

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

### Pulwama admin issues advisory for people living along banks of Jhelum

SRINAGAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): Amid inclement weather forecast, the district administration Pulwama on Friday issued an advisory for the people living along the banks of river Jhelum, asking them to refrain from venturing in and around the water bodies and limit their activities until the weather improves.

"In view of inclement weather with forecast of rainfall/ floods/ Cloudburst/ Landslide/ Thunderstorm/ Earthquake for seven days from Ministry of Earth science, Indian Meteorological Department. The General and those residing on the banks of river Jhelum its tributaries and streams in particular are advised to refrain from venturing in and around the water bodies and limit their activities till improvement of Weather," read an advisory from the administration.

It also asked the boatmen to not to attempt to cross the river Jhelum at designated ferry points until they have verified the situation. "The General Public of District Pulwama can contact District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC) and Police Control Rooms for any information and untoward event," read the advisory.

The public can contact the control rooms on below numbers: 01933242442, 01933241280, 01933247369 and 01933240354.

### High Court clears teacher of suicide abetment charges

SRINAGAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has quashed a criminal case against a college teacher accused of abetting suicide. The teacher, Rajnesh Sharma, was named in a suicide note left by a student who had been reported by Sharma for an attendance shortage.

Justice Rahul Bharti ruled that merely being mentioned in a suicide note does not automatically imply guilt under Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which addresses suicide abetment.

Justice Bharti emphasised that Section 306 IPC is intended to address cases where a person intentionally drives another to

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## Senior J&K BJP leader resigns over ticket distribution, threatens to contest as Independent

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30 : In yet another rebellion within the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir over ticket distribution for the assembly elections, senior party leader Chandar Mohan Sharma Friday announced his resignation from the party and threatened to contest as an Independent.

The BJP is facing resentment over its ticket distribution in the Union territory, with party leaders and workers protesting in several districts of the Jammu region. This has prompted the party to launch a damage control exercise, deploying



several top leaders, including Union ministers, to defuse the situation.

"There is immense resentment and anger among leaders and workers of the party over the unfair distribution of mandates. They are holding protests to express their discon-

tent. Saddened by this, I, one of the senior-most leaders of the BJP, along with others, have resigned from the party," Sharma, the convenor of the 'Tawi Andolan', told reporters here.

Advocate Sharma, who joined the BJP in the early 1970s,

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## Army recovers landmine along LoC in Poonch

MENDHAR/JAMMU, Aug 30 (Agencies): Army troops on Friday recovered a landmine along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said.

An Army party found the landmine in the Pattri Gali area during a patrol along the LoC, they said.

The patrol party secured the area and called the bomb disposal squad to destroy the mine, they added.

Officials said the mine had drifted due to rains and ended up on the patrol track.

## Prioritise Development and Peace over Militancy: BJP's Reddy to JK Voters

JAMMU, Aug 30 (Agencies): Firing salvos at National Conference, PDP and the Congress for promoting terrorism and separatism in J&K, Union Minister and BJP's J&K incharge for elections G K Reddy Friday said that people of the UT have two choices in the upcoming elections: to choose Terrorism, separatism or Development, peace.

"We have always been clear in our politics. Ever since BJP was formed, we had promised revocation of Article 370 and we did what we promised not to play politics but to provide rights to the people of J&K for which



they were waiting since past seven decades," he said addressing a press conference in Jammu, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). Reddy said that this election is not just an election for the BJP but an "Andoolan" against the Congress-NC alliance. "Rahul-Omar alliance is aimed

at reviving terrorism and separatism in J&K but we will not allow that. So this Andoolan is to ensure Pakistan and its proxies are kept at bay and J&K remains on the path of development and peace," he said.

He said people of J&K have to decide themselves in the upcoming elections that whether they want to choose revival of terrorism, separatism or development and peace. "People have to decide whether they want Kashmiri youth again on streets with stones or with laptop and bats in their hands," he said. Reddy

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## Vikar Rasool Wani sentenced to five months in prison



SRINAGAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): Vikar Rasool Wani, the former Jammu and Kashmir Congress president and current candidate from Banihal constituency, has been found guilty along with five others.

Agency reported that the court has sentenced them to five months in prison and imposed a fine of Rs 1000 each.

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## Rains to lash J&K parts till Sep 3: MeT

SRINAGAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): Meteorological Department on Friday said that light to moderate rains with thundershowers at isolated places of Jammu and Kashmir will continue till September 3.

In its latest advisory the weather department forecast flash floods, landslides, mudslides and shooting stones over few vulnerable parts of Jammu and Kashmir, and said water logging in few low lying areas may occur.

"There will be generally cloudy weather with

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## The Dynasts: Kin of Top Politicians get tickets in J&K

SRINAGAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): The National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the two main regional political parties, have selected at least five candidates who are relatives of senior politicians.

Iltija Mufti addressing a press conference in Delhi.

PDP has nominated Iltija Mufti, daughter of the former Chief Minister and party president, while the NC has nominated four sons of former ministers to contest in the upcoming Legislative Assembly elections.

From NC, Mehar Ali,



son of Member of Parliament (MP) from the Anantnag-Rajouri seat Mian Altaf, has been given the mandate to contest from their traditional Kangan seat in Ganderbal district, now reserved for the Scheduled Tribe (ST). Salman Sagar, son of former minister Ali Muhammad Sagar, will contest from the Hazratbal

seat in Srinagar district. Hilal Akbar Lone, son of former minister and Speaker Muhammad Akbar Lone, will contest from the Sonawari seat in Bandipora district. Sajad Shafi Uri, son of former MLA Muhammad Shafi Uri, will contest from the Uri seat in Baramulla district.

These are first-time candidates from well-established political families in Jammu and Kashmir. They will likely rely on the traditional voter base of their parties, as well as the influence of their parents, who have been elected to the JK Legislative

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## Ladakh Admin, Hill Council to organise climate cup next month

KARGIL, Aug 30 (Agencies): Touted as one of the world's lowest carbon footprint football tournaments, administrative bodies in Ladakh have come together to organise the second edition of the Climate Cup, with matches to be played on grounds at 11,000 feet above sea level.

Ladakh Football Association general secretary Tsering Angmo said the tournament has become a marquee event of the Union Territory's administration and the Ladakh autonomous Hill Development Council to create awareness on climate change.

"At 11,000 feet above sea level, six teams will gather for a week in September to compete in Ladakh's Climate Cup," Angmo said.

"The Climate Cup is one of the world's lowest carbon footprint football tournaments where there is 'zero plastic,'" she said and added that battery-operated buses are used for team transportation.

Refreshments made from local fruits are given to players to encourage the local "green ecosystem," she said.

This year the Climate Cup has also roped in the forest department which has pledged to plant 10 trees for every goal scored in the event, Angmo said.

The trophy cup is made of wood trophy and Ladakhi motifs and symbols on it, she added.

An official said a one-day conference on sports, sustainability and

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## Sahai calls on JMC Commissioner, submits memorandum

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: A Delegation led by Rahul Sahai Chair PHDCCI Jammu along with Anil Sharma, Samar Dev Charak, Ashish Jain, Raj Dua, Shantnu Gupta calls on Devansh Yadav las Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation and submitted Memorandum regarding over all development of Jammu City in Jammu today.

Rahul Sahai Chairman PHDCCI Jammu extended heartfelt congratulations to Devansh Yadav Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation on his appointment as Commissioner of Jammu Municipal Corporation. PHDCCI delegation said we are confident that under your dynamic leadership, the JMC will reach new heights of success, and we wish you the very best in your endeavours.

Rahul Sahai said In light of your new role, we would like to bring to your attention several suggestions aimed at the overall development of Jammu City. We believe these initiatives will contribute significantly to the city's growth and the welfare of its residents.

Rahul Sahai Firstly proposed the introduction of a mechanism that



enables households and shopkeepers to subscribe to JMC's automated waste collection services, ideally through an app-based system. This would ensure more efficient and timely waste management across the city. Additionally, he suggested the formation of a JMC Advisory Panel comprising retired engineers, chamber members, market associations, and prominent citizens. Such a panel could offer valuable insights and guidance.

PHDCCI Delegation Furthermore submitted that there is a need for a robust customer care system, which includes real-time apps and toll-free numbers to address public grievances promptly. This will greatly enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the JMC's services. We also recommend a thorough review of the ongoing Jammu Smart City projects. Recent footpath

installations, for instance, have resulted in the narrowing of streets due to inadequate planning in areas like Gandhi nagar etc. Sahai said a public session showcasing completed Smart City projects would be beneficial in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Chair Rahul Sahai said as the JMC has notified unified bye-laws under RERA guidelines, we suggest organizing an educational session to help the public better understand these guidelines, particularly those involved in land plotting. In addition, expanding e-bus routes to include areas such as Bawe Temple and the industrial zones of Kathua, Samba, Bari Brahmana, and Gangyal would greatly facilitate local employment and align with industrial operation timings.

Sahai said the ongoing Tawi Lake Project also requires urgent attention, particularly regarding

the management of nallahs flowing into the river, which could lead to persistent water quality issues. To encourage compliance with sanitation and other charges, we recommend the implementation of a challan mechanism for defaulters, as non-payment and improper garbage disposal remain ongoing challenges.

Rahul Sahai also highlighted problems of Transport Nagar Jammu and said that the lack of sanitation services is a significant concern. The absence of garbage collection and drain clearing services has turned the Transport Nagar area into a dumping ground in the heart of the city. We also urge immediate action to address the rampant encroachments in Transport Nagar, where footpaths and roads are overtaken by vendors, leading to considerable disorder. Addressing these issues through an anti-encroachment drive and improving street lighting and public toilet facilities will be crucial steps toward restoring order in the Transport Nagar area.

Sahai said moreover, ensuring the functionality of street lighting across the city is of utmost importance, ideally through the use of

smart lighting systems that operate automatically. The collection of waste from gardens and parks should be streamlined to prevent delays, and fogging should be conducted during the monsoon season to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue.

Finally PHDCCI delegation said we bring to your attention the severe water crisis in parts of Trikuta Nagar due to outdated infrastructure. We urge the planning of a new pumping station to provide a long-term solution, particularly in the most affected areas, such as Sector 7. Additionally, in the absence of corporators, it is vital to keep residents informed about the plans for drain and road construction in their areas. Publishing these plans in local newspapers could be an effective way to ensure public awareness and engagement.

PHDCCI delegation thanked Devansh Yadav Jammu Municipal Corporation for considering suggestions and said we look forward to your positive response and said we remain confident that your leadership will bring significant improvements to our beloved city of Jammu.

## New power purchase agreements signed to ensure smooth running of Power across J&K: MD JKPCL

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Managing Director, Jammu Kashmir Power Corporation Limited (JKPCL) and Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDC), Yasin M. Choudhary, IAS paid a surprise visit to the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) Gladni to check the working of 24x7 control room and the purchase system.

The Chief Engineer (Trading) JKPCL, Er. Neeraj Sharma apprised the Managing Director about the methodology adopted in daily arranging the power from different sources Viz-a-Viz Interstate Generating Stations (ISGS), State Sector Generation (JKPDC) & as and when required from the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) to meet the daily demands



projected by the Chief Engineer, JPDC and KPDC. In place to mention here that JKPCL is catering to the peak demand of 2924 MW in Summers and 3133MW peak demand in Winters for the UT of J&K.

While elaborating on power scenario, Managing Director, JKPCL & JPDC, Yasin M. Choudhary, IAS, was also apprised that many PPA's have been signed in the recent past which mainly include 900 MW (Hydro), 1000 MW (Solar under various Schemes) as

well as 394 MW (Thermal under B(v) mode of SHAKTI policy) and a few others are in pipeline which will increase the power availability resultant to which round the clock power will not be a distant dream for the UT of J&K.

Further, Managing Director lauded the efforts of the staff of JKPCL, JPDC and SLDC who are manning the SLDC and assured all help and any further improvement to facilitate the hassle-free working of the Centre.

## DC Jammu seeks explanation from absentee health staff

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Deputy Commissioner, Sachin Kumar Vaishya conducted a surprise inspection of the Tehsil Office and the Government Health & Wellness Centre Pargwal.

Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the inspection tour.

At the Tehsil Office, the Deputy Commissioner scrutinised the Service Plus portal and evaluated the office's adherence to Public Service Guarantee Act, PSA guidelines. He reviewed both pending and resolved applications, interviewed staff on routine matters and



examined record maintenance practices. The DC also addressed several contentious local Revenue Department matters during his visit.

Following the Tehsil office inspection, the DC visited the Health & Wellness Centre Pargwal. There, he checked staff attendance, gathered feedback from patients and assessed

the medical facilities and prescription practices.

During the course of inspection at the Health & Wellness Centre, it was observed that five medical staff members were found absent. Consequently, the Deputy Commissioner has called for written explanations from the concerned staff regarding their absence.

## Ritu Mahajan makes J&K proud, wins Mrs. India North 2024 Title

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Ritu Mahajan, a talented young woman from Jammu, has brought laurels to Jammu and Kashmir by winning the coveted title of Mrs. India North 2024. The national-level competition, conducted by WEA Teen India 2024, was held in Jaipur from August 14 to 17, 2024.

Ritu outshone contestants from various states, impressing judges with her beauty, grace, and philanthropic endeavors. In addition to her main title, she also secured



the subtitles of Mrs. India Graceful Glamour 2024 and Bharat Gaurav Ratna Award as a Fashion Designer.

Owner of the exclusive boutique Ritu Creations in Trikuta Nagar, Ritu is being encouraged to expand her business to a larger scale MSME, supplying designer suits to

major showrooms across India.

Ritu's achievement is a testament to her dedication, hard work, and passion for fashion and social causes. Her win inspires young women in J&K to pursue their dreams and make a mark in the national arena.

## Dulloo condoles IFS Officer, Jitender Singh's untimely demise

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 30: A condolence and prayer meeting under Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo and attended by Administrative Secretaries was today convened to mourn the tragic and untimely demise of Jitender Singh, an IFS Officer of 2010 batch currently posted at Resident Commissioner Office, New Delhi.

During the condolence meeting, Dulloo expressed deep sorrow over the untimely loss of this young officer at the young age.

The ACS, Forest Ecology and Environment Department, Dheeraj Gupta also offered his heartfelt condolences

and praised Singh for his outstanding work as an officer in an upright manner.

He also read out the condolence message in which he maintained that his thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased. He also reiterated that in this hour of sorrow and grief the whole administration is with them.

All the officers expressed their heartfelt condolences, prayers, and resolved for extending every kind of support during this difficult time.

As a mark of profound respect for the departed soul, a two-minute silence was observed and prayed for the peace of the deceased officer.

## Recovery helpers of J&K SCARD Bank holds strike over disparity by Management



Top News Report

JAMMU Aug 30: The Recovery Helpers, Orderlies, and Drivers of J&K SCARD Bank Ltd. have been compelled to go on strike due to the persistent disparity, injustice, and harassment they have faced at the hands of the bank's management.

The strike is a result of ongoing grievances that have been consistently ignored by the bank's administration, despite repeated appeals for fairness and transparency.

The Recovery Helpers were appointed in 2014 with the promise of regularization after two years of service. By 2016, they had completed the required period and were expecting their positions to be made permanent. However, despite the Board of Management confirming their status in 2016, the decision was inexplicably put on hold. The reasons for this delay were never communicated to the Recovery Helpers, leaving them in a state of uncertainty and frustration.

Over the years, the Recovery Helpers have tirelessly sought justice by approaching various authorities within the bank. However, their pleas were consistently ignored. Exhausted and left with no other recourse, they eventually turned to the High Court, seeking a resolution. After an arduous eight-year legal battle, they finally secured a favorable judgment on October 18, 2023. The court ordered the bank's management to implement the decision within 12 weeks, yet the management chose to defy the court's order.

In a blatant attempt to sidestep the court's ruling, the bank's management issued an order of confirmation for the

Recovery Helpers but deliberately withheld the appropriate grade. This action was taken under the pretext that the bank's financial condition was poor, and the grade would be awarded once the situation improved. The Recovery Helpers argue that if the financial condition of the bank is truly dire, it should apply to all employees, not just them. The fact that other employees continue to receive full benefits despite the claimed financial constraints indicates selective treatment and discrimination against the Recovery Helpers.

The Recovery Helpers have raised several critical questions about the management's handling of financial resources, which further highlight the inconsistencies in the administration's actions.

The Recovery Helpers pointed out that an employee, who is not even part of the bank's regular establishment, was given a salary hike of Rs 16,000 in one go. They question the rationale behind this increase, especially when the financial condition of the bank is cited as the reason for denying their rightful benefits. Additionally, they challenge the 50% salary hike for sweepers, which contradicts the bank's bylaws that limit sweeping charges to Rs 2,000 per month.

The Recovery Helpers are also concerned about the administration's decision to reappoint a retiring employee with a substantial salary package and additional financial benefits, surpassing what he received during his active service. This decision raises further doubts about the management's claims of financial distress.

The daily fuel expenses incurred by the bank's administration have also come under scrutiny. The Recovery Helpers urge a thorough examination of the vouchers and account books to understand how such high expenditures are justified amid the alleged financial crunch.

