Good Morning Kashmir





Deeply saddened by the passing away of Dr. MS Swaminathan Ji. His pioneering work & contribution in transforming nation's agricultural landscape, ensuring food security will be remembered for generations. Condolences to his family and admirers.



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WORLD RABIES DAY 4.396 Bite Cases **Reported To ARC** SMHS In 6 Months **JAHANGEER GANAIE**

SRINAGAR: A whopping 4,396 bite victims, mostly dog bites, were reported to the Anti-Rabies Clinic at Srinagar's Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) Hospital in the last six months, officials

The presence of dogs in the nook and corner of the valley has led to human dog confrontation due to which the number of cases of dog bites has increased in the region, they said.

An official from Anti-Rabies Clinic SMHS • P-02

'POWER GENERATION HIT'

Prolonged Dry Spell Reduces Water Level

In Water Bodies OWAIS GUL

SRINAGAR: With prolonged dry spell leading to the reduction in water level in most of the water bodies across the Valley, the Kashmir-based power houses are generating less electricity, prompting the government to go ahead with power curtailment, causing immense hardships to the people.

Pertinently, • P-02

Milad Immerses Kashmir Valley In Religious Fervour



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), is being celebrated with religious fervour across Kashmir Valley. The largest congregation is expected to be held at Hazratbal shrine. The devotees would have a glimpse of the holy relic after every prayer.

Besides Hazratbal,

large congregational prayers are expected to be held at Asarisharif Kalashpora, Jenab Sahib Soura, Lal Bazar, Punjura Shopian, Khiram Sirhama Anantnag (Islamabad),

On the occasion, a festive look prevailed for the past several days

Baramulla.

Seer hamdan Kaba

Marg Qaimoh Ahm-

shrief Bandipora and

Hazrat Janbaz Wali (RA)

as various Masjids and shrines in the city and elsewhere, besides various commercial malls in the civil lines areas were decked out with lights.

A festive look prevailed in Srinagar for the past several days as many markets and thoroughfares were decorated and illuminated with florescent lights while religious flags and buntings were hoisted atop many buildings • P-02

India-China Relations In 'Abnormal State' Since Galwan Clash: Jaishankar

AGENCIES

NEW YORK- India-China relations have been in an the 2020 Galwan Valley clash and it is a "possibly longer than medium-term issue", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, emphasising that none of the explanations given by Beijing for amassing its troops along the LAC are really ten-

India has been consistently maintaining that the situation at the border in eastern Ladakh is not normal and that peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were key for the normalisation of overall bilateral ties.

If the two biggest countries of the world have that degree of tension between them, "it has consequences for everybody else". Jaishankar asserted during a conversation at the Council on Foreign Relations to a question about India-China rela-

"You know, one of the pleasures of dealing with China is that they never quite tell you why they do things. So you often end up trying to figure it out. And it's always, there's a certain ambiguity out there," Jaishankar, who was India's Ambassador to China from 2009 to 2013, said.

"At various points in time, the Chinese have given us different explanations, and none of them are really tenable," Jaishankar said.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

"It is very hard to try to be normal with a country which has broken agreements and which has done what it has done. So if you look at the last three years, it's a very abnormal

"Contacts have been disrupted, visits are not taking place. We have of course this high level of military tension. It has also impacted the perception of China in India," he

state," the minister said.

The perception was not positive in the 1960s and 70s because of the war in

"But we had started to put that behind us when this happened," he said.

"So I think there's both an immediate issue, as well as a medium-term issue, possibly longer than medium-term issue out there," Jaishankar

said. The external affairs minister outlined a historical perspective on the relations between Delhi and Beijing, adding that it has never been easy.

"It had a war in 1962. It had military incidents after that. But after 1975, there's never been a combat fatality on the border, 1975 was the last time," he said, adding that in 1988, India normalised the relationship more when then •P-02

YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF DEALING WITH CHINA IS THAT they never quite tell you why they do things. So you often end up trying to figure it out. And it's

Winds Of Change Blowing In Rural Economy Of Country: LG

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GHAZIPUR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday said that the dream of India as a global superpower has been realized and a new work culture and a new pro- growth mindset has taken root in the society under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji.

Unveiling the statue of Smt Tetara Devi at Mata Tetara Devi Sachidanand Girls Degree College in Ghazipur, LG Sinha said that the transformational changes of the last 9 years are



inspiring every citizen to contribute in realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat

the College for being in the forefront of setting high • P-02

Dwidi Visits Forward Areas Along Siachen, Ladakh

JAMMU- The Northern Army Commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi on Thursday visited the forward areas in Siachen Ladakh and "reviewed the operational

preparedness". Army said. Accompanied by General Officer Commanding of Lehbased Fire and Fury Corps Lt Gen Lt Gen Rashim Bali and Commander Siachen Brigade, the Army Commander complimented the troops deployed in the sector for their excellent standards of combat readiness despite inhospitable terrain.

High Altitude Areas, our resolve takes flight" #LtGenUpendraDwivedi #ArmyCdrNC accompanied by GOC @firefurvcorps and Cdr #Siachen Brigade visited the Forward

always, there's a certain ambiguity out there."

Areas along LC in #Siachen to review the operational preparedness," ," Indian Army's Northern Command said in a post on X.

The Army Commander felicitated the troops deployed in remote frontline areas for their excellent standards of combat readiness despite inhospitable terrain and exhorted them to continue to strive for excellence, it added.

Centre Unveils Draft Notification For ESZ Around Dachigam National Park

NASIR AZAM

SRINAGAR: The Union Ministry of Forests, Environment & Climate Change has unveiled the draft notification for an eco-sensitive zone around Dachigam national park, Thajwas (Baltal) and Overa- Aru wildlife sanctuar-

The notification, proposes that an area to an extent varying from 200 meters to 13.15 kilometers around

National Park, Thajwas (Baltal) wildlife sanctuary and Overa-Aru Wildlife sanctuary shall form their "The extent of eco-sen-

the boundary of Dachigam

sitive zone shall be of 200 m to 13.15 km from the boundary of Dachigam National

Park, Thajwas (Baltal) Wildlife Sanctuary and Overa -Aru Wildlife Sanctuary and comprising of an area of 448.00 sq.km," • P-02

2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS

PM, HM, Other BJP Bigwigs To Hold Rallies In J&K

JAMMU: To boost the morale of party workers and setting right tone for Lok Sabha elections due in April-May next year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah among top brass of Bharatiya Janata Party's stalwart (BJP) is all set to led party's campaign in Jammu and Kashmir by holding massive rallies after assembly polls in

Party sources said that Modi, Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Road and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari among top leadership will be addressing rallies and launching various development projects from October -November onwards.

Sources said though the



calendar of VVIP visit is not final yet but it's likely to commence after the assembly elections in four states including Madhya Pradesh , Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telan-

Sources confirmed that Modi, Shah is expected to be in Jammu and Kashmir for minimum of two days and maximum three

days depending upon his schedule whenever it is finalized.

They said the Home Minister has given his consent to the tour programme while a formal nod from the Prime Minister is expected as the UT Government is also preparing a detailed list of projects and welfare schemes which • P-02

J&K People Enjoying Normal Life: DGP



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Thursday addressed 65 DySsP trainees at Sher-e-Kashmir Police Academy Udhampur and asked them to 'focus on your work, don't worry about people who would try to bring you down, you are now part of a force which has an unparalleled legacy of martyrdom'.

As per a statement issued, a police spokesman said DGP was on a day-long tour to the SKPA Udhampur & Subsidiary Training Center (STC) Talwara Reasi where he interacted with trainee officers & jawans and also inaugurated new buildings in these train-

He was accompanied by the IGP Hqrs/CIV Police • P-02

ing institutes

LIVE the MOVIE SRINAGAR

INOX CINEMA SHIVPORA SGR



FRIDAY, 29 SEPT

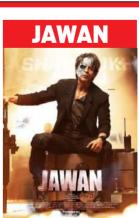


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2:45PM, 6:00PM (Hindi) UA





6:45PM (Hindi) ∪



3:15PM, 6:30PM (Hindi ATMOS) UA



3:50PM (English) TBA

31 Terrorists Killed In Joint Operations So Far In 2023: Police

SRINAGAR: A total of 31 terrorists have been killed in joint operations in the Kashmir Valley this year so far, police said here on Wednesday.

A top police official said that the joint operations were carried out by Army, Police, SSB, BSF and CRFP at different places in the Kashmir Valley.

He said that this year so far a total of 31 terrorists have been killed in joint operations.

One terrorist was killed in joint operation with Police, Army & SSB, 2 terrorists were killed in joint ops with Police, Army & BSF, 5 terrorists were killed in



joint ops by Police, Army & CRPF and 23 terrorists were killed in joint ops by Police & Army," he

Earlier, this month two terrorists including top commander Uzair Khan was killed during 7-day long operation in Kokernag, in which 3 officers including a DySP, Army

Colonel and a Major were also killed. The official further said that police and other security agencies have been dealing effectively with terror operatives and in the past few months several terror modules have been busted across the Valley that have dented support base of terrorists in the region.

In last month, a total of four terrorists were killed and 40 apprehended while a total of eight terrorists were killed and 34 apprehended.

The data further reveals that a total of 111 terrorists are currently active in Jammu and Kashmir, including 40 local terrorists and 71 foreign terrorists. As per the data, 137 terrorists were active in Jammu and Kashmir last year.—(KNO inputs)

3 Drug Peddlers Arrested In Kulgam, Awantipora: Police

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said to have arrested three drug peddlers in Kulgam & Awantipora and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

In Kulgam, a police party led by Incharge Police Post Mirbazar during naka checking near Petrol Pump at Nippora intercepted a motorcycle bearing registration number PB07AT-9499 ridden by two persons a police spokesman said in a statement issued.

During search, police said that the officers present were able to recover 4.5kgs of Poppy Straw concealed in a Nylon bag was recov-

They have been identified as Mohd Saleem Ganie son of Gull Mohd Ganie resident of DK Pora Shopian and Balbir Singh son of Sheer Singh resident of Chenani Pullmanda. Udhampur. Both the persons were arrested and motorcycle used in commission of crime

was also seized. In Awantipora, a Police Party led by Incharge Police Post Reshipora arrested one drug peddler at Kawani Brabandina crossing. He has been identified as Abdul Salam Dar son of Munawa Dar resident of Kawani Awantipora. During search, 380 grams of Charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has

where he remains in custody, police said.

Accordingly, police said that cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and investigation has been taken up.

"We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact nearest police establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law," police said.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Milad Immerses

and vehicles to celebrate the birth day of

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his greetings and good wishes to the people on the eve of Milad-un-Nabi.

In a message the Lt Governor said: "On the auspicious occasion of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, I convey my greetings to all.

The holy Prophet showed us the path of an egalitarian society based on compassion, peace, love, harmony and brotherhood. The timeless teachings of holy Prophet continue to guide humanity on the path of kindness, equality and universal brotherhood. May the joyous occasion of Milad-un-Nabi bring peace, prosperity and happiness to all and inspire us to follow the path of righteous living and work for the welfare of all".(GNS)

India-China

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China. Jaishankar further pointed out that in 1993 and 1996, India made two agreements with China to stabilise the boundary, which is disputed. "So there's a negotiation going on."

