

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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BRIEFLY

Police nab drug peddler with heroin in Jammu

JAMMU, Aug 22 (Agencies): Police have arrested one drug peddler with a contraband of heroin from the Narwal area here.

Police said that during routine patrolling, one person was taken into custody, and during the search, heroin (approximately one-kg) was recovered from his possession, on Thursday.

The accused, identified as Gulzar Ahmad of Poonch, has been arrested, and the matter is being investigated, said police.

PDP announces constituency in-charges for four seats

SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday announced its constituency in-charges for four seats.

As per the official handout, Syed Jamaat Ali Shaheen should look after the Kangan constituency, while Mohd Ashraf Malik should take care of Dooru.

For Rajpora, it assigned Syed Bashir Ahmed, and for Habba Kadal it said Arif Lai-groo should handle the task.

70 percent party structure was dismantled in last 2 years, re-structured party at district level again: Vikar Rasool

SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Former J&K PCC President Vikar Rasool Thursday said that in the past two years, Congress faced a big storm as the party's 70 percent structure was dismantled but he along with his team worked hard to restructure the party again and today PCC is a strong and vibrant force in the UT.

Addressing the Congress worker's meet in Srinagar, Vikar, said that Congress suffered back to back jolts in the past two years and the party's 70 per cent structure

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"Tell us your stand on Article 370": G Kishan Reddy to Rahul Gandhi amid J&K Visit

JAMMU, Aug 22 (Agencies): Union Minister G Kishan Reddy criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, attributing Gandhi's ability to dine at Lal Chowk in Srinagar to the achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government over the past decade. He also asked Rahul Gandhi to clarify Congress' stand on Article



370 and the National Conference's resolution. "Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi should tell

the people of the country about the resolution of the National Conference. They should also

talk about Congress' stand on Article 370. Do they want to snatch the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir again? It is due to the 10 years of work of the Narendra Modi government that he (Rahul Gandhi) was able to go to Lal Chowk and eat food last night," he said while speaking to reporters in Jammu.

Rahul Gandhi, along with Congress Rajya

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Congress willing to forge Pre-Poll alliance for J&K Polls: Mallikarjun Kharge

SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday expressed willingness to forge an alliance with other opposition parties for the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls and termed BJP's promises to the people of the Union Territory "jumlas". Kharge along with Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday spoke with Congress



leaders and workers here to get feedback about the grassroots-level preparations for the assembly polls. "This was the first

meeting after the polls were announced... We are here to seek the views of local leaders and workers for polls and alliances. Under Rahul Gandhi's leadership, we have taken the initiative to restore statehood for Jammu and Kashmir. We promise to work towards that," Kharge told reporters here.

He said Gandhi was interested in forging a

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Jammu and Kashmir: NC and Congress announce Pre-Poll Alliance for all 90 seats



SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Hours after

the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul

Gandhi, and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge met with the National Conference leadership to discuss a potential pre-poll alliance for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections, a pre-poll alliance between the two parties was announced for all 90 assembly segments.

Addressing media at his Gupkar residence,

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6 dead, several injured as bus travelling to Durbuk meets with an accident in Leh

LEH, Aug 22 (Agencies): At least six people lost their lives and several others were injured as a bus skidded off the road near Durbuk in Leh Ladakh. As per sources,

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Restoring Statehood to J&K is Cong, INDIA Bloc's priority: Rahul Gandhi



SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Leader of Opposition in the Lok

Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said it is the priority of the Congress party and the INDIA Bloc to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

The former Congress president also said it is his party's aim that people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh get their democratic rights back.

"It is our priority and also of the INDIA bloc

to restore statehood in J-K as soon as possible. We had expected this could be done prior to elections, but it is okay, elections have been declared. It is a step forward and we are hoping that statehood will be restored as soon as possible and the democratic rights of the people of J-K will be restored," Gandhi said at a press conference after

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BSF DG visits forward areas along IB in J&K, Reviews security

JAMMU, Aug 22 (Agencies): BSF Director General Daljit Singh Chawdhary on Thursday visited forward areas along the International Border in Jammu frontier to review the situation and operational preparedness of the troop, officials said.

He also interacted with troops on the ground and was briefed about



security measures by top officials. This is the first visit of

the DG to the Jammu frontier after taking

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HC quashes 9% tax demand on outside J&K vehicles

JAMMU, Aug 22 (Agencies): High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has quashed 9% tax demand on outside J&K vehicles and clarified that once a motor vehicle is registered upon payment of the prescribed fee under the Central Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, such registration is valid throughout India, and there is no provision for re-registration or the imposition of



additional fees upon re-registration. Striking down the imposition of 9% token

tax on a vehicle brought into the Union Territory from Haryana, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani ruled

that this additional tax was illegal and discriminatory.

The case originated when petitioner Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, a resident of Srinagar, brought his vehicle, initially registered in Gurgaon to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2023. As Trambo intended to use the vehicle in the UT for more than 12

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IITian quits lucrative job in Saudi Arabia to fight assembly polls from Lolab

SRINAGAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): In a development that has garnered significant attention in north Kashmir, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee has quit his lucrative job in Saudi Arabia to fight the upcoming assembly election from Lolab segment of Kupwara district. 38-year Mudasar Akbar Shah of Lalpora, Lolab, who was a faculty member at a prestigious varsity in Saudi Arabia, has decided to fight the polls.

Mudasir says he has decided to plunge into electoral battle to bring economic prosperity to his native area of Lolab and fight against injustice meted out to youngsters.

"I have come here to serve my own people. I want to bring

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EDITORIAL

ENVIRONMENT
CRISES-CALL
FOR ACTION

In an era marked by rapid industrialization and urbanization, environmental awareness has become more crucial than ever. The state of our planet's environment is at a tipping point, with climate change, pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity presenting grave challenges. Understanding and addressing these issues through environmental awareness is essential for the health of our planet and future generations.

The environment is facing unprecedented threats. Climate change, driven by the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, is leading to global warming. This warming has far-reaching consequences, including rising sea levels, more frequent and severe weather events like hurricanes and droughts, and disruptions to ecosystems. The melting of polar ice caps and glaciers, in particular, contributes to the loss of habitat for species that depend on cold environments, further threatening biodiversity.

Pollution is another pressing concern. Air quality has deteriorated significantly in many parts of the world due to industrial emissions, vehicle exhaust, and burning of fossil fuels. This pollution not only harms human health, causing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, but also contributes to environmental degradation. Water pollution, from agricultural runoff, industrial discharge, and plastic waste, affects aquatic life and contaminates drinking water sources. Land pollution, largely from improper waste disposal and littering, further exacerbates environmental problems.

Deforestation, driven by logging, agriculture, and urban expansion, leads to the loss of critical habitats for countless species and contributes to increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Forests act as carbon sinks, absorbing CO2 and releasing oxygen; their destruction disrupts this balance, contributing to global warming and loss of biodiversity.

Environmental awareness is the foundation for addressing these issues. It involves understanding the impact of human activities on the environment and recognizing the need for sustainable practices. Education and awareness-raising activities help individuals and communities comprehend the severity of environmental problems and the importance of taking action.

Awareness campaigns can influence behavior by highlighting the connection between everyday actions and environmental impact. For example, reducing energy consumption, minimizing water waste, and choosing sustainable products can significantly lower one's ecological footprint. Simple changes, such as using public transportation, recycling, and supporting eco-friendly businesses, contribute to larger environmental benefits.

Environmental awareness also fosters advocacy and policy changes. When people are informed about environmental issues, they are more likely to support policies aimed at protecting natural resources and addressing climate change. Grassroots movements and organizations play a critical role in pushing for legislative changes and encouraging governments to adopt sustainable practices and policies.

Educational initiatives are vital for spreading environmental awareness. Schools and universities incorporate environmental education into their curricula, teaching students about ecology, conservation, and the importance of protecting natural resources. Workshops, seminars, and public lectures offer opportunities for individuals to learn about environmental issues and solutions.

Community involvement is another key aspect of environmental awareness. Local clean-up events, tree planting drives, and sustainability workshops empower individuals to take direct action in their communities. Collaborative efforts between local governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations can lead to more significant environmental improvements and foster a sense of collective responsibility.

Corporations and governments also have a crucial role in promoting environmental awareness and implementing sustainable practices. Businesses can reduce their environmental impact by adopting green technologies, improving energy efficiency, and minimizing waste. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives often include environmental stewardship, reflecting a commitment to sustainability.

Governments are responsible for enacting and enforcing environmental regulations and policies. International agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, aim to unite countries in their efforts to combat global warming. National and local governments can also support environmental protection through conservation programs, pollution control measures, and incentives for sustainable practices.

Environmental awareness is essential for addressing the myriad challenges facing our planet. By understanding the impacts of our actions and advocating for sustainable practices, individuals, communities, and governments can contribute to a healthier, more sustainable world. As we confront the environmental crises of our time, fostering a culture of awareness and action is not only a responsibility but a necessity for ensuring the well-being of future generations and the preservation of our natural world.

IPS officers foul amid move to induct IRS into CBI

By: Dilip Cherian

The recent move by the government to induct Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers into the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has sparked some discontent within the Indian Police Service (IPS) ranks. Traditionally, the CBI has been the stronghold of IPS officers or its own cadre recruited at the deputy superintendent of police (DSP) level. However, this shake-up aims to leverage the specialised expertise of IRS officers in tackling the surge of financial fraud cases. Also Read - K.C. Singh | PM's Mission Kyiv bid for belated strategic balance? Advertisement Recently, the department of personnel and training (DoPT) appointed five IRS officers to the rank of superintendent of police (SP) in the CBI. These officers, from the 2014 and 2016 batches, are expected to serve for a five-year tenure. The government's rationale is clear — with economic offences on the rise, the CBI needs personnel with a deep understanding of financial matters. The IRS officers, with their background in handling complex tax and financial issues, are seen as the right fit for this challenge. Also Read - Sanjeev Ahluwalia | Is Modi mania waning? A reality check for govt Moreover, an IRS officer

from the 2017 batch, Vijendra Kumar, who was already serving as a deputy inspector general (DIG) in the CBI, had his tenure extended by another year. This move further signals the government's intention to integrate IRS expertise into the CBI's operations. This decision, however, hasn't sat well with the IPS lobby, which views it as an encroachment on their traditional domain. While protests of any kind are necessarily muted at the moment, DKB has picked up some sounds that indicate there is a growing concern that the IRS, having already established a foothold in agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), is now making inroads into the CBI. For the IPS, this shift could mean reduced opportunities in premier investigative agencies — a bitter pill to swallow for a service that has long prided itself on its role in maintaining law and order. Also Read - Aakar Patel | After PM's talk of a secular civil code, can govt publish a draft? Performance of first batch of lateral entrants raised doubts The Centre's decision to cancel advertisements for the lateral entry of 45 officers at the joint secretary, director and deputy secretary levels highlights the growing tension within the ruling coalition. Pressured by allies like the

