

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

### LG Sinha greets people on Navratri

#### Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended his greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Navratri.

In post on X, LG Sinha wrote, "Greetings and warm wishes to you and your family on the auspicious occasion of Navratri."

### 1998 murder case of ex-Bihar minister: SC sentences two persons to life imprisonment

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday sentenced two persons, including ex-MLA Munna Shukla, to life imprisonment in the 1998 murder case of former Bihar minister Brij Bihari Prasad.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Kumar and R Mahadevan partially set aside the Patna High Court verdict acquitting all the accused and asked convicts Mantu Tiwari and ex-MLA Shukla to surrender within 15 days.

The top court, however, gave benefit of doubt to six other accused, including former MP Surajbhan Singh, and upheld their acquittal as ordered by the high court in the case.

### Man killed, two others injured in Verinag accident

SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): One person was killed while as two others were injured on Wednesday after a vehicle hit them at the main road Bonagund area of Verinag in Anantnag district.

Officials said that this morning, an Alto car driven by an unknown person hit three pedestrians at main road Bonagund.

In this incident, one person was killed on the spot while the other two were seriously injured and were shifted to district hospital Anantnag for treatment.

They have been identified as Ghulam Nabi Mir 67 (deceased) son of Gani Mir, Hasena 62 (injured) wife of Ghulam Nabi and Mushtaq Ahmad Mir 46 (Injured) all residents of

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## Supreme Court ends caste-based discrimination in prisons, orders immediate reforms

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Supreme Court of India has struck down provisions in state prison manuals that enable caste-based discrimination, stating that assigning menial and degrading tasks to prisoners based on their caste violates constitutional protections under Article 15, Bar and Bench reported.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, along with Justices JB Parid-



wala and Manoj Misra, emphasised that such practices, even if implied, cannot be toler-

ated under the Constitution.

The Supreme Court, in its ruling, declared,

"Assigning cleaning and sweeping to marginalised groups and assigning cooking to higher castes is nothing but a violation of Article 15. Such indirect uses of phrases which target so-called lower castes cannot be used within our constitutional framework, even if caste is not explicitly mentioned."

The Court also emphasised the importance of dignity, stating, "Not providing dignity to

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## Sonam Wangchuk released, prohibitory order withdrawn: Delhi Police to HC



NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Thursday told the Delhi High Court that

climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and his associates have been released from detention. The senior law officer

also said that the Delhi Police order prohibiting assembly and protests in various parts of Delhi has also been withdrawn.

Mehta made the statement before a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela.

The bench was hearing petitions seeking the release of Wangchuk as well challenging the prohibitory order.

Around 120 people

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## Sonamarg tourist footfall soars to six lakh in five years

SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): Sonamarg—a picturesque place in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district has been witnessing a flow of tourists in the past five years and the footfall has gone up to six lakhs by this year.

The number of tourists has increased by 11

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Navratri Greetings To All Our Readers

## Navratri: JK Police issue special traffic advisory to minimise traffic congestion

JAMMU, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir Traffic Police have issued an advisory to minimise traffic congestion and ensure a smooth experience for devotees visiting Kali Mata Mandir Baghe-Bahu Jammu and Kandoli Mata Nagrota during the Navratri festival from October 3 to 12. In a post on X, Jammu and Kashmir Police said, "General public in particular those visiting Kali Mata Mandir Baghe-

Bahu Jammu and Kandoli Mata Nagrota during the celebration of Holy Navratri festival w.e.f 03-10-2024 to 12-10-2024 for paying obeisance, advised to follow the particular route to reach the respective Temple to minimize the traffic pressure/chaos of the approaching routes."

"During the Navratri period, there will be one-way vehicular traffic movement towards the Baghe-e-Bahu Temple to

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## Exchange of fire in Kishtwar

SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): An exchange of fire between militants and security forces is being reported in Chatroo area of Kishtwar district, reports said Thursday.

Quoting officials news agency GNS reported that contact was established with the militants after a specific input was received by security forces about their presence in the area.

More reinforcement

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## Will win absolute majority on October 8: Ravinder Raina

JAMMU, Oct 3 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir chief of BJP Ravinder Raina Thursday said that the way people voted in record numbers in all three phases of Assembly polls held after a decade suggests that BJP will win absolute majority on October 8.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, Raina said that people from every nook and corner of Jammu and Kashmir came out in record numbers to exer-



cise their right to franchise in all three phases.

"I am of the firm belief that the way people voted in record numbers, BJP will emerge as the single largest party in J&K on October 8. The new govern-

ment will carry forward the vision and mission of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and take J&K to new heights of development, peace and prosperity," Raina said addressing a press conference in Jammu.

He said the way people voted signals that people have expressed faith in democracy and also in the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that entails—Sab Ka Saath, Sab ka Vikas and Sab ka Vishwas.

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## Indian Army trains aspirants to join Army under Agniveer Scheme

SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): In the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Army's Wussan Battalion of the 34 Assam Rifles in the Kangan area launched an inspiring initiative for army aspirants in the valley.

The Indian Army is training around 20 aspirants, now gearing up for their physical test after a successful initial assessment. The dedicated team at the Kangan unit is actively supporting their preparation, offering guidance and resources to ensure the candidates are well-equipped for



the challenges ahead. In a remarkable display of commitment, the Army is providing comprehensive support, including breakfast meals and necessary train tickets for travel to training locations.

The initiative not only fosters a spirit of cama-

raderie and discipline among the youth but also reinforces the community's connection to the armed forces. The aspirants have expressed immense gratitude for the assistance, highlighting how this program has

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## Sahil Gupta applauds voter turnout in Jammu, credits Modi's leadership for strengthening democracy

### Top News Report

JAMMU Oct 3: BJP Ex-Councillor Sahil Gupta, representing Ward No. 7, commended the people of the Jammu region for their overwhelming participation in the third and final phase of the Assembly elections.

He expressed sincere gratitude for the enthusiasm displayed by voters, describing the unprecedented turnout as a testament to the flourishing democracy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a statement reflecting on previous election cycles, Sahil Gupta noted a significant shift in the public's attitude towards voting. "In the past, there was a general sense of indifference among the people when it came to casting their votes," Gupta remarked.

He explained that many

voters previously felt disconnected from the political process, viewing elections as a distant or irrelevant matter.

However, this time around, the spirit of democracy seemed to resonate strongly, with people actively coming out in large numbers to exercise their democratic right.

Gupta attributed this positive shift to the continued efforts of the Modi government in strengthening India's democratic institutions and processes.

"The change we are witnessing today is a direct result of the efforts of Prime Minister Modi's government, which has empowered citizens to take an active role in shaping their future," he stated. According to Gupta, the current political landscape under Modi's leadership has encour-



aged a sense of responsibility and civic duty among voters, contributing to the record turnout in Jammu and surrounding areas.

Sahil Gupta went on to emphasize that voting is not just about selecting a representative but about taking part in the broader process of nation-building. He expressed optimism that this trend of increased voter engage-

ment will continue in the coming elections, ensuring a more vibrant and representative democracy.

Throughout the day, Sahil Gupta personally visited various polling stations across the Bishnah constituency to monitor the voting process. He interacted with voters, listening to their feedback and ensuring that the polling was conducted smoothly. Gupta expressed satisfaction with the efficient organization of the election, noting that no significant obstacles or issues were reported at the booths he visited.

Gupta further praised the voters for their active participation and engagement. "I want to thank the people of Jammu for turning up in such large numbers and making this election a success. Their participation is a vic-

tory for democracy and a reflection of the growing political awareness in the region," he said.

The Ex-Councillor also commended the election staff and officials for their efforts in ensuring a seamless and secure voting process. He appreciated the dedication of those working behind the scenes to make the election a smooth and transparent affair, from security personnel to polling officers.

Sahil Gupta reiterated his belief that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been pivotal in promoting political engagement and empowering citizens. He praised the electorate's enthusiasm and expressed hope that future elections will witness similar levels of civic participation, ultimately strengthening the foundation of Indian democracy.

## Panchayat, urban body elections likely in J&K before year-end



SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Panchayat and urban body elections are likely to be held before the year's end in Jammu and Kashmir.

After the successful conclusion of Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in J&K, officials say the local elections will be held by December.

"Preparations are now

underway for the Panchayat and urban body elections in J&K. For this purpose security forces deployed to ensure the peaceful conduct of the Assembly elections will remain in J&K until the municipal and panchayat elections are completed," said the officials.

Officials said that the decision to retain the security forces has been taken keeping in view the high cost associated with to and fro movement and for the redeployment of such forces in J&K.

The terms of office of the municipal corporations in both Jammu and Srinagar expired last November. As per legal requirements, elections must be held either before or shortly after the end of the corporation's term.

The delay has made these elections long overdue prompting the government to prioritise their completion.

Security forces were first deployed for the Amarnath Yatra and later for the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly polls.

After the conduct of

Panchayat and urban body polls, all democratic processes, including the very grassroots level, will be completed in J&K post abrogation of Article 370.

The last Assembly polls were held on September 16, 2018. The 2018 polls were held on a non-party basis although political parties had fielded candidates without openly supporting them.

A total of 27,281 panchs (panchayat members) and sarpanches (village headmen) were elected in the 2018 elections. There were 12,776 vacant sarpanch and panch seats in J&K. Bypolls to the Panchayats were held in 2020.

The Panchayat polls in J&K are not conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) but by the J&K state election commission.

Almost 30,000 panchs and sarpanches completed five-year terms on January 9, 2024, and with that, the disbursement of Rs 25 lakh panchayat fund also ceased. The 2024 Panchayat poll will be held after fresh delimitation of 'Halqas' (Revenue Villages).

## NC-Congress Alliance to provide Stable and developmental oriented Government in J&K: Rattan Lal Gupta

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: The Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), Rattan Lal Gupta, has expressed strong confidence that the NC-Congress alliance will form the next stable and developmental oriented government in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here today, Rattan Lal Gupta pointed to the significant 69.65 percent voter turnout in the three phases of the Assembly polls as a clear indication of the public's desire for change.

The senior NC Leader stated, "The people of Jammu and Kashmir are fed up and frustrated with the misrule of the last ten years under the BJP. There is a yearning for stable governance, and the NC-Congress alliance is committed to fulfilling that need."



He emphasized that J&K requires a stable government to address the pressing issues faced by its citizens. "Our focus will be on delivering a government that is both drugs-free and corruption-free, ensuring a bright future for the J&K," he said.

Highlighting the NC-Congress alliance's vision for the state, Rattan Lal Gupta further noted that the parties are united in their efforts to restore peace, development, and prosperity to the J&K. "We aim to build a Jammu and Kashmir where opportunities are created for all, and

where people can live without fear, free from the scourge of corruption and drug abuse."

Mr Gupta further said that the priority of the new Government will be to fulfill the promises of the manifesto to provide 1 lakh jobs to local youths of J&K, implementation of J&K Youth Employment Generation Act within three months, 12 LPG cylinders free of cost to EWS, free travelling of women in all public transport, enhancement of marriage assistance from Rs 50000 to Rs 75000, increase of medical allowance of pensioners to Rs 1000 from Rs 300, Minority Commission to be strengthened and free ration of 10 kg per person per month shall be given to each BPL families, Rs 5000 Pm to each EWS household, free 200 units electricity power and free drinking water without charges.

## Manvik Gaur- a young author of 12 years hailing from Basohli publishes books on AI

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: In a remarkable achievement, Manvik Gaur - a 12-year-old prodigious author and a student of K.C. International School, son of Mansha Khajuria and Dr. Vishal Sharma hailing from Basohli, District Kathua of Jammu & Kashmir, has successfully published two books, marking an early milestone in his literary journey.

The book was released by Dr. Chinmay Pandya, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya Haridwar Uttarakhand.

Dr. Chinmay Pandya is grandson of one of the greatest scholars, seers, philosophers of recent times in India- Pt. Shri Ram Sharma Acharya (1911-1990), who was the founder of All World Gayatri Pariwar fraternity, which has 160 million members and thousands of global centers focused on social reform.

Dr. Chinmay Pandya, carrying forward his grandfather's legacy, remains a beacon of knowledge and cultural preservation.

Dr. Chinmay Pandya lauded the young author's remarkable accomplishments at such a tender age, emphasizing the importance of nurturing creativity and innovation in children to shape a better future.

He expressed confidence that these books will inspire other young



readers to pursue their dreams and explore new fields of learning.

One of the author's standout books, "Python Playtime: Kid's Guide to Coding for AI," is designed to ignite the curiosity of young minds and serve as an accessible entry point into the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The book simplifies complex AI concepts, making it easy for children to understand and apply programming skills using Python.

In his second book "Saviour The Son Goku", the young author continues to demonstrate his passion for both storytelling and technology, further cementing his reputation as an emerging voice in the literary and technological space.

These books are avail-

able on all major online platforms. The release of these books signifies a bright new chapter in the fusion of education, creativity, and technology, providing young learners with the tools they need to become future innovators.

Link of the Books: Book 1st: "Saviour The Son Goku"

Bribooks: <https://www.bribooks.com/bookstore/saviour-the-son-goku>

Amazon: <https://www.bribooks.com/bookstore/saviour-the-son-goku>

Book 2nd: "Python Playtime: Kid's Guide to Coding for AI,"

Amazon link: <https://shorturl.at/LREK>

Flipkart link: <https://shorturl.at/hWO2>

Notion Press: <https://notionpress.com/read/python-playtime-kid-s-guide-to-coding-for-ai>

## Bhalla inaugurates & participates in Shobha Yatra to mark beginning of Navratri festival



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: On the occasion of first Navratri, JKPC Working President Raman Bhalla today inaugurated and participated in the magnificent Shobha Yatra, taken out from Bage E Bahu Bawe Bali Mata with religious fervour and gaiety amidst chanting of Bhajans and hymns in praise of Maa Vaishno Devi towards famous Mahamaya Mandir. Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla said that such festivals symbolize unity in diversity besides highlighting composite culture of the State. These events also provide a common platform to the people irrespective of caste, colour and creed to interact with each other and share their culture and traditions which further help in strengthening bonds of brotherhood and communal harmony. Extending

greetings to the people in general and pilgrims in particular on Navratras, Bhalla said that the festival provides an opportunity to the visiting yatris to have a glimpse of our rich cultural heritage and peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths. He said that efforts must be made by LG Administration to create additional infrastructural facilities at Bawe Bali Mata temple to meet the increasing rush of pilgrims effectively. Lauding the role of various local associations connected with the Navratri festival, Bhalla said that such events could not get successful without the active participation of the locals. Highlighting the fast growing popularity of the festival, Bhalla said the yearly event was started for popularizing the Holy Cave Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi Ji as a major pilgrim destination of the State. He asked

Government to make all out efforts to provide all modern line basic amenities to the visiting pilgrims from across the country. He said the devotees of Shri Mata Vashino Devi Jee and Shiv Khori is increasing day-by-day. Thousands of devotees on Thursday thronged ancient Mahakali Temple (Bawe Wali Mata) in this winter capital to pay obeisance to mark the celebrations of first day of nine-day long Navratras. Amidst enchanting of Jaikaras in praise of deity, devotees were seen lined up in the premises of the temple on Tuesday midnight for early Darshan of Goddess Kali. In view of this, he maintained that there is urgent need to develop facilities at famous Mahamaya Mandir, Shree Ranbireswar Mandir, Shree Raghunath Mandir and others including the Chichi Mata Mandir to accommodate huge rush of devotees.