He said it was agreed that neither India nor China would actually amass troops at the Line of Actual Control and if either side brought more than a certain number of troops, it would inform the other side.

"So it was pretty explicit the way it was laid out," the minister said about the two agree-

Jaishankar added that there have been subsequent agreements after that and it was a "very unique situation" because, in the boundary areas, troops on either side would step out of their designated military bases, do their patrolling and return to their bases.

'If they happen to intersect somewhere, there were very clear rules about how they would conduct themselves and the use of firearms was prohibited. So this is how it was really till 2020," he said.

In 2020, when India was in the middle of its strict COVID-19 lockdown, "we saw that Chinese troops in very large numbers were moving towards the Line of Actual Control."

"So in the middle of all of that, we actually had to mobilise and counter-deploy, which we did. And then we had a situation where we were understandably worried that the troops were now much too close. And we cautioned the Chinese that such a situation could create problems and sure enough, in the middle of June 2020 it did," he said.

"So we had a clash in which 20 of our soldiers died. They claim that four of their soldiers died. So that's one again one of those things we will never know," he said.

Jaishankar said the Chinese side gave different explanations at various points of time but none of them are really tenable. "And since then, we have been trying to disengage.

'We have been trying to disengage because both of us have a forward deployment ahead of our regular military bases. We have been partially successful, out of whatever maybe, let's say 10 places, we would have resolved seven or eight of these over deployments," he said.

"There are still some we were discussing. But the basic problem is that a very large number of troops are amassed on the border in violation of the agreements, continues,' Jaishankar continued.

"Now what it has done is it has completely in a way impacted the relationship because it's very hard to try to be normal with a country which has broken agreements and which has done what it has done," he said.

Responding to another question on the Chinese navy's actions in the Indian Ocean, Jaishankar said: "Yes. If one were to look at the last 20-25 years, there's been a steady increase in the Chinese naval presence and activity in the Indian Ocean. There's been a very sharp increase in the size of the Chinese navy

"So when you have a very much bigger navy that navy is going to be obviously visible in terms of its deployment somewhere," Jaishankar said, noting that "when you come out of the east coast of China, you either go into the Pacific or you turn westwards and come into the Indian Ocean.

He said that India has seen Chinese port activity or port building in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and elsewhere.

"I would say, looking back, maybe the governments of the day, the policymakers of the day, perhaps underestimated the importance of this and how these ports could work in future. Each one is a little unique in a way and suddenly we obviously do watch many of them very carefully for any security implications that they have for us," he said.

"So, from an Indian point of view, I would say it's very reasonable for us to prepare for

a far greater Chinese presence than we have seen before," the EAM added.

4,396 Bite Casessaid that from 1st April 2022 till 31st March

2023, as many as 6,875 bite cases were reported, with most of them from Srinagar.

He said a total of 4,396 fresh cases were reported from April 01 to September 27 this year. If it continues, the cases may reach the 10.000 mark by March 2024, he said

Giving yearly data on bite cases, the official said that from April 2015 to March 2016, 7,061 bite cases were reported to ARC SMHS, followed by 5,832 cases from April 2016 to March 2017, 6,802 from April 2017 to March 2018, 6,397 from April 2018 to March 2019, 6139 from April 2019 to March 2020, 4,808 from April 2020 to March 2021, 5,469 from April 2021 to March 2022, 6,875 from April 2022 to March 2023 and

Around 54,000 cases have been registered in the Anti-Rabies Clinic from April 2015 to September 27, 2023, he added.

In Kashmir, dog bite is a serious public health problem. Thousands of people become victims of animal bites, especially dog bites, and some of them develop rabies.

Rabies is an invariably fatal viral disease resulting in approximately 59,000 human deaths per year globally, with 95 percent of cases occurring in Africa and Asia. The only way to prevent a rabies death is

vaccination of an animal bite victim. In Kashmir, the burden and characteristics of dog bites are not routinely captured by the health system in place. World Rabies Day is celebrated on Septem-

ber 28 to raise awareness about rabies prevention and to highlight progress in defeating this horrifying disease. The day also marks the death anniversary of Louis Pasteur, the French chemist and microbiologist, who developed the first rabies vaccine.

Today, safe and efficacious animal and human vaccines are among the important tools that exist to eliminate human deaths from rabies while awareness is the key driver for the success of communities to engage in effective rabies prevention—(KNO)

Prolonged Dry Spell August and September—2023 has recorded

deficient rainfall while the hot and humid weather conditions continued for weeks together, breaking the decades old record in the month of September.

The hot and humid weather conditions resulted in reduction in water level in the famous water bodies including river Jhelum, Chena, Doodh Ganga and others following which the people complained of water scarcity in their areas.

However, with the passage of time, the consumers across the Valley have been complaining of erratic power supply, demanding authorities to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to the people.

The complaints are being received from Natipora, Rambagh, Barzulla, Bhagat, Chanapora, Dalgate, Boulevard, Nehru Park, Habb Kadal, Chattabal and other places. "The conditions are the same in both metered as well as the non-metered areas," the consumers said.

Chief Engineer, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), Javed Yousuf Dar said that the department has resorted to the power curtailment in view of the less power generation at the powerhouses of the valley in wake of the reduction in water level of river Jhelum, Chenab and other water bodies.

He said that besides the less power generation, the temperature has plummeted, which in result has increased the demand of electricity, thus promoting the KPDCL to go for power curtailment. "We are trying to ensure less curtailment in the areas where smart meters have been installed," he added.

The Chief Engineer further told KNO that the availability of electricity from outside is too less, but the government is trying to arrange more electricity and hopefully in the coming days, the situation would improve.

It is worth mentioning that two weeks ago, the water level in river Jhelum was recorded 70-year low due to the prolonged dry spell in Jammu & Kashmir.

The prolonged dry spell ended on Sunday when the upper reaches of Gulmarg and other areas received fresh snowfall and the rains lashed the plains across J&K, which also led to the decrease in maximum temperature—(KNO)

Winds Of Change

standards for Girls' education in the region

and making immense contribution in transition and development in student's life.

The Lt Governor highlighted the rapid strides made by the country in many areas from education to economic growth in the last

He said the progress in infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture is truly unprecedented and development has become the core issue in politics today

"Winds of change are blowing in rural economy of the country. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the dream of India as a global superpower has been realized and a new work culture and a new pro-growth mindset has taken root in the society," the Lt Governor said.

Prominent personalities and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion.

Centre Unveils Draft

reads the notification.

The Ministry has invited suggestions/objections on the proposal contained in the draft

The natural boundaries of Dachigam National Park, Overa-Aru wildlife sanctuary and Thajwas wildlife (Baltal) sanctuary are connected at landscape level. The boundary of Dachigam national park on North and North Eastern side merges with Overa-Aru wildlife sanctuary while as Overa-Aru wildlife sanctuary on its North and North-Eastern side merges with Thajwas wildlife sanctuary.

The protected areas hold a good population of some of the important/endemic species of animals, birds and vegetation.

The eco-sensitive zone proposed makes these areas as one unit and will help gene flow across these areas to flourish the biodiversity," the notification further states.

The Dachigam National Park, comprising an area of 141 sq.km, was notified as national park on April 10, 1990 while as Overa- Aru wildlife sanctuary, comprising an area of 425 sq.km, and Thajwas(Baltal) wildlife sanctuary, comprising an area of 210 sq.km, were declared as wildlife sanctuaries on March 19, 1987.

The MOEFF&CC notification states that the Union Territory government shall prepare a zonal master plan for the purpose of ESZ within a period of two years from the date of publication of the notification in the official gazette, in consultation with local people and adhere to stipulations given in the notification for approval of the competent authority.

"The zonal master plan for the eco-sensitive zone shall be prepared by the Union Territory government in such manner as is specified in this notification and also in consonance with the relevant Central and Union Territory laws and the guidelines issued by the Central Government, if any," it further states—(KNO)

J&K People
Headquarters B S Tuti & AIG Training/
Headquarters B S Tuti & AIG Training/
Headquarters B S Tuti & AIG Training/ Policy PHQ J S Johar. He inaugurated a double storey Kot building at SKPA Udhampur and a Conference Hall at STC Talwara. Officers present on these occasions were Director SKPAU Garib Dass, SSP Udhampur Dr Vinod Kumar, Deputy Directors of SKPAU Rajinder Gupta, Sheikh Zulfikar Azad & Rajesh Kumar Bali, Principal STC Talwara Jameel Ahmad, SSP Reasi Amit Gupta, SSP R C Kotwal & other staff of SKPAU & STC Talwara.

Addressing the trainee officers at SKPAU, the DGP said that the atmosphere of training institutes rejuvenates personnel adding that training period is missed by all personnel throughout their life.

Revisiting his previous postings, the DGP said that all personnel consider training institutes wherever they train their second home. Advising to train hard & learn as much as one can, the DGP said, "Focus on your work and don't bother about those people who would try to bring you down'

Paying tribute to the martyrs of J&K Police, the DGP said to trainees that 'you are now part of a force which has an unparalleled legacy of martyrdom.

Referring to the Kokernag encounter, the DGP said that "we have to work on how to respond better so that loss of security forces lives is avoided."

Sharing his past experiences, Singh said "as you will progress in life you will remember your previous stints. All you have to do is to work with passion, dedication & professionally adding that you have to have synergy, camaraderie with your jawans & colleagues besides with other forces.

Referring to the areas where there was no Police presence previously, the DGP said that "during the last few years we have tested ourselves to the optimum and have overcome obstacles resulting in the changed situation," adding that J&K Police along with other security forces are holding ground & have control over all the areas.

"We have ensured that rule of law is applied to stone pelters and instigators whoever they may be," he said.

Urging trainees to ensure holding of the ground, the DGP said that "we have to deal with anti national and anti social elements strictly while taking care of the common people.'

"In a region where terror used to prevail, JKP alongwith SFs ensured security and safety of common people whose support & cooperation is utmost important for the UT's peace," he said.

He emphasized upon trainees to develop compassion as an essential element for own personnel & for the people we serve, adding that Police officers should be confident about their efforts & intentions and taking decisions on ground in the interest of the administration. Regarding the training of personnel, the DGP

said that Police Headquarters is more focused providing specialized courses on cyber crime investigation & counter measures & tactical aspects. Directing for organising modules on specialized crimes, the DGP said that more special-

ized training courses are the need of the hour for cracking the modern cyber crimes. He advised for learning basic investigation skills for improving conviction rate of NDPS & UAPA cases. He exhorted lady

officers to strive for studying cyber crime, crime against women and children. He emphasized upon officers to be tech savvy while exploring technologies in policing methods for solving problems. At STC Talwara addressing the darbar of Border Battalion trainees, the DGP directed that while providing training to these train-

ees special focus has to be on the modern day challenges on borders viz narco-terrorism, infiltration, drone droppings etc. besides training them how to protect the people during any emergency on borders. He said that these trainees should be exposed

to the modern day tools used to monitor the situation and other activities on borders.

The DGP said that "with the day in and day out efforts of Jammu Kashmir Police and sacrifices of our fallen heroes, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are enjoying normal life, students are attending schools and other business activities are going on in full swing without any fear. The bandh call culture has ended completely.'