Janata Dal (United) and Lok Janshakti Party, and a re-energised Opposition, the government urged the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to withdraw the advertisement. The move was prompted by concerns over reservation norms and the need to ensure social equity. Also Read - Shikha Mukerjee | As public trust wanes, Didi faces her biggest challenge The lateral entry scheme launched by the Modi government in 2018 aimed to bring private sector talent into government roles. However, the initiative has faced significant challenges, especially regarding the lack of reservations for SC, ST, and OBC communities. This issue has drawn criticism not only from the Opposition but also from within the NDA itself. The first batch of lateral entrants, recruited in 2019, has seen multiple high-profile exits, casting doubt on the scheme's effectiveness. Despite these setbacks, five lateral entrants continue to serve, though the scheme's future remains uncertain. With policy rollbacks coming in thick and fast, Mr Modi may necessarily need to take a pause and rethink the changing political landscape. In a coalition government, balancing the demands of allies while pursuing reform is a tricky task, and recent events suggest that the Modi government is feeling the strain. Telan-

gana police chief's order sparks debate A recent order from the Telangana DGP's office has sparked criticism across various cadres. The directive instructs around 16 IPS officers, currently awaiting posting orders (APO), to sign in and out of an attendance register in the officer's waiting room each day. They are also required to be on standby for any urgent assignments from the DGP. This order has been met with surprise and disapproval, particularly among IPS officers from other states. Many see it as not only unprecedented but also damaging to the morale and dignity of the officers involved. While adherence to rules is crucial, an overly bureaucratic approach can hinder problem-solving in complex situations, they say. The concern is that this new order signals a lack of trust, which could undermine the smooth functioning of the police force. However, it appears the state DGP felt compelled to issue this order due to practical issues. Reports suggest that many APO officers were residing in Hyderabad rather than at their designated headquarters, leading to concerns about their availability for duty. While some believe there were better ways to address this issue — such as advising officers to stay at the IPS guest house in Vijayawada — the chosen approach has nonetheless drawn significant criticism.

PM's Mission Kyiv bid for belated strategic balance?

By: K.C. Singh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on a visit to Poland, starting August 21, and then swinging through Ukraine on August 23. It is logical to combine the two visits as no VVIP can fly directly to Kyiv as Ukraine, in entirety, is a war zone. Most foreign dignitaries use the Poland route. The PM's visit to Ukraine is not surprising as his trip to Moscow on July 8-9, while the 75th anniversary summit of Nato opened in Washington, caused diplomatic surprise, if not anguish, all across the West. Surely this was avoidable, when the proximity of India to Russia and the unwillingness to cut trade and military ties with Moscow was already irritating the United States and India's other friends in the West. Also Read - Dilip Cherian | IPS officers foul amid move to induct IRS into CBI Advertisement If it is assumed that South Block did not simply err in the selection of dates, then logically was it based on the assumption that former President Donald Trump, who at that time was leading President Joe Biden in polls, was likely to be back in the White House come January 2025? A Trump victory, to take the reasoning further forward, would collapse the US and Western support to Ukraine. Consequently, Russian President Vladimir Putin could obtain a settlement based on the status quo, which Mr Putin could project as a victory. Therefore, throwing India's lot with Mr Putin at that stage appeared to be a sensible gamble. But as the late British statesman Harold Wilson had once said, a week could be a lifetime in politics. The four weeks following Mr Biden's disastrous performance in his first debate with Mr Trump, including a failed assassination attempt on the latter, turned

the American presidential election upside down. Also Read - Sanjeev Ahluwalia | Is Modi mania waning? A reality check for govt In the changed scenario, vice-president Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee for President and Tim Walz, her running mate, are either ahead of or level with Donald Trump and J.D. Vance in half a dozen crucial swing states, which historically have determined the outcome of US presidential elections. The ongoing Democratic National Convention in Chicago is further fuelling their climb. With just over two months left for the US presidential elections, the race has become extremely tight. Also Read - Aakar Patel | After PM's talk of a secular civil code, can govt publish a draft? In these changed circumstances, an outreach to Ukraine seems to be a logical step to contain the damage done to India's image in the West by the untimely Moscow summit in July. However, geopolitics is rarely static and has produced a new twist. Ukraine has for the first time militarily intruded into Russian territory in the Kursk region, piercing Russia's unguarded southwestern border. The Ukrainians have moved quickly along the rivers Seyn and Psei, utilising them to protect their flanks. They have so far occupied 1,250 sq km, captured some hundred-odd Russian soldiers, caused an exodus of civilians from the area and then destroyed three crucial bridges to keep the Russian troops from either escaping or receiving supplies and reinforcements. So far, the Russian offensive in Ukraine's Eastern Donbas region has not weakened. It had been speculated that one of the reasons for Ukraine's offensive into Russian territory was to compel Russia to divert military resources away from Ukraine's eastern front. The coming weeks will show whether Ukraine can

hold onto the Russian territory it has occupied while defending effectively on its eastern front. If they can do both, then the occupied enclave can be a useful negotiating chip for future peace talks. Also Read - Shikha Mukerjee | As public trust wanes, Didi faces her biggest challenge The strategic impulse, to balance India's perceived tilt towards Russia, exceeds the importance of trade and commerce with Ukraine, which in 2019-20 was just \$2.52 billion. Mr Modi can be expected to repeat the standard Indian advice, which he also tendered in Moscow, that "solutions and peace talks cannot succeed amid bombs, guns, and bullets". However, with Ukraine's counter-offensive and Russian embarrassment, the two sides are further from ceasefire than ever before. Therefore, leaks from the Indian government on Mr Modi as peacemaker sound unrealistic. The visit to Poland, besides enabling the transit to Ukraine, has different importance. It is the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Also, a prime ministerial visit is taking place after 47 years. The last high-level visit from India was by vice-president Hamid Ansari in April 2017. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar visited Poland in 2019. Indian exports to Poland in the period 2018-20 were around \$2 billion. In the last two years, these have risen to nearly \$4 billion. Indian investment in Poland is over \$3 billion, mostly in the information technology field. Poland is a pioneer in clean coal technology, food processing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. It is also a growing market for Indian textiles. What sets Poland apart is its long tradition of Indology. Jagiellonian University at Krakow has had a Sanskrit chair since 1893. Yoga has been taught in Poland for a

century. There are an estimated three lakh yoga practitioners and over 1,000 yoga centres. The Art of Living and Brahma Kumaris are active in propagating Indian culture. India is also remembered for giving refuge to Polish orphans and other refugees during the Second World War. The Maharaja of Kolhapur set up the Valivade camp in Maharashtra and Jam Sahib of Navanagar a facility at Balachadi town near Jamnagar in Gujarat. The latter is popularly referred to in Poland as the "good maharaja". Both have been called the Indian Schindlers, in remembrance of the saviour of Jews in Europe. Thousands of their descendants are in Poland and potentially India's friends. The Indian diaspora in Poland numbers over 25,000, including 5,000 students. Several Indian states have bilateral agreements with Polish regions. As a member of the European Union, Poland faced criticism since 2015 due to constitutional aberrations by the then ruling Law and Justice Party, which were seen as weakening the judiciary's independence. The election of Donald Tusk as the new Prime Minister in December and his steps to moderate those measures has begun the normalisation of Poland's relations with the EU. Earlier this year, funds began to be released, worth billions of euros, that were withheld due to democratic backsliding by the previous regime. Mr Tusk was previously Prime Minister from 2007 to 2014, and the president of the EU's European Council from 2014 to 2019. He heads a coalition government. Thus, Prime Minister Modi engaging a leader who is restoring democratic functioning is good for India's image, especially in Europe, where concerns over Indian democratic backsliding have been audible.

BIG FM celebrates business excellence and innovation at the BIG Impact Awards Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 22: BIG FM, one of India's leading radio networks, hosted the second season of BIG IMPACT AWARDS Jammu, celebrating entrepreneurial excellence and the exceptional contributions of change makers in the city. The awards acknowledged and honoured businesses known for their innovative approach and societal contributions across various sectors.

With Title partner-Ruchika Makeovers, presented by Semparia, Banking partner J&K Bank, the event unfolded with grandeur at the Four A Resort. The awards witnessed an impressive assembly of leaders from various industries who felicitated the winners with the prestigious BIG Impact trophy.

The city of Jammu, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, provided the perfect



backdrop for an event that celebrated the convergence of tradition and modernity.

The evening commenced with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, followed by a mesmerising Ganesh Vandana performed by Natya Roots, led by famous choreographer Akash Dogra. This set the stage for an event that artfully integrated cultural legacy with present-day accomplishments.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Dr.

Jitendra Singh, who graced the event as the Chief Guest, highlighted the importance of acknowledging the contributions of local businesses in fostering economic growth and societal development.

He underscored the powerful impact of celebrating these entrepreneurs which leads to more innovation and determination across various sectors, including automotive, real estate, hospitality, health and wellness, education,

fashion, lifestyle and more.

Sharing his thoughts, Sunil Kumaran, COO, BIG FM, said, "At BIG FM, we have always championed the power of innovation and creativity as the driving forces behind progress.

Keeping up with the same spirit, the BIG IMPACT AWARDS has been honouring the contributions of businesses and changemakers across the country. With the second edition in Jammu, we are once

again celebrating the visionary minds and businesses that play a pivotal role in setting benchmarks for the future and empower the Jammu community. My sincere congratulations to all the award winners for their remarkable efforts."

This year's event was further supported by esteemed partners and sponsors, including J&K Bank, Ujala Cygnus, AS Marketing, whose contributions were instrumental in making the evening a resounding success. Those who received Big Impact Awards includes Monalisa, Gupta & associates LLP, V Group of Industries, Aroma Family Restaurant, First Step, Swasthya Shastra, The Shri Ram Universal School, Anaya Communication Pvt. Ltd., Rivazo Royal Homz, A One Ultrasound Clinic, Dr. Vijant Singh Chandail, Duggar Haveli, Career Edge, Branding Elves, The Grandstand and Shriya Gupta

GDC Marh organizes Maiden Internship for Students

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 22: GDC Marh organized Maiden free of cost Internship for all the B.A/ B.Sc/ B.Com students of semester 5th for 15 days in alignment with NEP 2020 with various organizations/ industry of Jammu under the leadership of Principal of the college Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul and faculty members.

20 students of science i.e, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics did their internship at ITI Jammu w.e.f, July 15 to Aug 1, 2024 under able guidance of Principal Er. Abdul Rashid Sheikh. Industry related skills, practical training of computer hardware and network maintenance were given to the students. Students worked as interns as per the directions of the supervisors.

