ball after he picked up 4 wickets against the Aussies. Fazalhaq Farooqi is the leading wicket-taker of the tournament and has been a major reason behind Afghanistan's surge in the tournament. Rashid Khan has led from the front as he has been amongst the wickets as well.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, need a miracle to go through. They will be knocked



out of the competition if Australia beat India in their last Super 8 match. The Tigers, led by Najmul Hossain Shanto, are languishing at the bottom of the table after losses at the hands of Australia and India. Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Rishad Hossain have performed in the bowling department, but it's their batting that

has let them down.

Predicted Playing XIs Afghanistan: The Afghans may think about bringing back Najibullah Zadran to strengthen their batting in place of Nangeyاليا Kharote, who gave 13 runs in the only over he bowled against Australia.

Predicted XI: Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Gulbadin

Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Karim Janat, Nangeyاليا Kharote/Najibullah Zadran, Rashid Khan (c), Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Bangladesh: The Tigers may bring back Taskin Ahmed, who did not play against India. Jaker Ali Anik has been underwhelming until now, and it won't raise eyebrows if he is dropped.

Predicted XI: Tanzim Hasan, Litton Das (wk), Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Towhid Hridoy, Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah, Jaker Ali/Taskin Ahmed, Rishad Hossain, Mahedi Hasan, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mustafizur Rahman.

Smriti Mandhana misses third ton but India complete sweep



BENGALURU, Jun 24 (Agencies): Smriti Mandhana waltzed to a characteristically elegant 90 to form the crux of India's six-wicket win in the third and final women's ODI against South Africa, marking their 3-0 series sweep.

Mandhana, whose innings came off 83 balls, had efficient sup-

port casts in Shafali Verma (25), Priya Punia (28) and Harmanpreet Kaur (42) as India went past the target of 216 without exerting themselves much.

The hosts made 220/4 in 40.4 overs after South Africa were restricted to an underwhelming 215/8 despite skipper Laura Wolvaardt's solid

61. Though she failed to make a third hundred on the bounce, the knock underlined the way Mandhana dominated this ODI series, scoring 343 runs at an average of 114.33.

The 27-year-old was once again composed in the middle, and played some typically graceful shots around.

Earlier, the Indian bowlers showed an unbending will to restrict South Africa to 215 after the visitors raced to 102 without loss in 19.5 overs.

Brief scores: South Africa: 215/8 in 50 overs (Wolvaardt 61, Brits 38; Deepti 2/27, Reddy 2/36); India: 220/4 in 40.4 overs (Mandhana 90, Harmanpreet 42).

Kuldeep Gupta calls on Commissioner Secretary GAD, submits memorandum

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Kuldeep Kumar Gupta, Secretary Vansh Sabre Sports Foundation, called on Commissioner Secretary GAD Sanjeev Verma here on Monday.

Gupta discussed the burning issue of appointment orders of outstanding sports persons to be appointed under S.O-12 which is pending before government for issuance of their appointment orders who have represented the Country in International Level as well as World University Games and also brought Medals in National as well as International Level in Olympic Games/Para-Olympic/World Cup/Asian Games/Commonwealth Games/SAF Games/International Cricket Matches/World University Games and other sports disciplines in National Level i.e. Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Swimming, Table Tennis, Kabaddi, Fencing, Volleyball, Tennis, Weight Lifting, Wrestling (International Style), Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Judo, Shooting, Archery, Equestrian Sports, Handball, Rowing, Roller/Ice Skating, Skiing, Squash.



Billiards & Snooker, Chess, Golf, Karate, Kayaking & Canoeing, Polo, Taekwondo, Power-Lifting (Composite Events), Yachting, Kho-Kho, Softball, Wushu, sports for physically challenged, Baseball, Netball, Pencak Silat, Triathlon and Ice-Hockey etc.

In this regard, a memorandum was also submitted to the Commissioner Secretary and Gupta urged for swift action to ensure justice to the outstanding sports persons with no further delay to issue the appointment orders in favour of outstanding sports persons as the resentment among the outstanding sports persons who with

their dedication and despite hardships with their performance in the games brought laurels for the Country as well as Jammu & Kashmir and are icons in their field of sports.