## Kavinder pays obeisance at Bawe Wali Mata Temple on first day of Navratri

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta, today paid obeisance at the ancient Bawe Wali Mata Temple on the auspicious occasion of the first day of the Navratri Festival.

Accompanied by party colleagues, the BJP stalwart sought the blessings of Mata Rani for the peace, prosperity, and well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Kavinder Gupta highlighted the significance of Navratri as a time of spiritual rejuvenation and reflection. He urged people to participate in the festival with devotion and uphold the values of harmony and unity. "Navratri symbolizes the triumph of good



over evil, and it is an opportunity for all of us to come together and pray for strength, health, and happiness," he remarked.

The former Deputy Chief Minister also extended his heartfelt wishes to the people, hoping that the festival brings positive change to every household. He lauded the rich cultural and religious heritage of Jammu, of which

the Bawe Wali Mata Temple is a significant part, drawing thousands of devotees from across the region.

The senior BJP leader reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that religious festivals are celebrated peacefully and that the government remains dedicated to protecting and promoting Jammu's cultural legacy.

## Army trying hard to protect borders, says outgoing GOC 15 Corps



SRINAGAR, Oct 3 (Agencies): The outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps, Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai on Thursday said that the Indian Army tried hard to protect borders while maintaining a 'proper connect with the people of Kashmir.'

Addressing a press conference at 15 Corps headquarters, Ghai said that Kashmir has seen numerous significant events taking place here and a lot of development coming to the region.

"Significant efforts are being made by 15 Corps, J&K police and other security agencies. There has been no active terror recruitment in the region while number of active terrorists has also reduced and has become almost negligible," Rajiv Ghai said.

He said it was a challenge is to maintain the situation while some more years are required like the current year and 2023 for enduring peace.

"There are around 80 active terrorists in Kashmir. The figure has gone down. Their number will be further down by mid next year," he said

Rajiv Ghai said that the army has started various schemes for the welfare

of people. "We prepare students for various examinations like NEET and other competitive exams," he said.

He said the Indian Army is also addressing the challenge of drugs in Kashmir as well. "We have also taken various initiatives in Sports activities as several youth from Valley have brought laurels to the country. We are also promoting culture," he said.

He said the Indian Army was aware of its responsibilities for nation building.

"We foiled infiltration attempts by terrorists from across the border. This summer there were less attempts of infiltration," he said.

He further stated that successful infiltration attempts were not mostly made in Kashmir but at other places.

Referring to the frequent attacks in Pir Pranjol range, Rajiv Ghai said that there were chances that the terrorists may attempt to take shelter in Kashmir. "Terrorists keep moving as they cannot survive at one place," he said.

He further stated that the ceasefire announced in February 2021 was intact and was being followed from both sides.

## EDITORIAL

India as  
'Vishwa Bandhu'

India, often referred to as 'Vishwa Bandhu', embodies the spirit of global brotherhood and unity. The term 'Vishwa Bandhu' translates to 'World Brother' or 'Universal Friend', reflecting India's long-standing ethos of inclusivity and communal harmony. This philosophy is deeply rooted in Indian culture, history, and spiritual traditions, fostering a vision of a world where diversity is celebrated and unity is paramount.

Historically, India has been a melting pot of cultures, religions, and philosophies. From ancient times, it has embraced various civilizations, including the Indus Valley, Vedic, and Mauryan empires, each contributing to a rich tapestry of societal values. The teachings of sages like Gautama Buddha and Mahavira further emphasized compassion, non-violence, and universal welfare, resonating across borders and influencing global thought.

The struggle for independence in the 20th century showcased India's commitment to non-violence and peaceful coexistence, championed by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. His philosophy of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) and 'Satyagraha' (truth-force) not only galvanized the nation but also inspired global movements for civil rights and freedom.

In contemporary times, India stands as a beacon of hope and resilience amidst global challenges. As a democracy, it champions values of freedom, equality, and justice, serving as a model for emerging nations. India's commitment to a multi-religious society underscores its identity as Vishwa Bandhu. The country is home to a myriad of religions, languages, and ethnicities, each coexisting peacefully, contributing to the country's vibrant social fabric.

India's foreign policy further reinforces its role as a global leader. Initiatives like the 'Act East' policy and participation in international forums like BRICS, the G20, and the United Nations demonstrate its commitment to collaborative global governance. India's focus on sustainable development, climate change, and technological innovation positions it as a crucial player in addressing global challenges.

Cultural diplomacy is another pillar of India's identity as Vishwa Bandhu. Through initiatives like Yoga and Ayurveda, India shares its ancient wisdom with the world, promoting well-being and holistic health. The global popularity of Indian cuisine, music, and dance further exemplifies how cultural exchanges can foster international understanding and friendship.

The Indian diaspora plays a vital role in this narrative. With over 30 million Indians living abroad, they serve as cultural ambassadors, bridging gaps between nations. Their contributions to various fields, including technology, business, and arts, have strengthened India's global presence and fostered goodwill.

While India's aspirations as Vishwa Bandhu are commendable, challenges remain. Internal divisions, often driven by communal tensions, pose risks to social cohesion. Economic disparities can also hinder the realization of a truly inclusive society. To uphold its role as a global leader, India must address these challenges head-on, fostering dialogue and understanding among its diverse communities.

The rise of nationalism in various parts of the world calls for a reaffirmation of India's commitment to pluralism. By embracing its diversity and promoting inclusivity, India can lead by example, encouraging other nations to adopt similar approaches.

Looking ahead, India's role as Vishwa Bandhu will be shaped by its ability to harness the strengths of its diversity. Education plays a pivotal role in this endeavor; promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance in schools can cultivate a generation that values global citizenship.

Additionally, India can enhance its soft power by expanding cultural exchanges and collaborations with other nations. Initiatives like the International Day of Yoga not only promote wellness but also strengthen international ties.

In conclusion, India as Vishwa Bandhu represents a powerful vision of global unity and brotherhood. By embracing its rich heritage and promoting inclusive growth, India can continue to inspire the world towards a future of peace, cooperation, and mutual respect. As it navigates the complexities of the modern era, India's commitment to being a universal friend remains steadfast, echoing the age-old wisdom that together, we can build a better world for all.

## Navratri is the celebration of feminine power

By: Omkar Dattatray

Navratri festival is celebrated twice in a year, once as Chaitra Navratri and then as Sharad Navratri. Both Navratri's are celebrated with great devotion and traditional gaiety. The underlying essence and spirit is the celebration, respect and reverence to feminine power which is the cause and action of the universe. Thus Navratri is dedicated to the importance of feminine power without which we cannot think of the universe. Therefore by celebrating the Navratri's, we actually celebrate feminine power as its significance is very great in the world and for all humanity. As the name implies, Navratri consists of nine days and nights which are dedicated to the nine forms of the Shakti. During Navratri people especially the women keep fast and worship the small girls being the form of Shakti that is being the feminine power.

Navratri shows and teaches us to revere and respect women and therefore we should learn to respect the women folk in the day to day life and only then we are successful in celebrating Navratri.

We should appreciate that before manifestation of the universe, when nothing else existed, what existed was the omnipresent formless Divine Consciousness. This is also called the static consciousness or Shiva in Hindu scriptures. When universe came into being, first of all from static consciousness manifested Dynamic Consciousness Shakti. Shakti is the feminine power of Shiva and is the creative force behind the world. Shiva as masculine power is not capable of creating anything without feminine power and hence first to manifest is His own creative feminine power as Shakti, who was then allowed to create the universe. This Shakti is also known as the Divine Mother, as everything in the universe has taken birth from its womb. This Divine Mother, which has given birth to the universe, also nurtures and sustains it, and has the power to destroy it. There are primarily and actually nine aspects of the Divine

Mother which helps it to create, sustain and destroy or dissolve back the universe. There are nine aspects of the Divine Mother which are worshipped in the Hindu religion as nine shaktis during the nine days Navratri festival. These nine forms of the Divine Mother (Goddess Durga) are

named as Shalputri, Brahmacharni, Chanderganta Kushmandi, Skandamata, Kyantyne, Kalratri, Mahagauri and Sedehatri.

Durga is the inaccessible, invincible one and omnipotent, the main source of energy for creation. Shalputri is the mother of gross universe. All the gross objects and beings have manifested from this Shalputri aspect of the Divine Mother. Brahmacharni is the form of celibacy. As per Sanatan Dharma, Durga in her Kali roopa fought demons for nine days and eventually freed mother earth from their atrocities. Thus the tenth day is celebrated as Vijaydashmi meaning the day of victory, triumph over bad elements. The Navratri festival basically denotes the tremendous potential power, the feminine aspect of creation has within herself, which also draws down to the power of an ordinary/common women. In fact women is the epitome of the feminine aspect of creation and till she is respected, loved and treated as auspicious for the entire human race, she can give joy, peace and help in the growth of every aspect of creation. Shailputri is the daughter of the Mountain king Himavat, and is manifestation and form of the Hindu mother goddess Mahadevi, representing herself as the pure form of goddess Parvati. She is the first Navadurga venerated during the first day of Navratri, and is incarnation of Goddess Sati. Thus Maa Shailputri is one of the Navadurgas and is the provider of fortune and prosperity.

Devotees hail her as mother nature and pray for their spiritual awakening. The second form of Navadurga is called Brahmacharni which means a devoted female student who lives in an Ashrama with her Guru along with other students. She is the second form of Mahadevi and is worshipped on the second day of Navratri. The goddess Brahmacharni is an aspect of Parvati and wears white clothes, holding a japamala in her right hand and a kamandalu in her right. She is the form of Navadurga who did severe penance and is the goddess of devotion and penance. The third form of Maa Durga is known as Chandraganta. On the third day of Navratri, this form of Durga is worshipped. She is called

Chandraganta because on her forehead is half moon in the shape of Ganta. By her worship, the devotees are freed from all the troubles of this body and with ease reach to supreme bliss. It is

the Chandarganta who had killed the demon Maheshasura and freed the world from this cruel demon. The fourth form of Maa Durga is called Kushmanda. She has created the universe with her small smile and thus the name Kushmanda. She is worshipped on the fourth day of Navaratri. Skandamata is the fifth among the Navadurga forms of Mahadevi. Her name comes from Skanda, an alternate name for the war god. She is the powerful goddess whose love and care helped Lord Kartikeya to defeat the demon Tarkasura. Lord Shiva and Maa Parvati's first son, Lord Kartikeya, was also known as Skanda. Hence Maa Parvati is often referred to as Skandamata. She is believed to protect her devotees, just like a mother protects her child from harm. The sixth form of Maa Durga is known as Katyani and she is an aspect of Mahadevi and the slayer of the tyrannical demon Mahishasura. In Shaktism, she is associated with the fierce forms of Shakti or Durga, a warrior goddess, which also includes Bhadrakali and

Chandika. With the difficult penance of saint Kantiyan she took birth from the couple of Katayana as she was happy with his penance and hence the sixth form of Maa Durga is called Katayani. She is believed to bless her devotees and benefits them. The seventh form of Maa Durga is known as Kalratri and she is worshipped on the sixth day of Navratri. She seems very dangerous and fearful, but she always gives good results and blessings. She is first referenced in Devi Mahatmya. Kalaratri is one of the fearsome forms of the goddess. She is the goddess of auspiciousness and courage. Kalaratri is traditionally worshipped during the nine nights of the Navratri celebrations. The seventh day of Navratri puja in

particular is dedicated to her and she is considered the fiercest form of mother goddess, her appearance itself invoking fear. This form of goddess is believed to be the destroyer of all demon entities, ghosts, evil spirits and negative energies, which flee upon knowing of her arrival. Kalaratri is also known as Shubankari meaning auspicious / doing good in Sanskrit, due to the belief that she always provides auspicious results to her devotees. Hence, it is believed that she makes her devotees fearless. Mahagauri is the eighth form among the Navadurga aspects of the Hindu mother

goddess Mahadevi. She is worshipped on the eighth day of Navratri. According to Hinduism, Mahagauri has the power to fulfill all desires of her devotees. The one who worships this goddess, gets relief from all the sufferings in life. She is the goddess of beauty and women, she is very powerful and is the bestower of all good fruits and results.

Siddhidhatri is the ninth and final among the Navadurga aspects of the Hindu mother goddess Mahadevi. As the name Siddhi implies the supernatural power or meditative ability and Dhatri means giver or awardee. She is worshipped on the ninth day of Navratri. She fulfills all the divine aspirations. It is believed that one side of Lord Shiva's body is that of Goddess Siddhidhatri. Therefore Shiva is also known as Ardhanarishwara. According to Vedic scriptures, Lord Shiva attained all the Siddhis by worshipping this form of Maa Durga. She is in fact the goddess of supernatural powers or Siddhis. On the ninth day of the Navaratri, nine small girls are worshipped as being the nine forms of Maa Durga and their feet are washed and they are offered fruits, money, utensils etc. We Indians worship the feminine power during Navaratri's but alas! in actual practice the women are heaped atrocities and they are harassed and even some are subjected to sexual assaults. There is talk of the empowerment of women but in actual world, the women folk is harassed and even molested. It is a big contradiction that on one side we worship the women and on other side there are the increasing cases of molestation and sexual assaults on the women which is very unfortunate and this way we nullify the essence and spirit of Navaratri puja. The best performance of the Navaratri celebrations is only when we learn to revere, respect and honor the women in the day to day life and in homes, places of worship, at workplaces, in educational institutions and at all the places because where women are respected, gods travel there.

Thus the best way to celebrate the feminine power is that we should respect the women in the actual world.

*(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist)*

## Why are Indian students choosing IT, Pharma, and Fashion courses in Europe?

By: Vijay GarG

In recent years, Indian students have shown a growing interest in European universities, opting for a wide range of courses that align with global trends and the promise of international exposure. While traditional programmes in Information Technology (IT) and Pharmaceuticals remain popular due to the excellent career prospects they offer, there has been a notable shift towards unconventional disciplines such as Fashion, Branding, and Luxury.

This shift may seem surprising at first glance, but it is a calculated move by students seeking niche industries with great potential.

For instance, pursuing an MBA in Fashion, Branding, or Luxury in countries like France and Italy, known as fashion powerhouses, can open doors to numerous opportunities. These countries are home to a plethora of household and luxury brands, making them the ideal place for students aiming to establish themselves in the fashion and luxury industries.

By choosing these paths, students are strategically positioning themselves to succeed in highly competitive and specialised fields.

Beyond these niche courses, Indian students are also gravitating towards advanced, industry-specific programmes like industrial engineering and fields tied to Industry 4.0. As Europe embraces technological advancements and industrial innovation, these courses offer a pathway to success in the evolving global market.

## A LONG-TERM SHIFT

While this trend towards European universities may seem like a recent development, it has been gradually building momentum over the past few years. According to a 2022 study by ICEF Monitor, countries like the UK, Germany, and France attracted a significant number of students, especially from India and China. The data revealed that a total of 210,000 students were enrolled from these regions in that year alone.

One reason for this steady growth is the proactive stance taken by European countries. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron announced an ambitious goal to host 30,000 students in France by 2030, signalling a clear intent to attract more international students. While not every European country may make such bold declarations, their policies reflect a welcoming attitude towards foreign students, including those from India.

For Indian students planning to study in Europe, practical concerns like accommodation and visa processes are often top of mind. However, many institutions and organisations offer extensive support to ease the transition.

There are dedicated platforms which provide reliable and convenient student accommodation services. Most European universities also offer on-campus dormitories at affordable rates. Additionally, students can benefit from an extensive network of fellow Indians who have already made the move, offering guidance and support.