20 students of Education completed their internship in two phases w.e.f, July 10 to 16, 2024 at GCOE Jammu under the able supervision of the Principal of the col-

lege Dr. Jyoti Parihar and w.e.f, July 18 to 27, 2024 at GMHSS Marh where the Principal of the school Parshottam Dutt Sharma cooperated whole heartedly. There students learned about micro teaching its various skills, prepared lesson plans and delivered lessons to class 8th and 9th in the subject of Hindi and SST.

The students also collected the data related to the history of the school, infrastructure, strength of students and attended morning assembly also thereby working as members of the school fraternity.

28 students of Commerce, English and Geography underwent internship at Krishna Milk industry Unit- I (Sangrampur) and Unit - II (Karloop) w.e.f, July 13 to 27, 2024 under the mentorship of R.K Gupta and Veena Gupta (owner of the industry). The students worked as interns in processing of milk and its products with different machines such as boiler,

water cleaner, bulk milk cooler, khoya machine, cream separator, curd packing, cold room, hot room, etc.

The students of Sociology had their internship at RUDA (08 students) and Samast Eco Alternatives Pvt. Ltd Jammu, (10 students) for plastic waste management and recycling w.e.f July 8, 2024. There the students worked as interns and prepared reusable sanitary napkins, cloth bags and handmade diyas. The resource persons were Rajat Salgotra (Director, Samast Eco-Alternatives) and Sanjeev Arora (CEO RUDA). Students also interacted with locals, tourists and made them aware about plastic waste management so that they can become green champions in the near future.

The Principal along with concerned faculty personally visited all the internship venues and interacted with their heads for future planning for the welfare of the students and thanked them.

ACCA and UoM to host International Conference on Trends and Innovations reshaping global finance

Top News Report

CHENNAI/JAMMU, Aug 22: ACCA (The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants), a global body for professional accountants, is partnering with the Department of Commerce at the University of Madras (UoM) and the Department of B.Com Honors at Stella Maris College, Chennai, to host an International Conference titled "Pioneering Trends and Innovations Reshaping the Global Finance Landscape." The two-day event begins today in Chennai.

This conference will gather finance scholars, researchers, accountancy practitioners, and industry experts from across the globe. The event is set to explore the vital role of accountancy professionals in fostering financial stability, driving innovation, and promoting sustainable growth, all of which are crucial for building a robust and resilient global economy.

Among the notable speakers and panelists are leaders from prominent Indian and international corporations and

accounting firms, along with senior professors from top universities and colleges in Chennai. The conference will cover a range of critical topics, including digital transformation in finance, sustainable business practices, the impact of disruptive technologies, the future of work, advancements in artificial intelligence and fintech, global supply chain management, and the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

The event aims to serve as a platform for industry experts, researchers, and business leaders to exchange insights, experiences, and best practices. Additionally, it seeks to foster collaboration between industry and academia, paving the way for future partnerships and joint research initiatives. The conference will also feature cutting-edge tools and platforms designed to enhance teaching, research, and professional practices in the fields of accounting and finance.

Speaking ahead of the event, Md. Sajid Khan,

Director - India, ACCA, remarked, "This International Conference will serve as a vital forum for sharing the latest insights and strategies in the ever-evolving finance landscape. We are excited to bring together a diverse group of experts and practitioners to explore these emerging trends and innovations. ACCA is proud to support initiatives that drive forward-thinking solutions and foster collaboration among industry leaders, ultimately advancing the future of finance."

Dr. R. Shanthi, Head of the Department of Commerce at the University of Madras, added, "As emerging trends and innovations continue to redefine the global finance landscape, it is crucial for us to adapt and evolve. This conference will provide an opportunity for educators and industry leaders to engage in discussions that will equip our students with the tools and insights needed to excel. Staying informed and agile is not just optional but essential for success in this dynamic environment."

Director SKIMS Reviews measures on M-pox

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: In wake of M-pox viral infection Director SKIMS Dr. M Ashraf Ganie today took a detailed review meeting regarding preparations at SKIMS. Director SKIMS was apprised of various measures taken at SKIMS. The team of experts including Dean Medical Faculty SKIMS, Prof. Shariq Masoodi, Principal SKIMS Medical College Prof. Irfan Rabhani Medical Superintendent SKIMS, Dr. Farooq A. Jan HOD Microbiology, Prof. Bashir Fomda, HOD, Infectious Diseases, Prof. Aijaz Nabi Koul, briefed Director SKIMS about the rising situation and the preparations and measures taken at SKIMS.

SKIMS hospital administration is on alert and has taken various measures to face any eventuality. Isolation Facility has been set up with a bed capacity of 6 which

can be scaled up to 30 as a need arises, enhancing testing capacity, and treatment modalities have been devised as per recommended guidelines besides a dedicated Control Room has been established at SKIMS for M-pox management, also functioning as a helpline center with the number: 0194-2403679. Also guidelines for Healthcare Workers have been prepared for healthcare workers to manage screening and infection control, especially at airports and railway stations. Sufficient stocks of PPE kits, N95 masks, surgical gloves, and other protective gear have been kept available.

SKIMS will also issue a detailed advisory for information of the general public and the experts at SKIMS will educate the general masses about the disease through awareness campaigns on various social media & other platforms.

Shiv Sena (UBT) will contest assembly elections in J&K

Top News Report

MUMBAI/JAMMU, Aug 22: The Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit has received the green light from the party's high command to participate in the upcoming assembly elections in the region.

Following a comprehensive meeting at Sena Bhavan, Mumbai, party MP Anil Desai released the party manifesto, known as the 'Vachan Nama,' along with the first list of candidates for Jammu and Kashmir. The mandate was issued with best wishes for victory.

According to Manish Sahni, chief of the Jammu and Kashmir unit, the party leader Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray expressed deep concern over the unmet promises



to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including the violation of local rights and the failure to ensure the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to the valley.

The state unit was instructed to participate in the assembly elections with a firm resolve to restore the rights of the

sons of the soil. After the announcement of the election dates, the state core committee presented the list of candidates and the manifesto, which were then finalized by the party high command. The names of the party's candidates will be announced in Jammu on August 23.

Dimple Joins protest march, demands justice for Kolkata gang rape victim



Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 22: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood, on Thursday participated in a protest march organized by doctors in Jammu, demanding justice for the gang rape victim in Kolkata.

The rally, which started from Amphalla Dental College, proceeded along Janipur High Court Road, passed through New Plot, and continued to various parts of Jammu city, including Sarwal.

Addressing the rally, Sunil Dimple called on the Prime Minister to ensure full-proof security for doc-

tors in hospitals across India, including those in Jammu and Kashmir. He also appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to implement stringent security measures in all hospitals and medical colleges within the region. "Doctors are the saviors of lives, yet they often face mistreatment from the general public and attendants," Dimple stated. He strongly condemned the gang rape of the doctor in Kolkata and demanded that the perpetrators be hanged till death, emphasizing that justice must be served for the victim and her family. Dimple criticized the

government's approach towards the welfare of doctors, particularly highlighting the lack of recruitment for dental doctors over the past 14 years in Jammu and Kashmir. He also expressed concern over the stress faced by doctors with BAMS and BDS degrees, accusing the government of failing to establish adequate recruitment policies for medical professionals.

Dr. Yaseer, a leader among the doctors, also addressed the rally and led the protest in Jammu city, echoing the demands for better security and justice for the medical community.

GDC Nowshera Cadet Selected for TSC Camp

Top News Report

NOWSHERA, Aug 22: NCC Cadet Neeraj Kumar of GDC Nowshera has been selected for upcoming Thal Sainik Camp (TSC) in a firing event scheduled to be held at DG NCC Delhi w.e.f. Sept 3 to 13, 2024.

The cadet was selected from Pre-TSC camps which were held in Nagrota Camping Ground and has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, discipline and dedication

to service.

The Principal of the college Dr. Shamim Ahmed Azad congratulated the selected cadet on his achievement and encouraged him to continue striving for excellence and make the college proud at the TSC camp. The Principal also appreciated the Associate NCC Officer (ANO) Dr. Kuldeep Kumar for his guidance and mentorship which played a significant role in the cadet's selection.

Trials-cum-selection concluded in Kathua



Top News Report

KATHUA, Aug 22: The selection trials for various sporting events, including Basketball, Roll Ball, Roller Skating, Hockey, Speed Ball, Softball, and Swimming, concluded successfully on Thursday in district Kathua.

Players were selected to

represent Kathua district in upcoming division-level competitions as part of the annual sports calendar.

The trials witnessed great enthusiasm and energy, with players showcasing their talents across their respective fields.

These trials were organized under the patronage of Rajinder Singh

Tara, Director General of Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Jammu and Kashmir UT.

The event was held under the overall supervision of DYSSO Kathua, Sunil Singh Sambhalla, along with activity in-charges Darminder Singh Shelly and Parveen Lakhani.

GDC Mahanpur organizes walkathon

Top News Report

MAHANPUR, Aug 22: A Walkathon/Rally was organized by the Red Ribbon Club, Govt. Degree College Mahanpur Kathua in joint collaboration with J&K AIDS Control Society.

The Rally was flagged off by the Principal of the college Prof. (Dr.) Sangeeta Sudan along with other faculty members. More than hundred students of B.A Semester 3rd and 5th have participated in this rally.

This rally was organized in connection of ongoing celebrations of International Youth



Day 2024. The students raised slogans regarding National Integration and Awareness on HIV/AIDS among the masses

especially the Youth of India.

The students took a round of the entire campus with continu-

ous raising slogans and songs for bringing the Awareness on HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)

and Urinary Tract Infections (UTI).

The students also sang patriotic songs in order to create the feeling of National relevance and affection among the student community.

Among other faculty members who accompanied the worthy Principal Prof. (Dr.) Sangeeta Sudan were Dr Mohinder Nath, Dr Sudesh Kumar, Dr. Nisha Bhagat, Dr. Sapna Devi, Convenor, Red Ribbon Club GDC Mahanpur.

The Principal appreciated the efforts of Convenor Red Ribbon Club for her outstanding performance in the collage.

True-blue Punjabi

Actor Ammy Virk, who has made a mark with his latest Bollywood film *Khel Khel Mein*, believes the Punjabi film industry needs better organisation and higher budgets

If you ever get the chance to sit down with Ammy Virk, you'll quickly sense that he's not just another actor. There's a rare blend of humility and ambition in him that sets him apart. During our chat, what struck me most was his unwavering focus on authenticity and collaboration, qualities that define his approach to both Punjabi and Bollywood cinema.

Ammy Virk isn't just riding the waves of the film industry; he's shaping them with thoughtful precision. Whether he's discussing his role in his latest outing *Khel Khel Mein* or reflecting upon the success of *Bad Newz*, Virk exudes a genuine enthusiasm for his craft. "The film, a remake of the Italian thriller *The Perfect Stranger*, has been shot with all of us sitting at a dining table and sofa, and 85 per cent is of one night, or we can say two days. It is very entertaining. While the idea has been taken from an Italian film, *Khel Khel Mein* is made to suit the Indian culture and ethos," he says with much excitement. The film features an ensemble cast, including Akshay Kumar, Taapsee Pannu and Fardeen Khan.

