



IPL 2023: Bayliss backs Curran, Shahruckh to come good for Punjab

P12

MeT Predicts More Rains In J&K Till April 6

Urges Farmers To Postpone Spraying Orchards, Irrigating Fields

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 01: Weather department on Saturday said that intermittent rain in plains and snowfall over higher reaches was very likely to continue at most places of Jammu and Kashmir in next 24 hours.

A meteorological department official here told GNS that partly to generally cloudy weather was expected on Sunday with possibility of a brief spell of rain and thunderstorm towards evening at scattered places.

On April 3-6, he said, intermittent rain and thunderstorm was expected at many places. "Thunderstorm will be accompanied by strong gusty winds," he said.

The department has urged farmers to postpone spraying orchards and irrigating fields till April 6.

The MeT department also urged
Turn.....MeT Predicts More.....Pg 02



Provisionally Selected Haj Pilgrims To Deposit Advance Of Rs 81, 800 Upto Apr 7

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 01: The Executive Officer, J&K Haj Committee today issued a communique stating that as per circu-



lar received from Haj Committee of India, all the Provisionally selected pilgrim are requested to deposit Advance of Rs. 81,800 each upto 7th April, 2023 positively.

Payments can be made either
Turn.....Provisionally Selected.....Pg 02

CAG Red Flags Incomplete Work On 397 Projects Worth Rs 1518 Crore In J&K

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 01: Nearly 400 public welfare projects in Jammu and Kashmir remained incomplete despite incurring an expenditure of over Rs 1,000 crore over the past decade till the end of financial year 2021-22, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has said.

As many as 378 of these projects were taken up by different government departments between 2019 and 2022, the CAG said in its latest audit report on the Union Territory Finances for the year ended March 31, 2022.

"...397 capital works having original estimated cost of Rs 1,518.66 crore, taken up by four departments (viz

Turn.....CAG Red Flags.....Pg 02

Tax Revenue Marks Over 31% Increase During 2021-22 In J&K: CAG

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 01: The tax revenue in Jammu and Kashmir touched ₹11,707.28 crore in 2021-22 compared to ₹8,876.99 crore in the previous year, marking an increase of 31.88 %, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). State Excise, State Goods and

Turn.....Tax Revenue Marks.....Pg 02

NEWS BRIEF

Body of girl recovered, 2 of her cousin sisters rescued in Poonch

M S Nazki

POONCH, APR 01: Body of an 18-year-old girl was recovered from a river in Poonch district and two of her cousin sisters were rescued, officials said on Saturday.

They said as per information, three cousin sisters from Jandrola area of
Turn.....Body of girl.....Pg 02

Police arrest 113 drug peddlers in 3 months in Bla

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APR 01: Police in North Kashmir's Baramulla district have arrested 113 drug peddlers in the last 3 months.

The data revealed by the police said that 7 drug peddlers were booked
Turn.....Police arrest 113.....Pg 02

CRPF officer commits suicide in Central Kashmir

HT News Network

BUDGAM, APR 01: A Central Reserve Police Force officer posted in Central Kashmir's Budgam district ended his life by hanging himself inside his barrack, official sources said.

They said an Assistant Sub-Inspector (name withheld) from North Indian state of Haryana was found
Turn.....CRPF officer.....Pg 02

BSF fires to push back Pak drone on IB in Samba

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 01: Alert troops of Border Security Force opened fire to push back the drone along International Border in Ramgarh sector of Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir.

The BSF spokesman said that a blinking light was observed around 0015
Turn.....BSF fires to push.....Pg 02



Some people have given 'supari' to dent my image with support from few inside and outside India: PM Modi

Agencies

BHOPAL, APR 01: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said some people are hellbent to sully his image and they have given a "supari" (contract) for this purpose colluding with certain people sitting in India and also outside the country.

Modi's veiled attack on Congress comes amid a slugfest between the Grand Old Party and BJP over Rahul
Turn.....Some People have.....Pg 02

36000 pilgrims performed Umrah since Sept 2022 March 2023 in J&K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: At least 36000 from Jammu & Kashmir performed Umrah since September 2022 till this Ramadan, indicating 50 per cent increase of pilgrims compared to last year in the Union Territory, J&K Association of Haj & Umrah Companies (JKAHUC) said on Saturday.

General Secretary of the association, Muhammad Younis Bhat while talking exclusively to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that the tour operations have suffered a loss of Rs 5-6 lakh each this Ramadan as they were expecting a huge flow of pilgrims for Umrah in this holy month.

"However, the rush of pilgrims remained less, especially due to the March session for students announced by the government. The tour operators had already booked the blocks of airlines in advance, but as the rush was not up to the expectations, the bookings had to be cancelled and thus lead to the losses of Rs 5-6 lakh each to the tour operators," he said.

He added that at least 36,000 people from across J&K performed Umrah since September 2022 till this Ramadan while 34000 among them are from Kashmir division, adding that the number of pilgrims has increased nearly 50 per cent compared to last year.

The General Secretary further stated that earlier there was only one airline, Air India, available for the pilgrims, but the association played a key role in ensuring an increase in the number of airlines
Turn.....36000 pilgrims.....Pg 02

Congress Misused Art 356, 93 Times To Topple Opposition Govts: Rana

HT News Network

SAMBA, APR 01: Describing the Congress as the biggest pollutant in the Indian polity Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said history is replete of instances when the fast dwindling political party of the country belittled democracy by imposing emergency in 1975, abusing Article 356 to topple the duly elected governments 93 times and customizing the national politics by coining



the slogan, 'India is Indira, Indira is India' way back in 1974. Mr Devender Singh Rana who was

addressing prominent party workers here at Samba reminded the Congress of its dubious distinction of introducing Aya Ram Gaya Ram culture in the Indian politics. He said Congress demolished and mutilated all the institutions of Indian democracy and disfigured its federal structure.

"Those were the times the people had been subjected to unprecedented repression and political exploitation by a family that pushed the stalwarts
Turn.....Congress Misused.....Pg 02

Class 9 student slips to death in Boniyar

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APR 01: A minor girl died after slipping into an irrigation canal in Perniya area of Boniyar in Baramulla district.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)
Turn.....Class 9 student.....Pg 02

Over 1.5 Lac Visitors Throng Tulip Garden In First 12 Days

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: The Tulip Garden in central Kashmir's district Srinagar has attracted over 1.58 lac visitors including local, national and international tourists in the first 12 days of its opening, officials said.

The Assistance Floriculture Officer (AFO), and the ground level in-charge of Tulip Garden Inam-ul-Rehman, told GNS that the (Indira Gandhi
Turn.....Over 1.5 Lac Visitors.....Pg 02



BOTTOM

Govt aims to create strong ecosystem focusing on rural-urban partnership with Rs 7097 cr funds

4041 Amrit Sarovars to be completed, 10000 SHGs formed, metro rail in Jammu, Sgr to be realized

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: The Jammu and Kashmir government has allocated a substantial funding of Rs 7097cr in budget 2023-24 to develop a strong ecosystem for the cities, focusing on urban-rural partnership, enhancing market and business opportunities, job creation, filling gaps in education system and ensuring sustainable economic development in rural and urban pockets of the Union Territory.

The implementation of Panchayat Development Index helps in developing and replicating best practices



that drive improvement across the socio-economic themes of Panchayats under newly approved Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme (APDP).

The identified Panchayats are given special focus to saturate inclusive development schemes which would serve as model Panchayats, an official said. He added the J&K government has selected the most backward 285 Panchayats (One
Turn.....Govt aims to create.....Pg 02

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

MeT Predicts.....

commuters to confirm from traffic authorities the road status of various highways and roads before starting the travel.

Regarding rainfall during the last 24 hours till 0830 hours today, the MeT official said, Srinagar received 5.2mm, Qazigund 1.6mm, Pahalgam 3.3mm, Kupwara 5.3mm, Kokernag 9.0mm, Gulmarg 3.4mm, Jammu 13.7mm, Banihal 7.8mm, Batote 14.1mm, Katra 12.8mm, Bhaderwah 13.8mm and Kathua 20.8mm.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperatures recorded an increase at most places and settled above normal in J&K.

The MeT official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 9.1°C against 7.9°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C above normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 8.0°C against 6.8°C on the previous night and it was 2.9°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of 4.6°C against 3.2°C on the previous night and it was 2.9°C above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of 6.0°C against 5.3°C on the previous night and it was 0.9°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 0.8°C against 0.4°C on the previous night and it was 1.6°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 6.8°C against 5.7°C on the previous night and it was 1.6°C above normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 14.7°C against 15.1°C on the previous night. It was 2.4°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 8.4°C (above normal by 1.4°C), Batote 8.1°C (below normal by 0.8°C), Katra 12.6°C (1.9°C below normal) and Bhaderwah 7.4°C (1.8°C above normal). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of minus 1.2°C and 2.1°C respectively.

Provisionally.....

Online through www.hajcommittee.gov.in or in Haj Committee of India account maintained with SBI or account maintained with UBI through any branch having core Banking System by using unique Bank Reference Number in the Specified Pay - in slip on the website.

"In Addition, the Pilgrims of Kashmir Division are also advised to deposit a hard copy of Pay - In - Slip along the original passport at Haj House, Bemina, Srinagar by or before April 10, 2023", reads the notification.

The notification also states that the Provisionally Selected Pilgrims of Jammu Division Shall deposit the aforesaid documents in their respective Deputy Commissioners Offices by or before April 08, 2023 so as to reach Haj Committee by or before April 10, 2023.

"Besides above, all the selected pilgrims are advised to obtain the Medical Screening and Fitness Certificate as per the proforma available on Haj Committee of India Website www.hajcommittee.gov.in and submit the same along with passport."

CAG Red.....

Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Jammu (61 works) and Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Kashmir (216 work), Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Jammu (119) and Mechanical Engineering Department Kashmir (one) targeted to be completed during the period 2012-13 to 2014-15 and 2017-18 to 2021-22 were incomplete at the end of the year 2021-22," the CAG said.

It said the cumulative expenditure of Rs 1,095.52 crore incurred on these incomplete works got blocked.

Giving the breakup, the report said one project was sanctioned in 2012-13, two in 2013-14, nine in 2014-15, two in 2017-18, five in 2018-19, 85 in 2019-20, 203 in 2020-21 and 90 in 2021-22 at a cumulative cost of Rs 1,518.66 crore.

The irrigation and flood control department, Jammu, made the highest expenditure of Rs 614.22 crore followed by Rs 246.95 crore by the Jal Shakti (PHE) department, Jammu, Rs 233.65 crore by the Jal Shakti (PHE) department, Kashmir, and Rs 70 lakh by the mechanical engineering department, Kashmir.

The CAG also pulled up the government for poor recovery of loans in the Union territory.

"During the year 2021-22, the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir disbursed loans and advances of Rs 73.77 crore and recovered loans and advances amounting to Rs 1.03 crore. Out of total loans disbursed during 2021-22 loans amounting to Rs 40.00 crore was disbursed to J&K Road Transport Corporation Limited (JKRTC) which already had outstanding loans of Rs 439.23 crore ending 31 March 2021 (Rs 383.73 crore received from erstwhile State and Rs 55.50 crore from UT of J&K)," the report said.

It said as per last audited accounts for the year 2018-19, JKRTC booked losses of Rs 117.62 crore.

"Recovery of loans and advances are not forthcoming from loss-making public sector undertakings. No assessment about potential recoverability of these loans has been made in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) statements," the CAG said.

It said the government had a total outstanding loans and advances of Rs 168.25 crore ending 31 March 2022.

"In addition, there were loans and advances of Rs 1,740.44 crore disbursed by the Government of erstwhile State which were outstanding end-

ing 30 October 2019 and were yet to be divided between Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh," the report said. (Agencies)

Tax Revenue.....

Services Tax (SGST) and Taxes on sales and trade showed the maximum increase of 32.31%, 32.13% and 27.46%, respectively, the CAG said in its audit report on the Union Territory Finance for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The government's performance in the mobilisation of resources is assessed in terms of its own tax resources comprising revenue from its own tax and non-tax sources.

The report said there was an increase in all components of own tax revenue during 2021-22 which marked an increase of 31.88% compared to the previous year.

"SGST, State Excise and Taxes on Sales/Trade showed maximum increase of ₹1,554.95 crore, ₹435.37 crore and ₹410.70 cores respectively. The highest percentage increase with respect to 2020-21 was 536.67% and 87.02% under Taxes on Goods and Passengers and Land Revenue respectively," the CAG said.

The collection of taxes on vehicles increased from ₹488.38 crore in 2020-21 to ₹616.24 crore in 2021-22 (26.18%) and stamp duty and registration fee from ₹325.54 crore in 2020-21 to ₹512.02 crore in 2021-22 (57.28%).

Land revenue rose from ₹60.57 crore in 2020-21 to ₹113.28 crore in 2021-22 (87.02%) and taxes on goods and passengers from ₹0.90 crore in 2020-21 to ₹5.73 crore in 2021-22 (536.67%) and other taxes from ₹319.22 crore in 2020-21 to ₹376.60 crore in 2021-22 (17.98%).

During 2021-22, it said the GST collection was ₹6,394.31 crore compared to ₹4,839.35 crore in 2020-21, registering an increase of ₹1,554.96 crore (32.13%). This includes advance apportionment of ICGST amounting to ₹4,334.63 crore.

"The Government of J&K received compensation of ₹892.56 crore as Revenue Receipt on account of loss of revenue arising out of implementation of GST during 2021-22.

"Further, it also received ₹3,845.49 crore debt during 2021-22 (total debt of ₹5,945.29 crore as on 31 March 2022) as back-to-back loan from the central government in lieu of GST compensation, which would not be treated as debt of the Government of J&K for any norms which may be prescribed by the Finance Commission as per the decision of Department of Expenditure, Government of India," it said.

The CAG said the non-tax revenue receipts increased by 18.74% during 2021-22 with respect to the previous year and major increase was under power, water supply and sanitation, Education, Sports, Art and Culture and Police, while medium irrigation and non-ferrous mining and metallurgical Industries showed a decline in receipt with respect to the previous year.

Receipt under Education, Sports, Art and Culture increased by 1,047.16% during 2021-22 with respect to 2020-21, due to remittance of ₹461.61 crore by Chief Accounts Officer (CAO) Samagra Shiksha J&K on account of salary of teachers, the report said.

It, however, said the collection under own resources fell short by 32.42% of Budget Estimates.

"The UT Government could not achieve its own targets for own tax revenue and own non-tax revenue in the Budget Estimates. Own Tax Revenue fell short by 28.07% and Non tax revenue fell short by 41.03% of budget estimates," it said.

It said the UT's own resources (Own Tax Revenue and Own Non-Tax Revenue) of ₹16,547.73 crore during the year 2021-22 was 36.77 percent of committed expenditure (salaries and wages, interest payments and pension) of ₹45,000.95 crore for the year 2021-22.

Some people.....

Gandhi's "democracy under brutal attack in India" remarks in the UK and Germany taking note of Rahul's disqualification from Lok Sabha. The BJP has accused the Congress of "inviting foreign powers" for interfering in India's internal matters.

The prime minister was addressing a gathering at Rani Kamalapati railway station after flagging off the semi-high-speed Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express train.

"There are some people in our country who have been determined since 2014, spoken publicly and declared their resolve that they will tarnish Modi's image. For this, they have given 'supari' (contract) to various people.

"Some people are sitting inside the country to support these people and some are doing their work sitting outside the country. These people have been continuously trying to spoil and tarnish Modi's image," he said.

But India's poor, the middle class, tribals, Dalits, backward classes and every Indian has become the security cover of Modi, which made these people furious forcing them to adopt new tricks, he said.

Modi said such people have taken a pledge that "Modi Teri Kabra Khudegi".

"Amidst their conspiracies, every countryman has to pay attention to the development of the country and pay attention to building the nation," he said. Slamming Congress without taking its name, Modi said previous governments were busy with vote bank appeasement whereas his government is busy satisfying people.

"They (the previous governments) considered one family as the first family of the country. They ignored the poor and middle class, and the Railway is a living example of this (ignorance)," he said.

The prime minister also expressed deep grief over the stepwell roof collapse tragedy in a temple in Indore which killed 36 people and injured 16 on Ram Navami.

As Germany took note of Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Thursday thanked the German foreign ministry and Richard Walker, Chief International Editor of Deutsche Welle, for "taking note of how the Democracy is being compromised in India through the persecution of Rahul Gandhi".

Sharing a screenshot of Digvijaya Singh's tweet, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju had said, "Thank you Rahul Gandhi for inviting foreign powers for interference into India's internal matters. Remember, Indian Judiciary can't be influenced by foreign interference. India won't tolerate 'foreign influence' anymore because our Prime Minister is- Shri @narendramodi Ji". (Agencies)

36000 pilgrims.....

and now three airlines including Air India, Indigo and Spicejet are available for the pilgrims.

During the winters, the tour operators were facing losses, but this year, there has been rescheduling of the flight operations as the flights are connected unlike previous years, he said, adding that the Indigo earned highest amongst the three.

However, he appealed to the airlines to drop the pilgrims at Terminal 3 where the people from J&K get facilities.

Besides, the association also demanded immigration point at Srinagar international airport, saying that the process should be completed for pilgrims at Srinagar airport.

Reacting to the chaos over package for Umrah, he said that the main reason behind such an issue is the lack of coordination between the people and the tour operators, adding that the people have been demanding the cheapest package, thus the tour operators couldn't manage things with just a meagre amount. "There are three types of packages with tour operators made available at the association level, but people have been seeking cheapest packages, which becomes very difficult for a tour operator to manage the things and ensure proper arrangements for the pilgrim. The pilgrim should check each and everything while fixing the package and the tour operator too should make the things clear to the pilgrim so that there is no confusion among them," he said.

