

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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Celesti Bairagey sees constructive criticism as a gift



Discussion on Maharashtra Assembly poll seat-sharing done Ajit Pawar

Pakistan's ISI complicit with terrorists, says former US NSA McMaster

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BRIEFLY

Heavy rain likely on September 2, 3 in Kashmir parts: MeT

SRINAGAR, Aug 31 (Agencies): The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar on Saturday said there is a possibility of heavy rain between September 2 and 3 in remote areas, while it said moderate rain should be expected at many places.

In addition to rain, the MeT said that flash floods, landslides, and shooting stones should too be expected over few vulnerable places.

The weather department also said that there might be snowfall over the higher reaches of Kashmir, advising trekkers and tourists to plan accordingly.

However, it said, that nothing significant is expected after Sept 4 till 12 Sept, with only brief spell of light rain at few places on 6th and 7th September.

SDRF starts search operation after boy drowns in river in Rajouri

RAJOURI, Aug 31 (Agencies): The State Disaster Response Force has started a search operation after a young boy drowned in the overflowing river at Manjakote in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday.

The search operation is currently underway, said the officials. There has been heavy rainfall in the region.

The officials said that the search operation had started at 5:30 am today.

"We have been here, conducting our search operation since 5:30 in the morning. We have not found the body yet," the SDRF Team Incharge Mohd Nasser Kamlak said.

Delhi Trekker Dies Amid Extreme Weather in Kashmir's Gangbal Region

SRINAGAR, Aug 31 (Agencies): A 44-year-old trekker from Delhi, identified as Rohit Sayal, died while trekking in the Gangbal region of Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Friday.

As per media reports, Sayal was part of a 15-member trekking

Two more leaders quit BJP over selection of candidates for J&K Assembly Polls

JAMMU, Aug 31 (Agencies): Two more BJP leaders, including a district president, submitted their resignations from the primary membership of the party on Saturday, citing their resentment against the choice of candidates in their constituencies for the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a related development, hundreds of BJP workers took out a

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rally in the Khour block of the Chhamb Assembly constituency in the

outskirts of Jammu against fielding former MLA Rajeev Sharma

from there.

The BJP is facing resentment over its ticket distribution in the Union Territory immediately after it started releasing the list of candidates for the Assembly elections on August 26, with party leaders and workers protesting in several districts of the Jammu region.

In a damage control exercise, the party mobilised several top

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Rahul Gandhi will address 2 poll rallies in J&K on Sep 4: Cong Leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir

ANANTNAG, Aug 31 (Agencies): Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will address two election rallies in Jammu and Kashmir on September 4 to campaign for the candidates of the NC-Congress alliance, a senior Congress leader said on Saturday.

AICC general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir said that it was the desire of the candidates



of the alliance and the people of J&K in general to have Gandhi campaign in the Union

territory. "Rahulji will visit J&K on September 4 and will address election campaign rallies in Kashmir as well as Jammu for the alliance candidates," he added.

Mir, who is contesting the assembly elections from Dooru in the south Kashmir district here, said Gandhi will address an election rally at the Dooru stadium.

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Farooq Abdullah congratulates Jama'at for fielding candidates in J&K elections

SRINAGAR, Aug 31 (Agencies): National Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah Saturday congratulated banned Jama'at-e-Islami for fielding candidates in the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I congratulate Jama'at for stepping out and taking part in assembly elections. It is a good step," Dr Farooq as per



Greater Kashmir told reporters after paying obeisance at Kashmir's revered saint's shrine Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom Sahib (RA) in Srinagar.

On being asked about PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's recent remarks in which she alleged NC for poll rigging and forcing Jama'at and other political parties to stay away from elections in 1987, Dr Farooq replied that she should focus on safeguarding the country rather than engaging in blame game.

"May Allah keep

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Two killed, nine injured in separate road accidents in Jammu

JAMMU, Aug 31 (Agencies): Two persons were killed and nine injured in separate road accidents in Jammu and Doda districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, police said.

A student, Surbhi Kumari (18), was killed and eight other passengers, including six girls, were injured when a minibus turned turtle after colliding with a car

at the Kunjwani bypass here. The students were headed to school, they said.

Both the vehicles suffered extensive damage. The injured were taken to the hospital and the condition of two of them was stated to be serious, according to the officials.

In the second incident, a car plunged into a gorge near Malhori vil-

lage in Doda district, killing Mumtaza Begum (36) and leaving her husband Mohsin Ahmad critically injured, police said.

The two were headed home to Kishtwar from Jammu at the time of the incident. Ahmad was referred to the Government Medical College Hospital Jammu for treatment, they said.

ECI Appoints Expenditure Observers for Srinagar's 8 Assembly Constituencies



SRINAGAR, Aug 31 (Agencies): In view of the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in JK, the Election Commission of India has appointed Capt Pradeep Shoury Arya and Subodh Singh as Expenditure Observers for all eight Assembly Constituencies in Srinagar District.

According to a notice issued here, Capt Pradeep Shoury Arya has been appointed as the Expenditure Observer for the 19-Hazratbal, 20-Khanyar, 21-Habbakadal, and 22-Lal Chowk constituencies.

Similarly, Subodh Singh has been appointed as the Expenditure Observer for the 23-Chanapora, 24-Zadibal, 25-Eidgah, and 26-Central Shalteng constituencies.

To ensure the free, fair, transparent, and smooth conduct of elections, the District Election Officer Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, has notified that all stakeholders can contact the Expenditure Observers, Capt. Pradeep Shoury Arya (8899744409) and Subodh Singh (9906883393), on their respective numbers for any information, issues, or grievances regarding expenditure queries or complaints related to the elections.

Additionally, stakeholders can also file grievances on the C-vigil App.

Omar Abdullah's Divorce Plea: Supreme Court Instructs Mediation, Hearing on November 4

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Friday asked National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and his estranged wife Payal Abdullah to appear for mediation for exploring the possibility of a settlement.

A bench of Justice

Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah said it would hear the matter on November 4, after a report from the Supreme Court Mediation Centre is submitted.

The top court had earlier sought a response from Payal Abdullah

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Give strong fight to rivals in J&K elections: Ashok Koul to party candidates

SRINAGAR, Aug 31 (Agencies): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul on Saturday emphasized upon party candidates and leaders to give tough fight to rivals in the upcoming assembly elections of Jammu and Kashmir.



He at the occasion stressed upon the unity

among candidates and party leaders, and directed them to focus on strengthening the party at the grassroots level.

The BJP leader expressed these remarks while chairing an election review meeting with BJP candidates

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'BJP-led government fails to redress issues of OBCs in J&K'

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: Kewal Fotra, President of All J&K Sain Samaj, along with other leaders from various OBC organizations, expressed deep dissatisfaction and highlighted a series of grievances against the BJP-led government concerning the treatment of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The conference focused on the alleged failure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government to fulfill promises made to the OBC community in J&K, particularly regarding the implementation of reservations and recognition of OBC rights.

Kewal Fotra recalled that during the 2014 Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had committed to implementing a 27% reservation for OBCs in government services and educational institutions in J&K. This promise was made at prominent events held in Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu and Hiranagar. However, despite the passage of time, this commitment remains unfulfilled.

"The OBC community in J&K has long demanded the implementation of reservations as per Article 15(4), 16(4), 15(5), and 16(5) of the Indian Constitution. These provisions are backed by the Supreme Court's judgment dated November 16, 1992, which upheld the Mandal Commission Report recommending 27% reservations



for OBCs across India. Despite this, the BJP government has continued to enforce the Reservation Act of 2004 and state Reservation Rules under SRO-294 of 2005, which were framed under Article 370 by previous governments, and do not reflect the central reservation policy" he said.

Despite the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, which led to the reorganization of J&K into a Union Territory on October 31, 2019, he said, the Modi government continued to apply the old reservation policies that were in place before the abrogation.

These policies do not align with the central reservation policy that guarantees 27% reservation for OBCs.

Fotra criticized this as a clear indication of the Modi government's discriminatory attitude towards the OBC community in J&K.

The BJP government's reluctance to conduct a caste census with a separate column for OBCs, similar to that for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was highlighted as a significant issue. The OBC community

considers this census crucial for accurately reflecting their population and ensuring proper representation in various sectors.

Mohan Lal Pawar, General Secretary of All J&K OBC-Mahasabha, pointed out that the Modi government repealed the State Backward Classes Commission Act of 1997 and established a new "Socially & Educationally Backward Classes Commission" under Article 340. This commission, headed by Justice (Retd) G.D. Sharma, included no OBC members and was criticized for including 13 communities in the OBC list that were not identified by the Mandal Commission or recognized as socially and educationally backward by the Supreme Court. These communities include upper-caste groups like Acharya Brahmins, Sunar, Jat, and others, which dilutes the true essence of OBC reservation.

Since India's independence in 1947, the OBC community in J&K has had no representation in the State Assembly (State Law Making Body). Fotra and other leaders demanded political reservation for OBCs

to obtain their rightful certificates.

The appointment of non-OBC individuals to the Backward Classes Inclusion & Exclusion Commission and the OBC-Dedicated Commission was also criticized. The OBC leaders argued that these commissions lack proper representation from the OBC community, which undermines their legitimacy and the fairness of their decisions.

The OBC leaders called for the abolition of the creamy layer criteria, which currently restricts certain OBCs from availing reservations. They argued that this criterion should be removed, similar to how it does not apply to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The leaders demanded the immediate inclusion of certain OBC communities, such as Hanji, Gow Gujri, Ahanger, and Julaha, whose applications are pending before the Socially & Educationally Backward Classes Commission. They also requested that Yogi and Bowria castes be entered into the central list of OBCs, as they are already recognized in the J&K OBC list under SRO-408 dated June 18, 2019.

They urged the government to remove the word "Rural" from the central list of OBCs, as it has already been deleted from the J&K government's SRO-124 of 2000. This designation currently prevents many OBCs residing in urban areas from obtaining their rightful OBC certificates.

Transgender, LGBTQIA+ community of J&K holds rally demanding political reservation



Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: The Transgender and LGBTQIA+ community of Jammu & Kashmir, under the leadership of Raveena Mahant, Incharge of the J&K Unit of the Transgender Community, held a rally from Bikram Chowk to Hari Singh Park.

The rally was organised to voice the community's strong demand for political reservation and representation in the electoral process, a necessity that has long been denied by political parties in the region.

The rally highlighted the urgent need for political reservations for transgender individuals in legislative bodies. Without such reservations, the community remains under-represented and unable to influence decisions that directly impact their lives.

Participants demanded that political parties provide equal opportunities for transgender and LGBTQIA+ candidates to contest elections. The ongoing exclusion of our community from the electoral arena is a clear violation of our constitutional rights and democratic principles.

The demands raised during the rally are grounded in key judgments by the Indian judiciary, which have recognized the rights of transgender individuals. The Supreme Court of India, in its landmark ruling in National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014), acknowledged transgender persons as the "Third Gender" and directed the government to treat them as socially and educationally backward classes. This ruling makes transgender individuals eligible for reservations in education and employment, and by extension, should apply

to political representation as well.

Further supporting this cause, the Madras High Court in *Nangai v. The Superintendent of Police (2014)*, emphasized the necessity of including transgender individuals in all aspects of society, including political life.

