

# Good Morning Kashmir

Office of LG J&K  
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We have embarked on several major initiatives in developing efficient public service delivery mechanism and it has improved ease of living of common man. Transparent & accountable governance is ensuring that benefits of growth reaches all sections, especially last man in queue.

Srinagar • Saturday 08, April 2023 • Vol: 14 • Issue No:84 • Page:12 • Price: ₹ 5/- (Air Surcharge for Delhi, Jammu & Ladakh 50/- Paise) RNI No. JKENG/2010/36998

## Traffic police identifying stunt bikers through social media

Srinagar: Maneuvering bike stunts and posting them on social media has made it easy for traffic police to catch hold of bikers involved in the acts.



A senior traffic police official in Srinagar said that they have started a massive drive to curb stunt biking by expanding their graft in all districts of the valley. "In a recent drive, we seized more than 10 bikes," he said.

Not just Srinagar, we have identified a good number of bikers from other districts who come to Srinagar for bike. •P-02

## Srinagar would have never looked better: CS on ongoing works

Srinagar: The government on Friday said that all the ongoing developmental works in Srinagar City will be completed on set timeline and that Jammu & Kashmir has witnessed a massive change from 2018-19 till date in terms of completion of the projects.



Talking to the reporters here, Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta said that the ongoing developmental projects will be completed on time in Srinagar City. •P-02

## LG's Mulaqaat

# Our firm resolve to address public complaints in time-bound manner: LG Sinha

GMK News Network

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday interacted with a group of citizens who had submitted their various grievances on a dedicated portal and said there is a firm resolve to address public complaints in a time-bound manner.

He said the government has taken several initiatives to develop an efficient public service delivery mechanism and it has improved ease of living of common people.

We have embarked on several major initiatives in developing efficient public service delivery mechanism & it has improved ease of living of common man, observed the Lt Governor.

Transparent & accountable governance is ensuring that benefit of growth reaches all sections, especially last man in queue, he said.

While interacting with the citizens, the Lt Governor took appraisal of their grievances and action taken by the concerned Deputy Commissioners. The Lt Governor also sought details of the action taken on the directions passed in the previous meeting.

On the grievance of a person



from Srinagar regarding environment protection and sanitation at the foothills of Shankaracharya top, the Lt Governor directed Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation to look into the issue on priority for appropriate action.

Responding to a complaint regarding wards and bathrooms of the District Maternity & Child care Hospital Sheerbagh, Anantnag, the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag apprised the chair that the renovation and facelifting work of the bathrooms of the hospitals has already been done and the grievance was resolved.

Addressing the grievance of Sh Irfan Rasool from Baramulla regarding dumping of solid

waste in Nignli Nallah and its harmful impact on environment, the Lt Governor asked the Deputy Commissioner to formulate a comprehensive strategy through the local PRIs for a robust waste management.

Sh Farooq Ahmad from Pulwama had submitted a complaint regarding illegal sand extraction in Hajibal, on which the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner to take strict and immediate action.

Responding to the grievance of non-availability of Gynaecologist specialist at CHC Bani, Administrative Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department apprised the chair that the specialist will be arranged immediately on rota-

tion basis. On the sidelines of the LG's Mulaqaat, discussion was also held on successful implementation of training programme

for holistic development of agriculture and allied sector. The training programme is being executed by the Agriculture Production Department for farmers in all 20 districts. Sh Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department gave the detailed presentation of the training programme scheduled to be held between 24th April to 31st August, 2023.

Ms Rehana Batul Commissioner Secretary, Public Grievances conducted the proceedings of the LG's Mulaqaat.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Sh R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Administrative Secretaries; •P-02

## LG launches two major initiatives of Cooperative deptt

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha launched two major initiatives of Cooperative department- Diploma in Cooperative Management and MoU between Cooperatives and Department of Tribal Affairs, at Raj Bhawan Friday. Congratulating the stakeholders, the Lt Governor said the initiatives will strengthen the cooperative spirit in the UT and transform the lives of the tribal community.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of 'Sahkar Se Samridhhi' will guide the social and economic transformation and provide vital support for growth of agriculture sector. The new initiatives also aimed at improving cooperatives efficiency and to meet the requirements of rural economy," observed the Lt Governor.

Emphasizing on promoting cooperative education and training, the Lt Governor said the introduction of Diploma in Cooperative Management will provide opportunities to Junior Officers, members of Cooperative Societies, FPOs and officials of other allied departments to acquire requisite skills to manage cooperative business and facilitate the process of human resource development in J&K. •P-02

## DAK seeks death penalty for drug traffickers

Srinagar: On world health day, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday has sought death penalty for drug traffickers.

"Drug trafficking is destroying our young generation and it deserves exemplary punishment," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a statement issued here.

Dr Hassan said unseemly forces are involved in peddling and promoting drugs in Kashmir. "They are using their touts and agents who receive financial and material assistance for trafficking drugs. Youth •P-02

## 31 police officers transferred in J&K

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government in the interest of administration Friday ordered transfer and posting of 31 police officers with immediate effect.

As per the order, Paramjeet Singh, Addl. SP Railways, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Addl. SP Kathua vice Shri Suresh Kumar.

Suresh Kumar, Addl. SP, Kathua, is transferred and posted as Vice Principal, PTS, Kathua, against an available vacancy. Sandeep Bhat, •P-02

## School bag policy

# Edu Deptt fixes limit on bag weight for school students

Bhat Imran

Srinagar: The School Education Department Friday said that there shall be no carrying of bag for the students of classes I and II shall not have more than 1.5 KGs.

It also said that the weight of school bags for students of classes I and II shall not have more than 1.5 KGs.

Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) has said, "The weight of the school bags as per the policy should be 1.5Kg for students of Classes I and II, 3Kg for Classes III and IV."



The circular issued by the DSEK reads that the weight of school bags for classes VI and VII shall be 4Kgs and 5Kgs for classes VIII and IX followed by 5.5 KGs for class X. •P-02

## Covid-19

# Will take appropriate steps if need arises: Chief Secretary

Jahangeer Ganai

Srinagar: There is no need to panic about Covid-19 in J&K and if need arises, appropriate steps will be taken in time, Chief Secretary Arjun Kumar Mehta said on Friday.

While talking to reporters on the side-lines of World Health Day event in Srinagar, Kumar said that there is no need to panic and appropriate steps will be taken as the administration has been very successful in managing the previous waves of Covid-19.

"People should have complete confidence that whenever need arises all possible steps will be taken. But at the moment there is no need to worry," he said. "We by and large meet the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS). Not 100 percent but we will analyze what are the gaps and very shortly we will complete all the gaps. At present by and large we are very comfortable," the CS said.

Bhupinder Kumar Health and Medical Education Secretary, J&K, while talking •P-02



## CS launches 03 online services of Sc & Tech Deptt

Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Friday launched three online services in presence of Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology, Saurabh Bhagat. These include Sponsored Research & Extension Programme, Support for Innovation & Patent Filing scheme, and Science Talent Promotion Scholarship Scheme. •P-02

# Govt orders SIT probe into 'illegal lease' of temple properties in Kashmir

Owais Gul

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration a letter has been issued by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to 10 DCs of Kashmir wherein they were asked to probe the illegal lease of temple properties in temple properties being used illegally. "I am hereby directed to enclose herewith copy of communication along with its enclosures bearing O.M no. •P-02

tenant Governor's Secretariat References Monitoring Cell, Jammu & Kashmir, a letter has been issued to 10 DCs of Kashmir, wherein they were asked to probe the illegal lease of temple properties and nexus in temple properties being used illegally. "I am hereby directed to enclose herewith copy of communication along with its enclosures bearing O.M no. •P-02

## Amrit Kaal Budget

# Development of industrial estates, export hubs creation to get focus in 2023-24 budget

GMK News Network

SRINAGAR: "Development, expansion of new industrial estates, promotion of ease of doing business and creation of export hubs will receive a significant push in the budget earmarked for 2023-24 fiscal".

This year's budget elaborates that the Jammu and Kashmir government has identified 29 projects for development of new Industrial Estates during 2023-24.

The investment proposals for setting up of Medicities in Jammu and Srinagar had been received for creation of health infrastructure in private sector. In this regard, Medicities at Sempora, Srinagar and Meeran Sahib, Jammu are being established to provide better health-care facilities to the ailing.

The main aim of "One District One Product" is to promote local product for export. In this regard, Jammu and Srinagar districts have been selected among the 75 districts across India for export of local

products. Similarly, 1500 units under Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) are being targeted to be established in 2023-24.

Introduction of quality certification with branding under Handloom and Handicraft sector will also be done in 2023-24 and steps will be taken for popularization of local products.

Significantly, Jammu and Kashmir government has already taken a slew of measures towards promotion of ease of doing business in the UT which has received tremendous response from various potential investors. Besides, further steps are being taken up for reducing compliances on "Ease of Living" and "Ease of Doing Business".

The Budget will also facilitate conduct of mock drills to be carried out across the Union Territory. Besides, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development policy would also be notified.

Similarly, Samadhaan 2.0

The budget has also earmarked funds for providing of Turnover Incentives to boost industrial development for entailing increase in employment.

To facilitate export of local products to international markets, export hubs will be created under this year's budget. The government is also encouraging officers to give an active push to exports, marketing promotion programmes for handicrafts focusing global market, development of industrial estate connected to significant economic nodes to maintain the momentum of growth.

The Budget has also kept a provision for adoption of plug and play model for key development sectors including manufacturing sector. Notably, handicraft and handloom sector of the Union Territory has recorded •P-02



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## Weekend MOVIES SCHEDULE

SAT & SUN, 08 & 09 APRIL 2023

GUMRAAH	THE SUPER MARIO BRO	JOHN WICK CHAPTER 4	BHOLAA	THE POPES EXORCIST
10:30 AM, 3:00 PM (Hindi)	10:45 AM (Hindi) 4:30 PM (English)	2:30 PM (English)	1:45 PM (Hindi)	11:00 AM (English)
U/A	U/A	A	U/A	U/A

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# Market Checking drives conducted in Shopian villages

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Tehsilar Hermain along with concerned SHO Friday conducted market checking at various locations in the Hermain market.

The checking drives were aimed at ensuring quality and price control

and keeping a vigil on erring traders.

The authorities said that such drives will be conducted on a routine basis so that the quality and price of commodities is ensured without undue profiteering.

Traders were advised not to infringe upon the consumer rights and were also asked for displaying the rate lists at their respective trade centres.

Similarly, in Keegam tehsil, a joint team of revenue, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs conducted Market checking in Tehsil Keegam.

A sum of Rs. 3900 has been recovered from erring Shopkeepers. Rotten and expired items have been destroyed on spot. Erring shopkeepers have been warned against the illegal transactions.

# World Health Day DLSA B'pora organises Health awareness, sensitization programme

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora on Friday observed World Health Day by organising an awareness programme titled, "Health for All".

The programme was organised in collaboration with Health Department Bandipora under the Chairmanship of Principal District and Sessions Judge Bandipora Amit Sharma who is also Chairman

District Legal Services Authority.

Secretary DLSA Bandipora Nusrat Ali Hakak CMO Bandipora, Dr. Mohammad Rafiq Salathi, Principal AMT School Bandipora Dr. Asif Khan, District Epidemiologist Dr. Nabeel Ishtiyag, staff members of DLSA Bandipora, FMPHW, Asha Workers, Students, PLVs and other officials of AMT school were also present on the occasion.

The programme was aimed at creating awareness among the general public to raise awareness about people's general health and wellbeing around the world.

The introductory address was delivered by CMO Bandipora and in his discourse, he apprised that people should associate with many health organisations to spread awareness and conduct massive campaigns disclosing the necessity of a healthy lifestyle.

On the occasion Dr. Nabeel Ishtiyag acted as

resource person wherein he said that every year, World Health Day is observed to promote awareness about people's general health and wellbeing around the world.

He highlighted that the day is seen as an opportunity to drive worldwide attention to a subject of major importance for global health each year and sensitized young minds of the importance of their physical and mental health.

Other speakers while addressing the gathering said that Health is essential for leading a happy life. It is undoubtedly the greatest wealth offered to us. No money or any other materialistic things on this planet are worthy enough to substitute the worth of health, they said.

A healthy human body is the main source of all happiness. People should accept it as the greatest boon and should never exploit it, said the speakers.

## .....from FRONT PAGE

### Traffic police

stunts and reckless riding and driving, the official said.

In a surprising revelation, Srinagar traffic police authorities said they identified some bikers who come to Srinagar from north and south Kashmir for stunts. He said these boys travel a long distance for the purpose of filming the stunts on the picturesque Dal Lake.

"So far, social media handles have been a big tool for us to catch hold of them as after doing these stunts, they upload it on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. And upon questioning them, we also reached out to other members involved in bike stunts," the official said.

He added that with the support of district police across Kashmir, they are summoning these boys through their concerned police stations, and the concerned Station House Officers (SHOs) are sharing the information with them.

Notably, the drive by traffic police follows a horrific road accident on Boulevard near SKICC last week, which resulted in the on-spot death of a 20-year-old Srinagar boy.

Meanwhile, netizens have been urging the traffic police to act tough against those involved in bike stunts so as to save precious lives. Traffic Police Srinagar authorities have been repeatedly appealing to parents to keep a check on their children if they are giving them the two-wheelers—(KNO)

### Srinagar would

"Srinagar would have never looked better. Wait and watch what Srinagar is going to look like in May," he said while replying to a query.

"We understand that in the real world all timelines are not adhered to on the particular day. The project gets completed day before or day after. But, in 2018-19, only 9200 works were completed and this year around 90,000 works are being completed. That's the kind of change J&K has witnessed," he said.

Pertinently, the Srinagar city, especially the commercial Hub Lal Chowk is witnessing several developmental works and the government has claimed that all the projects will be completed on April 15.

The developmental works are being carried out under the much-hyped Smart City project—(KNO)

### Our firm resolve to address public

illegal sand extraction in Hajibal, on which the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner to take strict and immediate action.

Responding to the grievance of non-availability of Gynaecologist specialist at CHC Bani, Administra-

"We have taken several steps to ensure effective on-ground implementation of rural development schemes and to empower the targeted sections. Resource availability for growth of cooperatives is another area where steps have been taken to ensure credit access to people and support services for equitable distribution of benefits," observed the Lt Governor.

More than 1000 cooperatives have been established in various sectors. An amount of Rs 366 crore was allocated for the revival of Jammu, Baramulla and Anantnag Central Cooperative Banks, besides Apex Level Dairy Federation has been established in Jammu Kashmir after 27 years, he added.

The Lt Governor further stressed on expansion of the cooperative sector and connecting more farmers with Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society. Establishment of PACS in every panchayat should be our prime objective, the Lt Governor added.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also unveiled the logo of the Cooperative Department.

Ms. Yasha Mudgul, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Cooperatives Department and Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary to the Government, Tribal Affairs Department gave a detailed briefing on the new initiatives launched today and how the collaboration of Cooperative Department and Tribal Affairs Department will benefit the tribal community.

The Lt Governor appraised the action plans and the awareness programmes at various levels, besides measures initiated for computerization of PACS.

The Lt Governor also enquired about the training modules of the diploma course. It was informed that 50 candidates have been enrolled for the 40 weeks Diploma course in Cooperative Management through the Centre for Cooperative Management Jammu.

Head of Departments and senior officers were present on the occasion.

### DAK seeks death

are particularly targeted and initially drugs are gifted to them till they become addicts."

"There is a strong network of drug peddlers who make these drugs available with fruit sellers to tea shops and gyms and they enjoy the patronage of certain forces behind the curtain," he said.

The DAK President said the menace of drug addiction has engulfed a vast majority of our population.

"A recent report by the National Drug Dependence Treatment centre of AIIMS New Delhi has revealed that JK has 10 lac drug abusers. According to a survey from Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences 90 percent of drug abusers in Kashmir are using heroin," he said.



"Young people are dying because of heroin abuse in Kashmir," he said adding "more heroin addicts are dying now because they have moved from snorting (inhaling through the nose) to injectables making the drug even more lethal."

Dr Nisar said every day we see young persons coming to hospitals with heart attack and strokes and drug abuse is a big factor.

"Drug abuse is responsible for hepatitis epidemic in Kashmir. Drug addicts are at a higher risk of contracting hepatitis B, C and HIV and have the potential to spread these deadly infections to others," he said—(KNO)

### 31 police officers

Dy. Commandant, 1st Women Bn., is transferred and posted as Addl. SP Bandipora, against an available vacancy.

Imtiaz Ahmed, Dy.SP PC Sangam, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP (Ops.), Kunzer vice Aumer Iqbal. Imtiaz Ahmed shall also hold the additional charge of the post of SDPO Tangmarg, till further orders.

Aumer Iqbal, Dy.SP (Ops.), Kunzer, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-10thBn., against an available vacancy.

Rashid Younis, Dy.SP H r s Kupwara, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-8th Bn., against an available vacancy.

Mohammad Usman, Dy.SP Hrs Samba, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-22nd Bn. against an available vacancy.

Hamid Ail Bandy, Dy.SP Anti Corruption Bureau, upon his repatriation from ACB, is posted as Dy.SP, PC, Surankote vice Tanveer Jeelani.

Sourabh Prashar, Dy.SP (Prov.) Police Headquarters, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP (Hqrs.) Samba vice Mohd. Usman.

Mohd. Amen Bhat, Dy.SP Pahalgam, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-3' Bn., against an available vacancy. Dy.SP Hars. Anantnag shall hold

the additional charge of the post of Dy.SP Pahalgam, till further orders.

Pankaj Soodan, SDPO Border Kathua is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-24th Bn., against available vacancy.

Faraz Hussain Shah, SDPO PC Handwara, is transferred and shall await orders of posting in Police Headquarters, J&K.

DherajSingh Katoch, Dy.SP CID CI Jammu, is transferred and posted as SDPO Border, Kathua vice Pankaj Soodan.

Nikhil Gogna, Dy.SP Anti-Hijacking, Jammu, is transferred and posted as SDPO R.S. Pura vice Surinder Singh.

Tanveer Jeelani, Dy.SP PC, Surankote, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-22" Bn., against an available vacancy.

Mudassar Hussain, Dy.SP Civil Secretariat, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP (Hqrs.) Rajouri, vice Chanchal Singh.

Zohaib Hassan, Dy.SP PC, Rafiaband is transferred and posted as SDPO Panthachowk, against an available vacancy.

Sunil Singh, SDPO Domana, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-1st Bn., against an available vacancy.

Surinder Singh, SDPO RS Pora, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP I R - 5 Bn., against an available vacancy.

Adil Mushtaq, attached with the Crime Branch, is posted as Dy.SP IR-17thBn., against an available vacancy.

Javaid Ahmad, SDPO, Tangmarg, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-11th Bn., against an available vacancy.

Syed Sleet Shah, Dy.SP PC, Srinagar, is transferred and posted as SDPO PC Handwara vice Faraz Hussain Shah.

Mohd. Rafee Rather, Dy.SP Traffic Srinagar, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP (Hrs.) Kupwara vice Rashid Younis.

Priyanka Kumari, SDPO, Vijaypur, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP 15 Women Bn., against an available vacancy.

Shammi Kumar, Dy.SP Hrs Kathua, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-24th B., against an available vacancy.

Akash Kohli, SDPO Basohli is transferred and posted as SDPO Nagrota vice Sultan Mirza.