In light of these issues, the Recovery Helpers have made an appeal to the Lieutenant Governor, the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of Cooperatives, and the Registrar of Cooperative Societies J&K to intervene.

## DPS Jammu students win gold medals in district level roll ball championship



Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Students of Delhi Public School Jammu brought laurels to the school and their parents by winning gold medals in various categories in District Jammu Roll Ball Championship organized by Roll Ball Association of Jammu & Kashmir held at M.A Stadium, Jammu from 28-29 August, 2024. All the winners had also received merit certificates.

Mujtaba Sajad (IV-G) won 1 gold and 1 silver medal in U-11 boys category; Divansh Kandror (IV-I) won 2 gold medals in U-11 boys category; Yuvan Gandotra (V-C) won 2 gold medals in U-11 boys category; Khevna Gupta (V-B) won 1 gold medal in U-11 girls category; Dhvani Nanda

(VI-C) won 1 silver medal in U-14 girls category; Astitva Choudhary (VI-E) won 2 silver medals in U-14 boys category; Urwah Sajad (VII-F) won 1 gold medal in U-14 girls category.

Earlier, Astitva Choudhary, Dhvani Nanda and Urwah Sajad had also participated in 16th Sub-Junior National Roll Ball Championship-2023 held at Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

The management DPS Jammu, President-RCT, Ajatshatru Singh, Pro VC-Dr. Ritu Singh, Director-S.S Sodhi along with Principal-DPS Jammu, Ruchi Chabra and staff congratulated all the winners and their parents for their achievement. Further, they also extended their best wishes to them for all their future endeavors.

## If voted to power, NC to establish six new universities in J&K: Dr Vikas

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: National Conference (NC) Vice President, Omar Abdullah have announced that if his party is elected to power in J&K, it will establish six new Universities in the State to augment the Gross Enrolment Ratio.

This was shared with media by Dr Vikas Sharma, Secretary JKNC Central Zone (Jammu, Samba & Kathua) and Coordinator Jammu District Urban during a meeting organized here today. He said, "Jenab Omar Abdullah Saab have made a public statement through his 'X' handle that NC government, if voted to power, would establish six higher education growth center across the region. The six new growth centers will be established as full-fledged

affiliating universities, with three located in the Jammu region, including Chenab and Pir Panjal areas, and three in the Kashmir region, covering North and South Kashmir. The initiative also includes the upgrade of satellite campuses of the University of Kashmir and the University of Jammu to independent universities."

He said that the expansion was expected to increase the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in the region, providing relief to the two conventional universities that currently face affiliation congestion. The new institutions will affiliate approximately 4,000 seats from each existing university, paving the way for a substantial increase in college admissions and educational opportunities.

"This initiative would a

significant step towards making higher education more accessible at the local level," said Dr Vikas and added "We aim to address the growing demand for educational opportunities and provide our youth with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in today's competitive world."

He, however, flayed the BJP for ignoring the cause of students during its direct and proxy rule in J&K. "Nothing has been done to off burden the University of Jammu and University of Kashmir. Further, their off site campuses have been completely ignored in all aspects. But, the NC is committed to put both the universities on the track of growth and development, if elected to power by the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he concluded.

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir**  
**Office of the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Ramban**  
Email: [alcramban@gmail.com](mailto:alcramban@gmail.com)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

All e-Shram registrants (in case of Injury) and their dependents (In case of death), belonging to District Ramban who have met with any accident occurred after the date of registration on e shram portal, and have been died or have developed some kind of temporary and permanent disability after the accident, are requested to file a grievance on a grievance management system of e shram portal in order to take benefits of the scheme. Further the said applicants are also requested to submit the following documents in the office of Assistant Labour Commissioner near Cafeteria Morh, Ramban.

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4. FIR of the accident
5. Medical Report/Postmortem Report if deceased
6. Active Phone No. of applicant/dependents
7. Active Bank Account No. applicant/dependents
8. Two Photographs of applicants/deceased/dependents.

No:- ALC/Rbn/2024-25/467-70  
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Anil Kumar (JKAS)  
Assistant Labour Commissioner,  
Ramban

## EDITORIAL

MARS  
MISSION

Mars exploration has captured the imagination of scientists, engineers, and the public for decades, representing humanity's enduring curiosity about our solar system and the potential for life beyond Earth. Mars, often called the Red Planet due to its reddish appearance, is the fourth planet from the Sun and has long been a target for exploration due to its similarities to Earth and its potential to harbor life. Over the years, numerous missions have been launched by various space agencies to explore Mars, each contributing to our understanding of this enigmatic planet.

The exploration of Mars began in earnest with the Mariner missions by NASA in the 1960s and 1970s. Mariner 4, launched in 1964, was the first spacecraft to successfully fly by Mars, sending back the first close-up images of another planet. These images revealed a barren, cratered surface, dispelling some early hopes that Mars might have conditions similar to Earth.

The Mariner program was followed by the Viking missions in 1975, which were the first to successfully land on Mars. Viking 1 and Viking 2 both included orbiters and landers, with the landers conducting experiments to search for signs of life. Although the results were inconclusive, the Viking missions provided a wealth of information about the Martian surface and atmosphere.

The next significant leap in Mars exploration came with the development of rovers, mobile robotic laboratories capable of traversing the Martian surface and conducting detailed scientific experiments. NASA's Sojourner rover, part of the Mars Pathfinder mission in 1997, was the first to achieve this feat. Though small, Sojourner demonstrated the potential of rovers to explore Mars autonomously.

Building on this success, NASA launched the twin rovers Spirit and Opportunity in 2003. These rovers were designed to search for evidence of past water on Mars, and both exceeded their expected lifespans by many years. Opportunity, in particular, made significant discoveries, including evidence that liquid water once flowed on Mars, creating conditions that could have supported life.

In 2012, NASA's Curiosity rover landed on Mars as part of the Mars Science Laboratory mission. Curiosity was equipped with a more advanced suite of instruments than its predecessors, allowing it to analyze rock samples in greater detail. One of its most significant findings was the discovery of organic molecules in Martian soil, which are the building blocks of life. This finding, combined with evidence of ancient lakes and rivers, suggests that Mars may have been habitable in the distant past.

As of 2024, Mars exploration is more active than ever. NASA's Perseverance rover, which landed in 2021, is tasked with searching for signs of ancient microbial life and collecting samples for a future mission to return to Earth. Perseverance also carried the Ingenuity helicopter, the first aircraft to fly on another planet, demonstrating the feasibility of aerial exploration on Mars.

Other space agencies have also joined the quest to explore Mars. The European Space Agency (ESA) and Roscosmos are collaborating on the ExoMars mission, which includes the Rosalind Franklin rover set to launch in the coming years. This rover will drill into the Martian surface to search for signs of life that might be buried underground. China's Tianwen-1 mission, which includes an orbiter, lander, and rover, successfully landed on Mars in 2021, making China only the third country to achieve this milestone.

Looking ahead, the ultimate goal of Mars exploration is to send humans to the Red Planet. NASA's Artemis program aims to return humans to the Moon as a stepping stone to Mars, with the goal of landing astronauts on Mars by the 2030s. SpaceX, a private company led by Elon Musk, is also developing the Starship spacecraft, which is designed to transport humans to Mars.

Human exploration of Mars presents enormous challenges, including long-duration space travel, radiation exposure, and the need for sustainable life support systems. However, the potential rewards—scientific discoveries, the possibility of finding life, and the expansion of humanity beyond Earth—make this an endeavor worth pursuing.

Mars exploration has come a long way since the early flybys of the 1960s. With each mission, we learn more about this fascinating planet and take steps closer to answering some of the most profound questions about our place in the universe. The quest to explore Mars continues to inspire and drive technological innovation, bringing us closer to the day when humans might set foot on the Red Planet.

## Curb the menace of child molestation

By: JULIO RIBEIRO

TWO four-year-old girls were sexually abused by a sweeper in a privately run school in Badlapur, a small town in Thane district adjoining Mumbai city. He had been employed just days before the crime took place. He was reportedly the only male employee in the pre-primary section of the school. On two consecutive days, he was sent by a teacher to take the two girls to the toilet.

There is an urgent need for case studies by top psychologists to list the root causes of the malaise and suggest remedies.

It turned out that no background check was conducted prior to his hiring. Police investigations into his antecedents revealed that the man was just 24 years old but had been married thrice in a short period of less than a year. He had discarded his first wife two or three days after marriage and the second one within 10 days. The third wife, who is presently with him, is in her fifth month of pregnancy.

Even if a proper background check had been done, it is doubtful if the man's proclivities would have been detected. But his act of changing his partners should have alerted the principal against taking him on in a school which had many girl children.

Sexual offences are being reported almost daily in the media. This particular case hit the headlines probably because the school was rumoured to be owned by someone connected to one of the ruling parties in Maharashtra.

The Assembly elections are due in the state before the year ends. The Opposition perhaps felt that since a crime like this disturbed the peace of mind of parents and even common citizens, it would be a fit issue to create a ruckus that could affect voting patterns.

A bandh was announced by the Opposition parties, but it had to be shelved after the Bombay High Court, hearing a public interest litigation, decided that such bandhs were illegal. A city-based NGO, Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT), set up 30 years ago by former Cabinet Secretary BG Deshmukh, former Medical Director of Mumbai's Jaslok Hospital Dr RK Anand and I, had moved the high court against this practice of political parties depriving workers of earning their living and forcing the closure of shops and offices.

The PCGT won its case in the court. The two political parties then in the Opposition, the BJP and the Shiv Sena, were each fined Rs 20 lakh for the mayhem caused by the bandh. More importantly, the bandh as a political weapon had been laid to rest, at least in the city of Mumbai. The hardship it caused to the homeless, who depend on eating houses for their daily meal, and little children, who depend on the arrival of the milk vans for their sustenance, was highlighted in the court by a few affected citizens in sworn affidavits.

In place of the projected bandh, parents of schoolgoing children, politicians and their followers taped their own mouths with black cloth and marched through

the city streets demanding better security for schoolchildren.

Five years ago, a delegation of fathers of little boys going to private schools approached me with an offer of professional help, according to their individual expertise, to counter the menace of young children being molested in schools. The PCGT then tied up with another NGO working on the same issue, and approached the Commissioner of Police, Mumbai, who earmarked a DCP from the Crime Branch to liaise with us. We organised a number of seminars and meetings, including training workshops for principals of government and municipal schools, on the basics of the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act and how it could be effectively implemented.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 struck soon after our preliminaries were completed. The city police had started a 'Didi' programme in which a woman police constable, specially selected, was assigned to each of the 91 police stations in the commissionerate to visit each school in the precinct every month, address the parent-teacher meetings and impress on the parents first, the teachers next and the senior students later the lurking possibility of molestation and ways and means to prevent it.

The steps to be taken in case sexual offenders from within the school or outside manage to break the law were also listed. The police presence at the parent-teacher meeting was meant to engender confidence in the minds of parents that attention was being paid by the school and

the state to the security of their wards. The police, too, would not have an excuse for any delay in dealing with complaints made by the school authorities.

The steep increase in incidents of child molestation in buses hired by schools to transport children, in classrooms or staff rooms and in lavatories by the non-teaching staff or senior students preying on juniors is a sign of a sickness that needs to be combated head-on.

There is an urgent need for case studies by top psychologists to list the root causes of the malaise and suggest possible remedies. That will help to draw the attention of parents and teachers to a danger that afflicts not only our country but most countries of the world. In some European countries, child pornography has become such a menace that special squads have been created in crime-fighting units to address the problem.

The steady proliferation of sex offenders in many cities and even towns in our country needs immediate attention and involvement of the state. In Mumbai, NGOs involved in helping the authorities combat the menace are many. The current government at the Centre distrusts civil society bodies working to address such secular issues. Corporate funding has been discontinued to such NGOs and diverted to the PM Cares Fund.

The government would be well advised not to frown on such NGOs whose only motive is to better the quality of life of ordinary citizens. To dump every NGO in one basket is a strange way of going about the business of governance.

## Pitfalls of 'quick results' instead of deep reforms

By: Sanjeev Ahluwalia

The recent, hastily terminated attempt to induct 45 specialists as senior and mid-level civil servants on contract and the earlier agricultural reform legislation, hastily enacted without much debate in 2020 and then withdrawn a year later, both point to three generic, weak spots in the government's reform strategy. First, scoring a quick win for the reforms report card overrode the need to ensure social equity. Second, hasty formulation, without deep buy-in from key stakeholders -- respectively, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), mandated by Article 320 of the Constitution to manage Union government recruitment, and farmers in the case of agriculture -- gummed up implementation. Third, shrinking opportunities for the bureaucracy, across ministries, to influence decision-making, dried up ground-up feedback. Also Read - Sunanda K. Datta-Ray | Will Bengal introspect, or let politics go on as usual? Advertisement Both proposals had merits. Enhancing skills within bureaucracy rather than hiring expensive, short-term consultants, to do the bureaucracy's core tasks and unleashing market forces in agriculture to enhance woefully low productivity, are worthy objectives. Ironically, the case for lateral entry in civil services was decided way back in 1952 when the All-India Services were formalised. The Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and the Indian Forest Service and the Union government "Group A" Central services like Tax, Railways and the Indian Foreign Service all induct bright youngsters, train them to be leaders and inject them into the wider base of civil servants in each state government and Union ministries, at a high level, generally eight service years ahead of other junior cadres, who resent the UPSC inductees as "lateral" entrants. Also Read - Dilip Cherian | Railway Board

puts freeze on promotions as engineers rage Today, "lateral entry" refers to recruitment outside the existing government cadres. A mechanism devised for highly specialised positions, which can't be filled by deputation from any existing cadre but derided by pro-reservation activists for side-tracking the constitutional provisions for job reservations. Consider the case of the 500 officers strong Indian Economic Service (IES), a specialised Union government cadre since 1967. But the top-most position of the chief economic adviser has never been occupied by anyone from it. Instead, it is always filled laterally. It helped that the credentials of those selected were impeccable. Dr Manmohan Singh being one such, who went on to become Prime Minister of India -- a feat no other civil servant has ever equalled. This mechanism was also used to induct technocrats, like R.V. Sahi, ex-CEO of BSES, as secretary, power, in 2002, during the Atal Behari Vajpayee government. His private sector expertise was expected to be the key to unlocking power sector reforms. Also Read - Kamal Davar | After Bangladesh's eruption, stabilising of neighbourhood has become crucial Till now, administrative smarts dictated limiting "lateral entry" to a few unique positions filled one at a time. This lulled the ire of pro-reservation activists at undermining of the constitutional provisions (Article 16) for equal opportunity in employment (job reservations for SC/ST/OBC). The main difference between previous successful lateral appointments and the recent aborted attempt is in using it for bulk lateral hiring. This exposed the Narendra Modi administration to the potential threat of a snowballing, pro- and anti-job reservation agitation, on the scale unleashed by Prime Minister V.P. Singh's June 1990 decision to extend reservations to Other Backward Castes. Also Read - Shikha Mukerjee | R.G. Kar: Docs' distrust sign of a wider malaise? Bulk lateral entry is

an efficient way to quickly replace burgeoning, expensive, short-term, private consultants with in-house expertise. Not applying the reservation principle to such appointments does more harm than good, because it vilifies what could in fact be the way government appointments are done in future. The existing cadre system of human resources management is rife with non-meritocratic elitism. Most junior cadres (Group C and B services) have limited opportunities for career progress. Conversely, in the Group A cadres, "zombie" positions (not justified by workload) exist, created to safeguard "time-bound" promotions for entire batches. Also consider that for the all-India services and the Central services, job reservations end at induction, even though Article 16 (14A) of the Constitution does not bar reservations in promotions. One of the consequences of social and economic backwardness is that candidates join the government at a higher age after repeated attempts at cracking the UPSC exam. Such officers also retire earlier, potentially thinning diversity (SC, ST, OBC representation) at the top. It is clear that the need for specialised lateral entry arises primarily from the inadequacies of a generalized cadre like the IAS and the Provincial Civil Services which respectively dominate the Union and state civil services. Radical and direct HR reform would modify the existing cradle to grave employment policy. Instead, continuous, open market competition with reservation quotas for all eligible positions could be the norm. Upward career progression would be by competing for higher level positions rather than today's non-transparent, administered promotion policies. A root and branch overhaul could redefine staff functions and allocation in line with future skills requirements and the opportunities for digitisation of government procedures. The opportunities for working in the government would transform from being a "make or break" beginning

of career choice to a lifelong opportunity depending on meeting the skill requirements for each position. This would also end the pervasive tuition services industry built around the UPSC examination, trapping many youngsters into desperately trying for a government job before they hit the age limit. The "Agniveer" scheme has started mass contractualisation of government employment at the jawan level in the armed forces. The target is 0.15 million appointments of jawans by 2026. About 43,000 candidates are selected annually (mostly in the Army) for four years of service. One-fourth will be permanently absorbed into the defence forces. The rest will exit with a package of Rs 1.2 million each, skill development diplomas and re-employment in the Central paramilitary forces or in the private sector. For the government, this mechanism keeps the field forces young whilst remaining asset light. The political objections to changes in the appointments policy arise from the apprehension that the ruling party is building a cadre of government servants personally loyal to it. To the extent that discretion prevails in recruitment, this is an ever-present risk, not restricted only to the present government. The answer is deep institutionalisation of the recruitment process to end discretionary appointments. Close oversight by Parliament over appointments, relying on the performance audits reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (India's supreme audit body) is one safeguard. Elevating the UPSC from being just an advisory body to assuming direct responsibility for government appointments could be another. The top civil service (IAS) is only harming itself by resisting new practices for efficient human resources management, marrying competitiveness with social justice. It can either lead the change, end elitism and enhance efficiency, or decline into obscurity.