These judgments provide a strong legal basis for the demands for political reservation and representation raised by the community during the rally.

The rally was a powerful demonstration of the community's resolve to fight for their rights and ensure that their voices are heard in the political arena.

The Transgender and LGBTQIA+ community of J&K will continue to advocate for these crucial changes and call on the government and political parties to address this issue with the urgency it deserves.

Yuva Jatt Sabha calls for urgent political representation for Jatt Community

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: In a significant move to address the ongoing concerns regarding the assembly election ticket distribution, Amandeep Singh Boparai, President of the Yuva Jatt Sabha, convened an urgent conference today to shed light on the injustices faced by the Jatt community in Jammu and Kashmir.

The conference highlighted the alarming trend of political parties, particularly the BJP, neglecting the Jatt community, which numbers in the lakhs within Jammu Province. Boparai expressed deep concern over the reservation of Jatt-dominant seats such as Suchetgarh, Marh, and Ramgarh, while simultaneously noting the complete lack of representation for the Jatt community in open seats.

"In the last Assembly, we had 2 MLAs and 2 MLCs from the Jatt community, but we fear that there will be no representation for us in the upcoming Assembly," stated Boparai. "Despite our significant population



and contributions to the region, we find ourselves sidelined in the political arena. It is disheartening to witness our community being overlooked during this critical election period."

While emphasizing that the Yuva Jatt Sabha is a non-political organization, Boparai asserted that they will take action whenever representation for the Jatt community is denied. "We urge all political parties to recognize the importance of inclusivity and representation. Our community deserves a voice, and we will stand by candidates who genuinely represent our interests," he added.

Boparai specifically urged the Congress party to ensure proper representation for the Jatt community by granting a ticket to a Jatt candidate for the Jammu South

seat. The BJP should consider giving the Bahu seat to a Jatt candidate, as it remains undeclared. This move could strengthen their support base and address community representation effectively. "We will ensure victory in Jatt-dominant seats if our community is properly represented. However, if we are ignored, we will have no choice but to boycott both the BJP and Congress and support independent candidates instead," he emphasized.

In light of this situation, the Yuva Jatt Sabha has declared its commitment to advocate for justice and equality in the political landscape. The Sabha calls upon all stakeholders to reconsider their strategies and ensure fair representation for the Jatt community in Jammu and Kashmir.

'Modi brought new dawn in J&K'

BJP leads movement to empower, defend people's rights: Kishan Reddy

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: In a fiery address today, Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, and BJP's In-Charge of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections, called ongoing assembly elections in J&K as "a movement for the people" as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continues its efforts to redefine the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking to an energized crowd in support of party candidate from Jammu West Arvind Gupta, Reddy reaffirmed that J&K remains the heartbeat of India, and the party's vision for its people reflects the legacy of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who established the party with the aim to protect J&K from dynastic rule and divisive politics.

Reddy reminded the gathering of the BJP's historic opposition to Article 370, dating back to the founding of the party. He paid homage to the sacrifices made by leaders like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who gave their lives for the cause of "Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan" (One Flag, One Constitution, One Head).



He noted that the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 marked a turning point in the BJP's long struggle to fully integrate Jammu and Kashmir into India, a cause the party kept alive in their manifestos for over 70 years.

The Union Minister emphasized that this election is the first after the historic abrogation of Article 370, signaling a new era for the people of J&K. "This is not just an election," he said, "it's a movement for the restoration of dignity for women, West Pakistani refugees, SCs, STs, and Valmiki Samaj, alongside all the people of Jammu and Kashmir." He extended gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for their unwavering resolve in implementing this historic decision.

Recalling Dr. Murla Manojoshi's historic journey to unfurl the tricolor in Srinagar's Lal Chowk, Reddy highlighted the symbolic importance of today's youth proudly carrying the Indian flag in rallies across Dal Lake. "The youth of Kashmir have shown their love for India and its unity," he said, contrasting this positive shift with the resistance of opposition parties like Congress and the National Conference (NC), who Reddy claimed "are not liking the big change in Kashmir post-Article 370 abrogation."

Reddy remarked that the world's eyes are on J&K now, as India demonstrates how peace, development, and democracy are taking root in the region. He urged voters not to see this election as a mere political contest but as a crucial step in securing the rights and futures of all people in J&K. "This election is a movement aimed at ensuring that no party like NC, Congress, or PDP ever snatches back the rights of the common people in J&K," he asserted.

Taking a strong stand against the NC's recent announcements, Reddy warned of dangerous designs to revert to dual flags and return power to militants. He pointed out that the NC's promises to

restore trade across the Line of Control and their potential dialogue with militants and Pakistan could unravel the progress made since Article 370's abrogation. "It is up to the people to see through this dangerous plan," Reddy urged, highlighting that Congress is supporting the NC's regressive policies.

Under BJP's leadership, Reddy said, militancy in J&K is on its last legs, and the region is entering an era of peace and prosperity. "The tables have turned," he claimed, "and we now see peace, prosperity, and development across the region thanks to Prime Minister Modi and Amit Shah's leadership." He also praised Modi for isolating Pakistan globally, stating that the rogue nation no longer has support from the international community due to its role in sponsoring terrorism.

Reddy credited Modi's policies for turning Pakistan into a failed state, isolated from the world stage due to its continued support of terror. "While Pakistan struggles, India's vision for J&K is moving forward with peace and progress," Reddy noted. He criticized Congress for supporting NC's regressive agenda, which, if allowed to prevail, would return J&K to a dark era of

militancy and bloodshed.

The Minister pointed out the ongoing development in the region, citing the establishment of key institutions like IITs, AIIMS, and IIMs in J&K. Reddy criticized the Congress for opposing these advancements and aligning with the NC's outdated vision. He referenced Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's statement of having a "blood relation" with the Abdullah family, implying that this closeness undermines the region's progress.

Speaking on occasion party candidate Arvind Gupta in his remarks urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to vote for the BJP, which he described as the only party capable of ending the bloodshed and restoring lasting peace to the region. "These elections are an opportunity to end dynastic rule, restore democratic institutions, and bring lasting peace to the region," he stated. He called on voters to put aside divisions of caste, creed, and religion and unite for a future that prioritizes development and stability.

Earlier, G. Kishan Reddy ended his address by calling for an end to the political dominance of families like the Abdullahs and Muftis. "The people of J&K deserve a government that will strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions and local bodies like Municipal Committees and Corporations," he concluded, asking the people to vote for change and prosperity over the dynastic politics that have defined the region for decades.

JSS Jammu ranked-1 in UT of J&K for Academic Excellence by Education Today

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu, is proud to announce its distinction as the No. 1 school in Jammu & Kashmir and Jammu for Academic Reputation, as recognized by Education Today. This prestigious accolade highlights the school's exceptional commitment to academic excellence and educational innovation.

Education Today's recent survey, which included

over 1,120 schools across North India, identified only 298 institutions for awards based on rigorous criteria including jury rankings, parent votes, and detailed survey analysis. Jammu Sanskriti School's top rankings reflect its outstanding educational standards and dedication to student success.

Education Today was established in 2013, and stands as one of the top education magazines in India, offering unparalleled insights and informa-

tion for students, teachers, and parents nationwide.

The North India's School Merit Awards ceremony took place on August 30, 2024, at The Crowne Plaza in Gurugram. The event was covered by the Education News Network and featured in the September issue of Education Today magazine. The recognition is a testament to the school's continued efforts to provide an exemplary learning environment. The award was received

by Rohini Aima -Principal Cum Vice-Chairperson of the school and Sunakshi Anand - Director operations of the school.

Rohini Aima, Principal Cum Vice-Chairperson of Jammu Sanskriti School, expressed her pride in the school's achievements and conveyed her gratitude to the Management, the Faculty and the parents for carving the niche. She further added "We are honored and thrilled to receive this recognition. This achievement is a tes-

tament to the hard work and dedication of our students, staff, and the entire school community. Our commitment to academic excellence and holistic development remains unwavering, and we will continue to strive for excellence in all aspects of education."

This accolade underscores Jammu Sanskriti School's dedication to nurturing academic excellence and its role as a leader in education in the region.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice							
Sr.DEE/G/FRZ acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.iresp.gov.in) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revise bids up to closing date and time only.							
Tender No	Name of Work	App Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Completion Period	Opening of tender	Website Particulars	
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EDITORIAL

SAVING NATURAL RESOURCES

Jammu and Kashmir, with its stunning landscapes, lush valleys, and diverse ecosystems, is endowed with a wealth of natural resources. However, rapid urbanization, population growth, and climate change pose significant threats to these invaluable assets. Protecting and conserving Jammu and Kashmir's natural resources is not just a necessity but an urgent priority for ensuring the region's environmental sustainability and overall well-being.

Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with abundant freshwater resources, including rivers, lakes, and glaciers. Major rivers like the Jhelum, Chenab, and Ravi are crucial for drinking water, agriculture, and hydroelectric power. However, the region faces challenges such as water pollution, over-extraction, and glacier melting due to climate change.

Implement Sustainable Water Management: Promote efficient irrigation practices, such as drip irrigation, and adopt rainwater harvesting techniques to reduce dependency on freshwater sources. **Protect Water Bodies:** Prevent pollution by regulating industrial waste disposal and encouraging community-led initiatives for the cleaning and maintenance of rivers and lakes. **Monitor Glaciers and Snowfall:** Establish research programs to track glacier health and snowfall patterns, which are crucial for managing water availability in the future.

The forests of Jammu and Kashmir are home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including endangered species such as the Hangul deer and the Kashmir stag. These forests play a critical role in maintaining ecological balance, preventing soil erosion, and contributing to the region's climate regulation.

Promote Afforestation and Reforestation: Encourage tree planting campaigns and the restoration of degraded forest areas to enhance biodiversity and combat deforestation. **Protect Wildlife Habitats:** Establish and enforce wildlife protection laws to prevent poaching and habitat destruction. **Support conservation programs and wildlife corridors** to ensure the survival of endangered species. **Sustainable Forestry Practices:** Adopt eco-friendly logging practices and manage forest resources in a way that meets current needs without compromising future generations.

The fertile soil of Jammu and Kashmir supports agriculture, which is a major livelihood for many residents. However, soil erosion, land degradation, and improper agricultural practices threaten soil health and productivity.

Promote Soil Conservation Techniques: Implement practices such as terracing, contour plowing, and agroforestry to reduce soil erosion and improve soil fertility. **Encourage Organic Farming:** Reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides by promoting organic farming methods that enhance soil health and reduce environmental impact. **Implement Land Use Planning:** Develop and enforce land use policies that prevent over-cultivation and ensure sustainable land management practices.

Jammu and Kashmir's potential for renewable energy is significant, particularly in hydroelectric, solar, and wind energy. However, over-reliance on non-renewable sources and inefficient energy use are concerns that need addressing.

Invest in Renewable Energy Projects: Expand investments in hydroelectric, solar, and wind energy projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and decrease environmental impact. **Promote Energy Efficiency:** Encourage energy-efficient appliances and practices in homes, industries, and public buildings to reduce overall energy consumption. **Support Research and Development:** Invest in research for new technologies and innovations in energy conservation and renewable energy sources.