Kuldeep Kumar Gupta commended the efforts of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha who is also a President of Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council and has taken commendable initiatives to introduce sports policy for the outstanding sports person in Jammu and Kashmir which was pending for the last few years as it was a major demand of the outstanding sports persons as well as the association of different disciplines.

In this regard government has issued S.O-12 for direct appointment of outstanding sports persons under their Quota i.e. 5 Gazetted officers and 25 Non-Gazetted officers in a calendar year but the appointment orders are still pending for the last nine years.

Kuldeep Kumar Gupta also appreciated the great efforts made by Sanjeev Verma Commissioner Secretary GAD being the Member of Committee as Administrative Secretary, General Administrative Department (GAD) and other member i.e. Administrative Secretary Home department, Youth Services & Sports Department, Administrative Secretary, General Administrative department, Director Youth Services & Sports department and Secretary J&K Sports Council who are also the members of the committee & worked tirelessly for the future of sports persons and scrutinized each National and International outstanding sports persons and prepared the list of eligible outstanding sports persons to be appointed under S.O-12 for direct recruitment.

Gupta apprised the Commissioner Secretary

(GAD) about the hardships being faced by the National/International Sports persons due to long pending issue of appointment in Gazetted as well as Non-Gazetted jobs in government departments for the last few years.

Moreover few outstanding sports persons have submitted their files under direct recruitment which are now overaged due to this long process of appointments which needs to be considered for the relaxation of their age for the appointment in Gazetted as well as Non-Gazetted Jobs.

Kuldeep Kumar Gupta also urged the Commissioner Secretary, GAD that the sports persons be appointed with total quota pending of last Nine years of 5 Gazetted Officers and 25 Non-Gazetted Officers at the earliest.

The Commissioner Secretary GAD Sanjeev Verma gave a patient hearing to the issue of appointment of outstanding sports persons in Gazetted as well as Non Gazetted government jobs put forth by Kuldeep Kumar Gupta and assured prompt consideration of the memorandum's recommendations.

Mula Ram foresees BJP's Defeat in J&K Assembly Elections, promises Congress-Led development era

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Mula Ram, former cabinet minister and Senior Vice President of the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) in Jammu and Kashmir, delivered a passionate address at a public meeting in Marh, confidently predicting a major defeat for the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections.

He outlined the Congress Party's readiness to assume power and initiate a new era of development in the region, criticizing what he termed as the incompetence of the BJP government at the center and the administration in the Union Territory (UT) of J&K.

Mula Ram expressed strong confidence in the Congress Party's electoral prospects based on the response received in previous Lok Sabha elections and the vote share obtained in Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that Congress is poised to form the next govern-

ment in the state.

He lambasted the BJP for what he described as hollow policies that have exacerbated the problems faced by the people of J&K.

He blamed the BJP-led central government and the LG administration for the increase in hardships and violence in the region, accusing them of being responsible for the killings of innocent civilians.

Mula Ram promised that if Congress comes to power, it will usher in a new era of development in J&K, aiming to address the longstanding issues and improve the lives of the people. He highlighted the current lack of peace in J&K, likening the situation to the turmoil of the late 1980s and early 1990s, particularly noting the vulnerability of senior politicians and former ministers to militant attacks.

The former minister criticized the LG administration's claims of restoring peace and order after

the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, asserting that the situation has deteriorated since then, with a resurgence of targeted killings reminiscent of past unrest.

Mula Ram emphasized that the Congress Party is the only viable alternative to what he termed as the "jumla party" at both the central and UT levels.

He called upon the electorate to support Congress in bringing about meaningful change and addressing the current challenges faced by the people of J&K.

Others who attended and addressed the meeting include Hari Singh Chib Vice President PCC Jammu Er. Rajinder Kumar Happy, Sauthger Singh Saini former SARPANCH, Ajit Choudhary, Rattan Lal Sharma, Balkar Singh, Pardeep Salaria, Bittu Rampal, Gurmeet Kour, Deva Choudhary, Dr. Bansi, Sagor, Karanjot Singh, Jagdish, Pappu Chib, and Sham Singh.