When it comes to visas, univer-

sities and education consultants often have in-house experts who guide students through the process. These experts help create the necessary files and ensure that visa applications are completed in a timely and efficient manner, smoothing the path for students to begin their studies abroad.

## NAVIGATING SOPs AND POST-STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

The requirements for international students vary across European universities. Generally, students must demonstrate their academic and language proficiency, with some universities requiring an IELTS band score while others may not. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are designed to assess a student's readiness for the rigorous academic environment in Europe.

Once students have completed their studies, job prospects are promising. Indian students, equipped with strong technical skills and a global mindset, often find themselves in prestigious companies across Europe. In fact, many are drawn to Europe not just for the quality of education but also for the work-life balance and attractive salaries.

European work culture is renowned for promoting a healthier balance between personal and professional life, which adds to the appeal for students seeking a holistic career experience.

## FUTURE TRENDS IN EUROPEAN EDUCATION FOR INDIANS

Looking ahead, the trend of Indian students opting for European universities is expected to continue. The combination

of favourable policies and a desire for high-quality education will likely drive more students towards Europe. However, it is important to note that while European countries are eager to attract international students, their economies are not reliant on this influx.

Unlike some other regions, Europe is unlikely to experience a surge in international enrollments merely for economic reasons.

Instead, the demand for European education amongst Indian students will grow steadily, driven by the reputation of European universities and the diverse opportunities they offer. For students seeking to make their mark in specialised industries like fashion, IT, or advanced engineering, Europe presents a unique and valuable educational landscape.

As more Indian students look beyond traditional educational destinations, European universities are emerging as a top choice for those aiming to combine world-class education with global career opportunities.

Whether it's fashion in Paris, industrial engineering in Germany, or IT in the UK, Europe offers a wealth of opportunities for ambitious Indian students ready to explore new horizons.

*(Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab)*

## ABVP Poonch unit organizes plantation drive

Top News Report

POONCH, Oct 3: The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) Poonch on Thursday organized a plantation drive across various educational institutions and community centers in Poonch.

The initiative took place at the Girls High Secondary School, High School Purani Poonch, and the Paalash Children Home for Boys. This event reflects ABVP's ongoing commitment to promoting an eco-friendly environment and encouraging active participation from students and teachers in environmental conservation.

The plantation drive aimed to raise awareness about the vital role trees play in maintaining ecological balance and combating climate



change.

During the event, students and teachers enthusiastically participated in planting saplings, creating a vibrant atmosphere filled with enthusiasm and a shared sense of responsibility towards nature. Participants were not only

educated about the significance of trees but also engaged in the hands-on experience of planting, leaving a lasting impact on everyone involved.

The ABVP Poonch unit effectively coordinated with school authorities

and the management of Paalash Children Home to ensure the event was meaningful for all participants. Speaking on the occasion, the convenor of the ABVP Poonch unit, Kanav Bali, highlighted the importance of such initiatives in building a sustainable future. He stated, "Trees are the lungs of our planet. By planting them today, we are investing in a healthier and more sustainable tomorrow. It is our duty as responsible citizens to protect our environment, and this plantation drive is a step in that direction."

Notable members Shrutika Sharma and Manthan Dutta were also present during the drive. They praised the dedication of the students, teachers, and community members who participated, expressing their grati-

tude for their commitment to this noble cause.

The event concluded with a pledge from all participants to continue contributing to the environment by planting more trees and spreading awareness about the importance of green spaces. The ABVP Poonch unit plans to organize additional drives in the future, aiming to make Poonch a greener and cleaner place to live.

The plantation drive received an overwhelming response from the community, with students, teachers, and local residents appreciating the efforts of ABVP Poonch. This initiative serves as a powerful reminder that small actions can lead to significant changes in preserving the environment for future generations.

## ASCOMS hospital organizes Basic Neonatal Resuscitation Program

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Department of Pediatrics, ASCOMS Hospital in association with Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) organized Basic Neonatal Resuscitation Program (BNRP) on Thursday.

The Basic Neonatal Resuscitation Program is a flagship program of the IAP under First Golden minute project where medical and paramedical personnel dealing with birth of newborn babies are trained to assess and resuscitate newborn babies if required.

This training was attended by doctors from the department of Pediatrics, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, faculty from the nursing college and staff nurses.

The team of instruc-

tors included Dr Sanjeev K Diga (Professor Department of Pediatrics SMGS Hospital), Dr Subash Slatiha (Senior Pediatrician, Jammu), Dr Vikas Mahajan (Associate Professor, ASCOMS Jammu) and Dr Niraj K Gupta (Assistant Professor, GMC Doda).

It is pertinent to mention that Dr Sanjeev K Diga and Dr Niraj K Gupta are the state coordinators for NRP and are instrumental for conducting these programs across the region.

Dr Ravinder K Gupta, Professor and Head department of Pediatrics ASCOMS, and President IAP Jammu was the chief course coordinator. He highlighted the importance of BNRP course in equipping the medical and paramedical staff with necessary skills to deal with any exigencies at the time of birth of a newborn.

He also stressed that such programs will continue to be held in future in the department. The scientific program was assisted by Dr Sushil Sharma (Assistant Professor ASCOMS), Dr Manoj Sharma (Assistant Professor ASCOMS) and Dr Wajid Ali (Assistant Professor ASCOMS).

Dr Rabinder Rattan Pal, Medical superintendent ASCOMS inaugurated the program and appreciated the efforts of department of Pediatrics ASCOMS under the guidance of Prof Gupta

in organising such workshops on a regular basis. He also highlighted the importance of neonatal resuscitation program to curb down neonatal mortality.



## Jammu Sanskriti School student excels in CBSE North Zone Taekwondo Championship

Top News Report

JAMMU Oct 3: Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu, is thrilled to announce the exceptional achievement of Mehak Sharma, who secured a gold medal at the CBSE North Zone II Taekwondo Championship held in Sonapat, Haryana.

The CBSE North Zone II Taekwondo Championship is a prestigious event designed to promote physical fitness, discipline, and sportsmanship among students. This year, it brought together talented young athletes from various CBSE-affiliated schools across the North Zone, providing them with an excellent platform to showcase their Taekwondo skills.

Mehak's outstanding performance not only highlights her talent but



also reflects the dedication and hard work she has put into the sport.

The school extends heartfelt congratulations to Mehak Sharma and her mentors, Shalvi and Jagpreet Kour.

Their commitment, perseverance, and passion for Taekwondo have made the entire school

community proud.

Rohini Aima, Principal Cum Vice-Chairperson, stated that Jammu Sanskriti School remains committed to fostering excellence in sports and encouraging students to pursue their passions. She also congratulated the parents and mentor for the achievement.

## Tennis Ball trails on Oct 6, 7

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: The J&K Tennis Ball Association to organize selection trials for the J&K UT Junior teams (Under 19 boys & girls).

These trials will take place over two days on 6th & 7th October 2024 at Greenfield, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The trials will start promptly at 9:00 AM under the supervision of Gulshan Rattan and B.K. Tickoo. For any inquiries, you can reach Tickoo at 7006763920.

To be eligible for the selection trials, participants must have a date of birth on or after 15/10/2004.

Organizers requested all participants to come prepared with the necessary documentation and equipment. This includes

a proper cricketing kit, a DOB certificate (issued by either the Municipality or BOSE), an Aadhaar card, a domicile certificate, a physical fitness certificate issued by a physician, and six recent passport-sized photographs.

Additionally, participants should bring their personal bat and any other cricketing gear they may need.

Following the selection process, those who are chosen for the teams will be required to attend a 7-day coaching camp in Jammu.

This camp will take place prior to their participation in the 32nd Junior National Tennis Ball Cricket Championship, which is scheduled to be held in Gohana, Sonapat (Haryana) from 17th to 20th October 2024.

## All fronts of J&K should be reviewed by election work of district presidents: Chandel

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Senior BJP leader Raju Chandel congratulated all party workers on the peaceful conclusion of the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to closely review the election process, emphasizing the need to identify and reward workers who contributed with honesty and dedication.

Chandel stated that the performance of state presidents should also be evaluated, particularly those who have formed effective teams and contributed positively across various assemblies in



Jammu and Kashmir. He suggested that those without commendable records should be removed from their positions.

Highlighting the need for strong leadership, Chandel emphasized the importance of appointing robust district presidents and a state front president in Jammu and Kashmir.

He advocated for the formation of a new team at both the state and district levels to enhance the party's presence and effectiveness in the region. He expressed a desire for more residents of Jammu and Kashmir to join the Bharatiya Janata Party, suggesting that a diverse and strong team would further solidify the party's influence.

Chandel concluded by asserting that with dedicated workers and a representative leadership from all sections of society, the BJP would gain significant power in future elections, reducing the need for alliances with other parties in Jammu and Kashmir.

## Vivek Bali wishes everyone a joyous, blessed Navratri

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Oct 3: Vivek Bali senior political leader, extends warm wishes to all on the auspicious occasion of Navratri. In his heartfelt message, he expressed his hopes for this festive season to bring immense happiness, prosperity, and joy to every household.

He said, "May Maa Durga's blessings be with you and your loved ones. Let this Navratri fill your lives with peace, love, and positivity." Bali emphasized the significance of the festival, which symbolizes the



triumph of good over evil, and encouraged everyone to welcome the divine energy into their lives with open hearts.

He concluded by sending his sincere greetings to all communities, hoping that this Navratri fosters unity, harmony, and collective well-being.

## Satsang held at Marh



Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Darshan Kumar Lakhotra organised a satsang with Swami Vinay Muni at Marh today, in which a large number of devotees hailing from different corners participated.

Addressing the devotees, Swami Vinay Muni said, Marriage changes everything. You go from 'all about me' to 'all about us.' This is especially difficult for most people to get adjusted to, particularly those who have

been single for a prolonged period of time. However, if you mentally, emotionally, and financially prepare for your union while single, getting acclimated to joining lives with another person will not only be easier, but it can also help cultivate a successful and lifelong marriage. Before tying the knot all women should accept a new family leaving her home and family to live with her husband's family, and adopt their traditions and ways of life; give up

career or studies; adjust to new expectations; and conform to their in-laws' expectations and keep them happy.

After the satsang concluded, the devotees partook parshad from the Langar.

Messrs Ex Corporator Rashpal Bhardwaj, R.L.Kaith, Rachpal Kaith, Bishan Lal Lakhotra, Ashok Kumar Lakhotra, Hans Raj Lakhotra, Tilak Raj Bassa, Harish Bhardwaj and Sonu also listened the Satsang and took Swami's blessings.

## Lt. Governor Govt failed to protect rights of Dalits, Weaker Sections: Ajeet

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Oct 3: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Senior leader, Spokesperson of Chenab Valley Zone Ajeet Bhagat on Thursday asserted that the present Government headed by the Lt. Governor has completely failed to protect the rights of Dalits as well as Weaker Sections of the society in the state.

He expressed great disappointment against the Jammu and Kashmir Administration for its negative attitude towards the Dalits and alleged that the present Administration is not showing the least concern to addressing the pressing issues of this Section of the society.

Bhagat said that the SC/ST prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 has not been extended to Jammu and Kashmir State, where their population is 25 per cent. He stressed upon the need for stepping up efforts to ensure economic empowerment, besides emancipation of the Weaker Sections so that they can play their useful role in the society. The National Conference leader that funds sanctioned for Central Sponsored schemes with regard to welfare of Dalits and other backward communities in Jammu and Kashmir have not been fully utilized more than 40 per cent due to poor monitoring mechanism.

The Senior National Conference leader asserted that the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has always remained committed to protect the rights of SC/ST Communities in the past and shall continue to do the same in future too. Bhagat said that the tall claims made by the Government with regard to unprecedented development in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A has proved to be a hoax but the reality is that the Situation has gone from bad to worst.

## AM Group Expands with New Bajaj Dealership in Jammu



Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: AM Group, a leading business conglomerate, has announced the launch of its new Bajaj dealership in Jammu, located at Bohri Road Talab Tillo. The state-of-the-art showroom was inaugurated by Chairman AM Group, Mr. Jatinder Gupta, along with MD AM Group, Sanjay Mahajan, and Directors Sanjeev Gupta, Ankur Mahajan, Akshay Mahajan, and other family members, including Mrs. Raj Mahajan, Vandana Mahajan, Sakshi Mahajan, and Aryan Mahajan.

Strategically located at Bohri Road Talab Tillo, the new dealership offers a vast range of Bajaj vehicles, including two-wheelers and three-wheelers. The showroom boasts modern facilities, including:

- Spacious display area for vehicles
- Advanced service center with latest equipment
- Comfortable customer lounge
- Trained and experienced staff

"We are thrilled to expand our presence in Jammu with this new dealership," said Mr. Jatinder Gupta, Chair-

man, AM Group. "Our goal is to provide exceptional customer service and an unparalleled ownership experience for Bajaj customers in the region."

The dealership will offer a range of services, including sales, service, and spares. Customers can expect a seamless and transparent buying experience, with attractive offers and financing options available.

AM Group is committed to contributing to the economic growth of Jammu and providing employment opportunities to the local community.

## Renowned actress Sonali Kulkarni, who has once again come up trumps with her role in digital film Love, Sitara, believes there is a lot to learn from the younger generation

Remember the beautiful lady vivaciously performing the 'butterfly step' in the song Wo Ladki Hai Kahan from the 2001 blockbuster Dil Chahta Hai? Well, if not, Sonali Kulkarni did delight one and all with her act. Cut to 2024 - the lady still has the same verve that has helped her ace many a role in not only Bollywood, but also Marathi cinema.

Seen in the latest digital film Love, Sitara, she hopes the good times are here to stay. "Quite a few of my projects are on the digital platforms now and I am hoping there are many more to come. OTT is indeed a boon with so many openings for the ones who are talented and wanting to go the distance with their act."

Love, Sitara was an experience she recounts as memorable. "I play a character named Hema, a woman in her forties with shades of grey. She is an air-hostess who is into a complex relationship. The show is about a dysfunctional family where many skeletons tumble out of the closet. All in all, it is about her catharsis and I loved essaying the role."

Working with her co-sta- was heartening too, as the talent around her impressed this star. "This was a bunch of really gifted actresses. Sobhita Dhulipala is a proven talent and impresses with each role she essays, while Rajeev Siddhartha is a class act too. I really enjoyed the company of everyone on the sets." Among the latest crop of actors, she admires Alia Bhatt, Ranbir



Kapoor, Ranveer Singh and Mrunal Thakur.

Having shone on screen for the past two decades, there must be a sea of changes Sonali must have witnessed? "There has been a veritable kranti in the film industry with the technological developments. One needs to keep pace with them to understand the nuances of modern-day filmmaking. Also, OTT has revolutionised the way we look at entertainment now. While nothing can replace the joy of the 70-mm experience in the-

atres, with the digital medium it is like anywhere, anytime! There is a whole lot of accessibility and convenience nowadays."

Recipient of several accolades, including a National Film Award, four Filmfare Marathi Awards and four Maharashtra State Film Awards, she views Hindi and Marathi cinema in similar light. "Only the budgets differ," says Sonali.

In the fast-changing world where social media can create a lot of negative energy, Sonali begs to differ. "Rather, social

media is a delightful way to reach out to the fans. It's about looking at the glass as half-full, than half-empty. While I look at its positives all the times, the flip-side does not bother me much. My entire energy goes in how I perform in front of the camera the next day. Other things doing the rounds are of least concern."