He further said that three packages are available, which include for 15 days, 21-22 days and one month, adding that most of the pilgrims opt for 21-22 days package.

About the upcoming Haj, the General Secretary of JKAHUC, said that the pilgrims must check the past history of the tour operators before fixing the package. He also said that there would be no increase in the amount payable for Hajj this year and the lowest package for a pilgrim will be Rs 6,50,000 like last year.

Asked about the video of Hajjis that went viral after they faced issues in Saudi, he said that there was no fault of the tour operators here, but it was because of the hotel that they faced hardships.

Moreover, he said that the pilgrims going for Umrah should prepare themselves for a 5-6 day stay at Madina as the erstwhile trend of staying for 40 prayers will come to an end as the rates have increased manifold.

The General Secretary further appealed people not to go after the low package and ensure proper check of facilities being provided to him/her while discussing the package.

"The pilgrims should be ready to accept the orders being issued by Saudi Arabia. The norms in Saudi are to be followed and people should be aware about it. They should be aware about economic class and deluxe class packages," he said and appealed to the tour operators to make things clear to the Hajjis and ensure proper signature of the pilgrims while divulging the details.

Pilgrims are advised to attend orientation programmes to get aware about the facts, he said, adding that the people from Kashmir staying in Saudi Arabia should not add fuel to any situation, especially when there is any misunderstanding or any issue is taking place with the pilgrims.

He further said that the association has ensured accountability. "The cheating issues have taken place in the past, but we have been ensuring accountability. If there is any such complaint, the matter is being investigated thoroughly. There is no such case in the past three-four years, because the association has been playing key role and the people should meet us in case of any such complaint," he said.

Congress Misused.....

of the Indian freedom movement to oblivion for lust of power", he added.

He blamed the Congress for bringing criminalization in Indian politics and dividing the society on caste and religious lines to create vote banks. The posterity will never forgive the Congress for sowing the seeds of caste-culture in the Indian polity that has adversely impacted the society over the decades, he added.

"Times have gone and the factotums of the dynasts must now learn to reconcile and adopt the new political culture of the greatest democracy of the world where a common man belonging to Other Backward Classes can rise to become the Prime Minister and a tribal woman making it to the highest office of Head of the Nation", Mr Rana said, adding this is New India, which is stepping towards becoming the Vishwa Guru.

The Senior BJP leader termed the euphoria of the opposition as a sign of deep frustration on the face of shrinking political space across the country due to acts of omission and commission and the open loot that has brought them together to form a coalition of corrupt. The fear of being caught for plundering the public exchequer has snatched from them their basic sense of proportion, which is why the political discourse has gone down to the lowest depths of Indian history. In their attempt to demean the nation just because of hate Narendra Modi syndrome, they have started targeting the institutions, not only across the country but around the world as well, he said, adding that this is the least the people of the country will tolerate.

Mr Devender Rana said the joining of hands by north-pole and south-pole of Indian politics is not without an agenda either. Coming as it is at a time when India has emerged as the fifth largest economy of the world and is all set to be the third in the next few years, some elements are desperate to scuttle the nation's growth story because they don't want India to shine under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Progressive India is an eye-sore for some nations as well, which is why the rejected politicians back home are getting oxygen to weaken the nation from within. He said all these forces will not succeed, given the resolve of Indians, irrespective of religion, region, caste or creed, to make their nation the world leader.

Mr Rana said the coalition of corrupt and inimical forces abroad are destined to fail in their machinations, adding that this is just a matter of time.

Prominent among others who were present in the meeting included Kashmiria Singh, District President, Inderjeet Sharma, Sangathan Mantri, Th. Narayan Singh, District Prabhari, Munish Sharma, Seh-Prabhari, Sanjeev Kumar, Ramesh Chander, DDC, Samba, Shilpa Dubey, DDC Vijaypur, Omkar Padha, Amit Dubey and Mandal Presidents.

Class 9.....

that a minor girl identified as Rukaya Bashir daughter of Bashir Ahmad Ganaie resident of Nowpora Jagir slipped into the canal.

The class 9 student was waiting for school bus along Lower Jhelum Hydroelectric power Project (LJHP) canal when she slipped and fell into the canal, he said.

Soon after the incident, a search operation to retrieve her body was launched and body was retrieved. Water supply of the canal was stopped and it helped in fishing out the body, said the official.

He said the body was handed over to her family after medico legal formalities were completed.

Tehsildar Boniyar, Vikramjeet Singh said fencing would be carried out along the LJHP, especially at accident prone sites soon.

He said he will write to the higher ups for an SDRF team for Boniyar so that people may not face any difficulties during such incidents.

Govt aims.....

Panchayat per Block) under APDP for holistic development.

The Jammu & Kashmir Municipal Development Index-2022 helps in rating, assessing and analyzing the performance and level of development of various municipalities/towns of the UT. The urban reform incentive fund is meant for providing reform linked assistance to the ULBs of the UT based on the performance as per the benchmarks prescribed under The Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Development Index-2022

The Budget has also been earmarked to declare all the villages and ULBs Open Defecation Free plus status (ODF plus).

Notably, Several Municipal bodies including Municipal Councils and Municipal Committees of Jammu division have self-declared as Open Defecation Free plus status after complying with all bye-laws and development done in Municipal limits as per the Swachh Bharat Mission norms.

Under initiative of "Har Gaon Ek Amrit Sarovar", 4041 Amrit Sarovars have been identified, out of which, 2420 have been completed and remaining will be completed before 15th of August 2023. The dream of elevated light Metro Rail in Capital Cities of Jammu and Kashmir will also be realized in this year's budget.

The government has also earmarked funds for new Townships and Housing Colonies for economically weaker sections /low income group/Middle Income group at Jammu and Srinagar.

To empower and facilitate the marketing of products of women entrepreneurs, the government will establish Ladies HAAT and Ladies Exclusive Markets in Jammu, Srinagar and other Major Towns besides creation of EKTA Malls.

Meanwhile, Rs 50 crore have been earmarked for Samridh Seema Yojana for development of Border Areas.

To provide employment avenues and handhold youth in setting up their enterprises, 10,000 further SHGs to be formed with the Budget of 2023-24.

The government has also allocated funds for constitution of 1500 new Panchayat Ghars to be constructed under "Har Panchayat-Panchayat Ghar" initiative for

smooth implementation of welfare programmes of Government at grassroot level besides Rs 1313 crore provided for PRIs and ULBs Rs 271.25 crore for DDCs/ BDCs.

Similarly, according to the Budget document, 40,000 new houses for houseless families under PMAY-G would be constructed, 18934 dwelling units to be completed under PMAY-U and New 87,350 IHHLs and 2500 CSCs to be constructed.

For restoration and conservation of Dal Lake, Sewage Management of Dal Lake to be accomplished with installation of 89.83 MLD STPs meant for benefiting 6, 20,565 people. Besides, elevated light Metro Rail in Capital Cities of Jammu and Kashmir to be rolled out.

Over 1.5 Lac.....

Memorial Tulip Garden, garden was thrown open to the public on March 20, 2023, and since then, it has turned out to be a major attraction for tourists, who are flocking to the garden to witness the vibrant colors of the tulips. "A total of 1.58 lakh people visited tulip garden Srinagar in the first 12 days and which includes local, national and international visitors."

Rehman further said that the number of visitors has exceeded expectations and the garden is receiving a good response from all across. "We are happy to see that people are showing keen interest in visiting the garden. The tulips are in full bloom and visitors are enjoying the scenic beauty of the garden to the hilt," he added.

"The garden has been set up with over 1.6 million blossomed bulbs of 68 colourful varieties, which have been imported from different parts of the world. The garden also features several other varieties of flowers, including Daffodils, Mascarines and Hisins.

The authorities have announced that they have made special arrangements for the safety and convenience of the visitors. The main facilities they offer include garden clearance and maintenance, and in addition to this, other public utilities including adequate drinking water facilities and rain shelters.

The famous Garden located on the foothills of Zabarwan Range in Srinagar along the banks of the Dal Lake is expected to remain open till April end, with the authorities expecting more visitors in the coming days.

Body of girl.....

Tehsil Mandi left their home for paying visit to Guntriyan Ziarat of Sain Baba Marian Sahib on Friday morning. However, as they did not return to their homes till evening, their family members started searching for them. During the searches, at around 22:15 hours, two girls were found near SK Bridge Poonch while another was found dead nearby in the river.

Meanwhile, they said, the police party of Police Station Poonch rushed to the spot and recovered the girl's body and shifted it to District Hospital Poonch for post-mortem.

Meanwhile the two girls were taken to hospital and police also recorded their statement, they said.

Station House Officer Ranjit Rao told HT that girls have alleged that they were being allegedly pestered by their respective families and as such decided to end their lives. "As per their statement, they jumped together but one of them died," he said. However, he said, further investigations in the matter are going on.

Police arrest.....

under Public Safety Act while at least 75 cases under NDPS Act stand registered against the drug addicts and peddlers in different police stations of Baramulla.

Police said that contraband substances including Brown Sugar, Charas, Poppy Straw, etc worth crores have been recovered from the arrested drug peddlers.

Police as per the news agency Kashmir News Trust said that 11 vehicles used for the transportation of drugs and drug peddlers have also been seized in the last 3 months in the Baramulla district.

Some of the arrested drug peddlers include females as well.

Meanwhile, police arrested a drug peddler carrying 48-gram charas at the Batapora Kunzar area of Baramulla district on Saturday. He has been identified as Firdous Mir of Gonipora Kunzar.

CRPF officer.....

hanging in his barrack. He was shifted to SD Chadora where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Official sources told news agency Kashmir News Trust that the deceased was posted in Chadora and was part of 181 Battalion.

Police in the meantime, have started proceeding under 174 CrPc to investigate the matter.

The suicidal trend among troopers posted in Kashmir Valley is not rare.

BSF fires to.....

hrs on the IB in the night in general area of Ramgarh.

"Alert troops fired towards the blinking light due to which it was forced to return back," he said. The spokesman added that the area being searched thoroughly.



Meet Insha Bashir: The first wheelchair bound basketball player of Kashmir

Bashir helps 'specially-abled' children to make their dreams come true

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Around 15 years ago, a tragic accident not only shattered the dreams of a Budgam woman of becoming a doctor but confined her to the wheelchair. But nothing stopped her from working hard and becoming the first wheelchair bound basketball player of Kashmir.

Insha Bashir (29) a resident of Beerwah area of Budgam despite disability is leaping the ladder of success not only herself but helping other specially-abled children to make their dreams come true.

In an exclusive interview with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Insha said, "I was not disabled from birth. I had a regular life like every other girl. When I was 12th class I had been diagnosed with gastric ulcers and suffered oral bleeding and in the same year one day I was at the terrace with dizziness and nausea and started vomiting blood from where I fell down and hit the ground underneath resulting in grievous injuries to my spine."

"It wasn't just a spinal cord injury but this incident shattered my dream of becoming a doctor and wholly and solely dependent on my family. I started suffering from depression, facing taunts

from relatives and other issues. My health started deteriorating despite full support from my family," she said.

"Despite facing all the trauma, though I had to change my subjects but continued studies and passed 12th class and then pursued bachelors degree and B.Ed as well and currently I am pursuing masters in social works," Insha said.

"My dad's deteriorating health pushed me to take charge of my life. And so, I began researching my condition and what I could do about it. I came across the Shafqat Rehabilitation Center in Srinagar that gave six months of physiotherapy," she recalls. Her father, her steadfast cornerstone had been diagnosed with Parkinsonism, and this proved to be the final nail in the coffin, ensuring that she finally mustered enough strength to stand up on her own feet.

After repeated attempts by her father Bashir Ahmad Wani and constant counseling sessions by Dr. Saleem Wani— valley's famous urologist, Insha was able to overcome this difficult phase of her life.

"Though it took me a long time to accept this reality, when I realized, I started taking everything positively and saw my disability



as a challenge which had become a hurdle.

"At the centre, when I saw more people with more complex problems than me, it gave me courage that I am not the only person who is facing this problem in the world. When I saw specially-abled boys playing basketball and other

games in a very happy mood, it ignited my childhood inclination towards it as well," she added.

"Once I overcame initial hesitation, I found the game to be enjoyable, and convenient and suitable to partake in, from a wheelchair. I found the game very interesting and it got me impelled by the

enthusiasm of representing Jammu & Kashmir," she said.

"I was the first wheelchair bound woman from Kashmir to play basketball. I started training others and in some time a team was ready following which I played at national and international level and won many medals," Insha said.

She represented India in the US in 2019, and participated in the National Championship as the captain of the J&K Wheelchair Basketball Women's team in 2019 besides that she was invited by the US consulate to be part of the prestigious Sports Visitor Program.

She now motivates and inspires others in the valley to overcome their inhibitions and impediments and take up sporting pursuits.

"Besides playing and training my team, the major area of focus is to encourage differently-abled girls in sports, not just in Kashmir but across the country, and ensure that they have a say in their own lives," she said.

She practices on a daily basis following a professional schedule, following the practice, she returns to the hostel and mentors, counsels and instructs young girls who wish to rise beyond their struggles and play like her.

"My message to the other specially-abled persons will be that your disability isn't the end of life, rather you need to be courageous to fight all odds and overcome challenges," she said. "If your one organ isn't functioning, your brain is working and that is enough to dream and work on your dreams to make them come true."

Delay in restoration of elected legislature will make region's democratic recovery unattainable : NC

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 1: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Saturday said further delay in the restoration of an elected legislature will make the democratic recovery of the region unattainable.

Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq also rued the "apathy" of the center in salvaging democracy in Jammu and Kashmir and said that long standing "undemocratic rule" has increased the hardships of people.

"Recently even the CEC (Chief Election Commissioner) had also acknowledged the deepening void in J&K due to the lingering undemocratic rule. If he is cognizant of this fact then why aren't elections being held. They have been citing one excuse after another, first it was secu-



rity, then it was weather and then the run up preparations for the election process. Now when the weather is clear, and the situation is admittedly normal; not holding the polls despite the ECI nod indicates the BJP is afraid of the polls," Sadiq said while talking to reporters in Srinagar.

He said when the party representatives asked the Chief Election Commissioner why the ECI wasn't holding the polls in J&K, the visiting delegation members were told that the commission has completed the delimitation exercise, voter list is also prepared, polling booths are also identified and election staff is also prepared and that ECI is waiting for two things, weather and security clearance. "It had made it clear to the delegation members that they were only waiting for weather and security. What holds them now from going with the exercise? Security, we are being told, has improved significantly, and the weather is clear," he said.

Sadiq contended that further delay in the restoration of an elected legislature in J&K will make the democratic recovery of the region unattainable.

"The new model in place in Jammu and Kashmir is bereft of democratic moorings with no say of locals including Dogras, Kashmiris, Paharis, Gujjars in the decision making process. Consequences of denying democratic rights to people would not augur well for the prized freedom, stability, and strength of our country. It will put the entire region on the path of terminal alienation," he added.

108 ambulance staff felicitated by Director Health Services Kashmir, for conducting Successful delivery inside ambulance in Tral area of district Pulwama

■ Nissar Shaheen

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Director Health services Kashmir Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rather today felicitated EMT Umar Tariq and Pilot Ravinder Singh of 108 Jammu & Kashmir Emergency Medical services here in Directorate of Health services Bemina, Srinagar for conducting successful delivery of a woman inside the ambulance while patient was brought to hospital from Home. Chief Medical Officer district, Pulwama Dr. Haseena Mir and Block Medical Officer Dr. Virender Singh was also present during the event.

During the Event DHS Kashmir lauded the 108 emergency services for playing crucial role in patient care especially in pregnancy and trauma emergencies by narrowing gap between

patient and health institutions. Ambulances 108 are well-equipped with all kinds of medical facilities, and are manned by well-trained Emergency Medical Technicians in life support skills.

Pertinent to mentioned here that The emergency medical technician of 108 ambulance services on 26th March '23 helped woman to deliver a baby girl in the 108 ambulance emergency vehicle at Sofigund, Aripal village in district Pulwama. The ambulance staff had conducted the delivery at around 3:00 AM early morning.

Naseema Bano, a 29-year-old woman from Sofigund, Aripal village district Pulwama had acute labour pain on Sunday. The family immediately called on toll free no. 108 and narrated her condition.

Umar Tariq, emergency medical technician of the 108 ambu-



lance and Ravinder Singh the pilot of ambulance, rushed to the spot. It turned out that the woman was

in labour and there was no time to take her to hospital. EMT observed that crowning

of the head was seen, looking at the situation, EMT decided to conduct the delivery in Ambulance. EMT took Advice from ERCP Dr. Nirmolak Singh and successfully conducted the delivery in the ambulance.

After she delivered a baby girl in the ambulance, the 108 Ambulance staff safely shifted her to the government hospital SDH Tral for further medical care.

108 ambulance service launched on 24th March '20 has completed 3 years of operations in Jammu and Kashmir and has proved to be boon in pregnancy related emergencies as many as 61097 pregnancy related emergencies were reported at 108 Emergency Response Centre and 759 successful deliveries were conducted in ambulance as well as at scene by 108 ambulance staff.

Patients suffer in absence of cath lab at GMC Baramulla

Lab to be established with completion of new building: Principal

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Hundreds of patients at Government Medical College Baramulla are suffering in absence of a cath laboratory.

Officials told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that cardiac catheterization lab, also known as a "cardiac cath lab," is a specialized area in the hospital where doctors perform minimally invasive tests and advanced cardiac procedures to diagnose and treat cardiovascular disease.