The success of natural resource conservation efforts largely depends on public awareness and community involvement. Educating residents about the importance of natural resource conservation and involving them in local environmental initiatives can drive positive change.

Organize workshops, seminars, and educational programs to raise awareness about the importance of conserving natural resources. Engage local communities in conservation projects, such as tree planting drives, waste management programs, and water conservation initiatives. Advocate for the development and enforcement of robust environmental policies and regulations to protect natural resources. Preserving Jammu and Kashmir's natural resources is essential for maintaining the region's ecological balance, ensuring the well-being of its residents, and safeguarding its unique biodiversity. By adopting sustainable practices, protecting ecosystems, and fostering community engagement, we can ensure that these precious resources are conserved for future generations. The collective efforts of individuals, communities, and policymakers are crucial in this endeavor, as each action taken today will contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future for Jammu and Kashmir.

The India-Pakistan wind's changing

By: JYOTI MALHOTRA

HAS the time come for Prime Minister Modi to drop his inhibitions and say, "Yes, I Will", to Pakistan?

For the uninitiated, much has happened in the last 48 hours. In Punjab, as the Aam Aadmi Party consolidates itself in the face of a shrinking Shiromani Akali Dal — whose MLAs, significantly, are not joining their former partners, the BJP — Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose family hails from Amritsar, has written to Modi, inviting him to attend a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Islamabad in October.

An honest and face-to-face conversation with your enemy is real catharsis.

The Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed that it has received such an invite, but not what it intends to do about it. It is also true that the Pakistani establishment may have put out this news in the hope that it builds some public pressure inside India — bleeding-heart liberals, who for their livelihood depend on reaching out and touching someone, as well as the candle-lighting brigade at Attari-Wagah can always be depended upon to push the envelope in favour of talks.

Equally true is the boring predictability of the naysayers. Modi cannot, must not, should not go to Islamabad because Pakistan is the enemy and cannot be trusted. In case you belong to this ilk, then, you should quickly pack your bags and take the next bus to Gurdaspur, so that you have a chance to reaffirm your animosity.

Here, where the drones fall within spitting distance of the Zero Line,

that is a few km inside of the India-Pakistan border, you know that the purest-grade white heroin load — in local parlance, chitta — that the hexicopters carry, has been packed and placed on the orders of the Pakistani establishment. There are many ways to carry out a 'proxy war', of course.

Another way is to infiltrate trained terrorists into the Jammu region. Military analysts believe that the ambushes of Indian soldiers and paramilitary in recent months — as many as 18 soldiers have been killed so far this summer — is a well-considered strategy by the Pakistani state to shift the focus away from the Kashmir valley.

So, what should PM Modi do? Should he go to Pakistan or not?

Remember that 10 long years ago, Modi had invited Nawaz Sharif, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, to his swearing-in ceremony in Delhi and Sharif had turned up — against the advice of his own powerful military establishment. When Sharif returned home from Delhi, it was said that he and his job were in trouble, because he had chosen to shake the hand of the man who was the Chief Minister of Gujarat when the 2002 riots had taken place, in which more than a thousand Muslims had been killed. The way Sharif explained it — Modi was the PM of South Asia's most powerful country, Pakistan was India's neighbour and both had been through the rough-and-tumble of history — it was his duty to offer the hand of peace.

The peace pipe didn't last long. On January 2, 2016, Pakistani terrorists attacked the Pathankot airbase. Soon, Modi had announced that he was breaking off all conversation with Pakistan until cross-border terrorism came to an end.

The deep freeze was turned on.

But the truth is that eight years on, cross-border terrorism has not come to an end. The Jammu terror incidents from this summer indicate that someone continues to orchestrate the whole show from behind the scenes. "Uski tooti mere haath main hai" (I hold the lever in my hands) — that is how in the summer of 1999, at the height of the Kargil War, a senior Pakistan General described Pakistan's control of cross-border terrorism to then army chief Gen Pervez Musharraf. The conversations were recorded by Indian intelligence, transcribed and shown to then Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz when he stopped over in Delhi en route to Beijing.

Aziz had been trying to defend the indefensible, that is, the Pakistani invasion at Kargil, when he was confronted with the tapes. He had nothing more to say after that.

Modi has been confronted with the same dilemma since 2016. He fully understands that the nature of the Pakistani state hasn't changed and what's more, is unlikely to change in the near future. If he had any doubts, the carefully instigated overthrow of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh next door — no doubt, she is fully responsible for allowing the situation to reach this crescendo — should give him a clearer picture of India's dangerous neighbourhood.

So, should he continue with upping the ante — 'surgical strikes' in 2016, followed by missile strikes in Balakote in 2019 — even though it's clear that Pakistan will find new ways to hurt India every day? Or should he take a leaf out of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's book and try to make peace with the nation that the latter went to war with?

It's clear that the wind is shifting in the India-Pakistan corner again. Modi remains a strong third-term Prime Minister, but he has had to go the extra mile to woo both Russia and the US over Ukraine. It's not clear whether the Big Powers want Modi to renew contact with Pakistan again, which is what explains the timing of the Islamabad invite. Even if the invite is for a pro-China organisation, which is what the SCO is, perhaps the Americans are testing the waters. They certainly don't want Pakistan to be fully drawn into China's sway.

And then there's Kashmir. More than one India-Pakistan-US Track Two conversation has come away with the revelation that Pakistan may be willing to tone down its very harsh criticism of the abrogation of Article 370 and return to a conversation if India conducts elections in Jammu & Kashmir. Guess what's happening there in September.

The fact remains that Modi should make the decision to go or not to go to Islamabad on his own merit — and how it will play at home. (For one, it is bound to burnish his credentials with the influential candle-lighting constituency at Attari-Wagah.) Second, Modi knows that secure leaders and nations are not afraid to speak to anyone, especially their enemies. Third, key state elections are around the corner. If Haryana and Maharashtra are lost to the Opposition, the sense of the BJP and PM Modi being further pushed into a political corner will increase.

Apart from the fact that an honest and face-to-face conversation with your enemy is real catharsis, imagine the boost to his popularity if Modi goes to Pakistan.

Social media overuse taking its toll on consumers

By: KP SINGH

IT was shocking to learn during an orientation programme for new entrants at a law college in Punjab that students remain occupied on social media (SM) for an average of over seven hours a day, leaving them with little time for sports and other community engagements or personal activities. It is estimated that 65 per cent of the teenagers are hooked on social networking service (SNS) and 72 per cent of them have direct access to the Internet. The number of SM accounts and Internet users has crossed the 100 crore-mark in India. According to Pew Research Centre statistics, 77 per cent of employees admit to using social networking sites while at work.

No one can deny that SM provides people who desire to expand their social networks, promote their businesses or overcome loneliness with an incredible platform. It fosters a feeling of belongingness among those who need company but cannot physically interact with their family members, friends and relatives. SNS also makes for a good pastime and a source of entertainment for all, especially senior citizens. However, over-indulgence in SM has a harmful impact on the physical, mental and overall wellbeing of its users.

According to a University of Buffalo study, excessive use of SNS by college students has detrimental effects on their physical health. They have higher levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a sign of chronic inflammation connected to major diseases like

diabetes, malignancies and cardiovascular problems. The new generation addicted to SM is at a high risk of suffering from the 'blue light effect', which is produced by the light emanating from electronic devices while in use. It adversely affects the production of the melatonin hormone, which controls the sleep-wake cycle or circadian rhythms, resulting in sleeplessness and a weak immunity.

A National Institutes of Health study (2018) at the New York-Presbyterian medical centre reported that children spending more than two hours a day on screen-time activities scored low on language and thinking tests. Some children exposed to the screen daily for more than seven hours experienced thinning of the brain's cortex, the area related to critical thinking and reasoning.

In 2015, psychologist Marion Underwood and sociologist Robert Faris analysed about 1.5 lakh social media posts from more than 200 students aged 13 years and found that they had created drastically different online personas for themselves. They felt the freedom to do or say whatever they wanted to without any inhibition or fear of consequences or repercussions. Media theorist Douglas Rushkoff calls this phenomenon 'digiphrenia', which is "the experience of trying to exist in more than one incarnation of yourself at the same time."

Studies have established that frequent stimulations received from SM sites shorten the attention span of the users, triggering far-reaching consequences. Such

individuals may find it difficult to express themselves clearly, make mistakes as a result of a diminished attention to detail, and perform badly in a variety of settings, such as social situations, at their workplace and at educational institutions.

Comparison is ingrained in human nature. The fake videos, manipulated information, impractical solutions and mischievous prescriptions published on SM are so mesmerising that ill-informed and innocent users start comparing their 'real life' with others' 'reel life', leading to self-doubt and making them feel frustrated and depressed.

It is sickening that the rat race to get maximum likes on digital platforms and the quest for creating the best videos and stories have made many gullible individuals share each and every moment of their private life and that of others, allowing an intrusion into their privacy. It is leading to different kinds of behavioural abrasions, relationship discord and social conflicts. Such people do not understand that SM platforms are best meant for impacting people and not for impressing others.

The bombardment of crypted and unverified information on social networking sites is cluttering the users' minds. It has snatched away from them the joy of being and living in the moment. Moreover, biased SM algorithms passively make the users consume unsuitable content that might lead to moral desensitisation.

An overindulgence in SM leads to psychological disorders; a new class of such victims has

already emerged. They can be seen checking their cell phones involuntarily — 79 times a day, according to a study — compelled by the desire to seek screen stimulation. Excessive time spent on networking sites has the potential of dragging such individuals into solitude and loneliness. In the absence of regular face-to-face interactions, humans lose the ability to recognise and respond to facial cues, voice tone and inflection, body language and the warmth of emotions.

The ethical consequences of addiction to SM are far more serious and extend from cyberbullying to privacy violations. Notably, 30 per cent of students in middle and high school are either victims or culprits of cyberbullying; 18 per cent of them are girls. Unfortunately, 15 per cent of the victims of cyberbullying attempt suicide out of depression.

Anonymity on SM often encourages users to post inappropriate material and indulge in cybercrimes. Although the Telecommunications Act, 2023, prescribes duties of the SM users and measures to protect consumers from unauthorised intrusion into their privacy and empowers enforcement agencies to intercept objectionable communication, it is not proving a deterrent in the absence of rules and a lack of awareness among the masses.

Humankind now stands at a critical juncture regarding social media overuse. It must introspect: "Are we using SM or has it started consuming us?" SM should be used with due responsibility.

GDCW organises lecture on three criminal laws

Top News Report

KATHUA, Aug 31: Kathua Women's Degree College recently organized an informative lecture to raise awareness about India's newly enacted criminal laws. This event was coordinated by the Departments of Education, Geography, Sociology, Home Science, and History, in collaboration with Vikshit Bharat and the SVEEP Committee. The lecture concentrated on the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bhartiya Nagrik Surksha Sanhita, and Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023. Dr. Syed Naser, a renowned expert, delivered a thorough presen-



tation, explaining the key aspects and implications of each law. His discussion provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of how these legislative measures will influence India's legal framework. Dr. Savi Behal, Principal of Kathua Women's Degree College, addressed the audience, highlighting the importance of staying informed about legal changes. She praised the initiative as a vital part of the college's mission to equip students with knowledge that will help them navigate and contribute to the evolving legal environment.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Rachna. She expressed her gratitude to Dr. Naser for his valuable insights and to all participants for their active involvement. Dr. Rachna acknowledged the efforts of the organizing committees and emphasized the significance of such educational events in fostering a well-informed student body. This lecture was a part of the college's ongoing commitment to providing students with a robust understanding of crucial legal and societal issues, preparing them to engage effectively with the legal changes affecting their world.

