



India greatly benefited from Vajpayee's leadership: PM Modi



■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 16 paid homage to BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary and said India greatly benefited from his

leadership.

He joined President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and many members of his Cabinet and leaders from different parties in a prayer meeting at 'Sadaiv Atal', the

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LG Sinha pays tributes to former PM Vajpayee on his death anniversary

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Jammu and Kashmir



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on
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Kashmir shrines, grand mosque offers Polish tourists profound experience of spirituality



■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: A nine-member foreign tourist group from Poland while

exploring the beauty and spirituality of Srinagar city Wednesday said that the spiritual atmosphere at mosques and

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NEWS BRIEF

Life In Jail For Man Who Killed Minor Son In Ramban

BANIHAL/JAMMU, AUG 16: A court in Ramban on Wednesday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for poisoning to death his two-year-old son in the Jammu and Kashmir district about 10 years ago.

District and Sessions Judge, Ramban, R Sjasrotia convicted Mohd Shafi, a resident of Ind village, in the murder of his son Mohd Suleman, a police spokesperson said.

He said the boy was found dead under suspicious circumstances at his home on October 30, 2013 and during the course of inquiry, it came to the

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Operations Of 12 Medical Stores Suspended Across Jammu

JAMMU, AUG 16: A special drive was carried out in Jammu Province where-in surprise inspections of Drug Sale Establishments were carried out under the supervision of Concerned Empowered Authorities. The drive was targeted to ensure that the drugs consisting of habit forming ingredients are strictly sold to the needy patients as per mandate of law and pharmacies operate strictly in consonance with the mandate of law and in the best interest of patient care.

Statutory Drug samples of
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Protest In Jammu Against Installation Of Prepaid Electricity Meters

JAMMU, AUG 16: Scores of power consumers held a protest here on Wednesday against the decision of the Jammu and Kashmir administration to install prepaid smart meters.

The protesters also blocked the highway for nearly two hours, alleging that smart meter users in Jammu were receiving exorbitant bills amounting to thousands of rupees.

Meanwhile, officials said two smart meters installed by the Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (JPDC) caught fire in Dontallah Bazar and Pir Mitha areas in the city under circumstances raising suspicions.

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Sarthal, a tourist spot in Kathua, lacks mobile network, other facilities

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Sarthal, a famous tourist spot along the Pathankot-Bhaderwah road in Kathua district lacks a mobile network and other basic facilities due to which locals and tourists are suffering.

The residents of the area told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Sarthal, falling in the Bani tehsil of Kathua, witnesses a good rush of locals as well as tourists but they are suffering in the

absence of facilities.

Mudasir Ali, a local social activist, said the area has the potential to emerge as a better tourist spot. Even without facilities, hundreds of people visit here, he said.

The place is at the tail end of Kathua and is "no less beautiful than Kashmir", he said, adding that the government is not paying attention to it.

The main issue, Mudasir said, is the lack of a mobile network. If any untoward

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Fully prepared to tackle swelling dengue cases: Principal Jammu GMC

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUG 16: In the backdrop of rising cases of dengue, Government Medical College and Hospital, Jammu, Principal Dr Ashutosh Gupta on Wednesday said the department is fully prepared to cope with the situation.



"Jammu GMC is fully prepared to cope with the situation arising due to increasing dengue cases," Gupta told a media conference here.

He was flanked by top doctors of the hospital. Epidemiologist Dr Harjeet Rai said, "We

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Chhari Mubarak taken to Shankaracharya temple on Shravan Amavasya



■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Chhari Mubarak,

the silver mace of Swami Amarnath, was taken to the historic Shankaracharya

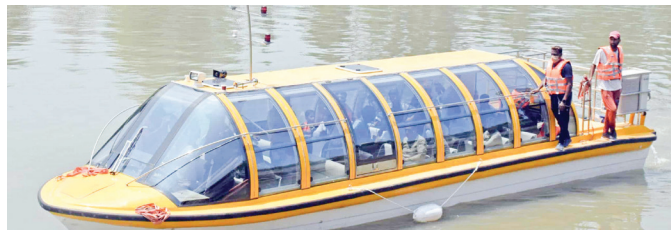
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Water Transport In River Jhelum

Poor planning and non-utilisation of assets led to idle investment of Rs 6 crore, govt went ahead with project despite studies showing that cruise couldn't pass through most of bridges: CAG

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has revealed that poor project planning and non-utilization of assets created for water transport in river Jhelum



in Srinagar has led to an idle investment of Rs six crore.