Rohit Kumar, Dy.SP PC Srinagar, is transferred and shall await orders of posting in Police Headquarters, J&K.

Manjit Singh, Dy.SP IR-14th B., is transferred and posted as Dy.SP (Hqrs.) Kathua, vice Shammi Kumar.

Chanchal Singh, Dy.SP Hqrs Rajouri, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-16' Bn., against an available vacancy.

Sultan Mirza, SDPO, Nagrota, is transferred and posted as Dy.SP IR-5thBn., against an available vacancy.

Vishal Shoor, Dy.SP, awaiting adjustment after promotion, is posted as SDPO Domana, vice Sunil Singh.

### Govt orders SIT probe

GAD-RMC/256/2022-LGRMC-GAD dated 20-05-2022 received from Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat References Monitoring Cell, Jammu & Kashmir with the request to ascertain any such instances in your district and take appropriate necessary action under rules with intimation to this office," a letter issued from Divisional Commissioner's office under number DIV.COM/Mig-121/7150795/46-57, reads.

Besides, the DCs have been asked to furnish the updated inventory of Religious Minority Properties (Temple, Gurudwara, Others) within week's time positively—(KNO)

### CS launches 03

All these schemes are offered by the J&K Science, Technology and Innovation Council (JKST&IC) and are primarily meant for inculcating the scientific culture among students/scientific community in particular and common masses in general.

Chief Secretary stressed the need for scientific solutions to various issues of local importance such as waste management, biomass energy, plastic to fuel stressing need to run a waste to wealth campaign. He complimented the Science & Technology Department for establishing Industrial Biotechnology Parks, Sub Regional Science Centre, and instructed for establishment of various Centre of Excellences across UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

He enjoined upon the Department to collaborate with other departments for innovative solutions to problems faced by people in their day to day life. He said that Science and Technology should contribute to ease of living. He made out that our focus should be on innovations for larger public interest so that the knowledge actually gets transferred from lab to land.

During the course, Chief Secretary also took the stock of various schemes of Science & Technology Department viz Jammu Smart City Mission, Jammu Solar city Mission, PM-KUSUM , Rooftop Solar Power Plant Mission and focused on the need to increase the demand of solar energy within the UT of J&K.

On the occasion it was given out that the Sponsored Research & Extension Programme envisages that the research proposals/scientific surveys should be invited through open advertisement from the Scientists/professors/ academicians/scholars/research etc, get it evaluated by the Scientific Advisory Committee(SAC)/ Technical Committee (TC) constituted by the Government for furnishing of

recommendations and then should be provided with the financial support for carrying out the research on the local specific issues. Later the outcome/recommendation of these research projects/surveys are forwarded to the line departments for implementation.

Regarding the Support for Innovation & Patent Filing scheme it was said that the JKST&IC provides financial support (seed money) to the innovator/ institution working on novel ideas for development of prototype. The scheme is aimed at the promotion of Innovations and encouragement of local youth for their pursuits in different fields of Science & Technology.

As far as Science Talent Promotion Scholarship Scheme is concerned it aims at encouraging the students to pursue Science subjects in their higher classes. The scholarships are provided to the meritorious students at 10+2 upto PG levels for a period of 02 , 03 and 02 years respectively at each level.

The three online schemes/services detailed above being implemented in the online mode now are also RAS integrated therefore open for public feedback. Post launch of these services, the Department of Science & Technology will be e-Governance Complaint as envisaged under the 'Digital J&K' mission of the UT.

Giving details about the performance of the Department it was said that a total of 2169 works have been completed under different schemes during 2022-23 out of 2400 works taken in hand. Moreover the ST&IC has registered an expenditure of nearly 99.8% of its funds released for the previous financial year.

Commissioner Secretary IT and other senior officers of IT department were also present during the inaugural function.

### Will take appropriate steps

to reporters said that since past few weeks a rising trend of Covid-19 cases has been reported in J&K and around 230 cases are active. But just 12 are hospitalized across J&K," he said. "As per government guidelines, testing rate has been increased and all patients having symptoms of influenza and acute respiratory distress are being tested and cases are on rise but hospitalization is not much."

He said it is an Omicron variant known as XBB.1.16 that is prevalent in society at present. "Most of the cases in the country are because of this variant," he said, adding that the genome sequencing lab has been made operational at SKIMS Soura and genome sequencing is now being done here.

He said that there is no need to panic as they have seen situations in last three years as handled them as well. "We have a very trained staff and hospitals are also very well equipped," the Secretary Health and Medical Education said.

He said that mock drills in the hospitals are being conducted to ensure operational readiness for management of Covid with specific focus on oxygen plants, ventilators, logistics and human resources on 10 and 11 April and gaps are also being filled.

Kumar said that that all persons having symptoms must report as early detection helps in proper management and if it is reported late, then sometimes it leads to difficulties.

He said that situation is very much under control but people shouldn't lower guard but follow covid appropriate behaviour—(KNO)

### Edu Deptt fixes limit on bag

DSEK said, "In compliance to the directions passed in a Public Interest Litigation, School Education Department had made the amendment to JK School Education Act 2002 by inserting Rule 8A, which mandates School Heads to regulate weight of school bags and mandated Government to cancel affiliation and recognition of the school violating provisions of Rule 8A.

It also said that the rules that shall be added as Rule 8A include, "No homework is assigned to students of classes up to 2nd standard."

The director also said that no formal books are prescribed at Nursery, LKG and UKG levels.

"However, students of these classes may be provided a maximum of two notebooks or work books to be kept in the teacher's custody in the school itself," it reads.

The circular also states that students of pre-primary level are not asked to carry any bag except light carrier for Lunch box.

"No Schools should prescribe any other subjects except Language and Arithmetic for class 1st and 2nd, Language, Environmental Science (EVS) and Arithmetic for class 3rd to 5th; and Language, Social Science, Mathematics and Science for class 6th and 7h, or as prescribed by the affiliating authority," it reads.

DSEK further said that the students shall not be asked to bring additional books and extra material to school.

The circular reads, "Government may cancel affiliation and recognition of the school violating the provisions of rule 8A."—(KNO)

### Development of industrial

an unprecedented growth in the last three months and registered Rs 729 crore worth exports despite instability in the global market.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Jammu and Kashmir has set a new record in establishment of village industrial units. In the last financial year, 1.73 lakh new jobs were generated under PMEGP (PM's Employment Generation Programme) alone.

## Congress' district president from Pulwama quits party

Says party has lost relevance in J&K

**AGENCIES**

Srinagar: District Congress Committee president, Umer Jaan from south Kashmir's Pulwama district has resigned from post and basic membership of the party. In his resignation letter, Umer has stated that the Congress has lost relevance in Jammu and Kashmir. "It's been quite a few years, especially after the abrogation of the special status that the Indian National Congress has lost relevance in the Union Territory because of its obscure stand on Jammu and Kashmir and

has failed to put forward its vision and policies regarding the UT," reads the letter. It reads that it seemed more interested in raising the issues of central leadership and ignoring the problems faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "I must thank every member of the party who stood by my side in my journey with Indian National Congress and I wish every member of the party best in future and hope they can change the policies for the betterment of people of India and in particular the people of J&K," it reads—(KNO)

## Union Forest Secretary inspects Wullar conservation works

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

BANDIPORA: Union Secretary of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EF&CC), Leena Nandan, on Friday visited Bandipora and inspected Wullar lake conservation works being taken up by Wullar Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA). Union Secretary was accompanied by Principal Secretary Forests Department, Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Executive Director, WUCMA, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmed, SSP Bandipora Lakshay Sharma, Coordinator WUCMA, DFO Bandipora, and other senior officers of the district.

was de-silted under Wullar Action Plan thus enhancing the water holding capacity of the lake significantly. The CED also briefed about the nature of catchment conservation works, biodiversity conservation works and eco-tourism development works that have been taken up under the Wullar Action Plan including construction of non-motorable road (pathway) around the lake. The officers said that Wullar Lake is valuable asset of not only the district but for the whole UT and if the tourism potential here is exploited fully, it will entirely change the socio-economic condition of the local population of the district. They informed that there is a huge potential for Water Sports besides having huge fish stocks in the lake. The administration also intends to develop a golf club on one of the islands inside the Wullar, they added. Union Secretary was appreciative of works taken up by the authority and said that the Union Government has prioritized conservation of this famous Lake with focus on tapping the vast ecotourism potential of the site. She assured that the Union government will extend adequate funding for all requisite works needed to be executed in the lake for its development and beautification.



Union Secretary inspected various conservation and ecotourism works being carried out by Wullar Conservation and Management Authority. Chief Executive Director (CED) WUCMA briefed the Union Secretary about the progress made in the conservation process including dredging operations being carried out in different sections of the lake besides informing about future plans for developing Wullar as a top tourism destination. It was informed that the dredging work was carried out in critically silted portions of the lake under which an area of 3.10 square kilometers

tract. They informed that there is a huge potential for Water Sports besides having huge fish stocks in the lake. The administration also intends to develop a golf club on one of the islands inside the Wullar, they added. Union Secretary was appreciative of works taken up by the authority and said that the Union Government has prioritized conservation of this famous Lake with focus on tapping the vast ecotourism potential of the site. She assured that the Union government will extend adequate funding for all requisite works needed to be executed in the lake for its development and beautification.

## BJP on mission mode to reach out to last person in society: Rana

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana Friday said the mission of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not only to steer the nation to highest pinnacles of progress and development but also to ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes percolate down to last person in the society. "The Prime Minister's vision of Atma Nirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat is Sashaktikaran (empowerment) of all, irrespective of religion, region or caste, as per his cherished agenda of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas", Mr Rana said, adding that it is with this mantra that every BJP Karyakarta is reaching out to the people, aware them about the schemes tailored by the government for their welfare, listen to their problems and make every effort in getting these resolved by taking up the grievances or issues with appropriate forums in the administration. Rana along with Mr. Munish Sharma, Prabhari BJYM and Mr. Parneesh Mahajan, Incharge Training Department were interacting with the people during the public grievances redressal camp—a

mechanism held on weekly basis—at the BJP headquarters at Trikuta Nagar. About 30 deputations apart from individuals from across the state met the BJP leaders, who redressed their grievances by taking up the matter with the concerned authorities. Mr. Rana said the commitment of the Prime Minister to public welfare keeps every worker on mission mode to be amid them like a family. This inspiring ethos of the BJP since its inception from the Jana Sangh era is a major irritant for the Congress and the self-styled socialists, which is why they are channelizing all their negative energies towards maligning the party of the people, for the people and by the people. However, the more these parties orchestrate campaigns against the BJP, the more it becomes dearer to the people for its Nation First mission, he added. Mr Rana referred in detail to the path-breaking initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, One Nation-One Ration Card, StartUp, Digital Bharat, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Jan Dhan Yojana, Izzat Ghar programme and much more, saying these schemes have changed the lives of the people. He said

Earlier, the momentum of opposing the BJP was feeble but after these parties were almost rooted out from the ground by the people due to their self-centric, anarchistic, opportunistic and dynastic politics, the venom has gained the intensity. The health cover of Rs 5 lakh each is available to over 50 crore families across the country, which includes the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir, as a special dispensation. He made a mention of the most successful Covid contain-

ment campaign under the leadership of the Prime Minister, saying this was unparalleled across the pandemic inflicted world. While several major economies crashed, India made a mark as the world's fifth economy, notwithstanding the fact of multiple challenges facing the country. Over 81 crore population is getting free rations for nearly three years now and this speaks of the concern of the BJP towards the compatriots, he added.



## NIT Sgr students develop Kashmir's first racing model 'Go-Kart'

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

Srinagar: A group of 25 students from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar has developed Kashmir's first racing model, Go-kart (G-01). It will be participating in All India Go Karting Competition to be held in Coimbatore Tamil Nadu next week. Department of Mechanical Engineering Team Garuda's first racing model, G-01 was flagged off on Thursday by In-charge Director NIT Srinagar Prof. MF Wani and Registrar Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari. The ceremony was attended by all Deans and HOD's of various departments. The team of 25 students was formed by Head MED, Prof. Adnan Qayoum and they worked under the mentorship of Dr.H.S. Pali and Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran from the past several months on the campus. Go-Kart has been designed from various equipment and Bajaj Pulsar 150 Engine has been used in the vehicle. It runs on Diesel and goes extreme to 150 kilometers per hour. Trail run was conducted successfully and it passed all normal tests before going on the road. In-charge Director Prof. M.F Wani appreciated Team Garuda's model and stated that it is a proud movement for the entire Institute. "It is the first time that students have developed the G-Kart model. It is

just beginning and more to come. Our students are working day and night on innovations and we are also upgrading our infrastructure on the campus," Prof. Sehgal appreciated the contribution of Dr.H.S. Pali and Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran for mentoring the students on the campus. Institute's Registrar, he said. In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal said that in the recent decades, GoKart is a new edition in Kashmir and it is more popular in south Indian states. "The trend of innovations in the Valley is evolving with advanced technology in every field and our students are performing well," he said. Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari said NIT Srinagar is progressing towards nation building and is empowering students with innovation and skill development. "The young bachelor's across the country were working together for months to make it happen. Despite all odds, students worked hard and developed the first racing model, Go-kart (G-01). It is their gift for

the entire region," he said. HOD MED, Prof Adnan said that the department is using the latest technologies in various fields. Youth who are fascinated with automobiles and dream of making a career in that field, he said. "We have created a dedicated team to establish changing trends in Kashmir. The department is working on many platforms to use the advanced technologies on the campus," he said. Coordinator Garuda Team, Dr.H.S.Pali said that it is the biggest milestone in the history of NIT Srinagar. The G-01 model is the culmination of months of hard work, dedication and collaboration by the team members of Garuda, he said. Faculty coordinator of Team Garuda, Dr Dinesh Kumar Rajendran said it is a testament to the ingenuity and innovation that is synonymous with the NIT Srinagar community. "We have pushed the boundaries of what is possible from students of Kashmir. The launch and demonstration of G-01 is an opportunity to showcase the capabilities of our Karting model," he said. Dr. Dinesh said NIT Srinagar's student team will be participating in All India Go Karting competition to be conducted by Kari Motors Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. "The students are well trained and capable enough to make wonders in the coming days," he said.



## Director H&H holds meeting for setting up Pashmina Wool Bank under PWDS

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

SRINAGAR: The Director, Handicrafts and Handloom (H&H), Kashmir Friday held a meeting to deliberate upon the modalities of setting up of Pashmina Wool Bank under Pashmina Wool Development Scheme (PWDS) implemented by the Central Wool Development Board, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The meeting was held to devise a viable framework for establishing the much needed Pashmina Wool Bank in the Kashmir region of UT of J&K. It was emphasized in the meeting that the proposed Pashmina Wool Bank shall ensure adequate availability of certified/graded Pashmina wool for the weavers and artisan community in Kashmir and shall also help to restructure the Pashmina wool sector to make it more viable and competitive. It was also acknowledged that the intended Pashmina wool bank shall go a long way to improve the socio-economic conditions among the herding Changthang communities for sustainable long-term incomes by procuring bulk raw Pashmina wool from them at suitable prices or MSP. The initiative aims to provide critical marketing support for stakeholders associated with the production and processing of Pashmina fibre by making it readily available at standard prices. There was an elaborate discussion about the possible value addition practices of Pashmina Wool which includes de-hairing, carding and spinning and

the importance of having a robust ecosystem in Pashmina industry consisting of well-established forward and backward linkages. It was said that the aim of the project is to recognize the economic and cultural importance of Pashmina in providing livelihood opportunities to the lakhs of breeders, artisans and traders across Kashmir and Ladakh regions. Moreover, it was also given out that the Directorate is exploring possible areas under PPP model (Private Public Partnership) with major stakeholders like TAHAFUZ Society, Kashmir Pashmina Organization (KPO) and Kashmir Karigar Union in order to have synergized efforts for result oriented output, safeguarding this ancient craft and restoring it to its pristine glory. The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir in the first instance is planning to procure raw Pashmina Wool from Changthang breeders and is planning to enter into a tripartite agreement with the Ladakh Administration and Changthang Breeders Society in this regard. Later, the Pashmina shall be tested and de-haired at the Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre, CDI and shall be given to registered artisans and weavers for further processing. The meeting was attended by Joint Director, Handicrafts Kashmir, representatives from TAHAFUZ Society, Kashmir Pashmina Organization, and Kashmir Karigar Association besides other officers from SKUAST-K and CDI.

## DSEK warns Pvt Schools for recommending texts-books from selected shops

**BHAT IMRAN**

Srinagar: School Education Department (SED) Friday warned recognized private schools for compelling and recommending parents to purchase text books, stationery items and school uniforms from a particular shop. Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) in a circular said that the directorate and its subordinate offices including Chief Education Office and Zonal Education Offices are receiving a number of complaints against the private schools regarding purchase of text books stationery items, school uniforms etc, from a particular shop which is a cause of concern among the parents and the society as general has raised eyebrows against this practice. The director said that on the contrary, the books prescribed by these schools should have been available in the open market. "There are some more complaints from parents wherein it is said that a large number of books are being prescribed by the private school authorities for primary classes, which unnecessary burdens the tender minds and mars the creativity and other 21st century skills among students as envisaged in NEP-2020," reads the circular. It also said that some private schools are forcing parents to purchase extra books for classes 6th, 7th and 8th in addition to the books prescribed by JKBOSE which amounts to extra burden on the learning of students and goes against the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 which advocates age appropriate burden free learning of students. Stating the subjects, such as, Computer Studies, Moral Education, and General Knowledge need to be infused across subject areas and other activities in the school without additional textbooks in sync with the School Bag Policy-2020. "The schools that prescribe additional books which are not prescribed

by the Board to which the schools affiliated not only flout the recommendations envisaged in Rule 8A of J&K School Education Rules, 2010 and revised guidelines of School Bag Policy, 2020 released by Department of School Education and Literacy Ministry of Education, Government of India, but also poses extra financial burden on parents," DSEK said. Resorting to such illegal practices by a few private schools, the director said that it was against the ethics and norms or guidelines issued by the Government from time to time. "Henceforth, all private schools shall notify through their websites the list of subjects and the books prescribed by the Board to which they are affiliated and no other subject or book shall be made mandatory," DSEK said. It also said that under no circumstances, any school shall ask parents to buy books from a particular bookshop. DSEK enjoined upon all the private recognized schools to desist from compelling the parents to purchase books, uniforms from any particular shops and change of books thereof. "Further, parents should be given wider choice to purchase books or uniforms from the open market." "Any deviation from these instructions, if noticed shall be viewed seriously and action will be taken as per the provisions of law which inter-alia includes the recognition of schools and withdrawal of the Managing Body also," reads the circular. "All Chief Education Officers shall constitute special monitoring teams involving cluster heads, Zonal Education Officers to verify the complaints received on account of sale of books and uniforms by the private schools/prescribing additional books or pressing parents for purchase from any particular shop. Action taken in this regard shall be submitted to this Directorate on a monthly basis," DSEK said—(KNO)

## Div Com inspects ongoing beautification works at Airport Road Humhama

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

BUDGAM: The Divisional Commissioner, (Div Com), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Friday inspected ongoing beautification works along the Airport Road at Humhama. Deputy Commissioner Budgam, S F Hamid; SMC Commissioner Srinagar, Ather Amir; Chief Engineer R&B Kashmir, SSP Budgam and other officers were also present on the occasion. During visit, the Div Com took detailed stock of works of footpath and pavement development plantations, parking facilities, market beautification, lawn develop-

ment and other beautification works. He said that parking facilities shall be created on both sides of the Airport Road near Panchayat Bhawan on the recently retrieved encroached land for public convenience. He said as the Srinagar is set to host G-20 Meeting, special focus is being given on beautification and facility creation and various projects have been taken up for execution. He directed officers to ensure all works are completed in a time bound manner including parking facilities for smooth traffic movement on Airport road.