He said that the gallant efforts of Jammu and Kashmir Police are being appreciated and acknowledged at every forum of the country, adding that he feels proud leading this brave force.

He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir want peace and they have understood the criminal folly of Pakistan, which is trying to instigate the youth against their own people.

While complimenting the officers & staff of these training institutes, the DGP directed for providing best training courses to the trainees and assured that all possible assistance will be provided by the PHQ.

Speaking to the media, the DGP said that Pakistan is the main source of militancy, adding that JKP & other security forces are committed to neutralise & uproot militancy from the UT.

He said that successful operations were conducted and will continue to eliminate the remnants of militancy.

He said that the presence of a number of active militants have decreased, efforts are on to finish the remaining. He said that the security grid on the borders and within the hinterlands is alert and active to thwart nefarious designs of Pakistan backed anti national elements—(KNO)

PM, HM, Other he will launch and inaugurate.

Sources said that PM Modi is likely to inaugurate AIIMS OPD at Awantipora besides addressing a massive rally in Anantnag, where over 2 lakh people are expected to attend the

Jaishankar, Nitin Gadkari, Rajnath Singh also expected to hold rallies before announcement of Lok Sabha polls.

Confirming the development, BJP's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina said that though dates are yet to be finalised but PM Modi, Amit Shah and other top ministers are expected to address massive rallies. He said that they recently met Amit Shah in New Delhi, where they had requested the top brass to hold rallies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Apart from this, he said BJP leadership has also requested party president Jagat Prakash Nadda for a two to three days visit to Jammu and Kashmir at his convenience but his tour is yet to be finalized. However, as per the party leaders, Nadda will definitely visit the UT before the announcement of Parliamentary polls—(KNO)

■ ◆CMYK◆ ■

SRINAGAR | Friday, 29, September 2023

Good Morning Kashmir

CRICKET WORLD CUP FEVER

Bat Manufacturers In J&K Struggle To Meet Demand

SANGAM: Sunil Kumar, an expert batmaker from Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, is among several master craftsmen lured to Sangam as manufacturers in this south Kashmir town have witnessed a surge in orders ahead of the Cricket World Cup that begins next week.

While sales of bats made from Kashmir willow witness an uptick ahead of every multilateral event organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC), orders this year have been higher as India is hosting the event after a gap of 12 years. "With the Cricket World Cup approaching, the demand for bats has risen so much that we are not able to complete all the orders," Kumar was quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

While more work translates into higher earnings, Kumar is happy that the bats he makes will reach international crick-

"I am a batmaker with 20 years' experience. I have made bats for ace cricketers such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo," Kumar said.

Fawzul Kabir, the spokesperson for the Cricket Bat Manufacturers' Association of Kashmir, said the demand for Kashmir willow bats has steadily increased over the past two years after the ICC granted approval for these to be used in international tournaments.

"We have been manufacturing cricket bats for 102 years but didn't have any national or international recognition till 2021. After getting the ICC's approval, our bats appeared in different international tournaments and the demand has risen manifold," Kabir, who manufactures bats under the GR8 Sports brand, said.

Kabir claimed that Kashmir caters to 80 per cent of the



global demand for cricket bats. 'With the World Cup around the corner and being hosted by India, the demand has risen manifold. We manufac-

ture around three million bats annually but the demand for this month and the previous one was 15 times higher. We manufactured around three to

four million bats in two months that we delivered," he said. Kabir claimed that from

"zero exports" till 2021, more than 1.85 lakh bats from Kashmir have been exported to various countries.

We are giving the world a better alternative in the form of Kashmir willow, that too at a cheaper price. Quality-wise also, if you see our bat, the biggest six in the (T20) World Cup was hit by a player using our bat," he said, adding at least 17 players will be using his company's bats during this edition of the World Cup.

Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh, a worker at a bat manufacturing unit, said the workforce here waits for the World Cup as their wages go up.

"We always wait for the World Cup because our work increases manifold and we get double the wages. We work day and night during these days as this is the source of our livelihood," he said.

Sheikh said the buyers increase their orders three to four times around the time of the World Cup.

"Those who usually order 1,000 bats ask for 3,000 to 4,000 bats now," he added.

Omer Alam, a former cricketer from Jammu and Kashmir who played in the Ranii Trophy, said the investment into improving the quality of Kashmir willow bats is now paying dividends.

"The investors are doing a fabulous job. Kashmiri manufacturers are providing bats to youngsters as well as international players," Alam said.

He feels that Kashmir willow bats are better than those made from English willow because of their durability.

"The Kashmir (willow) bats are much cheaper and they have a longer life. English willow bats are used for one season but Kashmir willow bats last for two to three seasons ... We have seen international players playing with these bats and it has got a good scope," he added.

Collaborative efforts need of hour to DC Sgr holds meeting with representatives combat impact of Rabies: Bhatnagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor. Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar Thursday remarked that collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, veterinarians and public are the need of the hour to combat the impact of Rabies in the society.

The Advisor made these remarks while addressing the day long technical conference on Rabies, organised on the backdrop of 'World Rabies Day 2023-All for 1. One Health for All at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) here

Secretary in Agriculture Production Department (APD), Shabnam Kamili; Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, Shubra Sharma; Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir, Purnima Mittal, Joint Directors, veterinarians from across the districts and other stakeholders were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Advisor Bhatnagar said that this conference is a unique platform to raise awareness about the devastating impact of rabies and the importance of prevention and control measures. He emphasized on the need for collaborative

efforts from all stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, veterinarians, and the public to combat the impact of this dreadful disease

He stressed upon the all stakeholders to work in cohesion and convergence so that Rabies can be completely eradicated. He highlighted that educational institutions and other publicly important places should be utilised to create maximum awareness among the people about the prevention from Rabies.

The Advisor exhorted upon the participants to aware people about latest advancements in rabies prevention, organise vaccination campaigns and awareness programs, to combat this deadly disease.

Advisor Bhatnagar further called upon the participants to study the feasibility of including certain aspects of veterinary science in school curriculum so that the children are made aware about animal health and hygiene from a

very young age. Speaking on different achievements of J&KAdministration, Advisor Bhatnagar said that Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing remarkable changes from last four years. He highlighted that J&K is number one in providing digital services to the citizens across the country. He added that J&K State Health Agency was ranked number one health agency across the country recently.

Commending organisers for organising this conference, Advisor Bhatnagar said that this conference will provide a platform for stakeholders from different sectors to come together, share knowledge, and collaborate on efforts to combat

rabies and protect human and animal health. Addressing the gath-

ering, Shabnam Kamili said that this conference will establish an enabling environment for veterinarians to discuss and deliberate on techniques and methods of tackling Rabies in the region. She urged upon all participants to work together towards a future where rabies is no longer a threat to human and animal populations.

During the conference, several technical sessions and informative sessions were held by veterinarians and experts from various fields related to rabies prevention and control. The participants also had the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions, share best practices, and explore new strategies to accelerate progress towards a establishing a rabies-free society

of various Political Parties

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner(DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, who is also the District Election Officer(DEO) Srinagar Thursdayconvened a meeting with the representatives of different Political Parties of Srinagar District here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

At the outset, the meeting discussed threadbare the Rationalisation of Polling Stations including creation, renaming or relocating Polling Booth locations recommended by District Election Authority in view of upcoming Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls.

Other than Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), the change of polling stations locations was also proposed by various political parties and other stakeholders in the District.

On the occasion, the DC/DEO briefed the meeting about the detailed reasons for change/relocation of 37 locations comprising 83 Polling Stations and recommendations made by concerned EROs for new locations

It was informed that change of location of said polling stations has arisen due to several reasons like existing location/building



upgraded etc. The DC/DEO said the proposed/recommended new 37 locations of the said polling stations are easily accessible to voters and have all assured minimum facilities for the con-

venience of the voters. After having detailed discussion, the DC/DEO assured the representatives of the political parties that all their submitted proposals have been thoroughly examined on the ground by the concerned EROs.

The DEO also asked the representatives of the political parties to identify and furnish their list of Booth Level Agents for all the respective polling areas at the earliest.

DEO further emphasized that the District Election Authority is always open to entertain any observation, objection or proposal for the betterment of the electoral process.

During the meeting, it was given out that as many as 902 polling stations spread across 8 Assembly Constituencies have been set up for successful conduct of Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls as well as forthcoming Parliamentary and Assembly Elections in District Srinagar as and

The representatives of various political parties expressed their contentment over the consideration of their proposals regarding the change of some polling station locations for the convenience and accessibility

of electorates.

Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar (ERO), Syed Shabir Ahmad. Joint Commissioner SMC (ERO), Syed Abul Qasim, Assistant Commissioner Nazool (ERO), SDMs East/West (EROs) Deputy District Election Officer, Shakeel Hussain, all AEROs, the meeting was attended by the concerned Officers/ Officials from District Election Author-

Eid-e-Milad un Nabi (SAW)

Srinagar Food Safety Teams Inspect City Markets

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, the team of Food Safety Department Srinagar on the eve of Eid-e-Milad un Nabi(saw) conducted special drives in various markets of Srinagar City to check the hygiene practices adopted and quality of food items by the Food Business Establishments.

The market check ing drive was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Food Safety(Designated Officer under FSSA Srinagar), Yameen ul Nabi in various city markets to check the quality of ready to eat food especially Kashmiri Snacks being sold in and around the Shrines of Hazrat Makdoom Sahab (RA) and Dastageer Sahib(RA) at Khanvar. besides other areas including Rainawari, Nowhata, Shiraz Chowk etc.

During the drive Mobile Food Testing Van was put in place by the inspection team to check the quality of Ready to Eat Food being sold in



these areas during which about 45 surveillance samples were tested in the Mobile Food Testing Van in-addition general awareness about food safety was imparted to Street Food Vendors regarding Food Safety

Rules and Regulations. Meanwhile, the Food Safety Team also carried out a surprise inspection of a students hostel at Rajbagh and checked the quality of food being served to students staying

in the hostel. Speaking in this regard, the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar has asked the Food Safety Department and other Market Checking teams to continue the drive in City markets to ensure that all essential commodities are sold at Government approved rates as per the Food Safety Standards and

Police bust gang of burglars in Kulgam, stolen property recovered the areas of Police Station suspected individual, Ayan son of Mohd Yameen.

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday busted a gang of burglars in Kulgam, arresting seven of its members and recovering property worth lakhs from them.

A police spokesperson said that seven burglars, along with stolen property worth Rs 10 to 12 lakhs,

were recovered from them. "In response to several burglary complaints in

Kulgam, cases with FIR No. 131/2023 and FIR No. 165/2023 under relevant sections of the law were registered. A special team was formed under the supervision of SP HQRS Kulgam, Ghulam Muhammad Bhat, to investigate these burglary incidents,"

The police spokesperson added that during the course of the investigation, they questioned a Shameem, son of Mohd Shameem Halwai, from Biinoor. UP, who is presently staying in Rangrezpora, Kulgam. "During questioning,

he disclosed that he, along with six others -Shahid Sheikh, son of Mohd Jasim Sheikh, from Delhi (currently residing in Srinagar), Farman Ahmad, son of Hanif Ansari, from Bijnoor, UP, Mohd Amir,

from UP, Bhar Alam, son of Mani Ahmad, from UP. Mudasir Habib, son of Habibullah Mir, from Shalipora Sopore, and Shabir Ahmad Bakerwal. son of Mushtaq Ahmad Bakerwal (Juvenile), committed the crime,' the statement reads.