Yoga Session organised at GDC Marheen

Top News Report

MARHEEN, Aug 31: Yoga session was organized by NSS unit of GDC, Marheen on Saturday under the patronage of Prof (Dr.) Anupama Gupta, esteemed Principal of Govt. Degree College Marheen. She encouraged and supported the volunteers by saying that Yoga is beneficial for our health and day to day routine work which will reduce the tension, stress and work pressure. On this occasion, Neha



Chib, Lubita and Kanika, NSS volunteers displayed demo regarding various Yog Asanas and gave tips for improving the health standard of society and the students as well. The event was managed by Dr. Arun Dev

Singh, NSS Programme officer Dr Shallu Rani Prof Manu Saini. The faculty members were present on the occasion Prof Sandeep Chaudhary, Dr. Balbinder Singh, Dr. Munisha Devi, of the college.

Health Department honors Hafiza Begum



Top News Report

DODA, Aug 31: In a heartfelt ceremony held in Bharderwah area of Doda district, the health department bid farewell to Hafiza Begum, a dedicated and respected staff member, who retired after more than 38 years of exemplary service. Hafiza Begum, the mother of Abrar Batt, a journalist with The Chenab Times, has been a cornerstone of the department, contributing significantly to the community's health and well-being over her long and distinguished career. The retirement cer-

emony, organized by the health department, was a fitting tribute to her years of hard work and commitment. Block Medical Officer, along with other staff members, expressed their gratitude and admiration for Hafiza Begum's dedication. The event was marked by warm speeches, shared memories, and a sense of appreciation for her invaluable contributions. Abrar Batt, in attendance at the event, expressed his deep pride in his mother's achievements and thanked the department for their support and the beautiful send-off. "My mother's

unwavering dedication to her work has always been an inspiration to me. I am deeply grateful to BMO Sir and the entire health department for honoring her with such a wonderful ceremony," he said. Hafiza Begum leaves behind a legacy of service and care that will be remembered by her colleagues and the countless individuals she helped throughout her career. As she steps into retirement, her contributions to the health department will continue to be felt, and her example will inspire those who follow in her footsteps.

GOC White Knight Corps, GOC CIF Delta conduct security review in Doda-Kishtwar

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: To review security measures in the strategically important Doda-Kishtwar region, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the White Knight Corps, along with the GOC of Counter Insurgency Force (CIF) Delta, carried out a thorough assessment of the operational readiness in the Sugarh and Patnazi sectors. The GOC White Knight Corps personally inspected the deployment of troops and their preparedness in these key areas. He expressed satisfaction with the professionalism and determination shown by the soldiers despite ongoing challenges. The GOC praised the troops for their dedication and their ability to maintain a high level of readiness, which is vital for the region's stability and

security, as reported by the White Knight Corps. The review also covered the security arrangements for the ongoing KaplasKund Yatra, a significant annual pilgrimage in the region. Given the large number of pilgrims and the area's sensitivity, the GOC stressed the importance of staying highly vigilant. Security forces have been directed to ensure all necessary measures are in place to prevent any potential threats. To boost security efforts, aerial platforms are being used for over-watch and real-time surveillance. These aerial assets play a crucial role in detecting and promptly addressing any suspicious activity, providing an extra layer of security. The GOC's visit is part of a broader strategy to ensure the security framework in the region remains strong and ready to respond to any potential threats.

GDC Pouni hosts poster making event

Top News Report

POUNI, Aug 31: In a significant move to empower the youth and highlight the pivotal role of women in fortifying Indian democracy, the Electoral Literacy Club of Government Degree College, Pouni, in collaboration with District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Reasi, successfully hosted a poster making event and Signature Campaign and Symposium events. The topic of symposium centered on the theme, "The Role of Youth, Especially Women, in Strengthening Indian Democracy." Dr. Prem Singh, Convener of Electoral Literacy Club administered the event under the able guidance of Dr. Udhay Bhanu, Principal GDC Pouni. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty,

and distinguished guests, making it a landmark occasion in the college's history. Prof. Bishan Das, Prof. Beant Singh, Dr. U S Liza, Prof. Mohit Anand and Tanpreet Singh coordinated the event. Dr. Prem Singh, HOD Political Science, gave a welcome speech. The symposium commenced with the singing of National Anthem and Pledging ceremony under SVEEP. Arun, a student of semester 5th, hosted the event. The event was graced by the presence of Sachin Sharma, Nodal Officer SVEEP. Principal, Dr. Udhay Bhanu, welcomed the guest and presented him the bouquet as a gesture of honor. In the keynote address, Sachin emphasized the importance of youth engagement in democratic processes and the unique contributions

women can make in leadership roles. Students shared their perspectives on democracy and gender equality. Their passionate speeches and creative presentations underscored the potential of young leaders to shape the future of Indian democracy. The symposium event concluded with Vote of thanks by Dr. U S Liza, HOD English. The Signature Campaign and symposium on "The Role of Youth, Especially Women, in Strengthening Indian Democracy" was a resounding success, fostering a deeper understanding of democratic engagement and the critical role of women in leadership. The Government Degree College, Pouni, remains dedicated to promoting civic education and empowering the next generation of leaders.

Jeelani assumes charge as SSP Kupwara

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: Ghulam Jeelani, a senior officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Police Service (JKPS), officially assumed charge as the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara. A formal handover ceremony was held at the District Police Headquarters, Kupwara, where the outgoing SSP, Shobhit Saksena, IPS, passed on the responsibilities to Jeelani. The ceremony marked a smooth transition of leadership within the district police. Shobhit Saksena, who has served with distinc-

tion, expressed his gratitude to the police personnel and local administration for their support during his tenure. Ghulam Jeelani, in his remarks, acknowledged the work done by his predecessor and pledged to continue efforts to maintain law and order while ensuring the safety and security of the citizens of Kupwara. The event was attended by senior police officers, district officials, and other dignitaries who conveyed their best wishes to the new SSP and commended the outgoing officer for his service.

GDC Khour organizes symposium on SVEEP to boost voting awareness

Top News Report

KHOUR, Aug 31: GDC Khour organized an enlightening symposium under the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, aimed at enhancing voting awareness among students. The event, held under the esteemed patronage of Prof. (Dr.) T.K. Sharma, Principal of the college, featured a range of engaging activities designed to underscore the significance of voting in a democratic society. The symposium included speeches, slogan writing, and a pledge-taking ceremony, all focused on highlighting the importance of exercising one's voting rights. Active participation came from NCC cadets, NSS volunteers, and students from the Political Science and Physical

Education departments, demonstrating a strong collective commitment to promoting democratic engagement. Notable speakers Sonia Sharma, Neha Devi, and Rakhi Manhas, all from the third semester, delivered speeches on the value of voting as both a fundamental right and a civic duty. They emphasized the power of every single vote in fostering positive change within the country. Additionally, Taniya Sharma and Mannu Devi, also from the third semester, captivated the audience with their poems on the crucial role of voting. Students showcased their creativity and enthusiasm through slogan writing, with impactful messages such as "Shape Your future, Vote Now" and "Every Vote Matters," aimed at spreading awareness about the significance of

voting. In his keynote address, Principal Prof. (Dr.) T.K. Sharma highlighted the dual nature of voting as both a privilege and a responsibility. He stressed that voting is not only a way to express individual opinions but also a powerful tool for shaping the collective future of society. The symposium concluded with a pledge-taking ceremony, where students committed to advancing voting awareness and encouraging their peers to exercise their voting rights. The event was organized under the aegis of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the college. Prof. Reeta Menia, Dr. Rashmi Sharma, Prof. Shivani Sharma, Prof. Himanshu Khajuria, Prof. Sunil Kumar, and Prof. Pooja Kumari also graced the occasion with their presence

Hundreds form human chain in Baramulla to promote voter awareness ahead of Assembly Elections

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: In a lively show of democratic spirit, hundreds of new voters gathered in Baramulla town to form a human chain as part of a Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program. The event, held in the center of the town, aimed

to emphasize the importance of every vote in the upcoming 2024 Assembly Elections. Most of the participants were first-time voters who came together to highlight the need for active participation in elections. The human chain, which stretched across the main streets of Baramulla, served as a powerful

symbol of unity and civic duty. The SVEEP program also included the distribution of voter education materials to encourage informed and enthusiastic voting. The initiative was well-received by the local community, with many expressing their commitment to voting in the upcoming elections.

Koul conducts election strategy meeting

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: Ashok Koul, BJP's General Secretary (Organization) for Jammu and Kashmir, held a crucial election strategy meeting in Anantnag with party candidates including Rafiq Wani, Sofi Yousuf, Javid Qadari, Veer Saraf, Arshad Bhat, Showkat

Gayoor, Advocate Wajahat, Choudhary Roshan, and Ashok Bhat (Habakadal candidate). Koul addressed the candidates, senior leaders, and District Presidents such as Dr. Darakshan Andrabi, Altaf Thakur, Charanjeet Singh Khalsa, Mudasar Wani, and others, emphasizing the need for unity to ensure a

strong performance in the upcoming 2024 assembly elections. He urged the party's leadership and workers to concentrate on strengthening the party's grassroots network. Expressing confidence in the party's prospects, Koul asserted that the BJP is on track to form the next government in Jammu and Kashmir.

Kho-Kho selection trials from Sept 3

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: The J&K Kho-Kho Association is organizing selection trials for the upcoming 34th Sub Junior National Kho-Kho Championship, scheduled to take place

in Jharkhand. The selection trials will be held from September 3 to 4, 2024, starting at 3 PM at Greenplay Field 1, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. Aspiring players are encouraged to participate in these trials to showcase their

skills and earn a spot on the team representing Jammu and Kashmir at the national level. For more information, interested individuals can contact on 9419141007, 9 1 4 9 5 0 9 6 1 7, 9906204257, or email jkkhokho@gmail.com

GDC Sunderbani organizes Poster Making Competition to raise voter awareness program

Top News Report

SUNDERBANI, Aug 31: GDC Sunderbani organized a Poster Making Competition to raise Voter Awareness Program. The competition was organized by the Electoral Literacy Club under the SVEEP (Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation). The programme held in the College campus to built a participative democratic character among students and encourage them to cast the vote and make an informed decision during the election. Dalip Kumar (JKAS) CDPO Sunderbani and Suresh Kumar (Supervisor) ICDS Project Sun-

derbani were jury members on the occasion. They judged this SVEEP event and declared as Jyoti Potoch semester 3rd on 1st position, Retish Sharma semester 3rd got 2nd position and Amisha Sharma semester 3rd and Shakti Devi semester 5th shared 3rd position. Principal of the college Dr. Ashu Vashist appreciated the efforts of Electoral Literacy club members Dr. Kuldeep Raj Sharma, Prof Davinder Kumar, Dr. Manjeet Singh, Dr. Umesh Paudel and Prof. Jyoti Sharma. She congratulated the students for their participation and securing their positions.