Rather than advising youngsters, Sonali believes it is time to learn from them. "The generation next is confident and fearless, which is something I want to imbibe. I was not the same during their age," she quips. Her repertoire of languages is huge too — Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Italian and more — what's the secret behind her lingual felicity? "Interest and God gift," she beams.

Among her best works, she counts Dil Chahta Hai, Mission Kashmir and Taxi Number 9211, but on her mind is a role that she has wanted to essay for long. "It's a heart's wish and I do not want to jinx it. Still, I want to play a sportsperson in the times to come. Not many know that I am a trained triathlete and it's a passion I pursue whenever I find time. Essaying such a role on the screen would come easy."

Sonali is also a published author who is one book old and the next one is in the pipeline — a collection of articles she had penned as a columnist for newspapers. Hoping that her upcoming crime series Manvat Murders, releasing on Sony LIV on October 4, makes a mark too, Sonali is sure here to stay. And, here to impress!

## Sobhita Dhulipala says she doesn't believe in 'dealbreakers' in relationships



Actor Sobhita Dhulipala recently got candid in an interview while talking about her idea of love and relationships. She spoke to agency and explained why her feelings will not be dependent on a person's actions.

Sobhita Dhulipala on unconditional love

Sobhita told the publication that she doesn't believe in 'dealbreakers' or 'conditions' in love. She also said that she doesn't believe in 'definitions', adding, "I don't believe in definitions or terms like describe yourself in three words or this is the one thing I don't like. I can tell you things that I admire deeply or things that I am immediately moved by but if I were to say I don't like someone who does this or if I have to be in a situation where a loved one or family does something like that, I would like to be in a position to still love them."

She said that for her, that's what it means to trust her partner and how she doesn't view love as something dependent on conditions. "For me, that is trust. My feelings for someone should not be dependent on their actions. I don't think my love is conditional that way. I would not like to look at things like that," said Sobhita.

Her love story with Naga Chaitanya Naga Chaitanya was previously married to Samantha Ruth Prabhu, but the couple parted ways in 2021 after marrying in 2017. He began dating Sobhita in 2022 and people found out about their relationship in 2023 when Chef Surender Mohan from London posted a picture with Chaitanya and Sobhita was spotted sitting in the background. The same year, a fan also posted pictures taken separately with the couple but one could see the similarities in the background.

In April this year, the couple went on a Safari to Tipeswar and were spotted by fans at a wine tasting in Europe in June. Chaitanya and Sobhita got engaged in August this year at his residence in Hyderabad. Only their parents were present for the traditional ceremony. A source told Hindustan Times that the Daggubati-Akkineni clan gathered for a high-tea after the ceremony with Suresh Babu, Venkatesh and others. Nagarjuna also hosted a dinner at his home.

Upcoming work  
After Mani's Ponniyin Selvan: I and II, Sobhita was seen in the English film Monkey Man. The film, directed by and starring Dev Patel, is yet to be released in India. However, it received good reviews from critics and the audience and made good money at the box office. She recently starred in a Zee5 original film called Love, Sitara in which she played the titular character. Sobhita also dubbed for Deepika Padukone's character SU-M80 in Telugu for Nag Ashwin's Kalki 2898 AD.

## Navratri special| Helly Shah: We would do garba till the sun came up in Ahmedabad

Hailing from Ahmedabad and being a Gujarati, the festival of Navratri hits different for Helly Shah. As the nine days festivities begin, the actor recalls the memories of her hometown. "Ahmedabad Navratri are crazy and I have grown up watching that craze. And I enjoyed it when there were no time limits. We would be on the floor and do garba till the sun came up. Then we'd have breakfast straightaway and then go to sleep. Gujaratis are so passionate in Ahmedabad. I would travel to Surat, Vadodara and other places in Gujarat just to garba and every place had a different vibe," she shares.

One of Helly's core memories of the festival is her mom dressing her up in traditional chaniya choli. "We would go to the famous markets and while I would still not understand fashion much at the time, my mom always used to be so enthusiastic about it. Three days back she



asked me again if she should buy chaniya choli for me," she gushes, adding, "I used to go to nani's place and would

make an idol from clay, which we call Malla Mata. We would select our theme for the decorations, and I would love

the serenity of the first aarti in the evening. I still get goosebumps talking about it. You can feel the power and devotion in everyone's eyes."

After moving to Mumbai, the actor saw the same craze for Navratri in the city too. She says, "Gujaratis jahan jate hain, apna jaadu spread kar hi dete hain. In Mumbai, there are so many Gujaratis, and you can see their influence. When I saw the craze of garba here, it was really overwhelming and heartening. Main puri gulabi hoke nikli thi after my first garba night here." While she loves the festival, Helly does have one regret: "In the 28 years of my life, one thing I have not been able to do is attend a (singer) Falguni Pathak garba night. This year, I aim to do so. I was just talking to a friend, who is also a Gujarati, and he told me he is planning to go to a Falguni Pathak garba night. I told him if he doesn't take me along, he will see the bad side of me."

## Samantha, Chaitanya say divorce was 'mutual' after Telangana minister links KTR with their split

Former actor couple Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya hit back at Telangana minister Konda Surekha after her remarks that senior BRS leader KT Ramarao was responsible for their divorce sparked controversy, saying her claims are "false" and the decision to part ways was "mutual".

On her Instagram Story, Samantha wrote there was "no political conspiracy" behind her split with Chaitanya, which was announced in 2021.

The actor, known for web series "The Family Man 2" and films "Theri", and "Eega", implored Surekha to be responsible and respectful of individuals' privacy.

"My divorce is a personal matter, and I request that you refrain from speculating about it. Our choice to keep things private doesn't invite misrepresentation.

"To clarify: my divorce was mutual consent and amicable, with no political conspiracy involved. Could you please keep my name out of political battles? I have always remained non-political and wish to continue doing so," she wrote on Wednesday night.

Talking to reporters here, Congress leader Surekha, the minister for environment, forests and endowments, alleged that KTR was the reason behind Samantha and Chaitanya's divorce.

"KTR (Rama Rao) was the reason behind the divorce of Naga Chaitanya and Samantha..." she alleged.



KTR sent a legal notice to Surekha, demanding an apology from her.

In her post, Samantha asked Surekha to understand the "significant weight" her words carry as a minister.

"To be a woman, To come out and work, To survive in a glamorous industry where women are more often than not treated as props, To fall in love & to fall out of love, To still stand up and fight... It takes a lot of courage and strength. Konda Surekha Garu, I am proud of what this journey turned me into — please don't trivialise it," she added.

Chaitanya, in his note shared on X, said the divorce was one of the "most painful and unfortunate" of his life's decisions.

"After a lot of thought, a mutual decision was made by me and my former spouse to part ways. It was a decision made in peace, owing to our different life goals and in the interest of moving forward with respect and dignity as two mature adults. However, there have been various baseless and completely ridiculous

gossips on the matter so far," he wrote on Wednesday night.

The "Majili" actor said he has remained silent all this while out of deep respect for her former spouse as well as my family. He recently announced engagement to actor Sobhita Dhulipala.

"Today, the claim made by Minister Konda Surekha garu is not only false, it is absolutely ridiculous and unacceptable. Women deserve to be supported and respected. Taking advantage and exploiting the personal life decisions of celebrities for the sake of media headlines is shameful," he added.

Earlier, Chaitanya's father and top Telugu actor Nagarjuna strongly condemned the minister's remarks asking her "not to use lives of movie stars who stay away from politics to criticise your opponents".

The former couple also received support from fellow Telugu film industry colleagues, including Jr NTR, Chinmayi Sripada, and Nani.

Dragging personal lives into politics is a

new low, said Jr NTR.

"It's disheartening to see baseless statements thrown around carelessly, especially about the film industry. We will not sit quietly while others make baseless allegations against us. Let's ensure our society does not normalize such reckless behavior in democratic India," the "Devara: Part 1" star said on X.

Chinmayi said it's unfortunate to watch how multiple individuals, Telugu YouTube channels and media persons have been using Samantha's name to gain mileage.

"End of the day all it proves is that they need her or her name to get the attention. Not the other way round. She will always be higher than anyone could even dream of touching with a barge pole," the singer wrote on the microblogging site.

Nani, Samantha's co-star on films such as "Eega" and "Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu", said it's not okay for anyone in a respectable position to talk "utter baseless rubbish" in front of the media.

"Disgusting to see politicians thinking that they can get away talking any kind of nonsense. When your words can be so irresponsible it's stupid of us to expect that you will have any responsibility for your people. It's not just about actors or cinema. This is not about any political party... We all should condemn such practice which will reflect poorly on our society (sic)" he said.

## Tagore Theatre invites entries for the fifth Tri-City Theatre Festival

Ensuring Tagore Theatre remains chock-a-block with artistes and art lovers, November would see the five-day Tri-City Theatre Festival. Announcing the same, Abhishek Sharma, director, Tagore Theatre invited entries from local theatre groups in Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula along with a recording/videography of maximum two plays, latest by October 7. Sharing details, Sharma said, "Each

selected group will be paid a remuneration of ~60,000 for the performances."

It's going to be the fifth edition of Tri-City Theatre Festival and is scheduled from November 5 to November 9. It's going to be a ticketed festival, amounting to ~100 per seat. The amount collected from the sale of the ticket would go to the group performing. "We want to push the culture of ticketed shows. It's a nominal amount but this can

go a long way to make theatre viable."

Sharma, who joined as the director last year has ambitious plans for city's cultural point. A café figures on the list as does ambition to have Tagore Theatre be the meeting point for artistes — not just act—but also script write—and technicians. "I have been fortunate to have been guided in the process by my predecessor—Chakresh bhai and Kuldeep Sharma ji," shared

Abhishek Sharma and also lauded role of assistant director Tagore Theatre Nihal Chand Dogra, "He comes from defense background and has been a huge help in administration work."

The entry for the festival is open only for new plays (not performed in Chandigarh for last one year) and only by local theatre groups. The duration of the play must be minimum of an hour and thirty minutes.

## Isha Foundation row: SC transfers plea from Madras HC to itself, asks cops not to take further action

**'You cannot let an army or police into an establishment like this,' a three-judge Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud said, staying the high court's September 30 order**

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday restrained the Tamil Nadu police from taking any further action against Isha Foundation as it stayed the Madras High Court's order for a probe against the Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev-run Coimbatore-based organisation.

"You cannot let an army or police into an establishment like this," a three-judge Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud said, staying the high court's September 30 order.

"Police shall not take any further action in pursuance of directions in paragraph 4 of the High Court's order," the Court ordered.

"With reference to the said allegations, Coimbatore Rural Police having jurisdiction shall conduct an enquiry and file a status report before this court," ordered the Bench – which also included Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra.

The order came after senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi mentioned the matter for urgent hearing and pointed out that the high court chose to pass such an order on habeas corpus despite the two daughters (aged 42 and 39 years) of the petitioner categorically stating that they were at the Isha foundation on their own will.

He also said that a similar petitioner filed by the mother of the



two women was dismissed eight years ago.

Contending that hundreds of police officials raided the foundation's ashram and were probing every corner, Rohatgi urged the top court to stay the high court's order.

"These are issues of religious freedom. This is a very urgent and serious case. This is about Isha Foundation, there is Sadhguru who is very revered and has lakhs of followers. The High Court cannot start such enquiries on oral assertions," Rohatgi submitted.

On behalf of the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta supported Isha Foundation's petition. "The High Court should have been very circumspect. This needs your attention," Mehta told the Bench.

The Bench virtually interacted with two women whose father

POCSO case against a doctor in the institution and other allegations about confinement of persons.

Transferring the case to the Supreme Court, the Bench asked the Tamil Nadu Police to submit its report before it, instead of the high court and posted the matter for further hearing on October 18.

Both the daughters of Kamraj -- a retired professor from the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore -- completed their masters in Engineering and joined Isha Foundation which he accused of brainwashing and converting them as monks and not even allowing their parents and relatives to meet them.

Towards the end of the proceedings, senior counsel Siddharth Luthra, on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Government, denied the petitioner's allegation that police were forcing Ashram residents to give handwritten complaints and said the state police team that visited Isha Foundation was accompanied by health department officials and child welfare committee members.

"We want to know why a person who had given his daughter in marriage and made her settle well in life is encouraging the daughters of others to tonsure their heads and live the life of a hermitess. That is the doubt," the high court had commented on September 30.

Dr S Kamaraj -- had filed a habeas corpus petition on which the Madras High Court had passed the impugned order.

Alleging that his daughters were held captive in Isha Foundation, Kamraj sought a direction to the Tamil Nadu police to produce his two daughters.

However, after interacting with Kamraj's daughters, the top court noted that the two women said they were there at Isha Foundation Coimbatore on their own volition and without any pressure and that they were free to go anywhere.

One of the women said she was being harassed by her father. One of them said she participated in a 10 KM marathon recently.

In its September 30 order, the high court had also ordered the Coimbatore Police to investigate allegations of child abuse -- a

## SC slams CAQM, says it made no effort to implement its direction to stop stubble burning

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the Commission for Air Quality Management for failing to control incidents of stubble burning and said it has made no effort to implement its direction to prevent such incidents.

A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih said CAQM has not launched a single prosecution against incidents of stubble burning in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas.

It held a meeting on the issue only on

August 29, it said.

The top court noted that only five out of 11 members were present in the meeting where the implementation of its directions was not even discussed.

The apex court also rapped the Punjab and Haryana governments, saying the two states have only exacted nominal compensation from the farmers who were found burning stubble.

It directed the Centre and CAQM to file affidavits within a week from today on the matter and posted the matter for hearing on October 16.

## 'Cease work' by medics affect healthcare services in Bengal's state-run hospitals

KOLKATA, Oct 3 (Agencies): Healthcare services in West Bengal's government-run hospitals were affected for the third consecutive day on Thursday as junior doctors struck work demanding justice for the rape-murder victim post-graduate trainee at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital and security at their workplaces. This is the second time that junior doctors at state-run hospitals in Bengal went on a 'cease work' over their demands.

The medics went on a cease work after the body of their colleague was found at R G Kar Hospital on August 9. They partially returned to work on September 21 after 42 days, resuming essential services after the government promised to address most of their concerns. However, alleging that the government did not fulfil its promises, the doctors went on a cease work again from Tuesday.

"The government has not yet invited us for talks over our demands," Aniket Mahata, one of the doctors leading the agitation, told agency.

The doctors have also expressed concern with the pace of the CBI investigation into the rape and murder of the medic. A statement released by the junior doctors on Tuesday claimed that the central agency's probe was "frustratingly slow" and that they were "disappointed". In addition to seeking swift justice for the deceased doctor, the agitating medics are also demanding removal of the state's health secretary and greater police protection in hospitals.

The doctors also called for the immediate filling of all vacant posts for doctors, nurses and healthcare workers, as well as the implementation of a digital bed vacancy monitoring system in hospitals.

## Ex MP Ashok Tanwar rejoins Congress, was seeking votes for BJP hours back

CHANDIGARH, Oct 3 (Agencies): Former Lok Sabha MP Ashok Tanwar, who joined the BJP in January and unsuccessfully contested the general election on 'lotus' symbol, is back in the Congress. Mr Tanwar rejoined the Congress at party leader Rahul Gandhi's rally at Haryana's Mahendragar today.

A former Congress MP from Sirsa, Mr Tanwar served as Haryana Congress chief from 2014 to 2019, when he left the party.

In 2021, he joined the Trinamool Congress and switched to AAP the next year. Mr Tanwar left AAP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, opposing AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's decision to ally with Congress.