In its report tabled in the Parliament on August 09, the CAG said the Jammu & Kashmir government went ahead with the project despite studies

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Kashmir willow wicker gaining popularity after adopting modern designs

■ Qiesar Baba

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: For the first time in decades Kashmir-made willow wicker items are gaining popularity all across the world after adopting new look and modern designs.

58-year-old Bashir Ahmad Dar, who is running "Shaaksaz Willow Wicker Craft Producer Company limited" at Peerpora in central Kashmir's Ganderbal District started in 2020, claimed that wicker willow is presently yielding good revenue for the artisans.

"Yes, after the third G20 Tourism

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Advocate Shabir Bukhari Bereaved

His Mother in Law, Rafiq Bano Left for Heavenly Abode

Congregational Fathe-ha-Khawani to be held on 18th Aug at her ancestral graveyard Malkhah.

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR AUG 16: Mother in Law of Advocate Syed Shabir Bukhari passed away today after prolonged illness. Rafiq Bano had met with an accident and was in coma for more

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Police and Civil Administration Felicitates Daily Headlines Today Senior Correspondent for 'Positive, Transparent Journalism'.

■ HT News Network

Handwara, Aug. 16: HT-District Police Headquarters Handwara and Civil Administration Handwara has felicitated Senior Correspondent Dr. Abdul Qayoom The Daily Headlines Today's in recognition to his 'Positive and transparent journalism' in a function on 77th Independence held here on Tuesday at DPL Handwara. The senior journalist received the award by the hands of Senior Police



and Civil Administration officials. (HT) Highlighting contributions made by the

journalist for over a decade now, the top officer on the occasion remarked that the

scribe was being awarded "for his dedicated efforts in highlighting the public grievances of the frontier district in print/electronic media and for his positive and transparent journalism."

Dr Ab Qayoom has a vast experience in the field of journalism and even has put his life in risk on several occasions just for the people of area in general and people of Langate and Handwara in particular", he said. (HT)

Ganie attend (High Tea) party, organised by LG administration on 77th Independence at Srinagar

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

Langate, Aug. 16: Newly elected trade president of Langate market Lateef Ah Ganie was invited for (High Tea) by Honorable Lieutenant Governor JKUT Shri Manoj Sinha, Chief Secretary on 77th Independence Day on Tuesday. While talking to HEADLINES TODAY Ganie said, As an invite of tea party organised by LG administration at Srinagar on the occasion of 15 Aug.



As elected representative (President) of Langate Traders Union/Federation i also

attended the party. Ganie said, It was great pleasure for me to attend a such kind of high

profile tea party, in which honorable LG Jk Shri Manoj Sinha along with Chief Secretary directly interact with me. During the first get-together I also raised many issues related Langate Traders Union Federation, meanwhile the LG assured of their redressal. He also expressed gratitude to Hon'ble LG for providing his busy schedule during High tea party to listen to the issues related Langate trade union/Federation.

Mission Director, Poshan Abhiyaan visits Shopian, Reviews Poshan sector schemes, directs for achieving targets in a time bound manner.

■ FAROOQ RATHER

Shopian, 16th August:- Mission Director Poshan Abhiyaan, J&K Rubeena Kousar today visited district Shopian in order to review the functioning of the department.

She held a joint meeting of officers and supervisors of Poshan Projects of Shopian and Kulgam districts in the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex Shopian.

The meeting was attended by the District Programme Officer, Shopian,



CDPOs and Supervisors of both districts.

On the occasion, DPO, Shopian and Kulgam, Nisar

Ahmad highlighted the progress and achievements under various schemes of the department through a

detailed Power Point Presentation.

MD called upon all Officers and officials to work relentlessly for the welfare of women and children of the district.

The Mission Director, on the occasion emphasized on bringing transparency and accountability at all levels of the department and directed the officers and the officials to achieve 100% targets set by the department in a time bound manner.