Reflecting on his recent success, Ammy says, "The audience has loved *Bad Newz*



immensely. It was my first film as a lead in Bollywood, and seeing it gross Rs 100 crore at the box-office was an incredible feeling. Working with co-stars Vicky Kaushal and Tripti Dimri was amazing." Ammy is now set to resume shooting for *Saunkh Saunkh 2* and *Nikka Zaildar 4*, and is excited about his next venture, *Sarbala Ji*, with Gippy Grewal. "It has been a great year so far, and I'm hopeful that next one will be even bigger," he says.

As we speak about his Punjabi films, the actor expresses his passion for the language and the industry. He acknowledges the industry's progress, but also sees significant room for growth. "Punjabi films have made a mark. Slowly, the films

are going for a higher budget," he notes, talking about recent films like *Carry on Jatta 3* and *Jatt and Juliet 3* touching the Rs 100 crore mark. He hopes, "In the coming time, we'll cross the Rs 200 and 250 crore threshold that need to be explored, the actor adds, "We should make more action films and ones that depict our rich history."

However, Ammy is also candid about the challenges that the Punjabi film industry is facing. He highlights the need for better organisation and support within the industry. "There are no associations, even heroes and heroines are few," he says. He believes both the industry and the audience need to contribute to the growth of new artistes

and projects. Ammy quotes the example of the recently released film *Rhode College*, "It's a film that deserves support of the audience just like any big budget film. There are a lot of new faces in it and I request everyone to appreciate fresh talent."

The actor says he is personally very happy when any Punjabi film does well. "When Jagjit's *Oye Bhole Oye* did well, you won't believe how much I danced at its success party. As such, I had no connection with the film, but I was just overjoyed by its success."

Ammy also emphasises the importance of preparation and planning in filmmaking. "When a new film is made, the writer and the director are most important," he says. Another point of contention is the time at hand for the artistes to prepare for a film. "Everyone should get proper time to make a film. If we get the script just one day before the shoot, there are going to be problems on the sets. The thing about preparation is that you can save a lot of time, effort and money."

As he sums up his take on the Punjabi film industry, Ammy says, "We need more directors, more actors and writers in the industry."

Malaika Arora shares glimpse of 'happiness' on her plate



Ditching the calories, Bollywood actor Malaika Arora indulged in some

tasty food as she shared a glimpse of 'happiness' on her plate.

Malaika took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of a plate full of egg crepes, tikkis and an avocado.

She captioned the image, "Happiness on my plate..."

Earlier this month, Malaika shared a few moments from her visit to Napoleon's tomb in France.

She shared a handful of pictures from her Paris getaway, where in one picture, a portrait of Jesus Christ could be seen from inside the *Dome des Invalides*, *Tombeau De Napoleon*.

The tomb has Napoleon's remains following their repatriation to France from Saint Helena in 1840, at the initiative of King Louis Philippe I and his minister Adolphe Thiers.

The diva also shared a picture of a sword from the museum. She also attended the Paris Olympics and cheered for Neeraj Chopra, who won the silver in javelin throw on Thursday night.

'Ramayan' actress Dipika Chikhlia pays visit to 'Ashtavinayaka' Ganpati

Senior actress Dipika Chikhlia shared a glimpse of her 'day trip' with her 'best buddies' to the Ballaleshwar Pali temple, and sought the blessings of Lord Ganesha.

Ballaleshwar Pali is among one of the eight temples dedicated to the Lord Ganesha. It is located in the village of Pali in the Raigad district of Maharashtra.

Taking to Instagram, Dipika shared a reel video, in which she is seen wearing an olive green coloured co-ord set.

Dipika is seen walking in the premises of the temple holding a puja thali in her hand, and clicking pictures.

In the video, she can be heard saying, "Maharashtra me Ashtavinayaka ye mandir hai Pali mein. Photo lena to



zaruri hain."

The post is captioned as, 'A day trip from crazy schedule... with best buddies #palli #ganpati'.

On the work front, Dipika is best known for playing Sita in

Ramanand Sagar's 1987 television show 'Ramayan'.

The show featured Arun Govil as Ram, Sunil Lahri as Lakshman, and Dara Singh as Hanuman.

The cast and crew of Punjabi film Alzheimer aims to generate awareness about the disease among the viewers

We have all heard of Alzheimer's disease, a progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys the memory. But what if a person starts showing symptoms of the disease during the early thirties? An upcoming Punjabi film titled *Alzheimer* deals with the subject, and the cast got candid during an interaction at the Press Club.

Actor Bhinda Aujla, who is also debuting as director with this film, is hopeful that this message-oriented subject will ignite interest in the audience.

The OTT film, which is releasing today on *Chaupal*, also stars actors, Harman Bhullar, Surbhi Mahendru and Puneet Kaur. Written by Sapinder Singh, Bhinda related to the subject because he had seen



his grandparents suffering from memory loss. He said, "Almost 70 per cent of the film is shot in Canada and rest of the scenes are based in a village named Chankoiyan Kalan. We have done intense research on the topic and how lifestyle changes can help. Everyone knows it as a disease that one can be plagued by during old age, but

there are rare cases of it affecting youngsters as well. The character that I play also finds it hard to process that he has the disease. Another actress, Puneet, has been taking care of Alzheimer's patients in Canada and had first-hand experience. She helped a lot during the shooting process."

Harman Bhullar, who is also a part of the film,

said she first got a break as a model in a Punjabi song. "To get to play a small part in renowned singer Sartaaaj's song, *Baari Khohi*, was a huge moment for me. But it was MS Dhoni's biopic that inspired me to follow what I love. That film really moved me to work towards what brings me happiness — acting."

On the other hand,

Bhinda has always had interest in acting. However, he complains, "Not many big names from the industry come in support of a new actor or director." A Punjabi who moved to Canada for higher studies, he has four more projects in the pipeline. Out of them, one is a web series titled *Kasba Singhai Kheri* and also a film *Vadda Ghar*. As to why he chose OTT for his debut as director, Bhinda says, "It's because I have also made this film for the elderly people, who might not be able to go to the theatre. I wanted to reach out to as many people as I could. Moreover, it's a film that should be watched with the family to understand the nuances of this disease and how it affects the family."

My style is more about looking effortless than overly styled: Sidharth Malhotra

Bollywood's dapper dude Sidharth Malhotra says his fashion journey has evolved a lot and that he ensures to invest time making sure each piece is tailored to perfection.

Asked how he would describe his fashion game, Sidharth said, "I gravitate towards classic silhouettes with a subtle touch of masculine edge. My style is more about looking effortless than overly styled."

It's all about a perfect fit for Sidharth, who made his debut in 2012 with 'Student of the Year' and was later seen in hit films such as 'Ek Villain', 'Kapoor & Sons' and 'Shershaah', to name a few.

"Fit is certainly essential for me. I ensure to invest time in making sure each piece is tailored to perfection," said

Sidharth, who began his career as a fashion model.

The 39-year-old star agrees that his fashion journey has evolved in his 12-year journey in Hindi cinema.

"My fashion journey has evolved a lot. It has been significantly shaped by the diverse characters I've portrayed on screen. While these roles have introduced me to a spectrum of styles and eras, my aesthetic leans towards a more understated elegance," said the actor.

Sidharth also shared that he appreciates the allure of glamour for specific characters.

"But my everyday style prioritises comfort and simplicity. Ultimately, my on-screen wardrobe is a collaborative process, intricately tied to the character's narrative and the film's visual



world," he said.

The star, who has redefined the case for men's style with his impeccable fashion choices, minced no words when it came to men experimenting as much as women with their wardrobes.

Asked if he agrees that when it comes to

men's fashion, there's not much to experiment with compared to women, Sidharth said, "I disagree with that perspective."

The star said that the fashion industry for men has evolved tremendously, offering a wide range of options from

fast fashion to high-end luxury.

"Today, men have access to diverse styles and trends that allow for personal expression. It's all about being intentional with our choices and how we style ourselves. We no longer have to conform to traditional notions of menswear," said the star.

The actor acknowledged the efforts by designers for pushing the envelope when it comes to fashion for men.

"Designers are pushing boundaries, creating pieces that cater to various aesthetics and personalities. From streetwear to tailored suits, the possibilities are endless. It's an exciting time for men to experiment and find what resonates with them," said the actor.

AR Rahman unveils 'Le Musk' soundtrack, says music is heartbeat of his immersive film



Celebrated composer AR Rahman said music will guide the audience into the emotional journey of his directorial debut 'Le Musk', as he launched the soundtrack of the multisensory virtual reality film.

The soundtrack of 'Le Musk', which has travelled to film galas such as Cannes (Extended Reality (XR) showcase), Los Angeles and Toronto, comprises 12 songs of diverse genres including jazz, orchestral and world music. It was launched globally today on Believe Music, a digital music company.

Rahman, who also serves as music composer on the movie, said 'Le Musk' is a labour of love.

"Music is the heartbeat of 'Le Musk'. It carries the soul of the film, guiding the audience through an emotional and sensory journey.

"The film is a labour of a lot of hard work and love, where we tried to push the boundaries of how we use technology to create something truly immersive. I am thrilled to finally share this soundtrack with the world and offer a glimpse into the world we've created," the multiple award-winning musician said in a statement.

Notable names, including Nora Arnezeder, Sana Moussa, Linda Lind, Mayssa Karraa, Hiral Viradia, Simona Gilbert, the Firdaus Orchestra and the Budapest Orchestra, have collaborated on the film's soundtrack. 'Le Musk' has award-winning music engineer Greg Penny on board.

Rahman also said the team is in the process of setting up immersive experience studios across the world to bring 'Le Musk' to audiences the world over.

"The film would not have been possible if not for my team who worked tirelessly to push the boundary of what was known to be possible," he added.

SC terms 'extremely disturbing' police delay in registering unnatural death in Kolkata case

The apex court asks protesters to return to work

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday termed "extremely disturbing" the Kolkata Police's delay in registering the unnatural death of the woman doctor who was raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. It also asked protesting doctors to resume work and assured them that no adverse action would be taken after they rejoin.

Questioning the sequence and timing of legal formalities conducted by police, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said it was very surprising that the postmortem of the deceased was conducted on August 9 between 6.10 pm to 7.10 pm before the registration of case as unnatural death.

"How was it that the post-mortem was conducted at 6.10 pm on August 9 and yet the unnatural death information is sent to Tala police station at 11.30 pm on August 9. This is extremely disturbing," the bench, also comprising Justice J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said.