They said that the cardiology unit is functional at GMC Baramulla but in absence of a cath lab they refer patients with minor or major heart attack to Srinagar.

The first hour after a heart attack is known as "the golden hour." Taking appropriate action within this first hour can save a patient's life, they said, adding that most deaths due to cardiac arrest happen during this period.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), near-

ly 47% of deaths occur due to sudden cardiac arrests before an individual reaches the hospital.

"If a patient who has suffered a heart attack reaches the hospital within the golden hour, cardiologists and trained emergency physicians are in a better position to run the appropriate tests and scans to confirm the occurrence of a heart attack and take the patient to the catheterization laboratory (simply called 'cath lab'), where an interventional cardiac procedure called a primary angioplasty is performed to clear the cause of most heart attacks — plaque build-up that blocks the artery/arteries," they said.

However, in absence of a cath lab no angiography or angioplasty facilities are available at the hospital due to which patients most of time lost their golden time in reaching SKIMS or SMHS hospital.

Doctors said that if a cath lab will be established at the hospital, it can help in saving lives of dozens of patients who lost their golden period

in travelling to Srinagar.

Locals from North Kashmir said that the Cardiology unit at the hospital has been made functional just a few months back but there is immediate need of a cath lab as well.

There is an immediate need for a full fledged cardiology unit at GMC Baramulla which will cater cardiology related patients of entire north Kashmir, they said.

Notably, a cath lab has special imaging equipment used to see the arteries and check how well blood is flowing to and from the heart. This information helps the care team to diagnose and treat blockages and other problems in the arteries.

Principal GMC Baramulla Dr Ruby Reshie told KNO that a cath lab is in pipeline and it will be established as soon as possible.

She said that it may take some time as of now till the new hospital building is completed as there is no space in the existing hospital. The cath lab will be established, she added.

'World Apple Conference' to be held in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, APR 01: A delegation from Sopore Apple Farmer Producer Company (J&K), which is organizing a maiden World Apple Conference in Srinagar held a meeting with Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Chairman Sopore Apple Producer Company (J&K) Adil Malik said that the top official assured them support to the maiden conference scheduled on June 24-25 at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Center (SKICC), Srinagar. He is likely to attend the conference, said Adil.

Dulloo was briefed about the issues being faced by the Horticulture industry, especially apple trade and he assured them fruit-laden and vegetable trucks would be given priority on highways to prevent losses. Adil said Dulloo told them to provide registration numbers and paste stickers on their consignments so that they may be given priority on Srinagar-Jammu highway.

The two day 'World Apple Conference' is being organized by Sarhad, a Pune based NGO and Sopore Apple Farmer Producer Company (J&K), which aims to further empower and strengthen the apple growers of Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

Chief Justice visits District Court Complex Ganderbal; reviews functioning, infrastructure

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 01: Chief Justice High Court, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, today visited the District Court Complex Ganderbal and reviewed functioning of the court besides taking stock of infrastructural facilities there.

Chief Justice was accompanied by Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Administrative Judge District Court Ganderbal.

On arrival, Chief Justice was given guard of honour by District Police Ganderbal.

Chief Justice and Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi visited all court rooms and observed proceedings of cases. They also visited the office of District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal and front office DLSA Ganderbal, and gave certain on spot directions to Judicial Officers and Police Department.



While interacting with the Judicial Officers and Administrative Officers, Chief Justice said that the purpose of visiting this district court complex was to assess the basic infrastructure issues here as courts

are important public institutions and needs basic facilities including court rooms, enhanced e-court facilities, facilities for lawyers, public and litigants to function properly. He issued several directions for further streamlining of infrastructural facilities in the court.

Chief Justice also reviewed the progress on land acquisition for new

Court Complex. Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal informed the Chief Justice that 40 kanal of land has already been identified and will be transferred after completion of codal formalities.

Chief Justice directed the Chief Engineer, R&B to keep DPR ready as per revenue site plan so that work on new Court complex could be started at an earliest once land get transferred to the law department.

Later, Chief Justice and Administrative Judge of District Ganderbal, chaired a separate meeting of District Bar Association Ganderbal who apprised them of several issues confronting them while discharging their legitimate duties and the Chief Justice has assured them all genuine issues will be looked into priority.

DC Pulwama Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary chairs 7th District NCORD meet

Says collective efforts are needed to prevent drug, substance abuse

HT News Network

PULWAMA, April 01 The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary on Saturday convened a meeting of the District Level Committee of Narcotics Coordination (NCORD).

At the outset, the DC discussed various issues related to menace of drug addiction, areas of concern, age group of addicts, hot spots of drug peddling, abuse, besides, cultivation of illicit poppy and cannabis in the District. He said that collective efforts are needed to curb the drug menace and all stakeholders shall have to work in tandem to enhance the rehabilitation of persons involved in drug abuse.

He emphasised on conducting awareness camps in schools and colleges on mass scale to sensitize the youth about hazards and ill effects of consuming drugs. The Education Department was asked to promote anti drug abuse awareness in all educational institutions and its ill effects on society. The DC directed the CEO to ensure that no tobacco product is



DM directed all concerned officers for immediate completion of mapping of land used for bhong and poppy cultivation and submission of action taken in destruction of poppy and Cannabis. He also directed CAO and CHO to explore avenues for growing alternative crops in these areas besides providing valuable inputs to land owners.

He asked officers of all line departments to make coordinated efforts to contain the drug peddling and break the supply chain besides taking stringent action against the persons involved in this dangerous trade.

Choudhary said, in order to combat this rising societal problem, multi-pronged rehabilitation, counseling and guidance policy is being implemented on ground to monitor drug abuse and take remedial measures to curb the menace.

Bandipora admin accords warm farewell to outgoing ADC Bandipora Waseem Raja

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, APRIL 01: District Administration Bandipora on Saturday accorded a warm farewell to Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Waseem Raja who was recently transferred by the government.

Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora Ali Afsar Khan, Nodal Officer Coordination MY Hakaak, Joint Director Planning Imtiyaz Ahmad and other senior officers of the district were present on the occasion.

The Deputy Commissioner and other officers of the District Administration lauded Raja for his efficient, prompt and sincere services. They also praised the working capacity of the outgoing officer and hailed his contribution to serve the public. They lauded outgoing



ADC for his contributions in good governance, promoting people friendly work culture to the people of the district and countless activities for effectively implementing different government schemes.

DC Bandipora presented mementos as a token of appreciation to ADC on the occasion.

In his emotional address, the outgoing ADC extended his gratitude to officers and staff of mini secretariat Bandipora for their support and sincere efforts. They lauded outgoing ADC for his contributions in good governance, promoting people friendly work culture to the people of the district and countless activities for effectively implementing different government schemes.

DC Bandipora presented mementos as a token of appreciation to ADC on the occasion.

Abdul Gani Vakil visits Dangerpora Sopore

Emphasized on the role of religious scholars in curbing Drug menace

HT News Network

Sopore April 01 J&K Peoples Conference Sr. Vice President and Former Minister Abdul Gani Vakil on Friday visited different villages of Rafiaband and Sopore namely Botingoo, Shercolony, Sonen Saidnaar including Dangerpora Sopore where an unfortunate incident had taken place - a Son had killed his mother. Expressing sympathies with the bereaved

family Vakil said that this incident is a glaring example of drug abusers being dangerous not only for themselves, but also for their family and the society at large.

Vakil appreciated the efforts of police in nabbing the culprit quickly but urged the people to come forward and report drug abuse both inside and outside of their family so that immediate rehabilitation process can be initiated.

Abdul Gani Vakil also emphasized on the role of religious scholars in helping to get rid of the drug menace. Religious scholars, influencers need to move in and counsel the younger generation. We as a society need to act soon. Vakil added, J&K Peoples Conference Sr. Vice President and Former Minister Abdul Gani Vakil on Friday visited different villages of Rafiaband and Sopore namely Botingoo, Shercolony, Sonen Saidnaar including Danger-

pore Sopore where an unfortunate incident had taken place - a Son had killed his mother. Expressing sympathies with the bereaved family Vakil said that this incident is a glaring example of drug abusers being dangerous not only for themselves, but also for their family and the society at large. Vakil appreciated the efforts of police in nabbing the culprit quickly but urged the people to come forward and report drug abuse both inside.

Chairman DDC Budgam distributes orders among AAYAS/Helpers at Narbal

HT News Network

BUDGAM, APRIL 01: Chairman District Development Council Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan today distributed appointment orders among AAYAS and Helpers in a function conducted here at Govt Middle School Mazhama Narbal. Twenty one appointment orders were distributed among the eligible beneficiaries today.

Nazir Ahmad Khan while addressing the gathering said that appointment of AAYAS and Helpers in the schools will ensure the saturation of all welfare schemes in the School Education Department including Mid Day Meal Scheme etc.

"Government is ensuring quality education and effective infrastructure in the schools and every effort should be taken to ensure all facilities are provided to the students so that the loss incurred during previous years is compensated at an earliest", Nazir Ahmad Khan added.

CEO Budgam, BDC Rathsun, BDC Narbal, PRI members and senior citizens of the area were also present on the occasion.

DC Bandipora hosts farewell to accord warm send off to retiring officers

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, APRIL 01: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad Saturday hosted a farewell to bid adieu to two retiring employees Block Development Officer and Principal ITI who attained superannuation on March 31 after discharging their duties for over three decades.

Block Development Officer Gurez Reyaz Ahmad Wani and Superintendent ITI Bandipora Abdul Rashid Bajard rendered service of about three decades before attaining superannuation on 31st march.

Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora Ali Afsar Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Waseem Raja, Nodal Officer Coordination MY Hakaak, Joint Director Planning Imtiyaz Ahmad, district heads of various departments and other concerned were present on the occasion.

While acknowledging the outstanding contribution of these officers, DC Bandipora conveyed his best wishes to the retiring officers and prayed for his good health and success post retirement.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Dr Owais Ahmad, appreciated the efforts put in by both the officers in their respective fields to ensure implementation of various schemes of the Govt.

Principal Secretary visits Ganderbal, inspects progress on transit accommodation Wandhama, BDC building Gangerhama

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 01: Principal Secretary, ARI & Trainings, Ashok Kumar Parmar, today visited Ganderbal and took stock of developmental scenario in the district.

Principal Secretary convened a joint meeting with DDCs, PRI members and district officers to get first hand appraisal of their concerns, grievances and development issues. He also sought feedback on status of various developmental issues.

The meeting was attended by DDC Chairperson, Nuzhat Ishfaq, ADDC, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani; CPO, ACP, DDC members, BDCs, Sarpanchs, Panchs and other district officers. During the meeting,

DDCs, BDCs and other PRI members highlighted various development issues pertaining to their areas. They demanded early completion of Lari Preng Water Supply Scheme, desilting of Bab Canal, upgradation of High School at Sherpathri, beautification of Nallah Sindh, adequate staff in RDD especially engineering wing, timely completion of Guzhamma Bridge and other related issues.

While reviewing progress on Lari Preng scheme, Principal Secretary directed the Executive Engineer R&B for ensuring timely completion of the project besides supply of portable water supply to consumers across the district. Regarding desilting of Bab Canal, Executive Engineer, I&FC was directed to ensure desilting/dredging of all necessary canals



where ever required at an earliest so that irrigation facilities are improved across the district.

While interacting with the PRIs, Principal Secretary said that purpose of visiting district Ganderbal was to assess the issues and developmental needs of the people. He assured an early action on issues

highlighted during the meeting. He also gave necessary instructions to the officers for conducting regular field visits for proper and timely monitoring of works.

Earlier, Chief Planning Officer, Irfan Giri, presented a detailed development scenario of the district. Later, Ashok Kumar inspect-

ed progress on various ongoing development works including Transit Accommodation Wandhama, BDC building Gangerhama and Waiyl bridge.

While visiting Transit Accommodation Wandhama, Ashok Kumar reviewed the readiness of the apartments being constructed for the Kashmiri migrant employees. He also enquired about the progress on other works including water facilities, electricity, waste disposal, landscaping, inner roads, fencing, transport, and other allied facilities.

During field visit, Principal Secretary passed necessary instructions to the executing agencies for timely completion of these vital projects in the district without compromising with the quality.

Ladakh LG assures support to 'Kargil International Marathon'

HT News Network

Kargil, Apr 1, : Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Brigadier BD Mishra has assured full support to the 6th Edition of Kargil International Marathon 2023 which will be organized by 'Sarhad Pune' in association with Ladakh Autonomous, Hill Development Council Kargil, Ladakh Police, and Ladakh District Administration.

The 6th Kargil International Marathon will be organized in Kargil this year on September 17, 2023. The marathon format is 5 km, 10 km, 21 km half marathon, and 42 km full marathon with a total cash prize of Rs. 8 lakh rupees and is authorized by the Athletics Federation of India and the International Federation.

As per a statement, a delegation of Sarhad Pune comprising, Sanjay Nahar, Dr. Shailesh Pagaria, and Suyog Zende met Ladakh LG BD Mishra at his residence.

On this occasion, the LG said the Kargil International Marathon would increase the flow of tourists in Kargil and provide employment to local people on a large scale. This marathon is getting tremendous

response this year, and over 5000 runners are going to participate in it, some of them enjoying international fame. [Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Brigadier BD Mishra has assured full support to the 6th Edition of Kargil International Marathon 2023 which will be organized by 'Sarhad Pune' in association with Ladakh Autonomous, Hill Development Council Kargil, Ladakh Police, and Ladakh District Administration.

IRP-21st bn Organises farewell function in the honor of 05 outgoing officers.

Syed Tajamul

Pattan, Indian Reserve Police 21st Bn Organises a farewell party for its officers for attaining superannuation at its headquarters Parihaspora Pattan. The party was headed by Deputy Commandant Shri Sheikh M Shafi and were given for outgoing SI's Shri Manzoor Ahmad, Shri Ab Rashid, Shri Gh Mohammad, ASI Shri Mohd Abdullah and HC Shri Ab Khaliq Malik. Speaking on the occasion Deputy Commandant (SP) Shri Sheikh M Shafi appreciated the work and dedication of the officers towards their duties. The officers according to him were very punctual in their duties, honest and officers of highest integrity. Their retirement are a loss to the department but



at the same time inspiration for new recruits, Juniors to follow their foot steps in the interest of society and nation. He wished the officers good health and happiness in the times to come. DYSP Shri Farooq wani also spoke on the occasion and praised the work, behaviour and conduct of the retired officers and prayed for good and healthy post retirement life. Wani also threw light on the tenure of departing officers and commended their supervisory skills, professionalism,

humane nature. He also hopes that Ramadan Friday is the most pious to start post service life. The retiree officers also spoke on the occasion, shared their experience of working on different posts and different places in the department and thanked all officers/officials for organising the farewell party in their honour and promised that even after retirement they will continue to work for needy people, society and the nation.

Congress misused Art 356 93 times to topple opposition Govts : Rana

HT News Network

SAMBA APRIL 1- Describing the Congress as the biggest pollutant in the Indian polity Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said history is replete of instances when the fast dwindling political party of the country belittled democracy by imposing emergency in 1975, abusing Article 356 to topple the duly elected governments 93 times and customizing the national politics by coining the slogan, 'India is Indira, Indira is India' way back in 1974.

Mr Devender Singh Rana who was addressing prominent party workers here at Samba reminded the Congress of its dubious distinction of introducing Aya Ram



Gaya Ram culture in the Indian politics. He said Congress demolished and mutilated all the institutions of Indian democracy and disfigured its federal structure. "Those were the times the people had been subjected to unprecedented repression and political exploitation by a family that pushed the stalwarts of the Indian freedom movement to oblivion for lust of power", he added. He blamed the Congress for bringing crim-

inalization in Indian politics and dividing the society on caste and religious lines to create vote banks. The posterity will never forgive the Congress for sowing the seeds of caste-culture in the Indian polity that has adversely impacted the society over the decades, he added. "Times have gone and the factotums of the dynasts must now learn to reconcile and adopt the new political culture of the greatest democracy of the

world where a common man belonging to Other Backward Classes can rise to become the Prime Minister and a tribal woman making it to the highest office of Head of the Nation", Mr Rana said, adding this is New India, which is stepping towards becoming the Vishwa Guru.

The Senior BJP leader termed the euphoria of the opposition as a sign of deep frustration on the face of shrinking political space across the country due to acts of omission and commission and the open loot that has brought them together to form a coalition of corrupt. The fear of being caught for plundering the public exchequer has snatched from them their basic sense of proportion, which is why the political.

DC Kishtwar urges youth trainees to promote sustainable development

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 01: Deputy Commissioner, Dr Devansh Yadav met with Youth Trainees from the Community Leadership Executive Course at IIM Jammu today.

During the meeting, Dr Yadav emphasised the importance of strengthening Youth Clubs and ensuring drug-free societies in their respective blocks. He also urged the trainees to play a crucial role in regional development by implementing what they learned in the training program.

The trainees were encouraged to utilise their newly acquired skills and knowledge to promote sustainable development in the district.



The trainees shared their experiences of the program, which covered critical areas such as government schemes, drug abuse, and skill enhancement. Dr Yadav encouraged the trainees to fulfill their roles and responsibilities diligently to achieve the desired outcomes.

The trainees pledged to constitute Youth Clubs in their area and ensure the mobilisation of youth and

community awareness on various education, sports, and developmental initiatives of the government.

The Community Leadership Executive Course successfully concluded on March 31st, 2023, after running for five days from March 27th. The program aimed to equip the trainees with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead their communities towards sustainable development.

The meeting was attended by officers from the Government Polytechnic College Kishtwar, Mission Youth, and the trainees themselves.

The program was a CSR initiative led by Director IIM Jammu in collaboration with the District Administration Kishtwar, Mission Youth and Government Polytechnic College Kishtwar.