## Intra District Indoor Sports Tourney held at SPPND GDC Samba

### Top News Report

SAMBA, Aug 30: Expanding their horizon into the sports arena, Department of Physical Education SPPND GDC Samba organized Intra-District Indoor Sports Tourney featuring games like chess and carrom.

The event held under the able guidance of the Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Twinkle Suri, aimed to foster a spirit of healthy competition and sportsmanship among the students. The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of GDC Ghagwal, GDC Ramgarh, and GDC Samba. The day's events were set to motion with zealous students applauding the agili-



ty and quick reflexes of young sports stars. Sporting events are not merely contests but a powerful medium to instill values of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork in our students. Beyond promoting phys-

ical well-being, they play a pivotal role in character development. HOD Physics, Dr. Narayan Dutt, in his motivational speech, on this occasion underscored the significance of sports in our lives. In Women's Category

(Chess), Taniya Devi from GDC Ghagwal and Komal Devi from GDC Ramgarh won Gold and Silver respectively. Priya Devi and Sneha Sambyal from GDC Samba got Gold and Silver in Carrom whereas Pallavi

Devi from GDC Ghagwal got bronze.

In Men's Category Sumit Verma of GDC Samba bagged Gold in Chess, Keshav Rana from GDC Ramgarh got Silver and Sushant Raina from GDC Ghagwal clinched Bronze. In Carrom, Vansh Kumar from GDC Samba won Gold, Balwinder Kumar from GDC Ghagwal Silver and Kavi Choudhary from GDC Ramgarh Bronze.

The proceedings of the tournament were adjudged by PTI Sanjeev Jamwal and PTI Ashok Kumar. The event was organized under the supervision of Convener Sports Committee Dr. Pankaj Bandhoria and PTI Pardeep.

## Samsung TV Plus expands its channel offerings; debuts Aaj Tak HD & The Lallantop for consumers

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Samsung TV Plus, the brand's free ad-supported streaming TV (FAST) service in India, has announced the launch of Aaj Tak HD and The Lallantop on its portfolio. The partnership between Samsung TV Plus and TV Today Network underscores Samsung's commitment to deliver top-quality programming and meet the evolving needs of viewers in an increasingly connected world.

TV Today Network's FAST channel offering from The Lallantop and Aaj Tak HD, will meet audiences' need for compelling and premium free

content on the biggest screen in the house. The connected TV base in India continues to grow as more households opt for internet-enabled smart TV options.

"Our endeavour is to bring unparalleled access and exceptional value to our audiences and advertisers on the Samsung TV plus platform. The addition of Aaj Tak HD and The Lallantop channels will provide increased access to the latest news from the world of business, politics, entertainment and more. This partnership with TV Today Network is a testament to that commitment," said Kunal Mehta, Head of Partnerships, Samsung TV Plus India.

"We are thrilled to announce the launch of our two new FAST channels on Samsung TV Plus India. This partnership represents a significant milestone for us, as it allows us to bring our diverse and engaging content to a broader audience through one of the most popular and innovative smart TV platforms. With numerous options available for connected TV viewers, this collaboration enables us to broaden our audience and engage with those embracing new technologies, ensuring our content remains accessible across diverse viewing ecosystems," said Salil Kumar, CEO - Digital Business, TVTN.

## Hashmi expresses condolences on tragic loss of Syed Nahid Madni

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: In a heartfelt expression of grief, prominent sociopolitical activist Agha Syed Karar Hashmi, who is currently pursuing studies at the Islamic Seminary in Qom, I.R., has conveyed his deepest condolences to his esteemed teacher, Dr. Syed Awsaf Madni, on the sudden and tragic death of his young son, Syed Nahid Hussain. The family, originally from Dab Ganderbal, now resides in Lalbazar, Srinagar. Agha Karar Hashmi, deeply moved by the untimely loss, remarked on the profound impact of Syed Nahid's passing, describing him as a "young budding flower" whose death has shat-

tered the dreams and aspirations of the Madni family. "The untimely departure of this pious young soul has broken the hearts and dreams of the Madni dynasty, from Dab Ganderbal to Lalbazar Srinagar," Hashmi observed. He further emphasized that the entire community of Dab stands in solidarity with the grieving family during this critical time.

Syed Nahid Hussain, only 19 years old, was widely recognized as a devout, intelligent, and deeply religious individual. His sudden passing has sent shockwaves through the community, leaving a void that is felt by all who knew him. Hashmi acknowledged the profound sorrow that has enveloped the com-

munity, noting that Syed Nahid's death is an irreparable loss not just for his family but for everyone who was touched by his piety and character.

In this moment of profound grief, Agha Karar Hashmi offered prayers to Almighty Allah, beseeching Him to grant Syed Nahid the highest place in Jannatul-Firdous. He also prayed for strength and patience for the bereaved family, so they may endure this immense and irreparable loss. "At such a tragic moment, we stand united in our prayers for the departed soul and in our support for the family," Hashmi concluded, extending his unwavering support to the Madni family during this heart-breaking time.

## Plantation Drive held at Rich Harvest

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: To give impetus to the campaign Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam Rich Harvest School in collaboration with the Rotary Club conducted an impressive Plantation Drive to combat Climate change. The Head of Institute



Anita Bhatia accorded a warm welcome to distinguished guests from the Rotary Club--District Governor P S Grover, past District Governor Dr Dushyant, President Balvinder Singh, Secretary Dr Anamika, Joint Secretary Prof. Ranjit Singh Jamwal and Vocational Director Dr Sandhya Bhardwaj in the pres-

ence of the School Management Gambhir Dev Singh Charak--Managing Director and Ruchi Charak-- Director.

Dr Sandhya in her address encouraged children to plant and safeguard trees for the preservation of our precious ecosystem.

The Managing Direc-

## Congress holds workers' meeting at Kund, several NC, BJP, PDP workers join party

### Top News Report

KULGAM, Aug 30: Congress Party held workers meeting, at different areas of Kund in Devser Constituency in south Kashmir's kulgam district which was presided over by the Congress senior leader and Contesting Candidate from Devser Constituency Amanullah Mantoo.

The prominent leaders and the senior workers were present at the meeting.

On this occasion, a large number of political activists and workers from the area joined the Congress Party.

Amanullah Mantoo greeted the new entrants



into the party fold. Prominent among the jonees were NC, BJP and PDP workers.

While addressing the workers, the speakers, mostly the party leaders from the Devser constituency expressed their hope that the Congress Party would win the Assembly election in Devser constituency.

The party senior leader Amanullah Mantoo in his speech, appreciated the party workers for their enthusiasm and vibrant political activities in the district. He said, "I feel delighted to see you working day and night to strengthen the party. On this occasion, I must tell

you that the Congress Party is entirely different from the BJP, apni party, PDP and other parties because we believe that this party is the party of the masses. People have faith in us. They trust our policies and ideology. Therefore, we ought to work hard to fulfill the expectations of the masses."

He added, "I am sure the Congress Party would rise as a winner in the Assembly elections. The moment people elect us to serve them in the government; our every move would be for the peace, prosperity, and the development of Jammu and Kashmir."

## Seminar on "Entrepreneurial Initiatives in the Start-up Ecosystem" held at SPPND GDC, Samba

### Top News Report

SAMBA, Aug 30: To celebrate World Entrepreneurship Day, the Institution Innovation Council (IIC) in collaboration with the Department of Commerce of SPPND GDC, Samba organised one day seminar on "Entrepreneurial Initiatives in the Start-up Ecosystem under the leadership of the Principal of the college Prof. (Dr.) Twinkle Suri.

Prof. Ranjodh Singh Jamwal, President IIC formally welcomed the resource persons, Sahil Anand, Managing Director, M/s Anand Coir Foam of Jammu Pvt. Ltd., Brand-Nidra and Puja Sharma, Founder/CEO, PUVINA Food and Spices (OPC) Pvt. Ltd., Brand-Harvest Stories.

The first resource person of the session,



Sahil Anand highlighted the importance of developing an ecosystem among youth wherein innovation and entrepreneurial skills thrive.

He motivated students to work for their own idea underscoring the importance of failure as it is often a necessary precursor to the very things we view as successes. The second resource person, Puja Sharma explained the concept of start-ups, an important engine of economic growth.

She said Start-ups are

beyond innovations and play crucial role in job creation and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship. Both the sessions were highly interactive with participants engaging in lively discussions and question answer session.

Assistant prof. Ritika compered the proceedings of the seminar. The seminar was attended by about 60 students. The event concluded with the formal vote of thanks by Dr. Narinder Sharma, Convener, Institution Innovation Council (IIC).

## GDC Thannamandi hosts online quiz competition on Voter Awareness

### Top News Report

THANNAMANDI, Aug 30: The Electoral Literacy Club at Govt. Degree College Thannamandi organized an online quiz competition on voter awareness under the proficient guidance of Principal Prof. Dr. Farooq Ahmed.

The event aimed to educate citizens about the electoral process and encourage young voters to participate in the democratic process. The competition saw a number of participants showcasing their knowledge on voter rights, responsibilities, and the electoral process. The quiz consisted of multiple-choice questions and was held on Online Platform. The Electoral Literacy Club, comprising of faculty members: Prof. Supriya Gupta, Dr. Junaid Ahmed, Dr. Ather Raina, Prof. Rumi Dar, Prof. Nagina Kouser organized the event.

Principal Dr. Farooq Ahmed congratulated the Electoral Literacy Club on this initiative, saying, "Empowering young minds with knowledge and encouraging them to participate in the democratic process is crucial for our nation's future.

Those who qualified the quiz were awarded with certificates of appreciation. The Electoral Literacy Club plans to organize more events and activities to promote electoral literacy and citizen engagement in the democratic process.

## SPPND GDC Samba promotes voter engagement with voter's pledge

### Top News Report



SAMBA, Aug 30: PRAVAAD Electoral Literacy Club, SPPND Government Degree College Samba launched new voter engagement initiatives by taking a formal Voter's Pledge, aimed at fostering greater electoral participation among students.

The Voter's Pledge event marks a pivotal moment in the club's ongoing efforts to enhance electoral literacy and encourage active civic involvement.

The pledge, which was taken by students and faculty alike is designed to reinforce the importance of voting, educate the electorate about their rights and responsibilities and inspire a sense of commitment towards the democratic process.

Prof. Narayan Dutt, HoD Physics emphasized the importance of such initiatives: "Our institution is deeply committed to cultivating informed and

responsible citizens. The Voter's Pledge not only underscores our dedication to democracy but also empowers our students to play an active role in shaping their future through the electoral process."

The PRAVAAD Electoral Literacy Club's initiative comes at a crucial time, as Assembly Elections approach, making it an essential component of the broader efforts to increase voter turnout and engagement.

On this occasion,

## Batwal community holds its meet in Gurdaspur



### Top News Report

GURDASPUR/JAMMU, Aug 30: The Batwal Samaj Ekta Manch Punjab organised a meeting at Rajpura in Gurdaspur in which a large number of Batwal community members hailing from different corners participated.

The Manch's President Surinder Pal Kaith distributed Guru Gyagi's calendars among the community members and preached Guru's univer-

sal message of religious tolerance, universal brotherhood and gender equality.

While Manch's General Secretary Ashwani Chanjotra acquainted the community members with the harmful effects of drugs and urged them to keep their children away from drugs and focus on their education saying it is a powerful weapon through which a citizen becomes more critical, has more job opportunities, and

improves his quality of life.

On the occasion, a village's welfare committee was constituted with Sewa Singh as President and Balwinder Targotra as Vice President.

Prominent among those who attended the meeting included Pradhan Surinder Pal Kaith, Rajinder Lakhotra from Ropar, Sardar Bhupinder Singh Khalsa, Ravi Kumar, Dr. Harjeet Singh, Sat Paul, Ladi and Lovely Kumar.

## Students takes pledge to plant saplings in Central Sanskrit University

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: A plantation program was organized on Friday under the joint aegis of NSS Unit of Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus, Kot-Bhalwal, Jammu and CRPF, Group Centre, Bantala, Jammu.

On the occasion, CRPF Group Center Bantala Deputy Commandant Joginder Singh and Assistant Commandant, Arun Uniyal along with other officers was present.

On this occasion, Campus Director Prof. Shreedhar Mishra said



that plantation is essential for the environment and human life. He added that plantation is the social and moral responsibility of all of us. Therefore, all of you should plant as many trees as possible and inspire your family and friends for this. Planting trees is very

important for environmental balance. We hope for a good environment, but do not understand our responsibility.

CRPF Deputy Commandant, Joginder Singh said that the population is continuously increasing, but the number of trees and plants is continuously

decreasing. It is saddening. This is a matter of concern for human life as well as animals and birds. People are cutting trees for their own benefit, but are rarely planting new trees.

Every person must plant at least one tree.

On this occasion,

campus teachers, CRPF employees and NSS volunteers planted saplings and also took a pledge to take care of the plants. Dr. Madan Kumar Jha, Dr. Madan Singh, NSS Program Officer Maninder Singh, Romik Pajotra were present during plantation program.

## Peep into the times

A wide spectrum of topics, notable performances and thought-provoking themes — the five-day theatre festival organised by the Chandigarh Sangeet Natak Akademi offers a deep insight into life

Loneliness, caste and class divide, discrimination against women to bridging the gap between our roots and modern sensibilities — Chandigarh Sangeet Natak Akademi's five-day National Theatre Festival in the tricity covers varied subjects. Theatre groups from Bhopal, New Delhi, Lucknow and Chandigarh bring many themes, and showcases their relevance in contemporary times through their productions..

Now is the time to be one

Sanjay Mehta's play Shivoaham opened on Tuesday. It offered a peep into the life and work of Adi Shankaracharya. "Now, more than ever before, we need to be one and Adi Shankaracharya's life and teachings implore us to do that," said Mehta, who runs Rangshirsh Sanstha in Bhopal. That he has Muhammad Faizan play Shankaracharya says a lot about him practicing what he preaches. "We have long been divided into religions, communities and castes, while Adi Shankaracharya talked of all living beings as one brahman. To see and acknowledge all of us as one is a message that must be conveyed."

Faizan feels fortunate to have landed the lead role. "To rise to the challenge, and the faith reposed in me by my guru has been one sig-



nificant journey," shared Faizan, who extensively studied scriptures and memorised shlokas to play the saint. "I am from Muslim faith. While my mother was all supportive, not the others. It was as if I was living Shankaracharya's life all over again, where people were not receptive to his ideas of Advaita Vedanta," said the actor, who called theatre his only karma and dharma!

Getting real with life Theatre director Priyanka Sharma adapted Neil Simon's The Star-spangled Girl into Haya Padosan. "We have done lots of intense productions. We wanted to make something fun this time around," said the founder of Silly Soul Foundation, New Delhi.

She began the play before Covid, and later made some change to add mirthwhile also amplifying the message. "It's the story of a man who woos his padosan. I cross-dress as a man to ensure it tickles while

also pointing out that it isn't so funny when a man does it."

She raises a valid point about cinema blurring reality with increased use of screens through her play. "You say a situation and there is a set dialogue or song for it. But is life so filmy?" she questioned. On how safe she feels living in Delhi, she said, "As I have grown older and confident, I do feel safe."

She recalled how back in college days her intimate was five in the evening, "I studied at Miranda House, Delhi University. I remember the dread as evening approached. We trembled with fear and would implore the seniors to let us leave to make it back at home in time."

She remembered how cycle-rickshaws were the only option, as auto-rickshaws were considered unsafe. Today with phones and cabs, things have become easier. "Now, women have become stronger, more confident and don't mind

saying their mind, something which probably isn't going down well with men and leading to crime. While women can finally report it, earlier it went unaddressed," she said.

She also pointed out how social media had made news more accessible. "Now we have minute-to-minute reporting of what happened in Kolkata, social media sure has kept youngsters up to date."

Loneliness amongst elders

Surya Mohan Kulshreshtha brought his play Shikashta. A new production, the Chandigarh audience caught its second show. Written and directed by Kulshreshtha and Bhartendu Kashyap from Nipa Rangmandali, Lucknow, this one talks of growing loneliness amongst the elders. "In two to three decades time, India would have the largest population of senior citizens in the world. How they adjust to changing

dynamics is what the play is all about," said Kulshreshtha.

A two-character play, it talks of how a man and a woman come together in an old-age home but how their respective egos make them clash. "Now is the time how our country is going to deal with senior citizens — would the retirement age still be 60, with many going nuclear family way would we need old-age homes... if we don't start now, it would be rather late," he emphasised.

For the remaining two days of the festival, August 30, will witness a lecture-cum-demonstration by eminent theatreperson Mohan Agashe and Dhruvad exponent Pt Umakant Gundecha.