It directed the Kolkata Police officer, who registered the first entry about the rape-murder



that has shocked the country, to appear in the next hearing and disclose the time of the entry.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, told the top court that the most shocking fact is that the FIR was registered at 11.45 pm after the postgraduate medic was cremated.

"State police told parents it was suicide, then they said

it was murder. Victim's friend suspected cover up and insisted on videography," Mehta told the bench.

As the hearing commenced, the top court asked protesting doctors to resume work, and assured them that no adverse action will be taken against them after they rejoin.

The apex court was told by the counsel for resident doctors

at AIIMS Nagpur that they are being victimised for protesting over the Kolkata rape-murder case.

"Once they get back to duty, we will prevail upon authorities to not take adverse action. How will public health infrastructure run if the doctors do not work?" the bench asked.

"If there is difficulty after that, come to us... but let them first report to work," it said. The top court said its heart goes out to all patients visiting public hospitals.

It assured doctors' associations that the National Task Force will hear all stakeholders.

The brutal assault and murder of the junior doctor has sparked nationwide protests. Her body was found with severe injury marks inside the seminar hall of the state-run hospital's chest department. A civic volunteer was arrested by the Kolkata Police in connection with the case the following day on August 10.

On August 13, the Calcutta High Court ordered the transfer of the probe from the Kolkata Police to the CBI, which started its investigation on August 14.

'Full emergency' at Thiruvananthapuram airport after bomb threat on Air India flight from Mumbai



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 22 (Agencies): A full emergency was declared at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on Thursday after a bomb threat message was found in the washroom of an Air India flight arriving from Mumbai, according to airport sources.

The pilot of the aircraft informed the ATC about the threat after a 'Bomb in flight' message, written on a tissue paper, was found in the washroom of the plane, they said.

They also said that the

police have initiated an investigation into the incident.

The aircraft is currently being inspected by security agencies, including a bomb detection squad, the sources said, adding that the passengers who travelled on the flight are presently waiting for their luggage to be delivered.

Meanwhile, Air India, in a statement, said that a specific security alert was detected on flight AI 657 during cruise from Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram and "the crew carried out all

the laid down security drills keeping passenger safety as top priority." "All passengers and crew disembarked safely. Air India accords top priority to the safety of its passengers and crew," an airline spokesperson said.

The flight with 135 passengers landed safely at the airport around 8 am and was moved to an isolation bay, airport sources said earlier.

Passengers were safely evacuated from the flight by 8.44 am, they said.

The bomb threat was communicated by the pilot at 7.30 am as the aircraft approached the Thiruvananthapuram airport, the sources said.

Subsequently, a full emergency was declared at the airport at 7.36 am, they said.

"There has been no impact on life. Airport operations are currently uninterrupted," the sources said.

4 killed, 13 injured as tanker overturns on tea stall after colliding with bus

BERHAMPUR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Four people were killed and 13 others injured as a tanker overturned on a roadside tea stall after a head-on collision with a bus in Odisha's Ganjam district on Thursday morning, police said.

The accident happened on National Highway 59 at Samarjhola near Hinjili, they said.

The bus was on the way from Bhawanipatna to Berhampur, while the tanker was going towards Aska when the accident happened, they added.

One person on the bus was killed, and the other three deceased were people sitting at the tea



stall, police said.

Those injured were admitted to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital, officials said.

The condition of two persons was stated to be critical, they said.

"We have confirmed

four deaths so far," Superintendent of Police Jagmohan Meena said.

The deceased are yet to be identified, he said.

A police team and firefighters were clearing the highway to open it for traffic, he said.

Congress criticises govt over untimely fund allotment for Sikkim landslide

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): The main opposition party Congress has condemned the Union Government over Sikkim landslide for not allocating funds to act timely to mitigate the disaster. Further, it has allowed unplanned hydro-projects in the environmentally fragile region that made Sikkim prone to disasters.

Jairam Ramesh, General Secretary and a senior leader of the Congress accused the government of practicing vendetta politics that did not allocate enough funds for irrigation and flood mitigation to West Bengal which is equally affected.

"The Union Budget of July 2024 made



the vague promise of assistance without any details of funds for Sikkim," states Ramesh. "In a classic case of the Government's confrontational federalism, the Budget was indifferent to the areas in West Bengal which were equally affected," he further said. A massive landslide disaster in Sikkim has substantially dam-

aged the Teesta V, a 510 MW hydel power station on the Teesta river on August 20 morning in Balutar, Sikkim, 20 km southwest of capital city Gangtok.

This disaster comes on the heels of the Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) and riverine floods in the Teesta River basin in October 2023, which caused massive devastation in

Sikkim and Kalimpong, West Bengal. Moreover, the National Highway 10, the lifeline of Sikkim and Kalimpong, runs along the Teesta and has been in a precarious state with frequent landslides and closures.

In his one page statement, he pointed out unplanned construction of hydropower projects in the ecological fragile Himalayan region made Sikkim as disaster prone. Ramesh underlined that the National Hydropower Development Corporation (NHDC) has been carrying out 47 hydropower projects in different stages of development on the Teesta River in Sikkim and West Bengal.

"Of them, nine have been commissioned, work on 15 dams is going on and another 28 are in the pipeline. The October 2023 disaster was provoked by the GLOF, but it only reached its catastrophic scales due to the failure of the Teesta-III dam," states Ramesh. "The mismanagement in the debris disposal has also resulted in the riverbed level going up, making the region more flood prone," he added. Amidst these hydel projects, IRCON has also undertaken tunnelling of this sensitive region for the Sivok-Rangpo railway line (14 tunnels), contributing to the region's increased vulnerability.

Will soon constitute committee to resolve grievances of farmers for all times: Supreme Court

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would soon constitute a multi-member committee to amicably resolve the grievances of farmers "for all times".

A bench of Justice Surya Kant, Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, which posted the matter for further hearing on September 2, asked the Punjab and Haryana governments to give tentative issues concerning farmers to the committee.

The Punjab government informed the top court that in compliance with the August 12 order of the apex court, they held a meeting with the protesting farmers in which they had agreed to partially open the blocked highway.

The bench asked the Punjab and Haryana governments to keep engaging with protesting farmers and persuade them to remove their tractors and trolleys from the highway.

On August 12, the top court asked the Punjab government to persuade the farmers protesting at the Shambhu border since February 13 to remove tractors and trolleys from the road, saying that "highways are not parking space".

The court was hearing the Haryana government's plea challenging the high court's order asking it to remove within a week the barricades erected at the Shambhu border near Ambala where protesting farmers have been camping since February 13.

The Haryana government had set up barricades on the Ambala-New Delhi national highway in February after the 'Samyukta Kisan Morcha' (Non-Political) and 'Kisan Mazdoor Morcha' announced that farmers would march to Delhi in support of their demands, including legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for their produce.

Delhi Police bust Al Qaeda terror module, 14 people detained from 3 states

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): The Delhi Police on Thursday claimed to have busted an Al Qaeda terror module after detaining 14 people from Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

After receiving intelligence inputs, an operation was conducted along with the police forces of the states, officials said.

"The module, as per current state

of operations, was being led by one Dr Ishtiyaq of Ranchi (Jharkhand), and it aspired to declare 'khalafat' and execute serious terrorist activities within the country," a Delhi Police statement said.

The members of the terror module were trained, including in handling weapons, at various locations, it said.

The statement said six people

were detained from Bhiwadi in Rajasthan while they were undergoing training to handle weapons, and eight from Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh for questioning, it said.

They are being interrogated and additional detentions are anticipated.

Raids are being conducted to recover arms, ammunition and documents, the officials said.

Ayodhya gang-rape accused Moid Khan's 'unauthorised' shopping complex demolished

AYODHYA (UP), Aug 22 (Agencies): The district administration on Thursday bulldozed a shopping complex here belonging to Moid Khan, a gang-rape accused alleged by BJP to be a member of the Samajwadi Party (SP).

The Ayodhya police on July 30 arrested Moid Khan, who ran a bakery in Bhadarsa Nagar of the Purakalandar police station area of the district, and his employee Raju Khan for allegedly raping the 12-year-old girl two months ago and recording the act.

The incident came to light when recently a medical examination revealed that the victim was pregnant.

The bulldozers started demolishing the shopping complex in Bhadarsa town around 1.30 pm. According to the police, the shop-



ping complex was vacant and a branch of a bank operating there was shifted before the demolition.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Sohawal Tehsil AK Saini said, "The shopping complex of Moid Khan was built on government land. So action was taken to demolish the unauthorised building."

Heavy security arrangements were put in place in Bhadarsa town with the deployment of

vincial armed constabulary and civil police to ensure that law and order is maintained, officials said.

On August 3, the Ayodhya district administration demolished Moid Khan's bakery that was allegedly built illegally over a pond.

BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, have alleged that Moid Khan is a member of the Samajwadi Party and is part of the team of Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad.

However, Akhilesh Yadav, in a statement, had said, "Without a DNA test in the Bhadarsa case of Ayodhya, BJP's allegation will be considered biased."

BJP hit back, alleging SP is defending a "paedophile" and showing its "boys will be boys mindset" while leaders of the INDIA bloc are "silent".

Body of trainee pilot found as search continues for missing aircraft in Jharkhand

JAMSHEDPUR, Aug 22 (Agencies): The body of the trainee pilot who was on board the two-seater aircraft that went missing after taking off from Jharkhand's Jamshedpur was found in the Chandil dam on Thursday, officials said.

The trainer aircraft, a Cessna 152 owned by a private flying school, went missing after taking off from the Sonari aerodrome on Tuesday morning, following which a search operation was launched in the nearby areas, including the reservoir of the dam, to locate it, they said.

As the search continued in the reservoir, where it was suspected to have crashed, a body was found floating on Thursday morning, they said.

It was later identified as that of trainee pilot Subhrodeep Dutta, a

resident of Adityapur in Seraikela-Kharsawan district, they added.

Meanwhile, a team of the Indian Navy joined the search for the aircraft and pilot Captain Jeet Satru, 35, a native of Patna.

The 19-member team of the Navy was brought in from Visakhapatnam, officials said.

On Wednesday, a six-member team of NDRF searched the reservoir of the dam for hours.

The reservoir was being searched after villagers claimed the aircraft crashed into it, Superintendent of Police (Seraikela-Kharsawan) Mukesh Kumar Lunayati said.

East Singhbhum's Deputy Commissioner Ananya Mittal said the last location of the aircraft was near Nimdih in Chandil sub-division as per the Air Traffic Control.