Following his exit from AAP, he joined the BJP and contested the general election from Sirsa but lost to Congress's Kumari Selja.

"The Congress has always raised its voice for the oppressed and deprived sections of the society. Influenced by our struggle and dedication, senior BJP leader, former MP, member of BJP's campaign committee and star campaigner Ashok Tanwar joined the Congress," the main Opposition party said in a post on X.

Interestingly, Mr Tanwar was tweeting



in support of BJP candidates contesting the Haryana Assembly election this morning. An hour later, he was seen at the Congress rally with Mr Gandhi as the announcer spoke about his 'ghar wapasi (homecoming)'. The tweets have now been deleted.

Mr Tanwar's return to Congress happened on the last day of campaigning ahead of the Haryana Assembly election. The 90 Assembly segments in the state will vote on Saturday. Votes will be counted on Tuesday. While the Congress is pushing hard for a return to power, the BJP is aiming for a third consecutive term.

## BJP spreads hatred, oust it from Haryana: Rahul Gandhi

NUH, Oct 3 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said his party will not let the "hatred" being spread by the BJP on the basis of religion, language, and caste win and appealed to the people of Haryana to oust the ruling party in the Assembly polls.

Gandhi was addressing a public meeting in Nuh that had witnessed incidents of violence last year after a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was attacked by a mob, leading to the death of six people, including two home guards and a cleric.

The fight is between 'mohabbat' (love) and 'nafrat' (hatred). The



Congress spreads love while the BJP spreads "hatred", Gandhi said on the last day of campaigning for the October 5 assembly polls.

"The most important thing is brotherhood. Wherever the BJP and RSS people go, they spread hatred. In whichever state they go, somewhere they talk about language, somewhere they talk about religion and somewhere they speak about caste. "Hatred has to be ended. India is not a country of hatred, it is the country of 'mohabbat'. And you have shown this to the entire country," said Gandhi.

India is the country of 'mohabbat ki dukan', not 'nafrat ka bazaar', he said

"We will not let this hatred win in the coun-

try. Love, brotherhood and unity will win in the country," said the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

"With hatred, the country gets weakened. Hatred spreads sorrow and fear. It is only love which is an antidote to hatred. Love spreads brotherhood and with love, the country progresses. We talk about love but they (BJP) spread hatred and try to break the country," he added.

Holding a copy of the Constitution, Gandhi said it has protected the rights of the poor, farmers, and labourers but "the BJP and the RSS were hell-bent on attacking the Constitu-

tion."

"The fight is about this. If the Constitution does not remain, then you, the poor, would not have anything. Your land, money, and water will vanish. These will go into the hands of select 20-25 people," he said.

Rahul again raised the issue of several Haryana youths going to the US while adopting an illegal route after spending a huge sum of money in search of a better future, saying they were unable to get employment opportunities in their home state.

The counting of votes for the Assembly polls will take place on October 8.

## Bengaluru Aero India show scheduled for February

**Leading Indian, foreign manufacturers to participate in five-day exhibition**

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Ministry of Defence on Thursday announced that the biennial Aero India show will be held at the Yelahanka Air Force station at Bengaluru from February 10 to February 14 next year.

The five-day event will witness the participation of leading Indian and foreign manufacturers, besides several delegations of friendly foreign countries.

The Department of Defence Production said in a post on X: "The Aero India will be conducted from Feb 10 to Feb 14".

Several foreign countries have evinced interest in buying Indian platforms, including Tejas fighter jets. India exported military equipment worth Rs 21,083 crore in the last financial year.

The Philippines became the first country to buy the BrahMos air defence missile system. Earlier this week, Tata announced a plant at Morocco in North Africa to produce the wheeled armoured personnel carrier.



## Bihar floods: Kharge asks Centre, state govt to expedite relief, rescue ops



NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (Agencies): Expressing concern over the flood situation in Bihar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday demanded that the Centre and state government should expedite the relief and rescue operations.

According to the disaster management department, the number of people affected by flood has reached 14.62 lakh.

"The flood situation in Bihar is becoming terrible. Nearly 15 lakh people in 17 districts are affected by the floods and the news of many deaths in the last few days is extremely painful," Kharge said in a post on X in Hindi.

The Congress presi-

dent said the bridges have collapsed and the homes of citizens have been destroyed due to the disaster, especially in north Bihar.

"We demand from the Centre and state government that the relief and rescue operations should be expedited so that the victims can get immediate help," Kharge said.

"We thank the Indian Air Force, NDRF and SDRF teams wholeheartedly for the help they are providing in these difficult circumstances. But we still need all possible help from the state government agencies," he added.

Kharge also urged the Centre to provide adequate compensation to every flood victim and help the state government.

The Congress president said the farmers, whose crops have been destroyed should also get compensation.

The Congress workers are expected to be ready to serve the victims, he added.

According to the state disaster management department, packets of food and other relief materials are being air-dropped by the IAF helicopters in the 17 flood-affected districts.

These districts are East and West Champaran, Araria, Kishanganj, Gopalganj, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Madhepura, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Saran, Saharsa, Katihar and Khagaria.

For safe evacuation of people, 16 teams of the NDRF and 17 teams of the SDRF have been pressed into service. Around 975 boats have also been pressed into service in the affected areas.

## Two abducted Meitei youths released in Manipur



IMPHAL, Oct 3 (Agencies): The two Meitei youths, who had reportedly been abducted by Kuki militants on September 27, were released early on Thursday.

"The two young men abducted in Kangpokpi on 27th September, 2024, have been safely brought back to the custody of @manipur\_police. I sincerely appreciate everyone from both the state and central government who worked tirelessly to ensure their safe return. Your efforts are deeply valued", Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said in a post on X.

Initially, three youths on way to participate in an SSC recruitment camp had

been abducted on September 27 after they strayed into Keithelmanbi area in Kangpokpi district.

One among them, identified as Ningombam Johnson Singh, was rescued by the Assam Rifles, while the other two remained missing.

Normal life was affected across five districts of the Imphal valley due to a shutdown called by a Meitei group Joint Action Committee to condemn the abduction of the youths, identified as Oinam Thoithoi Singh and Thokchom Thoithoiba Meitei.

It became a political issue, with the state Congress blaming the Biren Singh-led BJP government for its failure to ensure their timely rescue.

Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akojiam had also written to Home Minister Amit Shah, appealing for their safe release. The MP had called the demands for exchange of hostages by Kuki militants as an "act of terrorism" and said the country must not succumb to such threats.

## Deadly Israeli strike kills at least six in central Beirut

Israeli forces suffer deadliest day on Lebanese front in a year

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM, Oct 3 (Agencies): Israel bombed central Beirut in the early hours of Thursday, killing at least six people, after its forces suffered their deadliest day on the Lebanese front in a year of clashes against Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

Israel said it conducted a precise air strike on Beirut.

Agency witnesses reported hearing a massive blast, and a security source said it targeted a building in central Beirut's Bachoura neighbourhood close to parliament, the nearest Israeli strikes have come to Lebanon's seat of government.

At least six people were killed and seven wounded, Lebanese health officials said. A photo being circulated on Lebanese WhatsApp groups, which agency could not immediately verify, showed a heavily damaged building with its first floor on fire.

Three missiles also hit the western suburb of Dahiyeh, where Hezbollah leader Hassan Namrissarallah was killed last week, and loud explosions were heard, Lebanese security officials said. The southern suburbs came under more than a dozen Israeli strikes on Wednesday.

A day after Iran fired more than 180 missiles into Israel, Israel said on Wednesday eight soldiers were killed in ground combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbour.

The Israeli military said regular infantry and armoured units joined its ground operations



in Lebanon on Wednesday as Israel's missile attack and Israel's promise of retaliation raised concerns that the oil-producing Middle East could be caught up in a wider conflict.

Hezbollah said its fighters engaged Israeli forces inside Lebanon. The movement reported ground clashes for the first time since Israeli forces pushed over the border on Monday. Hezbollah said it had destroyed three Israeli Merkava tanks with rockets near the border town of Maroun El Ras.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a condolence video, said: "We are at the height of a difficult war against Iran's Axis of Evil, which wants to destroy us."

"This will not happen because we will stand together and with God's help, we will win together," he said.

Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli air raids killed at least 46 people in the south and centre of the country over the past 24 hours.

Iran said on Wednesday its

missile volley - its biggest ever assault on Israel - was overbarring further provocation, but Israel and the United States promised to hit back hard.

U.S. President Joe Biden said he would not support any Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear sites in response to its ballistic missile attack and urged Israel to act "proportionally" against its regional arch-foe.

Biden joined a call with Group of Seven major power leaders on Wednesday to coordinate a response, including new sanctions against Tehran, the White House said.

G7 leaders voiced "strong concern" over the Middle East crisis but said a diplomatic solution was still viable and a region-wide conflict was in no one's interest, a statement said.

Hezbollah said it repelled Israeli forces near several border towns and also fired rockets at military posts inside Israel.

The paramilitary group's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first

round" and that Hezbollah had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back Israel.

Israel's addition of infantry and armoured troops from the 36th Division, including the Golani Brigade, the 188th Armoured Brigade and 6th Infantry Brigade, suggested that the operation might expand beyond limited commando raids.

The military has said its incursion is largely aimed at destroying tunnels and other infrastructure on the border and there were no plans for a wider operation targeting the Lebanese capital Beirut to the north or major cities in the south.

1.2 MILLION LEBANESE DISPLACED

Nevertheless, it issued new evacuation orders for around two dozen towns along the southern border, instructing inhabitants to head north of the Awali River, which flows east to west some 60 km (37 miles) north of the Israeli frontier.

More than 1,900 people have been killed and over 9,000 wounded in Lebanon in almost a year of cross-border fighting, with most of the deaths occurring in the past two weeks, according to Lebanese government statistics.

Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that about 1.2 million Lebanese had been displaced by Israeli attacks.

Malika Joumaa, from Sudan, was forced to take shelter in Saint Joseph's church in Beirut after being forced from her house near Sidon in coastal south Lebanon with her husband and two children.

## Russia and Ukraine launch scores of attack drones in overnight strikes

A Russian missile also struck an apartment building in Kharkiv, Ukraine said.



KYIV, Oct 3 (Agencies): Russia and Ukraine each launched more than 100 attack drones, most of which were intercepted, overnight into Thursday, military officials said.

Ukraine's air defenses shot down at least 78 of the 105 Russian Shahed drones launched overnight at several regions, including Kyiv, the country's air force said in an update. Fifteen regions were targeted, Ukraine said.

"The air attack was

repulsed by aviation, anti-aircraft missile troops, electronic warfare units and mobile fire groups of the Air Force and the Defense Forces of Ukraine," the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said in a statement early Thursday.

It was unclear if there were injuries in Kyiv, Serhiy Popko, head of the city's administration, said on the messaging app Telegram.

Russia's air-defense

systems shot down some 113 Ukrainian drones in four regions, including the Kursk region, the Russian Ministry of Defense said. The Ukrainian attack had been "thwarted" the military said.

At least 73 Ukrainian drones were destroyed over the Belgorod region, which borders Kharkiv, Ukraine, Moscow said.

Ukrainian officials also said missiles had been fired late Wednesday toward residential areas in Kharkiv, where they struck at least one apartment building.

At least eight people were wounded in that strike, officials said. A 3-year-old child was among the injured, Ihor Terekhov, Kharkiv's mayor, said on Telegram.

## Taiwan hospital fire leaves at least 9 dead as typhoon batters island's south

TAIPEI, Oct 3 (Agencies): A fire at a hospital in southern Taiwan killed at least nine people Thursday as the island was being battered by a typhoon.

The fire occurred in Pingtung county, which has been hit hard by Typhoon Krathon, which made landfall in the afternoon with torrential rains and heavy winds and has brought parts of the island to a standstill.

Those who died inhaled smoke from the fire, the source of which was still under investigation.

Soldiers from a nearby base were mobilized to aid medical workers and firefighters in the evacuation of patients and putting out the flames. Reports said 176 patients were rushed to the front entrance and transferred to ambulances or tarps, used



to shield them from the pouring rain. They were moved to shelters nearby.

Krathon made landfall in the major port city of Kaohsiung, packing winds of 126 kph (78 mph) with higher gusts, according to Taiwan's weather authorities.

The slow-moving typhoon has doused eastern and southern parts of the island over the past five days, forcing thousands to evacuate from mountainous or low-lying areas. The weather administration has Kaohsiung and

Pingtung County residents to not go outside when the eye of the storm passes above their area.

Flooding and high winds have caused considerable damage to industries from fishing to chemicals, while cutting off transportation routes and electrical networks.

Taiwan has made considerable progress in fireproofing public facilities in recent years by banning smoking and boosting implementation of building regulations.

## Former Singapore minister sentenced to a year in prison for receiving illegal gifts

SINGAPORE, Oct 3 (Agencies): A former Singaporean Cabinet minister was sentenced Thursday to a year in prison after he pleaded guilty to charges of receiving illegal gifts, in a rare criminal case involving a minister in the Asian financial hub.

Former Transport Minister S. Iswaran had pleaded guilty last week to one count of obstructing justice and four of accepting gifts from people with whom he had official business. He was the first minister to be charged and imprisoned in nearly half a century.

Justice Vincent Hoong, in his ruling, said holders of high office "must be expected to avoid any perception that they are susceptible to influence by pecuniary benefits."

"I am of the view that it

is appropriate to impose a sentence in excess of both parties' positions," Hoong said as he handed down a total of 12 months imprisonment for the five charges. The defense had asked for no more than eight weeks in prison, while the prosecution had pushed for six to seven months imprisonment.

The court approved Iswaran's request to delay the start of his sentence to Monday, Channel News Asia reported. He remains out on bail for now. It is unclear if he will appeal the sentence.

Iswaran was initially charged with 35 counts, but prosecutors proceeded with only five, while reducing two counts of corruption to receiving illegal gifts. Prosecutors said they will apply for the

remaining 30 charges to be taken into consideration for sentencing. No reasons were given for the move.

Iswaran received gifts worth over 74,000 Singapore dollars (\$57,000) from Ong Beng Seng, a Singapore-based Malaysian property tycoon, and businessperson Lum Kok Seng. The gifts included tickets to Singapore's Formula 1 race, wine and whisky and a luxury Brompton bike. Ong owns the right to the local F1 race, and Iswaran was chair of and later adviser to the Grand Prix's steering committee.

The Attorney-General's Chambers said it will decide whether to charge Ong and Lum after the case against Iswaran has been resolved.

Singapore's ministers are among the



world's best paid. Although the amount involved in Iswaran's case appeared to be relatively minor, his indictment is an embarrassment to the ruling People's Action Party, which prides itself on a clean image. Singapore was ranked among the world's top five least-corrupt nations, according to Transparency International's corruption perception index.

The last Cabinet minister charged with graft was Wee Toon

Boon, who was found guilty in 1975 and jailed for accepting gifts in exchange for helping a businessperson. Another Cabinet minister was investigated for graft in 1986, but died before charges were filed.

Iswaran had resigned just before he was charged. His trial comes just over four months after Singapore installed new Prime Minister Lawrence Wong after Lee Hsien Loong stepped down after 20 years.

## Bilawal Bhutto hints at pardon for Imran Khan if convicted by a military court

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3 (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari indicated that his party could pardon jailed former prime minister Imran Khan if he is convicted by a military court.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and other top officials had last month said that the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder may face a military trial for allegedly instigating his followers to attack army installations after his workers went on rampage following his arrest on May 9, 2023.