On the concluding day, August 31, Sohni Mahiwal will be staged. The play is written by Ekam Maanuke, designed and directed by Navdeep Kaur, Chairperson, Department of Indian Theatre. It gives a new lease of life to this folk tale of Punjab. "The live folk music of Punjab gives it a complete regional flavour. It's our attempt to bridge the gap between our roots and modern sensibilities through theatre. To explore the cultural heritage of our region and our traditions with the young generation is a beautiful experience," shared Navdeep.

## Angelina Jolie gets emotional as her film 'Maria' draws 8 minutes standing ovation at Venice Film



Pablo Larrain's biographical drama 'Maria' starring Angelina Jolie took the Venice Film Festival by storm with its world premiere, garnering a remarkable 8-minute standing ovation.

Several videos from the event went viral on social media.

Angelina turned heads with her appearance at the event on Thursday night.

She wore a custom-made beige gown with a fur stole wrapped

around.

At the event, Larrain and Jolie were in attendance alongside cast members Pierfrancesco Favino and Alba Rohrwacher.

After the screening, the crowd inside the Sala Grande was emotional and was even chanting Jolie's name.

Jolie was taken by the response of the crowd and was seen wiping away tears and at times turning her face away from the cheering as she was overcome by

emotion.

After Angelina got emotional, she was comforted by her Maria co-star Pierfrancesco Favino. Film's director Pablo Larrain walked down from the gallery to wave at the audience.

The film is based on true events and tells the story of Maria Callas, one of the world's greatest opera singers.

The film explores her tumultuous and tragic life, reimagined during her final days in Paris in the 1970s.

This is the third portrait of a famous woman as seen through Larrain's lens, following 2016's Jackie and 2021's Spencer, both of which also premiered in Venice.

At a press conference earlier in the day on Thursday, Jolie spoke about preparing to play the famous soprano Callas, which marked her first time singing in a role, as reported by Variety.

On learning to sing opera, she said, "Everybody here knows, I was terribly nervous. I spent almost seven months training because when you work with Pablo you can't do anything by half."

He demands, in the most wonderful way, that you really do the work and you really learn and train."

## Indian filmmaking close to superseding Hollywood: 'Thangalaan' actor Daniel Caltagirone

Western cinema, as British actor Daniel Caltagirone sees it, is "dying", and Indians films are on the verge of supplanting Hollywood, which seems to have lost its way in the surge of streamers.

The actor plays the antagonist Lord Clement in Pa Ranjith's Tamil period drama 'Thangalaan', fronted by Vikram in the title role.

Caltagirone, whose Hollywood film credits include the Oscar winning title 'The Pianist', 'Legionnaire', 'Lara Croft: Tomb Raider — The Cradle of Life' and 'The Fall', said he feels "privileged" to make his Indian cinema debut at a time when stars like Deepika Padukone are presenting at the Academy Awards.

"There is a shift. Western cinema is dying... Something is happening, I don't know what



it is. I don't know if it is because of streaming, but I urge people to not abandon cinema... Indian cinema is having an effect globally..

"Indian cinema is exciting, colourful, fun, and passionate. There is amazing old-school storytelling. It just throws you in whereas we have lost something in the West. It's become

dull and sort of too self-reflective. Indian filmmaking... you are one step away; you are so close to superseding Hollywood. Big Indian stars like Deepika... They are now presenting at the Oscars... This is unreal," he said in an interview.

This is not his first time working with an Indian filmmaker.

From bonding with Vicky Kaushal over their Punjabi roots to jamming to Ammy's unreleased songs, Ludhiana lad Guneet Singh Sodhi cherishes the time he had on the sets of Bad Newz

With Shah Rukh Khan as his idol, and having sat outside his house, Mannat, in Mumbai, to seek inspiration often, it was a reward worth its weight in gold when Guneet Singh Sodhi's performance in the recent movie Bad Newz was appreciated by King Khan's son, Aryan Khan, at the premiere.

This lad from Ludhiana, who was earlier seen in the film Laal Singh Chaddha, brings a freshness to the screen with his portrayal of Harman Satija in the Vicky Kaushal, Ammy Virk and Tripti Dimri-starrer Bad Newz.

About the journey of securing the role, Guneet says, "I auditioned for this role, but waited a long time to get any news. I happened to be at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah with my family during that time and



prayed for this role, as my audition had gone really well. A few days later, I received a call from the makers of Bad Newz that I had been selected. My prayers were sure answered."

Guneet plays the character of a lover boy in the film, who, "is the perfect fusion of Amol Palekar and Hrithik Roshan — good-looking and sharif ladka. His

any starry tantrums on the sets? "Not at all. In fact, they are both really simple and down-to-earth. They were perfect team players and as I was the youngest on the sets, they encouraged as well as pampered me. We often shared our meals. Vicky and I had many shoot days together and bonded over our roots in Punjab. We also enjoyed jamming to Ammy's unreleased songs," he informs.

Growing up in Ludhiana, Guneet moved to Chandigarh for higher education, "I studied at the DAV College and was part of the Aaghaaz Theatre Group. Acting became a real interest there and I represented the institution in many national competitions. Chandigarh is one place I will forever remember."

Guneet, who was a part of Love Aaj Kal 2

alongside Sara Ali Khan, was also seen in Rakshak on Amazon Mini TV. "I am waiting for an offer to act in a Punjabi film, as it's my home turf." Is anyone in the Punjabi industry listening?

Preferring the bada purdah, Guneet is not too keen on television. But he is eyeing the OTT space. "I certainly want to foray into OTT, as the scope there is immense. I want to diversify and explore various genres. Meri shakal cute si hai so sab lover boy hi banate hain, but I want to essay some negative roles too," he quips.

For the youngsters trying their luck in tinsel town, Guneet's advice is clear, "Don't focus on struggles. Just come and test the waters. Keep working hard." That's the way to go!

## Saripodhaa Sanivaaram box office collection day 1: Nani's film performs well, opens at 9 crore in India

Saripodhaa Sanivaaram box office collection day 1: The action drama, which released in theatres on Friday, has been directed by Vivek Athreya. As per Sacnilk.com, Saripodhaa Sanivaaram had a good opening in India. The film is available in five languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi.

Saripodhaa Sanivaaram India box office collection

According to the report, the film opened at 9 crore [Telugu: 8.75 crore; Tamil: 24 lakh; Malayalam: 1 lakh; Hindi: 0]. The film earned 1.1 crore gross in Karnataka, 8.5 crore in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana,

55 lakh in Tamil Nadu, 5 lakh in Kerala, 20 lakh in other states in India.

The gross amount it earned in India is 10.4 crore. Globally it has collected 19.40 crore gross. Saripodhaa Sanivaaram had an overall 53.54% Telugu occupancy on Thursday.

Saripodhaa Sanivaaram review Agency review of the film read, "On paper, Saripodhaa Sanivaaram reads like your cookie-cutter commercial cinema, in which the emotional portions rely on the amma (mother) and akka (elder sister) sentiment, or the hero becomes the saviour of the masses. But Vivek smartly depends not



just on his cast's performances, but also on his strong technical team and mostly good writing to set his film apart. He also turns the vigilante trope on its head. Much like Surya, the film struggles to find its purpose for a while. But eventually, it does."

About Saripodhaa Sanivaaram

The film stars Nani and Priyanka Mohan in lead roles. It has been produced by DVV Entertainment, renowned for producing the global blockbuster RRR. The movie also features SJ Suryah, Abhirami, Aditi Balan, P Sai Kumar, Subhalekha Sudhakar, Murali Sharma, and Ajay Ghosh.

Nani recently spoke about his role in film

Recently, Nani shared that playing the role of Surya in the film wasn't as challenging as one might expect, despite the complex storyline. Speaking with news agency, he had said, "It was actually not very challenging because I feel the challenging roles for me are the ones which I on a personal level can't relate to, and I need to work on every small detail of it."

"Somehow Surya felt like me, so it was actually a lot more easy to pull it off. It was challenging for director Vivek to build a story like this and execute it with that kind of ethernet height. But I think I had fun working for it," he had added.

## PM Modi's apology after collapse of Shivaji statue: 'He is our deity'

**PM Modi said that he knew that those who consider Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj their deity are deeply hurt and apologised to them.**

PALGHAR, Aug 30 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday apologised for the collapse of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg on August 26.

Speaking at an event in Maharashtra's Palghar on Friday, PM Modi said "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is not just a name for us. Today I bow my head and apologise to my god Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj".

"Those who consider Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as their deity and have been deeply hurt, I bow my head and apologise to them. Our



values are different. For us, nothing is bigger than our deity", he added.

The Prime Minister also slammed the Congress and other Opposition parties for

often attacking freedom fighter Veer Savarkar and his ideology.

"We are not those people who keep abusing and insulting the great son of Mother India, the son of this land, Veer Savarkar. They (Opposition) are not ready to apologise, they are ready to go to the courts and fight".

Earlier at the event in Palghar, PM Modi laid the foundation stone of the Vadhvan Port. The total cost of this project is around Rs 76,000 crores.

PM Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 218 fisheries projects worth around Rs 1,560 crores.

## Era of uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over, says Jaishankar



NEW DELHI, Aug 30 (Agencies): Almost a week after Ukraine questioned India's economic ties with Russia, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said there is an economic complementarity between India and Russia and "we should not be intimidated in pursuing advantages of that complementarity".

The minister was speaking at the release of a book 'Strategic conundrums: Reshaping India's foreign policy' written by Ambassador Rajiv Sikri.

On Russia, Jaishankar said trade has gone up five-fold and it's not a simple crude oil relationship. Moscow, he said, was following its own look east policy. Post 2022 – when the conflict with Ukraine began – there is a profound shift in the way Russia looks at the world. "We in India need to take advantage of it rather than

get clouded by a larger narrative, which is not our narrative", the minister said.

His remarks come just a week after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, at a media interaction at Kyiv, quipped how India was supporting the Russian economy: "It is generating billions of dollars that help fund Russia's military... officially, it's war economy".

Zelenskyy also said he wanted India to be on the Ukrainian side and not just balance ties between Kyiv and Moscow.

On the US, Jaishankar said ties were 'indispensable'. "I don't dispute history, we must see that we are talking about convergence. We have to understand, it's not alliance, it's about overlapping interests and to work together on issues which suit us", Jaishankar added.

India's understanding of the US has changed and so has the US

understanding about us, he said.

"There are issues we agree with US and on issues we don't agree. The record of the last twenty years (of Indo US relations) bears out the fact the choices we made have been the right ones," he added.

On China, he said: "In 2005, we described relations a 'strategic and cooperative partnership, it was an "astounding mistake". Development of border infrastructure on our side is key to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas."

Addressing relations with Pakistan, Jaishankar said: "The era of having an uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over". Actions have consequences, he said, with referring to the actions, but possibility the indication as to continued support to cross-border terrorism.

The Article 370 applicable to J&K has been abrogated. "The issue is what kind of relations we can contemplate with Pakistan".

On Bangladesh, he said "There are political changes. We have to look for mutual interest." In democracies there will change of regime. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted on August 5 after a protest.

## Sharad Pawar turns down certain measures under Z-plus security cover

NEW DELHI, Aug 30 (Agencies): Nationalist Congress Party-SP chief Sharad Pawar, accorded Z-plus protective cover recently, is learnt to have turned down certain measures suggested by security agencies.

The Centre accorded him the Z-plus cover of the Central Reserve Police Force's (CRPF) VIP security wing after a threat assessment review by central agencies. However, Pawar is learnt to have conveyed

to them that he has not been told why his security is being increased.

The 83-year-old former Maharashtra chief minister is learnt to have rejected the proposals to deploy additional security personnel inside his house in the national capital, change the vehicle he uses to travel within the city and that he be escorted by two security personnel inside his vehicle.

Pawar was also amenable to increasing the

height of the boundary walls of his house in Delhi as part of the enhanced security measures.

The former defence minister is learnt to have conveyed this to the representatives of security agencies—the CRPF and the Delhi Police—at a meeting here on Friday.

Besides them, representatives of the Delhi Fire Service, Central Public Works Department, New Delhi Municipal Council and Union



home ministry were also part of the meeting.

Sources had said that after the assessment recommended a strong security cover for Pawar,

the Union home ministry asked the CRPF to give him Z-plus protection. 55 armed CRPF personnel have been earmarked for the task.

## Assam Chief Minister scraps 2-hour namaz breaks on Friday in Assembly

GUWAHATI, Aug 30 (Agencies): Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the cancellation of the two-hour namaz break on Fridays in the Assam Legislative Assembly, citing it as a step towards enhancing productivity and shedding colonial-era practices. The decision, which was made public on Friday, eliminates a long-standing provision that allowed Muslim lawmakers and staff members to take a break for Friday prayers, or namaz.

Chief Minister Sarma expressed his gratitude to Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary and the legislators for supporting this "historic decision." He emphasised that by abolishing the Jumma break, the Assam Assembly is prioritising legislative productivity over practices that he views as outdated.



"By doing away with the 2-hour Jumma break, Assam Assembly has prioritised productivity and shed another vestige of colonial baggage," Sarma stated.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the Assembly should function without any religious considerations. The scrapping of the namaz break in the Assam Legislative Assembly was a unanimous decision made by all Assembly members, effectively ending the practice of a two-hour break from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm on Fridays.

This decision marks a significant change in the Assembly's schedule, which will now commence its proceedings at 9:30 am every day, including Fridays.

## Kolkata doctor rape-murder: Mamata again writes to PM Modi, seeks stringent central legislation

KOLKATA, Aug 30 (Agencies): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment on heinous crimes like rape and murder.

Banerjee, who wrote to Modi a few days ago on the issue following nationwide uproar over the rape and murder of a doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, sought mandatory provision for time-bound disposal of cases of rape/rape and murder.

Banerjee had on Wednesday said an amendment to existing



laws will be passed in the state Assembly next week to ensure capital punishment to convicted rapists.

Stating that she is yet to receive a reply from the PM on the issue flagged by her, Banerjee wrote that she has, however, received a communication from the

Union Women and Child Development minister.

Maintaining that the letter by the WCD minister "barely attends the gravity of the issue" raised by her, Banerjee wrote, "The seriousness of the subject and its relevance to the society have not been adequately appreciated

while sending out this generic reply."

The CM wrote that 10 exclusive POCSO (Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act) courts have been approved by the state government.

She further mentioned that 88 fast-track special courts and 62 POCSO-designated courts are already functioning in West Bengal on state funding.

Banerjee wrote that helpline numbers 112 and 1098 are functioning in the state and additionally, Dial-100 is extensively used in emergency situations.

WCD Minister Annapurna Devi had on Wednesday said the situation of women in

West Bengal has been "deteriorating" and slammed the Mamata Banerjee government for failing to implement central schemes such as fast-track courts and emergency helplines to deal with crimes against women.

Devi claimed that the fast-track special courts (FTSCs), which were allocated to West Bengal, are yet to become operational in the state.

The WCD minister also said that the state "failed" to implement key emergency helplines—the Women Helpline (WHL), Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) and Child Helpline.

## "I am inseparable from PM Modi, for as long as he is PM": Chirag Paswan

**Chirag Paswan said his love for Narendra Modi is unshakeable and he is inseparable from him, for as long as he is Prime Minister**

PATNA, Aug 30 (Agencies): Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Friday rejected rumours of a rift between his Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and the BJP, asserting that he views himself as "inseparable" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In an interview to PTI, Mr Paswan said he was willing to contest the upcoming Bihar assembly polls as an NDA partner "if the BJP so desires", and made light of estranged uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras' recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"My love for Narendra Modi is unshakeable. I am inseparable from him, for as long as he is Prime Minister", said Mr Paswan, when asked

about speculations triggered by his stance on issues like Wakf Board reforms, lateral entry into bureaucracy and creamy layer and sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes.

He pointed out "as a matter of fact, my views always reflected the government's stand. A case in point is sending the Wakf Bill to the Joint Parliamentary Committee".

Speculations have been rife that Mr Paswan, formerly a docile junior ally, had begun to flex his muscles in the backdrop of a decline in fortunes of the BJP, which is now short of majority in Lok Sabha, and depends on allies' support to stay in power.

However, the LJP (RV) chief dismissed the



speculations and made it clear that his party was not averse to contesting polls, in states like Jharkhand, as an NDA partner.

"The fact is, our party has an alliance with BJP in Bihar and at the Centre. So, we

will abide by coalition dharma at national level and in my home state. And although we have no strings attached in states like Jharkhand, it does not mean we are averse to a tie-up with BJP there. If the BJP and other NDA partners

want us on board, we are game", the Union Minister said.

He also scoffed at rumours that have followed the meeting between Mr Paras, who had in 2021 split the Lok Janshakti Party founded by his late father Ram

Vilas Paswan, and Shah earlier this week.

Some leaders in the opposition INDIA bloc have claimed that Shah was indirectly sending a message across to Mr Paswan that he could ill-afford to defy the BJP which had many aces up its sleeve.

Mr Paswan, however, maintained "He (Mr Paras) has lost all public support. He had been meeting all people ahead of Lok Sabha polls, too. That exercise proved to be of no avail".

Notably, Mr Paras, who heads Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party, had given up his Union cabinet berth in protest against his party not getting any seat to contest in the Lok Sabha polls.