## Pneumococcal vaccine shortage at govt health facilities hits jab schedule

Will receive fresh stock by Monday, says official

**JAHANGEER GANAIE**

Srinagar: Several health centres in Jammu and Kashmir are facing shortage of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) leading to a disruption in vaccination schedules of dozens of children. Parents from several districts said that they have been taking their children for PCV vaccines to different health centres but they were told the vaccine is not available. Qayoom Ahmad in Pulwama, a father of a six weeks old infant, said his nearby health centres did not have the vaccine. He said that dozens of parents like him had to return home without vac-

inating their children. A health official on condition of anonymity confirmed that PCV vaccines aren't available now. He said that a few doses are being made available for immunization day (Wednesday) and many had to return without getting their children vaccinated. Even at some cen-

tres, parents have been informed through Asha workers and other officials that PCV vaccines will be available at health centres three shots of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (for protection against a type of bacterial pneumonia) by the time they turn nine months old; the first two shots are given at six and 14 weeks of age. Meanwhile, a top health official denied shortage of PCV vaccine. "The supply could have been exhausted in one centre owing to extra load but rationalisation is regularly being done at district level," he said. A few months ago there was a shortage at manufacturing level across the country but we are getting it in limited quantities. By Monday, we will receive fresh stock," he added—(KNO)

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Good Morning Kashmir EDITORIAL

'ILLOGICAL' PRICE HIKE

Ramadhan is celebrated with great enthusiasm all over the world. It is a time when Muslims can seek forgiveness and develop good habits. It takes us away from social evils. In this blessed month, many people cannot afford to buy groceries. There are many homes where food is not available during the sehri and iftiaari time. Food items such as fruits, vegetables, meat, and chicken are being sold at high prices. It is unfortunate that shopkeepers are deceiving the general public in this holy month. Due to the hike in prices, the common man is suffering badly. The shopkeepers who are supposed to give relief to the consumers are showing no concern. Despite giving discounts on food items, the shopkeepers, fruit, and vegetable sellers are trying to take advantage of innocent people. The poor man is struggling to feed their family in the month of Ramadhan. Though the administration has given some relief by lowering the price of meat to rs 535. The sellers must be kind, especially to the poor consumers, and sell their food items in genuine prices. Moreover, people must come together and feed poor families. We are happy to see youngsters distributing food items in hospitals and in other places. The elite classes must contribute money to the poor families and make sure no one sleeps without having sehri and iftiaari. Other than this many people are complaining about water and electricity issues in their areas. They have to eat sehri and iftaari under the candlelight. As it is a merciful month, we hope concerned authorities will provide relief to people in this holy month. Food, water, and electricity must be available so that people don't face inconvenience.

PRIYANKA SAURABH



As soon as the new session starts in the schools, the problems of the parents increased. Along with the fees of one to two months, the huge amount charged in the name of development fees in the schools has to be paid, then copy-books have to be bought as well. The copy-book set is so expensive that parents are sweating to buy it. In many private schools, a set of books for classes I and VIII is costing Rs.6 to 10,000. The administration and education department are keeping silent on this loot. These days there are long lines at all the booksellers. Relatives are reaching selected shops to buy children's books. Books from private publishers prescribed by schools are up to five times more expensive than NCERT books. Most private school operators do not show interest in ordering National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books. In private schools, 80 percent of expensive books by private publishers are taught.

The cost of these books is many times more than NCERT. In many books, a print slip is pasted separately on top of the print rate, and much more is recovered than the published price. In private schools, expensive books from different publishers are installed along with changing the books every year due to commission. A 256-page NCERT book costs Rs 65 while a private publisher's 167-page book is available for Rs 305. Which books are being taught by the school which is available for 500 to 600 rupees? Even BA-MA books are not so expensive. Earlier, his younger child used to read from the books of the elder child because the books remained the same. But now the younger child is not able to use the books of older children because every year deliberately one or the other changes are made in the books.

The covers of the books are also changed so that it cannot be known whether it is an old book or a new one. For the revision of one page of the book, a new book has to be taken.

The syllabus of schools changes every year. But the syllabus prepared by NCERT with great research has remained the same for years. But now the question arises that the standard of curriculum implemented in private schools falls so much in one year that the schools have to change it. But it is not so, the standard of the curriculum is fine, but the schools are afraid of cutting their commission. If the old syllabus is

being from the Central Board of Secondary Education, children are asked to take books from private publishers instead of NCERT.

NCERT books are available in every shop but to buy books from private publishers one has to visit a certain shop. These books are not available anywhere else. Atlas, Book of Human Values, Grammar, Compact, Graph Book, etc are such things that do not seem to be anywhere throughout the year, yet have to be taken because the school says. Taking a compact assignment of Rs.488, a graph book of Rs.50, etc., the bill runs into thousands. Whether it is the state government

the list of private publisher's books to the parents of their own free will. Even the parents are not able to protest much regarding the future of their children.

Booksellers get only 15 to 20 percent commission on NCERT books. While others pay 30 to 40 percent commission from publishers. Apart from this, stationery offers are available separately. In the greed of this huge commission, the school operators deal directly with the publishers and get the books directly from the schools. Due to which the private schools also get five to 10 percent commission from the booksellers or they get their commission from the bookseller-



implemented then the students will get all those books at all the shops in the city. Some students will try to make do with old books as well. In such a situation, the illegal earnings of private schools may get a shock. Private schools are not in favor of this. The curriculum changes by the schools are only nominal sequence changes. In which the serial number of the chapter written in the books is changed, so that the students cannot use the previous year's books. Why there is no time limit fixed after how much time the books have to be revised? Despite

or the central government, no one cares about education. In this area, private schools are openly looting the public. No government is paying attention to this. What is the level of education and how is there looting? There is no one to watch. The administration is also silent on the bullying of schools and private publishers and is unable to do anything for the benefit of the parents. The administration has issued instructions across the country that NCERT books will be taught in all schools, but no private school is following it. Everyone is handing over

ers determined by the school. The school operators get the benefit of lakhs in this game which is held every year. Any parent does not want to play with the future of his child because after the complaint action may or may not be taken against the bookseller, and the school will take action against the child. In such a situation, the question is whether the officers are not able to see this loot happening openly.

The author can be mailed at priyankasaurabh9416@gmail.com

Book Review

'THE SERAPHIC GARLAND' BY KHURSHEED AHMAD WANI

RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR



Khursheed Ahmad Wani, apart from being a teacher, is a prolific writer, poet and also author. His poetry pieces are regularly published by leading and high-impact magazines and journals around the globe. Hailing from a remote Batagund village of the frontier Kupwara district, Mr Khursheed Wani is an excellent poet having a strong grip over vocabulary and the skill of weaving extraordinary poems depicting love, passion, compassion, miseries, hope, loneliness, friendship, courage, time etc in his poems. "Seraphic Garland" is Khursheed's debut poetry collection published by Blue Rose One. Its cover page is eye-catching and it comprises 75 adorably composed poems of varied themes and central ideas. This 132-page poetry collection isn't less than a fine treat for English literature lovers.

The author has dedicated this beautiful creation to his entire family, especially to his mother, father and brother. Moreover, he inherited the skill of poetry through his grandfather Sahil Mawri. He has expressed his gratitude to a number of persons who encouraged him to move forward viz A G Peer, Bilal Ahsan, Shafkat Aziz etc. In its foreword-1 written by Annette Nasser, the avid writer says "Though all of his poems have deep-rooted meaning, I thoroughly connected and found with deepest clarity, his motivation and positive aspects he reflects not only through his interactions with people but through his earnest beliefs and direct art of veracity".

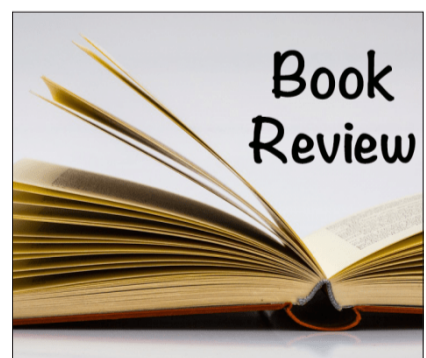
Jenayah Hela Sr. English teacher from Tunisia too has written it's another foreword. She is of the view "Khursheed's poetry collection is a highly philosophical poetry collection introspective enough, as it appears like a meditative reflection of utter beauty as

intricate, and intimate as a murmur". In its 3rd foreword, Dr Mohammad Haj Assistant professor of American poetry writes "Kashmir, the mother of natural beauty has left a considerable impact on Khursheed's works". The 4th foreword of Seraphic Garland is written by Sarfraz Ahmad poet from the UK. He says "Each poem has been immaculately crafted together, words are chosen carefully and weaved to create something beyond beautiful". The Proem of the book is written by Author himself and he says "I have tried to portray the beauty of motherland in my poems because there is no doubt that it is truly a Paradise on earth. It is a great blessing to dwell in its beauty". The opening piece/poem "the divine decree" of the book on page 01 is so nicely crafted that it depicts the true poetic style of the author. Another poem about Kashmiri Kangir the winter companion of varieties under the title "A short Paean" on page 05 shows the author's love for his cultural assets and how two different craftsmen slave to make this fine creation which warms our chilling bodies during the biting cold of winters. Another one on page 07 "An Unusual Trip" reflects his passion to go for jungle trips and his love and affinity for nature.

Outing with Chums on page 13 is so beautifully composed that it shows the author's treasure of vocabulary and how nicely he plays with words and phrases to compose his poetry items. Another excellent poem "All laud to thee O Lord" on page 19 is adorably composed to show his skill of composing the nicest items. This magnificent one reflects the author's belief in the almighty's unimaginable powers. The author goes like this; Oh, my Lord, Thou art merciful To every caste and creed, On pastures and birds, Verily, the showerer of blessings!

About 40 days harsh winter period (Chilli-Kalan) of Kashmir Khursheed has written a masterpiece under the title "Forty days in Kashmir" on page 26. Knowledge plays an important role in the personality building of a person and in the prosperity of nations. The same has been expressed by the author through the poem "Knowledge" on page 28. On 1st day of school reopening festive scenes are witnessed on the school campuses when blooming buds are received with full love and affection. School premises are decorated everywhere to welcome them.

The same has been reflected in one of the poems "Back to School" in this book on page 36. Asia's largest Tulip garden of Srinagar under the foothills of Zabarwan is the major tourist attraction during the spring season. Colourful tulips add joy and pleasure to our incoming guests who feel scents of paradise while entering the garden. This is what is written in one of the poems of this book "Written among Tulips" on page 39. There is popular saying that the pen is mightier than the sword. It is because of the power of the pen that a human becomes a human and nations progress by leaps and bounds. This is what is depicted in "The Pen" on page 46. Poets, litterateurs and philosophers of the whole globe have



unequivocally tried their best to express their utmost love and praise for the holy Prophet who is the real model for whole humanity. Khursheed too has done the same while writing "Oh prophet of prophets" on page 48.

The day of Eid-ul-Adha is a special day in our Islamic calendar. We celebrate it with religious fervour and perform the sunnah of prophet Ibrahim by sacrificing the animals. Children, young and adults all feel blissful on that day. A State of Bliss on page 55 reflects the same. Teachers are the builders of the nation. They mould the minds of children thus helping them to become responsible future citizens. The author has portrayed the same in "A Lifelong Glim" on page 60. Talib, a little kid who was mercilessly killed and then buried in unknown forests by some wild beasts is still sending shivers down the spine of every human. His mother may still be waiting for him to return and the light of her eyes too might have weakened due to this shock. This heartwrenching poem "Talib" is

found on 67. O Man, Wake Up on page 71 is the appealing one trying to awaken people who are in deep slumber so that they realise the hardships and sufferings of youth whose joys are buried and futures darkened. The year of the pandemic was a challenge for all. Everyone was restricted to the four walls of his house and children too lost a year due to no schooling. Online and offline teaching seldom helped them to cope with changing situations. Khursheed has nicely depicted the same in "A Year of Agony" on page 76. Verinag the primary source of our Jhelum River is the major tourist attraction of south Kashmir. The famous pretty Mughal garden of Verinag built by Mughal emperor Jahangir is still rejuvenating the lives of people living in the area. About the beauty and splendour of nature of Verinag Khursheed has written a beautiful poem "The source of Jhelum" on page 93.

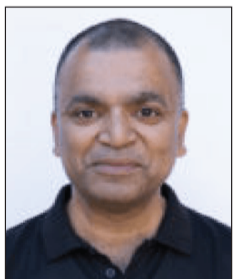
The poet has anxiously craved peace in his homeland which it is lacking despite being the paradise on earth. It can be felt in its "Listen to me" on page 101. A newspaper vendor during the morning times helps us to get acquainted with global happenings and enhances our information as newspapers are full of world news and a treasure of knowledge. Alas, it is recklessly put on shelves at the mercy of dust. The same is depicted by the poet in "The Newspaper" on page 108. During childhood, one enjoys life to the fullest. It is laden with sweet memories. In fact it is everyone's best phase of life. The author has beautifully written "My salad days" describing the same during his own childhood. The Comforts is the concluding and last poem of the book appearing on page 132. Khursheed Ahmad Wani has nicely composed every poem forming the contents of this beautiful poetry collection. He has a treasure of words and phrases in his memory which is helping him to compose the nicest poetry items. In fact, I like every poem in this book but few are extraordinarily composed to attract the attention of every poetry lover. It is really a sweet treat for English poetry lovers. My best wishes are for the author for his future endeavours and I take pride to write a review of a book written by a poet of this stature and calibre.

The author can be mailed at rayeeskumar31@gmail.com

# Ending tobacco use is the bedrock for progressing towards ending TB, SDGs



SHOBHA SHUKLA



BOBBY RAMAKANT

Globally all governments have promised to end tuberculosis (TB) by 2030, with the Indian government aiming to end it 5 years before the global target. TB was the deadliest of all infectious diseases till the pandemic hit us. But if we look at TB's high-burden nations, such as India and Indonesia, it continues to be the biggest killer infectious disease leaving COVID-19 behind - though undeniably, even one death due to TB or COVID-19, is a death too many.

Every case of active TB disease comes from those who are infected with the TB bacteria (referred to as latent TB infection). Additionally, the top-5 TB risk factors - malnutrition, tobacco use, alcohol use, diabetes and HIV - increase the risk of progressing from latent TB to active TB disease manifold. These risk factors also make it difficult to treat TB, and risk of death also shoots up, says Dr Guy Marks, President of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union).

Indonesia's Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin called for stronger actions to end all forms of tobacco smoking in the country to progress towards ending TB. Tobacco smoking is the biggest preventable cause of not only TB but also several other life-threatening diseases in Indonesia, as well as globally. He was deliver-

ing the keynote address at the Indonesia National Webinar on the theme "Yes! We can end TB and tobacco smoking," co-hosted a day before World Health Day 2023 by Indonesia's Ministry of Health, All Indonesia Public Health Services Association (ADINKES), Indonesian TB Research Network (JetSet TB), International Union Against TB and Lung Disease (The Union) and Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT). This almost 5-hours long virtual session was attended by 1000 people from diverse government ministries, departments and other sectors from Indonesia, Nepal, India, Singapore, and other countries in Asia Pacific region.

According to the latest Global TB Report 2022 of the World Health Organization (WHO), Indonesia has the second highest TB burden in the world after India. There were 969,000 estimated TB cases in Indonesia in 2021, out of which 74% (717,941) were notified to the national programme. Over half of TB cases (53%) were males (in whom smoking rates are higher too).

More alarmingly, the WHO report points out that the top-5 TB risk factors in Indonesia in 2021 were: undernourishment (which caused 120,000 new TB cases), tobacco smoking (which caused 113,000 new TB cases), HIV (which caused 35,000 new TB cases), diabetes (which caused 28,000 new TB cases), and alcohol (which caused 14,000 new TB cases).

The WHO report also tells us that in 2021 these were also the top 5 TB risk factors in the whole of Asia Pacific region: undernourishment (1.2 million new TB cases), tobacco use (502,000 new TB cases), alcohol (486,000 new TB cases), diabetes (234,000 new TB cases), and HIV (209,000 new TB cases).

#### TO END TB WE HAVE TO END TOBACCO

"We cannot end TB unless we end tobacco smoking," said Mukta Sharma of WHO. It is important to note that whether a person is smoking tobacco or exposed to passive smoking, the risk of TB disease goes up by 6 to 9 times. "In Indonesia, 77% of TB patients were smokers - much higher than other countries in the region," said Sharma.

Dr Ayu Swandewi Astuti, from Udayana University in Indonesia emphasised that efforts to end TB must be in tango with efforts to end tobacco smoking, alcohol con-

sumption and undernourishment; prevent diabetes; and ensure that every person with HIV is receiving the full cascade of HIV care services.

"In Indonesia and the 30 countries with the highest TB burden, men are at higher risk of TB than women because most (60%) men aged over 15 years smoke cigarettes," said Indonesian Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin.

#### INSTEAD OF DECLINING, TOBACCO SMOKING HAS INCREASED IN INDONESIA

"In the last 10 years, the number of adult smokers in Indonesia has increased significantly by 8.8 million - from 60.3 million smokers in 2011 to 69.1 million smokers in 2021. The results of the Global Adults Tobacco Survey (GATS) also show a 10-fold increase in the prevalence of electronic smoking from 0.3% in 2011 to 3% in 2021. Meanwhile, the prevalence of secondhand smoke has also risen to 120 million people," said Sadikin.

Studies show that tobacco smokers are at 2-3 times higher risk of TB disease progressing from latent TB to active TB disease; treatment outcomes are less optimal and risk of death is also higher in them. Having non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes further elevates the TB risk. "TB is one of the leading causes of death in smokers, with 15.2% of deaths from TB related to smoking, so smoking as a major risk factor for TB can

hinder the target of reducing TB incidence and mortality by 2030," said Sadikin.

According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), TB is the 10th leading cause of death in Indonesia at 7.1%, after heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Also, at 17.03% smoking is the second highest risk factor for death after cardiovascular disease.

That is why strong coordinated actions are an absolute must to end both TB and tobacco smoking - along with prevention of NCDs, and promotion of other health activities. "It is necessary to strengthen the strategy in supporting the achievement of National Medium term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024 to reduce the prevalence of smokers aged 10-18 years and eliminate TB in Indonesia," Sadikin said. He called for stronger implementation of a range of evidence-based tobacco control measures, such as ban on smoking in public places, quit-tobacco-smoking services to help people (and TB patients) to quit the addiction, among others.

Sadikin also shared that during COVID-19, the number of people who could get diagnosed with TB in a year had dipped to around half a million but in 2021 it again picked up to over 717,000. But, over 200,000 people were missing from TB care services in 2021. He underlined the importance of reaching out to everyone with TB disease with the full cascade of

health services, and ensuring that everyone is on treatment. In 2021, 86% of those who were diagnosed with drug-sensitive TB were put on treatment, out of which 87% reported treatment completion in Indonesia. However, only one-third of those with drug-resistant TB were put on treatment in the same year. Sadikin called for ensuring every person with TB should get full cascade of services if we are to end TB.