Dozens joined Shiv Sena in Valley



Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: Shiv Sena (UBT)'s support base is increasing rapidly. Due to raising voice on local issues and rights of sons of the soil, Shiv Sena (UBT) is becoming the first choice of local people in Kashmir valley along with Jammu, stated by Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit chief Manish Sahni.

According to the press release issued from the party's state central

office Jammu, in a program organized under the leadership of Kashmir in-charge Malik Bashir, as per the instructed of state chief Manish Sahni in Handwara of district Kupwara, Kashmir, BJP leader Tariq Ahmed Rather along with dozens of his supporters joined the party.

Malik Bashir welcomed the members with the party symbol. Tariq Ahmed was appointed as the spokesperson of Kashmir division.

Along with this, Manzoor Ahmed Sofi was appointed as the president of district Kupwara.

New entrants were instructed to go among the people and raise their voices on public issues and as per the party manifesto.

On this occasion, Vice President Mush-taq Ahmed Bhatt, Youth President Manzoor Ahmed Ghani, General Secretary Imran Jargar, Secretary Javid Ahmed were present.

Ramp walk on yoga, music health benefits held

Top News Report

CHANDIGARH/JAMMU, June 24: International Yoga Day and World Music Day were jointly celebrated to spread awareness about the health benefits of physical activity and music at a Mohali mall on JUNE 24. The event was organized by Cardiomersion, which is a global trust to spread awareness on cardiovascular diseases.

The children, youngsters and aged walked the ramp to spread awareness on yoga and music importance in our healthy life during the occasion.

Speaking during the occasion, Dr. Deepak Puri, global chairman of Cardiomersion said that there has been an alarming rise in sudden cardiac deaths among youngsters nowadays, which has become more frequent since the onset of Covid pandemic.

"In the last two years there has been a 29.6 per cent increase in fatal heart attacks in the age group of 25 to 45 years. The fatal heart attacks occur 10 times more frequently in those who did not need hospitalization for severe Covid complications while they occurred nearly 100 times more frequently in those who needed admission to ICU for Covid complications."

Dr. Puri further informed that apart from Covid there are other risk factors like hereditary, racial, gender and age. Meanwhile, apart from yoga sessions about scientific evidence of yoga for cardiovascular health, yoga for general wellbeing and tele-yoga, a panel discussion on 'guidelines for physical activity- physiotherapy vs gym vs yoga vs aerobics vs zumba vs pilates' was also held during the occasion.



Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: In connection with observance of International Yoga Day (IDY), Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, Field Office, Rajouri organised Mini ICOP at Govt. HSS, Samote in Rajouri district. The aim of organizing this IYD awareness programme was to publicize IYD and make common masses acquainted about the benefits of Yogasanas. People were made aware about benefits of practicing Yogasanas for making life stress free, disease free and productive.

On the day of observance of 10th International Yoga Day, CBC Field Office, Rajouri organised a series of events at GHSS, Samote.

These events were organised under the Chairmanship of Shabir Kamlaq, Vice Principal of the host Institute.

Arun Kumar Lecturer, Pal Das Lecturer, Mohd Sheikh Salim Lecturer Teachers of GHSS, Abdul Latif CHO, Health Deptt. Buddhal, Naresh Chauhan, Yoga Instructor, 60 RR were prominent among others who attended the programme.

In his address Shabir Kamlaq, Vice Principal urged the participants to practice Yogasanas regularly in order to feel the difference and make their lives healthy and fit.

He also appreciated the efforts of CBC for making people of far flung and remote hilly area aware about Yoga and AYUSH through their activities which included Mass Yoga Demonstration, Expert Lectures and cultural programme.

He was of the view that Yogic practices are very beneficial for physical health, mental health and psychological health.

He was of the view that public participation and Jan Bagidhari will definitely play a crucial role in promoting the concept of Yoga.