GDC Mendhar organised series of activities on Drugs Abuse.

MS Nazki

MENDHAR NSS unit Government Degree College Mendhar in collaboration with District Development Youth organized series of activities in the college under the able guidance and patronage of Dr Mohd Azam Principal Government Degree College Mendhar. The program was started with the lecture of Sabzar Ahmed and he welcomed all the guests to the function. SDM mendhar Jahangir Ahmed Khan was the chief guest of this event. About 200 students were present in this workshop. Prof. Mohd Alyas delivered a lecture for the students and motivate them how to prevent drug abuses in the society. Dr Shazia Anjum was also present in this Program and Dr Nusrat Begam delivered a wonderful lecture in this workshop 5 students participated in debate competition 3 students participated in essay writing competition and 3 students participated in poster making competition.

BMO Thathri staffer given warm farewell after 28 years of service

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 01: Mohammad Ashraf Zargar, Senior Assistant at the Block Medical Officer (BMO) Office in Thathri, was given a warm send-off by the staff of Community Health Centre (CHC) Thathri after retiring from 28 years of service in the department. A farewell function was held in the premises of CHC Thathri where BMO Thathri, Dr Ghansham Singh and other officers and officials complimented Zargar for his contribution to the health department and wished him good health and a prosperous post-retirement life.

DC Rajouri reviews progress of Jal Jeevan Mission schemes

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 01: Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting to review the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes in the district today. The meeting discussed physical and financial progress and sought updates from concerned officials. Out of 293 approved JJM schemes, work has been allotted for 228 and 89 are in progress. The laying of piped network is progressing well with 970 kms laid against a target of 13520 Kms. The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need for quality work, timely completion and proper supervision. He urged stakeholders to focus on proper use and maintenance of water supply systems. Increased transparency and effectiveness in monitoring works, including functioning of

NGOs as Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs), was also stressed. The Deputy Commissioner called

ning Officer, Mohammad Khurshid; Superintending Engineer Hydraulics, Bhrm Jyoti Sharma; Executive Engi-

updates from concerned officials. Out of 293 approved JJM schemes, work has been allotted for 228 and

tiveness in monitoring works, including functioning of NGOs as Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs), was also stressed.

The Deputy Commissioner called for outcome-based efforts and strict adherence to timelines for successful completion of all projects under JJM. He stated that successful implementation will provide access to safe drinking water for the rural population and positively impact their health, hygiene and socio-economic development.

The meeting was attended by several officers including Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Khurshid; Superintending Engineer Hydraulics, Bhrm Jyoti Sharma; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Khajuria; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Nowshera, Vipin Kumar; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mechanical, Manmohan Singh and others.



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The meeting was attended by several officers including Chief Plan-

ner Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Khajuria; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Nowshera, Vipin Kumar; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mechanical, Manmohan Singh and others. Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting to review the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes in the district today. The meeting discussed physical and financial progress and sought

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Will Take Corrective Measures After Looking Into Report: SKUAST Kashmir On CAG Findings

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Apr 1: Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) Kashmir on Saturday said the institute will take corrective measures wherever irregularities have taken place, days after the CAG highlighted shortcomings in manpower planning, appointments, career advancement and entitlements in the twin agriculture universities in the Union territory.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at NIELIT Srinagar, SKUAST Kashmir Vice Chancellor Nazir Ahmad Ganai said the university will look into the findings of the



report when it receives it. "I have not seen the CAG report yet. As soon as we receive it, we will look into it," he said.

Ganai said when it comes to SKUAST Kashmir, "we are one of the fastest growing institutions nationally in efficiency, transparency and in building innovations".

"...this is a report since the inception of the university till now, there could be some irregularities. Wherever there are, we will correct that. But, we will know only when we have the report with us," he said.

The VC said it would be premature to say what action the university would take as "the report is yet to reach us".

"There could be some irregularities in the past, but we look towards the future... how we become number one in the country," he added.

DC Rajouri reviews implementation of Mission Vatsalya

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 01: Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting to review the progress of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes in the district today. The meeting discussed physical and financial progress and sought updates from concerned officials. Out of 293 approved JJM schemes, work has been allotted for 228 and 89 are in progress. The laying of piped network is progressing well with 970 kms laid against a target of 13520 Kms. The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need for quality work, timely completion and proper supervision. He urged stakeholders to focus on proper use and maintenance of water supply systems. Increased transparency and effectiveness in monitoring works, including functioning of NGOs as Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs), was also stressed. The Deputy Commissioner called for outcome-based efforts and strict adherence to timelines for successful completion of all projects under JJM. He stated that successful implementation will provide access to safe drinking water for the rural population and positively impact their health, hygiene and socio-economic development. The meeting was attended by several officers including Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Khurshid; Superintending Engineer Hydraulics, Bhrm Jyoti Sharma; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Khajuria; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Nowshera, Vipin Kumar; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mechanical, Manmohan Singh and others.

Congress launches 'Jai Bharat Satyagraha' Draws action plan for the significant Nationwide Programme

HT News Network

Srinagar April 1: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Saturday in a meeting held at Srinagar Party Office launched month long Party's Nation Wide Programme "Jai Bharat Satyagraha". JKPC also draws action

plan for conducting successful programmes in the district.

JKPC President Vikar Rasool Wani in a meeting of Senior Party Leaders, Former Legislators, District Presidents and AICC Members had a detailed discussion over the Jai Bharat Satyagraha and urged them to follow the AICC directives vigorously and

ensure that programmes are held in every district on daily basis followed by Press Conferences. Former JKPC President Peerzada Mohd. Sayeed, Former Legislators Bashir Ahmad Magrey, Gh. Nabi Monga, Mohd Muzaffar Par-ray, Mohd Anwar Bhat and other senior leaders spoke on the occasion and highlighted

the significance of the Jai Bharat Satyagraha. JKPC President also received feedback with regard to preparations for the successful conduct of this significant programme in the districts and urged the Party Cadres and Districts Presidents to involve every primary and active member and common

people in this initiative which has been launched against the BJP's vendetta politics and loot of people's money. Briefing the media person, JKPC President Vikar Rasool Wani said that Congress Party's has launched month long Jai Bharat Satyagraha in protest against the flawed conviction and disqualification of Rahul

Gandhi for raising the voice against the Modi Adani nexus and loot of National Wealth, with the result, Modi Govt hatched a conspiracy to disqualify him (Rahul Ji) from Lok Sabha aiming to silence him, but the Congress party is committed to continue its fight against loot of people's money and Nation's wealth.

Jammu and Kashmir Biodiversity Council holds stakeholder consultation meeting

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 01: A stakeholder consultation meeting on the Jammu and Kashmir Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) was held at Van Bhawan in Jammu. The BSAP is a roadmap for biodiversity conservation.

The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Biodiversity Council, Dr Mohit Gera, and began with a welcome address by Member

Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Biodiversity Council, Asaf Mehmood Sagar.

The meeting was attended by representatives from various departments and institutions related to biodiversity conservation, including Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Horticulture, Housing and Urban Development, Floriculture, Agriculture Production, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Revenue, Soil and Water Conservation, Wildlife Protection, Education, Tourism, Fisheries, Forest Ecology and Environment, and Social Forestry.

Dr Mohit Gera stated that the purpose of the consultation meeting was to gather input from all stakeholder departments on the action points highlighted in the BSAP. He added that the activities proposed under the BSAP needed to be evaluated by the stakeholder departments in light of their available resources. The final draft of the BSAP was submitted to the government for consideration and it was recommended that consultation meetings



be held with all stakeholder

departments.

The BSAP focuses on 11 action points, 38 strategies, and 161 activities covering all aspects of biodiversity conservation. Dr Gera mentioned that the BSAP would be a key document in the years to come due to Jammu and Kashmir's vulnerability to climate change and its link to biodiversity.

Earlier in the meeting, Member Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Biodiversity Council, Asaf Mehmood Sagar, gave a brief background on the process

involved in preparing the BSAP and the efforts made by the council to refine the document. The process for drafting the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Jammu and Kashmir was initiated following national guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in 1999.

The guidelines called for the development of national as well as state and union territory level Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

EDITORIAL

Kashmir's Dream (11) & Its Youth!

Dream 11 is a fantasy sports platform that has taken India by storm. With the increasing number of cricket enthusiasts in the country, Dream 11 has become a popular platform for cricket lovers to create virtual teams and compete with each other. However, this platform has also been a source of concern for many, as it has been linked to an increase in unemployment, especially in the Kashmir valley.

In recent years, there has been a surge in the number of Kashmiri youth who have taken to playing Dream 11. While this may seem like a harmless pastime, it has had a significant impact on the local economy, as many young people have become addicted to the game, spending long hours playing and neglecting their studies and work.

One of the main reasons for the popularity of Dream 11 among Kashmiri youth is the lack of employment opportunities in the region. The valley has been plagued by unrest for decades, which has led to a decline in tourism and the closure of many businesses. This has left many young people with few options for employment, and Dream 11 has become an attractive alternative.

However, the rise of Dream 11 has led to a significant increase in the number of unemployed youth in the valley. Many young people have become addicted to the game, spending hours playing and neglecting their studies and work. This has led to a decline in the quality of education and a decrease in productivity, as many young people are more interested in playing Dream 11 than in pursuing their careers.

Another issue with the rise of Dream 11 in the valley is the prevalence of online gambling. While Dream 11 is a legal platform, many young people in the valley have started to use it as a way to make money through online gambling. This has led to a rise in addiction and a decrease in productivity, as many young people are more focused on making money through gambling than on pursuing their careers.

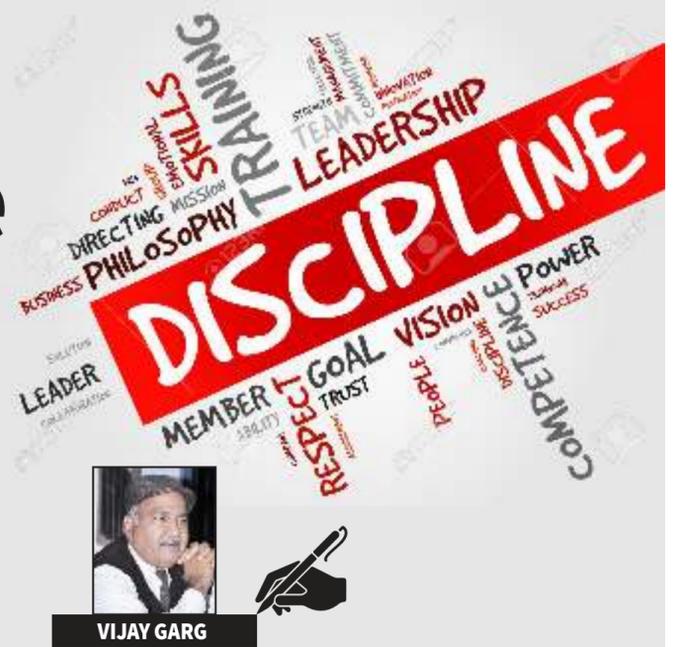
The rise of Dream 11 has also led to a decline in physical activity among young people in the valley. Many young people spend long hours sitting in front of their computers or smartphones, playing the game, and neglecting their physical health. This has led to an increase in health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, which have further exacerbated the already fragile health situation in the valley.

It is important to promote healthy gaming habits and seek professional help if one is struggling with addiction or mental health issues related to excessive gaming.

It is important to note that these bad habits are not limited to Kashmiri youth and can affect individuals from any region or background. It is crucial for individuals to maintain a healthy balance between gaming and other aspects of their life, such as work, school, social activities, and physical exercise. Additionally, seeking professional help and support can be beneficial for those struggling with addiction or mental health issues related to excessive gaming.

In conclusion, while Dream 11 may seem like a harmless pastime, it has had a significant impact on the lives of young people in the Kashmir valley. It has led to a rise in unemployment, a decline in productivity and education, an increase in online gambling, and a decline in physical activity. The government and other stakeholders in the region must take steps to address this issue and provide young people with better opportunities for employment and education. This will not only improve the lives of young people in the valley but also contribute to the overall development of the region.

Discipline And Self-Discipline Are Very Important In Student Life



VIJAY GARG

Discipline is very important in our life. Roughly disciplined man is considered civilized. Without it, a person is considered as an idiot, no matter how many degrees he has acquired. If we take a look at the history, we find that all the great personalities of the world became great only because of following the discipline. Without it, a person often lags behind in every field, be it social, academic, sports or any other field. We should have discipline and self-discipline, i.e. we should not be forced to do anything. Discipline is even more important in student life. Students should be more aware of obligations. What are their obligations towards home, school and society? They should know about them well. They first learn discipline from home like waking up early in the morning, respecting time, eating on time and going to school. Obeying one's duties towards one's parents. Often seen it is that many children keep shouting at their mother for small tasks. This is wrong. They should get used to doing their own work. By doing

This is wrong. They should get used to doing their own work. By doing this, their self-confidence will increase. When going to school, one should obey the teachers there without any fear.
Do all work on time. do not make excuses. do not cause any damage to the school property eg do not pluck plants and flowers. do not scratch walls. turn off fans and light bulbs when not needed and turn off water.

this, their self-confidence will increase. When going to school, one should obey the teachers there without any fear. Do all work on time, do not make excuses, do not cause any damage to the school property eg do not pluck plants and flowers, do not scratch walls, turn off fans and light bulbs when not needed and turn off water. Not in vain lose etc. All these are examples of self-discipline, meaning that children should develop these feelings without fear. There can be many other forms of discipline in student life like living together with peers, talking sweetly to everyone, caring for the helpless elderly and loving children younger than oneself etc. Students have to become self-disciplined if they want to be always happy and progress. Only by being disciplined can we climb the ladder of success and create a good society. "If life is to be happy, wear the jewel of self-discipline."

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational Columnist Malout Punjab.

Liberalization of Forest Conservation Act and Regulations for Agro-forestry Revolution

DR. RAMESH CHAND



Forestry is part of agriculture and allied sectors which comprise four segments namely, crops, livestock, fishery and forestry. Out of these, first three segments have witnessed sort of revolution like green revolution, white revolution, and blue revolution etc. This resulted in more than 3.05 per cent annual growth in their output during in the last 50 years. However, output of forestry increased by mere 0.54% per year which is not even one third of growth rate in population. This has very serious economic and ecological implications. Per capita availability of wood and wood products produced in the country followed a steep decline and India had to meet large part of domestic demand for wood and products from imports. Insignificant growth in forestry also mean little growth in environment and ecology friendly production. This has far reaching implications for carbon sequestration, water balance and health of natural eco system.

Output of forestry comes from three sources viz. public forest, privately owned land and other land types owned by Centre and states, panchayats, communities etc. Due to various reasons extraction of wood and wood based products and setting up of wood based industry is strictly regulated by Forest Conservation Acts and various regulations. The total land area under forest in India is 23.4 million hectare. There is rationale to ban or check commercial extraction of forest produce especially wood and wood products in such areas. However, there is huge possibility of raising forestry and trees outside this forest area to meet goals related to economic growth, environment, ecology and sustainability. The biggest scope is on agricultural land by adopting agro forestry. Out of total cultivable land, 26 million hectare remains fallow. This is more than total area under forests in the country. India also has 12 million hectare of culturable waste lands. There are huge possibilities of raising trees on fallow land, culturable waste and on field boundaries. At present, forestry plantations on private non forest land covers very small area and most of tree species grow only naturally. They are not sufficient to meet domestic demand for wood. As a result India has been importing large quantity of wood and wood products which has shown rising trend till 2018-19 when imports



reached \$ 6126 million or Rs. 42841 crore.

The reasons for very low interest in tree plantations and agroforestry needs closer examination. There is no demand side constraint as the prices and import of wood and wood based products follow rising trend in the country. Till a few years back there were strict restrictions on felling of trees grown on non forest private land and their inter state movement required Transit permit. This even discouraged naturally growing trees on private lands as landowners had to follow cumbersome procedures to get permission for selling such trees. In the meantime country came with National Forest Policy 1988 and National Agroforestry Policy 2014 to encourage tree plantation in the country. In the wake of all this MoEFCC issued fresh guidelines to States and UTs for "Felling and Transit Regulations for Tree Species Grown on Non Forest Private Lands" on 18 Nov. 2014. These guidelines clearly specified list of tree species exempted from any restrictions for felling and liberalised transit rules for tree species grown on private land. Subsequently, this matter was taken up by the NITI Aayog with States/UTs as a part of Reforms related to Agriculture and Allied Sectors. Some states issued their own notifications to comply with the guidelines issued by the central government. However, the matter was not very actively followed in most of the states.

Even the limited follow up of liberalization of restrictions on felling and transit of trees raised on private land showed large impact on growth of output of

forestry and reduction in import of wood and wood based products. A year after the notification on relaxation of restrictions on felling of Tree Species grown on Private Land, output of forestry sector show more than 5 per cent annual growth for three consecutive years. This never happened before (since 1950-51). Similarly, import of wood and wood based products declined by 5% in two years after 2014-15 and fluctuated thereafter rather than moving on rising trend.

Field reports indicate that area under agroforestry species, like poplar, has seen large increase in some pockets in the country. However, the information about removal of restrictions on felling of trees has not percolated down in large parts of the country. There is a need to take this information to village level. There is also a need for complete liberalization of felling and free transport of tree material in the country to encourage greening of India. In the present day of technology there are ways to ascertain source of supply ie whether the produce is from forest land or private land.

Technological options are now available for faster and better quality production of various tree species. However, due to various kind of regulatory restrictions markets for tree species remain highly underdeveloped. If these constraints are removed, forestry sector has the potential for "brown revolution" like other three sub sectors of agriculture and allied sectors.