KCPS students excel at Stemletics event hosted by Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya Gwalior

Top News Report

JAMMU, Aug 31: Five students of KC Public School (KCPS), namely, Aryan Mahajan, Mriganka Bhat, Medhavi Arora, Lavanya Koushal and Divyansh Sharmatook part in the 'Stemletics' event hosted by Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya Gwalior on August 28 and 29, 2024.

The term 'Stemletics' refers to an innovative programme that combines sports and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) education to engage students in hands-on learning experiences. The programme aims at equipping the next generation of leaders with essential tools to succeed in today's world and

encourages students to pursue careers in STEM fields. The event commenced with an impressive opening ceremony with the DRDO Director presiding over it. Thereafter, participating teams from several reputed schools from India took part in a number of activities such as Castle Run Robot Workshop, Technovate

Competition, Castle Run Robot Competition and Obstacle Avoiding Robot Competition. The team from KCPS escorted by Mohit Uppal of IT department put up a marvellous performance during the event and won the third position in the Obstacle Avoiding Robot competition. In this event, robots built by students utilized

sensors and advanced algorithms to expertly manoeuvre through a complex maze, avoiding collisions and finding the optimal path. Aryan and Divyansh of KCPS handled this event with remarkable dexterity. This accomplishment showcased KCPS team's exceptional skills, innovative thinking, dedication to the field of robotics and

excellent team spirit. KCPS Chairman Raju Chowdhary and Principal AK Mishra complimented the school Science Club 'KC Science Crusaders' and its mentors Kapil Kashyap and Surbhi Mahajan for taking up the initiative of training the school team for this futuristic scientific contest in which they emerged victorious.

Javed Akhtar says society is not clear who is a contemporary woman

Javed Akhtar and Zoya Akhtar recently spoke about cinema and storytelling. In an interview with agency, the veteran lyricist-screenwriter reflected on the portrayal of female characters and contemporary society's understanding of women.

Javed Akhtar on contemporary women in cinema

Javed, while speaking of contemporary morality in storytelling, said, "When society is clear about contemporary morality and aspirations, great writing can emerge. The writer is a part of society, breathing the same air. This is how great roles come about. Meena Kumari in Saheb, Biwi Aur Ghulam, Nargis in Mother India, and Waheeda Rehman in Guide exemplify this. However, when morality is unclear, issues arise."



He also said, "Look at these two girls - Sridevi and Madhuri Dixit. They were not less talented than any so-called heroine of the past. But did they get one big role? Not because anybody was their enemy. But at

that point, society was not clear about the contemporary woman. 'Main chup rahungi' is out, but who is in? Nobody knows. Till today, we are roaming in the dark trying to find the modern woman. Zoya had told me, 'You

will not praise me on the stage. I find it embarrassing when you say good things about me.' But Zoya, the fact is the only contemporary woman I have seen is in your films."

Javed Akhtar in Angry Young Men

Javed recently featured in a documentary series titled Angry Young Men. The show depicts the cinematic journey of his partnership with Salim Khan. Directed by Namrata Rao, the documentary highlights how the Salim-Javed partnership resulted in 22 blockbusters out of their collaboration in 24 films. The veteran screenwriters also discuss their split in the series. The show features Zoya and Farhan Akhtar, Salman Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Shabana Azmi, and many other celebrities.

Celesti Bairagey sees constructive criticism as a gift



Celesti Bairagey, who has been part of the show Rajjo as well as

Amazon Mini TV series Amber Girls School, says it is very impor-

tant to manage criticism well. "I see constructive criticism as a gift. It's a chance to refine my skills and gain new perspectives. I take feedback seriously, reflect on it, and use it to enhance my future performances. Growth happens outside of our comfort zone, and feedback helps me push those boundaries," she says.

Ask her how she contributes to a positive and collaborative work environment on the sets, and she says, "On the sets, I believe in the power of teamwork. I always bring a positive attitude, respect everyone's contribution, and stay open to ideas. A collaborative environment makes the magic happen."

Ishaan Khatter is ecstatic as he gets featured first time on billboard in Los Angeles

Actor Ishaan Khatter is over-the-moon as he got featured in a billboard for the first time in Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Ishaan took to Instagram, where he shared a video, which seems to be by his co-star Eve Hewson. The billboard had the poster of his upcoming series 'The Perfect Couple' featuring him and his co-stars.

He wrote, 'My first billboard in Sunset Blvd Ft only the most appropriate commentary by @evehewson. Sept 5th. The Perfect Couple. Netflix. Let's go.'

The actor later shared a glimpse of his passport and ticket, and wrote, 'May the excitement begin.'

He did not mention the details about his travelling.

Talking about 'The Perfect Couple', it is a mystery drama star-



ring Nicole Kidman, Liev Schreiber, Dakota Fanning, Hewson and Ishaan. It is an adaptation of the 2018 novel of the same name by Elin Hilderbrand.

The show tells the story of Hewson's character Amelia, who is about to marry into the wealthy Nantucket Winbury family, to the disapproval of their matriarch novelist played

by Kidman. But when a body is found on the beach and secrets are revealed, everyone becomes a suspect.

Apart from 'The Perfect Couple', Ishaan will be seen in 'The Royals' alongside names such as Bhumi Pednekar, Zeenat Aman, Sakshi Tanwar, Nora Fatehi, Chunky Panday, Dino Morea and Milind Soman.

Back to big screen

Call it nostalgia or a strategic move, blockbusters such as *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* and *Maine Pyar Kiya* have been re-released in theatres to draw in crowds. Is the trend here to stay? We take a look

In the ever-evolving world of cinema, where trends shift as quickly as the latest blockbuster, one phenomenon has recently emerged with compelling force — the re-release of prequels when sequels hit the screens! Here's a look at the trend.

Retracing the past

In 2023, as the buzz around *Gadar 2* peaked, cinemas across India rolled out a timely re-release of its prequel, *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*. Originally premiered in 2001, this epic film had become a huge hit. The re-release was not just a nostalgic gesture, but more of a strategic move. By bringing back *Gadar* just before the release of its sequel, the filmmakers cleverly tapped into the growing excitement and antici-



tion surrounding *Gadar 2*.

Covid effect

The Covid-19 pandemic left theatres in the dark and there was a significant decrease in new releases. Cinemas reopened in India after a seven-month-long break. With barely any new films being made and the pandemic still raging, studios and distributors found an innovative way to address the void — which was 're-releasing classic films'. So, iconic films

from the past like *Rockstar* and *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* returned to the big screen.

Tapping blockbuster material

A notable example is Sajid Ali's *Laila Majnu*. The 2018 classic love story found its way back to theatres six years after its debut. Written by Sajid Ali and Imtiaz Ali, this modern adaptation of the classic Persian love story stands out as a refreshing tribute to the timeless theme of eternal love.

Triptii Dimri and Avinash Tiwary shine as *Laila* and *Majnu*. The film crossed the box-office collection of its original release within just a few days of its re-release. The film's popularity saw an unexpected boost due to a viral incident involving actor Avinash Tiwary. While visiting a café in Kashmir, a region where the film was extensively shot, Tiwary was recognised by locals not by his real name but by his character's name —

Qaes Bhatt. The videos capturing this incident quickly spread across social media platforms. The buzz created by these viral clips reignited interest in the film.

Hit formula

Recently, the films *Laila Majnu* and *Maine Pyar Kiya* are running in theatres across Chandigarh. Similarly, as many went to watch *Tamasha* in theatres pondered why Imtiaz Ali's directorial was a flop when it first ran in theatres. Speaking of *Tamasha*, another of Ranbir Kapoor's powerful performance in *Rockstar* was appreciated by audiences as the film re-premiered in theatres recently. Those who missed out on *Gangs of Wasseypur* can now watch the film in theatres from August 30 till September 5.

Jacqueliene Fernandez opens up about 'being in spotlight for reasons unrelated to work': What has helped me the most is...

Actor Jacqueliene Fernandez has spoken about how she handles being in the "spotlight for reasons unrelated to your work" and which aren't "positive in nature". Speaking with agency, Jacqueliene also talked about her 'language barrier' in Bollywood and added that she is "still managing" it.

Jacqueliene of going through ups and downs Jacqueliene said, "Positives and negatives are always going to be there...But what has helped me the most is giving up this constant desire and need to be loved and realising that this is truly the last illusion we all have and that we all face. This is what has kept me free, humble, and calm. I believe in God, I always have. It's an extremely strong force in my life. And because of that, I never really fear anything. I meditate often. Now I'm able to distinguish between right and wrong people, and I keep my family and good people close. I hold on to my ability

to be empathetic as my superpower, and not a weakness."

Last month, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoned Jacqueliene to appear for questioning in the 200 crore money laundering case involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar. She was earlier questioned several times by the ED officials in the case for her links with Chandrashekhar, who is accused of extorting substantial sums from various individuals and allegedly using the funds to sustain a luxurious lifestyle. The ED seeks to probe her connection to Chandrashekhar and her potential involvement in the laundering activities. Jacqueliene on her language barrier

On her language barrier, the actor said, "Honestly, I'm still managing the language barrier. I train and work hard on it—speaking and performing in a language that is not my mother tongue and battling a perception that I am weak in the language. I love to see myself get-



ting better in that field and approaching it more positively...I remember my initial years as well. It was a nightmare for me because I was badgered by the critics pretty harshly. It was only after my third film, which was *Murder 2* (2011), that I was able to gain some positive judgments and constructive criticism, which then led to *Housefull 2* (2012) and *Race 2* (2013)."

Jacqueliene's upcoming film

Jacqueliene will be next seen in *Welcome to the Jungle*. The film, which is directed by Ahmed Khan, will be out in theatres on December 20, 2024.

The film also stars Akshay Kumar, Disha Patani, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Arshad Warsi, Shreyas Talpade, Suniel Shetty, Johnny Lever, Kiku Sharda, Krushna Abhishek, Rahul Dev, Daler Mehndi and Mika Singh. The film is the third installment of the hit franchise *Welcome*. The second instalment, titled *Welcome Back* showed released in 2015.

Kangana on Emergency: I'm determined to even go to court to protect my film



Actress-filmmaker Kangana Ranaut says the censor board has not given the certificate to her for the upcoming movie *Emergency* and hopes that it comes on time, otherwise she is determined to fight for it and go to court. About the film getting released

on September 6, Kangana said, "Hopefully, it will. My film got cleared by the censor board. And the day we were about to get the certificate, a lot of people did a lot of drama."

"There are a lot of issues with the censor board as well. So I

hope it gets released. Because suddenly, as they say, the carpet is pulled from below someone's feet. I was very confident that I got the certification. But now they are not giving me my certificate," she added. Kangana is determined to give a tough fight to protect her film. "And it's getting too late. I hope the film comes on time. Otherwise, I am determined to fight for it. I am determined to even go to court to protect my film. To save my right as an individual. You can't change history and scare us by threats," she said.

"We have to show the history. An almost 70-year-old woman was shot 30-35 times in her house... Someone must have killed her. Now you don't want to show it... Because, apparently, you think you can hurt someone. But you have to show the history. So how did she die?... If they are going to suppress the voice of an artiste and my creative liberty... Some people have wielded their guns and we are not afraid of guns," she said.