"TB is preventable. Each of the 969,000 people who got TB disease in Indonesia in 2021, is a grim reminder that we could have done better to prevent TB. If we are to end TB by 2030 we also need stronger actions against risk factors that put people at risk of TB. For example tobacco use is entirely preventable, but sadly continues to be a major risk factor for not just TB but also NCDs," said Dr Tara Singh Bam, Asia Pacific Director of The Union and Board Director of APCAT.

"We have to find everyone with TB in our community and ensure that full spectrum of TB services are within reach of the person. As tobacco smokers are many times more at risk of TB (and several other deadly diseases), government must implement comprehensive tobacco control policies as per the WHO recommendations. These include higher taxes and prices on tobacco products, effective ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, increasing pictorial health warning on tobacco packs to over 90% size, complete ban of smoking in public places and workplaces, among others. When we do TB budget allocation at village level then we also need to couple it with budget allocation for full range of evidence-based tobacco control," added Dr Bam.

If we are to end TB by 2030, we need urgent and stronger collaborative actions so that while we scale up TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care services to all those who need it, we also reduce (and eventually eliminate) TB risk factors, such as tobacco, alcohol, and undernourishment, prevent and reduce NCDs, among other vital steps to strengthen health systems.

Shobha Shukla and Bobby Ramakant are part of the editorial team at Citizen News Service. Follow them on Twitter @Shobha1Shukla or @BobbyRamakant



## LG Greets people on Shri Guru Nabha Dass Jayanti

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, has greeted the people on the eve of Goswami Shri Guru Nabha Dass Jayanti. In a message, the Lt Governor said that Guru Nabha Dass Ji was one of the greatest saints of the Bhakti movement whose teachings for an honest, truthful and virtuous life continue to guide humanity. "His message inspires us to embrace equality and



compassion. May Guru Nabha Dass ji's teachings guide us to build a just and humane society," the Lt Governor said.

## DEO Doda chairs virtual meeting to encourage voter participation



GMK NEWS NETWORK

DODA: In a bid to encourage voter participation and enhance Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Program (SVEEP), District Election Officer, Vishesh Mahajan, chaired a virtual meeting with more than 450 EROs (Electoral Registration Officers), AEROs (Assistant Electoral Registration Officers), BLOs (Booth Level Officers), from different locations. The online interaction was aimed at assessing the progress of new voter enrollment in the current year. During the meeting, the DEO urged all BLOs to ensure that no eligible new voter is left out in their area

who has reached the age of 18 years.

Furthermore, the DEO announced special days for the SVEEP program, which aims to motivate new voters to enrol themselves in the voters' list. He suggested using schools, colleges, universities, and hospitals for advertising to encourage new voters to participate actively. The online meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Doda, Additional Deputy Commissioner Baderwah, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Doda, Deputy District Election Officer, besides tesildars and others.

## Poonch teachers rally for government school enrollment

GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: Teachers participated in a motorbike rally to boost government school enrollment in huge numbers in the district Friday. The rally, flagged off by Deputy Commissioner, Inder Jeet, aimed to raise awareness about education and facilities in government schools. Teachers rode bikes with placards promoting the enrollment drive. The DC was accompanied by Joint Director School Education, Mohd Ashraf; CEO Poonch, Bishamber Dass; and DEPO Poonch, N M Suri.



Inder Jeet appreciated the participation of the teachers and emphasised the significance of education in the development of the district. He urged parents to prioritise education and enroll their children in government schools. Mohd Asraf urged par-

ents in Poonch district to admit their children in government schools and avail the benefits of various schemes. Government schools offer incentives including scholarships, special assistance for girls, free books, uniforms and mid-day meals. These facilities provide a conducive learning environment and ensure quality education without financial constraints. Chief Education Officer,

Bishamber Dass emphasised that government schools are equipped with resources and opportunities to nurture students' academic growth. Cluster Heads, ZEO Poonch, ZEO Kanuyian, ZEO Nangali and ZEO Poonch were also present in the rally. The rally was coordinated by members of District Resource Group Poonch, Darshan Kumar and Harish Sharma.

## DC Rajouri unveils admission prospectus for Eklavya Model Residential School

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI: Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal unveiled the admission prospectus for the upcoming academic year 2023-24 of Eklavya Model Residential School, marking the second academic session for the school. The school was established with the noble objective of providing quality education to students from schedule Tribe communities. During the unveiling ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of education in empowering young minds and creating a better future for the country. He highlighted the need for equal access to education for all children, irrespective of their background or socioeconomic status.



The Deputy Commissioner encouraged parents and guardians to take advantage of this opportunity and enroll their children in the school. He emphasised that the school will have state-of-the-art infrastructure, with its buildings in an advanced stage of construction, highly qualified faculty and a comprehensive curriculum designed to provide students with a holistic learning experience. The Eklavya Model Residential School is affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and offers education from class VI to XII. The prospectus contains

detailed information about the admission process, eligibility criteria, and fee structure. Interested parents and guardians can obtain a copy of the prospectus from the school's website or by visiting the admission office. Chief Planning Officer, Mohd Khurshid; Chief Education Officer, Sultana Kouser; District Social Welfare Officer, Wakeel Ahmed Bhat and teachers of the school were present at the event.

## District Health Society Doda celebrates World Health Day 2023

GMK NEWS NETWORK

DODA: The District Health Society celebrated World Health Day Friday under the supervision of Chief Medical Officer Doda, Dr Ab Hamid Zargar. Health awareness and medical check-up camps were organised in different health facilities across the district to raise awareness and advocate for healthcare issues. The main program was held at Chenab Valley Public Hr Sec School Doda and presided over by CMO Doda, Dr Zargar. He said the aim was to raise awareness about health issues and mobilise efforts in

support of healthcare. He exhorted people to take necessary measures to achieve equitable health. At Baderwah, the main program was held at Crescent Public School where Block Medical Officer Baderwah, Dr Mohd Ashraf Kuchay presided. MD of the school, Dr Mohd Iqbal Zargar and health staff were also present. Students were made aware of hand washing techniques and personal hygiene by health officials.

Staff and students took out bicycle rallies in Doda, Baderwah and other parts of the district to commemorate the day and create awareness on World Health Day.

## Eat Millet Walkathon held in Katra

GMK NEWS NETWORK

REASI: The Mega Eat Right Millet Walkathon started Friday and was flagged off by Executive Director of FSSAI New Delhi, Inoshi Sharma; Commissioner FDA J&K, Shakeel ul Rehman; SSP Katra, Amit Vasin; and Sub-Divisional Magistrate Katra, Angrez Singh. They were joined by health icon and Commonwealth Games Champion 2015, Sangram Singh Wrestler; Chairman and President of Katra Hotel Association, Rakesh Wazir and Sham Lal Kesar; and officers of Food Safety FDA and allied departments. Participants included school children, business stakeholders, pilgrims of Mata Vaishno Devi, prominent citizens and the public. The walkathon started from Fountain Chowk Katra and culminated at Railway



Station Katra. Participants chanted slogans promoting the importance of millets and their health benefits

while highlighted on placards. Hydration points were installed along the route. The event aimed to promote the inclusion of millets in daily meals. The walkathon went through the markets of Katra with participants projecting the themes of the event. A mobile food testing van was displayed to promote the event and different departments participated. FSSAI collaborated with Food and Drugs Administration UT J&K to promote Indian-based recipes and value-added products as part of the IYOM expedition. The walkathon culminated at Railway Station Katra where cultural activities were carried out at the Holiday Inn site. Dignitaries including SSP Katra, SDM Katra and health icon Sangram Singh were facilitated by Commissioner FDA J&K UT, Shakeel ul Rehman.

## DC Rajouri reviews progress on JJM projects

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI: Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal reviewed the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes in a meeting with concerned officers Friday in which Superintendent Engineer Hydraulics informed that out of 293 approved schemes, work has been allotted for 259 schemes and 102 schemes are already in progress. The DC was informed that laying of the piped network has been progressing well, with 979 km of piped network already laid against the target of 13,520 km. Kundal urged the officers to ensure that work on all allotted schemes begins as soon as possible and stressed that the successful implementation of JJM will provide access to safe drinking water to the rural population and posi-

tively impact their health, hygiene and overall socio-economic development. The meeting also discussed the status of ongoing projects in the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) sector. Kundal stressed the importance of proper maintenance and regular cleaning of irrigation kulhs to prevent clogging and ensure uninterrupted water flow for irrigation. He also emphasised effective management of water resources for sustainable development. Officers who attended the meeting included Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Khurshid; SE Hydraulics Bhrum Jyoti Sharma; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Rajouri Ashwini Khajuria; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Nowshera Vipin Kumar and Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mechanical Manmohan Singh.

## Kishtwar Administration discusses Paddar Baisakhi Utsav

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR: A meeting was convened by Deputy Commissioner, Dr Devans Yadav to discuss the modalities for the Baisakhi Utsav organised by District Administration Kishtwar in collaboration with Indian Army at Paddar on 13th and 14th April 2024. The meeting discussed arrangements and finalised activities including wrestling, river rafting, rappelling, tug of war, beach volleyball, bike rally and day-night cricket matches. Stalls for local cuisine, sports and cultural programs were also discussed. DC Kishtwar discussed awarding prizes and felicitating participants with organisers and coordinators. He urged army officers to develop selfie points and other facilities to ensure maximum participation. Nodal Officers were appointed for different activities and arrangements to ensure

smooth functioning. Officials were asked to ensure local cuisine stalls by involving women's self help groups members. Arrangements for the opening ceremony of Machail Mata Temple on Baisakhi were also discussed and directions were passed to concerned officials. DC Kishtwar said that the upcoming Baisakhi Utsav promises to be a grand celebration of culture and sports and all necessary arrangements are being made to ensure its success. The meeting was attended by ADC Kishtwar, Inderjeet Singh Parihar; ACR Kishtwar, Varunjeet Singh Charak; SDM Paddar, Dr Rishi Kumar; BDC chairman Paddar, Arpan Singh Rana; Captain Shekhar Singh of 17RR Dul; Dy SP HQ, Ashish Gupta; BDOs Paddar, Ravi Kumar and Nagseni; DYSSO Kharati Lal Sharma; Ex En PMGSY Mohinder Kumar; AEE JPDCL Sudhir Sharma; officials of NRLM and others.

## NCC unit of GCW Udhampur observes World Health Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR: To mark World Health Day, the NCC cadets of Government College for Women Udhampur, under the aegis of G-20, organised a slogan writing competition with the World Health Organisation's theme "Health for All". Cadet Palvi Sharma won first prize, while Cadet Rubena and Cadet Meenakshi won second and third prize respectively. Cadets Priya, Anjali and Kritika Thakur received consolation prizes. The event was coordinated by NCC Caretaker Shailu Jasrotia, who appreciated the cadets for their active participation. The slogans were

evaluated on the basis of originality of content and presentation skills by a jury consisting of Tania Akhtar, Head of Department (HOD) English; Mohan Galgotra, HOD Education; and Roopa Kumari, Assistant Professor of Education. Cadet Palvi Sharma won first prize, while Cadet Rubena and Cadet Meenakshi won second and third prize respectively. Cadets Priya, Anjali and Kritika Thakur received consolation prizes. The event was coordinated by NCC Caretaker Shailu Jasrotia, who appreciated the cadets for their active participation. The slogans were

**GOUSIA MEMORIAL ISLAMIC PUBLIC SCHOOL**  
WAILOO, KUNZER

**MANAGING BODY**

S. No	Name	Design
1	Peerzada Altaf Ahmad	Chairman
2	Gh. Mohi Ud Din Bhat	Secretary
3	Gh Nabi Gojri	Accountant
4	Mohd Asif Bhat	Member
5	Mohd Aafreen Zargar	Member
6	Mohd Hussain Lone	Member
7	Mohd Yaseen Beigh	Member
8	Farooq Ahmad Sheikh	Member
9	Ab Majeed Bhat	Member
10	Mohd Rafeeq Bhat	Member

Sd/-  
Principal  
Gousia Memorial Islamic Public School,  
Wailoo, Kunzer

Government of Jammu & Kashmir UT.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION BARAMULLA.**

**e-Auction Notice No. 02 of 2023-24 dated 05.04.2023**

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K (UT), It is hereby notified for the information of General Public and the timber traders/ extraction contractor in particular that e-Auction Notice/ sale of the marked Poplar Trees coming under the alignment from Narbal to Baramulla National Highway through e-Auction on the basis of "As it is where it is" at different location as per the details given below.

S. No	Package No	Location	Total No of Trees	Quantity	Minimum Reserve bid (In Lacs)	Amount of C.D.R @2% (in Rs)	Time for Completion (Evacuation)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs)
01	1B (Tree No 1/1B to 296/1B)	Tapper Waripora to Sangrama	296	48784Cft	86.35	173000/-	30 days	1600/-
02	1B (Tree No 297/1B to 566/1B)	Tapper Waripora to Sangrama	270	45464Cft	80.47	161000/-	30 days	1600/-

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per the scheduled date given below.

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	05.04.2023
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 05.04.2023 to 10.04.2023 4:00PM
3	Bid submission Start date	05.04.2023
4	Bid Submission End date	10.04.2023 upto 4:00PM
5	Date and time of Opening of Bids (Online)	11.04.2023 upto 11:00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla

- Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 mentioning there in the Package No/ Location/ Auction Notice Number in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla. (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document & Earnest money in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla (Tender receiving authority) in the shape of CDR/FDR.
- Instructions to Bidder (ITB)
  - All bidders shall upload the following information and documents along with qualification criteria/ qualification information with their bids
    - Valid Registration Card duly renewed.
    - Valid GST No. along with latest clearance certificate FORM GST- 3B/ GSTR-3B of the preceding month/quarter (as the case may be) i.e. Month (February)/ Quarter (October-December).
    - Pan Card.
    - Earnest money/bid security (CRD)
    - Tender document fee (Treasury Challan).
    - Affidavit
  - Bidders shall quote their rates per Cft.
  - The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in).
  - The Bids uploaded on the website up to due date will be opened on date mentioned above, in the office of the Bid Receiving Authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla.
- The original instruments in respect of EMD and relevant Technical Bid Documents etc must be uploaded by the contractors. However, the bidder who is declared H-1 after opening of Financial Bids shall submit hard copies of original instruments in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla
- CDR means 'Call Deposit Receipt' and FDR means 'Fixed Deposit Receipt' issued by any Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank pledged to the Tender Receiving Authority i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla.
- Financial Bids of those bidders who have technically qualified will be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla immediately after the evaluation of technical bid is completed by the committee. In case of some un-foreseen circumstances, holiday or otherwise, the date of opening of the bids as specified shall be the next working day, or else notified separately.
- The bidders shall be required to submit a sum as Earnest Money Deposit specified in the tender document for due performance of contract. The bid for work shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids. If any bidder withdraws his/her bid before the said period or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid, the Earnest Money shall be liable to be forfeited in favour of R&B Division Baramulla.
  - If the tender is accepted, the Earnest Money will be retained as part of security for due fulfillment of the contract. The Earnest Money of other contractors shall be released to them but the R&B Department for any loss or depreciation that may occur as hither-to-fore while in its possession, nor be liable to pay any interest thereof.
  - Tenders uploaded without details of Earnest Money Deposit of requisite amount shall be summarily rejected.
  - In case it is found that the contractor(s) has/have furnished misleading/wrong or fraudulent information/documents, the Earnest Money Deposit of the contractor(s) will be forfeited or otherwise the contractor(s) shall be liable for cancellation.

No: 133-46  
Dated: 05.04.2023  
DIPK-165-23  
DT: 07/04/2023

Member Secretary  
(Poplar Auction Committee)  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Division Baramulla

# India's Tax agency plays key role in promoting adoption of digital public infrastructure initiatives: IMF

WASHINGTON: India's tax agency has played a prominent role in promoting the adoption of digital public infrastructure (DPI) initiatives including unique identification numbers for individuals, International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in the working papers.

In India, the Permanent Account Number (PAN), which came earlier than the Aadhaar card, is a unique, ten-character, alphanumeric identifier issued to all judicial entities identifiable under the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961 and was introduced in 1972.

For all tax purposes, the PAN was made mandatory. Accompanied by a laminated identification card, PANs saw widespread use in other areas of public administration. This is reflected by the fact that far more PANs were issued than the number of active taxpayers under management at any one time (estimates suggest nearly 400 million were issued in excess of active taxpayers).

The working paper 'Stacking up the Benefits: Lessons from India's Digital Journey' said that Aadhaar, which is the successor of PAN, formalized the reality that



a national identification solution beyond the scope of tax administration was required. "In developing Aadhaar, it benefited from PAN's many lessons, notably incorporating the use of biometrics to reduce tax and financial fraud," the paper read.

"The number of PAN allottees increased exponentially following the outsourcing of non-core activities (including allotment of PAN) performed by the tax administration on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis during the period 2003-04," the paper added.

With a view to improving the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, reputed private firms were hired

by ITD as managed service providers for the processing of applications, collecting, handling, and verifying personal documents like proof of ID, age and address, clarification with the applicants, printing the laminated card and mailing.

Core tax administration operations rely heavily on DPI initiatives, where Aadhaar is expected to revolutionize tax administration compliance activities by promoting the consistency of registers across public agencies.

An ongoing initiative to link PANs to Aadhaar is planned for completion by March 2023. At that time, PANs not linked to Aadhaar will become inoper-

ative, representing a wholesale transition to reliance on the platform which will impact nearly all functions, from registration itself to filing, payment and compliance casework.

The widespread adoption of Aadhaar has the potential to dramatically improve the use of third-party data for risk analysis and enforcement work at the tax administration, according to the statement released by the IMF.

The Goods and Services Tax Network serves as an example of a specific DPI that has helped strengthen tax collection capability and simultaneously provide a platform for innovation. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# Festivals in Bhutan attract thousands of tourists, help maintain sustainable tourism model: Report



THIMPHU: Festivals in Bhutan attract thousands of tourists every year, which helps maintain a sustainable tourism model, according to The Bhutan Live.

As per The Bhutan Live, the figures are expected to go up as Bhutan is welcoming tourists again after the lockdowns. Attending festivals is a great way to understand a country's culture and history.

The Haa Summer Festival is a vibrant lively event with religious performances, unique Bhutanese local cuisine, local Bhutanese alcoholic drink Ara, and traditional sports. It gives insight into the lives and traditions of Bhutan's nomadic herders.

One can expect a

glimpse of Bhutanese culture through its songs, folk dances, artefacts, and religious performances. They can also see alpine flowers, can enjoy the hospitality of the local people of Haa Valley. The Festival takes place in July.

The Paro Tshechu Festival, according to The Bhutan Live, is probably one of the most prominent festivals of Bhutan. Monks wear masks which represent the deities, re-enact and replay the scenes from legendary tales and historical anecdotes.

But the showstopper of the festival is the moment when people get to see a glimpse of 350 years old Thangka, which is one of the oldest Buddhist reli-

gious scrolls. It has narratives from history, celebrating the high deeds of Guru Rimpoche. This festival takes place in Paro, the city with an international airport, in the month of April.

The annual festival of Matsutake Festival is one of the famous harvest festivals of Bhutan and is a celebration marked by the locals of Ura Valley during the mushroom season. This festival observes the celebration of this legendary mushroom harvesting.