Member, NITI Aayog



COL SATISH SINGH LALOTRA

Living beings, be it humans or animals or even plants draw sustenance from each other's presence driven by the need to feel secure, intermingle amongst themselves or their own ilk or even compete for a higher position in the hierarchy of their being. The ecosystem is made in such a way that both biotic and abiotic parts of this system either sustain themselves or wither away wrought by the time and tide of events respectively. In the animal kingdom within this planet of ours, there are very few large sized animals which go solo (alone) in all their endeavours from 'womb to tomb' excepting in their formative years. Tiger is one such large sized carnivore which holds the pride of place in our ecosystem that epitomizes power in its entirety, since it goes all alone in his hunting, living, procreating and finally marking of his territorial limits of his hunting efforts. The magnificent 'Panthera Tigris', a striped carnivore with thick yellow coat of fur with dark stripes is a combination of grace, power, strength, agility, and enormous power to have earned the pride of place as the national animal of India. For many readers of this article, it may be news that as late as March 1973, Asiatic Lion used to be national animal of India.

But then seeing its very limited spread in a remote western corner of Gujarat at Gir forest, and not in entire India a more magnificent carnivore with an evenly spread from Himachal Pradesh to Arunachal Pradesh to Kerala upped the ante and fitted in the bill for being nominated as the national animal of India. In order to conserve the Tiger population in the country, GOI launched 'Project Tiger' on 01st April 1973 exactly half a century ago, the largest conservation effort anywhere in the world in co-operation with WWF (World wild life). 'Project Tiger' was set up under the PM ship of Mrs Indira Gandhi as its chairman with Dr Karan Singh as vice-chairman and Rajasthan forest officer K.S Shankhla as the first project director. Since this magnificent beast is always on the radar of poachers, freelance hunters, as also dwindling catchment areas for their prey the NTCA (National tiger conservation authority) was formed in December 2005 following the recommendations of 'TIGER TASK FORCE' constituted by the PM of India for reorganized management of 'Project Tiger' and the many tiger sanctuaries in India.

The stated recommendations of the said task force were as follows:

- Reinvigorating the constitution of governance.
- Strengthening efforts towards protection of tiger, checking poaching, convicting wildlife criminals, and breaking the international trade network in wild life body parts and derivatives of tiger.
- Expanding the undisturbed areas for tiger by reducing human presence.
- Repair the relationships with the local people who share the tiger habitats by investing in forest, by fielding strategies for co-existence.
- Regenerate the forest habitats in the fringe areas of the tigers by forming protective enclaves by investing in forest, water and grassland economies of the people.

Be that as it may the aim of my write up is to put under the scanner the above mentioned recommendations in the right perspective to watch if they have yielded desired results or not and also see which way the project is headed? India has seen an extensive

50 yrs of 'project tiger'—is it on rails?

'Being alone is a power few can handle'—Anonymous

expansion of protected areas, tiger reserves and now, a push for tiger corridors all driven by colonial exclusionary conservation practices. As per the data from the 'National wildlife database cell', India has a network of 990 protected areas which cover approximately 5.27% of the total geographical area of the country. This includes 106 national parks, 565 wild life sanctuaries, 100 conservation reserves, and 219 community reserves. Adding to this is India's network of 55 tiger reserves (TRs). Notification of PAs (protected areas) in India is overseen by central legislation called as 'Wild life protection act' (WLP) whereas the NTCA (National tiger conservation authority) a body constituted under the same law oversees TRs.

The year 2021-22 saw some states in the country going on a PA declaration spree, with Maharashtra state board for wild life alone notifying three (3) new wild life sanctuaries and almost 30 new conservation reserves in various stages of approval. As stated above since the launch of 'Project Tiger' in 1973, the tiger has been made the center of focus of conservation of governance in India. That brings me to my first point of contention in direct contravention to the recommendations of the 'Tiger task force' i.e governance rules of 'tiger Conservation by eliminating human presence' which is a flawed concept of animal conservation. The latest tiger census reports indicate the last recorded tiger population of India standing at 2967, which is 70% of the world tiger population. What an impressive data. The 55 tiger reserves in India cover a total area of about more than 74,000 sq km out of which, 41,500 sq km forms the critical tiger habitat whereas the remainder is the so called 'Buffer zone'. The idea of corridor-based conservation has off late caught the fancy of Indian conservationists. The NTCA in its 2014 report 'Connecting tiger populations for long term conservation' cited how the Indian sub-continent alone holds 6 global priority tiger conservation landscapes of long term significance and 32 tiger corridors as also ensuring connecting these with one another. The (NWAP) 2017-31, National wildlife action plans also stressed upon identification of wildlife corridors outside PAs (protected areas).

That is where the whole rub lies. Even for a layman

on casting a glance at any of the maps of any tiger conservation corridor will reveal how the tiger reserves and corridors are being imposed on a raft of forest lands, human habitations, agricultural fields, pasture lands and scarce water sources. The first recommendation of Tiger task force has to be clubbed with the third recommendation which in so many words say—to expand the tiger corridors by reducing human presence compelling us all to see the lopsided aspect of governance. These landscapes are actually living, breathing human-inhabited places, home to adivasis like the Korkus, Gonds and Baigas in the central province of India and even in the neighbouring 'Melghat tiger reserve and Pench tiger reserve spanning over both states of Maharashtra and MP. I have myself witnessed the majority of Korku tribesmen evicted from the STR (Satpura tiger reserve) at Madhai near Hoshangabad for making way for the tiger corridors when I visited STR in 2011. Now using the imagery of these corridors, the state can acquire any land and convert it into a protected area which will sound a death knell to these tribal people. Although conservation corridors are an old concept it has given a new fillip to coercive control of lands thus exacerbating societal tensions in the country as such. This is self-evident in the way abrupt and break neck speed with which certain states are going about this concept with relocations speeding up in other protected areas. As per the data shared by the MoEFCC (Ministry of environment forest and conservation) in the lok sabha as late as 2019, out of 57386 families living inside the critical tiger habitat (CTH) of 52 tiger reserves around 14,441 families had been shifted. NTCA in 2020 was altogether on a different plane with their assertions that 63,916 families in 761 villages living inside the CTH (Critical tiger habitat) of tiger reserves and 18,493 families of 215 villages had been relocated from the notified CTH since the inception of Project tiger. Ground report tells us the number of people impacted is far more and will only grow with more tiger corridors in the offing, thereby pooh-poohing one of the stated recommendations of 'Tiger task force' that



lays stress on expanding the tiger corridors by reducing human presence.

As if the above stated facts don't nail the inflated conservation efforts of GOI, the center for financial accountability (CFA) in a recent report cited a spurt in the infrastructure projects in and around the protected areas. As per CFAs analysis, MoEFCC received around 2592 proposals for environment clearance between July 2014 and April 2020, of which 2256 proposals were approved marking a 87% clearance rate. What a stupendous achievement. But at what cost? More importantly 270 projects were located in and around these protected areas, thus deflating the very purpose of creating these protected areas. Is the minister of forest, environment and conservation taken on board for these anomalies? Further 680 projects were given wildlife clearances between 2015-2020 by national board for wildlife (NBWL) as revealed in the Rajya sabha by the MoEFCC in September 2020. The majority of oil and gas deposits are located in these landscapes with corporate extraction instead of being monitored is being facilitated through ease given by these clearances. Is this fact not interference in the tiger conservation? If not, then why not? What will it take the GOI to apply due diligence in according clearance to these corporate interests?

The 'Convention of biological diversity since its inception in 1992 recognised the role of indigenous people (tribals in our context) through articles 8(i) & 10(c). Yet these indigenous people have been excluded at both state level and the national level in India from these discussions and decisions about the land usage, their inhabitants and natural resources they depend upon. In the Indian context the FRA (Forest rights act) passed in 2006 envisions and ensures the same by legally recognizing the role of these adivasis and other forest dependent communities in the protection, conservation and management of the ecosystems. But does it happen in our context? While posted at Itarsi in MP way back from 2010 till 2012 I was witness to scores of Korku tribal people living on the margins with their families trudging miles on the Betul-Hoshangabad highway with small wicker baskets perched on their heads in search of Tendu leaves. Why couldn't these people be ensured a proper captive area in their near vicinity for tendu leaves collection and their marketing by the state government? It shows that they have been disregarded by the authorities in their welfare. The FRA empowers these tribals to stop any activity which is detrimental to their growth. But then all boils down to its implementation, which is a big NO in India. This brings me to the last recommendation as enshrined by the Tiger task force—"Regenerate the forest habitats in the fringe areas of the tigers by forming protective enclaves through investing in forest, water and grasslands economies of the people". But having gone through the details as appended by me in this write up as also diluting the FRA by the authorities is there a remote chance of these targets being met? As if the above dichotomies are not enough, few months back the union state minister of MoEFCC, Ashwini Kumar Choubey came up with a most preposterous idea of renaming the Jim Corbett tiger reserve on the name of 'Ram Ganga' tiger reserve which incidentally flows in the midst of this tiger reserve. With the 'Project tiger well with in crossing half a century of its inception I am of the considered opinion that a major and thorough course correction of this project is the need of the hour so as to meet the lofty aspirations of conservation of this magnificent carnivore as set forth by our former PM Mrs Indira Gandhi and the erstwhile vice chairman Dr Karan Singh of PROJECT TIGER.

The writer is a retired army officer

JK economy: Setting the record straight



VISHAL SHARMA

J&K's economic growth story over the last three years has been remarkable. The story's been remarkable in that even at the peak of covid pandemic, the economic growth never slipped into the negative territory. J&K has seen many upheavals during the last 30 years and every time it has come out stronger. However, it was never expected to hold out on the economic front in the midst of what was a perfect economic storm. But it did!

If GSDP numbers (at current prices) from the fiscal year 2018-19 (Rs 159859 cr) to 2022-23 (209752 cr) are anything to go by, then J&K's economy is not only resilient, but also one that can bounce back and progress in difficult times quicker than that of most other State/UT economies, because, as the cliché goes its fundamentals are strong. GSDP during this period grew phenomenally at around 23%.

In fact, during the past decade, GSDP has grown substantially. From Rs 98367 cr in the fiscal year 2014-2015, GSDP at current prices in the year 2022-23 (IR) is expected to be Rs 209752 cr. This represents an increase of 53%. GSDP is projected to grow at more than 10% in the next fiscal year and is projected in absolute terms to be Rs. 230727 cr.

Although, there may be an argument that GSDP at current prices may not reflect the true economic growth in the J&K as it is not inflation adjusted, the gross capital formation,

which represents outlays on addition to fixed assets and net changes in the levels of inventories has shot up from Rs 8251 cr in the year 2018-19 to Rs 9739 cr in 2020-21.

GSDP growth is a function of growth in public and private expenditure. This is, therefore, best captured by higher than normal public and private sector spends over the same period. While capex in public sector from 2018-19 (Rs 11114 cr) to 2021-22 (Rs 35208 cr) has registered an increase of 68%, which is the highest increase in the last 10 years, private sector spending has also moved toe to toe with the public sector capex.

This is borne out by the private sector contribution to gross value added (GVA), which is tentatively expected to be 75% (assumed figure) in the year 2020-21. This figure was 63% in the year 2019-20.

Consistent GSDP growth has expectedly made J&K richer. Today the per capita income of J&K is Rs 165755, which is roughly equivalent to 2072 USD. Per capita income in 2018-19 was Rs 118828 which roughly equals 1747 USD at the conversion rate in vogue then. Increase in per capita income has made average resident of the UT richer and today he has on an average 300 USD more to spend.

Wherever GSDP grows, people end up having more money in their pockets, thus, improving their living standards. Nowhere is it more evident than in the growth of more eateries, more malls, and stores of merchandise in J&K over the last few years.

These places of shoppers and consumers would not have come up or conversely the existing ones wouldn't have stayed in business, if they did not have consumers. And there would not be any consumers, if the



extra money generated by the recent economic growth had not found its way into the pockets of the consumers.

This assertion is further corroborated by the headcount ratio (people below poverty line) in J&K. Today amongst 36 states and UTs in the country, J&K is the 16th best performing UT. Although it's not something to gloat over and there is a fair bit of ground to cover, the situation is not as bad as it is generally thought to be.

On the top of it is of course the GST growth story, which has even belied our wildest imagination! GST growth in J&K from 2017-18 to 2021-22 has followed an upward trajectory except in the year 2019-20 when it slightly dipped.

In terms of the actual achievement vis-a-vis the annual targets, GST collections in UT have

gone from 57.14% in 2017-18 to 93.47% in 2018-19 while they have soared to a high of 98.29% in 2020-21 and to 106.78% in 2021-22.

Higher GST collections are reflective of higher than normal growth of businesses and businesses grow only when they have consumers to serve! No business grows to create idle capacities or inventories, which are not routinely getting replaced.

The naysayers though would have us believe otherwise. Those with a little or no knowledge of fiscal numbers and the intricacies of the GSDP, headcount ratio, tax rises etc, would say that these numbers tell half the story or no story at all. They say that J&K's economy has shrunk and that people have become poorer! Where are the stats to support that argument?

There is another argument that is made by

these people about unemployment rate in J&K being the highest it's ever been. This can't be far from truth!

MOSPI data on unemployment in J&K reveals a declining trend from January-September, 2022. While unemployment rate in J&K has decreased from January 2022 onwards, the national unemployment rate painfully has gone in other direction, albeit not linearly, over the corresponding period. This is as per the CMIE data, which is often used by some people to clobber the government.

As far employment initiatives undertaken by the government, around 21000 youth have been absorbed in the public sector in the last two years. In addition, 20749 self employment opportunities have been created so far during the current financial year and this number is expected to rise by the time the current fiscal year draws to a close. In fact, there has been a steady increase in the creation of self employment opportunities in J&K from 2017-18 (40723) to 2021-22 (217864).

How would an increase in employment on sustained basis be even possible if J&K was not growing? And to those who are saying that there has been no employment created in J&K, well, they only need to look at numbers. Pythagoras reminds us that numbers rule the universe. He also has a word for those who don't rely numbers to make their case: "Be silent or let thy words be worth more than silence." There's a message in this for all, but for this though they will have to look beyond rhetoric!

The writer is a Milken IFC fellow on capital markets

Modi flays earlier govts' focus on a certain family and not the commoner

Bhopal, Apr 1 (UNI) In a scathing assault on the Opposition in general and Congress dynasticism in particular, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday unleashed a veritable political barrage by alleging that earlier dispensations considered "a certain family" as everything and accomplished naught for the commoner.

While addressing a public meeting at the Madhya Pradesh capital's Rani Kamalapati Station on the occasion of flagging off the Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express, the visiting leader did not name any individual or entity when he said, "Such people are working on a resolve to sully my image. The Centre responded with its accomplishments; as a consequence the detractors are jittery and that is precisely why there is talk of digging my grave. Twenty-first century India is working with fresh thinking; predecessor governments were busy in appeasement alone."

Should not the Railways



have been modernised earlier, the Prime Minister asked rhetorically and added that if earlier regimes had thus willed, it could have been accomplished.

"As soon as we assumed the reins, we laid emphasis on modernisation of Railways; it is our endeavour to make them numero uno at global level. There is ceaseless stress on extension of facilities and that is reflected in the numerous provisions contained in the latest Budget. Special focus is on passenger safety and assistance is rapidly available in an emergency. The accent

is also on electrification of tracks, stations are being modernised and equipped with Wi-Fi in addition to CCTV. Cleanliness of trains and stations is a priority area; attention is being paid to redress of complaints," he observed.

Commendable work is underway within Madhya Pradesh vis-a-vis the industrial and also every other sphere and the state is ceaselessly advancing in the context of various development parameters, the Prime Minister noted and said that Rs 13,000 crore have been allocated to the state in the

Railway Budget as compared to a mere Rs 600 crore nine years earlier.

"This train is a symbol of our skill and self-reliance; it shall enhance tourism in Bhopal's surroundings. The Vande Bharat Express also symbolises the enthusiasm of developing India. In the recent past, I dedicated this modernised station to the people," he reminisced during his 22-minute-long speech.

Mr Modi offers tributes to devotees whose lives were snuffed out by the Ram Navami temple tragedy in the state's commercial capital Indore and prayed for early recovery of the injured. Commendable work is underway within Madhya Pradesh vis-a-vis the industrial and also every other sphere and the state is ceaselessly advancing in the context of various development parameters, the Prime Minister noted and said that Rs 13,000 crore have been allocated to the state in the

No One Should Be In Jail Without Legal Authority: Supreme Court

New Delhi: Although the State is tasked to prevent crime and maintain security, personal liberty should not be the collateral and none should suffer incarceration without legal authority, the Supreme Court has said.

The Supreme Court observation came while it was examining the legal question whether the date of remand is to be included or excluded for considering a claim for default bail when computing the 60/90 day period as contemplated in proviso (a) of Section 167 (2) of the CrPC.

According to section 167 of the CrPC, an accused will be entitled to default bail if the investigating agency fails to file a charge sheet within 60 days from the date of remand. For certain category of offences, the stipulated period can be extended till 90 days.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice K M Joseph held that the stipulated 60/90-day remand period under Section 167 CrPC ought to be computed from the date when a magistrate authorises remand.

"This court is conscious that none should suffer

incarceration without legal authority. Although, the

needs to be guarded. The liberty of the individual is



State is tasked to prevent crime and maintain security, personal liberty should not be the collateral," the bench also having Justices Hrishikesh Roy and B V Nagarathna said.

The top court said if the State fails to file charge sheet or supplementary request for remand within the stipulated 60/90-day period, it needs to strike a balance between the rights of the individual and the restriction on those rights and prevent prolonged incarceration without legal support. The very instance of the statutory remand period ends, an indefeasible right to default bail accrues to the accused and same

surely relative and regulated. Absolute liberty is something that cannot be conceived in a societal setting.