Abdul Latif, CHO, also addressed the gathering. He said Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with self, the world and the nature.

The session began at 9:30 am and continued till 10:30 am. Yoga was practiced under the supervision of Naresh Chauhan, Instructor from 60 RR (Yoga Expert).

He taught various asanas, mudras, pranayama and Kriyas. Various Asanas like Vrikshasan, Vajrasan, Padmasan, Trikonasana, Sarvangasan, Bhujangasan, Halasan, Shirshasan etc. were prac-

ticed and their benefits were explained to the participants.

The yoga session was attended by officials of Block Administration, staff and students of GHSS Samote.

Sunil Kumar from CBC explained the working and organization of CBC in his welcome address.

Vijay Mattoo from CBC Poonch conducted the programme and open quiz. He also motivated the audience to adopt Yoga in their day to day life for a better living. He said that yoga is beneficial for physical fitness, musculoskeletal functioning and cardiovascular health.

Speeches by students and expert lectures by Staff and representatives from Education, Health were also organised to promote the concept of Yoga and to generate its awareness among masses among & through the students and younger generation who witnessed the programme.

An open quiz on yoga and current affairs also engaged the audience. Cultural items by Saraswati Sangeet Vidyalay, Poonch Empanelled troupes of CBC, Regional Office, Jammu was another attraction during the awareness programme who mesmerized the audience with its theme based and folk items.

People high hopes from NC MP's to raise their issues in Parliament: Rattan Lal

Top News Report

JAMMU, June 24: After the failure of LG's administration in resolving the burning public issues, people have now started pinning hopes on the newly elected MPs of National Conference from the union territory. The Senior NC leader emphasized that the people have high expectations from the National Conference, underscoring the Party's responsibility to comprehensively address their aspirations.

This was stated by Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President JK NC Jammu in a statement issued to media persons here on Monday.

The senior NC leader said that people have high hopes from the elected representatives as they

firmly believed that these MPs will raise their issues in the Parliament for an early redressal because under the LG's administration all their hopes have been shattered with the phlegmatic response of the present dispensation.

The senior NC leader said that the unemployment is the biggest issue of J&K as the incumbent dispensation has failed to address this issue leading to frustration among the youngsters in J&K.

The NC stalwart leader also raised the issue of power shortage in the Union Territory. He said that it is strange that the people sitting at helm never get tired of self-praise when the issue of uninterrupted power supply is highlighted but on ground things are contrary as power outage is

a new norm in J&K with people living in both metered and non-metered areas facing unscheduled power cuts even during the extreme weather conditions.

He also pointed out that despite severe dearth of electricity in J&K, the government is not justified to sell power to Rajasthan.

He said that NHPC has control over five hydel projects (power stations) including Salal (690 MW), Uri-I (480 MW), Dulhasti (390 MW), Sewa-II (120 MW) and Chutak (44 MW) totaling installed capacity of 1724 MW in Jammu and Kashmir but then also the major parts of the UT face acute power crisis.

He demanded that the J&K government should take back these projects for fulfilling the local demand besides early

expedite the construction of Sawalkote power project.

Rattan Lal Gupta said that the industrial policy brought in with much fanfare has remained on papers only because the sector is likely to remain sick with no changes on ground as the people at helm of affairs have drastically failed to win the confidence of investors as it evident by the fact that no major industry has been established in Jammu region in last 10 years.

He said that even the dearth of potable water in the region also says it all about the inefficiency of the LG's administration.

He recalled the initiatives taken by the then NC government under the realms of Dr Farooq Abdullah, especially

regarding the Chenab lift water scheme to address water scarcity of Jammu city and its Kandi belt but all in vain as things were abandoned and still pending with Centre govt. He also demanded for early restoration of the statehood.

He said that every day in J&K under the status of a UT has been undermining the due rights of the people as the J&K deserves much more.

The Provincial President also expressed confidence by saying that it is expected that the elected MPs will raise all the issues of public interest in the Parliament and also ensure that the demands highlighted should be acceded by the concerned quarters and things take concrete shapes in J&K.