The police spokesperson also said that all the arrested individuals confessed to their involvement in multiple burglaries when they

were brought to the police station Kulgam.

The investigating team, led by the SHO Police Station Kulgam, was also able to recover stolen property worth lakhs, and more arrests and recoveries are expected as the investigation is in progress, the spokesperson added.

The police have resolved to take strict action against inimical and anti-social elements, it said.

Youth injured during clash between 2 groups in Srinagar REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: A youth was injured during clash between two groups in Parimpora area of central Kashmir's Srinagar district on Thursady, officials said.

An official said that a clash broke out between 2 groups near PC Depo Parimpora over some issue, during which a vouth identified as Umer Faroog got injured.

He said that soon after the incident he was shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Police have taken cognizance of the incident and investigation is going on, the official said—(KNO)

Why JKAP, DAP, JKPC not invited by opposition parties for meeting: Chugh "People can see the out-

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: BJP National General Secretary and Incharge of J&K, Tarun Chugh, questioned opposition parties on Thursday for not extending invitations to parties headed by Sajad Lone, Altaf Bukhari, and Ghulam Nabi Azad for the meeting scheduled on October 3rd in Jammu.

In a statement, Chugh also said that opposition leaders are raising a hue and cry, alleging that the BJP mistreated the people of J&K, "While the fact is that, under the rule of these parties for three decades,



J&K was known as the terrorist capital of India, and now these parties are alleging that the BJP has created an environment of terrorism in J&K.

He further said that it is evident today that PM Modi has transformed J&K into a tourism and development hub, and terrorism has decreased in the Valley since the BJP came to power.

comes of the initiatives taken by the Government. All the allegations by the opposition do not hold any value," he said.

Regarding elections, Chugh said that in the previous DDC, Panchayat, and BDC elections, opposition parties formed an alliance. vet millions of people voted against them. "Due to this. an alliance has been formed between Mufti and Abdullah. The people of J&K will not accept this alliance, even though they were previously elected. This shows that people know the true faces of these parties.'

Dir. Info, employees condole demise of Tej Kishan's father

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Director Information, J&K, Minga Sherpa has condoled sad demise of father of Tej Kishan, MTS, DIPR, who passed away after a brief illness.

In his condolence message, the Director Information expressed his deepest condolences with Tej Kishan and his family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

Meanwhile, the employees of DIPR also condoled the sad demise of father of Tei Kishan. The officers and employees of the department offered their deepest condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and courage for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

■ **◆CM**YK**◆** ■



Morning Kashmir

Hit-And-Run Cases On The Rise

hey are from posh localities of valley. Burly looking, bassvoiced, and drive cars very fast. Often these cars are owned by their influential parents and these young men- often spoiled brats - drive faster than the acceptable speed. Often their craze for speed leads to accidents. Most often they hit a person and run, knowing fully well the loopholes in the existing laws would ensure that they are out of jail in no time. A few days ago we had an accident in posh Parraypora are wherein a vehicle owner hit about five cars and ran away. Just a few days earlier a woman in north Kashmir was hit by a car and the car owner fled in no time. A couple of years ago a young man in his twenties hit an on-duty cop and ran away, changed the color of his car to evade arrest for a good weeklong time. This young man in particular was sent to judicial custody but got out in no time. The vehicle owners are in the know of things that as long as they have a valid driving license the quantum of punishment would be tolerably lesser making them braver and braver by the day. This getting away so freely is setting a bad precedent, emboldening more spoiled brats to overshoot the permissible speed limits. The new penal code has tougher regulations for hit-and-run cases. It is better than the archaic existing penal code laws for hit-and-run cases. A mere possession of a driving license does not give the license holder the right to hit people on the street and go scot-free. This bad trend of hit-and-run was unheard of in Kashmir. With people owning more and more cars and the novae riche of the city handing over keys of expensive cars to adolescent sons and daughters is wreaking havoc with the fabric of society. Parents must put in a moral code in place before handing over the keys of cars to their sons and daughters. Hit and run is a serious crime. We expect the tougher regulations of the new penal code would be set in place as soon as possible and implemented in letter and spirit.

Role Of Mentor: Significance And Prospects



DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

mentor is typically an experienced and knowledgeable individual who provides guidance, support, and advice to someone less experienced or knowledgeable in a particular field, skill, or area of expertise. The mentor-mentee relationship is often characterized by the mentor sharing their expertise, insights, and wisdom with the mentee, helping them to develop their skills, make informed decisions, and achieve their goals. The key aspects of mentoring include: a. Guidance and Support: Mentors offer guidance and support to their mentees, helping them navigate challenges, make important decisions, and overcome obstacles. b. Knowledge Transfer: Mentors share their knowledge and expertise with mentees, passing on valuable information and insights that can accelerate the mentee's learning and growth. Mentors often introduce mentees

to their professional network, helping them establish valuable connections in their field. d. Goal Setting: Mentors assist mentees in setting and achieving their goals, whether they are related to career advancement, personal development, or a specific project. e. Feedback: Mentors provide constructive feedback and help mentees improve their skills and performance. f. Role Modeling: Mentors often serve as role models, exemplifying the qualities and behaviors that the mentee aspires to emulate. g. Long-term Relationship: The mentor-mentee relationship can be short-term or long-term, depending on the goals and needs of both parties. Mentoring can occur in various contexts, including: h. Professional Mentoring: In a workplace setting, a senior colleague or supervisor may mentor a junior employee to help them develop their skills and advance in their career. i.Academic Mentoring: In educational settings, professors or teachers may mentor students to support their academic and personal growth. j. Entrepreneurial Mentoring: Entrepreneurs often seek mentors to guide them through the challenges of starting and growing a business. K. Personal Development: Mentoring can also occur in personal development contexts, where mentors help individuals achieve their personal goals and self-improvement objectives. The mentoring relationship can be formal or informal, and it's often based on mutual trust and respect.

Need of mentor

Mentors play a crucial role in personal and professional development for a variety of reasons and they fulfill: a.

Guidance and Direction: Mentors provide valuable guidance and direction to individuals who may be navigating unfamiliar territory, whether it's in their career, education, or personal life. A mentor's experience and expertise can help mentees make informed decisions and avoid common pitfalls. b. Skill Development: Mentors can help mentees develop specific skills and competencies. Whether it's acquiring technical skills for a job or developing soft skills like communication or leadership, mentors can offer hands-on training and feedback. c Confidence Building: Interacting with a mentor can boost a mentee's confidence. Encouragement and positive feedback from a mentor can help mentees believe in their abilities and tackle challenges with greater selfassurance. d. Accountability: A mentor can help hold a mentee accountable for their goals and commitments. Regular check-ins and discussions with a mentor can ensure that a mentee stays on track and makes progress toward

Perspective and Feedback: Mentors offer an external perspective and provide constructive feedback. They can help mentees see situations from different angles, challenge their assumptions and offer insights that mentees might have missed. Motivation: Mentors can serve as motivators and role models. By sharing their own experiences and successes, mentors can inspire mentees to strive for excellence and persevere in the face of adversity. g. Personal Growth: Mentoring relationships can contribute to personal growth and selfawareness. Mentees may gain a better understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement through discussions with their mentors. h. Problem Solving: Mentors can help mentees solve specific problems or challenges they're facing. They may offer solutions based on their own experiences or guide mentees in developing problem-solving skills

their objectives

Benefits for mentees

Mentorship offers a wide range of benefits for both mentors and mentees. The key advantages for a mentee include: a. Learning and Skill Development: Mentees can acquire knowledge and develop specific skills through the guidance and expertise of their mentors. This can accelerate their learning and help them become more competent in their field. b. Confidence Boost: Interacting with a mentor who believes in their potential can significantly boost a mentee's confidence. This increased self-assurance can help mentees take on challenges and pursue their goals with greater determination. c. Networking Opportunities: Mentors often have extensive networks within their industry or field. Mentees can benefit from these connections, which can lead to job opportunities, collaborations, and professional growth. d. Objective Feedback: Mentors provide constructive and objective feedback, helping mentees identify areas for improvement and make necessarv adjustments. This feedback can be instrumental in personal and professional development. e. Career

Advancement: Mentors

can offer guidance on career planning and advancement strategies, helping mentees set and achieve their professional goals. This can lead to promotions, salary increases, and greater job satisfaction. f. Problem Solving: Mentees can turn to their mentors for advice and assistance in solving specific challenges or issues they encounter in their work or personal life. g. Professional Role Models: Mentors often serve as role models, showcasing the qualities and behaviors that mentees should strive to emulate. This can have a positive influence on mentees' values and ethics. h. Personal Growth: Beyond professional development, mentors can

help mentees grow as individuals. They may offer guidance on work-life bal ance, time management, and personal goal-setting

Benefits for Mentors

Even for mentors the concept of coaching-professionally, personally and academically is beneficial in many ways which include: a. Sense of Fulfilment: Mentoring can be a deeply rewarding experience. Mentors often find satisfaction in helping others succeed and in passing on their knowledge and expertise. b. Improved Communication Skills: Mentors develop strong communication and coaching skills as they guide and mentor their mentees. These skills can be valuable in various aspects of life, including leadership and teamwork. c. Fresh Perspectives: Interacting with mentees can provide mentors with fresh perspectives and new ideas. Mentees may bring innovative solutions or approaches to challenges. d. Networking: Mentoring can expand mentors; professional networks as they connect with their mentees and potentially gain access to the mentees' networks as well e. Enhanced Leadership

Abilities: Mentoring allows mentors to practice and refine their leadership skills, as they guide, motivate, and sup port their mentees

Through mentorship, mentors contribute to the growth and development of the next generation, leaving a lasting impact on their field or industry. g. Personal Growth: Mentoring can also be a source of personal growth for mentors. They may reflect on their own experiences and gain new insights as they guide others. In summary, mentorship is a mutually beneficial relationship that offers numerous advantages for both mentors and mentees.

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Heart Disease - Facts, Statistics, And You



DR BALBIR SINGH

eart diseases contribute to more than one-third of all deaths worldwide and this means we need to develop ways and means to reduce this. Many Western countries have noticed a decline but in India, this is on the rise and has reached to epidemic proportion.

We also understand that many of these deaths are preventable and proper guidance to the population at large can halt these rising deaths due to heart diseases. In a recent study published in an important medical journal with a large number of participants (n = 1518028) with a followup of around 10 years came to the important conclusion that 5 risk factors contribute to the major burden of heart disease. These 5 risk factors are hypertension, body mass index, non-HDL cholesterol. current smoking, and diabetes. These factors could contribute to contributing to the majority

of occurrences of heart attacks or deaths globally with India being depicted with red color due to the high burden of disease and deaths.