Police carries bung destruction drive in Handwara

■ Dr Abdul Qayoom



Handwara August 16: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police in Handwara destroyed wild bung in Handwara and Chogal areas.

A police party of Police Station Handwara along with concerned Magistrate, Municipal Committee Handwara and locals carried out a special drive against wild bung in Handwara & Chogal areas. During the drive huge quantity of wild bung spread over vast areas of land was destroyed. General public of these areas have widely appreciated the action taken by the Police and assured their full cooperation in future to eradicate the drug menace from the society. Community members are requested to come forward with any information regarding cultivation of contrabands in their neighbourhood. Persons found indulging in drug peddling & cultivation of contraband substances shall be dealt as per law.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost No PLATE of my vechile (Scooty) bearing Ragistration No: JK01AG/9214 From Lal Bazar To SHALIMAR .

Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the R T O Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Nisar Ali Jo
S/o:- Assad ullah Jo
R/o:- Nbdipora Hawal Srinagar

Illegal extraction and transportation of minerals;

Police arrests 03 persons, seizes 03 tractors in Baramulla

■ HT News Network

Baramulla August 16: Acting tough against the persons involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police have arrested 03 persons and seized 03 tractors in Baramulla. Police parties under the supervision of SDPO Kreeri Shri Khalid Ashraf-JKPS assisted by SHO PS Chandoosa & IC PP Wagoora, seized 03 tractors and arrested their drivers for their involvement in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals at Bandipayeen Chandoosa & Vizer Wagoora. They have been identified as Nasrullah Khanday son of Manzoor Ahmad resident of Dandmoh at Bandipayeen Chandoosa, Mohammad Umar son of Mohammad Sultan Chopan resident of Mirangund Nowpora & Javid Ahmad son of Ghulam Qadir Mir resident of Saloosa Kreeri. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and investigations have been taken up.

Persons found indulging in illegal extraction activities shall be dealt with as per law. Community members are requested to share information regarding the crimes in their neighbourhood with their concerned police units. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and investigations have been taken up. Persons found indulging in illegal extraction activities shall be dealt with as per law. Community members are requested to share information regarding the crimes in their neighbourhood with their concerned police units.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Son's Date of Birth certificate (DOB) as His DOB is 23/12/2016 Now I am applying for the issuance of Date of Birth certificate from (B D O) office WAGOORA if anybody have any objection in this regard He /She may Contact with BDO office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....MOHAMMAD ALTAF GANAIE
F/OMOHAMMAD RIZWAN GANAIE
R/OBRANNAR KAKOTHAL
BlockWAGOORA

HT - KASHMIR

DC Reasi presides over Public Outreach camp at Panthal Assures quality redressal of public grievances

■ HT News Network

REASI, AUGUST 16: The Block Divas meeting was held today at Panchayat Panthal under the Chairpersonship of District Development Commissioner, Babila Rakwal.

At the outset, District Development Council, Panthal, Rajinder Mengi; Chairperson Block Development Council, Chander Mohan Singh and local Sarpanch, Suresh Kumar Mengi discussed and projected a range of issues of the area.

The District Development Commissioner and other government functionaries listened to the people's issues projected by the public deputations and PRIs of local and adjoining Pan-



chayats.

They apprised the District Commissioner about a range of issues pertaining to their areas and sought her intervention for timely redressal of the grievances.

The locals & PRI members demanded up-gradation of water & Power infrastruc-

ture, Road construction, Blacktopping of some Roads & raised other issues of public importance.

Interacting with the people, the District Development Commissioner said the District Administration is ensuring timely and quality redress of the genuine

public demands through a vibrant mechanism.

At the end, the DDC passed instructions to the representative of line Departments to take appropriate action to address the raised issues and the same would be reviewed in next Block Divas.

The camp ended with the vote of thanks by Block Development Officer, Panthal.

Anirudh Rai, Assistant Commissioner Development; Deepak Dubey, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Katra; Mehak Chowdhary, Block Development Officer along with staff and Officers/officials of line Departments were also present in the Block Divas.