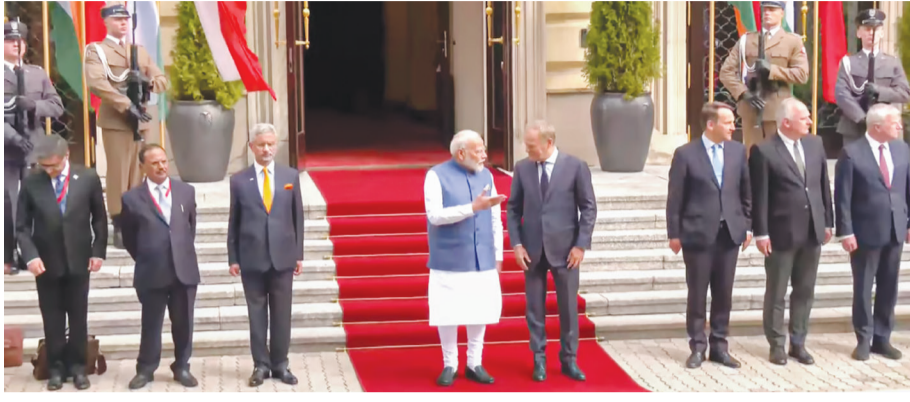
India's Modi holds security and trade talks with Poland's leaders en route to war-torn Ukraine

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was greeted Thursday by his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk before heading to Kyiv for top-level meetings

WARSAW, Aug 22 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi was greeted on Thursday by his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk before heading to Kyiv for top-level meetings. The two leaders are expected to sign bilateral strategic cooperation agreements covering cybersecurity and the defence sector.

Modi arrived in the Polish capital on Wednesday for the first leg of his two-nation visit. He received a ceremonial red carpet welcome at the Chancellery before the talks.

"A new landmark in the India-Poland partnership! PM Narendra Modi was warmly received by PM Donald Tusk of Poland at the Federal Chancellery in Warsaw and accorded a ceremo-



nial welcome. This visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland after 45 years will impart fresh momentum to the India-Poland partnership," MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X.

Modi and Tusk met for talks on security, the war on Ukraine by India's strategic partner Russia, and invigorating bilateral ties. They were expected to make state-

ments, and later the Indian leader is to meet with Poland's President Andrzej Duda.

Ahead of his visit, Modi said Poland was India's key economic partner in Central Europe.

Sitting on the eastern flank of NATO and the European Union, Poland is concerned about the two-year-old war across its eastern border. It's offered political, humanitarian,

and defence support to Ukraine.

Kyiv chastised Modi for a visit to Moscow last month, during which he met and hugged President Vladimir Putin. Modi has avoided condemning Russia while emphasising a peaceful settlement to the war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the meeting as a "huge disappoint-

ment and a devastating blow to peace efforts." He also chided Modi for hugging Putin during their meeting.

Modi's visit to Poland also marks 70 years of official bilateral relations between New Delhi and Warsaw.

According to figures cited by the Embassy of India, the total value of bilateral trade increased from \$1.95 billion in 2013-2023, with India's exports accounting for the majority.

Then-Indian President Pratibha Patil visited Poland in 2009, and Tusk, during his first term as prime minister, paid a visit to India in 2010.

On Friday, Modi travels to Kyiv to meet with Zelenskyy.

Drone attacks on a military facility in southern Russia spark a fire



MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Agencies): A drone attack sparked a fire at a military facility in the Volgograd region of southern Russia on Thursday, regional officials and the country's Ministry of Defense said.

Regional Volgograd Governor Andrei Bocharov said on Telegram that a "defense ministry facility" was on fire after being attacked with drones in the area of Marinovka. There were no casualties, he said.

Bocharov did not specify what was damaged but Russian Telegram channels said

that drones attempted to attack a military air base near Marinovka in the village of Oktyabrsky.

Ukraine did not acknowledge the attack but it comes as Ukraine has intensified its attacks on Russia, with a ground offensive into the Russian region of Kursk and drone attacks that targeted Moscow on Wednesday in what the capital's mayor called one of the largest drone attacks to date since Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Videos shared on Russian social media channels showed thick

black smoke rising from the air base and an explosion in the night sky reportedly near the base. Marinovka is about 300 kilometers (185 miles) east of the Ukrainian border and about the same distance west from the border with Kazakhstan.

The Baza Telegram channel, which is close to Russian law enforcement, said one drone was taken down several kilometers (miles) from the airfield and that wreckage from another fell on a trailer near the air base, causing it to catch fire.

Data from NASA fire satellites, which monitor Earth for forest blazes, showed fires breaking out around the air base's apron, where fighter jets previously have been seen parked.

Rescuers recover fifth body from sunken superyacht off Sicily; 1 still missing



PORTICELLO, Aug 22 (Agencies): Rescuers searching the wreck of a superyacht that sank off Sicily brought ashore a fifth body on Thursday, leaving one person still unlocated, as investigators sought to learn why the vessel sank so quickly.

Rescue crews brought the body bag ashore at Porticello port while divers continued the

search for the sixth missing person.

No signs of life have emerged over four days of searching the yacht's hull on the seabed 50 meters (164 feet) underwater.

The Bayesian, a 56-meter (184-foot) British-flagged yacht, went down in a storm early Monday as it was moored about a kilometer (half mile) offshore.

Civil protection officials said they believe the ship was struck by a tornado over the water, known as a waterspout, and sank quickly.

The six missing passengers included British tech magnate Mike Lynch, his 18-year-old daughter and associates who had successfully defended him in a recent U.S. federal fraud trial.

French destroyer in EU mission rescues 29 mariners from oil tanker stricken in Red Sea attacks

DUBAI, Aug 22 (Agencies): A French destroyer rescued 29 mariners from an oil tanker that came under repeated attack in the Red Sea, officials said Thursday, while also destroying a bomb-carrying drone boat in the area.

Yemen's Houthi rebels are suspected to have carried out the assault on the Sounion. The attack, the most serious in the Red Sea in weeks, comes during a monthlong campaign by Houthis targeting ships over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip that has disrupted a trade route through which \$1 trillion in cargo typically passes each year.

The Sounion is now at anchor in the Red Sea and no longer drifting, the European Union's Operation Aspides said. However, it wasn't clear if the vessel was still ablaze. The vessel had been staffed by a crew of Filipinos and Russians.

Military officials did not name the French destroyer involved in the rescue.

In the attack Wednesday, men



on small boats first opened fire with small arms about 140 km (90 miles) west of the rebel-held Yemeni port city of Hodeida, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said.

Four projectiles also hit the ship, it added. It wasn't immediately clear if that meant drones or missiles.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the attacks, though it can take them hours or even days before they acknowledge their assaults. However, they did acknowl-

edge US airstrikes in Hodeida that the American military's Central Command said destroyed a Houthi surface-to-air missile and radar system.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors.

Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the United States or the UK to force an end to Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

As Iran threatens to retaliate against Israel over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, the US military told the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area. Early Thursday, the US military's Central Command said the Lincoln had reached the Mideast's waters, without elaborating.

America also has ordered the USS Georgia-guided missile submarine into the Mideast, while the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier strike group was in the Gulf of Oman.

Additional F-22 fighter jets have flown into the region and the USS Wasp, a large amphibious assault ship carrying F-35 fighter jets, is in the Mediterranean Sea.

Floods swamp Bangladesh as nation finds its feet after protests

At least two people have died and hundreds of thousands are stranded in the floods in at least eight districts in southern and eastern areas.

DHAKA, Aug 22 (Agencies): Floods triggered by torrential rains have swamped a swath of low-lying Bangladesh, disaster officials said Thursday, adding to the new government's challenges after weeks of political turmoil.

At least two people have died and hundreds of thousands are stranded in the floods in at least eight districts in southern and eastern areas.

"Around 2.9 million people have been affected and more than 70,000 people have been taken to shelters," Mohammad Nazmul Abedin, senior official in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, told agency.

Long-time premier Sheikh Hasina quit as prime minister this month and fled to India after weeks of deadly student-led protests, ending her 15-year autocratic rule.



The South Asian nation of 170 million people, crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers, has seen frequent floods in recent decades.

It is among the countries most vulnerable to disasters and climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index.

The annual monsoon rains cause widespread destruction every year, but climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events.

The army and the navy have been deployed, with speedboats and helicopters rescuing those stranded by the swollen rivers.

Much of the country is made up of deltas where the Himalayan rivers the Ganges and the Brahmaputra wind towards the sea after coursing through India.

Heaviest rains Neighbouring India's foreign ministry rejected accusations it was to blame for the floods, denying it had deliberately released water

from an upstream dam.

It said the catchment area had experienced the "heaviest rains of this year over the last few days", and that the flow of water downstream was due to "automatic releases".

Asif Mahmud, a key leader of the student protests that ousted Hasina, and now the sports minister in the interim cabinet, had accused India of not only hosting Hasina, but of "creating a flood" by deliberately releasing water from dams.

India said that was "factually not correct".

"Floods on the common rivers between India and Bangladesh are a shared problem inflicting sufferings to people on both sides, and requires close mutual cooperation towards resolving them," New Delhi's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Hasina's rule saw widespread human rights abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killings of her political opponents.

But Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government preferred Hasina over her rivals from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which it saw as closer to conservative Islamist groups.

Modi has offered his support to the new Bangladeshi leader Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who is heading the caretaker administration.

Russian climbers reach hospital after rescue in Pakistani Himalayas



PESHAWAR, Aug 22 (Agencies): Two Russian climbers who were injured on the slopes of one of northern Pakistan's highest mountains reached a hospital in Peshawar on Thursday, a week after they were stranded after being hit by falling ice.

The climbers were part of a five-member team of Russian climbers that was attempting to climb one of Gasherbrum's peaks to retrieve the body of a fellow climber who died there last year when it was hit by a pile of ice on Friday.

Rescuers airlifted two of the mountaineers Monday, but two others remained stuck on the base camp because of their injuries and bad

weather until Wednesday. Akhtar Hussain, a police official in Skardu, a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, said the Russians were transported to a hospital by ambulance, and were in stable condition.

Karrar Haidri, the secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, told The Associated Press that climbers Mikhail Mironov and Sergei Mironov are getting the best medical care at a hospital in Skardu. He said the search for the fifth climber, Sergei Nilov, had been called off as he is presumed dead.

Hussain said doctors provided medical care to the two injured climbers. "They are sad

over the death of their fifth colleague, but are thankful to the Pakistani rescuers and the army for making efforts to save their life," he said.

He said one needed only minor medical care, while the other had bruises on his arms and legs because he was hit by the pile of ice on Friday.

Haidri said the climbers were fully aware of the dangers linked to the mission when they began expedition to retrieve the body of their colleague who died in 2023 on the same mountain while trying to scale it.

Hundreds of climbers try to scale mountains in northern Pakistan every year, and accidents are common because of avalanches and sudden weather changes. This month, a Pakistani climber Murad Sadpara, 35, known for taking part in high-altitude rescue missions died during a descent from one of the country's tallest mountains in the north.