Mr Paswan, who was until then the lone MP of

LJP(RV), got five seats, and the party went on to win all of these. Mr Paswan himself grabbed Hajipur, the pocket borough of his late father, leaving Mr Paras, who had won the seat in 2019, in a sulk.

The 41-year-old actor was also asked about the recent controversy around Kangana Ranaut, the BJP MP whom he calls an "old friend" and who was his co-actor in his only shot at Bollywood.

"I think the matter should have been closed once the BJP made it clear that she had expressed a personal view which the party did not agree with", said Mr Paswan, referring to an interview in which Ms Ranaut had alleged that girls were

raped at the site where farmers were carrying out their protests, which had created a situation comparable to the restive Bangladesh.

Mr Paswan, however, expressed disgust over Punjab leader Simran Singh Mann's taunt that Ms Ranaut seemed to have had an "experience of rape" herself.

"This is unacceptable", said Mr Paswan, adding "we cannot trivialise a crime that causes so much trauma to the victim. Especially at a time when the nation's conscience has been rocked by the horrific incident involving a doctor in Kolkata, which has evoked such strong remarks from the President, the highest constitutional authority".

## Israeli air strike hits West Bank on third day of raid

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the measures were "not a ceasefire" in the nearly 11-month-old war triggered by Hamas's October 7 attack.

JENIN, Aug 30 (Agencies): Israel carried out an air strike in the occupied West Bank on Friday as its large-scale military operation entered a third day, with both sides reporting at least 16 Palestinians killed.

A top UN aid official meanwhile questioned "what has become of our basic humanity", as the war raged on in Gaza and humanitarian operations struggle to respond.

The United Nations has warned the military operation which Israel launched in the West Bank early on Wednesday is "fuelling an already explosive situation" in the territory and has pressed Israel to end it.

In the United States, Vice President Kamala Harris pledged she will not change Washington's policy of supplying weapons to Israel if elected to the top job in November. But she stressed it was time to "end this war".

Israel has described its raids on towns and refugee camps across the northern West Bank as "counter-terrorism" operations.

Israeli forces have killed at least 16 Palestinians in the raids since Wednesday, a toll confirmed by the Palestinian health ministry.

The military said one of its "aircraft struck a terrorist cell" near the city of Jenin early on Friday. It did not immediately give further details.

An agency journalist reported loud explosions from the city's refugee camp and thick plumes of smoke rising from the area.

Israeli troops pulled back from other West Bank towns late Thursday but fighting raged on around Jenin, long a hub of militant activity.

Vaccination 'pauses'  
In Gaza, Israeli artillery pound-



ed western areas of Gaza City early Friday, an agency journalist said, while a medical source at the southern Nasser Hospital said an Israeli strike killed three people near the southern city of Khan Yunis.

The World Health Organization said Israel had agreed to at least three days of "humanitarian pauses" in parts of Gaza, starting Sunday, to facilitate a vaccination drive after the first case of polio in a quarter of a century was recorded in the territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the measures were "not a ceasefire" in the nearly 11-month-old war triggered by Hamas's October 7 attack.

In the West Bank, the army said it killed seven militants on Thursday, including five militants in Tulkarem refugee camp.

A military statement said one of the five was Muhammad Jaber, also known as Abu Shujaa, who Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said was its commander in the nearby Nur Shams refugee camp.

Two other militants were killed in Jenin on Thursday, the military said.

The Israeli assault has caused significant destruction, especially in Tulkarem, whose governor Mustafa Taqatqa described the

raids as "unprecedented" and a "dangerous signal".

The Palestinian Prisoners' Club advocacy group said at least 45 people had been detained in the West Bank since Wednesday. An Israeli military spokesman said "10 wanted individuals were arrested".

Violence has surged in the West Bank since Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel triggered war in Gaza.

The United Nations said on Wednesday that at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the territory by Israeli troops or settlers since the Gaza war began.

Nineteen Israelis, including soldiers, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during army operations over the same period, according to Israeli official figures.

'Basic sense of humanity'  
In Gaza, the Israeli military said Thursday it had "eliminated dozens" of militants in a day of combat and strikes.

Israeli shelling in the Jabalia refugee camp killed two people on Friday, the civil defence agency in the Hamas-ruled territory said.

The UN had to halt the movement of aid and aid workers within Gaza on Monday due to a new Israeli evacuation order for the Deir el-Balah area, which

had become a hub for its workers.

"More than 88 percent of Gaza's territory has come under an (Israeli) order to evacuate at some point," the acting head of the UN humanitarian office, Joyce Msuya.

She said civilians were being forced into just 11 percent of the Gaza Strip, already one of the most densely populated territories in the world before the war.

"What we have witnessed over the past 11 months... calls into question the world's commitment to the international legal order that was designed to prevent these tragedies," Msuya said.

"It forces us to ask: what has become of our basic sense of humanity?"

Hamas's October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,199 people, mostly civilians, according to an agency tally based on Israeli official figures.

Palestinians militants also seized 251 hostages, 103 of whom are still captive in Gaza including 33 the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 40,602 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

The war has devastated Gaza, repeatedly displaced most of its 2.4 million people and triggered a humanitarian crisis.

In central Gaza, some Palestinians returned to parts of Deir el-Balah after the military had amended a previous evacuation order.

Mohamed Abu Thuria told agency he had "found massive destruction everywhere".

Another displaced Gazans back in Deir el-Balah, Ibrahim al-Tabaan, said: "We lost everything."

## America ready to 'turn the page' on Trump: Kamala Harris



WASHINGTON, Aug 30 (Agencies): The American people are ready to "turn the page" on Donald Trump, Kamala Harris has said, asserting that her Republican challenger is pushing an agenda which "divides" the country and "diminishes the character" of its people.

In her first major television interview of her presidential campaign, the 59-year-old US Vice President, who will face Trump in the November 5 elections, said the American people are ready for a "new way forward".

"I think sadly in the last decade, we have had in the former president someone who has really been pushing an agenda and an environment that is about diminishing the character and the strength of who we are as Americans really dividing our nation," Harris, in a joint interview with her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, told agency.

"And I think people are ready to turn the page on that," Harris, the Democratic Party's candidate, said.

"The American people are ready for a new way forward. Our former president has pushed an agenda that diminishes the character and strength of who we are as Americans, and divides our nation. People are ready to turn the page," she said in a post on X, linking an interview snippet.

Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, also refused to engage in Trump's identity politics during the interview.

She eluded questions about Trump's claims over her racial identity, calling those a part of the same old tired playbook.

Last month, Trump questioned Harris' racial identity at the National

Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago, suggesting she had previously identified as South Asian but happened to turn Black for political purposes.

Her refusal to comment aligned with her campaign's strategy to avoid leaning into identity politics following Trump's remarks, agency reported.

Responding to a question about a previous debate on the decriminalisation of US borders, she said, "I believe there should be consequence. We have laws that have to be followed and enforced that address and deal with people who cross our border illegally. And there should be consequence."

Harris added that she is the "only person" in the presidential race who has "prosecuted transnational criminal organisations who traffic in guns, drugs, and human beings".

"I'm the only person in this race who actually served a border state as attorney general to enforce our laws.

And I would enforce our laws as president going forward.

I recognise the problem," she said. Calling the border issue a "very significant" immigration issue to the American people and the security of the US, she said a border security bill was crafted under the administration of her boss -- incumbent President Joe Biden.

She said that Trump killed the bill that would have put 1,500 additional agents at the border as it "would not have helped him politically".

Speaking about Biden, she said that serving with him for almost four years was "one of the greatest honours of my career".

"He has the intelligence, the commitment and the judgment disposition that I think the American people rightly deserve in their president," she said.

Last month, Biden dropped out of the presidential race, saying it was in "the best interest" of the Democratic Party and the country to withdraw from the race.

He endorsed Harris to be the nominee of the party.

Harris also said she would name a Republican to serve in her Cabinet if elected.

## New Zealand's Maori King dies after 18-year reign, World leaders mourn

NGARUAWAHIA, Aug 30 (Agencies): The king of New Zealand's Maori died on Friday after heart surgery, with aides saying the beloved 69-year-old monarch, praised as a symbol of national unity, had "passed to the great beyond".

Spokesman Rahui Papa said King Tuheitia died peacefully surrounded by family, just days after celebrating the 18th anniversary of his coronation.

A symbol of Maori identity and kinship, Tuheitia occupied a largely ceremonial role and for most of his reign only spoke publicly once a year. Nonetheless, he helped put New Zealand's rich Indigenous heritage at the centre of public life. He campaigned to reduce high rates of Indigenous incarceration and for whales to be granted legal personhood, hoping to protect them from the ravages of evermore polluted and warming seas.

"The death of Kiingi Tuheitia is a moment of great sadness," Papa said in a statement. "A chief who has passed to the great beyond. Rest in love." After a string of health problems, Tuheitia had been in hospital trying to recover from heart surgery when he died.

His body was brought on Friday afternoon to lie in state at a marae -- ceremonial grounds -- near the north island town of Ngaruawahia.

Black-clad mourners flocked to the site as news of the king's death spread.

Kawakawa leaves  
New Zealand's Maori



currently make up about 17 percent of the population, or about 900,000 people. Women carried wreaths of kawakawa leaves on their heads and were cloaked in patterned shawls. Some prayed gently as they placed bouquets of flowers. Many were marked with facial tattoos -- an indelible statement of pride in their Maori heritage. They passed under an ochre-red archway, ornately carved with beaked figures, and into the ceremonial grounds. Inside, leaders sang songs of bereavement -- the dirges and polyphonic melodies that have marked Maori funerals for generations.

A royal spokesperson told agency that Tuheitia will lie in state before being buried on Wednesday at Mount Taupiri, the sacred "embracing mountain" that is the final resting place for Maori royals.

The process of electing his successor will be guided by a privy council. During Tuheitia's past periods of ill health, his eldest son Whatumoana Te Aa Paki took over official duties. "Immense fondness"

King Charles III, New Zealand's formal head of state, led the tributes, saying he was "shocked" having recently spoken to Tuheitia by phone.

"My wife and I were profoundly saddened to learn of the death of Kiingi Tuheitia," he said in a statement.

"I had the greatest pleasure of knowing Kiingi Tuheitia for decades." The UK monarch said he remembered with "immense fondness" his meetings with Tuheitia in New Zealand in 2015 and at Buckingham Palace last year.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon praised the king's "unwavering commitment to his people" as he ordered flags on government and public buildings to be flown at half-staff. "Today, we mourn," Luxon said in a statement from Tonga, where he is attending the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Kiingitanga -- Maori King movement -- was founded in 1858 with the aim of uniting New Zealand's Indigenous Maori under a single sovereign, in the face of British colonisation. The position has significant political and symbolic weight, but carries no legal status.

Tuheitia was the seventh Kiingitanga monarch.

Whales' rights  
In 2006, Tuheitia succeeded his mother, Queen Te Arikini Dame

Te Atairangikaahu, who held the position for four decades. During his reign he held countless ceremonies, visited the United Nations, met Pope Francis at the Vatican and represented a New Zealand delegation at the Olympic games in Paris.

Tuheitia called a 'hui' (national meeting) in January, when he asked for unity among Maori in response to concerns that the policies of the coalition government are undermining Indigenous rights.

In March, Tuheitia made international headlines with an impassioned call for whales to be granted the same legal rights as people, in a bid to protect vulnerable species. He wanted the marine mammals to have inherent rights, such as having a healthy environment, to allow the restoration of their populations.

Chief of staff Ngira Simmonds told local media he would miss the king's love of music and community. "I think what he will leave behind for this nation at large was his strong belief for unity, that unity is the best way forward for us as a nation," Simmonds said.

Around half a million New Zealanders tuned in to watch the last funeral of a Maori monarch when Tuheitia's mother was buried in 2006.

Maori expert Carwyn Jones told agency, saying thousands would likely attend in person.

"Here is an opportunity to see (the Kiingitanga) operating and being a focal point for Maori."

## Taiwan detects 25 Chinese aircraft, 7 vessels around its territory

TAIPEI (TAIWAN), Aug 30 (Agencies): The Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) detected 25 Chinese PLA aircraft, seven PLAN vessels and two official ships around the country's territory from 6 am on Thursday to 6 am on Friday, Taiwan's Defence Ministry stated.

Seventeen of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southeastern and southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), Taiwan's MND said.

In a post on X, Taiwan's MND said, "25

PLA aircraft, 7 PLAN vessels and 2 official ships operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 17 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, central, southwestern, and southeastern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation."

Taiwan had detected 13 Chinese PLA aircraft, along with eight PLAN vessels and two official ships, around the country from 6 am on Tuesday to 6 am on Wednesday.

Ten of the aircraft crossed the median line

of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southeastern and southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), MND said.

This adds to a series of similar provocations by China in recent months. Reportedly, China has increased its military activities around Taiwan, including regular air and naval incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ and military exercises near the island.

Earlier on Wednesday, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) criticised China for violating other countries' sovereignty and disrupting

regional peace, Taiwan News reported.

According to the Taiwan MoFA statement, China's continued use of military aircraft and warships to intrude into Taiwan and Japan's air defence identification zones and exclusive economic zones has increased regional tensions, according to Taiwan News report.

Notably, Taiwan has been governed independently since 1949. However, China considers Taiwan part of its territory and insists on eventual reunification, by force if necessary.

## Germany deports Afghan nationals for first time since Taliban takeover in 2021

BERLIN, Aug 30 (Agencies): Germany deported Afghan nationals to their homeland on Friday for the first time since August 2021, when the Taliban returned to power.

Government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit described the 28 Afghan nationals as convicted criminals but did not immediately respond to a request for comment to clarify their offenses.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser called the move a security issue for Germany.

Germany does not have diplomatic relations with the Taliban, requiring the government to work through other channels. It's unlikely that Friday's actions will lead to a

wider thawing of relations between Germany and the Taliban, especially after last week's issuing of the first set of laws to prevent vice and promote virtue in Afghanistan. They include a requirement for a woman to conceal her face, body and voice outside the home.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has slammed the morality laws in posts on X.

While Hebestreit said the deportations have been in the works for months, they occurred a week after a deadly knife attack in the town of Solingen in which the suspect is a Syrian citizen who had applied for asylum in Germany.

The suspect was sup-

posed to be deported to Bulgaria last year but reportedly disappeared for a time and avoided deportation. He was ordered held Sunday on suspicion of murder and membership in a terrorist organization pending further investigation and a possible indictment.

The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for last Friday's attack, without providing evidence. The extremist group said on its news site that the attacker targeted Christians and that he carried out the assaults "to avenge Muslims in Palestine and everywhere." The claim couldn't be independently verified.

There has also been debate over immigration ahead of regional

elections Sunday in Germany's Saxony and Thuringia regions where anti-immigration parties such as the populist Alternative for Germany are expected to do well. In June, Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed that the country would start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant left one police officer dead and four more people injured. Faeser on Thursday announced a plan to tighten knife laws, according to German news agency dpa. Along with other officials in the governing coalition, she also pledged during a news conference to make deportations easier.



# National Sports Day observed at GDC Marh

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Department of Physical Education and Sports in collaboration with NSS unit under the patronage of Principal Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul, organized Intramural competition of three games namely Chess, Badminton and Carrom in commemoration of Major Dhyan Chand (Hockey Legend) w.e.f 28th to 29th Aug 2024. In this competition students from Sem-Vth and Sem-IIIrd participated in

Chess, Badminton and Carrom (Men & Women). The Principal Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul was the chief guest and inaugurated the event. He encouraged the students to inculcate discipline, sportsmanship to take J&K to new heights. He also played inaugural match of Badminton, Chess, and carrom with students for their encouragement. He further encouraged the students to take part in various games and sports activity. A Fit India pledge was

also taken by all participants and staff members. In Chess competition Silver medal won by Gourav Kumar (B.A Sem 3rd sem) and Gold medal clinched by Aayush Shan (5th sem). In carrom women section silver medal bagged by Reena Sharma & Simran Chover (5th sem) and Gold medal clinched by Sanjana Devi & Mishu Devi from (B.A 5th sem). In Badminton (Women Double) Silver Medal won by Riya Sharma & Sneha Bhagat (sem 3rd Sem) and Gold Medal

clinched Sanjana Devi & Mishu Devi from (5th sem). In Badminton (Men Double) Bronze Medal got by Gorav Kumar, Pranav Sharma, Ketan Kumar and Rohit Kumar from B.A 3rd Sem, Silver medal was won by Summy Kumar and Bobby Kumar Baitha Sem 5th and Gold Medal bagged by Abhishek Bhat and Ayush Shan from Sem B.Sc 5th. The event was conducted by Ravi Kumar (Physical Training Instructor), Prof. Imtiaz Shahid

(Convenor Sports), Asstt Prof. Sachin Bhagat (NSS PO), Asstt Prof. Dr. Shakun Sharma and Asstt Prof Dr. Sheetal Sharma. A match between the faculty and staff was also organized for the encouragement of students. A total of 70 students participated in the activity. Refreshment was served to the students. Certificates of merit/participation and medals certificates were also distributed among the participating students.