Need faster verdicts: PM Modi on crimes against women amid Kolkata rape-murder

Amid the outrage over the Kolkata rape-murder, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the country needs faster verdicts in cases of crimes against women to ensure their safety.

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the country needs faster verdicts in cases of crimes against women to ensure their safety. He noted that atrocities against women and the safety of children are matters of grave concern for society. The PM's comments came amid the outrage over the rape-murder of a woman doctor at a government hospital in Kolkata.

"There are several laws in the country that address the issue of women's safety. In 2019, the fast-track courts law was passed, under which witness deposition centres were created. District monitoring committees play an important role. We must ensure these committees are further strengthened and that faster verdicts are delivered in cases involving women's safety," PM Modi said.

Addressing an event in Delhi



on the 75 years of the Supreme Court, he said, "Today, atrocities against women, the safety of children... are serious concerns of society. Many strict laws have been made in the country for the safety of women, but we need to make it more active".

"The faster the decisions are taken in cases related to atrocities against women, the greater assurance of safety half the population will get," he empha-

sized.

The Prime Minister made these remarks a day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to him, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment for heinous crimes like rape and murder. The Trinamool Congress supreme also said that she had written to the Prime Minister earlier but had received no reply from him on

the "sensitive issue".

The central government, responding to Banerjee's letter, also stated that existing laws are strong enough to deal with such crimes and urged the state to act in letter and spirit.

"If the state government follows the central legislation in letter and spirit, it will certainly have a lasting impact on strengthening the criminal justice system, bringing the perpetrators of such crimes to face the consequences commensurate with the offence and also in ensuring justice to the victims or survivors," Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Annapurna Devi, said.

PM Modi, at the Supreme Court event, also stressed that several steps have been initiated in the past 10 years to eliminate delays in delivering justice and to improve judicial infrastructure.

"Hindu, Muslim MLAs sat together": Himanta Sarma on Namaz break decision



RANCHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): After facing criticism over the state assembly's decision to scrap the practice of 2-hour adjournment for Jumma prayers in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday that Hindu and Muslim MLAs together sat and unanimously took the decision that they will work during this period also.

CM Himanta said, "The Hindus and Muslims of our assembly sat in the Malas Rule Committee and unanimously resolved that the two-hour break is not right. We should work during this period as well. This practice started in 1937 and has been discontinued from yesterday."

"This is a unanimous decision. This is not just my decision alone," he added.

The state assembly ended the practice of a two-hour adjournment for Jumma

Prayers, every Friday that was introduced by Saadulah's Muslim League government in colonial Assam.

Assam Speaker Biswajit Daimary said that the decision was taken as it had become difficult to hold discussions on Fridays due to a lack of time.

Former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav hit out at CM Sarma and alleged that the Assam Chief Minister wants "cheap popularity" and further said that the BJP wants to "bother Muslims in some way or the other."

Samajwadi Party leader ST Hassan said, "Himanta Biswa Sarma spreads poison in the society. His government is against Muslims."

According to the previous rule, the sitting of the Assembly on Friday used to be adjourned at 11 am to facilitate Muslim members to go for namaaz, but, as per the new rule, the Assembly will conduct its proceedings without any adjournment for religious purposes.

As per the amended rule, the Assam assembly will commence its proceedings at 9.30 am every day, including Fridays. The order stated that the amendment was done to scrap the colonial practice which aimed at dividing the society on a religious basis.

Drunk civic volunteer rams divider at RG Kar protest site, arrested after sit-in

KOLKATA, Aug 31 (Agencies): A civic volunteer with the Kolkata Police has been arrested for hitting a divider at Sinthi near RG Kar Medical College and Hospital where students were protesting against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor. The protesters claimed the civic volunteer, Gangasagar Ghosh, was drunk, and his bike had a Kolkata Police sticker.

The incident happened at 3.45 am on Saturday when a group of students of Rabinindra Bharathi University were protesting against the doctor's rape and murder. The civic volunteer appeared at the protest spot on his bike and hit a road divider.

The student protesters

immediately intercepted Ghosh and handed him to an on-duty traffic officer, Tarakeshwar Purie. However, the protesters alleged that the traffic sergeant helped the civic volunteer escape from the spot as a huge crowd gathered.

The students' group then staged a sit-in and protested against the police, demanding immediate action against the civic volunteer and the traffic cop.

Later, Kolkata Police arrested the accused civic volunteer based on a complaint filed by the students. A departmental inquiry has been launched against the traffic sergeant while the civic volunteer has been removed from service.

Civic volunteers are hired by Kolkata Police to help manage traffic and assist police during festivals and awareness campaigns.

The development comes as the protests over the RG Kar rape-murder case refuse to die down. The 31-year-old doctor was found dead in the seminar hall of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9.

A civic volunteer of the Kolkata Police, Sanjoy Roy, was arrested a day later. He was arrested after the police found a Bluetooth device near the crime spot. CCTV footage also showed him on the third floor of the hospital where the seminar hall is situated.

"Discussion on Maharashtra Assembly poll seat-sharing done": Ajit Pawar

NAGPUR, Aug 31 (Agencies): National Congress Party (NCP) chief Ajit Pawar on Saturday informed that the first round of discussions on seat sharing between Mahayuti alliance has been completed ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections.

Ajit Pawar also said that the alliance will sit together again for the second time to decide on 288 seats.

"We had our first round of discussions on seat sharing. We will sit again for the second time and decide who gets which seat, out of the 288 seats. We will discuss and decide on that," Ajit Pawar said.

"Elective merit will be the criteria for seat sharing," he added.

Ajit Pawar refused



to comment over Shiv Sena leader Tanaji Sawant's controversial statement over NCP leaders.

"If someone has said something, I don't want to comment on it. I have decided at the beginning of the Jan Samman Yatra that I will not comment on anyone. If someone criticizes me, it does not matter to me. I believe in working," Ajit Pawar said.

Maharashtra Health Minister Tanaji Sawant had expressed his dissatisfaction with the alliance.

"Even if we sit next to each other in the cabinet, I feel like vomiting after coming out," Sawant was quoted as saying.

Earlier, Ajit Pawar visited the site in Malvan where the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj collapsed on

August 26.

Pawar stated, "Everyone is saddened by what has happened. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is our deity, and we are all proud of his legacy. The Chief Minister has held meetings regarding this incident. Efforts are being made to rebuild the memorial. Action will be taken against those responsible. No matter where they flee, they will be found. There is no point in debating whether it was the Navy or the PWD."

Maharashtra legislative assembly elections will be held in 288 constituencies. The Election Commission of India has yet to announce the dates for the election.

The upcoming Maharashtra election will see a contest between the Maha Vikas Aghadi

coalition, comprising the UBT Shiv Sena, NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), and Congress, and the Maha Yuti Alliance, which includes the BJP, Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction), and NCP (Ajit Pawar faction).

The recent Lok Sabha Election has given a boost to the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance, with the Shiv Sena (UBT) winning nine seats, the Congress 13, and the NCP-SP winning eight, bringing the total tally of the alliance to 30.

On the other hand, the Mahayuti alliance suffered a major blow with BJP winning only nine seats, Shiv Sena winning seven and NCP folded with one seat, bringing the total tally of alliance to 17.

Vinesh Phogat joins farmers' stir at Shambhu border: Your daughter is with you

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): Wrestler Vinesh Phogat showed her unwavering support for the farmers' protest as she joined them at the Shambhu border, saying, "Your daughter is with you". Farmers at the Shambhu border marked the 200th day of their ongoing protest on Saturday with a large gathering. Phogat joined them in a show of solidarity.

Farmers have been stationed at the Shambhu border since February 13, after authorities prevented their march to Delhi.

The protesters are demanding a legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all crops, among other key issues.

Phogat, a prominent sports personality and supporter of the farmers' movement, was honoured with garlands by the farmers.

In her speech at the Shambhu border, Vinesh Phogat expressed admiration for the farmers, acknowledging that they have been sitting there for a long time, fighting for their rights, but their energy and determination have not diminished.

She shared her pride in being born into a farmer's family and assured the protesters that she stands with them as their daughter.

"I am lucky that I was born in a farmer's family. I want to tell you that your daughter is with you. We have to stand for our rights because nobody else will come



for us. I pray to God that your demands are met and don't return back without taking your rights," said Phogat.

In her address at the Shambhu border, Vinesh urged the government to fulfil their demands. She voiced her disappointment that the farmers have not been heard for such a long time, emphasising that their determination has inspired others to continue fighting for their rights.

"Farmers are sitting here for 200 days for their rights. I appeal to the government to fulfil their demands. It is very sad that they have not been listened since 200 days. We got a lot of strength by seeing them," she said.

She reiterated that her primary focus is on supporting the farmers in their fight for justice.

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher stated that the protest is being conducted peacefully but with great intensity. He mentioned that the Centre is testing their

resolve, and their demands have not yet been met.

"We will present our demands to the government once again, and new announcements will also be made," Pandher told agency. He emphasised that completing 200 days of protest is a significant milestone.

The farmers have called for strict action against Bollywood actress and Member of Parliament (MP) Kangana Ranaut. They have urged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to take a firm stand against Ranaut, whose remarks have previously sparked controversy and opposition among the farming community.

The farmers have also hinted at revealing their strategy for the upcoming Haryana polls. They plan to announce their next steps in the coming days, emphasising their intention to play an active role in the political landscape of the state.

Pilot drops damaged helicopter mid-air to avoid accident

DEHRADUN, Aug 31 (Agencies): In a heart-stopping manoeuvre, a pilot flying an Airforce Mi-17 helicopter was forced to drop a damaged helicopter being transported for repairs after the Mi-17 experienced sudden imbalance mid-air. The dramatic incident occurred when the pilot, realizing the danger, released the crippled helicopter, which crashed to the ground.

Fortunately, no casualties or damage to property were report-

ed, thanks to the swift action by the pilot.

The disabled helicopter belonged to Crystal Aviation Company.

"We were transporting the damaged helicopter to Gauchar when the Mi-17 suddenly became imbalanced," said a source.

"The pilot, sensing danger, quickly scanned for an empty space and dropped the helicopter into the valley," he said.

According to government sources, the helicopter being carried for repair had made an

emergency landing on May 24, 2024, due to technical issues. Following this, the aircraft was being transported to Gauchar airstrip for repairs, suspended from an Indian Air Force Mi-17 helicopter.

Rahul Choubey, District Tourism Officer, told this newspaper, "On May 24, a technical glitch in a Crystal Aviation company helicopter prompted the pilot to make an emergency landing short of the Kedarnath helipad, and fortunately all passen-

gers on board landed safely."

According to sources at the District Disaster Management Office, "There were no passengers or cargo on board the crippled helicopter when it crashed."

A rescue team rushed to the scene immediately after receiving the news and is currently assessing the situation.

"We urge everyone not to spread rumours about any casualties in the helicopter crash," said a spokesperson for the rescue team.

Former JMM MLA Lobin Hembrom joins BJP

RANCHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): In yet another shocker for the ruling JMM ahead of the Assembly polls, expelled former JMM MLA from Borio, Lobin Hembrom, joined the BJP at the state BJP office in Ranchi on Saturday.