Rohit Sharma calls Dravid, Agarkar, Shah 'three pillars', credits them for T20 World Cup win

Under Rohit's leadership, India triumphed at the ICC showpiece in June beating South Africa in the final

MUMBAI, Aug 22 (Agencies): Star batter Rohit Sharma said that former head coach Rahul Dravid, chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar and BCCI secretary Jay Shah backed him to the hilt in his effort to extract the best from players without worrying about results, eventuating in India's T20 World Cup triumph under him.

Under Rohit's leadership, India triumphed at the ICC showpiece in June beating South Africa in the final. It was their second T20 world title after 2007, and Rohit also brought curtains on his career in the shortest format with that victory at Barbados.

"It was my dream to transform this team and not worry too much about the stats, the results, to make sure that we create that environment where people can go out there and play freely without thinking too much," Rohit said after being named the men's international cricketer of the year at the CEAT Cricket Rating Awards here.

"That is what was required. I got a lot of help from my three pillars, who are actually Mr Jay Shah, Mr Rahul Dravid (and the) chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar," he said.

"That was very critical for me to



do what I did and obviously not to forget the players, who came in at different points in time and helped the team to achieve what we achieved," he said.

Rohit said the feeling of winning the World Cup that ended India's decade-long drought in global tournaments could not be described in words.

"(It was) a feeling that cannot come everyday. It was something that we were really hoping for. When we won the World Cup, it was important for all of us to enjoy the moment which we did pretty well and thanks to our nation as well for celebrating with us," he said.

"As much as it meant for us, it meant a whole lot to the entire nation as well. It felt really great to bring it (trophy) back home

here and celebrate with everyone here."

"(It is a) fantastic feeling that can never be put out in words. I don't think it's a feeling that can be expressed. It won't do justice to our effect when all that happened," Rohit said.

The Mumbaier said he is not someone who fusses with the specific weight of a bat but prefers to go with the feel of it.

"The guys who spend time with me in the changing room where I put my stickers and I put the bat tape and all that, will tell you (that) whichever bat I pick up, I go and play with that," he said.

"The balance of the bat for me is very important. I have seen a lot of guys who are pretty much into 'how many grains the bat has', 'what is the weight of the

bat' and 'how does it look from outside', but I am not that kind of a person. I will pick up the bat and if I feel this is the right bat, I will go and play with that," he said.

Despite guiding Mumbai Indians to five IPL title as captain, Rohit's hunger to add more trophies to his cabinet remains insatiable.

"There is a reason I won five IPL trophies. I'm not going to stop, because once you get the taste of winning games, winning Cups, you don't want to stop and we'll keep pushing as a team. We'll keep striving for better things in the future," he said.

As an extension, he wanted more success with India too as their ODI and Test leader.

"We've got a couple of solid tours coming up, very challenging ones as well. For us, it never stops. Once you achieve something you always look forward to achieving more.

"That is what I will be doing. I'm pretty sure my teammates will be thinking on the same line. What I've seen in the last two years in Indian cricket, there's some real excitement, some real good cricket is being played," he added.

Women's T20 world cup: Change of venue won't impact our preparation: Deepti



MUMBAI, Aug 22 (Agencies): Star India all-rounder Deepti Sharma is focusing on delivering the best for her team in the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup and feels the sudden change of venue won't impact her side's preparations.

The ICC on Tuesday moved the T20 World Cup from Bangladesh to the UAE following unrest in the South Asian nation.

The event, scheduled to take place from October 3 to 20, will now be staged in Dubai and Sharjah with Bangladesh retaining the

hosting rights, ensuring that it receives its share of revenue. "It doesn't matter wherever the World Cup is happening, I just focus on how as an all-rounder I can contribute to the team's success," Deepti said.

"I just want to give it my all and the last 4-5 months have been fruitful for us, let's hope we continue the good work and end the trophy wait this time. We have some idea about how the wickets will play in UAE," she added.

The all-rounder has delivered some stellar performances with both bat and ball in the

recent months. "I am enjoying my cricket at the moment and this has enabled me to shrug the pressure off my shoulders. I have learnt from the other international cricketers that when you start enjoying the game, you do better on the field," she said.

"I don't let pressure get the better of me, I have developed this habit since I played the first game in the Women's Super League back in 2018. I have developed this habit and made it a part of my game," she added.

Deepti was brilliant throughout The Hundred for London Spirit Women and finished things off in style as well with a winning six to take her team to its first-ever title.

"That moment (hitting the winning runs at Lord's) was amazing, this is what I was missing. It is always great that you win the game for your team. I thanked God for his blessings because in such situations you need to believe in yourself. If you do so, then you do it," she said.

India's Paris Olympics star Archana Kamath, 24, quits table tennis, would rather study in US

MUMBAI, Aug 22 (Agencies): India's women's table tennis team made history at the 2024 Paris Olympics, making it past the Round of 16 for the first time ever in the nation's history. India eventually lost the women's team battle to Germany in the quarter-finals, where Archana Kamath was the only paddler to have won a game. India lost the match 1-3 and bowed out of the competition. Though reaching the quarter-finals was historic in India's table tennis history at the Olympic Games, Kamath wanted more. With there being no guarantee of a medal in the LA Games in 2028, the young paddler has decided to quit table tennis professionally and instead study abroad.

After returning home from the Paris Games, Kamath, aged 24, had an honest conversation with her coach Anshul Garg about the prospects of earning a medal in the next games. The coach, understandably stunned by Archana's stance, decided to give an honest response.

"I told her that it's difficult. It's going to take a lot of hard work. She's ranked outside the top 100 in the world but she improved so much in the past couple of months. But I think she had already made up her mind to go. And once she makes up her mind, it's difficult to change it," Garg told agency.

Archana's selection for the Paris Olympics was a chatter of debate before the start of the quadrennial event, especially after she got the nod over Ayhika Mukherjee, who had beaten World No. 1 Sun Yingsha earlier.

Keeping aside the chatter around her selection, Archana focused on the game and did really well in helping India win the only match against



the Germans in the 1-3 quarter-final loss. Archana has the backing of TOPs, Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), and other sponsors, but that isn't enough. An Olympic medal is what drove her, but now studying abroad is looking like a better career path.

"My brother works at NASA. He's my idol and he too encourages me to study. So I make the time to complete all my studies and I enjoy it. I'm good at it too," she had told the paper earlier. Archana has also been described as a brilliant student by her father, who said that the paddler has no regrets about the career choices she has made.

"Archana has always been academically oriented and all along her TT career has pursued her studies with graduation in Economics and has recently completed the requirements for a Master's degree in International Relations, Strategies, and Securities. Having played table tennis with so much dedication and passion for more than 15 years which culminated in her representing our country at the Olympics, she felt it was time for her to pursue her other passion- full-time studies. She has taken this difficult step with absolutely no regrets and after having given her best for the sport and the country," Archana's father Girish said.

The financial sustainability of sports like Table Tennis is a matter of concern, especially considering the drastic

step Archana decided to take after the Paris Games. However, eight-time national champion and current Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) secretary Kamlesh Mehta feels that change is taking place quickly.

"Table tennis is getting a lot of corporate backing. The Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) has all corporate owners. Players are being supported by professional sports agencies too. There's a lot happening and the government with TTFI is doing whatever we can to support players and create a system that makes players want to stay in the sport. The number of professional academies that have come up in the country is a testament to that. Our results on the international stage - even in youth tournaments - show that we are doing something right," he said.

While there's support for Table Tennis stars in terms of equipment and training, Archana's coach Garg feels the sport is still far from becoming a platform of livelihood for players. Hence, Archana's decision made sense to him.

"The top players generally don't have any problem because they get a lot of support. But what about the upcoming players? Yes, they get support in terms of training and equipment. No expense is spared there but what about a livelihood? That gets difficult so Archana's decision is understandable," Garg said.

Snubbed for Duleep Trophy, India star takes county cricket route to impress selectors

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): One of the finest bowlers in India's domestic red-ball spectrum, Jaydev Unadkat has had an intriguing career so far. Despite taking wickets in domestic cricket at regular intervals, Unadkat has somehow not fit the bill for selectors as far as Test selection is concerned. Even when he has made the squad, his chances in the playing XI have been quite limited. As the Indian team gears up for the upcoming Test season, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selectors decided against picking him for the Duleep Trophy squads. The left-arm pacer, hence, decided to sign for English county side Sussex, hoping to impress selectors through this alternate route.



"I'm really happy to be back here. Hove is my second home. The team's been doing fantastic this season and, hopefully, in the second leg of the season, we're going to pull it through and get

back in division one, where we belong! Cheers," Unadkat said in a video posted by Sussex on social media.

In his first season or Sussex, Unadkat impressed everyone,

picking up 11 wickets in four matches as the team finished in third position in Division 2.

"We are all delighted that Jaydev is returning to the 1st Central County Ground for the final five championship matches of the coming season.

"Jaydev lived up to the expectation that not only would he show his class on the field, but he would also be a fantastic person and be part of what we are all trying to achieve. Jaydev is a lovely guy who did everything he could to help our players and share his fantastic knowledge," he added.

Unadkat was part of the India squad that travelled to West Indies last year. His last appearance for the national team came in the second Test between the two sides in July 2023.

India batters have fallen back a bit in playing spin: Assistant coach ten Doeschate



NEW DELHI, Aug 22 (Agencies): Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate was candid in his admission that the desire to do well overseas has dented Indian batsmen's ability to play spin and his immediate task is to make them adept in it again ahead of an important season that features five Tests at home.

Traditionally strong against spin, India lost 27 wickets against Sri Lankan spinners in the three-match away

ODI series earlier this month, which they lost 0-2. It was India's first bilateral ODI series defeat against the Lankans in 27 years.

"We got undone against Sri Lanka. The mindset of India has been such that they've been so desperate to do well overseas," Doeschate said. "The focus has moved to doing well in Australia and England. We've kind of let playing spin, which was always a strength of the Indian team, fall back a

little bit. That's one thing I'm looking forward to helping with, getting to that position where Indians are the best players of spin in the world again," he added.

India are scheduled to face Bangladesh and New Zealand at home across five Test matches in September and October. Both these sides have handy spinners in their ranks.

Doeschate, a former Netherlands all-rounder with considerable coaching experience around the world, said playing spin is about making a mental shift rather than bringing about major technical changes.

"I don't think much of what we're going to bring is technical knowledge. It's more about mindsets, situational awareness, and how we think they can control certain phases of the game. We need to throw ideas out there... de-briefing and keeping

the mental space really good. That's going to be really important," he said.

The 44-year-old Dutchman, who will be assisting head coach Gautam Gambhir along with Abhishek Nayar, said the team is also desperate to win the Champions Trophy next year.

"There's the Champions Trophy (February 2025). With only three ODIs left in preparation, it's going to be really challenging to switch between the formats and get the team ready for that, which again is something they're desperate to win," he said.