During this festival, the locals make delicious delicacies and the visitors can get a peek at the lifestyle of the locals which helps them form a deeper connection. This festival celebration includes a

mushroom-picking excursion and a glimpse of the panoramic forests. This festival takes place in the month of August.

Another annual festival, the Sakteng Festival is an annual celebration which takes place in the Sakteng Valley located at an altitude of 3000 meters. This valley is located on the eastern side of Bhutan and is home to semi-nomads known as the semi-nomads named 'Brockpas.'

This valley has still not been touched by modernity, and sometimes it is really difficult to reach there. But this three-day festival is worth experiencing. Watching Yak dance can be a great experience. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# Four million people will fall below the poverty line in Pakistan in FY23, says World Bank

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has forecast that about four million people will fall below the lower middle-income poverty line amid economic growth plummeting to just 0.4 per cent against a budgeted target of 5pc, reported Dawn.

In the meantime, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected Pakistan's economic growth plunging to 0.6 per cent from 6 per cent last year owing to the prevailing political crisis, flood-oriented economic losses, foreign exchange challenges and tighter macroeconomic policies at home and challenging external environment.

The Washington-based leading agency in its flagship Pakistan Development Update (PDU) 2023 said, "In the absence of public transfers that cover income losses or mitigate the impact of higher prices, poverty measured at the lower middle-income poverty line (USD 3.65 per day 2017 PPP per capita) is projected to increase to 37.27

FY23, pushing an additional 3.9 million people into poverty as compared to FY22."

It added, "The depth and severity of poverty have also increased, reflecting the overlapping impacts of multiple shocks and households' lack of savings to mitigate short-term impacts".

The World Bank's GDP growth rate estimate at 0.4 per cent is down from its previous growth estimate of 2 per cent in January, Dawn reported.

It was not easy to write a report about Pakistan in such a critical time when so many things were happening amid a super focus on the IMF programme, exchange rate volatility and floods and so on but all these highlighted usual structural issues were behind the fresh numbers, said World Bank's Country Director for Pakistan Najib Benhassine.

Benhassine also said, "The resolution of Pakistan's economic crisis requires a com-



mitment to sustained macro-fiscal and structural reforms," adding that this was needed both to unlock fresh financing and avoid a balance of payments crisis and lay the foundation for a recovery of private investor confidence and higher growth over the medium term.

So, the urgency of the issues called for long-term changes to stabilise the economy in a time of uncertainty that affected not only Pakistan but also the rest of the world at the same time.

According to the research, a number of events—including the effects of flooding and import

restrictions on production and labour incomes in industries like agriculture and the textile industry—have had a detrimental impact on impoverished households.

This also included the high food inflation, which had a negative impact on all households' actual purchasing power and had particularly negative effects on poorer households, which lacked the savings necessary to maintain consumption despite rising costs. Also, a possible drop in international remittances had an effect on households.

"Downside risks to the outlook remain very high," Adnan Ghuman, author of the report, noted politically-driven slippages in fiscal policy in the context of upcoming elections, constraints on foreign exchange liquidity and uncertainties around external funding inflows, rising levels of public debt, growing exposure of banks to the public sector,

and political instability, as per a Dawn report.

He said that agriculture was affected by flooding and challenges acquiring essential inputs in the first half of 2022-2023, while large-scale manufacturing (LSM) shrank by 3.7 per cent as a result of tighter policy and import restrictions. As a result, the services sector has been hurt by rising costs and dwindling company and consumer confidence while inflation hit a multi-decade high in the first half of the year.

Despite efforts to reduce the current account deficit and consolidate, according to Ghuman, the country's external situation deteriorated. The fiscal deficit rose in the first half of the fiscal year as a result of rising debt payment costs.

The macroeconomic picture remained uncertain and hinged on the successful implementation of crucial reforms due to the growing exposure of the banking sector to the sovereign

in recent years, reported Dawn.

All estimates, according to the World Bank, are inextricably tied to the IMF programme, which stipulates that Pakistan should carry out and maintain structural and macroeconomic reforms because the nation faces numerous dangers from rising public debt levels and declining foreign reserves. This would ensure necessary additional disbursements and external finance to regain macro-stability and trust.

According to the research, the slower GDP growth was attributable to the effects of the summer of 2022's exceptional flooding, declining confidence, import restrictions, belated fiscal tightening, and dampened private sector activity.

Over FY23, Pakistan faced devastating floods and increasing global commodity prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Dawn reported. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# Domestic cotton production in Pakistan declines to four decade low of 4.9 m bales

ISLAMABAD: The domestic cotton production in Pakistan in 2023 has declined to a four decade low of 4.9 million bales. This has added to the country's deepening economic crisis, Pakistan based Dawn newspaper reported.

As per Dawn, ginning data shows that the cotton harvest declined by a hefty 34 per cent this year from 7.44 million bales the previous year, mainly because of the catastrophic summer floods in Sindh and southern Punjab where this industrial crop is mostly grown.

Pakistan's Sindh has suffered a 46 per cent loss in cotton output, with Punjab posting a 32 per cent decline, forcing the textile industry to import significantly large quantities.

Though most of the crop losses this season were caused by the floods, Pakistan's cotton economy has been facing numerous challenges due to consistently falling production over the last couple of decades, after touching a high of 11.1 million bales in 2004-05, according to Dawn.

The most recent production spike of 10.6 m bales was seen almost ten years ago in 2014. Meanwhile, in comparison, global production elsewhere in the world, especially in India, has been increasing rapidly to record levels.

According to Dawn, there are several factors responsible for the poor cotton harvest, year after year, ranging from pests and disease, erratic weather patterns and water shortages to poor seed quality, lower per acre yield and a large reduction in the area under cultivation because of government policies encouraging sugarcane and other major crops in traditional cotton-sowing regions.

Textile and clothing exports have suffered a great deal in the last one decade, with average annual production dropping to almost half the actual requirement of the textile industry. Additionally, cotton imports, a major driver of the economy, are adding to our balance-of-payments woes.

During the first eight months of the present fiscal year, textile exports.

Textile exports during the first eight months of the present fiscal year plunged by almost a third because of slowing global demand as well as shortages of the local fibre. With the industry having invested billions of dollars in technology replacement by spinners, its future competitiveness depends largely on the increased availability of domestic cotton, Dawn reported. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# MEA condemns attack on Hindu temple in Canada

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday condemned the vandalism of a Hindu temple in Canada's Windsor yesterday and said that the MEA is in touch with the Indian consulate.

While speaking to the reporters on Thursday, the MEA spokesperson said, "We will continue to insist that action is taken against the perpetrators. They are identified and persecuted. Also, as important as measures to prevent such occurrences." "We want these incidents not to happen, we want action and ensure that the Indian community's places of worship are protected," Arindam Bagchi added.

"This issue has been taken up with the Canadian authorities to catch the perpetrator and ensure this doesn't happen again," he added.

Clearing India's stand on recent incidents of vandalism at Indian consulates and High Commission, Arindam Bagchi said, "It (Vandalism) has happened in a couple of places. We have made it pretty clear to our host governments what actions we expect from the host government in terms of what they need to do. We are in contact with the host governments. We had conveyed our expectations about the security



of our premises and the safety of our personnel."

"What is important is action to be taken rather than assurances," he added.

A Hindu temple was vandalised with anti-India graffiti in Windsor in Canada's Ontario, Windsor police said in a statement. The Windsor Police Service started an investigation into the vandalism as a "hate-motivated incident" and two suspects are wanted in the incident.

According to the statement, police personnel were sent to the Hindu temple on April 5 after a report of hate-motivated vandalism.

"On April 5, 2023, officers were dispatched to a Hindu temple in the 1700 block of Northway Avenue following a report of hate-motivated vandalism. Officers discovered anti-Hindu and anti-India graffiti sprayed in black on an exterior wall of the building," Windsor Police said in the statement.

In the investigation, police

officers obtained a video that shows two suspects in the area just after 12 am (local time).

"In the video, one suspect appears to commit the vandalism on the wall of the building while the other keeps watch," Windsor police said in the statement.

"At the time of the incident, one suspect wore a black sweater, black pants with a small white logo on the left leg, and black and white high-top running shoes. The second suspect wore black pants, a sweatshirt black shoes, and white socks," the police further said.

The Windsor police have called on residents in the immediate vicinity of the temple to check their home surveillance between 11 pm - 1 am (local time) for evidence of the suspects. Police have urged people to call the Mortality Unit if they have any information regarding the incident.

Earlier in February, the Ram Mandir in Canada's Mississauga

was vandalised with anti-India graffiti. The Consulate General of India in Toronto condemned the defacing of the Mandir and requested Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action against the perpetrators.

"We strongly condemn the defacing of Ram Mandir in Mississauga with anti-India graffiti. We have requested Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action on perpetrators," tweeted the Consulate General of India in Toronto.

In January, a Hindu temple in Brampton was defaced with anti-India graffiti triggering outrage among the Indian community. The Consulate General of India in Toronto condemned the vandalism at the Gauri Shankar Mandir stating that the act has deeply hurt the sentiments of the Indian community in Canada.

The consulate office in a statement said, "We strongly condemn the defacing of Gauri Shankar Mandir in Brampton, a symbol of Indian heritage, with anti-India graffiti. The hateful act of vandalism has deeply hurt the sentiments of the Indian community in Canada. We have raised our concerns on the matter with Canadian authorities," Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown also condemned the vandalism of the temple. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# Democracy is under threat: Taiwan's President in joint remarks

CALIFORNIA: Democracy is under threat, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said on Wednesday (local time) and added that the urgency of "keeping the beacon of freedom shining" cannot be understated, according to CNN.

While addressing the presser at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California's Simi Valley, Tsai, standing along with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, said, "It is no secret that today the peace we have maintained and the democracy which we have worked hard to build are facing unprecedented challenges."

"We once again find ourselves in a world where democracy is under threat and the urgency of keeping the beacon of freedom shining cannot be understated," she added. On Wednesday, Tsai met McCarthy, becoming the first Taiwan's President to meet with a US House speaker on American soil.

The landmark meeting is the second time Tsai has met with an American lawmaker of that rank in the space of a year, following a visit from then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August, according to CNN.

The meeting gave both Tsai and McCarthy a prominent platform to highlight US-Taiwan ties. "We're stronger when we are together," Tsai said in the press conference. "In our efforts to protect our way of life, Taiwan

is grateful to have the United States by our side."

While addressing the presser, McCarthy said, "The friendship between the people of Taiwan and America is a matter of profound importance to the free world. It is critical to maintain economic freedom, peace and regional stability," reported CNN.

After Tsai landed in California in the US and held a meeting with McCarthy, China vowed that it will take "resolute and effective measures to safeguard national sovereignty," according to the official statement. In a statement, the Chinese Foreign Ministry called Tsai's visit to US "transit" and said that it "gravely violated" the one-China principle.

The Chinese foreign ministry also said that Tsai and McCarthy still hold the meeting with disregard for China's serious representations and repeated warnings.

The ministry, in the statement, also said that the US officials are giving Tsai a platform to make separatist remarks seeking "Taiwan independence." "This is essentially the United States acting with Taiwan to connive at 'Taiwan independence' separatists' political activities in the United States, conduct official contact with Taiwan and upgrade the substantive relations with Taiwan, and frame it as a transit," according to the statement. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

# Indian consumer tech space sees huge value creation with \$250 bn in valuation

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** The last five years have seen 4,351 consumer tech deals and \$54 billion in deal flows in India, a new report has shown, adding that the Indian consumer tech space has seen large value creation with over \$250 billion in valuation and more than 40 unicorns (as of December 2022).

The pandemic accelerated digital penetration by 12-24 months across different sectors, thereby boosting the adoption of e-commerce and reaching a total of 350-400 million online shoppers by 2025, according to the report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Matrix Partners India.

In the next 5-10 years, India's economy is projected to grow by \$3.5 trillion, which is equivalent to the amount added since its Independence 75 years ago. "This growth is expected to result in a remarkable surge in per-capita income, leading to an increase in discretionary spending that has not been witnessed in the past," said Siddharth Agarwal, Principal, Matrix Partners India.

This presents a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs to tap into a rapidly growing market and contribute to the country's economic growth while solving real-world problems," he added.



According to the findings, there is an increasing relevance of omni-channel with 6-8 times growth in digitally-influenced retail spending, reaching \$207 million in 2021. There has been a 1.8x increase in time spent online by consumers on social media and photo/video apps in the last three years, leading to these channels becoming important for e-commerce with the emergence of discovery

led shopping and social commerce, the findings showed.

Marketplaces are overtaking search engines as new search sites with 35-40 per cent consumers choosing marketplaces for searches in select user categories, such as electronics, fashion, mobile, food and FMCG and beauty and personal care.

"New online shoppers are not the same as existing ones they are older, more women, lower income and from smaller towns. This is both an opportunity and a challenge as entrepreneurs and leaders innovate on business models to serve the new consumer," said Parul Bajaj, Managing Director and Partner, Boston Consulting Group.

Consumers are seeking quicker gratification with shorter delivery options, leading to the emergence of Q-commerce, which has rapidly increased to 25-30 per cent of the overall online grocery market.

"New commerce models such as assisted and conversational commerce, influencer commerce, live/video commerce and group buying could provide an impetus to existing and new shoppers," said the report.

# Network Planning Group under PM Gati Shakti approves 4 infra projects

UNI

**NEW DELHI:** The Network Planning Group (NPG) under PM GatiShakti has recommended 4 infrastructure projects, an official statement said on Thursday.

The projects will be developed in tandem with the PM GatiShakti principles using the integrated and holistic approach, the statement said.

The projects will also provide multimodal connectivity, seamless movement of goods and passengers as well as increase logistics efficiency across the country, it added.

A project by the Ministry of Railways for construction of Broad-gauge double line between Sawai Madhopur and Jaipur in



Rajasthan state was examined by the NPG. The project spans approximately 131 kilometers from Sawai Madhopur to Jaipur and is deemed to be a significant infrastructure initiative.

Upon completion, the project is expected to improve the line capacity to 71% (without maintenance block) and 80% (with

maintenance block) by the year 2026-27.

The Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur route serves as a feeder to the Delhi-Mumbai route, and it represents the primary conduit connecting Jaipur, its environs, and Mumbai, southern and eastern parts of India. The proposed project would help alleviate congestion

in the existing single line network, resulting in uninterrupted traffic flow.

Further, the National Planning Group (NPG) evaluated a project proposed by the Ministry of Railways for the construction of a new Broad-gauge line between Anand Nagar Ghughuli via Maharajganj on Northeastern Railway in Uttar Pradesh state.

Another project by the Ministry of Railways for construction of a new Broad-Gauge line between Junagarh to Nabarangpur station in Odisha state was examined by the NPG.

Last project by the Ministry of Railways was for Provision of Automatic Block Signaling on Freight Dense high utilization network on Western Railway.

# GCPL to invest Rs 100 cr in early-stage consumer startups in India

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) on Friday said they will invest Rs 100 crore in Early Spring, a new Rs 300 crore early-stage consumer fund being set up by Spring Marketing Capital (Spring).

GCPL said it will anchor the fund in addition to offering its expertise and experience to help founders build strong, sustainable companies.

Spring's first fund of Rs 150 crore continues to invest in companies at Series A and beyond. The Early Spring Fund will invest Rs 5-Rs 20 crore in each company, from seed to pre-series A stage.

"We intend to leverage our understanding of consumer space and learnings

over the last decades to enable early-stage founders focused on building strong offline as well as online presence by offering differentiated products in India," said Omar Momin, Head M&A, GCPL.

Spring is run by Raja Ganapathy, Arun Iyer and Vineet Gupta, who bring together decades of investing and brand building experience.

GCPL will offer expertise and experience enabling founders to build strong, sustainable companies.

"I would urge new-age companies to connect with and leverage Spring's expertise and experience across the spectrum of brand building, manufacturing, product development, distribution and future capital raises," Momin added.

# \$500K worth Apple products, including 436 iPhones, stolen from US store



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Thieves stole \$500,000 worth of iPhones, iPads and Watches after breaking into an Apple store inside of a mall in the US.

According to the police, burglars got away with more than 400 electronics items from the Apple retailer at Alderwood Mall in Lynnwood, Washington State, reports Komo News.

They made entry by cutting through the bathroom wall of the neighbouring espresso machine store, according to the Lynnwood Police Department (LPD).

"Approximately 436 iPhones in total were taken out of the back," LPD Communications Manager Maren McKay was quoted as saying.

"In total about \$500,000 worth of merchandise was stolen and that's iPhones,

iPads, Apple watches," McKay added.

The owner of the coffee machine store said they have never dealt with anything like this in five years in business at the mall.

Apple employees were not "aware of the extent of the massive theft until the next morning".

The tech giant did not comment on the burglary.

Brookfield Properties, the company that runs the mall, told KOMO News this was an isolated incident.

According to the police, it appeared to be a well-organised operation based on what they've seen from surveillance video.

"From the masks that the folks were wearing, there were no fingerprints left behind," McKay was quoted as saying in the report.(AGENCIES)

# Chrome gets WebGPU tech that allows high-performance 3D graphics

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google has announced that WebGPU, an API (Application Programming Interface) which allows high-performance 3D graphics and data-parallel computation on the web, is now available by default in Chrome 113, which is currently in the Beta channel.

"WebGPU is a new web graphics API that offers significant benefits such as greatly reduced JavaScript workload for the same graphics and more than three times improvements in machine learning model inferences," Google said in a blogpost.

According to the company, the initial release of



WebGPU is available on ChromeOS, macOS, and Windows.

However, support for other platforms will come later this year.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai also shared about the release of WebGPU on Twitter, saying: "WebGPU in Chromium 113, excited for the web and great to see

this ship to stable!"

WebGPU will now allow developers to achieve the same level of graphics as they do now with far less code.

The tech giant also said that "the API is designed with the web platform in mind, featuring an idiomatic JavaScript API, integration with promises, support for importing videos, and a polished developer experience with great error messages".

Google further mentioned that the initial release of WebGPU serves as a building block for future updates and enhancements.

Meanwhile, Google is reportedly working on a new "Search Companion" feature for Chrome. The Search Companion will be a helpful new way to search the web using Lens, reports 9To5Google.

With the new feature, the tech giant aims to bring a deeper connection between Lens and Chrome. (AGENCIES)

# Twitter to show 50% less ads to paid Blue subscribers



AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** In order to woo more users, Elon Musk-run Twitter will now show at least 50 per cent less ads to Blue subscribers, along with a boost in their visibility on the platform.

The micro-blogging platform has implemented the new tool on both 'For You' and 'Following' tabs.

"As you scroll, you will see approximately twice as many organic or non-promoted Tweets placed in between promoted Tweets or ads. There may be times when there are more or fewer non-promoted Tweets between promoted Tweets," according to the company.

The feature, however, does not apply to advertisements shown in profile replies, promoted accounts and trends, and promoted events on the Explore page. The company has also prioritised rankings in conversations and search for Blue users, who pay \$8 a month.

Meanwhile, the blue check marks on Twitter still remain for legacy verified accounts.

A new verified tagline for legacy Blue users now reads: "This account is verified because it is subscribed to Twitter Blue or is a legacy verified account".

According to the Twitter CEO, "We are adding the date of verification to the profile. Note, only date since paid verification counts, since there was so much corruption in the past with legacy checkmarks."

According to Musk, only verified accounts will be allowed to appear in 'For You' recommendations, starting April 15.