Patriotic Extravaganza hosted by Directorate of Tourism Jammu at Musical Fountain Bagh-e-Bahu Jammu

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 16: The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu embarked Jammuites on a Patriotic journey, weaved together with magnificent ceremonies under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Meri Maati Mera Desh initiatives of the Government, movie screening along with Tricolored theme illumination and Musical Fountain Show was commemorated at Aquaplex Crown Bagh-e-Bahu Jammu on the eve of 77th Independence Day of India.

The event was beautifully crafted in an unforgettable tapestry of Independence Day Celebrations, under the stars and the open skies amid tricolored illumination all around bringing in the beautiful symphony of nature and patriotic essence.

The event was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar by lighting of Diyas which was followed with the ceremonial recital of National Anthem and the much awaited Open Air Cinema experience was formally thrown open for public with the screening of Hindi Movie 'Uri: The Surgical Strike'.

Pertinent to mention here that this is the first time that Open Air Cinema Experience has been launched in Jammu and cinema lovers can now enjoy movies sitting under the open skies at Bagh-e-Bahu Jammu. The event was a perfect amalgamation of entertainment and Patriotism leaving an indelible mark on everyone's heart. Jammuites also enjoyed the Open Air Cinema while paddle Boating in the lake at the Musical Fountain arena which was a dreamy experience for those present on the occasion. The festivities continued to unfold with captivating cinematic experience at the exquisite Aquaplex Crown Musical Fountain, Bagh-e-Bahu, as the silver screen came alive with the heroic tale of 'Uri', under the starlit sky. This awe-inspiring celebration, a beacon under the initiatives of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and 'Meri Maati Mera Desh', epitomized the spirit of our nation's 77th Independence Day. The echoes of freedom resounded in every heart, as Jammu basked in the glory of this remarkable commemoration. The enthralling movie captivated the audience with its portrayal of sequence of events related to



Surgical Strike and its inspirational narratives. The movie underscores the sacrifices and valour of our armed forces serving as a poignant reminder of the value of Freedom and the inspirational bravery of our armed forces. As a symbol of unwavering respect for the nation, the event started with the harmonious rendition of the National Anthem, bringing everyone together during this heartwarming display of patriotism and unity.

Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar said that the Aquaplex Crown Bagh-e-Bahu is a great endeavour of the Directorate of Tourism Jammu to bring Open Air Cinema Experience to Jammu region and it is an added feature to the ever growing diverse list of tourism products being brought in to the Jammu region. He hoped that people in large numbers especially bloggers, social media influencers shall come to this place and watch movies under the Open Sky which is going to be a regular feature and movies shall be displayed on the Open Screen under the supervision of Directorate of Tourism Jammu. Director Tourism Jammu, Vivekanand Rai expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the attendees for joining in this patriotic celebration and said that the Directorate of Tourism Jammu has organized series of events under the Meri Maati Mera Desh initiative of the Government wherein Dogra Food Festival was organized at Duggardhani Kheral in District Reasi, Suchetgarh Border Familiarization Tour was flagged off, Mega Cultural Festival was organized at Bahu Plaza Jammu, Tiranga Rally was also organized at Raghunath Bazaar Jammu and the Open Air Movie screening is a part of the month long celebra-

tions being organized by the Directorate of Tourism Jammu to commemorate 77th Independence Day of our great nation.

Joint Director Tourism Jammu, Sunaina Mehta added that Diya Lighting ceremony, under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Meri Maati Mera Desh initiatives, envisions a unified celebration of India's valour, commemorating the nation's journey of freedom and puts emphasis on the fundamental aspect of expressing heartfelt gratitude to all the bravehearts who have made the supreme sacrifices for our great nation. She further emphasized that Bahu Fort is a symbol of reverence for all Jammuites and Tourism Department is committed to promote it as a major attraction for the tourists. Such initiatives of Jammu Tourism Directorate are dedicated towards nurturing a deeper connection between the people and their motherland, reinforcing the values of togetherness and pride to our heritage and culture.

This impressionable experience of entertainment, celebration of Culture, Heritage and patriotism, reflecting the collective spirit of unity and pride that resonated throughout the venue, was received with rousing response from the visitors who chanted 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' in between the event. The tranquil ambience served as a canvas for the attendees to unite, celebrate and reaffirm their commitment towards national progress and development.