Notably, the Speaker tribunal of the Jharkhand Assembly had cancelled his membership in a defection case.

During the occasion, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Kolhan Tiger and BJP leader Champai Soren, BJP leader Sita Soren, State President Babulal Marandi and Leader of Opposition Amar



Kumar Bauri were also present. Hembrom contested Lok Sabha elections from Rajmahal Lok Sabha seat as an independent

candidate breaking the party line, due to which, the JMM also expelled him from the party for six years.

Lobin is counted as a strong tribal leader in the Santhal Pargana region of the state.

Notably, Lobin had been vocal against his party while being in the JMM for quite some time. He had raised the issues related to illegal mining and transportation in the district, after which ED started investigating the matter.

Earlier on Friday, JMM's senior leader Champai Soren joined the BJP.

Rahul Dravid's son Samit earns India U19 call-up for Australia series

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced squad for the upcoming multi-format series between India Under 19 and Australia Under 19 on Saturday, August 31. Samit Dravid, son of the legendary India cricketer and former India head coach Rahul Dravid, also found a place in both red-ball and white-ball teams.

Notably, 18-year-old Samit was recently seen playing in the Maharaja T20 Trophy for Mysuru Warriors. However, the right-handed batter didn't have a memorable time in the league scoring just 82 runs from seven innings at an average of 11.71 and a strike rate of 113.88.

His highest score of the tournament came against Gulbarga Mystics where he scored 33 (24) with the help of four fours and



a six. Meanwhile, apart from him, Uttar Pradesh's Mohamed Amaan will be seen leading the One-Day squad in the upcoming series while Soham Patwardhan will be seen leading the team in the four-day matches.

Notably, India U-19 will take on Australia U-19 in three 50-over



games on September 21, 23 and 26 in Puducherry followed by two four-day matches in Chennai beginning from September 30.

India U-19 Squad for one-day series: Rudra Patel (VC) (GCA), Sahil Parakh (MAHCA), Kartikeya KP (KSCA), Mohd Amaan

(C) (UPCA), Kiran Chormale (MAHCA), Abhigyan Kundo (WK) (MCA), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK) (SCA), Samit Dravid (KSCA), Yudhajit Guha (CAB), Samar N (KSCA), Nikhil Kumar (UTCA), Chetan Sharma (RCA), Hardik Raj (KSCA), Rohit Rajawat (MPCA), Mohd Enaan (KCA)

India U-19 Squad for four-day series: Vaibhav Suryavanshi (Bihar CA), Nitya Pandya (BCA), Vihan Malhotra (VC) (PCA), Soham Patwardhan (C) (MPCA), Kartikeya KP (KSCA), Samit Dravid (KSCA), Abhigyan Kundo (WK) (MCA), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK) (SCA), Chetan Sharma (RCA), Samar N (KSCA), Aditya Rawat (CAU), Nikhil Kumar (UTCA), Anmoljeet Singh (PCA), Aditya Singh (UPCA), Mohd Enaan (KCA).

US Open: Bopanna into men's and mixed doubles pre-quarters, Bhambri advances



NEW YORK, Aug 31 (Agencies): India's Rohan Bopanna made progress in both men's and mixed doubles event of the US Open on Saturday, August 31. The 44-year-old competing alongside Indonesia's Aldila Sutjiadi beat Demi Schuurs and Tim Pütz in a tight first round match by 7-6 (7), 7-6 (5).

Both pairs put on an

excellent exhibition of tennis fighting tooth and nail for the victory forcing both games into a tie-breaker. However, it was Bopanna and Sutjiadi who prevailed over the German-Dutch duo to progress to the pre-quarters where they will face the pair of John Peers and Kateřina Siniaková.

Bopanna also had a field day even in the

men's doubles event as he, along with Matthew Ebden, edged past the pair of Roberto Carballes Baena and Federico Coria comfortably in the second-round match. The second-seeded duo beat the Spanish-Argentinian duo by 6-2, 6-4 to seal their spot in the pre-quarters. They will be up against the Argentinian pair of Maximo Gonzalez and Andrés Molteni in the next game.

Meanwhile, another Indian, Yuki Bhambri, also progressed ahead at Flushing Meadows with a second round victory along with Albano Olivetti. The duo beat Austin Krajicek and Jean-Julien Rojer by 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 to progress to the third round.

Big blow to India as senior batter suffers hand injury ahead of Bangladesh test

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 (Agencies): Team India is all set to face Bangladesh in the upcoming two-match Test series, kick-starting from September 19 in Chennai. The T20 World Cup 2024 champions will be back in action after a hiatus of more than a month as their last appearance came against Sri Lanka in a white-ball series. Earlier this year, India faced England in five Tests, so this will also mark their return to the longest format after a gap of six months. However, ahead of the highly-anticipated Test series, India faced a big blow as batter Suryakumar Yadav suffered a hand injury.

The explosive T20I batter, who has played just one Test in his career so far, was eyeing a possible return to the longest format for India. He was playing in the ongoing Buchi Babu tournament for Mumbai and was also named in the upcoming Duleep



Trophy, which will begin from September 5.

However, things did not go as planned for Surya as he ended up injuring his hand during a Buchi Babu tournament match against Tamil Nadu. According to a report by ESPN Cricinfo, Surya suffered the injury while fielding against Tamil Nadu in Coimbatore.

It was further stated that currently there is no clarity about Surya's participation in the Duleep Trophy. Moreover, it also unclear whether he will be featuring in the Tests against Bangladesh.

Earlier, Surya had expressed his desire of cementing his place in the Indian Test team. He made his Test debut in February 2023 against Australia.

"There are a lot of people who have worked really hard to earn their place and even I want to earn that spot again. I made my debut for India in Tests. After that, I got injured as well. There were a lot of people who got an opportunity and have done well too. They deserve that opportunity right now," Suryakumar said as quoted by ICC.

Defending champion Novak Djokovic shocked at US Open

Popyrin, who beat Djokovic, will try to reach his first Grand Slam quarterfinal by getting past No. 20 Frances Tiafoe

NEW YORK, Aug 31 (Agencies): Defending champion Novak Djokovic was shocked at the US Open one night after Carlos Alcaraz was, bowing out in the third round with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 loss to 28th-seeded Alexei Popyrin of Australia on Friday night.

The No. 2-seeded Djokovic was trying to become the first player in tennis history with 25 Grand Slam singles titles. Instead, after knee surgery in June, he finishes a year without claiming at least one major championship for the first time since 2017. Before that, it hadn't happened since 2010.

Also of note: 2024 now becomes the first season since 2002 in which none of the Big Three of men's tennis — Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer — earned a Slam trophy.

The third-round exit equals Djokovic's worst showing at Flushing



Meadows; the only other occasions he was beaten that early at the US Open came in 2005 and 2006.

Djokovic, who is 37, has reached the final in Ashe 10 times, leaving with the title in 2011, 2015, 2018 and 2023.

On Friday, though, he double-faulted 14 times and looked physically sluggish and emotionally flat, perhaps residual fatigue after collecting his first Olympic gold medal for Serbia by beating Alcaraz in the final at the Paris Games earlier in August.

The No. 3-seeded Alcaraz entered the US Open as the tournament favorite having won the French Open and Wimbledon, and acknowledged his energy was lower than he realized after getting eliminated in New York by 74th-ranked Botić van de Zandschulp 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 on Thursday night.

Djokovic then replaced Alcaraz as the money-line pick to take the men's title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook, but that status didn't last long at all. For the 25-year-old

Popyrin, this represented a real breakthrough: He had been 0-3 against Djokovic and 0-6 in third-round matches at majors.

But the strong-serving Popyrin is playing as well as ever, coming off the biggest title of his career less than three weeks ago at a hard-court tournament in Montreal, where he picked up five wins against opponents ranked in the top 20.

Everything was working against Djokovic, who was not up to his usual high standards.

Popyrin was terrific at the net, going 10 for 10 on serve-and-volley approaches and 25 for 36 overall on points when he pushed forward. Djokovic, in contrast, only won the point on 19 of his 40 trips to the net, in part because Popyrin kept flipping passing shots by him.

Popyrin took big cuts with his powerful forehand, accumulating 22 of his 50 total winners

with that shot.

And he broke Djokovic five times, including for a lead of 3-2 in the fourth. That game felt titanic, lasting more than 10 minutes and including four break chances for Popyrin, who converted the last with an inside-out forehand to close a 22-stroke exchange, then rocked back on his heels, clenched both fists and let out a roar. He took Djokovic's next service game, too, to make it 5-2.

The first time Popyrin served for the match, he faltered, allowing Djokovic to break. The second time, Popyrin finished the deal, holding on as Djokovic sent a forehand long.

Now Popyrin will try to reach his first Grand Slam quarterfinal by getting past No. 20 Frances Tiafoe, who advanced Friday with a 4-6, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3 win over No. 13 Ben Shelton in a matchup between two Americans.

"Like maids working at homes": Pakistan star's tirade against cricket board over 'favoritism, false promises'

ISLAMABAD, Aug 31 (Agencies): Ahmed Shahzad, Pakistan cricket star, has been very critical of the country's board of late. His tirades started with Pakistan's falling form in international cricket. Pakistan cricket hit a new low recently as it suffered the first ever loss to Bangladesh in Tests. Since then, former Pakistan cricketers have been quite critical. Shahzad is also among them. After the first Test loss, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) brought some changes in its domestic structure.

The PCB has named Waqar Younis, Shoaib Malik, Misbah-ul-Haq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, and Saqlain Mushtaq as mentors for the teams during the Champions One-Day Cup. It appointed the five former stalwarts of Pakistan in preparation for the 2025 Champions Trophy.

Shahzad, who has

pulled out of the Champions Cup, blasted the PCB.

"The condition of Pakistan cricket team is such that PCB needs some names that can stand in front to protect them so that they come in the line of fire. We have had such discussions before also. The lower the level of Pakistan cricket teams falls, the higher the money paid to these people. Even though they have coaching staff, but no disrespect, just like there are maids working at homes and the women of the house point out the dirty areas after a while, the work of the PCB looks the same," he said.

"Your work is the same."

Damage Control Strategy of PCB! Earlier, in another X post, Shahzad had written that he is pulling out of the domestic competition due to 'favoritism, false promises, and injustice.'

"With a heavy heart,



I've decided not to play in the Domestic Cricket Champions Cup.

The PCB's favoritism, false promises, and injustice towards domestic players are unacceptable. In a time when Pakistan is struggling with inflation, poverty, and massive electricity bills, the PCB is wasting 5 million Rs on mentors for doing nothing and rewarding failed players in the current

team who brought Pakistan cricket to an All-time Low," he posted on X.

"It's even more disrespectful that the PCB claims they don't have 'instruments for surgery' which is a huge disrespect for domestic players. As a Pakistani and true cricket lover, I cannot support a system that has no value for merit. I refuse to be a part of this failed setup."

After historic midnight win, Aryna Sabalenka thanks crowd for staying late

NEW YORK, Aug 31 (Agencies): World No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka reached the round of 16 at the US Open 2024 as she beat No. 31 Ekaterina Alexandrova. The match started at 12:08 am (US time) and will go down in history as one of the latest matches to have ever begun at the US Open. It finished close to 2:00 am (US time) and saw Sabalenka getting the better of Alexandrova 2-6, 6-1, 6-2. Sabalenka thanked the crowd at the Arthur Ashe Stadium for staying till late and was actually left stunned when she got to know her round 3 match would begin at midnight.