"Starting April 15, only verified accounts will be eligible to be in For You recommendations. This is the only realistic way to address advanced AI bot swarms taking over. It is otherwise a hopeless losing battle. Voting in polls will require verification for the same reason, he said last week.

"That said, it's ok to have verified bot accounts if they follow terms of service and don't impersonate a human," Musk added.

# LG Electronics' Q1 profit down 23% on sluggish demand

**SEOUL:** LG Electronics on Friday said its operating profit for the January-March period likely declined 23 per cent from a year earlier amid the ongoing macroeconomic woes that dampened consumer demand.

The South Korean tech company estimated its first-quarter operating profit at 1.49 trillion won (\$1.1 billion), down 22.9 per cent from a year earlier.

Sales decreased 2.6 per cent to 20.41 trillion won. The data for net income was not available.

The operating profit, however, was 20.7 per cent higher than the average estimate, according to a survey by Yonhap Infomax, the financial data firm of Yonhap News Agency.

LG's quarterly profit has actually risen from a year



ago, considering the 80 billion-won one-off gains from patents licensing the tech firm that were made in the first quarter of last year.

Stabilising material costs and steady sales of high-end home appliances helped the firm achieve the relatively solid earnings results.

LG's TV business likely made a turnaround in the first three months of the

year, after making losses for the past three consecutive quarters, thanks to improving TV demand in the European market, LG's biggest OLED TV market, and decreasing inventory levels, as well as marketing costs.

According to market research firm Display Supply Chain Consultants (DSCC), premium TV shipments are estimated to have fallen 14 percent from

a year ago in the first quarter, but they are expected to begin increasing in the second quarter.

Analyst Kim Dong-won from KB Securities expected LG's TV business to log 439 billion won in operating profit this year, up a whopping 81 times from a year ago.

The company will release its final earnings report later this month. (AGENCIES)

# Public Cloud services market in Asia-Pacific to reach \$154 bn in 2026

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** The Public Cloud services market in the Asia-Pacific region is likely to reach \$153.6 billion in 2026, a report has shown.

IDC expects the Asia, Pacific excluding Japan (APEJ) Public Cloud market will grow at a year-over-year (YoY) rate in 2022 at 25.9 per cent in comparison to 36.3 per cent in 2021, as cloud migration contin-

ues to accelerate.

However, the YoY growth rates will slow down, beginning from 2023 with a YoY growth of 24.1 per cent, to 21.4 per cent in 2026.

"Organisations in the APEJ region are progressing their cloud adoption along the advancements offered by the cloud market segment. Organisations will continue to invest in these adjacent technologies to enhance their customer experience and business

outcomes," said Shahana Latiff, Research Manager, Cloud Services, IDC Asia/Pacific.

Infrastructure as a service (IaaS) will achieve a market value of \$65.6 billion and make up 42.7 per cent of the Asia/Pacific Public Cloud services market in 2026.

Platform as a service (PaaS) will reach a market value of \$29.8 billion, contributing to 19.4 per cent of the market.

Software as a service (SaaS) will grow almost more than double from \$22.9 billion in 2021 to \$58.1 billion in 2026, contributing to 37.8 per cent of the entire Asia/Pacific Public Cloud market, said the report.

"SaaS growth is attributed to organisations who want to streamline their operations and process by transforming their applications into scalable modules," it added.(AGENCIES)

# WhatsApp's new feature to allow users share status updates to FB Stories



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly developing a new feature, which will allow users to share their status updates to Facebook stories without leaving WhatsApp.

Earlier, users could share status updates to Facebook stories, but they had to go through the extra step of manually sharing the update each time they posted something new, according to WABetaInfo.

But now, due to this new feature, the process may be automatic for certain status updates users choose, when the option is enabled.

In the Status Privacy setting on WhatsApp, users will find a new option "share my status updates across my accounts", where they can add their Facebook account, according to the report.

Moreover, the report mentioned that this option

will be optional and disabled by default.

Users will be able to enable this option within the Status Privacy settings if they want certain status updates to be shared to Facebook stories without leaving WhatsApp.

Furthermore, the report stated this feature will allow users to save time and effort when they manually share their status updates with Facebook Stories without leaving WhatsApp.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature called "audio chats", which will be available within conversations in a future update of the application on Android.

A new waveforms icon will be added to the chat header, allowing users to initiate audio chats, plus users will see a red button for ending ongoing calls. (AGENCIES)



# Macron counts on Xi 'to bring Russia to senses' for ending Ukraine war

AGENCIES

**BEIJING:** Visiting French President Emmanuel Macron has asked his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping "to bring Russia to its senses" in an effort to end the ongoing war in Ukraine, according to media reports.

Macron arrived in Beijing on Wednesday on his state-visit to China with high expectations for a possible breakthrough on working with the Asian giant to find solutions to end the war, reports CNN.

While Ukraine tops the agenda, Macron's trip also has a strong economic component, with the President being accompanied by a delegation of some 50 business leaders, with some expected to finalise or even sign new deals during the trip.

He is also joined by European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen.

Macron and Xi engaged in closed-door talks on Thursday, which officials from the two nations described as being "frank" and "friendly", the BBC reported.

Later in the day, the two Presidents joint addressed the media at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

In his opening statement, Macron told Xi: "I know I can count on you to bring Russia to its senses, and bring everyone back to the negotiating table."

He went on to say Russia had "put an end to decades of peace in Europe" and



that finding a "lasting peace" that respected internationally recognized borders was "an important issue for China, as much as it is for France and for Europe".

"We can't have a safe and stable Europe," as long as Ukraine remained occupied, Macron said, adding that it was "unacceptable" that a member of the UN Security Council had violated the organisation's charter.

On his part, the Chinese leader emphasised his country's position on the Ukraine issue which is "consistent and clear", Xinhua news agency reported.

"It is essentially about facilitating peace talks and political settlement. There is no panacea for defusing the crisis."

Xi said it requires all parties to do their share and create conditions for

ceasefire and peace talks through a buildup of trust and added "China supports Europe in playing its role in the political settlement of the crisis".

He also said that peace talks should resume as soon as possible and urged the international community to "stay rational, exercise restraint, and avoid taking actions that might cause the crisis to further deteriorate or even spiral out of control".

The Chinese leader reiterated that "nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought", as well as opposed the "use of biological weapons under any circumstances".

"China is ready to stay in touch with France and play a constructive role in the political settlement of the crisis," the President added.

Since the war began in

February 2022, China has claimed neutrality and attempted to frame itself as an agent of peace.

It has also released its own peace plan which Western nations have been generally dismissive of, saying it sides too much with Russia.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has expressed interest in it and called for direct talks with Xi, who is yet to publicly respond.

Macron's trip, which comes four years since his last visit, marks the most politically significant interaction Xi has had with a Western leader since he met US President Joe Biden at the G20 summit in Bali last November.

Macron will continue his state visit on Friday with a trip to China's southern commercial hub of Guangzhou, where he is expected to dine with Xi.

# GERB-UDF coalition wins Bulgaria's early parliamentary elections

**SOFIA:** The coalition of GERB party and the Union of Democratic Forces (GERB-UDF) won the country's early parliamentary elections, according to final results announced by the country's Central Electoral Commission (CEC).

The coalition received 26.49 per cent of the vote and will thus have 69 seats in the 240-member National Assembly, Xinhua news agency reported.

The We Continue the Change - Democratic Bulgaria (PP-DB) coalition came second with 24.56 per cent of the vote and 64 seats, according to the CEC on Thursday.

Four more political groups have managed to cross the four per cent threshold to enter Parliament: Revival party with 14.16 per cent and 37 seats; Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) with 13.75 per cent and 36 seats; BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) for Bulgaria coalition with 8.93 per cent and 23 seats; and There Is Such A People (ITN) party with 4.11 per cent and 11 seats.

Voter turnout was 40.69 per cent, according to the CEC.



The newly elected National Assembly is expected to hold its inaugural session within two weeks.

Under Bulgaria's Constitution, the country's President will appoint a Prime Minister-designate nominated by the largest parliamentary group to form a government, and a simple majority of legislators present at the session will be needed for approval.

In case of failure, the constitution allows two more attempts to form a government by the second largest group, and by one of the others.

And should no agree-

ment on the formation of a government be reached, the President will appoint a caretaker government, dissolve the National Assembly and schedule new elections.

This was Bulgaria's fifth parliamentary election in two years. Three of the previous four parliaments, including those elected on April 4, 2021 and July 11, 2021, as well as October 2, 2022, failed to form a government. A cabinet was formed only after the elections held on November 14, 2021, but it was ousted by a no-confidence vote in June 2022.

The formation of a new government is problematic

after these elections held on April 2 as well, according to observers.

Kolyo Kolev, Director of Mediana polling agency and a top political analyst, said in an interview with Xinhua that at first glance, it seemed impossible to form a coalition able to elect a government.

The reason was that the two main parties had built their entire images and campaigns on the total negation of the other party.

"Therefore, it will be very difficult for them to build bridges between themselves and form a working coalition in one form or another," Kolev added.

Formation of other coalitions seemed almost practically impossible, because they would also require the participation of parties that are mutually unacceptable, he said.

"But on the other hand, it is not possible not to form a government, because this is the fifth consecutive election in two years," he said. A large part of the electorate was already fed up with this confrontation between all, Kolev added.(AGENCIES)

# Myanmar to restore murals at pagodas of world heritage site



AGENCIES

**YANGON:** Myanmar will restore mural paintings at the pagodas in the ancient city of Bagan in Mandalay region, a Unesco world heritage site, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museums on Friday.

"We were restoring all the mural paintings in Bagan. By restoring like this, people of the next generation will be able to view the fine arts of the ancient period and take pride in Myanmar's cultural heritage," U Ar Kar Kyaw, director for the department, told Xinhua news agency.

The century-old murals can be seen at pagodas, temples and palaces of ancient kings in the ancient city of Bagan, he said.

"To maintain and restore the murals, we also have to take technical

assistance from experts of other countries," he said, adding that the countries giving technical assistance for restoring the cultural heritage in Bagan included India, China, Italy and South Korea.

The department maintains and restores the cultural heritage at pagodas in Bagan including mural paintings, he added.

The Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone, where over 3,000 ancient pagodas and religious edifices can be viewed in one place, has been in existence for more than 1,000 years, standing as one of tourist attractions of Myanmar.

It was named as a Unesco world heritage site in 2019.

Lying on a bend of the Ayeyarwady River in the central plain of Myanmar, Bagan is a sacred landscape, featuring an exceptional range of Buddhist art and architecture.

# West did not give diplomacy a chance in Ukraine: Brazil's Lula



AGENCIES

**BRASILIA:** Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has said that neither Ukraine nor Russia can achieve every goal they've set in their conflict, but need a mediator to facilitate peace talks, while faulting the EU and the US were too quick to back Kiev instead of trying for a de-escalation, media reports said.

"It is not necessary to have a war," Lula said at a media breakfast at his official residence, Palacio do Planalto on Thursday, RT reported.

"We think that the developed world, especially the EU and the US, had the option not to enter the war the way they did, so fast, without spending time trying to negotiate," he contended. "Negotiating peace is very complicated."

The Brazilian leader, who is set to travel next week to China, a nation with a similar position on Ukraine to his own, says he hopes his contacts with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping will help bring about a conversation "that we should have had a year ago".

India and Indonesia may have a role, too, he added.

Explaining his view on how the hostilities could end, he suggested that the status of Crimea should be excluded from the discussion, but stressed that Russia "cannot keep the land in Ukraine".

He also said that Ukraine's President Vladimir Zelensky "can't want everything either". Kiev has declared a military victory over Russia and a return of all lands, including Crimea, as preconditions for entering peace talks.

# Wreckage found in search for missing Japan GSDF helicopter

AGENCIES

**TOKYO:** Floating wreckage that could be aircraft parts has been spotted during a search and rescue operation for the missing Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) helicopter carrying 10 people, including a lieutenant general.

The four-blade, twin-engine UH60 helicopter, known as the Black Hawk, vanished from radar screens near Okinawa's Miyakojima Island, at about 3.55 p.m. on Thursday shortly after taking off to survey nearby land features, the military said.

Addressing a press conference, General Yasunori Morishita, chief of staff of the GSDF, said the multipurpose chopper which belongs to a unit under the GSDF's 8th Division based in Kumamoto prefecture is believed to have been caught up in an aircraft accident, reports Xinhua news agency.

Two pilots, two mechanics, and six crew were on board and all were SDF members, whose whereabouts still remain unknown, including Lieutenant General Yuichi Sakamoto, the 55-year-old head of the division, Morishita confirmed.



Oil and objects including what could be part of a rotor blade were found in the sea area where the accident is believed to have occurred, according to the Japan Coast Guard who dispatched patrol ships to nearby waters in search for the helicopter.

A lifeboat printed with GSDF signs was also found in a folded state, carrying no one on it, it added.

The GSDF is trying to confirm whether the objects are from the missing helicopter.

"We are putting maximum priority on human life and rescue operations," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters in Tokyo.

Rough weather conditions were not reported around the time the helicopter went missing.

# Japan's real wages drop for 11th straight month in Feb

**TOKYO:** Real wages in Japan declined for an 11th straight month in February, the government said in a report on Friday.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, wages fell 2.6 per cent from a year earlier on an inflation-adjusted basis, with workers earning an average of 271,851 yen (\$2,064), including overtime, up 1.1 per cent in yen terms from the same period in 2022, reports Xinhua news agency.

The preliminary report showed that despite the decline in the recording period being less than the 4.1 per cent drop logged in January, workers' earnings here remain under pressure.

Japanese companies are continuing to grapple with the effects, directly or indirectly, of steep import costs and a weak yen, which has further pushed up inflation and hence consumer costs, which are hurting both households and businesses.

The weak wage data from the ministry also shows that the Japanese government's efforts to



encourage companies to increase wages, along with a significant number of major companies agreeing to do so as a result of this year's wage negotiations, have yet to be reflected in wage packets.

Separate government data showed Friday, meanwhile, that household spending in February rose 1.6 per cent from a year earlier, marking the first increase in four months.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, households of two or more people spent an average of 272,214 yen, with the amount coming in less than median economists' forecasts.

Accounting for more than half of Japan's gross domestic product, household spending is a key gauge of private consumption.(AGENCIES)

# Portugal establishes new agency for migration, asylum services

**LISBON:** Portugal's Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the Agency for Minorities, Migrations and Asylum, which will replace the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) and the High Commission for Migrations.

The agency will integrate the SEF structure with its 680 employees, and the process of renewing residence permits for foreigners in Portugal will be handled by the Institute of Registries and Notary, according to an official

announcement by the Minister of the Presidency, Mariana Vieira da Silva.

Ana Catarina Mendes, Minister in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and for Parliamentary Affairs, said in the press conference after the council meeting that the new agency will integrate the High Commission for Migration to respond to the challenges of inclusion and integration of migrants in Portugal, reports Xinhua news agency.

Meanwhile, Minister of

Internal Administration Jose Luis Carneiro said that this restructuring will guarantee safer national borders and resist illegal immigration and human trafficking.

While the SEF agents cancelled a strike previously arranged for April 7, the Union of Employees of the Foreigners and Borders Service, which integrates employees with non-police functions, held a two-day strike to protest against their integration into other Portuguese state bodies.(AGENCIES)

# Sri Lanka sees significant increase in remittances in 2023

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka saw a significant increase in remittances so far this year with over \$560 million sent back by migrant workers in March, Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment Manusha Nanayakkara said on Friday. Announcing the monthly remittances received, the Minister said it marked a 78.5 per cent increase from the inflows



recorded in March 2022, reports Xinhua news agency. Nanayakkara said remittances by migrant workers have increased remarkably this year. The South Asian

country got \$437.5 million in remittances in January, and \$407.4 million in February, Central Bank of Sri Lanka data showed.

Official figures for the 2021 and 2022 totals were \$5.49 billion and \$3.8 billion, respectively.

Migrant workers' remittances are one of the main sources of foreign revenue for Sri Lanka.(AGENCIES)

سرینگر میونسپل کارپوریشن  
اطلاع عام بلسلسہ بولی نیلام گھوڑے بزرگیہ سر بھر offers  
ہر خاص و عام کو بزرگیہ اشہبہار ہذا مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ سرینگر میونسپل کارپوریشن کے پیمانہ واقع نینگہ پورہ، بے مالو بائی پاس میں مورخہ 2023-03-13 سے پہلے گھوڑے بغیر کسی دعویٰ کے بند پڑے (ضبط شدہ) ہیں۔ ان ضبط شدہ گھوڑوں کے مالکان کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ وہ مورخہ 2023-04-11 تک پیمانہ ہذا میں اپنے گھوڑوں سے متعلق شناخت ظاہر کرنے کے بعد جرمانہ و دیگر اخراجات ادا کر کے اپنے گھوڑوں کو واپس لے جائیں۔ بصورت دیگر ان ضبط شدہ گھوڑوں کو بزرگیہ سر بھر offers حاصل کرنے کے تحت فروخت کیا جائیگا۔ اس سلسلے میں ڈیر نیلام جانور کی تفصیلات ویڈیوز آفیسر کے دفتر واقع نینگہ پورہ، بائی پاس سے دفتر وقت کے دوران حاصل کی جاسکتی ہیں۔  
لہذا خواہشمند اصحاب اپنی مہربند آفر (offer) مورخہ 2023-04-12 دن کے 2:00 PM بجے تک ویڈیوز آفیسر کے پاس پیش کر سکتے ہیں۔  
بجگم

المستقر  
بجگم  
میونسپل ویڈیوز آفیسر  
سرینگر میونسپل کارپوریشن

DIPK-NB-75-23  
DT: 07/04/2023

# Responsibility of human-elephant conflict lies with society: Prez Murmu

AGENCIES

**GUWAHATI:** President Droupadi Murmu on Friday inaugurated the Gaj Utsav at Assam's Kaziranga National Park, and said that the responsibility of man-elephant conflicts rests on the human society.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said, "Elephants have been most respected in our tradition. It has been considered a symbol of prosperity. It is the National Heritage Animal of India. Therefore, protecting elephants is an important part of our national responsibility to preserve our national heritage."

She said, "The Human-Elephant Conflict has been an issue for centuries and when we analyze this conflict, it is found that a barrier created in the natural habitat or movement of elephants is the root cause. Therefore, the responsibility of this conflict lies with human society."

She asserted that protecting elephants, conserving their natural habitats and keeping elephant corridors free from obstruction are the main objectives of Project Elephant. Solving the problems related



to Human-Elephant Conflict is also the aim of this project.

The President said that Kaziranga and Manas National Parks of Assam are an invaluable heritage not only of India but of the whole world. That is why these have been given the status of 'World Heritage Site' by UNESCO.

"Assam has the second largest population of wild elephants in the country. Therefore, Kaziranga is a very apt place for organising the Gaj Utsav," Murmu said.

She emphasized that for the success of Project Elephant and Gaj Utsav, all the

stakeholders would have to move forward together.

The President said that the actions which are in the interest of nature, animals and birds, are also in the interest of humanity and Mother Earth. The forests and green areas of Elephant Reserves are very effective carbon sinks.

She mentioned, "It can be said that all of us will be benefited by the conservation of elephants and it will also help in facing the challenges of climate change. Participation of society along with the government is necessary in such efforts."

The President further said that elephants are considered as very intelligent and sensitive animals. They are also social animals like humans.