High Blood pressure: High blood pressure appears to be the major contributor to heart diseases contributing to 13.5% of all deaths thus offering the greatest potential for intervening and reducing the burden of heart diseases. In the European Hypertension guidelines, anyone with BP more than 140/90 in the office readings should be treated with a target treatment BP of less than 130/80 mm. With this in mind, 50% of people don't even know they have hypertension since they never check there BP, those who are detected with hypertension don't get treated adequately. This leaves an immense opportunity of

detecting and treating high BP. Non-HDL cholesterol: Is a measure both LDL and triglycerides which are considered bad cholesterol as we understand more and more about this we realise how important is this parameter with the lower the better and there has been no adverse effects noted of very

low levels of cholesterol. So it is important for us to realize that checking for cholesterol and acting on it can save many heart attacks.

Diabetes: This is both a genetic and lifestyle disease, lack of physical exercise, highcalorie diets, and overweight all contribute to diabetes with India having the highest prevalence all over the world its time to act. A diabetic patient needs utmost care to keep HbA1c levels to less than 7 and has to check cholesterol in order to prevent heart ailments.

Smoking: This leads to

inflammation in the arterial tree which is the precursor of blockages and clotting. This clotting leads to heart attacks and many deaths. In young individuals smoking is the major cause of heart attacks and causes immense damage to heart muscles

Obesity: Obesity contributes directly to other cardiovascular risk factors, including cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, and sleep disorders. Obesity also can lead to the development of cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular disease mortality independently of other cardiovascular risk factors. More recent data highlight abdominal obesity, as determined by waist circumference, as a cardiovascular disease risk marker that is independent of body mass index. There have also been significant advances in imaging modalities for characterizing body composition, including visceral adiposity. Lifestyle modification and subsequent weight loss improve both metabolic syndrome and associated systemic inflammation and endothelial dysfunction.

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IDEAS, OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN ARTICLES PUBLISHED ARE WRITERS' OWN AND MAY NOT BE FOUND N ACCORD WITH THOSE OF GOOD MORNING KASHMIR

Are We Putting Money Where The Mouth Is To Reach The Missing Millions?



SHOBHA SHUKLA / BOBBY RAMAKANT

nless we find people with TB and put them on treatment, how will we be able to reduce avoidable human suffering, and untimely deaths, and break the chain of infection transmission? Finding TB remains the critical entry point to the TB care pathway.

Amidst the growing call for finding new tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat TB, are we using the best of such tools we have today to the greatest possible extent? While we must fully fund and support TB science for better new tools, it is no less a compelling priority and a human rights imperative to ensure that all the new evidence-backed technologies we have today, are maximally deployed and utilized - everywhere. Scientific breakthroughs must be converted into public health advances, no excuse not

A day before the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB was held on 22 September 2023, we read news from Papua New Guinea. The island nation has 70 WHO-recommended molecular testing machines (Gene Xpert - which requires semi-centralised infrastructure) to diagnose TB in each of the 22 provinces or cities; but all are underused except one which is installed in its capital city at Port Moresby General Hospital. Despite 32% of those with TB could not be diagnosed in 2021, all but one of its molecular testing tools lie underused in the country in 2023.

Reasons cited for the underuse of Gene Xpert molecular tests were: "sputum transportation challenges, road conditions, etc." The real reason, which is not cited in the news, could be that Papua New Guinea has deployed Gene Xpert which is not laboratory-independent and requires semi-centralised infrastructure in place.

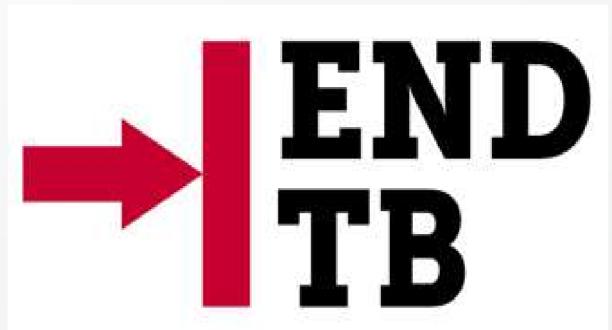
One wonders why was the existing WHO-recommended point-of-care, laboratory independent and decentralized molecular test (Truenat) not deployed in Papua New Guinea instead, to resolve issues such as, "sputum transportation challenges, road conditions, etc."

Are we missing a chance to make a change?

Among the WHO-recommended molecular tests, Truenat (made by Molbio Diagnostics in India) is the only laboratoryindependent, portable, and lowmaintenance platform solution that can replace microscopy for TB, and also perform multidisease testing at the primary healthcare level. It works equally well in secondary or tertiary healthcare services too.

Why are we knowingly making a wrong choice?

Today, thanks to scientific advancements, we have a far better and more proven choice to find and treat TB. So why are a large major ity of people with TB still getting diagnosed using old archaic and inefficient tools (like sputum microscopy) and treated with drugs that are toxic, far less effective, and have a longer treatment duration? There is no reason why old tools, that are inefficient in preventing, diagnosing or treating TB, should not be done away with when we have better choices today.



Let's do a reality check: In 2021, globally 39% of people with TB were not even diagnosed. During 2018-2021, a whopping 62% of those diagnosed with TB did not get a WHO-recommended molecular test - instead, they received the 140-year-old smear microscopy that underperforms to detect TB. Despite having the scientific evidence and WHOrecommended molecular tests

is: Taking TB services to those unreached

The WHO, Stop TB Partnership, national TB programs, affected communities, and partners have ably demonstrated that high TB burden countries can use innovative new tools to screen and diagnose TB and link people with TB to treatment and care. With the deployment of new innovative tools, not

> ne wonpeople with TB ders why but also put them on was the lifesavexisting WHO-recommended pointof-care, laboratory independent and decentralized molecular test (Truenat) not deployed

in Papua New Guinea instead. to resolve issues such as, "sputum transportation challenges, road conditions, etc."

68% in a period of 4 years, said

Dr Nguyen Binh Hoa, deputy manager of Vietnam's National

The best time for a paradigm

shift was years back. Next best

time is now. Science-based

active TB case finding needs to

be a norm and not confined to

pilots anymore. We have to walk

the talk on active case finding

TB Programme.

Having the best of molecular tests is not enough unless they are accessitive TB by offering a molecular test on their doorstep, and treatble and within reach of all those ment, care and support to those who may be at risk of TB. The national TB prevalence survey found positive for TB. of the government of India (2019-2021) shows that half of those diagnosed for TB did not have typical TB symptoms, but showed an abnormality in the

TB diagnosis. If we are to end TB, we must ensure that all people are screened for TB not just those

chest X-ray, which led to their

who are symptomatic. In the 1970s, richer nations like Australia had screened everyone (not just those with TB symptoms) and provided TB treatment to those found positive. Eventually, Australia could bring TB rates so low that TB was considered eliminated in the nation. It is important to note that back then Australia did not have the latest TB diagnostic tools

we have today. More recently, a few years back in some parts of Vietnam, all people were screened using modern diagnostic tools for TB, molecular tests were provided to those with presumptive TB, and those found with the disease were linked to treatment and care. As a result of this, TB rates dropped by

by using the best of screening tools recommended by the WHO (and not merely through verbal questioning for TB symptoms), and follow those with presump-

TB lab on wheels

Dr Arvind Mathur, WHO Representative to Timor-Leste shared how an innovative approach – "TB Laboratory on Wheels" - one stop mobile diagnostic van - is being used to find the missing people with TB.

TB Lab on Wheels has taken TB diagnostics closer to the communities. It is equipped with digital x-ray, WHO recommended molecular test Truenat, and an electronic medical record facility synchronized with Artificial Intelligence (AI) for reading the digital X-ray films. This van is helping to screen TB among different populations including high-risk people and in villages and hamlets.

"We were looking at how to increase case detection rate, how to go about screening large populations for TB in a short span of time. This molecular diagnostic tool (Truenat) is much more easily accessible, requires low maintenance, and gives quicker results. On one side we have digital x-ray with AI that can provide us a very

formal confirmation to some extent about where the problem is, and then at the same time we could run the molecular test (Truenat) to confirm diagnosis of TB, within the same settings and look into drug resistance in relation to the next step to be taken," said Dr Mathur to CNS (Citizen News Service).

The impact: "In a short span of time, around 7000 individuals have been screened with more than 600 people identified with presumptive TB. A 32% increase in detection has been observed as a result of using this technology," confirmed Dr

TB lab on wheels approach is being adopted by many other countries (and customised to their contexts) such as Cameroon and Bangladesh, among others. Now, the big van is just a big car with a mounted Truenat molecular test and other best of TB screening tools.

TB lab on utility boat goes from islet to islet in the Philippines

Dr Samantha Tinsay, Municipal Health Officer, Bantayan Municipality in Cebu, Philippines shared how Truenat molecular test machines, along with Fujifilm portable x-ray, were kept in a plastic tub and taken in a utility boat from islet to islet to screen and diagnose people with TB. "Case detection went up by over 317% and screening of presumptive TB went up by 1293%," said Dr Tinsay.

It is not difficult to imagine the huge positive public health outcomes if what Dr Mathur and Dr Tinsay have done in a limited manner was done on a larger scale in all high TB burden countries. What is holding us back from doing so? We can tailor the approach to find TB and treat TB in local contexts but if we continue to do 'business as usual', we will miss this opportunity to make a real difference by using the right tools at the right place

Finding the missing millions timely with appropriate tools

With TB elimination targets far off the track, the sense of urgency and purpose should drive us to turbocharge deployment of the best of tools we have to find and treat TB. We also need to turbocharge the efforts to find better new tools to prevent, find and treat TB too. This is not an "either/or" situation, but it is about doing both with compelling commitment and

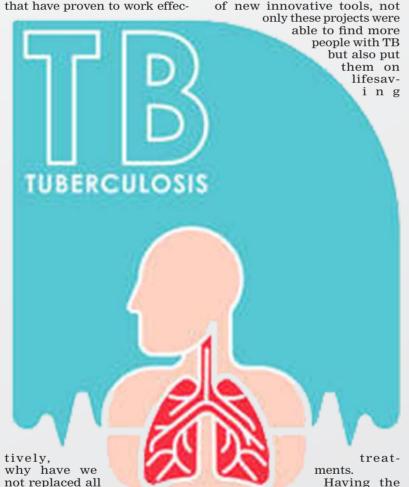
Finding new tools is one part of the relay race, deploying them and ensuring full uptake of the services is another. Full scale deployment and uptake of new innovative tools to find and treat TB globally will also pave the way for better rollout of new tools that are in the research pipeline (if and when they come

The 2nd UNHLM on TB (although attended by only one head of nation, Zimbabwe, among others) ended with an important political declaration. Next UNHLM will be in 2028. But answer to the question "will we walk the talk on the promise to end TB" will be written by us especially donors and governments – if we can eliminate the divide between what-we-knowworks and what-we-do.

It is high time to make the right turn to end TB, so do we

Shobha Shukla and Bobby Ramakant are part of the editorial team of Citizen News Service. Both are on the governing

board of Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and PRB Public Health Reporting Corps. Follow them on Twitter: @Shobha1Shukla, @BobbyRamakant).



microscopy tests with molecular tests by now? Perhaps, this is a moment of truth - have we truly invested

to ensure that a person with TB gets the best of standard WHO-recommended diagnosis, treatment, care, and support? With the gaping chasm between what we know works and what we do, how do we hope to end TB in the next 27 months in India and 87 months worldwide?