# Voter Awareness Programme organised under SVEEP at GHS Kotli

Top News Report

MAHORE, Aug 30: A voter awareness program was conducted at Govt High School Tuli by Prof. Ajaz Ahmad Malik, Nodal Officer SVEEP for the 56-Gulabgarh Constituency (ST). The program aimed to educate students and staff about the significance of voting in the democratic process and to encourage active participation in the upcoming Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Prof. Ajaz Ahmad Malik provided detailed information on the importance of each vote and how it plays a crucial role in shaping the future of the community and the nation. The session emphasized the responsibility of every eligible voter to participate in the electoral process and the impact that voting has on the democratic system. In addition to the general awareness about voting, the program also introduced various apps designed to facilitate and ensure transparent and smooth electoral participation. Prof. Malik explained the features and uses of apps such as the Voter Helpline, which assists voters with registration and other electoral services; cVIGIL, which allows citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct during elections; SAKSHAM, designed to assist persons with disabilities in the voting process; and KYC (Know Your Candidate), which provides information about the candidates contesting in the elections. The session also covered the assured minimum facilities that will be available at polling booths, ensuring that voters are



informed about the amenities they can expect on election day. This includes essential services like clean drinking water, ramps for the differently-abled, and adequate lighting and seating arrangements. The program concluded with an interactive session where participants discussed the significance of these initiatives and their role in promoting a fair and informed voting process. The event was a significant step towards enhancing voter awareness and ensuring a higher voter turnout in the upcoming elections.

# Shooters of GZSSRC brings laurels at 13th J&K UT Shooting Championship

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: In a remarkable event celebrating athletic excellence, Th. Gulchain Singh Charak, Former Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, President of Dogra Sadar Sabha, and Chairman of the Dogra Educational Trust, honoured and felicitated the shooters of General Zorawar Singh Rifle Club, Bari Brahmana, Samba. This prestigious event recognized the achievements of shooters who have excelled in the field of shooting sports, bolstered by the complex's state-of-the-art shooting facilities. The Dogra Educational Complex, located in the semi-urban area of Bari Brahmana, boasts an advanced 10-meter, 6-lane shooting range equipped with cutting-edge technology and international-standard amenities. This facility provides students with the perfect environment to hone their

skills under the guidance of highly qualified coach, Capt. Shamsher Singh. The infrastructure plays a crucial role in fostering talent from both rural and urban areas, positioning the Dogra Group of Institutions as a beacon for aspiring shooting stars. Th. Gulchain Singh Charak's presence at the felicitation ceremony underscored his unwavering commitment to nurturing young talent and promoting sports within the region. Under his leadership, the Dogra Educational Trust has consistently supported and advanced the cause of education and sports. The event highlighted the achievements of several students who have made significant strides in shooting sports. Notably, Ms. Pavneet Kour, Mr. Prabot Singh and Mr. Ridhvan Sharma scored first position as well as Gold Medal in J&K 13TH UT Shooting championship with highest score in 10-meter Pistol Event. Rishav Choudhary and

Aradhya Jamwal won silver medal in addition bronze medal earned by Vishav Choudhary and Mannat Choudhary. Additionally, Vishali Devi, a student of the B.A. LL.B 5-year Integrated course, qualified state score in the 10 meters rifle shooting championship (Junior Category) organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Rifle Association under the aegis of National Rifle Association of India at the Youth and the Service Office Gandhi Nagar, Jammu & Kashmir. The Dogra Group of Institutions proudly acknowledges the exceptional accomplishments of these shooters, which reflect the institution's dedication to excellence in both academics and sports. Th. Gulchain Singh Charak's support and encouragement continue to inspire the students and reinforce the commitment to developing a new generation of champions.

# PSPS GCW Gandhi Nagar celebrates National Sports Day 2024

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: The Department of Physical Education and Sports of PSPS GCW Gandhi Nagar, celebrated "National Sports Day 2024" in which a series of events were organized on August 29 and 30, 2024 which includes Intra mural Kabaddi, Volleyball, Chess carrom, T.T, and recreational activities were organized for both Staff and Students under the supervision of Kajal Premi Physical Director of the college. A large no. of Students and Staff members participated with Zeal and Enthusiasm in the Competition. In Kabaddi Team-B won the Competition by 11 points, in Volleyball

Team-A won by 2-0 and in Chess Esha Rana student in Carom Mehak won the match, Lemon Race was won by Sukriti, Three leg race was won by Meetali and Diksha, Balloon race was won by Sumiksha, Hold the cup and stood first in Head shoulder knee and Toes. The staff members also participated with full Enthusiasm. The winners were awarded with Trophies and medals. Dr. S.P. Sarawat the Principal of the College and staff members appreciated the efforts of the Department congratulated and applauded the efforts of the players and also motivated them for such participation more in the future also.

# Model Academy organises expert talk on Gut Health for Children

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Model Academy School in collaboration with Smt. Shanti Gupta Centre for Women's Studies, MIER College, organized the second phase of a one-day Adolescent Education Programme for the students of classes 11th and 12th on the theme: How to keep your GUT Healthy. The event featured Dr. Shivani Deswal, Pediatric Gastroenterologist and Transplant Hepatology, at Narayana Hospital, Gurugram, as the esteemed resource person. The primary aim of the session was to educate the students about the critical role that gut health plays in the overall well-being and development of children. Dr. Shivani Deswal discussed the importance of gut health, a cornerstone of overall well-being. The gut, often called our "second brain," influences everything from digestion to mental health. She emphasized the

need for a balanced diet, proper hydration, and regular physical activity to maintain a healthy digestive system. She also discussed common digestive issues in children, their symptoms, and preventive measures. Dr. Deswal said that to improve gut health, excessive use of antibiotics and intake of processed foods must be avoided, as these can harm the gut microbiome. By prioritizing a balanced diet and mindful practices, we can nurture our gut health and, in turn, our overall well-being. Dr. Deswal engaged the audience in a lively Q&A session, where she addressed various concerns raised by students and teachers. Topics ranged from dietary recommendations to managing specific gastrointestinal conditions. Following the talk, Rupa Gupta, Joint Director MIER, and Pramod Srivastava, the Principal presented a memento to Dr. Shivani Deswal as a token of appreciation.

# International Youth Day 2024; Red Ribbon Club of GDC Marheen organizes Nukad Natak

Top News Report

MARHEEN, Aug 30: In continuation with the activities conducted to celebrate International Youth Day, 2024, Red Ribbon Club of GDC Marheen organized Nukad Natak on the theme "Impact of Social Media on Young Generation". The programme was organized under the patronage of Principal of the college Prof. (Dr.) Anupama Gupta. In her address, she highlighted the different burning issues of the social media, and motivated the students to make best use of it for educational purpose. Eight students actively participated in the said events. The occasion was organized under the supervision of Dr. Balbinder Singh, Nodal Officer, Red Ribbon Club. Prof. Sandeep Chaudhary, Dr. Arun Dev Singh, Dr. Munisha Devi, Dr. Shalun Rani and Prof. Manu Saini joined the programme. Dr. Meeru Abrol, recently hosted a comprehensive interactive session aimed at evaluating and reflecting on the summer internships undertaken by Semester 5 students. This session was not only a review but also an insightful exchange that underscored the importance of practical experi-

ence in shaping students' professional capabilities. The session, skillfully coordinated by Dr. Mosmi Raina, Convenor of the Summer Internship Program, brought together students, faculty, and the principal for an enriching dialogue. The students, who had interned at a variety of prestigious institutions, had the opportunity to present their experiences in a structured and formal setting. These internships spanned across sectors, offering students exposure to a diverse array of professional environments. Students shared their experiences from internships at financial institutions like J&K Bank and J&K Grameen Bank, where they gained hands-on experience in banking operations, customer service, and financial management. The interns at the Drug De-addiction Centre District Police Lines, Jammu, provided critical support in social services, working closely with healthcare professionals to understand the complexities of addiction treatment and rehabilitation. In the food and dairy industries, students were involved in quality control, production processes, and supply chain management, offering

them a glimpse into the operational dynamics of these essential sectors. Meanwhile, those interning with news channels and community radio stations at the University of Jammu delved into the media landscape, gaining experience in journalism, content creation, and broadcasting. During the presentations, students detailed their roles, responsibilities, and the skills they developed during their internships. They highlighted specific projects they worked on, challenges they encountered, and how they applied theoretical knowledge to real-world problems. This not only showcased their contributions but also reflected the broad scope and diversity of the internship program at GCW Bhagwati Nagar. Principal Dr. Meeru Abrol commended the students for their commitment and the depth of their presentations. She emphasized the critical role that internships play in bridging the gap between academic learning and professional application. Dr. Abrol expressed her satisfaction with the wide-ranging experiences students gained and how these experiences enriched their overall educational journey.

# JK Election Deptt conducts awareness program under SVEEP at Govt MAM College

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: In a spirited effort to boost awareness among the electorate and the participation of youth in forthcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections 2024, the Election Department on Friday organised an awareness program at Government MAM PG College, Jammu under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP). Akther Hussain Qazi, Nodal officer of SVEEP was the Chief Guest and Sapna Kotwal, Nodal Officer for Media was the Guest of Honour at the program. Both the officers imparted awareness which aims

to strengthen the visibility, outreach, and effectiveness of SVEEP activities across the J&K Union Territory. The program also focused around the critical importance of voter participation, especially the First Time Voters among the youth. Both the officers expressed confidence that this initiative would significantly improve the voter awareness, particularly among First Time Voters, marginalized communities, and rural areas, fostering greater inclusivity and positively contributing to the democratic process. During the program, the Booth Level Officer (BLOs) shared and dis-

cussed the innovative ideas and strategic plans which will significantly increase the voter participation in the upcoming Assembly elections which are scheduled to be held across the UT in 3 phases commencing on 18 September, 2024. The BLOs also assured to take actionable steps to engage and motivate the electorate for maximum participation in the biggest democratic exercise in J&K. Among others present on the occasion were Prof. Dr. B B Anand, Principal Government MAM PG College, Jammu, Prof. Lukesha Dubgotra, Dr Jeevan Dhar, Dr Kailash Sharma, Dr Sanjay Samyal and others.

## FROM PAGE 1

### Senior J&K BJP leader resigns over ticket distribution, threatens to contest as Independent

criticised the party leadership in J&K for improperly presenting the proposal for mandates to the party high command. "We hope the party leadership accepts my resignation. However, if they reconsider their decision on the mandate change in the Jammu East assembly segment, it is okay. Otherwise, I will accept the calls from workers who want me to contest independently from the Jammu East seat," he added. "The people of the Jammu East segment fully support us, having worked closely with us during the Tawi Andolan movement," he added. "It is now time for the senior BJP leaders camping here to make a decision on this matter." Sharma, who joined the Jan Sangh decades ago and faced multiple prison terms as a BJP activist, lamented at being ignored despite his senior position in the party unit. Scores of BJP leaders from the Jammu North, Jammu East, Paddar, Reasi and Akhnoor segments have protested against

the party at its headquarters and in the respective constituencies over the ticket distribution. Senior BJP leaders, including Union ministers GK Reddy and Jitendra Singh and national general secretary Tarun Chugh, currently camping in Jammu are working to defuse the situation faced by the party in these elections. Assembly polls are being held in Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. The polls — the first in 10 years — will be held in three phases with the first phase of polling on September 18, followed by September 25 and October 1. The counting of votes will be done on October 4. **Prioritise Development and Peace over Militancy: BJP's Reddy to JK Voters** said BJP will soon dole out its manifesto that will cover all sectors. "Our manifesto will talk about peace and prosperity," he said. He said Abdullahs and Muti's were biased against the Jammu region. "Jammu was always ignored," he said. "I want to ask Rahul, Omar and Mehbooba, do you want a separate party again besides the national

flag? And do you want separate constituency in J&K again?," Reddy asked. **Vikar Rasool Wani sentenced to five months in prison** Wani, along with Bharat Bhushan Sharma, Sachin, Ikramuddin, and Nazim, will serve five months in prison and pay a fine of one thousand rupees each. This verdict comes as Wani is currently running for the Banihal Assembly seat. **Rains to lash J&K parts till Sep 3: MeT** light to moderate rains at many places of Jammu & Kashmir today," MeT said. It said that from August 31 to September 1 the weather will likely remain generally dry with brief spell of rain & thundershower at isolated areas. From September 2 to 3 the weather will likely remain cloudy with possibility of light to moderate rains & thundershowers at many places. From September 4 to 6, the weather is expected to remain generally dry, it said. Further from September 7 to 8 a spell of light to moderate rain mainly over Jammu division is expected. The department while issuing advisory amid incessant rains in J&K parts warned

of flash floods, landslides, mudslides and shooting stones over few vulnerable places. It also said that water logging in few low lying areas may take place. **The Dynasts: Kin of Top Politicians get tickets in J&K** Assembly multiple times in the past. Despite criticism from various groups, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), regarding the promotion of dynastic politics, such practices continue to benefit both the NC and PDP. All four new NC candidates come from families that have been loyal to the party and the Abdullah family, with the party leadership placing their trust in them at every level. For the PDP, the Mufti family remains a unifying factor, especially during challenging times, such as the period following the abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, when many leaders left the party. **Ladakh Admin, Hill Council to organise climate cup next month** climate change called 'Climate 11' will be held on September 6, a day before the final

of the Climate Cup. **High Court clears teacher of suicide abetment charges** suicide or creates circumstances that lead to such a decision. He clarified that teachers, parents, and others should not be at risk of being charged simply because someone in their charge becomes frustrated or distressed. The court found that Sharma had no intention to drive the student to suicide and noted that the student's family did not file a complaint against him. The court concluded that Sharma's actions, related to reporting attendance issues, did not warrant charges of suicide abetment. Sharma, an assistant professor of political science at Government Degree College, Kathua, was initially arrested and suspended following the student's death in 2022. He challenged the charges against him, arguing that he was performing his duty and that many students had similar attendance issues. The court observed that if the logic used to charge Sharma were applied more broadly, it would unjustly implicate many others in similar situations. Senior Advocate KS Johal and Advocate Supreet Singh Johal represented Sharma, while Deputy Advocate General Dewakar Sharma represented the Jammu and Kashmir government.

## Kailash Yatra-Reminiscent of Naga Dynasty in J&K begins at Bhadarwah

Top News Report

BHADARWAH, Aug 30: Bhadarwah- one of the famous tourist destinations after Kashmir Valley and known for its unparalleled mundane beauty incorporates elements of distinction in possessing the most ancient rich legacy of socio-religious importance in organizing perennial chain of festivities that commence initially from the month of May and continues up to December every year. Infact, these festivities mark the beginning of summer season which culminate in the end of every calendar year with the onset of winter season.

One of the worldly renowned regionally acclaimed celebrations is the Kailash Yatra usually conducted in the month of August or September that is at the end of the monsoon period.

The Kailash Yatra is characterized by the taking out of Chhari Mubarak to Kailash Kund situated at an altitude of 14600 feet from the average sea level to the extreme south western part of Bhadarwah Valley. The mountain Kailash (Bhadarkailash) assumes importance in the annals of history in that, it is believed to have been a seat of Lord Shiva up to the extent Lord Vasuki Naag, who was the devotee of Lord Shiva by virtue of his unimagined veneration was asked by the former to dwell and grace the Kailash Kund also referred to by the term Kaplash.

The Lord Shiva shifted out to the snowclad Mani Mahesh mountainous heights in the state of



Himachal Pradesh.

In the historical perspective of Bhadarwah, as per the legend, local deity Lord Vasuki Naag who was the disciple of Lord Shiva was chased by Lord Gurura and in order to escape from him, Vasuki Naag fled to Kailash Kund and took Shelter in the ice cold waters of Kailash Sarovar (Kailash Kund-the glacial lake) present in the midst of the mountain ridges, which lies at a distance of about 25 kms in the south western end of Bhadarwah Valley. As per historical inscriptions, the real sister of Lord Vasuki Naag namely Bhadarkali informed the Gurura about the escape of Lord Vasuki Naag and also showed his routes leading to Kailash Kund. Surprisingly, the cousin sister of Lord Vasuki Naag namely Devi Durga came to the rescue of Lord Vasuki Naag and saved him by telling Gurura that there was three times more water in the Kailash lake what he drank when the later had sucked two third waters and he was about to catch hold of Vasuki Naag.

The Gurura gave up the idea of killing Vasuki Naag and left the place, because of which Lord Vasuki Naag was saved and from that time, he

remained indebted to his cousin sister Durga. It is further derived out of the historical testimony that the Chharri which is taken out on the remembrance of what had happened with Lord Vasuki Naag and thus, is said to be following the same routes on which Vasuki Naag had traveled to escape from Gurura upto Kailash Kund.

Bhadarwah had been inhabited by the Naga Dynasty who were the progenies of Naga Cult and this part of land used to be their domain of excellence. The people belonging to Naga cult were thought to have a distinct racial hardihood as far their physical features were concerned (Some evidences scribbled in lawrance's collection of Deep Himalayan cultures). According to some historians, still few families of pure Naga Dynasty are found in the Aikhar area of Bhadarwah tehsil. However, with the passage of time, their life style too has under gone a remarkable dendrological metamorphosis and their congenial prognostication seems equally having gone through an incredible transformation viz-a-viz their cultural ethics have equally intermingled with the

modernized life sustaining features. Adding to this is the least attention paid by the successive central and state governments up till now which caused the traditional drift in the ancient dwelling styles and patterns of this race to go into the oblivion of the turns of time and consequent events led to the disappearance of the characteristic features of Naga race. The testimony of Naga Cult is adequately borne in the Vasuki Puranas.