Among those present on the occasion were Dr. Umesh Shan Deputy Director Tourism Jammu., Sugandhi Banotra Assistant Director Tourism Jammu, Ambika Bali Assistant Director Tourism Katra and other officials of the Tourism Department.

Director Tourism Jammu hoists National Flag at Tourist Reception Centre Jammu, holds Tiranga Rally on the eve of Independence Day

JAMMU, AUGUST 16: The Directorate of Tourism Jammu commemorated the 77th Independence Day with a resplendent ceremony at Tourist Reception Centre Jammu displaying patriotism and celebrating unity of our great nation.

The festivities commenced with the ceremonial hoisting of the Tricolor by the Director Tourism Jammu, Vivekanand Rai who was joined by Joint Director Tourism Jammu, Sunaina Sharma Mehta. The ceremony marked by resounding and spirited chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Vande Mataram', as officials of the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu and Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development

Corporation embarked on a special vibrant 'Tiranga Rally' towards Ragunath bazar which culminated at the Bazaar Chowk.

This fervent procession, led by the Director Tourism and his team of senior officers adorning colours of National Flag and proudly carrying the Tricolor in their hands, meandered its way through the Residency Road and Veer Marg area fulfill the atmosphere with energetic vibes of Nationalism and Patriotism.

The Tiranga Rally was a harmonious collaboration with the Raghunath Bazar Association and was joined by IRP personnel along with general public.

Sweets, symbolic of the confectionery of unity, were exchanged, thereby symbolizing the blending of diverse flavors within the tapestry of our nation. The resonant singing of National Anthem gracefully reverberated through the air, encapsulating the very soul of our shared identity and forging an indomitable spirit of camaraderie.

On this patriotic occasion, Director Tourism Jammu delivered an inspiring address reflecting the significance of Independence Day and also enumerated the unwavering dedication of the Directorate to uphold the ideals and values enshrined in our Constitution.

DC Rajouri conducts public outreach camp at Doongi, addresses concerns of locals

Awareness imparted to participants on NMBA, IMI 5.0, Mission Youth & other Govt schemes

RAJOURI, AUG 16: In an earnest endeavor to address public concerns, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal conducted a public outreach camp in Doongi block as part of the weekly Block Diwas initiative.

Engaging with locals, the DC listened to their grievances, assuring them of swift redressal. The community members raised a wide range of issues seeking road maintenance, school upgrading, meeting staff shortage and improvement in healthcare services.

Among the specific concerns highlighted were repair of roads from Shahpur to Thatyali and Tek to Thatyali, Sasal Kote to

Challas, besides provision of Road link from main road to Naibat, Workshop bridge to Mua Galli and main road to Khor Mohalla; Bank branch and ATM facility at Doongi Bhramna, sanctioning of a PHC for Sasal Kote panchayat drainage work on Agrati to Jabbar road etc.

Other issues projected included speedy completion of JJM Schemes, rationalization of staff in Educational Institutions, repair of school building at Lookote, construction of a community hall at Danma, inclusion of left out beneficiaries under PMAY-G, adequate staff at Government Middle school Ratti Mitti etc.

The officers capitalized on the opportunity to inform the public about government initiatives, encouraging them to avail the benefits of the same.

The Deputy Commissioner called for close coordination among departments and PRIs and active participation of the public to achieve developmental goals. He especially emphasized youth involvement in self-employment schemes for self-reliance.

Prompt action was taken as the Deputy Commissioner issued instant directives to concerned departments for time-bound resolution of highlighted issues. Responding to the water



scarcity problem, he reiterated the administration's commitment to provide tap water to all households under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

The DC further assured to take up the demand for health sub-centre and construction of Government Degree College Building Doongi with the concerned authorities.

The successful public outreach camp earned commendation from locals for its effectiveness in bridging the gap between the administration and citizens. It stood as a platform for airing grievances, with government officials demonstrating responsiveness and accountability.

This event reaffirmed the district administration's unwavering commitment to swiftly and effectively addressing public issues, ensuring people's well-being remains the top priority.