"We should have the same sense of sympathy and respect for elephants and other living beings as we have for humans. We can learn the feeling of selfless love from animals and birds," she added.

President Murmu mentioned that there is a very sacred relationship between nature and humanity and the culture of respecting nature has been the identity of India.

# PM Modi to flag-off Chennai-Coimbatore Vande Bharat Express today

UNI

**CHENNAI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the new Vande Bharat Express train between Chennai and Coimbatore today.

After inaugurating the New Integrated Terminal of Chennai Airport upon his arrival, Mr Modi will inaugurate it at the PuratchiThalaivar Dr MGR Central Railway Station at 1600 hours.

From the airport, he will reach INS Adyar by a helicopter from where he will reach the Central Railway Station by road.

Connecting Coimbatore, called the 'Manchester of the South', with the capital city of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, the new Vande Bharat train will reduce the travel time of passengers of both the destinations by nearly an hour.

The new Vande Bharat will benefit students, IT professionals, traders and businessmen, especially from various textile and industrial units in and around Coimbatore, Salem, Erode and Tiruppur districts.

Further, Mr Modi will inaugurate the 37 km new broad gauge section between Tiruthuraiipoondi



and Agastiyampalli completed at a cost of Rs.294 crores.

Southern Railway sources today said the new branch line will benefit the movement of edible and industrial salt from various salt hubs in and around the Agastiyampalli in Nagapattinam district, besides benefiting farmers and traders in the region.

Mr Modi will also flag off a DEMU service between Tiruturaipundi and Agastiyampalli. The improved connectivity through DEMU services will benefit students,

skilled and unskilled workforce employed at various industries and traders in Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts.

He will also flag off a new Tri-weekly Express service between Tambaram and Sengottai. The train service will provide direct connectivity to Chennai for remote stations in the delta districts of Tiruvarur, Thanjavur and for Ambasamudram in Tirunelveli district.

This will also be the first regular train service from Chennai to Tiruvarur-Karikudi section. This service will benefit specially stu-

dents, employees, business persons and regular travellers and will also help boost tourism in the South portion of Western Ghats.

After this event, Mr Modi will participate in the 125th commemorative event of Sri Ramakrishna Math at Vivekanandar Illam on the Marina beach front and inaugurate various road projects. Governor R.N.Ravi, Chief Minister M.K.Stalin, Railways, Communications and Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister of State for Fisheries L Murugan and other dignitaries.

# HAL hands over 100th Su-30 MKI ROH aircraft to IAF

AGENCIES

**BENGALURU:** Union Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane on Friday inaugurated the third LCA production line and also handed over the 100th Sukhoi-30 MKI ROH aircraft to Air Vice Marshal Sarin at HAL's Nashik Division.

The Signal Out Certificate (SOC) of the 100th ROH aircraft was handed over by Saket Chaturvedi, CEO (MiG Complex), HAL, to Air Vice Marshal Sarin in the presence of HAL CMD C.B.Ananthkrishnan and other senior officials.

The Defence Secretary lauded HAL's efforts in taking up the challenge of setting up a ROH facility for Su-30 MKI and also for establishing a new production line for LCA manufacturing.

Stating that HAL has been fulfilling the needs of the country's security, Aramane said, "The government has come out with several 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' policies, and that puts HAL

in a very important position. HAL will be producing more in the coming years. Build more systems, come out with new concepts, new platforms for future growth."

He also urged HAL to take up new initiatives to



aggressively compete in the defence market and look into new areas like unmanned vehicles as the country is in need of these advanced systems. He emphasised on initiatives, innovation, excellence and focus on performance.

Aramane also visited the LCA Assembly Complex, Su-30 ROH Flight Hangar and Final Assembly Hangar.

C.B. Ananthkrishnan, CMD, HAL, said, "The new production line will enable the company to enhance

LCA MK1A production capacity from 16 to 24 aircraft per year. HAL's Nashik Division has achieved peak overhaul capacity of 20 Su-30 aircraft per year despite having supply chain issues in the current geopolitical situations."

HAL has already set up two LCA manufacturing facilities in Bengaluru.

HAL's Nashik Division set up the Su-30 MKI Repair and Overhaul (ROH) facility in 2014 to meet the operational requirements of the IAF.

Having gained experience from manufacturing MiG-series and Su30-MKI aircraft and subsequent overhaul of MiG-series aircraft, HAL successfully mastered the technology with valuable support from the IAF, regulatory bodies and private industries.

Several HAL sister divisions are involved in the ROH activities. The company plans to reduce the dependency on OEM by indigenising majority of components required for ROH within the next 3-5 years.

# Charges framed against Atiq Ahmad in trader assault case

AGENCIES

**LUCKNOW:** The CBI court on Friday framed charges against gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and his son Umar in a case related to kidnapping and assault of a businessman in Deoria jail where Atiq was then lodged.

Charges have been framed under various sections of IPC. Atiq appeared in court via video conferencing.

Atiq had allegedly assaulted a Lucknow-based businessman Mohit Jaiswal in Deoria jail where he was lodged in December 2018 after getting him abducted.

The businessman had claimed that Ahmed forced him to sign away property worth Rs 40 crore.

In his police complaint, Mohit Jaiswal, alleged that Atiq Ahmad, his son Umar and about 15 others forcibly took away his SUV in which he was driven to Deoria from the state capital.

Police booked Atiq, his son Umar, and others on various charges, including attempt to murder, after Jaiswal filed the complaint at the Krishna Nagar police station in Lucknow.

# JOLT TO CONGRESS

## Former Andhra CM Kiran Kumar Reddy joins BJP



AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Last Chief Minister of United Andhra Pradesh Kiran Kumar Reddy on Friday joined the BJP here in the presence of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi.

He had resigned from the Congress on March 12. Taking a dig at the Congress leadership, Reddy said, "I had never imagined that I'll have to leave Congress... There is a saying- 'My king is very intelligent, neither does he think on his own, nor listens to anyone.'"

Welcoming the leader into the party fold, Union Minister Joshi said, "Several members of Kiran Kumar Reddy's family were in Congress. When I

met him some time ago, he told me that he was influenced by Prime Minister Modi. Today he is taking a big leap and joining us. He will strengthen our fight against corruption because his image as an MLA and minister has been very clean. It will be a big boost for BJP in Andhra Pradesh."

Reddy's decision to join the BJP comes ahead of the Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh next year, where the ruling YSR Congress and the main opposition Telugu Desam Party are locked in a bitter contest.

The move could potentially tip the scales in favour of the BJP, which is hoping to make inroads in the state.

# India logs 6,050 fresh Covid-19 cases



UNI

**NEW DELHI:** India has recorded a single-day jump of 6,050 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the active caseload to 28,303, according to the Union Health Ministry on Friday.

The death toll has increased to 5,30,943 with 14 deaths, three reported from Maharashtra, two each from Karnataka and Rajasthan, one each from Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and one was reconciled by Kerala.

As many as 3,320 patients recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours.

The total number of people who have recuperated from the disease is at 4.41 crore (4.41,85,858), while the case fatality rate has been recorded at 1.19 per cent.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 3.39 percent while the weekly positivity was pegged at 3.02 per cent.

The Ministry said 2,334 vaccine doses of COVID have been administered during the last 24 hours under the nationwide vaccination drive.

220.66 cr total Vaccine doses (95.21 cr Second Dose and 22.87 cr Precaution Dose) have been administered so far under National Vaccination Drive, said the Ministry.

Meanwhile, 92.25 cr Total Tests conducted so far; 1,78,533 tests conducted in the last 24 hours.

Amid the rise in Covid cases, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviva will chair a high-level meeting with states and UTs to review Covid situation on Friday.

# Teacher,s scam: CBI writes to Google, seeks info on 2 fake websites

AGENCIES

**KOLKATA:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probing the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal has written to Google seeking information on two fake websites used in the crime.

While investigating the case, the officials came across two websites duplicating the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC)'s.

According to sources, the CBI sleuths have written to the Google authorities, asking for details of the two fake websites. Both the websites are currently defunct.

The probe agency sleuths have sought information on the email accounts which used to open these websites, IP addresses of the devices which were used to open them and then disable them in due course. Once the detailed report on this count is available from the Google authorities, the investigating officers will be able to make further progress in the probe.

As per the sources, the original website of WBSSC ends with ".in", whereas the fake websites floated for the purpose ended with ".com". A mention about these two websites was made at a special court of CBI by the central agency counsel on Thursday during the hearing on the bail petition by expelled youth Trinamool Congress leader Kuntal Ghosh who is in judicial custody.

Explaining the modus operandi of running these fake websites, a CBI associate explained that the names of those who paid advance for getting jobs before the written examination were uploaded on these websites and shown as selected in the examination.

"This was a modus operandi to gain their confidence so that they pay out the remaining agreed amount so that the next stage of manipulations in the recruitment process could be started. The scam is in true sense a labyrinth where opening of one door leads to many other doors leading to multiple secret chambers," a CBI associate said.

# Woman arrested for killing a businessman at hotel in Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** A 29-year-old woman has been arrested by the Delhi Police's Crime Branch for allegedly killing a businessman at a hotel in south Delhi's Safdarjung Enclave area, and then robbing him, an official said on Friday.

The arrested woman has been identified as Usha, a resident of Panipat in Haryana.

The police said that Usha has three aliases Anjali, Nikki and Nikita, and she also possessed a fake Aadhaar card.

According to the police, on March 31, an information was received at Safdarjung Enclave police station that a man was lying dead in a hotel room following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

During initial investigation, it was revealed that Deepak Sethi (53), a resident of Mayur Vihar, had checked into the Baljeet Lodge guest house the night before at 8.50 p.m. (March 30) along with a woman.



However, the woman had left the guest house around midnight.

Deepak was found dead the next morning with some froth coming out of mouth. Some stains were spotted on the pillow. It was learnt that he had also consumed liquor.

"A handwritten note was also found near the dead body on which it was written 'you are a nice person. Sorry, sorry, sorry, understand that I was in a lot of compulsion, which made me do this to you. Extremely sorry,'" said Ravindra Singh Yadav, a Special Commissioner of Police (Crime).

"A team from the Crime Branch visited the spot and

analysed the CCTV footage minutely. The team obtained the copy of the Aadhaar card of the woman who accompanied the deceased, but the Aadhaar card with name 'Anjali' on it was found to be fake," said the Special CP.

After analysing more than 500 contact details of Deepak, the police team found some "suspects' numbers" but the prime suspect's mobile number was also found issued on fake documents and it was activated on March 20.

"On further scrutiny of the call details records, it was found that the suspect's mobile phone was recharged somewhere in the area of Santgarh. However, the phone was recharged by one Chide, Nigerian national who told police that the phone number belongs to one Nikki a.k.a. Nikita, who is a friend of Madhumita, his live-in partner," said the official.

Usha a.k.a. Anjali was arrested by police from Noida. "The team also succeeded in recovering the blue bag and gold ring of the deceased, fake Aadhaar card and mobile phone which was used in crime from the possession," said the official.

She also disclosed the sequence about this crime and about the note she had written which was found at the spot of crime.

"Madhumita and Usha were friends and Madhumita had introduced Deepak to Usha. Later, Usha and Madhumita had met Deepak on March 30 and they had planned to give him some drugs after reaching the hotel," said the official.

"When Deepak became unconscious, she took the bag, mobile phone and some jewellery of Deepak and fled from the hotel along with Madhumita who was waiting for her in a cab. It was a fool proof conspiracy as all the IDs and mobile numbers were taken on forged documents," the official added. (AGENCIES)

# ED trace Rs 12 crore of proceeds in Bengal municipalities recruitment scam from Ayan Sil

**KOLKATA:** The Enforcement Directorate has procured crucial clues about collection of Rs 12 crore in the alleged scam for recruitment of staff in different municipalities in West Bengal by private real estate promoter Ayan Sil, who is already in custody for his alleged involvement in the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam, officials said.

During the recent raid and search operations at Sil's residence the ED sleuths got hold of the documents relating to his involvement in the municipalities recruitment scam.

Sources said that during the course of that raid and search operations, the central agency sleuths recovered a hard disc from his residence. After decoding the contents in the hard disc, the sleuths have got a clear picture of the proceeds collected by Sil in municipalities recruitment and the amount as calculated by them is to the tune of around Rs 12 crore.

ED sources said that while this is the collection amount only from the municipalities recruitment irregularities, the central agency sleuths are yet to

reach at the final calculation of proceeds collected by the arrested real estate promoter from the scam relating to recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff in state-run schools.

As per initial estimates done by ED the collection made by Sil from the two scams combined will be nothing less than around Rs 100 crore.

Sources said that the hard disc not only has mention about the total proceeds collected in case of the municipalities recruitment irregularities, but also names of the candidates from whom money was collected and the amount collected from each on this count.

The ED has already decided to file a separate case in the scam of recruitment irregularities in the municipalities. The ED counsel has already claimed at a special court of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) such irregularities had been evident in several municipalities in the state and in that process around 5,000 people in workers' and clerks' grades were recruited against payments of crore of rupees. (AGENCIES)

# Suryakumar Yadav is the sort of player that can win you a World Cup: Ricky Ponting

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting feels India should back Suryakumar Yadav ahead of the ODI World Cup to be held at home in October-November, saying the right-handed batter is a kind of a player who can win the side in a major event like the World Cup.

In India's last ODI assignment in March before IPL 2023 began, Suryakumar was dismissed for a hat-trick of golden ducks as Australia won the three-game series 2-1. He has scored 172 ODI runs at an average of just 12.28 since his last ODI half-century in February 2022.

"Everyone in their career goes through something like that. I mean, I'm not sure I have seen it before where someone's got three first-ball ducks in a row in an entire series. But look, we've all been there. You have your ups and downs as international players."

"His previous 12 or 18 months have been absolutely outstanding. And everyone around the world knows what Surya can do in white-ball cricket. I feel they should stick with him because he's the sort of player that can win you a



World Cup."

"He might be a little bit inconsistent but he's the sort of guy that, in big moments, can win you games. A bit like the late great Andrew Symonds did for Australia. So that's definitely the way that I'd look at it for India. I wouldn't be playing safe. I'd be going with match-winning players and I think he's a match-winner," said Ponting in the latest episode of The ICC Review show.

Ponting believes that Suryakumar could be best utilised at the number five spot for India in ODIs. "I think he was only batting at five, wasn't he? I don't think they want him much lower than that, especially when they've got Hardik (Pandya), (Ravindra) Jadeja and Axar

(Patel), they've got plenty of batting."

"I'm a big believer in giving your best batter as much time as you can in all formats of the game. Because if you keep them down the order, quite often you don't get to use your best players and that's the last thing you want. So I think the No.5 slot's perfect for him and he's just got to grow into that role there."

Ponting opined India will have to stick with left-handed wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan though K.L. Rahul is the frontrunner to keep wickets for the Rohit Sharma-led side, especially with Rishabh Pant out of action for several months due to injuries suffered in a serious car accident last year.

"Look, I do think they'll stick with him. I think in their World Cup squad, K.L.

will definitely be there. I think Ishan Kishan should definitely be there as well to give another left-handed batting option because if you look back to game three, they promoted Axar and Jadeja ahead of Surya because of Ashton Agar and the balls spinning away from the right-handers."

"With Rishabh not being there now, they might think of maybe wanting to play a specialist left-handed batter in the middle order which I think would have to be Ishan Kishan in some role, whether that's at No.4 or No.5."

"Just to negate teams that have got left-arm off-spin because when you look at the spinners around the world now, there are very few right-arm off-spinners in ODIs and T20Is. You need to have left-handers through your middle order."

"Most sides will have left-arm off-spin and right-arm leg spin and if you've only got right-handers through the middle order, it's a lot harder for those guys to play it. So I think they'll go into that World Cup with the two keepers in their squad and they'll make the decision on what they need as far as their batting is concerned," he concluded.

# Sports Council reaches out to Senior Citizens in Kashmir division

Veterans meet under 'Sports for All' initiative

GMK SPORTS DESK

**KASHMIR:** Age is just a number and living true to this adage many senior citizens both men and women assembled in Pologround Sports Complex Srinagar and K. K. Hakhu Astro Turf Jammu under the 'Sports for All', initiative of J&K Sports Council to celebrate the spirit of "golden age".

Appreciating the motivation and enthusiasm of the participants towards the sports event organized by J&K Sports Council for elderly, Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary Department of Youth Services and Sports said that the response of veterans is very praiseworthy and that sport has no age barrier and a little spark and motivation is enough to keep the passion going.

Nuzhat Gull, Secretary J&K Sports Council said that the events like these are a great stress buster and she was sure that each participant after going back to their respective homes will be all fresh and rejuvenated.

She also said that the Sports Council in its pursuit to encourage healthy lifestyle shall follow with more such events in future. The event is being held under the government's special initiative for senior citizens and in future similar events under "Har Din Khel, Har Ek Ke Liye Khel"



vertical shall be held across J&K, she added.

Bashir Ahmad Bhat Joint Secretary J&K Sports Council presided over the function in Kashmir as chief guest and interacted with participants including people from all walks of life besides employees of Sports Council, YSS and some prominent businessmen.

Speaking on the occasion, Bashir Ahmad appreciated the role played by both divisional sports officers for putting up a decent yet grand show for veterans of the society.

In the events held in Kashmir division Farooq

Ahmad, Abdul Majeed Bhat and Abdul Rasheed bagged first three positions in 400 Meter race for above 50 years while as in similar race in 600 Meter Mohammad Iqbal, Mush-taq Ahmad Zargar and Mohammad Altaf Chopan clinched first three positions respectively.

In the Tug of War category for women team Red led by Nuzhat Farooq triumphed over team Blue and similarly in men category team Blue prevailed over team Red.

The chief attraction of the event in Srinagar was the traditional Hopscoth-

Saz Loung which was very nostalgic as expressed by many participants especially females and they demanded that Hopscoth events all exclusive for senior citizens should be organized sooner than later.

Among others present on the occasion in Kashmir included Nusrat Gazala Divisional Sports Officer (C), Executive Engineer CDK Abdul Rasheed, Divisional Sports Officer (K), Officers from Youth Services and Sports, Prof. Bashir Ahmad former member Sports Council and employees of Sports Council and YSS.

## IPL 2023

# Batting a concern for Mumbai Indians ahead of first home clash of the season

**MUMBAI:** Mumbai Indians would have hoped to have started their campaign in the 16th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) on a better note than the massive eight-wicket defeat to Royal Challengers Bangalore in an away match.

As they get ready to play their first match of the season at their home venue, the iconic Wankhede Stadium, against Chennai Super Kings on Saturday, Mumbai Indians will be hoping that the return to their home venue will bring an upswing in their fortunes. MI will be hoping to gain their first points in IPL 2023 against Chennai Super Kings.

Their performance in the first match showed that many of the areas of concern remain for the five-time IPL winners.

Asked to bat first, Mumbai Indians' batting failed to click as they could manage only 171/7 in 20 overs. RCB overhauled the score easily with Virat Kohli hammering an unbeaten 83 off 49 balls and RCB skipper Faf

Du Plessis smacking a 43-ball 79 to score 172/2 in just 16.2 overs at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The defeat may have reminded many Mumbai Indians fans of their horrendous start in IPL 2022 when they lost their first eight matches. They finished at the bottom of the table with four wins in 14 matches and struggled till the end of the tournament.

The Mumbai Indians' top order comprising skipper Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Gameron Green fell cheaply and though Suryakumar Yadav did get a start, he failed to convert it into a big score and was out for 15.