Talking to reporters here, Bilawal, 36, was asked about his stance on Khan's military trial

and he responded in measured words.

"We need to assess the evidence first. After all, we have the authority to grant a presidential pardon," he said while maintaining that his party was against the death penalty.

His father Asif Ali Zardari, being the incumbent president, has the power to grant pardon to condemned prisoners who have exhausted their right of appeals against conviction.

The former foreign minister had his father's power of pardon in mind when he talked about the presidential pardon, even though it is too early to speculate about Khan's trial by the mili-



tary and sentence.

Bilawal also spoke about the constitutional amendments. When questioned about the proposed amendments and their deadline of October 25, he stated, "If the amendments are made before October 25, the matter can be settled peacefully. While they can be done later, it may lead to confronta-

tional situations."

He further asserted that his party would not abandon the matter concerning the constitutional court, vowing to see it through to completion.

"We have already faced significant delays, our demands date back to 2006 and are part of our manifesto," he added.

He mentioned that the

## Palestinian, Filipino and Mozambican activists given human rights award

STOCKHOLM, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Right Livelihood Award was awarded Thursday to three activists from the Palestinian territories, the Philippines and Mozambique and to a U.K. pioneering research agency who "have each made a profound impact on their communities and the global stage."

"Their unwavering commitment to speaking out against forces of oppression and exploitation, while strictly adhering to non-violent methods, resonates far beyond their communities," the Stockholm-based foundation said about the laureates. It considered 176 nominees from 72 countries this year.

Issa Amro, a human rights activist in the occupied West Bank and his group, Youth Against Settlements, were awarded the prize "for their steadfast non-violent resistance to Israel's illegal occupation, promoting Palestinian civic action through peaceful means."

In the Philippines, Indigenous activist Joan Carling was cited "for raising Indigenous voices in the face of the global ecological breakdown and her leadership in defending people, lands and culture."

Anabela Lemos, a Mozambican environmental activist and director of Justiça Ambiental, was honored for "empowering communities to stand up for their right to say no to exploitative mega-projects and demand environmental justice." It is the first time the award went to Mozambique.

Based at University of London, Forensic Architecture was cited "for pioneering digital forensic methods to ensure justice and accountability for victims and survivors of human and environmental rights violations."

Created in 1980, the annual Right Livelihood Award honors efforts that the prize founder, Swedish-German philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, felt were being

ignored by the Nobel Prizes. To date, 198 laureates from 77 countries have received the distinction.

"The 2024 laureates demonstrate the power of non-violent resistance and truth-telling, placing decision-making into the hands of local communities," said Ole von Uexkull, the nephew of the prize founder and the organization's executive director.

Previous winners include Ukrainian human rights defender Oleksandra Matviichuk, Congolese surgeon Denis Mukwege and Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. Matviichuk and Mukwege received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022 and 2018, respectively.

The 2024 laureates will be given their awards on Dec. 4 in Stockholm. The size of the prize amount was not announced. The foundation said that "the award comes with long-term support to highlight and expand laureates' work."





Devotees throng Bawe Mata Temple to Seek Blessings on Thursday's first Navratri in Jammu.

Pic by AMAN SHARMA

FROM PAGE 1

**Supreme Court ends caste-based discrimination in prisons, orders immediate reforms**

prisoners is a relic of the colonial period where they were dehumanised. The Constitution mandates that prisoners have to be treated humanely, and the prison system must be aware of the mental and physical state of prisoners," as reported by Bar and Bench.

The Court made it clear that prisoners from oppressed castes cannot be forced into degrading work simply because of their marginalised status. It also ordered the removal of caste references from prison registrars and directed all states to amend their prison rules to eliminate such discriminatory provisions. Any failure to comply will result in accountability for the states.

The Bench also took note of discriminatory provisions in the prison manual of Uttar Pradesh, which linked menial labour assignments to prisoners' caste backgrounds. The Court strongly criticised such provisions, stating that no caste or tribe should be classified as a "scavenger class" or subjected to caste-based labour divisions. Furthermore, the Court declared that no prisoner should be assigned hazardous tasks such as cleaning sewer tanks, which are often relegated to marginalised communities.

In its ruling, the Court addressed the issue of discrimination against denotified tribes, who are often unfairly categorised as habitual offenders in prison systems. It asserted that such prejudice perpetuates stereotypes and violates the principles of equality and dignity enshrined in the Constitution.

The judgment arose from a petition filed by journalist Sukanya Shantha, who had highlighted the prevalence of caste-based discrimination in prisons. The petition called for the repeal of discriminatory provisions found in the prison manuals of various states, including Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh, among others.

The Court issued notices to the Union government and 11 states in January and sought assistance from Solicitor General Tushar Mehta in addressing the issue.

**Sonam Wangchuk released, prohibitory order withdrawn: Delhi Police to HC**

from Ladakh, including Wangchuk, were allegedly detained at the Delhi border by the police while marching to the capital to demand sixth schedule status for Ladakh.

The sixth schedule pertains to administration of tribal areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram as "autonomous districts and autonomous regions".

Wangchuk and his associates have been set free and their movement is not restricted as long as they are not in breach of any legal provision, SG Mehta said.

**Sonamarg tourist footfall soars to six lakh in five years**

per cent and revenue by 1800% at the tourist place.

According to the details, the number of tourists at Sonamarg has increased from 58,309 in 2019 to 6,61,539 by 2024.

In terms of revenue, a significant progress has also been made; in 2020, the income was Rs 1.63 lacs, which increased to Rs 3.51 lacs in 2021, Rs 9.7 lacs in 2022, Rs 25.8 lacs in 2023 and by 2024, it reached Rs 30.68 lacs.

According to the reports in 2020, a modern Solid Waste Management Plant was established in Sarbal Sonamarg to scientifically dispose of waste, which includes an electromagnetic disintegrator with an 11 metric ton capacity, a 5-MT auto insta-composter, and a segregator.

An official said currently around 1,270 rooms are available for tourists in Sonamarg, which includes both government and private hotels, and camping sites have also been developed.

These steps are propelling Sonamarg

towards further growth in the field of tourism, establishing it as a major tourist destination.

An official said that no applications were received for new hostel registrations during 2023-24, and details regarding the registration of horse riders and snow bikers are not available as it is a matter under the Department of Tourism.

Under this department, 25 assets have been created, out of which 19 have been outsourced so far.

**Navratri: JK Police issue special traffic advisory to minimise traffic congestion**

keep the Bahu Fort Route free from obstructions," they added in the post.

During Navratri period, no vehicle will be allowed to move towards Bagh-e-Bahu via Bahu Fort Road, Jammu and Kashmir Police said.

"P/S Bagh-e-Bahu crossing will be diversion point and all vehicles(LMVS/PSVs) going towards. Bahu-Fort shall be diverted from P/S Bagh-e-Bahu Crossing towards Qasim Nagar and from where the vehicles shall further be diverted towards Bye Pass Road NHW and Forest Check and then towards Kali Mata Mandir," Jammu and Kashmir Police said in the post.

The devotees and motorists are advised to follow the one way route strictly to keep the road free for movement of devotee vehicles without any obstacles, Jammu and Kashmir Police said.

"During Navratri days No Heavy vehicle (HMV) shall be allowed to enter from Bye-Pass Naka NHW (Sidhra road) towards Bagh-e-Bahu/Bahu-fort area.

The devotees/general public shall park their Vehicles in a specified parking slot only and not on either side of the road in anyway. Wrongly parked vehicles on the said stretch will be dealt under MV Act," Jammu and Kashmir Police said in the post.

Parking Slots at Bagh-e-Bahu, New JDA Parking, Main paid Parking Slot In front of Bagh-e-Bahu Temple, Ground of government Higher Secondary School Bagh-e-

Bahu and Railway Parking slot Bagh-e-Bahu.

The public in general and motorists in particular are requested to co-operate with the Traffic Police and avoid movement on the routes mentioned above during the religious programme. In addition to the above devotees visiting Kandoli Mata Nagrota, during Navratri Festival shall park their vehicles in the parking slot near the temple and not on the road in anyway, Jammu and Kashmir Police said.

**Exchange of fire in Kishtwar**

has been rushed to the spot, they said. This is a developing story and more details will be added as they come in.

**Will win absolute majority on October 8: Ravinder Raina**

Asked whether BJP had finalised the Hindu CM candidate if the party wins majority, Raina said lets have some patience till October 8. "For us who is going to be the CM is not the priority. We hope to see BJP emerging as a party with absolute majority. I believe, the way people voted for BJP, we will come up with a full majority," he said.

The J&K BJP chief said the massive campaigning of Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BJP national president J P Nadda in Jammu that saw massive participation of people, will bear fruit. "I am sure that not only in Jammu but also in Kashmir Lotus will bloom," Raina said.

Asked whether BJP was mulling Hindu or Dogra Chief Minister in J&K, Raina dodged the question saying, "thoda intezaar ka maza lijiye (let's wait till October 8).

He thanked police, CRPF, BSF, SSB and other security agencies for ensuring smooth and peaceful elections in J&K. "I also thank the Election Commission of India (ECI) for making up to the mark arrangements in J&K for smooth conduct of polls. I also thank the Chief Electoral Office and LG administration for making elaborate arrangements for peaceful and

hassle-free elections in J&K," the BJP J&K chief said. "I also thank NGOs, school children and all those who played their part in creating awareness among voters across the J&K UT."

Raina also extended Navratri greetings to people of J&K and rest of the country. "We will celebrate the festival with the grand victory of BJP in J&K polls on October 8," he claimed. He evaded queries whether BJP will forge alliance with PDP or any other party if it falls short of seats, saying that let the results come first.

**Indian Army trains aspirants to join Army under AgniVeer Scheme**

boosted their confidence and motivation. Aspirants feel a renewed sense of purpose as they prepare to serve their country. One of the aspirants, Farooq Ahmad, said, "I'm currently graduating and heard about the AgniVeer scheme. I was very excited to join the army. As soon as I heard about the AgniVeer scheme, I filled out the form. My written test has been passed, and I am now preparing for the physical exam."

Another aspirant, Sajad Ahmad, said, "I am trying to pass the exam and get a job. I have completed my 10th grade, and I am trying to get a job. I had completed my B.Sc. exam and I qualified. So I just want to say that I was trying to come here, but sir called and said that we are giving you training for 4 hours. So I come here at 6 am, and we have training till 9 am. So I want to say that those who are not coming should also come and join."

Aijaz Ahmad, an aspirant, also said, "Many young people participated in it. Many young people participated in the qualification, who are from different districts. He said the practice of 2-3 hours of training is being provided to them."

**Man killed, two others injured in Verinag accident**

Chingund Dooru. Meanwhile police have registered a case in this regard, and the investigation has been taken up.

## Navratri festival begins at Mata Vaishnodevi cave shrine in Reasi

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Amid multi-tier security arrangements, the nine-day-long festival of Navratri began with religious fervor, as over 45,000 pilgrims undertake the pilgrimage daily to pay obeisance at the cave shrine of Mata Vaishnodevi in the Trikuta hills of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), which manages the yatra, has started new registration counters at the Katra railway station to ease the process for the pilgrims in light of the expected influx during the Navratri period.

The Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra has been adorned with indigenous and foreign flowers, and large pandals have been set up in the Bhawan area for the auspicious occasion.

"I congratulate all the devotees on the occasion of Shardiya Navratri. We welcome them here and hope that thousands of



pilgrims from across the globe will come to pay their obeisance," Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Anshul Garg told reporters. He assured that all necessary arrangements have been made to ensure a comfortable and peaceful yatra for the pilgrims.

"There has been a heavy rush of pilgrims since yesterday with over 45,000 devotees registered and we expect a similar footfall today," he added.

Multi-tier security measures have been implemented to ensure an incident-free yatra.

"Police, CRPF and Shrine Board security personnel have been deployed along the track from Katra to Bhawan. Elaborate security arrangements have been made following a full review," Garg said.

In response to the heavy rush of pilgrims, crowd management systems integrated with CCTV and RFID surveillance systems have been put in place.

"As many as 650 CCTV cameras are active with integrated cards to monitor all movements and a skywalk has been introduced for crowd manage-

ment," he said.

Additionally, a new langar will be set up at Ardh Kuwari to provide facilities for the pilgrims, supplementing the three major langars already in place.

The CEO said the board has taken additional initiatives this year.

"We are launching registration counters at Katra railway station, which will start functioning from tomorrow. Eight such counters are operational now," Garg added.

Thousands of devotees are enthusiastically undertaking the pilgrimage, viewing it as a chance

to seek the blessings of Mata Vaishnodevi during Navratri. The shrine is approximately 15 kilometers uphill walk from the base at Katra.

Long queues were seen at the temple since early morning.

"We greet every devotee on Navratri and seek blessings not only for our families but for the entire nation, wishing for peace, progress and prosperity," said Sunit Kharu, a devotee from Maharashtra's Pune.

Navratri is an annual festival celebrated to worship Goddess Durga, with the celebrations lasting for nine days.

At Bhawan, prayers marked the onset of the nine-day Shardiya Navratri festival.

In Jammu, there were long queues seen at Mata Kali temple popularly known as Bawewali Mata located at Bahu fort in Jammu. Hundreds of devotees were lined up since pre-dawn time to pay obeisance at the deity.

## JMC Commissioner visits Bahu Fort



Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Jammu, October 03: Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Dr Devansh Yadav today visited Bahu fort Bawe wali Mata temple to take stock of arrangements put in place for the devotees during the holy Navratri.

During the visit, Dr. Yadav inspected various facilities, including sanitation, power and water supply besides all others provisions to accommodate the influx of devotees. He engaged with temple staff and local authorities to discuss logistical aspects, such as health, sanitation, besides availability of other basic services for the devotees.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining cleanliness in the pre-

ises and welcoming environment during the festivities, the Commissioner directed the concerned for ensuring uninterrupted power and water supply for the convenience of the devotees.

Directing the concerned JMC authorities to put in place adequate men and machinery during the holy Navratri, the Commissioner further instructed them to ensure cleanliness of lanes and drains, pond, parks and lifting of garbage from roads and rehri zone so that the pilgrims do not face any inconvenience.

The Commissioner also reviewed the pace of progress of the developmental projects being carried out by the Jammu Smart City Limited.

Inspecting the pace of work on protection wall

being constructed at 'Har Ki Paddi,' Jammu, the Commissioner directed the executing agency to accelerate the pace of work ensuring its early completion so that the construction of drains is also taken up.

The Commissioner also interacted with the devotees and enquired about the facilities being available in the temple premises during darshan.

Among others, Joint Commissioner, (R&E) Rakesh Gupta, Director Project, JSCL Sunil Thussu, Deputy Commissioner, (North) Sanjay Badyal, Deputy Commissioner (South) Lal Chand, Health Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma, besides other senior officers of JMC and JSCL accompanied the Commissioner during the visit.

## AIIMS Jammu Enhances Anaesthesia Practices with Dr. DK, Dr. Mridula Pawar

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: The Department of Anaesthesiology at AIIMS Vijaypur experienced a remarkable learning opportunity during the three-day visit of Dr. DK Pawar and Dr. Mridula Pawar, which concluded on September 25, 2024. Dr. DK Pawar is a former professor in

the setup and layout of the operating theatres, exploring equipment placement, workflow, and operational efficiency. Additionally, an engaging session on academics and research within the department was held. On the second day, anaesthesia was administered by Dr. D.K.Pawar to a patient undergoing a

Dr. DK Pawar and Dr. Mridula Pawar emphasized the importance of conducting regular scenario-based training sessions to enhance the team's response to critical situations. They also highlighted the need for multi-disciplinary team training and strict adherence to equipment maintenance protocols. Additionally,



the Department of Anaesthesiology at AIIMS Delhi and specializes in pediatric anaesthesia. Dr. Mridula Pawar, is an alumni of the second batch of GMC Jammu and retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Anaesthesia at VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital. During their visit, they engaged with the faculty, senior residents, junior residents, nursing officers, and technicians of the Department of Anaesthesiology.