"The law therefore allows authorities to detain accused persons and facilitate investigation. However, it is the duty of this court to discourage prolonged incarceration. Further, the right to default bail is not extinguished by the subsequent filing of the charge sheet, and the accused continues to have the right to default bail," the bench said. The legal question has arisen while hearing a plea filed by the Enforcement Directorate against the order of the Bombay High Court

granting default bail to former DHFL promoters Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan in a Yes Bank money laundering case being probed by the agency. According to section 167 of the CrPC, an accused will be entitled to default bail if the investigating agency fails to file a charge sheet within 60 days from the date of remand. For certain category of offences, the stipulated period can be extended till 90 days.

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Rajasthan govt to appeal in SC in 2008 Jaipur serial blasts case

HT News Network

Jaipur, Apr 1 (UNI) The Rajasthan government has decided to challenge in the Supreme Court the acquittal of four accused in the Jaipur serial blasts case by the High Court, an official said.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot at the Chief Minister's residence on Friday.

The Chief Minister said that reversing the 2008 district court verdict, the Rajasthan High Court has acquitted all the accused. He said that the state government intends to give the strictest punishment to the culprits, so the state government will soon file a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court against the high court's decision.

At the same time, the Chief Minister decided to terminate the services of Additional Advocate General Rajendra Yadav appointed to plead in this case.

The high court had on Wednesday acquitted the four accused in the case. Nearly 2019 people were killed and over 13 injured in a series of bomb blasts in Jaipur on May 2008, 80.

The trial court had awarded death sentence to Mohammad Saif, Saifur Rehman, Sarwar Azmi and Mohammad Salman in the case.

SS Jamir new president of Nagaland Congress

HT News Network

New Delhi, Apr 1 (UNI) The Congress has appointed S Supongmeren Jamir as the new president of the party's state unit of Nagaland.

According to a communique issued by Congress general secretary in-charge of Organisation KC Venugopal on Friday late night, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Jamir as the president of the Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee.

The development came hours after Kewekhapse Therie resigned as the party president of Nagaland.

"Congress President has appointed S Supongmeren Jamir as the president of Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee, following the acceptance of the resignation of Kewekhapse Therie, with immediate effect", the statement said.

The Congress also lauded the contributions of Therie. The Congress drew a blank in the recently concluded Nagaland Assembly polls.

UP: Six get lifer in murder case in Pratapgarh

HT News Network

Pratapgarh (UP), Apr 1 (UNI) Six persons were sentenced to life imprisonment and a penalty of Rs 20,000 each by a local court here in the murder of a relative of Samajwadi Party (SP) leader, prosecution counsel said here on Saturday.

District Government Counsel (DGC) Yogesh Sharma said that on October 22, 2014 Rajiv Yadav, nephew of SP leader Vijay Yadav, was shot dead in Patti area. "A case was lodged against Ram Shlok Pandey, Premdhar Dubey alias Kallu, Rakesh Yadav, his brothers Kailash Yadav, Brajesh Yadav and Rakesh Yadav," they said. He said that after hearing the arguments of both the sides and evidence available on record the court held the six accused guilty.

Navjot Sidhu Walks Out After 10 Months In Jail Over Road-Rage Case

Patiala: Punjab Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu came out of jail today, 10 months after he was imprisoned in a road rage case that killed a man 34 years ago.

After getting out of the jail in Punjab's Patiala, Mr Sidhu jumped straight to work. "Democracy is in chains," he said, in an apparent swipe at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Punjab is the shield of this country. When dictatorship came in this country, a revolution also came, led by Rahul Gandhi," Mr Sidhu said.

He alleged the centre wants to impose President's rule in the state where the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), a bitter rival of the BJP, is in power. His comments come amid the search for radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh, whose private militia has been accused of trying to create trouble in Punjab and disturb law and order. "There is a conspiracy to impose President's rule in Punjab. They are trying to weaken Punjab. I stand like a wall with Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and every Congress worker," Mr Sidhu said.

"I want to ask my little brother (Chief Minister and AAP leader) Bhagwant Mann. Why did you fool the people of Punjab?"



You made tall promises, cracked jokes. But you are just Chief Minister on paper today," said Mr Sidhu, who was released from jail over eight hours later from the scheduled time today. He alleged the government wanted the media to leave before releasing him. The Supreme Court in May last year ordered one-year "rigorous imprisonment" to Mr Sidhu, who had by then quit as Punjab Congress chief after his party's defeat in the state election. The court judgment came on a request by the family of the man who died after a fight with Mr Sidhu and his friend in 1988. The family had asked for a review of a 2018 order from the Supreme Court acquitting him of murder.

Opposition to continue demand for JPC probe on Adani issue: Congress

New Delhi, Apr 1 (UNI) Stepping up its attack on the BJP-led government at the Centre over Adani issue, the Congress on Saturday categorically said the Opposition will keep continuing its demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the matter.

The Congress has been spearheading the Opposition, demanding JPC into the Hindenburg Research report over Adani Group. The Hindenburg Research report alleged the Adani Group had engaged in stock manipulation and accounting fraud schemes over the course of decades.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, Congress general secretary in-charge Communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Nineteen Opposition parties are united. Our demand is that



there should be a JPC on the Adani issue."

"There has been no communication between the Government and Opposition. No attempt made by the ruling party. We will continue our demand," the Congress MP said in an apparent reference to 'log-jam' in both the Houses of the Parliament.

Referring to the Forest (Conservation) Amend-

ment Bill, 2023, which was sent to a Select Committee, the MP said, "The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023 should have been sent to the Standing Committee headed by me but it has gone to a Select Committee."

Taking a dig at the BJP over the same, he said, "There is an agenda. The target is to weaken all Environment and Forest Laws."

Piyush Goyal lauds GeM crossing Gross Merchandise Value of RS 2 lakh crore in 2022-23

Mumbai, April 1, 2023

In the financial year 2022-23, procurement of goods and services from government portal Government e Marketplace (GeM) has crossed the Rs 2 lakh crore mark, which is a remarkable achievement, said Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, in Mumbai today. Commerce and Industry Minister highlighted the role of GeM as a digital tool in the public and national interest. GeM is a symbol of the speed with which PM Narendra Modi has taken the country forward through modern technology, said the Minister. He was speaking at a press conference on the landmark achievement of GeM. Media persons from various parts of the country also joined the press conference via video conferencing.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal congratulated GeM and its strong ecosystem of buyers and sellers, whose unwavering support has been pivotal towards achieving this historic feat. The Minister added that the Prime Minister

desires that the Government departments run at the highest

grow faster, the future is very bright. I would like to appeal to

business of about Rs 5800 crore. The business through GeM has



levels of integrity and transparency, with participation of people from the remotest corners of the country and enables women entrepreneurs, startups and the MSME sector to participate in a fair and equitable manner in government procurements.

"I am confident that GeM will

more and more vendors to join GeM so that they too get a chance to participate in the government procurement process", he also said.

After the GeM portal was launched in 2017, business worth about Rs 400 crore was done, and in the second year, GeM did

grown from around Rs 35000 crore two years ago and tripled last year to Rs 1 lakh 6 thousand crores, the Minister informed. Growing to Rs 2 lakh crores in 5 years shows that this experiment of the Prime Minister has been successful, he further stated. The Minister also mentioned

that India has crossed total exports of 750 billion dollars for the financial year 2022-23 and the final figure is expected to cross 765 billion dollars.

The G20 Trade and Investment Working Group Meeting was held in Mumbai recently, also saw positive discussions, he informed. The Union Minister expressed that India has got the Presidency of the G-20 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it is a great opportunity to showcase the achievements of the rapidly developing New India to the world.

Speaking about the Foreign Trade Policy 2023 released in New Delhi yesterday, he said that this has been welcomed by industry and trade. A sense of stability is reflected in the foreign trade policy, he added.

Speaking about the vision and journey ahead for GeM, CEO of GeM P.K. Singh, thanked all the stakeholders who are the primary drivers behind GeM's reaching such great heights.

Rishi Sunak Spent 500,000 Euro In Under 10 Days On Private Jet Flights

■ HT News Network

London/New Delhi: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spent more than €500,000 of taxpayers' money on private jets in just over a week last year, according to The Guardian.

The UK government spent just under €108,000 on private jet travel for Rishi Sunak's attendance at the COP27 summit in Egypt, flying in on 6 November and returning the following day, the newspaper said.

A week later, he set off on a round trip to the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, at a cost of over €340,000.

Mr Sunak's Latvia and Estonia trip in December incurred travel costs of €62,498, with personal costs of €2,500, The Guardian report said.

The Liberal Democrats branded the expenses as a "shocking waste of taxpayers' money" during the cost-of-living crisis.

"This is a shocking waste of taxpayers' money at a time when people are struggling to pay their bills. Yet again this Conservative government is completely out of touch," the tweet said.

The Downing Street said Mr

Sunak's travel was for "vital meetings with world leaders".

"The role of the Prime Minister includes holding vital meetings with world leaders during bilateral visits and summits to discuss issues of international importance - including security, defence and trade," a government spokesperson said.

The UK's Opposition parties are also piling on the pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak over a recent Budget policy that could allegedly benefit his wife, Akshata Murty, through her business interest in a childcare firm. Akshata Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, is listed as a shareholder in Koru Kids Ltd which is likely to benefit from a new pilot scheme announced in the Spring Budget earlier this month to incentivise people to become childminders. While 10 Downing Street has stated that Prime Minister Sunak had followed the UK's ministerial code on the matter, the Opposition has called for further explanations. The UK's Opposition parties are piling on the pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak over a recent Budget policy that could allegedly benefit his wife, Akshata Murty, through her business

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While 10 Downing Street has stated that Prime Minister Sunak had followed the UK's ministerial code on the matter, the Opposition has called for further explanations.

"There are serious questions for Rishi Sunak to answer over any potential conflict of interest, and any extra income his family

could receive from his own government's policy," said Liberal Democrat chief whip Wendy

Chamberlain, who has called on the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests Sir Laurie Magnus to investigate. First reported by the 'i' newspaper, the UK's Companies House register lists Ms Murty as a shareholder in Koru Kids - one of six childminder agencies in England listed on the government's website with contact details. Labour's Deputy Leader, Angela Rayner, said Prime Minister Sunak must explain why he failed to "come clean" about the shares his family held in a company now

set to financially benefit from a childcare policy announced in his Budget, when queried during a parliamentary session of the Liaison Committee earlier this week.

"He must urgently correct the record and set out what steps he took to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interest. No proper explanation has yet been provided by the Prime Minister as to why this was not deemed necessary to publish in the register of members' interests," she said. At a hearing of the Liaison Committee - made up of all House of Commons committee chairs - Labour MP Catherine McKinnell had asked Prime Minister Sunak if he had any interest to declare in relation to the new childcare policy.

"No, all my disclosures were declared in the normal way," he said.

According to The Guardian newspaper, Rishi Sunak's spokesperson said the Prime Minister had told the Downing Street Permanent Secretary of any relevant interests when he took the job as PM last year and that the government and the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests will publish an annual statement of all those interests in May.

Tornado pummels central Arkansas, killing at least 2, injuring dozens

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON: A fierce tornado blasted through Little Rock, Arkansas, and neighbouring towns on Friday, killing at least two people and injuring dozens as it sheared roofs and walls from many buildings, flipped over vehicles and downed trees and power lines, officials said.

Hours later another tornado or extreme burst of wind was believed to have ripped open the roof of an auditorium in northern Illinois, causing a ceiling collapse, while a rock band was performing on stage, officials said. One person died and 28 others were rushed by ambulance to area hospitals, five of them with serious injuries, Shawn Schadle, the fire chief in Belvidere, a riverside town near the border with Wisconsin, told reporters.

He said about 260 people were attending the concert at the city's Apollo Theatre, which featured the band Morbid Angel as part of the group's "Tour of Terror".

The mid-afternoon twister in Arkansas and the storm in Illinois were both spawned by one of the numerous violent thunderstorms raking a vast swath of the US heartland as part of a much larger expanse of extreme spring weather.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences hospital - the region's only major trauma centre - declared a level-1 mass casualty alert after the tornado struck Little Rock, the state's capital and most populous city, at mid-afternoon.

IMF board okays \$15.6bn package for Ukraine

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund said on Friday its executive board had approved a four-year \$15.6 billion loan programme for Ukraine, part of a broader \$115bn international support package to help the country meet urgent funding needs.

The decision clears the way for an immediate disbursement of about \$2.7bn to Kyiv, the Fund said in a statement.

The Extended Fund Facility loan is the first major financing programme approved by the IMF for a country involved in a large-scale war. Ukraine's previous \$5bn IMF programme expired last year.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to have a devastating economic and social impact," IMF official Gita Gopinath said in a statement.

Despite this, Ukrainian authorities "have nevertheless managed to maintain overall macroeconomic and financial stability, thanks to skillful policymaking and substantial external support", she added.

The decision formalises an IMF staff-level agreement reached with Ukraine on March 21 that takes into consideration the country's path to accession to the European Union after the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the new funding.

Finland to become Nato member 'in coming days'

■ HT News Network

BRUSSELS: Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Friday that Finland would formally become a member within days, as he congratulated its president on clearing the final obstacle to joining.

"I look forward to raising Finland's flag at Nato HQ in the coming days.

"Together we are stronger and safer," Stoltenberg wrote on Twitter.

After months of delays, Türkiye's parliament removed the last hurdle for Finland on Thursday by becoming the last member of the US-led military alliance to ratify its application.

Stoltenberg said in a separate statement that "Finland has highly capable forces, advanced capabilities, and strong democratic institutions". "So Finland will bring a lot to our alliance," he said.

Nato foreign ministers are meeting at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels next week, when it is expected the membership could be formalised.

The Ukraine conflict has upended European security and pushed Finland and its neighbour Sweden to drop decades of non-alignment and seek to join Nato's protective umbrella.

Stockholm's application remains stuck, however, because of ongoing resistance from both Türkiye and Hungary.

US arms left behind in

Afghanistan fall into TTP hands

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON: Militants who carry out attacks inside Pakistan have obtained US weapons left behind in Afghanistan, a US-backed broadcasting service claimed in its latest report on the situation.

Observers say the influx of US weapons has boosted the military capabilities of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch separatist groups, according to the report released by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. This influx of weapons has caused "a surge in violence (in Pakistan) over the past two years," it added. When the United States pulled out its forces from Afghanistan in 2021, it left behind around \$7 billion worth of military equipment and weapons, including firearms, communications gear, and even armoured vehicles.

HRW urges Bangladesh to halt Rohingya repatriation plan

■ HT News Network

DHAKA: Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Friday urged Bangladesh to suspend plans to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, warning conditions there would not be safe for the persecuted and stateless minority.

Bangladesh is home to around a million Rohingya, most of whom fled a 2017 military crackdown in neighbouring Myanmar that is now subject to a UN genocide investigation.

A delegation from Myanmar's military regime travelled to Bangladesh this month to interview potential candidates for return and jump-start a stalled repatriation scheme.

But any return to Myanmar would put the lives and liberty of refugees "at grave risk", Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

"Voluntary, safe, and dignified returns of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar are not possible while the military junta is carrying out massacres around the country," said Meenakshi Ganguly, HRW's South Asia director.

Rohingya in the camps told HRW they "were lied to, deceived, or otherwise coerced by Bangladesh administrators" into meeting the Myanmar delegation, the watchdog said.

Some of the 15 refugees interviewed by the watchdog said they had been lured into the meetings on the understanding they were to discuss possible resettlement to a third country.

The Rohingya are widely viewed in Myanmar as interlopers from Bangladesh,



despite roots in the country stretching back centuries, and are stateless after Myanmar ceased recognising their citizenship in 2015.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, who has dismissed the Rohingya identity as "imaginary", was head of the armed forces during the 2017 crackdown.

The International Court of Justice is probing allegations of systematic rape, murder and arson against Rohingya by Myanmar's security forces.

Rights groups have accused the junta of planning to orchestrate a "token" return of refugees to avoid the court's censure. "Repatriation will be voluntary"

A junta spokesman said this month that Myanmar could accept "around 1,000" members of the minority as soon as mid-April.

But a senior foreign ministry official in Bangladesh, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the amount of preparation still needed made that timeframe doubtful.

He also denied his country would force refugees to return.

Trump to face criminal charges, says 'I am ready to fight'

■ HT News Network

NEW YORK: Former US president Donald Trump is due to be fingerprinted and photographed in a New York courthouse next week as he becomes the first ex-president to face criminal charges, in a case involving a 2016 hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels.

Trump's expected appearance before a judge in Manhattan on Tuesday as the Republican mounts a comeback bid for the presidency could further inflame divisions across the country.

The first US president to try to overthrow an election defeat, inspiring the deadly assault on the Capitol Hill, has signalled he will continue to campaign even as he faces charges.

"I am not afraid of what's to come," he said in a fundraising email on Friday.

Those specific charges have not yet been made public as the indictment remains under seal, but CNN reported that Trump faced more than 30 counts related to business fraud.

Susan Necheles, a Trump attorney, said the former president will plead not guilty.

Another Trump lawyer, Joseph Tacopina, said Trump will not have to wear handcuffs at his court appearance and will likely be released without having to post bail.

"He's ready to fight. He's gearing up," Tacopina said.

Mike Pence, Trump's former vice president, said the charges send a "terrible message" to the world about US justice. "I'm very troubled by it," Pence, a possible 2024 candidate, said at a forum in Washington.

Senior Republicans in the House of Rep-



representatives have vowed to investigate Bragg and demanded he hand over documents and other confidential material from the investigation.