In order to give concurrence to the age old tradition of conducting ancient Yatras, Charri Mubarak of Holy Kailash Yatra 2023 left for its destination of Kailash Kund from the ancient Vasuki Nag Temple Gatha Bhadarwah here today.

The Yatra crossed the Bhadenwah town at 9.30 am where the enthusiastic devotees raised slogans of Vasuki Nag deity.

Officers from district and additional district administration along with thousands of pilgrims both local and from outside accompanied with charri mubarak proceeded to its onward journey.

The yatra after having a night stay at Hayan (Nalthi) will reach the holy Kailash Kund tomorrow on 12th of September

2023. After performing pooja and other religious rites, the yatra will start its journey back to Bhadarwah on 13th of Sept 2023.

The administration of Bhaderwah has made elaborate arrangements of Medical teams with sufficient medicines, first aid, drinking water, electricity through generator sets, firewood and all other allied facilities including fool-proof security arrangements for smooth conduct of the yatra.

On this occasion, some charitable organisations and religious groups have made arrangements for free lingers at different spots enroute yatra.

This time, a large number of people drawn from Bhadarwah and its adjoining areas besides tourists and devotees from across the country participated in the annual Kailash Yatra.

"Yatras season in Bhadarwah especially in the summer times used to bring cheers on the faces of people whose businesses are connected and dependent on these Yatras every year. The rush of Yatries and other tourists has gone up this year which has once again boosted the livelihood of hundreds of people including Pony Walas, labourers, small vendors, businessmen etc." Said Mast Nath Yogi a veteran socio-political leader. He also added that this time like past, a number of devotees were allowed to accompany the Holy Mace upto Kailash Kund just in keeping with the age old traditional practice and for mere sentiments of the public of the area.

## Shiv Sena promises rights to people, hell to terrorists

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: All the previous and current governments are responsible for the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir, 'Chor-Chor Mausere Bhaee', they are challenging each other for a debate. Yes, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been cheated, betrayed and the rights of the local people have been violated, today Jammu division has also become a stronghold of terrorism, we give an open challenge to the BJP for a debate, stated by Manish Sahni, president, Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit.

A meeting was held here today to decide the strategy for campaigning with the candidates in the party's state central office. On this occasion, while talking to journalists, state chief Manish Sahni said that BJP is responsible for whatever happened with Jammu and Kashmir from



2014 till date.

There has been violation of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, breaking of promises and betrayal.

It is ridiculous for BJP leaders to give an open challenge for a debate on terrorism. Like "chor chor mausere bhai", they are challenging each other for debate. Sahni said that in the last few years, along with Kashmir, Jammu has also become a stronghold of terrorism. Since October 2021, 8-10 major terrorist attacks have taken place in the Jammu divi-

sion. So far 26 Indian soldiers have had to make the supreme sacrifice in this and about a dozen common people have died. Sahni said that those who challenge the debate on terrorism should take a look at the statistics of unemployment, corruption, crime, inflation, drug addiction, women trafficking in Jammu and Kashmir. Sahni said that Shiv Sena (UBT) will show the terrorists the way to hell with the promises of restoring the rights of the local people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Rally on Sports for promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies held at GCW Udhampur



Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Aug 30: To spread the awareness among the students as well as general masses about the promoting a healthy, active, positive lifestyle and encouraging sports participation at different levels to commemorate National Sports Day-2024, an awareness sports rally on the theme "Sports for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies" was organized by Department of Physical Education and Sports, Government College for Women (GCW) Udhampur with great zeal and enthusiasm at college campus yesterday.

The rally was flagged off by the Principal of the college, Prof. (Dr.) Nalini Pathania. Dr. Nalini Pathania, the patron of the programme, shared her views on the importance of sports and other physical activities and elaborated on how these activities help in maintaining a healthy balance in the otherwise hectic lifestyle. She also spoke about how different sports are being given recognition in the present era and motivated the students to actively take part and excel in various sports.

The route of the rally was premises of the college-Kallar Himmatti-Venus Chowk-Sailan Talab chowk, Battal Balian Road and culminated back at the college after covering a distance of about 2.5 kms. The message of the rally was conveyed with the help of placards, posters and through slogans by the 400 students besides urging the people to embrace an active lifestyle through sports and various other physical activities. The rally was escorted by Co-Convenor sports committee Dr. Ajay Kumar Sharma, Dr. M.K.Sharma, Prof. Simran Khajuria, Prof. Sandesh Sharma and Mohd Younus.

Head Department of Sports, Dr. M. K. Sharma was the organizing secretary of the entire programme and organised different activities and addressed the students and motivated them to participate in different sports and physical activities. He also elaborated on certain government initiatives to promote

dents to actively take part and excel in various sports.

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sports in the country. He focused on various schemes with which the government is trying to create a vibrant sports culture and prepare the next generation of athletes.

He further said that for instance the Khelo India Programme: the program helps to develop sports at the grassroots level. It grants money to build good sports infrastructure and train young athletes.

Fit India Movement, encourages people across India to stay fit. It motivates everyone to exercise regularly in order to stay healthy and active.

Later, in the college, a felicitation ceremony was also held and Dr. M.K. Sharma commenced the ceremony by welcoming the Principal, Dr. Nalini Pathania, Convenor Dr. Indu Khajuria, Co-Convenor Dr. Ajay Kumar Sharma and all the other members of the sports committee who were present: Dr. Ravinder Kumar, Prof. Manju Bala, Prof. Simran Khajuria and Prof. Sandesh Sharma. Prof. Yash Paul (HoD History) also graced the occasion with his presence.

## General Secretary constitutes Talent Search Committee for development of Kabaddi game

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: General Secretary of J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association Kuldeep Kumar Gupta constituted Search Talent Committees for Kabaddi Game under the guidance of the President of the Association Anil Gupta who is a friend Philosopher and Guide and has created new idea to search and pickup the talent of budding youth in Boys and Girls section in each District as well as UT of J&K for coaching Camp before participation in the coming Nationals but these players have to be registered with UT Association as well as Kabaddi federation of India otherwise they will not be allowed to participate in the coming trials for Nationals. The performance of the Talent Search Committee members will be reviewed by the president and after accessing the performance, the panel of selectors will be nominated for the year 2024-25. The name of the Talent Search Committee members in different sections are as under :-



NIS Coach, Manik Sharma NIS Coach and Dharamjeet Singh NIS Kabaddi Coach will search and pick up the talented probables in Inter-Battalion Kabaddi tournament organized by J&K Police Department.

Manmeet Kour Kabaddi Coach and Amir Alam Kabaddi Coach will search and pick up the talented probables under 14 under 17 and under 19 in Boys and Girls section in Inter Province competition organized by youth Service & Sports Department at Kishtwar and Rajouri within Jammu Province.

Anil Sharma NIS Chief Kabaddi Coach and Ajay Gupta NIS Senior Kabaddi Coach will search and pickup the talented probables in Inter College Kabaddi tournament in

Boys and Girls Selection organized by University of Jammu.

Deeraj Sharma NIS Kabaddi Coach will search and pick up the talented probables in Inter K.V. Kabaddi tournament organized by Kendra Vidyalaya :

Arshid Ahmad Rather, Firdous Ahmad and Mr. Shah Nawaz Sarwar from Kashmir province will search and pick up the talented probables in Boys and Girls section in Inter School, Inter District and Inter Province competition in under 14, under 17 and under 19 organized by Youth Services & Sports Department Kashmir and Inter College Kabaddi tournament in Boys and Girls Section organized by University of Kashmir.

Further all the above officials assigned the duty and will prepare the list of Kabaddi probables in all the categories wherein they have been assigned the job to search and pickup the talented Kabaddi probables list alongwith address and Mobile telephone No. to the General Secretary of the Association as early as possible.

## Five days All India Gufran Global Cricket Coaching camp concludes

Top News Report

DODA, Aug 30: All India Five days Gufran Global Cricket Coaching camp concluded on Friday with a prize distribution ceremony at Sport Stadium Doda here today.

The participants were also facilitated with certificates and the ceremony was attended by Chief Advisor YSCC Prof. Zaheer Hashmi, Patron YSCC Doda Manzoor Batt, Chairman YSCC Naseer Khora, Sr. Cricket Coach from Maharashtra Cricket Academy Mehboob Pathan, Cricket Coach Doda Warriors Sports Club Sh Pramod Thakur, Javed Ahmed Member YSCC, Naushair Batt Member YSCC and others.

The event was organized by Young Star Cricket Club Doda with a mission to provide specialized cricket coaching to the youth.

Former IPL Player, Iqbal Abdullah was the Chief Guest of the event, who imparted his insights to the young participants throughout the event. Ghulam Farooq (Former Ranji Player) from Andhra Pradesh & Sr Cricket Coach from Maharashtra

Cricket Academy Mehboob Pathan were other guests who decorated the event with their presence.

The event was sponsored by 10 Rashtriya Rifles Unit Doda and New Style Dry Fruits & Spices. Chief Guest, Iqbal Abdullah, during the concluding ceremony said that there's so much potential and talent in the young children in Doda which needs honing.

Manzoor Ahmed Butt, Patron YSCC announced that YSCC Doda shall make a team each in U-12, U-14, U-16, U-19 end U-22 category which shall be given the chance to play in tournaments in other states of the country. Further, he said that those young cricket aspirants who have been selected in the event shall be given the chance to attain further training for a period of one month in Madhan Lal Cricket Academy, Delhi.

Moreover, he said that more such events shall be organised in future where national and international cricketers shall impart their knowledge and guidance to those young cricket aspirants who have registered with YSCC Doda.

## Finance Department conducts training on upgraded Ladakh Integrated Financial Management System

Top News Report

LEH, Aug 30: In its ongoing efforts to boost the efficiency and effectiveness of financial management across various departments, the Finance Department of UT Ladakh organized a comprehensive hands-on training session on the newly upgraded Ladakh Integrated Financial Man-

agement System (LIFMS) for officials from the Election and Civil Aviation Departments.

The primary objective of the training was to familiarize participants with the latest technical modifications, updates, and challenges associated with the upgraded LIFMS. Led by Jigmet Namgyal, Nodal Officer for LIFMS, along with

other staff members, the session provided a detailed overview of the system's various modules.

This approach ensured that participants gained practical knowledge and were well-prepared to effectively utilize the upgraded LIFMS in their respective roles.

Key aspects covered during the training includ-

ed new functionalities, an improved user interface, and enhanced reporting capabilities.

The session was interactive, allowing participants to address their queries and gain hands-on experience with the system.

The Department of Finance, UT Ladakh, remains committed to continuous improvement

and capacity building, ensuring that its personnel are well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage financial operations efficiently.

The upgraded LIFMS is anticipated to significantly streamline financial processes, enhance transparency, and improve overall financial governance across the region.

## GGM Science College organizes Symposium on "Safeguarding Women"

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Organising Committee of SPARSH, GGM Science College successfully conducted a symposium titled "Safeguarding Women: Addressing the Rise in Crimes against Women and Building a Safer India" under the aegis of Principal Dr. Romesh Kumar Gupta and guidance of Dr. Vandana Khajuria, Chairperson Apex Body of SPARSH, Cluster University of Jammu.

The event aimed to spark meaningful discussions and explore solutions to create a safer environment for women. A total of 10 speakers shared their insights on this critical issue.

The competition was judged by Prof. Yasmeen Mughal and Dr. Shalini Sharma, Associate Professors from the Depart-



ment of English. Maithly of Sem V secured 1st place while 2nd position was secured by Parul Sharma of Sem V. The 3rd place was shared by Deepak Kumar and Amit Manhas also of Sem V.

Following the competition, an interactive session was held where students and teachers in the audience shared their feelings, opinions, and thoughts on the issue of rising crimes against women in the country. The discussion was particularly poignant in light of the recent Kolkata

rape and murder case, which underscored the urgent need for action and awareness.

The event was seamlessly anchored by Sumeet Kumar of Semester V and Certificates of Participation were distributed to all participants.

This symposium was a significant step towards addressing the growing concern over crimes against women in India and driving positive change and promoting a culture of safety and respect for all. The programme was coordinated by Prof Akanksha Parihar.

## Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma should've played Duleep Trophy: Suresh Raina

NEW DELHI, Aug 30 (Agencies): Former India cricketer Suresh Raina feels that the star players Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli should've played in the upcoming Duleep Trophy. Notably, there were widespread reports of both Rohit and Kohli featuring in the Duleep Trophy to prepare themselves for the packed Test calendar ahead.

However, the batting stalwarts were not named in any of the four squads for the red-ball tournament by the BCCI. Following their exclusion, former cricketers Sunil Gavaskar and Sanjay Manjrekar felt that they should've featured in the red-ball tournament which would've helped them massively in the upcoming series against Bangladesh.

Now, Raina has also echoed the same thoughts saying that the team hasn't played any red-ball cricket since the IPL ended.



"Yes, they should've played, you see we haven't played red-ball cricket ever since the IPL ended. Since, we're heading towards a crucial Test series, one must play 4 day cricket and get used to how the wicket will behave on Day 4. I think they're matured enough when they will regroup for 4-5 days and start practising. Sometimes, family-time is also important," Raina told agency.

Further speaking ahead, Raina gave details about the conditions in Kanpur where the

second Test of the series will be played. He also mentioned that Bangladesh cannot be taken lightly given their recent performance against Pakistan.

We can't take Bangladesh lightly: Raina

"But when they will play in Kanpur where the wicket will be solid in October and won't spin much as there will be dew factor. The ground is near river Ganga and hence there will be cold mornings. The weather will be gloomy hence they will need to tackle that but the Indian team

is very strong.

However, we can't take Bangladesh lightly as they've recently beaten Pakistan in the first Test in Rawalpindi. Hopefully, we will get some good cricket to watch," he added.

The India vs Bangladesh series is set to begin from 19th September 2024 with the opening game set to be played at MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai while the second Test will be played at Green Park, Kanpur from September 27.

The squad for the series is expected to be out in coming days. Meanwhile, Bangladesh beat Pakistan for the first time in their Test history winning first match by ten wickets. The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side will look to win the second Test as well and register a historic Test win against the Asian rivals and come to India riding high on confidence.

## PAK v BAN: Pressure on Pakistan as rain washes out Day 1 of 2nd Test in Rawalpindi



RAWALPINDI, Aug 30 (Agencies): The opening day of the second Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh was called off due to persistent rain in Rawalpindi on Friday, August 30. The Pakistan Cricket Board confirmed shortly after the end of the first session that no play would be possible at the Pindi Cricket Stadium due to the wet weather. Puddles had formed on the outfield due to overnight rain and the officials decided to abandon the opening day early.

The players and the support staff from the two teams reached the Pindi Cricket

Stadium early, but they were treated to visuals of rain pelting down on the field.

Pakistan will be under pressure after losing an entire day of play. The hosts need nothing less than a win in the second Test to avoid their first-ever series defeat against Bangladesh. Pakistan seemingly hit the panic button after the shock defeat in the series opener as they dropped their star pacer Shaheen Afridi from the 12-man squad announced for the second Test.

Pakistan added Abrar Ahmed, the right-arm off-spinner, to their final 12. However, with rain forecast for Day 4 and Day 5 of the Test match, captain Shan Masood and head coach Jason Gillespie need to do a lot of thinking before settling on their playing XI.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, will be hoping to ride the winning momentum after having dominated the hosts with the bat in the series opener. Bangladesh scripted their first-ever win over Pakistan in a Test match when they hammered Masood's side by 10 wickets in Rawalpindi on Sunday.

## Sophie Devine to step down as New Zealand's women's T20 captain after World Cup

CHRISTCHURCH, Aug 30 (Agencies): New Zealand's star all-rounder Sophie Devine will step down as captain of the national T20 team after the World Cup in October to focus on her playing role and nurture "future leaders" in the format.

The 34-year-old will, however, continue to lead New Zealand's ODI team.

Devine, who has been a key figure in New Zealand's cricket since her debut in 2006, has scored 3,268 runs in 135 T20Is.

She took over the T20I captaincy in 2020, succeeding Amy Satterthwaite, and led the team in 56 matches.

"I'm very proud to have had the privilege to captain the White Ferns in both formats," Devine said in a statement.

The veteran also acknowledged that captaincy comes with additional workload and can be "challenging at times".

Under Devine's leadership, New Zealand



won 25 and lost 28 games in the shortest format.

"Stepping away from the T20 captaincy will take a bit off my plate so I can focus more of my energy on my playing role and nurturing the future leaders," she said.

Currently recovering from a foot injury ahead of the T20 World Cup, Devine would continue to play for New Zealand in both the white-ball formats.

"I'm not ready to give up ODI captaincy just yet. But I won't be around forever, so I think stepping away from captaining one

format at a time gives the next leaders time to find their feet," said Devine.