Tilak Varma blasted a 46-ball 84 to help them reach a decent total though it did not prove enough to trouble RCB.

Mumbai Indians batting coach Kieron Pollard admitted that things did not work out for them in their first match but said it was not about key Indian batters like Rohit, Ishan



and Surya failing to fire.

"I believe all batters have to fire. I don't think we should single out any one individual. Cricket is played with eleven players and again the tournament has just started. So everyone is looking to start the tournament. Yes, we didn't get off

to a great start as a batting unit but in the end, I still thought that we manage a decent total at the end in Bangalore. So let's see what happens now since we are back home at the Wankhede," Pollard said in the pre-match press conference here on Friday.

Mumbai will be hoping to see their batters, especially skipper Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav come good against M.S Dhoni's CSK.

On his part, Mumbai India's batting coach Kieron Pollard said they were not concerned about Suryakumar Yadav's batting form. Having bad days is part and parcel of the game, every player has gone through it, he said and hoped that the Mumbai batter will score a big one soon.

Though the focus has been on Mumbai's batting failure in the opening match against RCB, their bowler did not have a better day as RCB won by eight wickets.

The bowling unit comprising, Jason Behrendorff, Arshad Khan, Jofra Archer, Piyush Chawla and Cameron Green could not dislodge Virat Kohli as he along with Faf Du Plessis put on 148 runs for the first wicket.

The CSK think tank might have seen that clash between Mumbai

Indians and RCB quite keenly and would be hoping to exploit the chinks in the hosts' armour at the Wankhede on Saturday.

Dhoni's side has had mixed results so far in IPL 2023, coming back to beat Lucknow Super Giants at Lucknow after suffering a comprehensive defeat on the opening night against Gujarat Titans on March 31 in Ahmedabad.

Things worked looked better for them against LSG as they posted a stiff target of 217/7 with openers, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Devon Conway putting up a 110-run partnership. Ambati Rayudu and Dhoni too are coming good. Moeen Ali then picked up 4/26 as LSG were restricted to 205/7 in 20 overs, thus losing winning the match by 12 runs.

With two of the most successful teams in IPL history (MI have won five titles and CSK four), today, fans will be in for a superb treat if Mumbai batters manage to click. (AGENCIES)

# Rhett to join Indian men's hockey team as analytical coach

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Hockey India on Friday announced that Rhett Halkett and Alan Tan will join the support staff of the Indian men's hockey team in their new roles as analytical coach and scientific advisor respectively.

The governing body of Hockey in India has earlier announced Craig Fulton as the new chief coach for the men's hockey team.

Hockey India also announced that former Japan women's hockey team head coach Anthony Farry will fill in the position of analytical coach of the Indian women's hockey team.

Rhett, a former South African international, amassed 155 international caps between 2010 and 2018. In 2020, Rhett went on to join the Netherlands Women's Hockey Team as the Assistant Coach. In his one-year tenure, he was part of the support staff during the FIH Women's Pro League 2020-21, European Championships and Tokyo Olympics. In 2022 Rhett took over the role of Assistant Coach for the Scotland Men's Hockey Team and also led Scotland U-21 Men's Hockey Team as the Head Coach.

Alan Tan comes with over 10.5 years of experience working as the Strength and Con-



ditioning Coach at the NSW Institute of Sport from January 2011 and September 2021. He also went on to take over the role of National Development Squad Program Manager at Wheelchair Rugby Australia from August 2021 to March 2023. Alan worked as a Laboratory tutor and unit assessor marker for Bachelor Exercise and Sport Science at the University of Technology Sydney from September 2021 to March 2023, before taking over as Senior Strength and Conditioning Coach for Tennis Australia at the Sydney Training Centre from November 2022 to March 2023.

Meanwhile, Anthony Farry taking on the role of Analytical Coach is backed by a three-year stint as the Assistant Coach for Hockey ACT and Hockey Australia between December 2008 and 2011. He came into the limelight during his tenure as Canada Men's Hockey Team Head Coach and High-Per-

formance Director between August 2011 and February 2017, with Canada successfully qualifying for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games through the World League qualification system, for the first time in history.

He also helped Canada U-21 Men's Hockey Team qualify for two consecutive editions of the Junior World Cups. Farry also went on to lead Japan Women's Hockey Team as the Head Coach and High-Performance Director between February 2017 and August 2020. Under his guidance, Japan won their first Gold Medal in the Asian Games in 2018. Farry took over the role of USA Women's Hockey Team Head Coach and High-Performance Director between August 2020 to April 2022.

"We welcome the new coaching staff for the Indian Men and Women's Team.

On behalf of Hockey India, I thank Sports Authority of India for processing their appointments on an immediate basis and appreciate their continued support in preparing the Indian teams for the upcoming Asian Games in China in 2023. I wish Rhett Halkett, Alan Tan and Anthony Farry the very best in their new roles," stated Padma Shri Dilip Tirkey, president Hockey India.

# Churchill Brothers pump six past Real Kashmir to make Super Cup Group Stage

**MANJERI:** The remaining last spot in the Group Stages of the Super Cup was snatched away in style by Goa giants Churchill Brothers when they earned a resounding 6-0 victory over Real Kashmir at the Payyanad Stadium, here.

Liberian striker Ansumana Kromah was the star performer with four goals against his name.

While the ardent fans of the two teams would remember their engaging in highly spirited rivalry in the I-League only a few months ago, Thursday's knock-out encounter was a complete contradiction, with Churchill Brothers enjoying total control over the proceedings.

The competitive edge of the match was more or less finished off in the first half itself, when the winners raced to a 3-0 lead before the referee blew for the breather. The scenario hardly changed in the second half, either, as the men from Srinagar could hardly put up a fightback to avoid further embarrassment.

With Real Kashmir not displaying enough attacking flair, Churchill took the lead in the 6th minute of the match off a penalty kick. Real Kashmir



goalkeeper Imran Arshad committed the blunder of bringing down Churchill midfielder Anil Rama Gaonkar inside the box and paid the penalty for it. Uruguayan striker Martin Nicolas Chavez scored from the spot with consummate ease as he placed the ball to the corner of the net with a deft strike.

Any hope of Real Kashmir making a turnaround after conceding an early goal was soon dashed as Churchill continued to attack relentlessly. While

their goalkeeper Nora Fernandes hardly touched the ball, his counterpart remained a busy man under the Real Kashmir bar.

The losers certainly didn't learn from their mistakes and conceded yet another penalty kick in the 35th minute. This time the culprit was their skipper Justin George, who used unfair means to bring down Kingslee Fernandes inside the Srinagar team box. The penalty was converted by Liberian Ansumana Kromah.

The Goan side, who, by now, were simply toying with the rival defence, struck the third goal at the stroke of half time when Kromah scored once again - this time it was a timely header from a rebound.

After the change of ends, Real Kashmir literally caved in, almost allowing free rein to their rivals. Kromah completed his hat-trick in the 60th minute when he made the most of a pass provided by Chavez. As if to celebrate his hat-trick, the Liberian

added one more to his tally in the very next minute. He appeared unstoppable as he made a solo run to put Churchill Brothers in a 5-0 lead.

The sixth goal came in the 75th minute. Sardor Jakhonov, a recruit from Uzbekistan, had the opportunity to get his name on the scoresheet against a hapless defence. With this result, Churchill Brothers now join Mumbai City FC, Chennai FC, and NorthEast United FC in Group D of the Super Cup. (AGENCIES)

# DC Sgr reviews progress of infrastructure development at Parimpora Bus Terminal

Upgradation Works amounting to ₹9.0 Cr in Progress at Bus Stand area

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** In order to review the progress of upgradation of facilities at Parimpora Bus Terminal, Transport Nagar and Fruit Mandi, a meeting of concerned Officers and Stakeholders was held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad at Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex here on Friday.

The meeting also discussed the action plan regarding shifting of automobile workshops from Batamalo-Mominabaad axis to a place Parimpora Transport Yard.

SSP Traffic, Muzafar Ahmad Shah, Vice Chairman Srinagar Development Authority, SDM West, General Manager SRTC, Deputy Director HP&M, Area Marketing Manager HP&M, Tehsildar Shalteng, ARTO and other Officers, besides representatives of Automobile Workshop Association and Bazar Committee Batamalo.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed appraisal about the measures taken for development and upgradation of facilities Parimpora Bus Stand, Transport Nagar and Fruit Mandi.



The DC was informed that for Development of Transport Nagar Parimpora which is spread over 200 kanals of land comprising of Goods and Forwarding Agencies, the Srinagar Development Authority has forwarded a DPR to the tune of 34.4 crores for development of infrastructure like roads, drainage system, footpaths, central verge, green spaces, electrification to the Administrative Department for approval.

Similarly, for upgradation of the infrastructure for macadamization, drainage system, development of green spaces, etc at Parimpora Bus Terminal which

is presently operational over a land of 60 kanals with basic facilities, a project at cost of Rs. 9.00 crores is in progress.

While different nature of works for infrastructure upgradation and face-lifting of Fruit Mandi Parimpora and SRTC Yard have already been taken up with completion of most of the works.

On the occasion, the DC stressed on the Officers of all line Departments to work in close coordination and ensure that physical works on the projects are started at the earliest soon after approval is accorded.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner held a

detailed consultation with the members of Automobile Workshop Association and Bazar Committee Batamalo regarding the shifting/relocating of automobile workshops on Batamalo-Momin Abaad corridor.

The representatives of Automobile Workshop Association submitted a memorandum related to shifting of Automobile Workshops from Batamalo SDA allotted shops. They apprised the DC that since Batmalo Bus Stand has been shifted to Parimpora their livelihood has been affected a lot and want relocation to Parimpora Bus stand.

## FINALIZATION OF GPDP 2023-24

# Govt to conduct special Gram Sabha meetings across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** The government would be conducting special Gram Sabha meetings across Jammu and Kashmir on April 10, 2023, in connection with approval and finalisation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) 2023-24.

These meetings of Gram Sabhas will provide an opportunity to locals

to come together and participate in decision-making process for their respective panchayats. This will ensure that the approved GPDPs are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the community and will pave way for achievement of Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs).

According to a circular issued by the Department of Rural Development and

Panchayati Raj here today, all the Deputy Commissioners have been asked to make arrangements for Gram Sabha meetings in every Panchayat on April 10 besides panchayat convergence meetings with full participation of all Panchayat Prabhari officers. The approved GPDP will be subsequently uploaded on the revamped eGramSwaraaj portal.

Pertinent to mention that GPDP is an all encompassing plan, across all sectors, for development of Gram Panchayats. The GPDPs are to be aligned with the 09 thematic areas for LSDGs, which are an integral part of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and are key to ensuring that no one is left behind in the journey towards sustainable development.

## Meeting to cover beneficiaries under PMJJBY, PMSBY held in Anantnag



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG:** The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Dr S.M Ashraf Friday conveyed a meeting with the bank heads and line departments to discuss PMJJBY and PMSBY schemes.

The LDM Jammu and Kashmir Bank Anantnag apprised the chair that under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna (PMJJBY) the insured is covered with two lakhs at a meagre premium amount of rupees 436 annually and has to pay a premium of rupees 20 under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojna (PMSBY) and will be insured for two lakhs under Accidental insurance cover.

The eligibility for both schemes is 18-50 and 18-70 besides over 13 crore beneficiaries already stand enrolled under PMJJBY and over 29 crore beneficiaries are enrolled under PMSBY, he added.

In this scheme once the beneficiary is added after that Auto debit of premium from subscribers' starts, to avoid the lapsing of the insurance policies, added the LDM.

The BDOs and other line officers raised some queries regarding the formalities which were cleared by the bank heads.

ADC while speaking on the occasion said that the unorganised working classes of different sectors which are not able to pay the premium of the scheme of life insurance and are at high risk must get enrolled in the scheme to avail the benefits.

He said the government has launched these schemes keeping the layman's earnings in view and his dependents and directed the bank heads and line departments to enroll all the eligible beneficiaries under these schemes. The bank and BDOs were directed for cooperation and conducting of awareness camps at panchayat level and for enrollments.

The meeting was attended by the programme officer ICDs, ACD, ACP, ACL, BDOs and bank heads of JKB, SBI, EDBI and other banks.

## 16 Route Permits of vehicles, 6 Driving Licenses suspended in Anantnag



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG:** A team of Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), headed by ARTO, Anantnag Dr Mohammad Zubair, Friday laid special nakka at different locations to check violation of the various visible offences under Motor Vehicles Act, 2019 and Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989.

During the checking, nearly 40 school buses were checked and 15 school buses were booked/ challaned for various offences such as diversion of route permit, carrying students in private vehicles, carrying excess students in school buses, plying without fitness, without permit and without Speed Limiting Device.

Some school buses which were plying without registration numbers were seized by the department.

Various Mini Buses which were found plying against route permit and carrying students were also checked and their Route Permit were recommended for suspension.

The enforcement wing

of the MVD, Anantnag has decided to introduce a checking schedule to inspect school buses and other vehicles transporting school students. They have decided to stick to the checking schedule in the backdrop of the recent instructions passed in the District Road Safety Committee meeting headed by Deputy Commissioner Anantnag to strengthen the inspection of school vehicles.

Though GPS and Speed governor are mandatory for school buses many school vehicle drivers tamper with these safety instruments, said ARTO Anantnag. Many of the school buses are yet to install GPS and GPS is not functional in many buses, he added.

The enforcement wing of the MVD has also introduced a checking schedule for other vehicles. The aim is to reduce road accidents in the district and safety of school going children with the strict implementation of laws. It was given that different types of offences will be checked during special drives on different days.

## Govt orders posting of 2 police officers

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday ordered posting of two police officers.

According to an order, Deepika, IPS, has been posted as Superintendent of Police (Headquarters), Anantnag, against an available vacancy.

Gh. Jeelani Wani has been posted as Commandant IR-5th Bn against an available vacancy—(KNO)

## Cop dies after his service rifle goes off accidentally in Kupwara

WARIS FAYAZ

**KUPWARA:** A Jammu and Kashmir policeman died on Friday afternoon after his service rifle went off accidentally in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said.

An official said that the cop, who was posted at the residence of Bhartiya Janta Party district president Kupwara, Abdul Rehman Lone, died when his service rifle went off accidentally.

He said soon after the incident he was taken to a nearby hospital, however, he was declared dead on arrival. He has been identified as Bikram Sharma and was posted at the residence of BJP district president in Awoora area—(KNO)

## Elderly man dead, 5 injured in Pulwama road accident

**SRINAGAR:** An elderly man died while 5 others were injured in a road accident in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. An official said that the accident took place in Khamri village of the district, resulting in injuries to at least 6 people.

He said that all injured were shifted to a nearby hospital, where one of them was declared dead on arrival. "He has been identified as Ab Gani Sheikh son of Sonauallah Shiekh," the official said.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident—(KNO)

## Locals foil woman's suicide attempt in Sopore

WARIS FAYAZ

**SOPORE:** A woman was prevented from committing suicide in Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said on Friday.

An official said that the woman was spotted by locals attempting to jump into the river Jehlum at Jamia bridge in Sopore. "After noticing the doubtful movement, locals rushed towards her and foiled her suicide attempt", the official said. He said that the woman is a resident of Sher Colony locality—(KNO)

## J&K Haj Committee office to remain open on April 09

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The office of Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee shall remain open on 9th April, 2023 (Sunday) for Receipt / submission of Documents from the Haj Pilgrims. As such, all Provisionally Selected Pilgrims of Hajj - 2023 who want to submit their required documents are being informed through this release that the office shall remain open on the said date for the convenience of the pilgrims.

## GDC Neeli Nallah organises symposium, plantation drive

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR:** To commemorate World Health Day, the NSS Unit of Government Degree College Neeli Nallah in Udhampur organised a symposium contest on the topic "Health for All" under the mission G20 Awareness. The programme was organised under the guidance of the college Principal, Prof Hans Raj.

Prof Hans Raj spoke about the importance of healthy living and the need for awareness about various health-related issues. He advised students to adopt healthy hygiene habits. Ten students participated in the symposium contest and presented their views on

the theme of the day. Deep Kumar, a student of semester VI, secured first position while Sunaina Devi and Rupali Rajput, students of semester IV, secured second and third positions respectively.

The event was followed by a cleanliness and plantation drive in the college campus with the aim of enhancing its beauty and promoting a healthy environment. The principal, staff and students participated in the drive and planted about 30 tree saplings. The programme was coordinated by NSS PO Unit Prof Radha Rani with an organising committee consisting of Prof Swati Dutt, Prof Shaista Yasmeen and Manisha Kancharu.

## Weather improves in J&K, likely to stay mainly dry till April 10



**SRINAGAR:** After a few days of intermittent rainfall, weather improved in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday and is likely to stay "mainly dry" till April 10.

A meteorological department official said that light rain at isolated places towards late afternoon/evening was expected on April 11.

Regarding the temperature, the MeT official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 4.4°C against 6.3°C on the previous night and it was 2.5°C below normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 3.0°C against 4.0°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C

below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of minus 1.8°C against 2.4°C on the previous night and it was 4.0°C above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of 3.6°C against 3.1°C on the previous night and it was 1.8°C below normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 1.6°C, the same as on the previous night and it was 2.1°C below normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said. In Kupwara town, he

said, the mercury settled at 1.7°C against 3.6°C on the previous night and it was 3.8°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 13.7°C against 14.7°C on the previous night. It was 4.1°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 7.1°C (below normal by 0.3°C), Batote 1.4°C (below normal by 1.4°C), Katra 12.6°C (2.5°C below normal) and Bhardarwah 4.3°C (1.7°C below normal). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of minus 6.0°C and minus 0.6°C respectively, he added. (GNS)

## Fake PMO official arrested in J&K to be brought to Gujarat

IANIS

**AHMEDABAD:** Conman Kiran Patel, who was arrested in Jammu and Kashmir last month for posing as a top official in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), is likely to be brought to Ahmedabad on Friday night, an official said.

A team of Ahmedabad Police has reached Jammu and Kashmir to take custody of Patel, according to a senior official.

Kiran Patel and his wife, Malini Patel, were accused of attempting to usurp a senior citizen's bungalow.

The Ahmedabad Crime Branch registered a case of cheating against them on March 22, six days after Malini Patel was arrested.

The complainant, Jagdish Chavda, had wanted to sell his bungalow in the Shilaj area. Patel approached Chavda claiming to be a real estate agent and persuaded him to renovate the property, claiming

in instalments from him for the work.

When the renovation was underway, Chavda shifted to his friend's residence.

A few days later, he learned that Patel and his wife had put up their own name-plate outside the bungalow and had conducted a house-warming ritual as if they were the owners.

When confronted, the couple left the bungalow without finishing the renovation, and Chavda moved back into the house.

In August 2022, Chavda received a court notice informing him that Kiran Patel had filed a civil suit claiming ownership of the property using photographs of his nameplate and invitation card for the house-warming ceremony, said the FIR.



Four FIRs related to cheating have been registered against Patel in different police stations in Gujarat.

"Our team is in Jammu and Kashmir to take Kiran Patel's custody in a cheating case registered with us. He will be brought here on Friday night," a senior police officer said.

that it would fetch a good price.

To gain Chavda's trust, Patel allegedly claimed to be a "Class-1 officer in the PMO" and a partner in a cafe chain.

Chavda agreed to the renovation, and Kiran along with his wife Malini, and an interior designer took Rs 35 lakh