Bragg said on Friday that Congress does not have authority to interfere with the case and accused the lawmakers of escalating political tensions. Bragg's office has been the target of bomb threats in recent weeks. Bragg hasn't disclosed them yet. But Cohen claims Trump approved the hush money and reimbursed him through his company, which falsely recorded the checks to him as legal fees. That would be a criminal misdemeanor of falsifying records. To elevate those claims to a felony, prosecutors would have to prove the record falsification was done to commit or hide a second crime. Bragg may allege that crime was a campaign-law violation designed to help Trump's candidacy in the final days of the 2016 presidential race.

New York state and the federal government have their own campaign finance laws, and Bragg is a state prosecutor enforcing New York laws. If he's alleging Trump was falsifying records to cover up his federal election law violation, that would be a novel legal theory.

Current Border Situation With India Stable, Says Chinese Diplomat

HT News Network

Kolkata: The earlier situation of "emergency control" at the India-China border is a matter of the past, and overall it is stable at present, a senior Chinese diplomat said here.

Interacting with journalists on Friday evening, Minister Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India, Chen Jianjun, said the two Asian giants continue to maintain communication via diplomatic and military channels, promoting the transition of the border situation to "normalised management and control". "The current border situation is overall stable," he said. Indian and Chinese soldiers

clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal



Pradesh on December 9, resulting in minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides. The clash near Yangtse in the sensitive sector took place amid the border standoff between

the two sides in eastern Ladakh. The ties between India and China nosedived

always viewed and handled China-India relations from a strategic and long-term perspective. Although the relationship faces some difficulties, China's position has never wavered and we have been committed to pushing it back on the track of healthy and steady development," Jianjun said. He said the two countries could draw strength from their ancient civilisations, and share oriental wisdom with the world, so as to jointly maintain the stability of the international order. "In a world intertwined with changes and chaos, China and India could speak out loud for more institutional rights of developing countries. "The Chinese side has

Russia to offer food for North Korean weapons - US

HT News Network

Seoul: Russia is sending a delegation to North Korea to offer food in exchange for weapons, US national security spokesperson John Kirby has said.

Mr Kirby said any arms deal between North Korea and Russia would violate UN Security Council resolutions.

The US has previously accused North Korea of supplying arms to the Russian military in Ukraine and the Wagner group of Russia mercenaries.

Pyongyang earlier denied the claims. Mr Kirby told a news conference the US had new information about a deal.

"We also understand that Russia is seeking to send a delegation in North Korea and that Russia is offering North Korea food in exchange for munitions," he said.

The security spokesperson said the US was monitoring the situation, and the alleged deal, closely.

North Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world and has experienced chronic food shortages for decades, including a devastating famine in the mid-to-late 1990s.

In February, experts warned the country, which has one of the most authoritarian governments in the world, was facing a critical food crisis due to a significant drop in production - worsened by poor weather, strict border controls and the effect of international sanctions.

Arrangements finalised for Baisakhi Festival at Dera Baba Banda

HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 01: A meeting was held in the office of the Deputy Commissioner to discuss and finalise arrangements for the Baisakhi Festival. The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Abdul Star. Detailed discussions were held on the arrangements for the upcoming Baisakhi festival at Dera Baba Banda, scheduled to take place from 12-14 April 2023.

Issues relating to security, traffic management, uninterrupted power and water supply, medical aid, ambulance services, fire tenders, repair and maintenance of the road from Simbal Choa to Dera Baba, and cleanliness in and around the Dera Babashrine were discussed.

Naib Tehsildar of Dera Baba Banda Bahadur, Priyanka Bharti, will be the Nodal Officer/Mela Officer under the supervision of Tehsildar Reasi. The Additional Deputy

Commissioner directed concerned departments to ensure the provisioning of a medical van, cleanliness, repair and maintenance of all roads leading to the shrine, arrangement and provisioning of an adequate number of buses for ferrying pilgrims, regulated parking spaces, arrangements for LPG refill, repair and maintenance of all tourism infrastructure including pole lights and law and order situation in specific venues/ Mela sites.

The Additional Deputy



Commissioner also directed all concerned officers to work in tandem to finalise necessary arrangements

well before the festival begins. Other officers present at the meeting included Assistant Commissioner Development, Anirudh Rai; Chief Medical Officer, Ravinder Manhas; Tehsildar Reasi, Suresh Singh; Deputy Superintendent of Police Headquarters; Assistant Regional Transport Officer; and other concerned officers and members of the Dera Baba Banda Bahadur Management Committee. Naib Tehsildar of Dera Baba Banda Bahadur, Priyanka Bharti, will be the Nodal

Officer/Mela Officer under the supervision of Tehsildar Reasi.

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The Additional Deputy Commissioner also directed all concerned officers to work in tandem to finalise necessary arrangements well before the festival begins. Other officers present at the meeting included Assistant Commissioner Development, Anirudh Rai; Chief Medical Officer, Ravinder Manhas; Tehsildar Reasi, Suresh Singh; Deputy Superintendent of Police Headquarters;

Dir Horticulture led team visit orchard infected areas in Baramulla & Bandipora

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 01: A team of Horticulture Department led by Director Horticulture Kashmir, G R MIR today visited several areas in district Baramulla and Bandipora in light of reports of infestation of insects damaging the blossom in apple orchards.

Director was accompanied by Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, Joint Director Horticulture, three other experts from the Department of Horticulture besides experts from SKUAST, Kashmir.

The purpose of the visit was to identify and assess the extent of the damage caused by the infestation and to determine the appropriate measures that can be taken to mitigate its impact on the apple orchards.

The team inspected various affected orchards in the Kreeri area of district



Baramulla and Asham area of district Bandipora and took stock of the severity of the pest.

Speaking on the occasion Director Horticulture advised the farmers never to miss any of the spray recommended by the

Department & SKUAST-K. He emphasized on the orchardists to have a close liaison with the department for better management of the pest.

The experts accompanying the Director identified the insect on spot as Leaf Roller, also called fireworm. The insect damages the blossom of the apple fruit crop thus reducing fruit set and subsequent fruit yield.

The orchardists were given on spot advisory to spray Thiacloprid @ 40ml/100 litre of water or Chlorpyrifos @ 100 ml/100 litre of water. The Ad-hoc advisory in this regard will follow.

Director also visited the Pesticide Testing Laboratory (PTL), Kreeri and took stock of its functioning. He also visited Fruit Plant Nursery Pattan where he took stock of various developmental activities and thoroughly deliberated on all the management practices being carried out.

ADDC Kulgam chairs DLIC meet; 54 cases under Mumkin, 06 cases under Tejeswini, 31 under SEI approved

Farooq Rather



KULGAM, APRIL 01: A District Level Implementation Committee meeting for Mission Youth J&K Mumkin, Tejeswini and Spurring entrepreneurship Schemes was held under the Chairmanship of Additional District Development Commissioner, Showkat Ahmad Rather here at Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

At the outset of the meeting the pace & progress under Mission Youth Schemes was reviewed by the ADDC. On the occasion, he was apprised that under Mumkin 169 cases, under Tejeswini 19 cases and under SEI 12 Cases have been disbursed so far.

The Nodal Officer Mumkin, Tejeswini & Spurring Schemes during the meeting, presented 54 new cases under Mumkin Scheme and 06 Cases under Tejeswini Scheme and 38 cases under Spurring Scheme.

The files were scrutinized by the members and also conducted interview of applicants under the Spurring Scheme, on the occasion.

Later the Committee approved 54 cases under Mumkin Scheme, 6 cases under Tejeswini scheme and 31 cases under Spurring scheme.

The meeting was attended by GM DIC, DSEO, LDM, AD Employment, District Coordinator NRLM and other officers.

Director Agriculture Kashmir inaugurates Sheikh Zahoor Memorial Conference Hall at Mattan Anantnag.

Farooq Rather

SRINAGAR, APRIL 01: The Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal on Saturday inaugurated Sheikh Zahoor Memorial Conference Hall at Mattan Anantnag in presence of Chief Agriculture Officer.

Director Agriculture inspected infra-structure and other facilities available in the premises.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the facility would provide people a decent seating place while officers can also meet public delegations at Conferences Hall.

He impressed upon the officers and officials of the department to discharge duties without added zeal and dedication. He exhorted upon them to be sensitive and responsive to the problems of farmers and put in their best efforts to mitigate the same.

Earlier in his welcome address, CAO, Aijaz Hussain Dar expressed his gratitude to Director Agriculture Kashmir for his constant support, guidance and leadership.

Two medical shops closed down at Kulgam

HT News Network

KULGAM, APRIL 01: A team from the Drug Control Office today inspected various chemist shops in Kulgam and closed down two medical shops for non adherence to the already issued directives for installation of CCTV cameras and computerized billing systems and for violation of conditions of licenses.

Drug Control Officer Kulgam informed that Chemists of the District Kulgam have been already sensitized for safe dispensing practices and reiterated that there will be no relaxation with regard to the adherence to Drugs and Cosmetics rules and other directives from District Administration Kulgam and State Drug Controlling authorities.

He said that these two shops were closed down for non-adherence to the already issued directives.

KU's NSS units continue with outreach activities under G20-Y20 banner

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 1 : Continuing with activities under the umbrella of Y20 and G20 celebrations, the National Service Scheme, University of Kashmir, organised more events at the main and north campuses to broaden its outreach initiatives. Programme Coordinator NSS KU, Dr Mussavir Ahmad said these programmes were held on directions of Vice-Chancellor, Prof Nilofar Khan.

An awareness camp on women's health and hygiene was organised in Gavmarg area of Shalimar, Srinagar, a socially-backward area, to create awareness among women about the importance of their personal health and hygiene. Dr Suraiya, Medical Officer, University Health Centre, urged the women participants to take special care of their personal hygiene, especially during menstruation, to stay away from catching infections. Sanitary napkins, masks and sanitisers were distributed among the participants. The NSS Unit IV at main campus also organised a day-long event on women-centric government schemes, with participation of around 100 volunteers. The sessions were conducted by Dr Shazia Manzoor, Head, Department of Social Work and Bilal Ahmad Bhat, who spoke about Women Helpline Service 181. The NSS Unit II at North Campus conducted a women's health and hygiene camp to promote good hygiene practices among women, which are critical for their overall well-being. Around 150 girl students from Greenland High School and Hanfia Model High School, along with their female teachers, participated in the event. The session was conducted by Dr Shumail Bashir, Associate Professor, GMC Baramulla, Director, North Campus, Prof Bashir Ahmad Ganai.

JJM conducts Day Long Awareness for ISA representatives, Anganwadi & Asha workers

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APRIL 01: In order to ensure effective implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission Scheme, the Jal Shakti Department Baramulla under the banner of Jal Jeevan Mission today conducted a handholding cum awareness programme for implementation Support Agencies (ISA) representatives, Anganwadi/ Asha workers, Water testing lab staff and Women PRIs at Dak Bungalow here.

Additional District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Aijaz Abdullah Saraf presided over the programme as the Chief guest. Joint Director Planning, Mohammad Yousuf Rather and all other functionaries of concerned departments were present in the programme.

On the occasion, the ADDC highlighted the importance of Pani Samitis for their immense role not only in providing adequate



water supply but also in maintaining cleanliness of the surroundings of water bodies.

The ADDC also laid emphasis on encouraging the local communities to take over the rural water supply system for operation and maintenance, and help administration so that the

"Har Ghar nase jal" mission is successful.

During the programme, the ADDC laid emphasis on officers to adhere strictly to the laid guidelines and maintain the highest level of transparency and accountability in the implementation process. He exhorted the officers to put

in coordinated efforts to achieve the desired results and meet the timelines targeted for completion of tasks at all levels.

Meanwhile, it was given out that infrastructure is being developed to ensure a portable tap water connection to every household in the district. Mass Water testing will be done across the district to make sure of the pure drinking water, it added.

Moreover, an awareness was spread among the Anganwadi & Asha workers on various aspects of water such as rain water harvesting, artificial recharge, water quality, water-borne disease, water saving, water handling, drinking water source augmentation, sustainability aspects, etc. During the programme, the ADDC laid emphasis on officers to adhere strictly to the laid guidelines and maintain the highest level of transparency and accountability in the implementation process.

Mega employment Mela organised by Indian Army in collaboration with pravite organisation's in Mawar Langate

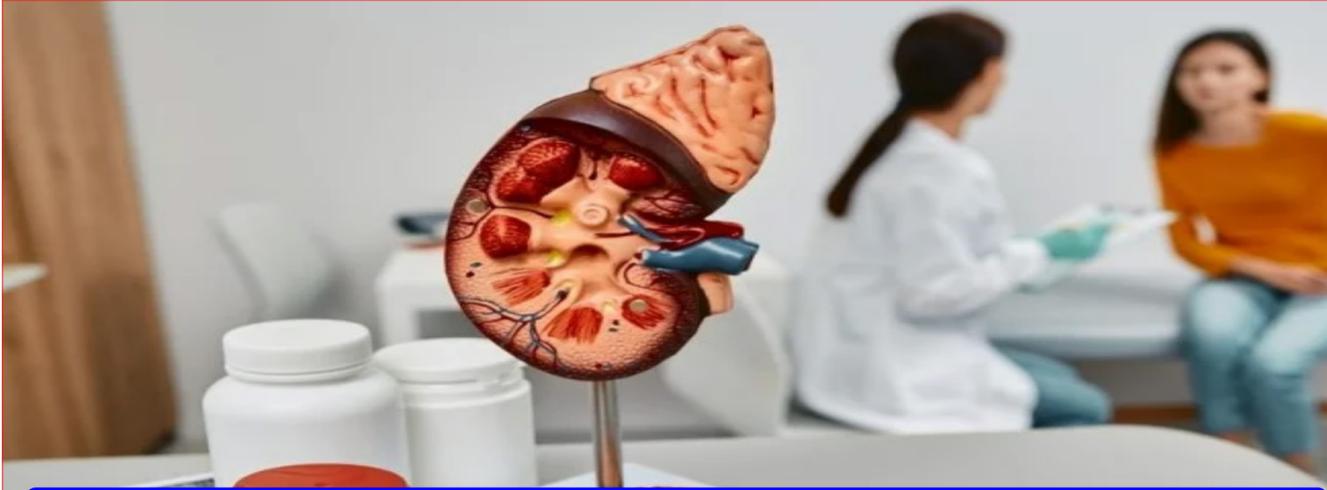
DR. AB QAYOOM

Langate, Apr, 01: Today Indian Army organised Awaam Rozgar Mela at famous playground of Kutlari Mawar area of Langate in North Kashmir's Kupwara district. As per the statement, In an effort to spread awareness about Govt schemes for employment generation, job opportunities, start-up business and address related grievances of the youth of Qalamabad Langate. The Indian Army organised A Mega Rozgar Mela at Kutlari village of Mawar Langate on First April 2023. The event was aimed at providing the information about Government schemes for employment generation, Entrepreneurship, Establishing businesses ideas and its settlement. Indian Army became facilitator in fetching various Government departments at doorstep of population thus connecting benefac-



tor and beneficiary. They were represented by spotlight placements organisation. representative of spotlight placements explained in detail about their respective schemes and facilities being provided by the Govt. One on one inquires of the locals were also settled by the representatives. The locals and prominent persons expressed their gratitude towards Army for this effort contributing towards development of area. Indian Army became facilitator in fetching various Government departments at doorstep of population thus connecting benefactor and beneficiary. They were represented by spotlight placements organisation. representative of spotlight placements explained in detail about their respective schemes and facilities being provided by the Govt. One on one inquires of the locals were also settled by the representatives. (HT)

These Common Medications May be Silently Damage Your Kidneys



Everyday medications stashed in your cabinet could be harming your kidneys. These include common medications like antibiotics, blood pressure drugs, and even some supplements. Some people are at higher risk of kidney damage from these medications including those who are over 60 years of age or who are living with chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, and lupus nephritis.

Everyday medications that you have stashed in your cabinet could harm your kidneys if taken too often or at high doses.

In fact, 20% of kidney damage that is caused by medications applies to both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

"Most people don't give their kidneys a second thought, but in reality, 1 in 3 people in the U.S. are at risk for kidney disease. Drug-induced kidney disease is arguably the most preventable," HaVy Ngo-Hamilton, PharmD, clinical consultant at BuzzRx, told Healthline.

Which common medications could silently damage kidneys?

While there are many medications that can cause kidney damage, below are common ones to keep in mind.

NSAIDs

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) treat pain and inflammation. They include aspirin (Bayer, Ecotrin), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These medications are among the most common culprits of drug-induced kidney disease in which long-term use can lead to chronic kidney disease (CKD).

"These medicines should never be taken every day or often without consultation with your healthcare provider first," Emily Beckman, APRN, nurse practitioner at Norton Community Medical Associates, told Healthline.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics, such as penicillin and cephalosporins, are given to fight infections caused by bacteria. While they are typically prescribed with the intention of finishing the entire prescription, many people don't finish them and keep extras in their cabinets.

"Many people will try to self-medicate with 'leftover' antibiotics when they feel a cold coming on. Not only is this ineffective for a viral-induced cold, but may also cause acute kidney issues," said Ngo-Hamilton.

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) PPIs, such as omeprazole (Prilosec) and lansoprazole (Prevacid), help reduce stomach acid and are among the most commonly prescribed medications.

"While they have a low overall risk for kidney injury, long-term use and sustained higher doses have been found to increase the chance of kidney disease," said Ngo-Hamilton.

Blood pressure medications

Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs) and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are effective at controlling blood pressure and reducing the risk of stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.