While New Zealand Cricket are yet to name her successor, team head coach Ben Sawyer praised Devine, calling her "epitome of a fearless leader".

New Zealand are set to announce their 15-member squad for the women's T20 World Cup on September 10.

The squad will depart on September 16 to play three T20Is against Australia in Mackay and Brisbane as part of preparation for the World Cup.

## No. 1 seeds Jannik Sinner, Iga Swiatek move into third round at US Open; Carlos Alcaraz, Naomi Osaka eliminated

NEW YORK, Aug 30 (Agencies): Iga Swiatek and Jannik Sinner flashed their No. 1 form with powerful performances that moved them into the third round of the US Open.

Carlos Alcaraz and Naomi Osaka couldn't quite find the games that once had them on top of the rankings.

Those past US Open champions were both knocked out Thursday night, with the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam winning streak halted by a 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 loss to 74th-ranked Botic van de Zandschulp.

Swiatek raced by Japanese qualifier Ena Shibahara 6-0, 6-1, finishing off the match in 65 minutes. It took the 2022 US Open champion longer than that to play the second set of her first-round match, when she needed a tiebreaker that she eventually closed out in 72 minutes.

"I just felt the rhythm was much better," Swiatek said. "I was a bit



tense in my last match, so today I just wanted to focus on the right things."

Earlier, Sinner downed Alex Michelsen 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 in 1 hour, 39 minutes.

But on the same Arthur Ashe Stadium court at night, Osaka's forehand faltered in key moments and the two-time US Open champion was eliminated by Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Sinner dropped the first set in his opening match in New York but didn't encounter much trouble while facing his second straight American on Ashe. The Italian earned his 50th victory of the season, including

face Dan Evans. Evans' victory in a tidy 2 hours, 37 minutes was three hours quicker than it took him to beat Karen Khachanov in the first round, their match setting a US Open record by lasting 5 hours, 35 minutes.

Sinner beat Michelsen for the second time this month, having also won a second-round match in Cincinnati shortly before it was revealed that he tested positive twice for an anabolic steroid in March.

Another Italian, Jasmine Paolini, played just three points before advancing when Karolina Pliskova appeared to injure her left foot. The No. 5-seeded Paolini, who has reached the finals of the French Open and Wimbledon in her breakout season, advanced past the second round of the US Open for the first time.

"Finally, we made third round!" she said with a laugh during an interview on the court.

Paolini will next play No. 30 seed Yulia Putintseva.

Other women's winners included No. 6 Jessica Pegula, No. 15 Anna Kalinskaya, No. 16 Liudmilla Samsonova and No. 18 Diana Shnaider. Pegula took out fellow American Sofia Kenin.

But No. 4 seed Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, withdrew from the tournament before her second-round match with a lower back injury, sending French qualifier Jessika Ponchet to the weekend.

"Unfortunately, I have to withdraw from my match today due to my injuries," Rybakina said in a statement. "I did not want to finish the last Grand Slam of the year this way but I have to listen to my body, and I hope I can close out the remainder of the year strong."

No. 7 seed Hubert Hurkacz was eliminated in straight sets by Jordan Thompson, and No. 16 Sebastian Korda was knocked out by Tomas Machac.

## Stephen Curry cherishes winning Olympic gold after tough Warriors finish

STANFORD, Aug 30 (Agencies): For Stephen Curry, winning an Olympic gold medal has certainly taken some of the sting away from such a disappointing end to his season with the Golden State Warriors when they missed the playoffs.

Back from his scoring flurry in a triumphant Paris Games for the United States and back on regular family duty before the new NBA season begins, Curry can reflect on the highs and lows of his year — with one notable joy being the addition of his fourth child with wife Ayesha, baby boy Caius Chai born May 11.

He has a new contract in hand, too, after receiving a \$62.6 million, one-year extension on his current deal that now keeps him with Golden State through the 2026-27 season.

"Everything happens for a reason and the journey gives you all

type of different experiences along the way," the 36-year-old Curry said Wednesday before hosting a charity golf tournament benefiting the couple's Eat.Learn.Play. Foundation devoted to Oakland schools.

"But this summer's been amazing, just coming off a tough NBA year to experience what we did and get a win in the Olympics and some of the things I look forward to every year especially around our foundation and the work that we're doing here in Oakland. ... It puts everything into perspective of what basketball has done for me and the doors that it's opened and trying to take full advantage of it."

Now, Curry can catch his breath and clear his mind from basketball at least for a little while — before the Warriors hold training camp in Hawaii beginning in early October.

A kids' size golf club in hand, Curry lined



up to hit his shot on an upward slope toward the green while reminding elementary-school students LeAni Wade and Terrell Covington about the importance of keeping their eyes on the plastic neon yellow ball to make solid contact.

And, the superstar instructed, no reason to be concerned about taking a chunk out of the grass in the process.

Add youth golf coach to Curry's remarkable resume.

Those children from Burckhalter Elementary School in Oakland were thrilled to have such a special field trip to Stanford Golf Course. These

students have been part of a pilot tutoring program through the Currys' foundation that is again expanding its reach in Oakland Unified School District after efforts last year included the revitalization of six schoolyards.

"It's the same way I appreciate all the things I get to do on and off the court where it's all connected," Curry said. "Me having fun going and winning a gold medal raised the platform to then be able to talk about stuff that matters even more. Being able to share those experiences with my family, the (foundation) team,

they know especially while they were working tirelessly every day to make sure a day like today is executed and make sure our plan is locked in, I'm representing everybody out there on the court doing what I do."

Five years into their foundation work, the Currys announced Thursday a commitment to raise and invest \$25 million over the next five years devoted to literacy programs that will provide one-on-one tutoring for children who are at least two grade levels behind in reading.

"What's interesting is it's never been a one and done and we've always slow rolled things out because we love to build a model that kind of proves itself and can stand on its own," Ayesha Curry said, acknowledging she observes her own children's learning styles and how much she wants to support

those without the same resources.

Wade, an 8-year-old in third grade, said she would remember this day golfing with Curry "for 15 years," and that her favorite part of the visit was "everything."

This isn't Curry's only project at the moment, either.

He is in the process of trademarking the use of "nuit, nuit" for entertainment purposes — the French words for his signature "night, night" catchphrase that goes along with him putting two hands together along his cheek in an act of saying goodnight when a victory is sealed.

It took off when Curry's 3-pointers sealed the gold medal against France and the two-time MVP sported a hoodie with "Nuit, Nuit" on it shortly afterward.

"Working on it," Curry said with a smile regarding the trademark before heading off to his golf cart.

## Pooja Singh breaks U20 NR in high jump to qualify for final at World U20 C'ships



LIMA, Aug 30 (Agencies): India's Pooja Singh rewrote the national U20 women's national record in high jump to qualify for the final with a ninth-place finish in the qualification round at the ongoing World Athletics U20 Championships here.

The 17-year-old, who hails from Fatehabad district of Haryana, cleared a height of 1.83m to finish second in qualification round group B and ninth overall late Thursday night and qualify for the final to be held on August 31.

Daughter of a mason, Pooja broke her own national U20 record of 1.82m set last year in Korea while winning a silver medal at the Asian U20 Championships.

Nine athletes in group A and three in group B made the cut for the final.

Pooja, who started her journey at the Partha Sports Academy under coach Balwan Singh without proper landing mat or equipment, had won gold in the U-14 girls' category with a jump of 1.41m but picked up a quadricep injury which kept her out for 15 months.

On her return, Pooja won a gold medal in the U-16 girls' category at the 2022 junior nationals with a new national record of 1.76m before claiming another gold in U-18 category at 2022 youth national championships.

## Two days conference on high altitude related illnesses conducted at Fire and Fury Corps

Top News Report

LEH, Aug 30: Head-quarter Fire and Fury Corps conducted a Continuing Medical Education (CME) Conference on "Cardiovascular Morbidities in High Altitude Area- Current Concept" at Raina Auditorium.

The event was focused on cardiovascular morbidities in high-altitude areas. This event explored the impact of high-altitude environments on cardiovascular health especially amongst Indian Army soldiers, a critical area of study given the unique physiological challenges posed by such settings.

The event commenced with a distinguished inaugural ceremony. The event was graced by Lt Gen Hitesh Bhalla, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Fire and Fury Corps, and Maj Gen Dinesh Kumar Singh, Chief of Staff of Fire and Fury Corps.

The occasion was further honored by the presence of GOC-in-C Northern Command and Lt Gen Sadhana S Nair, VSM, Director General Medical Services (Army), who conveyed their best wishes via video conferencing.

The inaugural session began with a traditional Saraswati Vandana, paying homage to the Goddess of Knowledge, followed by a Buddhist prayer, symbolizing peace and harmony.

This was succeeded by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, signifying the



illumination of knowledge and wisdom that the conference aimed to spread among its participants.

The keynote address was delivered by Lt Gen Velu Nair (Retd) and eminent hematologist followed by guest lecture by Dr Alok Srivastava, Head of Department, Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR), Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore.

The conference covered a range of topics, including the effects of reduced oxygen levels on myocardial blood flow, the prevalence of various cardiovascular morbidities in Indian Army soldier, and the potential risk factors for altitude sickness. Discussions also extended to adaptations of the cardiovascular system in individuals living at high altitudes temporarily.

This event highlighted the importance of tailored cardiovascular care for populations in high-altitude areas, emphasizing the need for specialised medical strategies to manage and prevent related health

issues. The conference provided a platform for experts to share recent research findings and to discuss the best practices for treating cardiovascular conditions in these challenging environments by which young medical officers were greatly benefitted. The conference, attended by healthcare professionals and researchers, aimed to discuss the challenges and advancements in managing cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) for populations living or traveling to high altitudes.

High-altitude environments, typically defined as elevations above 2,500 meters (8,200 feet), present unique physiological challenges due to reduced oxygen availability. The body's response to hypoxia—low oxygen levels—involves increasing pulmonary ventilation, heart rate, and hemoglobin concentration to sustain oxygen delivery. However, these adaptations put additional strain on the cardiovascular system, particularly in individuals with

pre-existing conditions like hypertension, coronary artery disease, or heart failure. The risk of adverse events, including sudden cardiac death, escalates with increased altitude due to the higher demands on the heart.

The conference highlighted the varying impacts of high-altitude exposure on different cardiovascular conditions including acute coronary syndrome, cerebral venous thrombosis, stroke, pulmonary thromboembolism and deep vein thrombosis.

Experts at the conference emphasised the importance of preventive strategies for those at risk. Recommendations include gradual acclimatization to allow the body to adapt to lower oxygen levels, maintaining proper hydration, and avoiding alcohol, which can exacerbate dehydration and altitude sickness.

The event underscored the need for more research to refine clinical guidelines for managing cardiovascular morbidities at high altitudes.

Current guidelines are based on limited studies and there is a pressing need for more extensive research to understand the long-term effects of high-altitude exposure on cardiovascular health. The conference called for collaborative efforts to develop evidence-based protocols that can be universally applied to protect vulnerable populations.

Several case studies were presented by the young medical officers serving in peripheral locations, illustrating real-world scenarios where high-altitude exposure led to severe cardiovascular complications. These cases reinforced the importance of personalised care plans and the need for heightened awareness among healthcare providers about the risks associated with deployment of troops in high-altitude areas.

The conference on cardiovascular morbidities in high-altitude areas served as a crucial platform for discussing the latest concepts and challenges in this specialized field. As deployment of Indian Army in high-altitude areas increases, so does the importance of understanding and mitigating the cardiovascular risks associated with such environments. The event highlighted the need for continued education, research and collaboration to improve outcomes for patients at risk of cardiovascular events in high-altitude settings.

## SMVDU scores position at State Level Agriculture Hackathon 2024



Top News Report

KATRA, Aug 30: Students from the School of Computer Science and Engineering at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University were honored for their exceptional achievement at the State Level Agriculture Hackathon 2024, organized by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST).

This prestigious competition, which focused on Precision and Economical Farming, attracted leading higher education institutions from across the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The competition, which spanned multiple phases, culminated in the final round

at SKUAST Jammu on July 20, 2024.

Our university's team demonstrated remarkable skill and innovation, securing second place. The team included Subhag Sharma, Tushar Taggar, Hridayanshu Sathia, and Vanshika Bakshi, all students of Computer Science and Engineering.

They presented their groundbreaking project titled "Deep Plant", which utilized machine learning and artificial intelligence to address critical issues related to crop failures and pest infestations, effectively overcoming local resource limitations.

In a grand award ceremony held at the Baba Jitto Auditorium on 29th August, 24, the team's achievement

was celebrated. Under the expert mentorship of Sanjay Sharma, Assistant Professor in the School of Computer Science, the team was awarded a cash prize of Rs 50,000 for their outstanding performance.

The Head of the School of Computer Science and Engineering congratulated the students for their dedication and innovative approach, emphasizing the high standards of education and mentorship within the department.

Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor of SMVDU, also conveyed his best wishes to the winning team and encouraged all students to undertake such innovative projects to address real-world.

## Workshop on Business Model Canvas held at SMVDU

Top News Report

KATRA, Aug 30: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University's Institution Innovation Council (IIC), in collaboration with the Technology Business Incubation Center (TBIC) and the School of Business, organized a workshop on the Business Model Canvas.

In the inaugural session, Vineeta Koul Lalotra, Director of Pragmatic Career Solutions, Pune, shared her learnings from the MBA program at SMVDU, reflecting on her experience on campus and in the hostel, and how these experiences shaped her journey in establishing her own

venture. Lt. Sandhya Suri, an Indian Navy veteran, TEDx Speaker, Change Enabler, Art Life Coach, Author, Poet, and Consultant, discussed daily routine activities that can help individuals become more confident.

She also elaborated on PRISM, the characteristics that enable people to become comfortable in being uncomfortable, encouraging them to step beyond perceived impossibilities.

Prof. Anuj Kumar, Head of Research at Rushford Business School, Switzerland, and an alumnus of University College Dublin, Ireland, provided a deep dive into the

features of the Business Model Canvas.

He discussed the business models of globally recognized companies such as Airbnb, Apple, LinkedIn, Tata Motors, Uber, Instagram, and Tesco.

The workshop attracted more than 80 participants, including faculty members, researchers, entrepreneurs, and students from various universities and institutions across India and abroad, joining this online workshop.

Dr. Arti Maini and Dr. Rashi Taggar smoothly coordinated the event, ensuring a productive and enlightening experience for all attendees.

## LIC of India hands over Dividend cheque to GoI

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 30: Siddhartha Mohanty, CEO & MD, LIC of India, today presented the Dividend cheque of Rs.3662.17 Crores to Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, as the Government of India's share of Dividend, approved by the Shareholders in the Annual General Meeting.

Dr. M P Tangirala, Additional Secretary, GOI, Ministry of Finance, Dept of Financial Services was present along with Officials from Life Insurance Corporation

of India, M Jagannath, MD, Tablesh Pandey, MD, Sat Pal Bhanoo, MD, R Doraiswamy, MD and J.P.S.Bajaj ,ZM(I/C),Northern Zone.

LIC also paid Interim Dividend of Rs. 2441.45 Crores on 1st March 2024, thus totaling to Rs. 6103.62 Crores paid as dividend to Government of India for the year 2023-24. LIC is completing 68 glorious years since its incorporation and as at 31.03.2024 has an asset base of over Rs.52.85 Lakh Crores. It continues to be the market leader in the Indian Life Insurance market.

## Independent candidate withdraw nomination in Devsar AC, 9 remains in fray

Top News Report

KULGAM, Aug 30: Independent candidate, who had filed nomination paper for the Devsar assembly constituency, withdrew his nomination paper on Friday. With that, 9 candidates have remained in the fray for the constituency.

Independent Candidate who withdrew the nomination paper is Rameez Ahmad Dar of Redwani Balla as today was the last day to withdraw the nomination papers for the seat.

The candidates who are in the fray are Dr. Suhail Ahmad Bhat of Awami Itihad Party, NC's Peerzada Feroze Shah, Senior People's Democratic Party (PDP) Leader, Mohd Sartaj Madni, Mohd Amin Bhat of DPAP, Reyaz Ahmad Bhat of Apni party, Amanullah Mantoo of Congress, Sheikh Fida Hussain of AAP, Abdul Rouf Naik (Independent)

dent) Nazir Ahmad Bhat, former member of (Jel) Independent.

The constituency is slated for elections in the first phase of the General Elections, scheduled for September 18.

In 40-Devsar AC there are 112381 voters including 56199 Male, 56175 female and 7 transgender and 127 polling stations have been established in Devsar AC.

## Illegal structures demolished at Bonigam



Top News Report

KULGAM, Aug 30: Demolition drive held at Bonigam area of Qazigund along Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

An official said "On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Amir Khan, a team of revenue department led by Tehsildar Devser

Raqib Ahmad Ganie along with Naib Tehsildar Chowgam, Mohd Amin Najar, and police carried out a demolition drive in Bonigam area of Devser belt and demolished structure which were raised illegally.

Tehsildar Devser told that nobody is allowed to raise any structure without permission from

the competent authority. These violators were informed time to time not to raise structures illegally and now officials were being forced to act tough.

"We demolished the structures in the area, adding People are requested to refrain from such practices otherwise be ready for the loss," he said.

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