"That was an interesting decision in between matches to have this 1 hour and 20 minute gap. I was like 'no way.. I'm gonna start at midnight.' And that's actually what happened. That was tricky. We stayed with the team and tried to relax. Right before the match we did our warm up and we hoped for the best," Sabalenka told the broadcasters after



the match.

The previous latest recorded start at the US Open came in 1987, when Gabriela Sabatini and Beverly Bowes took to the court at midnight and wrapped up in 90 minutes.

However, an early finish was not on the cards this time as Sabalenka lost the first set to the Russian in 33 minutes. Alexandrova won 76 percent of her first serve points and tallied 10 winners to just seven unforced errors. Sabalenka reaches round 4

"I don't know what I did, I was just trying to stay low, put as many balls as I can back on that side. She played incredible tennis in the first set. It was really tough to change it," Sabalenka said.

In the 2nd set, Sabalenka made a comeback to break Alexandrova's serve for the first time. With her powerful ground strokes, she rallied to win the second set in dominant fashion 6-1. The 26-year-old won 80 percent of her first-serve points and only recorded

three unforced errors. In a great display of power, Sabalenka was leading 5-0 in the third set. However, her set was broken afterwards but a backhand winner by Sabalenka ensured her victory.

"I'm really happy I was able to turn around this match and get this really difficult win."

Why a late start to the US Open clash?

The clash between Alexandrova and Sabalenka was scheduled as the second night match on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The day session match between Frances Tiafoe and Ben Shelton lasted over four hours, and had pushed into the evening. This delayed the start of the night session by more than an hour.

The first match of the night between Alexei Popyrin and Novak Djokovic lasted over three hours, with Popyrin pulling off a major upset in a 4-set win. The delays meant Alexandrova and Sabalenka did not take the court until near midnight.

Ladakh all set to hold 11th Edition of Ladakh Marathon

Top News Report

LEH, Aug 31: The Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, UT Ladakh, Dr Pawan Kotwal, convened a preparatory meeting regarding the conduct of the 11th edition of the Ladakh Marathon at the Civil Secretariat, Leh.

At the outset, Secretary to Youth Services & Sports, UT Ladakh, Vikram Singh Malik provided detailed insights about the Marathon, challenges and bottlenecks which impede the event.

The event will feature

six different categories with the participation of 6281 runners representing 28 countries, marking it the largest international event organised in Ladakh. The categories include the Silk Route Ultra, (122 km), Khardongla Challenge (72km), Full Marathon (42km), Half Marathon (21 km), 11.2km Run, and Run for Fun (5km).

During the meeting, a comprehensive powerpoint presentation was given by the organiser of the event, Chewang Motup, highlighting the importance of collaborative endeavours.

He informed the Advisor about the need of basic amenities, like availability of water, medical assistance, and a smooth traffic movement plan to be streamlined for the success of this event. The 11th edition of Ladakh Marathon, will take place from 5th to 8th September.

Advisor Dr Kotwal directed all the concerned departments and stakeholders to work hand in hand to make the event a successful one. He stressed that to deal with any kind of emergency during the event, Physiotherapists,

helpline numbers of police, health officials, and other concerned officials must be readily available to handle any unforeseen situation.

Chewang Motup also stressed that the event should be promoted well on social media, and directed to ensure awareness among the public about routes and traffic movements to avoid inconvenience to the public. He stated that advisories should be issued well in time in these regards. Adding that traffic closures along Marathon route, to Coordinate with IAF

for helicopters in case emergency to rescue and evacuate.

The meeting was attended by the Administrative Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, UT Ladakh; Administrative Secretary, General Administration Department, UT Ladakh; Administrative Secretary, IT Transport, UT Ladakh; SS Leh; Principal Secretary, UT Ladakh; SSP traffic UT Leh; ITBP Security officials DIG, and other concerned officials, Director Rural Development Department joined the meeting virtually.

Sainik Samaj Party announces assembly candidates

Top News Report

JAMMU Aug 31: The Sainik Samaj Party, JKUT, organized a media interaction to introduce their candidates for the upcoming assembly elections from Jammu East, Jammu West, and Jammu North.

Col SS Pathania introduced Sanjiv Luthra as the candidate for Jammu East, Sumit Sharma for Jammu West, and Er. Dalbir Chib for Jammu North.

During the interaction, Pathania emphasized the urgent need for a change in the current political landscape.

He stated that a significant shift is only achievable if patriotic and nationalist



individuals—who are educated, competent, visionary, and have zero tolerance for corruption—step forward with a commitment to serving the nation and humanity.

Pathania also mentioned that the party's manifesto has already been released and that a door-to-door campaign by the can-

didates will commence shortly.

He urged politically inclined citizens to participate in the assembly elections under the mandate of the Sainik Samaj Party.

The candidates, in turn, shared their vision and strategies for contesting the elections in their respective constituencies.

GCPFI opposes reservation policy

Top News Report

JAMMU Aug 31: A meeting of the core group of the General Category People's Front of India (GCPFI) was held on Saturday under the leadership of Raj Kumar Banathia, the Chairman of the Front.

During the meeting, Prof. Yash Paul Sanson, the President of the Front, strongly criticized the government's continued support for caste-based reservations, accusing them of promoting caste divisions rather than working to eliminate them.

He expressed the growing frustration among the

general category population, which includes Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and others, over the ongoing reservation system.

Prof. Sanson emphasized that the mood of the masses is turning against both the Congress and BJP, as these parties have failed to protect the rights of the general category.

He stated that voters from the general category are increasingly unwilling to support parties that back reservations, quotas, special privileges, and concessions, which they believe have led to their marginalization.

Prof. Sanson called for the complete abolition of reservations and urged the government to implement the Supreme Court's rulings on the matter.

He criticized the caste-based reservation system, arguing that it has become a special qualification used for political gain at the expense of the general category.

Som Nath Sharma, General Secretary of GCPFI, passionately appealed to the government to end the reservation system and address the discrimination faced by the general category. He accused the gov-

ernment of denying the basic rights of the general category through biased policies and called for the removal of these injustices.

The meeting also saw the unanimous passing of a resolution protesting the government's refusal to recognize the general category's political rights, particularly the "Right to be elected."

The Front urged voters in reserved constituencies to press the NOTA button or boycott the elections altogether.

V.K. Sharma, Vice President of the Front, highlighted recent Supreme Court verdicts on reservations, includ-

ing the exclusion of the creamy layer and quotas within the SCs/STs reservation.

He supported the views of Jitan Ram Manjhi and Kirori Lal Meena, who have endorsed these court rulings.

Other prominent members of the Front, including V.K. Sharma, Bhushan Pargal, Deepak Kumar Khajuria, Ravi Sawhney, Jagdish Dogra, Dr. Banshi Lal, Kewal Krishan Sharma, Surinder Kumar, and Gopal Dass Verma, echoed similar sentiments, calling for an end to what they described as the cancerous effect of reservations on Indian society.

NSS SMVDU organizes food preparation event at Govt School

Top News Report

KATRA, Aug 31: NSS unit of SMVDU Katra



organized a food preparation event at Govt Primary School Sirah village.

The event was organized to engage volunteers to work in a team

and to have bonding with school students.

NSS volunteers reached school with all

items such as mixed vegetables, poori, boondi raita and halwa in the school premises.

Afterwards, volunteers served the food to the school students and teachers.

School students were very happy after having the special meal of the day. NSS volunteers regularly organize different events in all nearby Govt. Schools.

NSS volunteer Sadhvi Sharma coordinated the whole event with other volunteers. NSS coordinator, Dr. Rajiv Kumar and staff member Avd-hesh Gupta were also present during the event.

School incharge Monika thanked the NSS SMVDU team for organizing the event in the school. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Pragati Kumar appreciated the efforts of NSS volunteers and emphasized on organizing more such events in other schools also.

People of Patnazi, Mori embrace BJP under leadership of Haji Tariq Hussain Keen



Top News Report

BONJWAH, Aug 31: In a significant development ahead of the upcoming assembly elections, the people of Patnazi and Mori Panchayats have shown overwhelming support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of Haji Tariq Hussain Keen, the BJP candidate for the Inderwal Constituency.

Haji Tariq Hussain Keen, who has been actively campaigning in the region, received a warm and enthusiastic welcome from the residents during his recent door-to-door campaign. The residents expressed their confidence in his leadership and vision for the constituency, marking a pivotal moment for the BJP as it continues to strengthen its presence in the region.

The embrace of the BJP by the people of Patnazi and Mori Panchayats is seen as a major boost for the party, signaling a shift in political dynamics within the Inderwal Constituency. Local leaders and party workers were present during the campaign, reinforcing the message

of development, inclusivity, and good governance that Haji Tariq Keen has been advocating.

Speaking on the occasion, Haji Tariq Hussain Keen thanked the people for their support and assured them of his commitment to addressing their concerns and working tirelessly for the betterment of the region. He highlighted the party's development agenda and the positive changes it aims to bring to the constituency.

This development is expected to have a substantial impact on the electoral landscape of Inderwal, as the BJP gears up for a strong performance in the forthcoming elections.

PSAJK expresses condolences to JKCSF Vice President

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: The Private Schools Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) deeply mourns the sad demise of Mohammad Masood Bhat, the younger brother of Mohammad Sulieman Bhat, former Trade Union Leader and Vice President of the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Society Forum (JKCSF). Masood Bhat passed away after a brief illness, leaving behind a legacy of kindness and integrity. A delegation from PSAJK, led by President G.N Var, accompanied by other esteemed

members, visited the bereaved family at their residence in North Kashmir's Rajpora-Rajwar, Handwara. The delegation conveyed their profound sympathies and offered support to Mohammad Sulieman Bhat and his family during this difficult time.

The association offered heartfelt prayers (Dua-e-Maghfirat) for the departed soul, beseeching Almighty Allah to grant Mohammad Masood Bhat the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and envelop him in His infinite mercy and forgiveness.

"May Allah forgive his sins, expand his grave,

and grant him eternal peace in the gardens beneath which rivers flow. May Allah also provide strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear this immense loss," prayed PSAJK President G.N Var.

PSAJK stands in complete solidarity with the Bhat family during this difficult time of grief and pledges its unwavering support. The association recognizes the significant contributions of Mohammad Sulieman Bhat to society and extends its full sympathy and condolences to him and his loved ones.

Special train service announced for devotees traveling to Haridwar on "Somavati Amavas"

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Aug 31: In a heartening development for devotees from the Udhampur, Jammu, and Kathua sectors, a special train service has been announced to facilitate their journey to Haridwar on the occasion of "Somavati Amavas."

The announcement was

made by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, who has been instrumental in securing this special service for the devotees.

The special train will significantly ease the pilgrimage for thousands of people who traditionally undertake this holy journey during "Somavati Amavas."

This move has been

widely appreciated by the local communities, especially those who were facing difficulties in traveling due to the limited availability of regular train services.

The special train is expected to ensure a more comfortable and convenient pilgrimage experience for all devotees.

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