On the first day, a tour of various hospital areas was conducted. This was followed by an interactive session focused on

superficial mastectomy, accompanied by insightful discussions. A mock drill was conducted, simulating a patient with road traffic accident being received in the Emergency Department, with the objective of practicing and refining rapid-response procedures and interdisciplinary teamwork in emergency situations. The drill also included the transfer of the patient from the Emergency Department to the operating theatre and then to the ICU. Day three featured an interactive session focused on the various protocols to be followed within the ICU and OT.

they recommended fostering ongoing mentorship and collaboration with experienced anesthesiologists to ensure continuous learning and support. Regular audits of the ICU and OT were encouraged to maintain adherence to the highest standards of patient safety.

Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO of AIIMS Jammu, emphasized that the knowledge acquired during the visit would serve as a strong foundation for future advancements, ensuring the highest standards of anaesthesia care and patient safety protocols at AIIMS Jammu.

## Bhagesh of Cambridge School brings laurels at CBSE Cluster Taekwondo C'ship



Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: We are delighted to announce that our talented student, Master Bhagesh Sharma, has earned a Bronze medal in the Category Under 14 / Weight: 38-41 Kg, at the CBSE North Zone II Taekwondo Championship 2024-2025.

The event took place from the 26th to 29th of September at Vivekanand Public School, Sonapat, Haryana.

This remarkable

achievement of Bhagesh Sharma has made the entire Cambridge International School community proud.

Chairman Er. Vidhi S. Singh commended Bhagesh Sharma on his success and stated, "We are committed to nurturing our students' passions and supporting their growth in all areas of development."

He also congratulated Taekwondo coach Mr. Sunny and Bhagesh Sharma's parents.

## Warm Wishes for Navratri from Neeraj Dewan, President of Mahajan Sewa Sangh

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Neeraj Dewan, President of Mahajan Sewa Sangh, extends heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir as they celebrate the auspicious festival of Navratri. This nine-night festival, dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga, symbolizes the victory of good over evil and is a time of joy, devotion, and community celebration.

In his message, Sh Neeraj Dewan emphasized the importance of Navratri in fostering unity and harmony among the diverse communities of J&K. "Navratri is not just a festival; it is a celebration of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual

traditions. Let us come together to honor the goddess and spread love, peace, and prosperity in our beloved region," he stated.

Dewan also encouraged everyone to participate in the festivities, which include prayers, and cultural events that strengthen community bonds. "May this Navratri bring happiness and blessings to every household. Let us all embrace the spirit of the festival and work towards a brighter future for Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The Mahajan Sewa Sangh wishes everyone a joyous and prosperous Navratri filled with divine blessings and cherished moments with family and friends.

## Railway Police J&K seizes 7 kg of Ganja, investigates drug linkages

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: The Railway Police of Jammu and Kashmir (GRP Jammu) has successfully recovered 7 kg of a banned narcotic substance, believed to be Ganja, with an estimated market value of Rs 7 lakh.

An FIR (No. 10/2024) has been registered at Police Station GRP Kathua, and a thorough investigation has commenced to uncover the source and distribution networks associated with this contraband.

This seizure marks the ninth instance of banned

## Charri Yatra Celebrates 45 Years of Tradition, Commences for Mata Vaishno Devi

Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: On the first Navratri, the Charri Yatra, a revered tradition upheld for the past 45 years, was taken out from Tawi Bridge to the sacred shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi. This year's procession was led by Mr. Ashok Gupta, the founder of this cherished

Katra. The winter Navratras are particularly significant, drawing around 37,000 devotees to the shrine for darshan.

The auspicious JOT will be carried on the shoulders of dedicated sevaks, accompanied by the silver charri's beard. The JOT will be lit from the sacred flame at the Purani Guffa and brought

Ji temple and light their own JOTs, which they can keep in their homes. He expressed his intention to pray for the safety and prosperity of all citizens of Jammu and Kashmir at the Mata Vaishno Devi temple.

Among those accompanying Mr. Ashok Gupta in the Yatra were party workers Narinder Tan-



practice.

The journey began at the Maharaja Hari Singh Statue and concluded at Brigadier Rajinder Singh Chowk, where participants boarded buses to

back to Jammu to be housed in the temple of Yadhoo Ram Ji at Rani Park.

The party president encouraged the public to visit the Yadhoo Ram

gari, Abhishek, Ashish, Ashu, Sushil, Fauji, Geeta, Sunil, Mohan, Nirmal, and many others, all contributing to this significant celebration of faith and community.

## GCOE Jammu Honors Padma Shree Romalo Ram at Meet the Alumni Program

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Oct 3: As part of two week long Induction-cum-Orientation Program of Four Year Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP), Government College of Education Jammu organized an interactive session on "Meet the Alumni". Under this initiative, the newly inducted students were given the opportunity to meet august alumnus of 1996-97 Batch Padamshree Romalo Ram.

The principal of the college Dr Jyoti Parihar presented Basoli Painting prepared by college stu-



dents as a souvenir. She hailed his contribution towards the promotion of Dogri art, culture and music. She also added that the college is proud to have produced three Padamshrees' so far and it was a great honor for the institution to have an alumnus that has created such rich legacy.

Dr Rakesh Bharti, Convener ITEP apprised the students about life and contribution of Romalo Ramji. In his address to the students, Padamshree Romalo Ram ji recalled his struggles as a student as he hailed from remote area. He narrated the incidents related to the struggles that he had to face as a student from rural village of Udhampur. He also apprised the students about the way he brought

gold medal for the college in the annual cultural event in 1996 which is still a record. He exhorted the students to serve the soil with passion.

Dr Shalini Rana, IQAC Convener, motivated the students to follow the footsteps of the Romalo Ramji, who is a shining example of unparalleled dedication and commitment towards the promotion of rich Dogra art, culture and folk songs. She added that his life is a source of inspiration not only for the students but for the teachers also. The students enthusiastically interacted during the feedback session. The program was attended by Dr Rajinder Kour, Dr Devinder Kour, Prof Balwan Singh, Dr Ambica Sharma and Dr Suraj Prakash.

## GDC Thathri Organized Series of Events

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Oct 3: To celebrate the Gandhi Jayanti, the NSS unit of Govt. Degree College Thathri organized a series of events that highlighted the Gandhian values and principles under the able guidance of Dr. Javed Iqbal Zargar Principal of the college. The events were organized by NSS Programme officer Dr. Sanjay Kumar and coordinated by other faculty members. These activities aimed to promote Gandhian values of peace, non violence and service to the society. Various programs such as cleanliness drive, Swachhta Pledge, Symposium on Gandhi ji, essay writing and Slogan writing on Nasha Mukat Bharat were conducted. The events not only honored the "Father of Nation" but also encour-



aged the students to adopt and practice Gandhian principles in their lives. The celebration included cleanliness drive; Swachhta Pledge, Symposium, essay writing and Slogan writing on Nasha Mukat Bharat were associated with Mahatma Gandhi. In this regard a symposium/ seminar was conducted focusing on the relevance of Gandhi's teachings in today's world. Speakers emphasized on non violence and other Gandhian philosophies that continue to inspire people globally. The initiatives taken

by the NSS unit helped students to engage in activities that deepened their understanding of Mahatma Gandhi's ideologies, while also fostering creativity. The Faculty members who graced the occasion were Dr. Muzaffar Ahmed HOD Environmental Science, Dr. Javed Iqbal HOD Urdu and convener of college NSS committee, Dr. Narsing Das HOD Dogri, Prof. Mohd. Saleem HOD Economics, Prof. Arshad Ayoub HOD Political science, Prof Deepak Raj HOD English and Prof. Pooja Devi HOD Hindi.

## India aim to take advantage of UAE's 'heat wave' in women's T20 World Cup

*Weariness of the UAE pitches and the conditions are likely to play into favour of India's spin-heavy squad.*

DUBAI, Oct 3 (Agencies): A stellar effort by senior stars would be mandatory when India take on New Zealand in their opening Group A match of the women's T20 World Cup on Friday, aiming for a strong start in their quest to wipe off the memories of past near-misses. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who in all likelihood, will be appearing in her last T20 World Cup, has been witness to several near misses and disappointing moments from close quarters, including India's capitulation to Australia in the final at Melbourne in 2020.

As has been in the past, this Indian line-up is rich in talent and, arguably, only Australia have a similarly well-oiled unit.

But the reigning champions have six titles in their cabinet, and India's is still dust-laden.

So, what pegs India back in global events? It seems more a case of mental fragility at clutch moments, and they tried to address that during a preparatory camp at the NCA (National Cricket Academy) with a few counselling sessions.

But such external measures can only be of limited help in big tournaments, as it boils down entirely to flawless execution of strategies on a given day.

In that context, India will not get a better opponent than New Zealand, which is not a fancied side like its Trans-Tasman neighbour. But the two-time run-



ners-up are as tough as nails.

A victory against them could well be counted as a sign of being in fine shape --tactically and mentally -- and that's a prerequisite for India in a group that also has Australia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

To start with, India will require heavy contributions from their top guns -- the 35-year-old Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and Deepti Sharma.

Among them, Shafali and Mandhana have been in excellent touch, making runs in their last international outing in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July even though India lost to the hosts in the final.

In fact, Mandhana's last five T20I innings include three fifties. But Harmanpreet and Shafali have been a tad underwhelming and the duo finding range is

imperative for India's charge at the top and middle order.

It is critical to India's chances as the pitches in the UAE, going through a harsh heat wave, might not be a treasure trove of runs, particularly deep into the tournament.

However, the expected weariness of the track, in one way, will cater to India's strengths in the bowling department -- spin.

They have only three pacers in their squad -- Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy.

In all likelihood, India will only play two of them, while depending on a plethora of spinners in their line-up.

India have exceptional variety in that department. The attack will be marshalled by off-spinners Deepti and Shreyanka Patil, leg-spinner Asha Sobhana and left-arm spinner

Radha Yadav.

But the Kiwis have a good blend of experienced and young players, who can lift them above such obstacles.

Their talismanic skipper Sophie Devine, experienced all-rounder Suzie Bates along with veteran pacers Lea Tahuu and Leigh Kasperek form the crux of this New Zealand side.

Add the exciting young all-rounder Amelia Kerr to the mix, and they have the wherewithal to spring a surprise or two in this tournament.

But beyond them, the Kiwis are a bit green behind the ears and that could be their Achilles Heel.

Teams:

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajeevan Traveling reserves: Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakor.

**New Zealand:** Sophie Devine (c), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Fran Jonas, Leigh Kasperek, Melie Kerr, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuu.

## T20 World Cup: AI tool launched to protect players from toxic social media content

DUBAI, Oct 3 (Agencies): As the anticipation builds for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced an innovative social media moderation programme aimed at fostering a more positive and inclusive online experience for teams and players. With over 60 players already signed up and onboarding ongoing, this initiative reflects the ICC's commitment to creating a safer digital environment in the lead-up to the tournament.

In a proactive step to safeguard the mental health of athletes and fans alike, the ICC has introduced advanced software designed to protect the cricket community from toxic online content. This initiative is part of a broader suite of digital products that the ICC is rolling out for the tournament, aimed at promoting healthier interactions within the cricketing community.

To implement this social media moderation programme, the ICC has partnered with GoBubble, leveraging a blend of artificial intelligence technology and human resources. This collaboration will enable the monitoring and moderation of comments across the ICC's official Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube channels, as well as on the social media platforms of participating players who opt into the service. The state-of-the-art technology is specifically designed to identify and conceal toxic content, including hate speech, harassment, and misogyny, effectively creating a safer and more welcoming space for fans to engage with the World Cup.

Participating players can choose to utilise this service, which will automatically hide harmful comments from their social media feeds. This allows them to promote themselves and the sport in a much safer environment, free from the

detrimental effects of online negativity. Finn Bradshaw, ICC's Head of Digital, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "We are dedicated to fostering a positive and inclusive environment for all participants and fans of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. It's been great to see so many of the players and teams embrace our new initiative."

**SOUTH AFRICA STAR WELCOMES AI TOOL**

South Africa cricketer Sinalo Jafta shared her perspective on the importance of social media protection for players. "For me, social media protection takes a lot of weight off players, especially during World Cup campaigns, as that is when the pressure is the highest," she remarked. "There is nothing worse than opening up your phone after a loss—or even after a victory—and seeing degrading comments about your personality."

Jafta further highlighted the challenge young players face in dealing with online criticism. "With the youngsters coming in, you tell them 'please don't look,' but what are they going to do? It is literally their thing," she said.

"That protection is very big because players get to share their lives with the world without the fear of being judged or criticized. I am looking forward to seeing the changes, where people can just be free and players can show the world who they really are."

The ICC's social media moderation programme signifies a pivotal step towards prioritising mental well-being in sports, especially as the dynamics of social media continue to evolve. By fostering a supportive online community, the ICC not only enhances the experience for players but also for fans who follow their journeys.

## ED summons former India cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin in money laundering case

HYDERABAD, Oct 3 (Agencies): The Enforcement Directorate has summoned former India captain and Congress politician Mohammad Azharuddin for questioning in a money laundering case linked to alleged financial irregularities in the Hyderabad Cricket Association, official sources said Thursday.

The 61-year-old former Member of Parliament (MP) has been asked to depose before the federal agency at its office here on October 3, the sources said.

The probe is related to alleged financial irregularities in the Hyderabad cricket association in



which the ED had conducted searches in November last year.

The money laundering case stems from three FIRs and charge sheets

filed by the Telangana anti-corruption bureau (ACB) for alleged criminal misappropriation of the funds of the HCA to the tune of Rs 20 crore.

## Shamar Joseph among 9 players to get historic multi-year West Indies contract

BARBADOS, Oct 3 (Agencies): Cricket West Indies awarded multi-year contracts to their top men's and women's team cricketers for the first time in history. Fast bowler Shamar Joseph and former captain Shai Hope are among the six men's team players who were handed a two-year central contract. A total of 15 senior men's team players have been contracted. 15 women's senior team players were also handed central contracts with three of them, including T20I captain Hayley Matthews, receiving multi-year contracts.

The multi-year contracts come at a time when West Indies has been seeing quite a few players denying central deals and plying their



trade in T20 tournaments. The likes of Nicholas Pooran and Jason Holder, who refused to accept central contracts last year, have not been included in the retainership list. West Indies has seen one of the biggest talent drains to franchise-based T20 leagues, leading to weakened international teams, even for major tours. The CWI's move to offer multi-year contracts is aimed at pro-

viding financial security to players and retaining them for national duty.

The contract period runs from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 for the players on a one-year contract while for the multi-year awarded players, their contracts are from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2026.

**WEST INDIES CRICKET CONTRACT LIST**  
Multi-year contract  
Men: Shai Hope,

Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie and Jayden Seales.

Women: Shemaine Campbelle, Hayley Matthews and Stafanie Taylor.

**1-Year Contract**  
Men: Alick Athanaze, Kraigg Brathwaite, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Joshua Da Silva, Kavem Hodge, Akeal Hosein, Romario Shepherd, Rovman Powell.