Some common ACEIs include benazepril (Lotensin), enalapril (Vasotec), and lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril). Common ARBs include azilsartan (Edarbi), candesartan (Atacand), and irbesartan (Avapro).

"You should not stop taking these medications unless your doctor tells you to," said Ngo-Hamilton. "However, while on these medications, you should be vigilant of other medications that can be harmful for your kidneys to prevent increasing the risk of kidney injury."

Supplements

Supplements can also affect kidney function.

While not all supplements are unhealthy, Beckman suggested talking to your healthcare provider for guidance on the best way to take supplements as part of an overall health plan.

"Medicine is truly lifesaving, but

we always have to be mindful of how our food intake and lifestyle make a huge difference in our overall well-being, including protecting our kidneys," Beckman said.

Ngo-Hamilton agreed. She said the biggest concern with herbal supplements is their interaction with prescription and OTC products, and their ability to cause kidney injury.

"A common Chinese medicine containing aristolochic acid has been linked to chronic kidney injury. These herbal supplements are used to alleviate symptoms of arthritis, menstrual pain, and weight loss," she said.

Psychiatric medications

Medications used to treat mental health conditions can also cause kidney problems, such as Prozac (fluoxetine), which is a commonly prescribed antidepressant.

"Lithium and Elavil (amitriptyline), two mood stabilizers, are also potentially harmful for the kidneys. These psychiatric medications can cause muscle breakdown, leading to the release of myoglobin into the bloodstream. Since the kidneys work to filter myoglobin, kidney damage happens as a result," said Ngo-Hamilton.

How much of these medications is too much?

Knowing how much medication is too much or what a "hard-stop" is before certain medications can cause harm to your kidneys is difficult to answer, said Ngo-Hamilton.

"Unfortunately, there is no cut-and-dried answer to that question," she said.

Generally, for OTC products, if you take more than what's instructed on the product label, or for an extended period of time, it may be dangerous to kidney health, she added.

For prescription medications, she said taking more than what

your doctor prescribed or using leftover antibiotics, antivirals, and pain relievers, can all be harmful to the kidneys.

Who's at the highest risk of kidney damage from medication?

Some people are at a higher risk of drug-induced nephrotoxicity (kidney damage) than others. Ngo-Hamilton said risk factors include:

- Being over 60 years old
- Having an underlying renal insufficiency that is caused by other diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and lupus nephritis

Living with medical conditions, such as intravascular volume depletion (seen in vomiting, diarrhea, and bleeding), diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases like high blood pressure, liver dysfunction, electrolyte imbalances, and sepsis

If you are at high risk, talk with your doctor about assessing your baseline renal function before taking any medication.

What are signs of kidney disease?

Drug-induced nephrotoxicity can contribute to two types of kidney disease— chronic kidney disease (CKD) and acute kidney injury (AKI).

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) develops gradually over time. Along with certain medications, CKD can also be the result of a chronic condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, said Ngo-Hamilton.

"Most patients with CKD don't have any symptoms in the early stages, which is why it's known as 'a silent killer.' The condition is

typically discovered during routine testing for unrelated problems, and a simple blood and urine test are used to diagnose CKD," she said.

Symptoms of CKD include:

- Swelling of the lower extremities, especially the ankles
- Decrease in the amount of urine
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Confusion, shortness of breath, and seizures, if left untreated
- There are 5 stages of kidney diseases and their symptoms can overlap.

"However, the signs and symptoms will worsen as the disease progresses. Stage 5 is when dialysis or a kidney transplant is necessary to continue living," said Ngo-Hamilton.

Acute kidney injury (AKI), also called acute renal failure, is when kidney failure or kidney damage occurs suddenly within a few hours or a few days. AKI is common in people who are in the hospital, in intensive care units, and especially in older adults, according to the National Kidney Foundation (NKF).

How to prevent drug-induced kidney disease?

If kidney damage is due to medication, discontinuing the medication, replacing fluids, and treating kidney inflammation are ways to treat it.

However, none of this should be done without the direction of a physician.

"For a lot of us, taking medication for a chronic illness is not an option," said Ngo-Hamilton, noting that more than 55 million Trusted Source Americans are currently taking antihypertensive drugs to maintain heart health. "All medications come with side effects, some more significant than others; most of the time, the benefits outweigh the risks."

NEWS

World Autism Awareness Day: Lifestyle changes for expecting mothers to reduce risk of autism in babies

World Autism Awareness Day is observed on April 2 every year. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental dis-



order that affects a person's ability for social communication and behaviour and while its origin is usually genetic and there is no cure for it, one can reduce risk of their child developing the condition by making some important lifestyle changes. (Also read: Virtual Autism: Can too much screen time make your child autistic? Expert take)

According to studies, higher maternal intake of certain nutrients and supplements can reduce risk of autism. (Shutterstock)

According to studies, higher maternal intake of certain nutrients and supplements can reduce risk of autism. (Shutterstock)

"While there is no known cure for ASD, early diagnosis and intervention can improve the quality of life of individuals with the disorder. To note there is no sure way to prevent autism during pregnancy, there are some important steps that expecting mothers can take to reduce the risk of their child developing the condition. It usually affects children before 3 years of life and boys are prone four times more than girls," says Dr Madhu Juneja, Senior Consultant, OB-GYN, Cloudnine Group of Hospitals, Pune, Kalyani Nagar MBBS MS (Obgy).

Regular check-ups

Attending prenatal appointments is crucial to ensure that the pregnancy is progressing as it should be. Your doctor can identify any potential problems and thereby provide guidance to maintain a healthy pregnancy. The list of screening tests can identify any potential issues with the foetus. This can include genetic testing, which can identify if the baby is at higher risk for autism. Early detection can lead to early intervention and improved outcomes.

Diet and exercise

Expecting mothers should prioritise their own health during pregnancy. This includes eating a healthy diet, staying hydrated, and getting enough sleep. Good diet and meditation or exercise reduce stress, which can have a negative impact on the baby's development. Research suggests that maternal stress during pregnancy can increase the risk of ASD.

Avoid exposure to harmful substances

Exposure to harmful substances during pregnancy can increase the risk of developmental disorders, including ASD. To reduce the risk expecting mothers should avoid smoking, drinking alcohol, and using drugs. Exposure to environmental toxins, such as lead, can also increase the risk of developmental disorders as stated in multiple studies and diagnosed on ultrasound during pregnancy.

Get vaccinated

There is a common myth that vaccines can cause autism. However, this has been thoroughly debunked by numerous studies. In fact, getting vaccinated can actually reduce the risk of certain illnesses that can increase the risk of developmental disorders. Expecting mothers should accept the recommended vaccine.

Walnuts for heart health: Effect on the gut may be key

Since walnuts have heart health benefits, researchers from Texas Tech University and Juniata College conducted a study to analyze what impact they have on the gut microbiome.

The researchers were curious whether it is possible that the heart benefits derived from walnuts start in the gut.

The researchers assigned diets to three groups of people, including one group that ate whole walnuts, and then tested biological samples from each participant.

Their findings showed that people who consumed the diet with walnuts had higher levels of the amino acid L-homoarginine in their guts.

Since people with lower levels of homoarginine are at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease, this finding showed that it might be possible to improve heart health by making dietary changes that affect the gut.

While scientists know that certain

foods improve heart health, there are many questions remaining, such as how this happens, and what other foods exist that may lower cardiovascular risk.

Researchers from Texas Tech University in Lubbock and Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA, wanted to learn more about how walnuts may benefit the heart, and whether that starts in the gut.

They conducted their study by analyzing the genetic expression of microbes in participants who either did or did not consume a diet with walnuts.

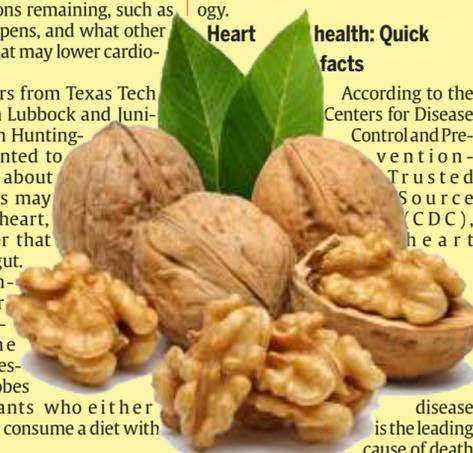
The study results were presented at Discover DMB, which is the annual meeting of the American Society

of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

Heart health: Quick facts

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Trusted Source (CDC), heart

disease is the leading cause of death in adults in the United States. Nearly 700,000 people die from heart disease each year.



Many factors influence heart health, and an important one is nutrition. People who follow diets that are high in fat and cholesterol are more likely to develop conditions that can eventually lead to heart disease.

To help reduce the risk of heart disease, people can choose diets that are low in fat, feature lean meats, and are low in sugar and salt. Avoiding processed foods or foods high in trans fats can help as well.

The role of the gut microbiome

A healthy gut microbiome is imperative to good health. The gut microbiota is a group of microorganisms that colonize the gastrointestinal tract. Some estimates suggest that there are 1,013 bacterial Trusted Source in the human gastrointestinal tract, about as many as human cells in the body.

Sometimes illness or lifestyle choices can cause changes to the gut microbiome and make bad bacteria out-

weigh good bacteria.

The NIH Trusted Source note that "[t]he gut microbiome plays an important role in human health and influences the development of chronic diseases ranging from metabolic disease to gastrointestinal disorders and colorectal cancer."

There are ways to improve gut health, such as taking probiotic supplements to rebalance the gut microbiome. Foods people can eat to help with this include yogurt, pickled vegetables, and kombucha tea.

What the new study did

The researchers who conducted the current study were interested in how walnuts impact gut health and improve heart health.

Walnuts have a higher alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) content, which is significant because ALA may impact Trusted Source neurological and cardiovascular health.

The researchers analyzed data from

42 participants for this study. The participants all had an elevated risk for cardiovascular disease.

All participants initially followed a traditional Western diet for 2 weeks. According to the researchers, their nutritional breakdown included a 50% carbohydrate intake, 16% protein, and 34% fats.

The scientists took stool samples to analyze the participants' gut microbiomes, and then placed the participants in one of three groups.

The first group, which was called the "walnut diet group", consisted of participants who ate 57-99 grams (g.) of walnuts per day - roughly 1 cup of walnuts.

The second group consumed the same amounts of omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid present in walnuts without eating walnuts. This was the "matched walnut control diet."

The third group was assigned to supplement ALA with oleic acid - while not eating walnuts -

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2023:

Right knee injury may cut short Titans, NZ skipper Williamson's season

AHMEDABAD: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson's continuation in the ongoing IPL season has been put under doubt after suffering a right knee injury during his team's winning effort against Chennai Super Kings here. The 32-year-old got injured following a nasty fall while fielding on the boundary during the CSK innings. He had limped off the field in the 13th over on Friday.

The extent of his injury is not yet known, but going by what was seen on Friday night, it did not seem like a minor injury.

Williamson, who was making his Gujarat Titans debut, intercepted a ball headed for a possible six off CSK opener Ruturaj Gaikwad's bat. He managed to palm the ball into the field of play before it bounced onto the boundary ropes. But he fell awkwardly on the ground and clutched his right knee in pain.

He was taken off after receiving on-field treatment and did not come back to bat with B Sai Sudharsan coming in as a substitute fielder first and later he took Williamson's place in the Titans' playing XI under the Impact Player rule.

Titans captain Hardik Pandya had said at the post-match press conference that he did not know how serious was the injury.

"It's knee (injury) for sure but I don't have any update about what exactly has happened. I don't know how seri-



ous the injury is and how much time it will take (to heal). Right now there is no time frame," Pandya said.

"I had just messaged him. He (Williamson) has gone for the scans, once he comes back after the scans and doctors check (on him), then only we will be able to know what exactly it is."

In Auckland, New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said Williamson's injury was a big blow to the national team. "Our first thoughts are obvi-

ously with him, we're not sure at this stage of the severity of the injury. He's being assessed in the next 24-48 hours, so we will know more after that," said Stead, who had spoken to Williamson since the incident and found him in "OK" spirits.

"All we know at this stage is it's his right knee. Unfortunately, I can't give you much more than that now until we find out more information," Stead was quoted as saying by www.stuff

co.nz. "It's not nice to see anyone, let alone your captain of your white ball team, being injured. It's a big blow for him, and it's a big blow for us."

Williamson had played for Sunrisers Hyderabad since 2015, and captained them fully in 2018 and 2022, and partially in 2019 and 2021.

IPL 2023:

Bayliss backs Curran, Shahrulkh to come good for Punjab

CHENNAI: After the 2022 IPL auction, Tamil Nadu middle-order batter and big hitter Shahrulkh Khan was the talk of the town. Having been released by Punjab Kings before the auction, he was once again signed by the same franchise for Rs 9 crore and was expected to make an impact in the coming season. However, he got to play only in eight games and managed 117 runs at a paltry 16.71.

In the domestic season that followed, Khan's poor run continued as he was not able to make an impact for this state. As another season beckons on the franchise, all eyes are on the TN batter, especially in the absence of their star opener Jonny Bairstow who will be missing the season due to injury. This time, the middle-order bat will have more responsibility on his shoulders, but more importantly, it seems like he has the backing of the team management to come good.

Head coach Trevor Bayliss said as much ahead of their opening game against Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday. The former England coach backed Khan and Liam Livingstone to step up for the franchise this season. "Shahrulkh looks in good form, he is hitting the ball well and hard. Livingstone is one of those players who are not with us here just at the moment but we are hoping to have him with us very shortly," Bayliss told the reporters in Mohali on Friday.

A team that is filled with bonafide T20 stars, added Sam Curran to their side, having paid the highest price in the history of the tournament. Reiterating the role of the all-rounder in the setup, Bayliss said that they are hoping that Curran would be the X-factor for them. "I think before I came on board, they recognised, after the last season, that they need someone to finish the innings off and our tactic at the auction was to get an all-rounder who could bat towards the end of an innings but is also able to bowl. The idea was to get an international all-rounder and we are hoping that Sam Curran will be that player for us. He has done pretty well in international cricket and in the last (T20) World Cup. We are quite happy that we got him on board."

While Bairstow is ruled out for the entire season, Punjab will also not have the services of Kagiso Rabada and Livingstone for the first few games. In their absence, the Shikhar Dhawan-led side will be looking at the young Indian players to rise to the occasion. "We have got about three guys who are unavailable from the original squad at the moment who would be hard to replace and these are good international players. But it is an opportunity for other players to make a name for themselves."



Ruturaj will do wonders for Indian cricket: Hardik Pandya

AHMEDABAD: Chennai Super Kings batter Ruturaj Gaikwad's dazzling knock of 92 went in vain in the IPL opener against Gujarat Titans but opposition captain Hardik Pandya was all praise of him, saying that he will do wonders for Indian cricket.

Gaikwad's classy knock off just 50 balls from which he struck four boundaries and nine sixes took CSK to 178 for 7. The Titans, however, chased down the target with four balls to spare, riding on Shubman Gill's 63 off 36 balls on Friday.

"Some of the shots he (Gaikwad) played was nothing to do with the bowling. There were some tremendous shots. Full credit to him for the way he batted, and if he continues to do so he is going to do wonders for Indian cricket," Pandya told reporters at the post-match conference. "He has the game and when the time comes I am sure the Indian cricket team will back him enough," he said.

The 26-year-old Gaikwad has played nine T20s after

making his debut in July 2021, scoring 135 runs at a modest average of 16.87. He had also played one ODI in 2022.

Pandya said the way Gaikwad was batting on Friday, it was getting difficult to bowl at him.

"Obviously, we all know what kind of a player he (Gaikwad) is. It looked like at one time CSK would score 220-230. We were finding it difficult on what area we should bowl at him. I had genuinely felt that we would not get him out at all," the Titans captain said.

"He is an all-round cricketer, some of the shots he played were not bad balls, actually good balls and that makes a lot of difference. As a bowling unit and as a captain, that made my job more difficult," he said.

Analysing his side's win in the last over, Pandya said, "A couple of shots from myself and Shubman put us in a difficult situation but again Rahul (Tewatia) getting the best out of his ability and Rashid coming in and showing what he can do. So overall we are quite happy but in a way, a lot of things we can learn from this victory. Even (if) we had lost we would have learnt a lot of things."

The Titans needed 41 off the last five overs but CSK managed to take the game down to the wire. It needed a cameo from Rashid Khan (10 not out off 3 balls) to settle the nerves in the Titans dressing room.



How can I call you back.....?

"Years have passed but the mark my father left on this world will never fade. Today we mark the 9th anniversary of his passing—and we celebrate the love and memories he gave us."

"Through thick and thin you were always there to guide and protect me. You were the best father anyone could ever have. You will always be in my heart. May Almighty ALLAH be pleased with you, bestow your grave with countless blessings and grant you a highest place in Jannah."

آمین بجاہ النبی الامین صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم

In this regard congregational Isaal E Sawaab meeting will be organized at their ancestral grave yard/Jamia Masjid Zagigam Pulwama on (Monday) 3rd April, 2023 after Asr Prayers.

From Your Loving & Thankful Son

Al Haaj Bashir Ahmad Naik

The Prophet (SA) said:
Whoever builds a Masjid for the sake of Allah Almighty, like a sparrow's nest or even smaller, Allah Almighty will build for him a house in Paradise. (Ibn-e-Majah)

"Whoever builds a mosque, desiring thereby Allah's pleasure, Allah builds for him the like of it in paradise." [Bukhari]

MARKAZI JAMIA MASJID TILAGAM (Pattan)

Masjid is under construction and needs huge finances for its completion. For the last two years no work could be undertaken because of financial constraints. Those who want to earn the pleasure of Allah & His Prophet (SA) are requested to donate generously.

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