Doeschate said qualifying for the World Test Championship (WTC) final in June next year is another important goal for India.

Currently, India are leading the WTC table with Australia in close pursuit, and Doeschate wanted to use the 10 Tests that India are

scheduled to play to cement that position of strength.

"In terms of what we're looking forward to... qualifying for the WTC final... there's a great opportunity with 10 Tests left. We have five (Tests) in India and then we are going to Australia (for another five Tests), which is going to be great," he said.

Doeschate said walking into the Indian cricketing establishment was a daunting task, particularly after their winning the T20 World Cup in June. "In terms of timing (his appointment), it's quite difficult to walk into a team that's just come back with the (T20) World Cup. But in terms of what's ahead of us for the next 18 months, it's mouth-watering as a coach. It's all the series you want to be involved in and all the challenges you want to come up against," he said.

Reasi District embraces Abdul Quddir Kundria's book "Gottey Gaye Gottey"

Abdul Quddir Kundria's 'Gottey Gaye Gottey' captivates readers in Reasi District

Top News Report

REASI, Aug 22: Abdul Quddir Kundria's much-anticipated book, "Gottey Gaye Gottey," has been met with enthusiastic acclaim following its recent launch at the Abhinav Theatre Writer's Club. Written in Dogri, Urdu, and Hindi, this seminal work has captured the hearts and minds of readers across Reasi district and neighboring areas.

The book was officially unveiled by Vidya Devi, the esteemed elder woman of village Bhabbar Brahmana, in a ceremony attended by a large and diverse audience. She was accompanied by prominent figures including Abdul Ghani, Retired ZEPO Reasi, Haji Abdul Rahim, Allaha Rakha, Abdul Qayoom, Kewal Kumar, Hans Raj, Talib



Hussain, Sudesh Kumar, Baldev Raj Thappa, Mistri Hans Raj, Shaista Bibi, Som Raj, Mohd. Hussain, Thakur Dass, Abdul Hameed, Haji Abdul Latif, Mohd. Shareef, Aashiq Hussain, and Arshad Ali. Residents from various regions including Pouni, Katra, Bhabbar, Kundra, Pai, Dera Baba, and surrounding villages, along with local Sarpanchs and Panchs, have hailed

"Gottey Gaye Gottey" as a pioneering work in the Dogri language. They expressed their belief that such a book should have been published years ago, given its profound representation of marginalized communities and its commendable effort to address their issues.

The book is noted for its compelling encouragement to the younger generation to avoid substance

abuse and its promotion of communal harmony through deep, thoughtful verses. Abdul Quddir Kundria's poetic style not only provides valuable guidance on engaging with the administration but also advocates for the support of marginalized communities, helping them navigate and overcome their challenges.

Vidya Devi praised the book as a significant con-

tribution to societal unity and moral upliftment, describing it as a "bouquet of humanity" that strengthens brotherhood and helps steer society away from vices. She extended her congratulations to the poet for his remarkable representation of the community.

Bodh Raj Bhagat, former Sarpanch, also commended Abdul Quddir Kundria, recalling how his poetry was previously enjoyed on radio and television. He emphasized the book's role as an important guide for marginalized communities and celebrated its publication as a noteworthy achievement.

The event witnessed a large turnout, with numerous attendees and distinguished dignitaries joining in the celebration of this literary milestone.

GGMSC organizes Expert talk on organ donation and transplant



Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 22: An expert talk was organized by career counseling & placement cell and Debates and Seminars committee of GGM Science College Jammu in collaboration with Sate Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (SOTTO), on organ donation/transplant to educate and raise awareness among the audience on the critical importance of organ donation, the process involved, and its impact on saving lives. The event was organized under the guidance and patronage of Dr. Romesh Kumar Gupta, Principal of the college. The event started with the formal welcome address by Dr. Devinder Kumar Sharma, Convener of the Career Counseling and Placement Cell. Anshu Sharma, consultant IEC from media team SOTTO,

was a resource person on the occasion. The lecture began with an overview of organ donation and its definition, after which the speaker emphasized the stark disparity between the number of patients in need of organ transplants and the supply of donated organs. The speaker said that organ donation is described as a life-saving intervention that not only extends lives but also significantly enhances the quality of life for recipients. Answering questions focused on the safety and long-term health outcomes for living donors, the speaker provided reassuring responses backed by data and research. The speaker made several concepts clear about deceased organ Donors and Living organ Donors to dispel misconceptions among the audience. More than 100 students were in attendance. The

students pledged to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation in their villages and communities. Among the faculty who attended the programme included Dr. Vandana Khajuria, Prof. Lekh Raj, Dr. Narinder Kumar, Dr. Sunil Dutt, Dr. Rahul Kait, Dr. Ashaq Hussain, Dr. Anshu Sahney (Convener Debaetes & Seminar Committee), Dr. Rajeev Kumar, Prof. Brinder Kumar, Dr. Chaman Lal (Staff Secretary), Dr. Shalini Sharma, Dr. AkanshaParihar, Dr. Arjun Singh, Dr. Pawan Sharma, Dr. Sukhdeep Singh, Dr. Rohit Bhardwaj, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Prof. Arti Sharma, Dr. Neha Sharma, Dr. Reetika Rani, Dr. Nisha, Prof. Arvind Kumar and Prof. Ram Krishan. The program concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Bal Krishan, Assistant Professor in Zoology.

Alexander Memorial School leads Youth Talent Search in solidarity with rape victims across Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 22: Alexander Memorial School, Jammu, has taken a significant step towards raising awareness about violence against women by uniting nine schools under the Youth Talent Search program. Although the participating schools carried out their activities on their own premises, they shared a common objective: to educate and sensitize the youth on the importance of respect and standing against violence towards women.

The schools involved in this initiative were New Era Environmental High School, Circular Road, Jammu; Bikram Memorial School, Bisnah; JK Montessori Hr. Sec. School, Talab Tillo, Jammu; S.D. Tarapuri High School, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu; Bhagwati Haqiqat

Memorial School, Lower Barnai, Jammu; Humanity Public School, Bari Brahmana, Jammu; and Elite Public High School, Om Nagar, Udheywalla, Bohri, Jammu.

Students from classes 6th to 10th were particularly targeted in this initiative. They were educated about the issue of violence against women, with a focus on understanding the significance of consent, encapsulated in the phrase "No means No." Teachers provided students with the National Commission for Women's 24x7 Helpline number and encouraged them to speak out in cases of sexual harassment. Furthermore, the students were advised to spread awareness within their families, especially teaching boys to respect women.

To show solidarity with rape victims and their

families, students from all nine schools wore black badges or ribbons throughout the day. This act was a symbolic gesture to demonstrate their support and empathy. Additionally, candles were lit as a tribute to the victims, serving as a symbol of peace and hope.

The event emphasized the crucial role that education plays in fostering respect for women. The students collectively pledged, "I will respect all women."

I will speak out against violence. I will report violence. I will make this world a better place to live in so that Humanity stays alive." This pledge reflects their commitment to creating a safer and more respectful world for women, ensuring that the seeds of respect and dignity are sown from a young age.

JKPSS welcomes Chinar Book Festival at SKICC

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: Jammu and Kashmir Punjabi Sahit Sabha (JKPSS), Srinagar, Kashmir welcomes the Chinar Book Festival at SKICC, Srinagar, organized by the National Book Trust. However, it is disappointing to note that books in every language are on display except Punjabi.

Punjabi is an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir's culture, widely spoken across the UT, especially in hilly and border areas. For over a century and a half, Punjabi writers have published over 400 works, including poetry, short stories, novels, plays, and folk literature.

The Jammu and Kashmir Punjabi Sahit Sabha, Srinagar, Kashmir, has been actively promoting Punjabi language and literature in Kashmir for the

last century. The exclusion of Punjabi language and writer organizations from the Chinar Book Festival has shocked the Punjabi-speaking community in Kashmir.

We request the Lt. Governor of J&K UT to look into this matter, as similar tactics are being used to marginalize Punjabi language activities in radio, Doordarshan, and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages. Radio Kashmir Srinagar, in particular, has been neglecting Punjabi programs, repeating old content and lapsing sanctioned budgets for over a year.

The Jammu and Kashmir Punjabi Sahit Sabha, Srinagar, Kashmir, condemns this anti-Punjabi policy in J&K UT. We urge concerned officials to address our grievances by thoroughly investigating this matter.

World Entrepreneurs' Day Celebrated at SMVDU with Expert Insights from JKEDI



Top News Report

KATRA, Aug 22: The School of Mechanical Engineering at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), in collaboration with the Innovation and Incubation Council (IIC), celebrated World Entrepreneurs' Day with a special event aimed at fostering entrepreneurial spirit and innovation among students. The event was organized by Dr. Varun Dutta, Dr. Sanjay Sharma, and Dr.

Rajiv Kumar, Assistant Professors at SMVDU. The highlights of the event were expert lectures delivered by Sourab Mengi, Assistant Manager at the Centre for Innovation, Incubation, and Business Modelling at JKEDI, and Shivani Sharma, Assistant Faculty at JKEDI. Their talks focused on the latest policies and opportunities in the startup and innovation ecosystem provided by JKEDI, offering valuable insights to aspiring

entrepreneurs among the students. Prof. R.K. Mishra, Dean of Student Welfare, Prof. Balbir Singh, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Sanjeev Anand, Convener of IIC, also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in today's competitive world. The event was attended by several dignitaries, including Dr. Vineet Tyagi, Dean (R&D), Dr. Yatheshth Anand, Head, School of Mechanical Engineering, Dr. Sanjay Mohan, Mr. B.K. Bhatia, Training and Placement Officer at SMVDU, along with faculty members and staff of the university. The students greatly benefited from the expert talks, gaining crucial information about various policies and support mechanisms available for start-ups and innovations through JKEDI. The event was a significant step towards nurturing the entrepreneurial ecosystem within the university, encouraging students to explore new ideas and venture into the world of start-ups.

Ram Madhav arrives in Jammu for crucial Meeting

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is likely to finalize its candidates for the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections today, marking a key moment in the party's strategic planning for the region.

As per media reports the BJP leader Ram Madhav is expected to land in Jammu shortly, where he will chair a crucial meeting to finalize the panels for each Assembly constituency. "Panels for each of the constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir will be forwarded to the BJP headquarters in New Delhi later. The final decision on candidates will rest with the National Election Committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

"BJP is fully prepared to contest the upcoming J&K Assembly polls with a strong strategy and the right candidates. Today's

meeting will ensure that we put forward the best possible names for each constituency," a senior BJP leader said ahead of the deliberations.

Ram Madhav's meeting in Jammu will play a pivotal role in finalizing the list. "This is a crucial moment for the party. We are considering every factor carefully before making our decisions," a BJP leader added.

The National Election Committee will announce the final list of candidates soon after these deliberations conclude.

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