Women: Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilla Connell, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Cherry Ann Fraser, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Ashmini Munisar, Chedean Nation, Karishma Ramharack and Rashada Williams.

Cricket West Indies said it has made only two changes to the men's pool of contracted

players. Kavem Hodge, who made his test debut this year against Australia received his first-ever international contract, along with Roston Chase. Hodge played a pivotal role in the regional team's first test win in Australia in 28 years in Brisbane and then followed that up with a maiden test century against England at Trent Bridge.

It also said that Test opener Tagenerneer Chanderpaul will take up a franchise retainer contract with the Guyana Harpy Eagles for the upcoming year.

West Indies said Kemar Roach was in discussions regarding a new dual playing and mentorship or coaching role as he begins to plan and consider the next stage of his cricket career.

## Gruelling schedule highlighted as Carlos Alcaraz runs from stadium to airport

BEIJING, Oct 3 (Agencies): Carlos Alcaraz said Thursday he had no time to celebrate becoming the China Open champion thanks to the gruelling tennis schedule, rushing straight from the stadium to catch a flight to the ongoing Shanghai Masters.

Alcaraz defeated world number one Jannik Sinner over the course of a draining three hours and 21 minutes on Wednesday night in Beijing, but by noon the next day was already at a press conference in Shanghai.

The 21-year-old has previously said that the men's tennis schedule is "going to kill us", and that "we have to do something about it", but on Thursday seemed to rein in his criticism. "The tennis schedule

is so, so tight, we're travelling from tournament to tournament with just one or two days before the tournament begins, so it is difficult, but we have to get used to it," the Spaniard said.

He told reporters he had to take all his luggage to the stadium with him before the Beijing final, and only had time to do a press conference and take a shower before "running" to the airport.

"I just did everything in a rush... we arrived here in Shanghai super late so I couldn't sleep as much as I wanted," he said, adding that it was 4 am (2000 GMT Wednesday) by the time he got to the eastern Chinese city.

Alcaraz will play his first match of the tournament on Sat-



urday against Shang Juncheng, who became only the second player from China to win an ATP Tour singles title when he won the Chengdu Open last month.

"I'm going to approach the match the same way that I approach every match, I'm going to prepare as best as I can," Alcaraz said.

"I hope to keep playing the same way that I'm playing and let's see what's going to happen, but I'll be ready."

Sinner will also be playing in Shanghai, with many seeing the rivalry between the two as the new narrative of the men's game.

"We are not close friends, but I think the respect that we have puts us in a position that we have a really good relationship," Alcaraz said on Thursday.

Also eying up the trophy is Novak Djokovic, who has won four times before in Shanghai and is targeting a 100th singles title.

## T20 World Cup: Australia's Alyssa Healy wary of tricky group featuring India

DUBAI, Oct 3 (Agencies): Australia captain Alyssa Healy is wary of the tricky group her team has been placed in, in the Women's T20 World Cup 2024. Australia have been grouped with India, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in Group A.

The defending champions will have to play Harmanpreet Kaur's India, who are being dubbed as one of the favourites for this edition of the tournament, Sri Lanka, who recently beat India in the women's Asia Cup among others.

Speaking about the tournament, Healy said that her team had come to win the title and not defend it, making it clear that Australia were coming in with a clean slate after the retirement of legendary Meg Lanning, who left cricket at the age of 31.

"You don't come here to defend the title, that's not what the World Cup is about, you come here to win it," she said. "So we are here with that approach. Our pool [Group A with India, New Zealand, Paki-



stan and Sri Lanka] is quite a tricky one. We've got to get past these teams to have a chance of lifting the trophy. So it's a challenge I'm very excited for," Healy told agency in an interview.

Not a lot of women's cricket has been played in the UAE. Healy believes that whichever team adapts the best in the tournament has a chance of lifting the trophy.

"The whole tournament, in general, is about adapting the quickest," Healy said. "That seems to be the way. If you look at the warm-up games, [it showed] you've got to adapt pretty quickly to what you're given. Probably the team that does the best throughout the

tournament will get the job done. We feel like we're well placed to do that and hopefully, we can do it," Healy said.

Australia are the most successful team in the tournament's history, having won four of the five titles. They did not win the tournament only in 2016, where they finished runner-ups behind West Indies. Healy said that Australia had a target on their back, but that was something that inspired the players to do better.

"It feels like, without being disrespectful, we have been hunted for a long period of time," she said. "We're constantly being asked about that, and we're used to it now. Teams are coming really hard at us to put us under the pump which we love."

"This World Cup is going to be no different. We know what the other nine are going to throw at us given the opportunity. We see it as a challenge and an opportunity to showcase a brand of cricket we like playing," concluded Healy.

# Kundan Kashmiri extends Navratra greetings to all

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: On the sacred day of the first Navratra, Kundan Kashmiri, president Kashmiri Pandit Conference (KPC), extended Navratra greetings to all.

"I extend my warmest and heartfelt congratulations to every member of the Hindu Samaj, and particularly to my Kashmiri Pandit brothers and sisters. May the divine blessings of Maa Shailputri shower upon us all, bringing strength, peace, wisdom, and prosperity into our lives," Kundan Kashmiri said.

Navratra, he added, a time dedicated to the nine manifestations of Goddess Durga, is one of the most significant festivals in Hinduism.

It symbolizes the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and spirituality over materialism. For nine days, we devote ourselves to the worship of the Goddess, invoking her divine energy in its various forms. These nine days are not merely for fasting and rituals but also for deep self-reflection, meditation, and rejuvenation of the soul.

The first day of Navratra holds special importance as it is dedicated to Maa Shailputri, the first form of Goddess Durga. Shailpu-

tri, which means "daughter of the mountains," represents strength, purity, and the power of nature. She is a symbol of patience, stability, and the unwavering will of the mother goddess. Shailputri, in her previous incarnation as Sati, sacrificed herself in the fire of devotion, and her rebirth as Shailputri signifies a new beginning, reminding us that we too can rise from any hardship with renewed strength and determination.

The Maa Shailputri, adorned with a crescent moon on her forehead and riding her sacred bull, Nandi, holds a trident and lotus in her hands. These symbols represent the balance of power and peace—qualities that are essential for a fulfilling life.

The lotus she holds signifies spiritual awakening and purity, while her trident symbolizes courage, strength, and self-control.

"When we offer our prayers to Maa Shailputri, we seek her blessings to purify our minds and rid ourselves of negativity. Her worship teaches us that true strength lies in patience, humility, and being in harmony with nature. The divine mother, in this form, inspires us to remain grounded and steadfast in the face of challenges," he said.



"For the Kashmiri Pandit community, Navratra has always been a time of deep devotion and reflection. The significance of these sacred days is felt deeply in our hearts, as we have a rich cultural and spiritual heritage that binds us to Maa Durga's divine energy. We have faced many challenges and adversities, yet like Maa Shailputri, we rise again and again with renewed strength. Our history is one of resilience, faith, and unwavering devotion, and it is these qualities that we must continue to uphold," he said.

"A special message to our youth on this pious day is that in these modern times, where distractions are many and our spiritual roots often get diluted, Navratra provides a golden opportunity to reconnect with our true selves. Maa Shailputri's message to you is clear, stay grounded in your values, remain con-

nected to your cultural heritage, and be strong in the face of life's challenges." Kundan Kashmiri said and added, "Our Kashmiri Pandit youth must remember that we come from a lineage of great saints, scholars, and yogis. Navratra is the perfect time to rediscover these roots, not just through rituals, but by truly understanding the spiritual depth of our traditions. I urge you to take time each day to meditate, to reflect on your goals, and to focus on self-discipline. Use the divine energy of Navratra to channel your potential into something constructive and meaningful, whether in your studies, career, or personal growth."

Embrace the teachings of Maa Shailputri by embodying purity of thought, purpose, and action. In a world that often tries to sway us away from our paths, the strength of Maa resides within each of us. Seek her guidance to remain focused, determined, and pure in your intentions. As the future of our community, it is your responsibility to carry forward the legacy of resilience and spiritual wisdom that has been handed down through generations. As we gather to celebrate these nine days

of devotion, let us also take a moment to reflect on the unity within our community. Festivals like Navratra are not just personal spiritual journeys, but collective celebrations that strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood. The light of the goddess shines brighter when we come together in prayer, love, and mutual respect.

Let us, as Kashmiri Pandits, use this sacred time to reconnect with our fellow community members, share in the joy of devotion, and unite in our collective prayers for peace, progress, and prosperity. In each Kashmiri Pandit home, may the divine light of Maa Durga shine bright, guiding us towards harmony and success. Let the recitation of Durga Saptashati and the chanting of Shiva bhajans fill our homes with positive energy, and may the youth actively participate in these celebrations, drawing strength and inspiration from our rich traditions.

"I pray for the well-being and happiness of every Kashmiri Pandit family and the larger Hindu Samaj. May the spirit of Maa Shailputri inspire us all to live with compassion, devotion, and unwavering strength," he said.

# DSW CLUJ commemorates Gandhi Jayanti with Swachhata Campaign 4.0



## Top News Report

JAMMU Oct 3: In observance of Gandhi Jayanti, the Cluster University of Jammu organized the Swachhata Campaign 4.0, an initiative spearheaded by the office of the Dean Students Welfare (DSW).

The campaign, designed to promote cleanliness and environmental responsibility, saw enthusiastic participation from students across all Schools, as well as Deans of various Faculties, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans. The event was held under the Patronage of Prof. Bechan Lal, Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu.

The campaign is a reflection of the University's dedication to fostering a cleaner environment and urged all participants to internalize the values of Swachhata in their daily lives.

Prof. Amit Pal Kaur,

Overall Incharge of the Swachhata Campaign 4.0, also addressed the gathering, stressing the importance of individual responsibility in maintaining hygiene and cleanliness. She encouraged students to be the flag-bearers of such initiatives, which not only honor the legacy of Gandhi Ji but also contribute to a sustainable future.

The students, guided by the NSS Campus Coordinator, Prof. Amit Pal Kaur, and the Nodal Officers/ Teachers Incharge from various Schools, actively participated in a comprehensive cleanliness drive across the campus. This event underscored the University's ongoing commitment to promoting environmental awareness and responsible civic behavior.

The event was attended by Dr. Vishal Sharma (Dean, Social Sciences), Dr. Mohd. Zubair Kales (Dean, Teacher Education), Dr. Monika Sharma

(Dean Faculty of Arts/acting Incharge Dean Students Welfare, CLUJ), Dr. Shubhra Jamwal (Assistant Dean, GCOE), Sunita Kumari (Assistant Dean, G.G.M. Science College), Dr. Roomi Rani (Assistant Dean, S.P.M.R. College of Commerce), Dr. Kuldeep Raina (Cultural Coordinator).

Also, Dr. Indu Sharma (School of Humanities and Liberal Arts), Dr. Tsering Landol and Dr. Harpreet Bhatia (School of Sciences), Sunaina Gupta and Dr. Monika Chib (School of Teacher Education), Dr. Ajay Kumar Chalotra, Dr. Rajneesh Kumar Karloopia and Dr. Roshi Charak (School of Social Sciences) also attended the cleanliness Drive.

The event was a significant step in raising awareness and encouraging the proactive measures to protect our environment. The Department of Students Welfare thanked all participants for their valuable contribution.

# Dimple criticizes BJP, predicts electoral success for NC-Congress Alliance in J&K



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: Sunil Dimple, president of Mission Statehood, expressed his gratitude to the Supreme Court for ensuring that assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir before the deadline of September 30.

He also extended his thanks to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the youth, along with the Election Commission of India (ECI), government employees, security forces, and Jammu and Kashmir police for facilitating peaceful elections and achieving a remarkable voter turnout.

Dimple took the opportunity to criticize BJP leaders, particularly Ravinder Raina and Ram Madhav, regarding their statements on Jammu-centric politics and the potential formation of a Jammu-centric government.

He asserted that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are in favor of a government that represents all three regions—Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh—rather than one that focuses solely on a single region.

Addressing the electoral landscape, Dimple predicted that the NC-Congress alliance and its independent partners would secure between 62 to 65 MLA seats in the upcoming assembly elections.

He confidently stated that the BJP's defeat in Jammu and Kashmir is imminent, highlighting the heavy voter turnout as a

clear indication of public discontent with the party.

Dimple argued that the increased participation reflects the people's anger over the BJP's decisions, particularly the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, and the perceived erosion of the Dogra identity.

Dimple urged the ECI to disclose the financial expenditures made by the BJP during the assembly elections, claiming that the party has spent around five thousand crores, including funding for proxy candidates such as Er Rashid and members of Jamaat-e-Islami.

He expressed concern over the extension of bail for Er Rashid, questioning the implications of his release.

Reaffirming his commitment, Dimple stated that Mission Statehood will continue its fight for the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including the restoration of Article 370 and 35A.

He predicted that alliance parties would form the government with 62-65 MLA seats, while the BJP would secure only 12-15 seats.

Furthermore, Dimple alleged that the BJP may be attempting to forge a government in collaboration with the National Conference through unethical means, including horse-trading.

He emphasized that, according to various reports, the National Conference is expected to win around 42 MLA seats, further solidifying his stance against the BJP's potential strategies.

# International, National cricketers visit Jammu Tawi Golf Course

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Oct 3: In an exciting prelude to the upcoming Legends Cricket Tournament, renowned international and national-level cricketers George Worker from New Zealand, Shaun Marsh from Australia, Peter Trevor from England, and Sachin Rana from India visited the Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra, today.

The world-class sportsmen took a break from the cricketing pitch to enjoy a friendly game of golf at one of India's most picturesque and challenging courses.

Jammu Tawi Golf Course, known for its breathtaking views and demanding terrain, pro-

vided the perfect backdrop for these athletes. It is a regular host for the prestigious Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), which is scheduled to be held later this month in the third week of October 2024.

The cricketers expressed their admiration for the course's beauty and the challenges it presents. George Worker praised the lush greenery and the impeccably maintained fairways, saying, "It's rare to find a course that not only tests your skill but also allows you to soak in such scenic beauty." Shaun Marsh added, "This course is one of the toughest I've played, but the experience was



thoroughly enjoyable. The team here has done an incredible job of creating an environment that's both challenging and relaxing."

Peter Trevor, who is an avid golfer, commented on the unique layout of the course: "The undulating greens and the surround-

ing mountains make for an unforgettable experience. It's definitely one of the finest courses I've seen in India." Sachin Rana also echoed the positive sentiments, noting, "It was a great time spent with fellow cricketers on a course that's truly world-class. We had a fantastic

day here."

Reflecting on the significance of the occasion, the Secretary of Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Manav Gupta stated, "We are honoured to welcome such distinguished athletes from around the world to our course. Their positive feedback is a testament to the hard work and continuous efforts we have put into the development of the facility. Our aim has always been to create a top-tier golfing experience that blends the natural beauty of the region with the highest standards of sport. Hosting both international sports personalities and major events reinforces our commitment to making Jammu Tawi Golf

Course a premier destination for golfers worldwide."

The visit by these legendary cricketers to Jammu Tawi Golf Course highlights the appeal of the facility to sports enthusiasts from around the globe. With its regular hosting of the PGTI and its growing reputation, the course is fast becoming a top destination for golf aficionados, both national and international.

As the Legends Cricket Tournament kicks off, the cricketers have left behind glowing reviews, not only for Jammu Tawi Golf Course but also for the city of Jammu, expressing their eagerness to return both for cricket and for golf.

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