Is it not time for people to demand that they be tested with WHO recommended molecular tests and treated with the one-month regimen for latent TB infection (TB preventive therapy), a four-month regimen for drug-sensitive TB, and a six-month regimen for drugresistant TB?

Rocking chair?

Every motion does not result in moving forward. There is a price we pay if we do not use the best of existing diagnostic tools or treatments: the price is so heavy and so inhumane and so avoidable - in form of more human suffering, untimely deaths, and more infection spread. This is so unacceptable.

Put money where the mouth

NATIONAL



India Sees Marked Improvement In Global Terrorism Index: FICCi CASCADE Report

NEW DELHI: Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said on Thursday that as India is rising as a global force in international trade and interconnectedness have transcended geographical boundaries, the challenge of illicit trade looms larger than ever before.

Addressing the inaugural of the two-day 9th edition of 'MASCRADE 2023', organised by FICCI CASCADE, Agarwal said: "Illicit trade undermines national security, risks legitimate manufacturing, leaks government revenue, jeopardises public health and safety, and erodes the trust of consumers and investors alike.

"Tackling this issue is fundamental for safeguarding India's economic stability, ensuring fair competition, and fostering an environment conducive to sustainable growth and ease of doing business. CBIC plays a crucial role in the fight against illicit trade in its entirety.

Speaking on the rising figures of GST revenue, Agarwal said that month after month the GST revenue has crossed the mark of Rs 1.6 lakh crores.

"The GST revenue collection was Rs 1.87 lakh crores in April this year, the highest ever. The buoyancy of revenue collection is 1.43 of nominal GDP growth, meaning thereby that growth in revenue collection is not only by GDP growth, but a major contribution is made by increased com-

pliance levels. He said that the government is taking all steps to encourage self-compliance.

"An environment is being created so that the fraudsters are not allowed to enter in the ecosystem and pollute it. The recent decisions taken in successive GST Council meetings,

in return filing are in that direction only, so that menace of fake ITC is curbed," he said.

To enhance the compliance, Agarwal said that the department has taken steps from soft approach of nudging the taxpayers for timely and accurate filing of returns, to selecting for return scrutiny or Audit.

Speaking on the Customs, Agarwal said that the department is fully committed in the country's efforts to bring down the logistics cost from level of 13-14 percent of GDP to the level of 8 per cent in line with such levels in developed world.

"For success of 'Gati Shakti' program, each and every component in logistics chain is important and need to be closely monitored. Customs is leaving no stone unturned," he said.

On anti-smuggling front, Agarwal said that whether it is a case of outright smuggling or by concealment in trade consignments, customs officers are keeping a vigilant eye over the perpetrators and syndicates involved in such illegal activities.

"CBIC is also actively exploring to harness cutting-edge technologies to enhance its operations, including Big Data Analytics, AI, Image Analytics, Natural Language Understanding, Network Analytics, and Open-Source Intelligence in the realm of Customs and GST. Such initiatives are leveraging innovative technology to manage risks and ensure compliance," he added.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of, World Customs Organisation said that to combat these threats and smuggling risks, customs administrations need to prioritise risk management and profiling based on timely and accurate information, intelligence exchange and analysis, including advance cargo and passenger information.



strengthen their cooperation with e-commerce platforms and intermediaries to ensure responsible and compliant trade practices, thereby preventing adverse effects on governments, consumer protection, and conventional consumer retailers," he said.

Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE said: "In recent time, PM Modi has been emphasising on the need to eliminate the streams of terror funding in order to protect our communities and economies. In line with this thought, the theme of MAS-CRADE this year has been inspired in the context of our war against terror financing. It is indeed heartening to see that the government has accorded top priority to this.

"Purposeful interventions such as establishing the world's first National Forensic Science University; developing national and global databases on crimes such as terrorism, narcotics, and economic offenses; creation of the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Center among others have been made.

"Clearly, the fight against terror funding and illicit trade are beyond any country, region or industry. A collective partnership of all compliant nations with the aim of promoting legal industry across the world, punishing the illicit traders and choking the flow of finance for terror funding is imperative.

"Additionally, internal security is a critical pivot for the nation's prosperity. After all, when a country can ensure the safety and wellbeing of its citizens, it paves the way for economic growth, development and an improved quality of life," he added.

Anil Sinha, Former Director, CBI and Think Tank Member, FICCI CASCADE said that we need to collectively strategise against the activities of illicit trade.

"This is the time of action and we must move in this direction," he added.

During the event, FICCI CASCADE-TARI report 'Illicit Markets: 'Hidden Stream: Linkages between illicit markets, financial flows, organised crime and terrorism' was released.

The first-of-a-kind report examines intricacies in various forms of illicit operations and highlights the intricate nexus between the illegal economy, terror and organised crime.

India is one of the fastest growing nations in the world and the nation is also displaying good progress in addressing security concerns, as evidenced by its improved scores in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and crime index.

The report notes that India has a GTI score of 7.43 and a crime index score of 44.7, reflecting positive developments in these areas compared to the levels observed in 2016.

This is evident through the decrease in both terror incidents and fatalities from 2016 reduction in crime cases.

The Global Organised Crime Index (2021) shows a low prevalence of organised crime actors in India at 4.3 on a scale of 1–10, compared to the average benchmark of 5.2 for 122 countries.

India also does not have a high propensity to export counterfeited products, according to the Global Counterfeiting Index.

The 6 Cs approach will help India safeguard itself against the ill-effects of illicit financial flows and remove barriers to economic growth. The Indian economy crossed the \$3 trillion economy mark in 2021 with the total amount of money laundering in India as per UNODC estimates pegged at \$159 billion, showing the magnitude of the problem driven by the rise of illicit markets and non-market

As India strives to transform its economy into a \$5 trillion powerhouse in the coming years, the current trade composition at 30 percent would make the trade value at \$1.5 trillion

The report recommends adopting 6 Cs as a policy playbook to negate the threats.

Cognisance of Terrorism and Organised Crime under regulatory framework; continuous and critical evaluation of illicit financial flows; central nodal agency for greater coordination; creating awareness and changing consumer preferences; combatting trade based money laundering; and cooperation and coordination at international level.

The report also investigates the hidden linkages in 122 countries and decodes the relationship between organised crime actors and the illegal economy, including trade-based money laundering, counterfeiting, arms and and crime.

It is a first-of-a-kind report that sheds light on the intricate nexus between the illegal economy, terror and organised crime. The report also provides linkages and empirical relationships based

The report relies on secondary data sources and indicators from international and other agencies on terror and crime, such as the Global Terror Index (GTI), Crime Index and Global Organised Crime Index (GOCI) to understand the subject across 122 countries

Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicators on counterfeiting, Global Financial Integrity (GFI) indicators on Illicit Financial Flows and other governance indicators provided by the World Bank were used to establish linkages and relationships.

In 2021, the economic impact of violence was estimated at \$1.17 trillion, which accounts for approximately 6 percent of the country's GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) and violence per capita impact is estimated at \$ 841 at PPP.

It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of such containment costs relate to security and as the economy grows (along with it the illegal economy), India's cost of addressing terror and crime will be

The report highlights the role played by criminal networks in a number of illicit activities, including drug and human trafficking, smuggling of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal trade of wildlife products. The United Nations estimates that the global amount of money laundered in a year is estimated to range from 2 to 5 percent of the global GDP.

150 Students From **Jharkhand School Admitted To Hospital After Complaining Of Uneasiness**



KOLKATA: Around 150 students from a residential school at Jharia in Jharkhand's Pakur district, which is in close proximity to the Bengal-Bihar borders, were admitted to a local hospital in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

The students were admitted on Wednesday night as they reportedly complained about feeling uneasy after having the

All the school kids, who were rushed to the Rampurhat Government Medical College & Hospital at Rampurhat in Birbhum district of West Bengal, were reportedly completely out of danger. The hospital authorities feel that the sickness was more of panic rather than actually food poisoning.

In fact the school authorities have communicated to the hospital authorities that a couple of students complained

of stomach uneasiness and vomiting tendency after having the dinner. Then one of the students claimed to have spotted a lizard limb in one of the dinner dishes and following that claim some other students made the similar complaint of stomach uneasiness and vomiting tendency.

Considering that lizard limbs are highly poisonous and can result in major hazards, the school authorities did not want to take a risk. They immediately contacted the authorities Rampurhat Government Medical College & Hospital, as it is closest to the residential school and arranged the admission of all 150 students to the emergency ward of the hospital.

However, the students who mainly complained about stomach uneasiness and vomiting tendency after dinner, have been kept under watch till Thursday morning.

BJP To Contest Raj Assembly Polls On Lotus And PM **Modi's Face: Sources**



IANS

JAIPUR: The BJP will contest the Assembly polls in Rajasthan on Lotus and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's face, sources said on Thursday.

The decision was taken in a meeting called in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP National President JP Nadda and party National General Secretary (Organisation) BL Santosh on Wednesday night which continued till 2 a.m.

In the meeting, Shah and Nadda expressed disappointment over various issues in the party's Rajasthan unit, reports of factionalism and poor crowd in BJP Parivartan

They discussed why the crowd did not gather in the Parivartan Yatras at many places and questioned if the factionalism of the leaders was the reason behind it. Those present in the meeting

included Union Ministers Arjun

Ram Meghwal, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Kailash Chaudhary, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, state president CP Joshi, Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore, State Election in-charge Pralhad Joshi, election in-charge Arun Singh, state co-election Incharge Vijaya Rahatkar, Kuldeep Bishnoi, Deputy Leader of Opposition Satish Poonia and MP Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Rathore was the first to leave the meeting followed by Deputy Leader of Opposition Satish Poonia, but both the leaders did not talk to the media. The meeting continued till late even after these leaders left the meeting.

When asked whether MPs would contest elections, Shekhawat said, it is for the party leadership to decide.

BJP state president Joshi said that the upcoming programmes of the party were discussed.

"The Central Election Committee will decide whether the formula for making MPs contest elections is applicable in Rajasthan or not," CP Joshi said.

He said that no senior leader of the party is being ignored, everyone is moving together.

BJP's election in-charge Pralhad Joshi said, "We have discussed many topics. The basis of selection of candidates has been discussed. The programmes have been fixed till the announcement of elections. The decision of MPs contesting elections will be considered further.'

Sources said that Raje had plans to organise a few major programmes. The Rajput community has called a mega gathering in the first week of October where Raje is the chief guest. Also in Hadoti, a few other programmes have been organised.

The veterans in the party held discussions on how the party should go out with a united face without showing signs of factions, said the sources

Wanted Criminal, Active Member Of Atiq Gang Saddam Arrested



LUCKNOW: Abdul Samad alias Saddam, a wanted criminal and an active member of slain mafia-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad gang, was arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh police from Malviya Nagar area of New Delhi, an official spokesman said here on

Thursday. The spokesman said that Saddam, who carried a cash reward of Rs 1 lakh on his arrest, was arrested from DDA flats opposite Select City Walk Mall in Malviya Nagar in New Delhi around 2 am.

"He has been arrested in connection with a case lodged at Bithri Chainpur police station in Bareilly under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Prevention of Corruption Act and Criminal Law Amendment (CLA) Act,' he said.

It may be noted that Saddam is brother-inlaw of Atiq's brother and former MLA Khalid Azim alias Ashraf. Atiq and Ashraf were shot dead by three shooters in Prayagraj district on the night on April 15 while being taken for medical examination during police remand in connection with murder of advocate Umesh Pal and

his two security personnel. The spokesman said that information about the absconding active member of Atiq gang Abdul Samad alias Saddam, a resident of Pura Mufti in Prayagraj district who was residing in a rented house in Khushboo

Enclave under Baradari police station in Bareilly, was being received by the STF for the last few days.

"During intelligence gathering information about Saddam living in a hideout in New Delhi was received after which he was arrested," he said.

The spokesman said that after being arrested by the STF, Saddam revealed that in a bid to evade arrest, he was shifting his base to different locations in Delhi, Karnataka and Mumbai. "The arrested criminal revealed that he came to Delhi to meet his paramour.'

He said that when questioned, Saddam revealed that he was living in a rented house in Khushbu Enclave as his brother-inlaw Ashraf was lodged in Bareilly jail. "Saddam not only supplied essentials to Ashraf inside the jail in connivance with the prison staff, but was also involved in sale and purchase of land on his behalf," he said.

He said that Saddam was responsible for handling money given by the friends of his brother-in-law Ashraf. "He along with Lalla Gaddi, Nazish, Syed Saheb and Furkan used to earn money by interfering in the disputed lands in Bareilly.'

The spokesman said that the Additional Director General of Police (ADG) Bareilly zone had announced a cash reward of Rs 1 lakh on the arrest of Saddam, "Saddam has been brought to Bareilly and further legal action is being taken by Bithri Chainpur police," he said.

■ ♦CMYK+

US Mission in India processes over 1 mn nonimmigrant visas in 2023



IANS

NEW DELHI: The US Mission to India said on Thursday that it has reached and surpassed its goal to process one million non-immigrant visa applications in 2023.

Stating that Indians made over one in 10 visa applications worldwide, the Mission said it has already surpassed the total number of cases processed in 2022 and is processing almost 20 percent more applications than in pre-pandemic 2019.

"Our partnership with India is one of the United States' most important bilateral relationships, and in fact one of the most important relationships in the world," US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said.

"The ties between our people are stronger than ever, and we will continue our record-setting volume of visa work in the coming months to give as many Indian applicants as possible the opportunity to travel to the United States and experience the US-India friendship firsthand," Garcetti added.

The Ambassador on Thursday handed over the passport to the one millionth visa holder and said: "... this year we are so proud... we have processed over 1 million visa applications."

Last year, over 1.2 million Indians visited the US, making this one of the most robust travel relationships in the world.

Indians now represent over 10 percent of all visa applicants worldwide, including 20 percent of all student visa applicants and 65 percent of all H&L-category (employment) visa applicants.

Recognising the continued high demand for its visas, the Mission said that the US continues to invest heavily in our operations

In the past year, the Mission said it expanded its staffing to facilitate more visa processing, and made significant capital improvements to existing facilities such as the US Consulate in Chennai, and inaugurating a new Consulate building in Hyderabad.

The Mission said that beginning next year, it plans to implement a pilot program that would allow domestic visa renewal for qualified H&L-category employment visa applicants.

Taiwan unveils first domestically-made submarine

TAIPEI: In an effort to bolster its defences against a possible Chinese attack. Taiwan on Thursday unveiled to first domestically-made submarine which will be delivered to the navy by the end of 2024.

The \$1.54 billion dieselelectric powered submarine named 'Haikun' -- a mythical massive fish that can also fly which appears in classic Chinese literature -- was launched during a ceremony presided over by President Tsai Ing-wen in the port city of Kaohsiung, reports the BBC.

According to military officials, the submarine will now undergo several tests, while another one is currently in production.

The Haikun uses a combat system by American defence company Lockheed Martin and will carry US-made missiles.

Taiwan aims to eventually operate a fleet of 10 submarines -- including two older Dutch-made boats -- and equip them with missiles, the BBC reported.

Taiwan's defence.

Admiral Huang Shukuang, head of Taiwan's Adm Huang further said that he had persondomestic submarine programme, told reporters ally approached military last week that the goal of contacts in the US, Japan, designing and building its South Korea and India for own submarine was to fend help but did not specify off any attempt from China which country eventually to encircle Taiwan for an agreed.

invasion or impose a naval The submarine's launch came a day after China He also said that it would confirmed it had been also buy time until US and conducting military drills this month to "resolutely Japan forces arrive to aid

combat the arrogance of Taiwan independence sep-

aratist forces" In recent weeks, China has ramped up its warship presence in the Taiwan Strait and military jet incursions into airspace around the island, the BBC

reported. US military and intelligence officials have given varying timelines for a possible Chinese invasion.

Czech Republic to buy 24 US fighter jets

blockade.



IANS

PRAGUE: The Czech government has approved a plan to purchase 24 US F-35 fighter jets, it was announced.

The country's Ministry of Defence said on Wednesday that the state will pay a total of 150 billion Czech crowns (\$6.48 billion) for the jets. This makes it one of the most expensive purchases in the history of the Czech Republic.

At present, the country is renting 14 Gripen jets from Sweden, but this lease should expire by 2027.

according to local media. The first F-35 aircraft from the new order should be available to the Czech Republic in 2029, and the last in 2035, Xinhua news

agency reported. While some opposition political parties view this purchase as an excessive expenditure at a time when the state budget needs stabilising, army representatives say it is necessary.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Jana Cernochova said, "I can guarantee that other modernisation projects of the Army of the Czech Republic are not threatened by this project, on the contrary, they complement each other with regard to the capabilities being built." The move will have positive effects on domestic industry, the

Minister added. Up to 14 projects related to the purchase are planned, and these should involve Czech companies.

On Wednesday, the Czech government approved a draft state budget for next year, with a deficit of 252 billion Czech

The country's defence spending, totaling nearly 160 billion Czech crowns, will exceed 2 per cent of GDP for the first time in 2024, according to the Ministry. (1 US dollar = 23.16Czech crowns).

Greece struck by storm Elias



IANS

ATHENS: Central Greece faced severe weather conditions as it was struck by a storm known as "Elias", which has led to extensive flooding in parts of the region.

Some affected areas had already endured the consequences of the recent storm "Daniel" just three weeks ago, which resulted in 17 casualties and significant damage to infrastructure, residential areas. and agriculture, reports

Xinhua news agency. Residents in the port city of Volos were requested to stay indoors on Wednesday afternoon due to floods from heavy rainfall, Greek national news

agency AMNA reported. Meanwhile, residents of three villages near the cities of Larissa, Karditsa and Lamia were alerted by authorities to prepare for possible evacuations given rising river waters

On the island of Evia, streets in three towns turned into raging torrents, with homes and business es experiencing flooding, according to AMNA.

The island's main road axis, which connects the south and the north, has been blocked by a landslide and many villages are facing power cuts and

water supply problems. From the start of the storm on Tuesday until Wednesday evening, the Fire Brigade received 10,495 calls for help in the Thessaly region, 125 on Evia Island, and 70 in the Attica region, which were related to evacuating people to safety, pumping out water and removing fallen trees,

Meteorologists forecast that the adverse weather system will recede on Thursday.

authorities said.

33 schoolchildren injured in bus accident in Israel



JERUSALEM: At least 33 children were injured on Wednesday evening when a school bus overturned at a crossroad west of Jerusalem, Israeli authorities

At least 33 passengers aged 8-12 were evacuated to hospitals, two of whom sustained serious injuries, one was in a moderate condition and 30 sustained light injuries, Zaki Heller, a spokesman for Israel's Magen David Adom rescue

SAN FRANCISCO: Tech

billionaire Elon Musk has disabled a feature on X that let users report misinformation about elections, the media reported on Thursday

a move which has created

furore as several countries like the US, Australia and

India gear up for key elec-

US, Australia and South

Korea since 2021, was

expanded to other coun-

research group Reset.

Tech Australia, the move is

"extremely concerning", as

the country is set to hold a key

referendum next month to

give Indigenous people more

rights as well as the 2024 US

"A recent change to

your reporting process

appears to have left Aus-

tralian users unable to

report electoral misinfor-

mation. This is because the

categories for reporting in

Australia offer no option to

report electoral misinfor-

presidential elections.

According to digital

tries last year.

The tool, available in the

tions in the next months.

service, said in a statement. The condition of the driver was not immediately clear.

An initial police investigation indicated that the bus was heading towards the Eshtaol intersection, west of Jerusalem, and suddenly veered to the right side of the road, overturning for reasons that have yet to be determined, according to a police statement.

The police are examining whether a brake failure led the driver to lose control of the bus.

Musk's X disables feature to report

mation," Reset.Australia

propriate categories such

as hate speech, abuse, spam,

imitation etc. Previously

Australian users could

select 'It's misleading' about

the 'Politics' category. This

may leave violative content

subject to an inappropri-

ate review process and not

labelled or removed in com-

pliance with your policies,'

Australian authorities

say the spread of elec-

toral misinformation is

the worst it has seen yet,

be no channel to report

electoral misinformation

when discovered on your

"There now appears to

the letter added.

reports the BBC.

"Users are offered inap-

said in an open letter.

misinformation about elections

Israel detects bird flu outbreak at northern petting zoo



JERUSALEM: The highly pathogenic avian influenza, also known as bird flu. was detected in northern Israel, the state's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development said in a

statement. The viral disease was discovered in a petting zoo in the village of Sde Yaakov in the Jezreel Valley, and about 250 birds, including peacocks, ducks, pigeons, and ornamental chickens, were infected.

This is the first outbreak of bird flu in Israel since early 2023 after 11 outbreaks were reported in coops throughout the coun

platform," the research

comment on the report.

Musk or X were yet to

The move could also

affect voters' ability to

report misinformation

ahead of the 2024 US presi-

According to Reset.

Tech Australia, the fea-

ture remains available in

the European Union (EU).

claimed that X had the

largest "ratio of discover-

ability" of disinformation.

is: you have to comply

with the hard law. We'll

be watching what you're

doing," said Vera Jourova,

EU's Values and Transpar-

ency Commissioner.

"My message for X

A recent EU study

dential elections.

group said.

try between late November 2022 and early January 2023, according to the Ministry on Wednesday.

Following the latest detection of the subtype H5N1, the Ministry quarantined all chicken coops within 10 km of the infected petting zoo and called on ornamental bird breeders and coop owners to keep the animals inside buildings to reduce infection risk, Xinhua news agency reported.

The Ministry also called on the public to buy only packed and labelled eggs at regulated sales places and consume poultry and eggs only after they have been fully cooked, baked, or fried.

Israel reopens Gaza crossing after two weeks of closure



IANS

JERUSALEM: Israel on Thursday reopened its main crossing point with the Gaza Strip after closing it for two weeks amid protests The sole pedestrian Erez

Crossing between Gaza and Israel, has been reopened for Palestinian workers to enter Israel, the Office of the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), an Israeli Defence Ministry unit that coordinates with the Palestinians, announced in a joint statement.

The crossing will remain open "depending on the assessment of the situation and the security stability", Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

Israel closed the crossing for the Jewish new year holiday on September 15, citing security concerns.

Approximately 18,000 Gazans hold permits from Israeli authorities to work in Israel, bringing muchneeded funds into the economy of the Palestinian enclave, which has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since 2007.

UK DM pledges more military aid to Ukraine



UNI

LONDON: UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps pledged further military support to Ukraine during a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kiev on Thursday, the defense ministry said.

"The Defence Secretary met President Volodymyr Zelenskyv and his counterpart Rustem Umerov and promised further military support from the UK," the press statement read.

This is Shapps' second trip to the Ukrainian capital in as many months.

He traveled to Ukraine in August in his former role as UK energy security secretary.

The United Kingdom has so far supplied Ukraine with main battle tanks, long-range cruise missiles, hundreds of thousands of artillery shells and more. Military aid totaled 2.3 billion pounds (\$2.8 billion) in 2022, with the same amount pledged for this year. This is in addition to millions of pounds in economic aid and a military training program that aims to have 30,000 Ukrainian recruits trained by the end of the year.

One killed. 162 injured in explosion, fire at warehouse in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT: One teenager was killed and 162 people were injured as a result of an explosion and fire at a warehouse in Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent, the Uzbek Health Ministry said on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, the Uzbek Ministry of Emergencies said that a powerful explosion had occurred overnight at a warehouse in Tashkent and caused a fire.

"As a result of the emergency, a teenage boy born in 2006 died on the spot. The total number of people injured as a result of the incident is 163, the ministry wrote on Telegram.

■ ♦CMYK+

SRINAGAR | Friday, 29, September 2023

Bulk demand for Tumbaknaris in weddings compensates yearly losses of potters

MUBASHIR AALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: Mohammad Shahban Kumar of Chadoo ra, for the last three months has worked overtime to make Tumbaknaris.

Knowing that the marriage season was approaching, he made more than 4000 Tumbaknaris, a traditional musical instrument, which is a quintessential part of weddings in Kashmir.

Interestingly, all of these tumbaknaris have sold due to their immense demand during the wedding season.

"We have only a few left now. Tumbaknari are good during the wedding season since it is an essential musical instrument used during weddings in Kashmir," he said.

The Tumbaknari is a traditional Kashmiri drum, which is cast in a clay funnel like case. The instrument is a symbol of celebration and joy for its resonant and melodic tones.

Due to the heavy demand for Tumbakanris, the potters make up for the annual loss to their business following reduced demand of earthenware in Kashmir.

A Tumbaknaris comes in three different sizes: small, medium and large. While



small is used by children, medium and large have a huge demand for its quality of sound and durability.

Its cost ranges from Rs 200-300 per Tumbakanri. "Number of Kumars (potters) is gradually diminishing in Kashmir. Those who are still associated with the pottery cash in on weddings to earn some bucks selling tumbakanris," Kumar said.

Abdul Majeed Kumar of Baramulla said the demand for this musical instrument grows up to 80 per cent during August, September, and October.

'These three months are the peak season of marriages in Kashmir. We witness a good sale of Tumbaknaris as 80 percent of our stock gets sold. Tumbaknaris and Kangris are the only two products which keep potters hooked to the profession in Kashmir," he said.

Majeed said Tumbaknaris in Kashmir have a good demand for all the sections of the society

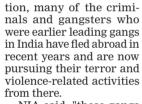
"Even those who are financially privileged and hold wedding functions in hotels too love to use Tumbaknari during wanwun (chorus wedding songs). From engagement functions to mehandi raat, Tumbaknaris continue to adorn Kashmiri weddings," he said.

The process of making a Tumbaknari begins with the careful selection of clay, followed by shaping, firing, and intricate handpainting. Each drum is a unique work of art, reflecting the artisan's creativity and dedication to preserving Kashmir's cultural heritage—(KNO)

NIA counducts raids in six states to dismantle terror network

NEW DELHI: In a crackdown on the Khalistanigangster nexus, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday raided multiple locations in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The raids were conducted in 53 locations across



are working with drug smugglers and terrorists based out of other countries, including Pakistan, UAE, Canada, Portugal". It further added that



mantling the terror-gangster-drug smuggler nexus, and nabbing weapon suppliers, financiers, and logistics providers associated with various hardcore

In an official statement, NIA said pistols, ammunition, large numbers of digital devices, and incriminating material, were seized during the raids.

These were the seventh in the series of such crackdowns launched by NIA following the registration of five cases since August

Besides Arsh Dalla, others under the NIA scanner in these raids were notorious gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi, Sukha Duneke, Harry Maur, Narender Lali, Kala Jatheri and Deepak Tinu.

As per NIA investiga-

NIA said, "these gangs



these criminals have been engaged in planning and commissioning serious crimes, including contract and revenge killings, in association with criminals gangs and their operatives. lodged in Jails across India.

"These groups have been carrying out targeted killings and raising funds for attacks and other nefarious activities through smuggling of drugs and weapons, hawala, and extortions," it said.

NIA had earlier conducted similar raids at over 370 locations, leading to seizure of 38 arms, including four lethal weapons, along with 1129 rounds of ammunition.

NIA has so far frozen 87 bank accounts and attached 13 properties, besides seizing 331 digital devices, 418 documents and two vehicles.

Lack of NOC

Forest dept halts R&B to carry out macadamization in Sopore village



WARIS FAYAZ

BARAMULLA: Lack of No Objection Certificate (NOC) by roads and buildings department has put macadamisation work on halt in Rajpora village in Sopore.

Villagers said they are facing multiple hardships in absence of paved roads. The six-kilometer Kehnusa-Rajpora stretch would connect the village with the district.

They said the forest department has halted the R&B department from carrying out work in absence

But North Kashmir Forest Conservator, Irfan Rasool said that his department is nowhere at fault.

The R&B department was asked to get NOC from the department which they failed. This is the only reason we stopped their work," he added

According to him, they will allow the roads department to proceed ahead once they submit the document. "Let R&B department resolve the issue to avoid any further inconvenience to the people,"

added the forest official.

Initially, locals said the forest department was nowhere when the road was being constructed in 2008. But they showed their presence only when the Roads and Buildings department was about to complete the road, they

"Only half a kilometer of the road has been left unfinished because of the forest department's intervention," said a local

Mohammed Ramzan. On the other hand, **Executive Engineer Roads** and Buildings Department, Bandipora division, Asadullah told KNO that they have never been asked by the forest department or they never intervened before.

He said the issue came up when they started macadamization.

"If we had been told about the NOC before starting the work, we should have provided them the same. But they stopped the work midway. We submitted the NOC on the official portal some 15 days ago but we are yet to get their nod," he added—(KNO)

Center transfers SSP Srinagar Rakesh Bhalwal to strife-torn Manipur

JAMMU: After successful tenure in home state-Jammu and Kashmir- with some remarkable achievements including completion of probe of infamous Pulwama terror attack 2019 and handling situation in Srinagar as police head, senior Indian Police Services Rakesh Balwal, has been "prematurely repatriated" by the Government of India to his parent Manipur cadre, where a fresh bout of violence has worsened the already tense situation.

A resident of Jammu's Udhampur, the 2012-batch IPS officer, was shifted to Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre in December 2021, after serving in Jammu and Kashmir as SP-National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2018 for a four-year period.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home

Affairs for premature repatriation of Rakesh Balwal, IPS, from AGMUT cadre to Manipur cadre," reads an official order.

He will be assigned a new posting in Manipur upon his joining in the state, which has been witnessing clashes between the majority Meitei and the tribal Kuki communities since May this year.

Balwal, has served in the Manipur Police in various capacities, with the last being Senior Superintendent of Police, Churachandpur in 2017. He has served in the Thobal and Imphal

Before joining as Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar, Balwal was part of the NIA team that presented the court with over 13,000-page charge sheet in the Pulwama attack.

Balwal was on deputation with the NIA for threeand-half years as SP and was a member of the team that investigated the 2019 Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF personnel lost their lives. Balwal was awarded the Union Home Minister's medal for investigation, the Chief of Army Staff Commendation and a disc from the Director-General of CRPF.

He took over as SSP Srinagar at a time when the city was witnessing a lot of terror activities, including the killing of members of the minority and attacks on policemen. AS SSP, Balwal focused on improving the law-and-order situation within the city, ensuring that the presence of terrorists was reduced

to near zero and maintaining that no attacks were carried out either on minorities or security forces. He also focused on effective social policing and cracked many case of eve teasing, acid attacks while maintained effective deterrence on rash driving. As police head he launched an outreach program and tried to build bridges among the commoners. It was during his tenure that Muharram procession was allowed on the roads after three decades and public participation in the Independence Day functions was allowed this year. International events like hosting the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting were conducted peacefully during his tenure as the city police chief. It was during his tenure that Miwaiz Umer Farooq was released from house detention recently and allowed to hold Friday prayers at the historical Jama Masjid

ADC Kulgam takes stock of Milad arrangements

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: The Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Viqar Ahmed Giri Thursday visited Shrine of Mir Syed Ali Hussain Simnani (RA), here at Kulgam and took stock of arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of Eid Milad-un- Nabi (S.A.W) celebrations.

He also interacted with management Committee members of the

shrine and enquired the facilities available for devotees here.

Additional Deputy Commissioner also directed the PDD, PHE authorities to ensure regular water and power supply to the Shrine.

He also took stock of parking and other arrangements for the devotees.

He was accompanied by Tehsildar Hqd, Ali Mohammad and other officers and officials





KVK-Gurez Organizes Mega Awareness Programme under HADP

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Continuing with the series of awareness and popularization programmes under 'Innovative Extension Approaches for Agriculture Development in Jammu and Kashmir'; a landmark sub-project under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), KVK Bandipora-II at Dawar Gurez organized one day mega awareness programme on 'Income and Employment generation in Agriculture through skill and entrepreneurship Development'

More than 150 farmers including farm women, youth, and members of various SHGs formed under NRLM, officers/ officials of various depart-

ments participated in this mega event. Dr. Bilal Ahmad Bhat,

Head KVK-Gurez said that under the leadership of Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K Prof. N A Ganai, the HADP comprising of 29 different projects will be a big boon for the farming community of the entire Kashmir valley.

Prof. Masood Salim Mir, Associate Director Research is the chairman of this innovative project and about 21 such programmes have been sanctioned for various KVKs and research stations of the university.

These programmes have been sanctioned with the ultimate aim of strengthening the extension machinerv and services in this region so as to ensure that the programmes designed and developed for the farming community reach out to them well in time.

While deliberating upon the programme, Dr. Parveen Kumar, SMS (Ag. Extension) and coordinator of the programme said that this was the second programme under Innovative extension approaches of HADP aimed at creating awareness and sensitization of the farming community about different skill and entrepreneurship opportunities available in the agriculture and allied sectors.

Farming community from all the three blocks of Gurez viz. Bagtore, Dawar and Tulail participated and listened to the expert lectures of different specialists of KVK-Gurez. They were sensitized on various protected cultivation technologies and various fruit crops suitable for this region and how these can be a potential source of income and employment generation for the youths of this region particularly.

Head KVK-Gurez briefed the participants about various initiatives of KVK-Gurez for the upliftment of the farming community of the region.

Earlier Tehsildar Gurez. Rouf Iqbal who was the chief guest of this programme in his inaugural address highlighted the importance of skills and entrepreneurship opportunities in various sub sectors of the agriculture sector like nursery raising, fruit crops, value addition and food processing.