Among the others present were DDC Member Doongi, Khalid Chowdhary; CPO, Mohammad Khurshid; ACD, Vijay Kumar; DDE, Qadeer Ul Rehman; CEO Education Sultana Kouser; ACP, Sheraz Chohan; DSWO, Wakeel Ahmed Bhatt; EXEN Jal Shakti Rajouri, Ashwini Sharma; EXEN PWD (R&B) Rajouri, Sardar Khan; EXEN REW, Zahir Khan and other district and sectoral officers attended the event.

48 RR Celebrates 77th independence day at Bufliaz

■ M S Nazki

Surankote On the occasion of 77th Independence Day 48 RR organised an event at Madrasa Bufliaz and A Bike Rally from Bufliaz Chowk to Chandimarh Bridge and back. The event was attended by more than 400 people. The youth attended the Bike Rally in great mass. Slogan of Hindustan Zindabad echoed through the valley of Bufliaz, Sailan and Chandimarh.

At Madrasa, Students of Islamic studies showcased their love towards the country and Army by singing patriotic Hindi songs. The students were praised for their performances and youth cheered for 48 RR Company Commander Captain Amandeep Singh with josh.

Thus, at last the events were culminated with distribution of certificates to the winners.

Sarpanch unfurls tricolor at Bufliaz Independence Day celebrated with enthusiasm and zeal in Bufliaz

■ M S Nazki



Surankote: Bufliaz celebrated the Independence Day with patriotic fervour and zeal. The celebrations marked singing of the National Anthem and unfurling of the National Flag by Tahira Tabassum Sarpanch Bufliaz B in the Premises of Govt Hr Sec School Bufliaz. The tiny tots and students of various educational institutions proudly wore the tri-colour and sang patriotic songs. Contingents from different schools participated in the march pas which was followed by cultural programmes. Paying rich tributes to the freedom fighters, Sarpanch Tahira Tabassum said that the nation owes gratitude to these great leaders, who sacrificed their lives to secure freedom for the country. Affirming that India is known for its unity amidst diversity of religion, region and culture, he said despite these diversities we all should strive hard to maintain communal harmony and take every possible step to ensure that the benefits of the development works percolate down to each and every strata of society. The Programme was Organised by Sarpanch Bufliaz B Tahira Tabassum. On the conclusion, the 15 People's were given awards by Sarpanch Tahira Tabassum as the Best paying services for the wellbeing of a society. These awardees were linked

Operations of 12 Medical stores suspended across Jammu Div for violation of Norms

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 16: A special drive was carried out in Jammu Province wherein surprise inspections of Drug Sale Establishments were carried out under the supervision of Concerned Empowered Authorities. The drive was targeted to ensure that the drugs consisting of habit forming ingredients are strictly sold to the needy patients as per mandate of law and pharmacies operate strictly in consonance with the mandate of law and in the best interest of patient care. Statutory Drug samples of nearly Two Hundred formulations of various categories were lifted randomly for determination of strength and purity. These samples were referred to

Drug Testing Laboratories locate within the U.T of J&K for framing of legal opinion to ascertain their quality parameters and to ensure that quality medicines are being sold to the end users.

Operations of Twelve Retail Sale Establishments (Four in Jammu, Three in Samba District, Two in Poonch District, One each in Kathua & Ramban, were disallowed u/s 22 (d) of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 on spot. The reasons for suspension ranged from Non maintenance of Sales records, Impersonation, Improper storage conditions etc. Moreover, Stocks of Drugs worth Rs 3,86,100 that were found to be contravening the provisions of the D&C Act have also been confiscated from the supply.

Scintillating Jashan-E-Azadi Musical Event enchants Doda on Independence Day

■ HT News Network

DODA, AUGUST 16: Marking a joyous celebration of Indian independence, the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Language, Sub Office Doda, orchestrated a captivating musical extravaganza in the town hall. The event, organised under the guidance of Cultural Officer Slah-Ud-Din Tahir, showcased a variety of talents from across the district, painting a vibrant tapestry of melodious performances.

Deputy Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan, SSP, Abdul Qayoom and other functionaries along with a huge audience of locals attended the program anchored by Master Om



Prakash Bhagat. The audience was left spellbound by the mesmerizing voices of the artists who took the stage with renowned performers like Naseem Ul Haq, Farooq Khokar and Pawan Gupta. The town hall was packed to the brim, buzzing with enthusiastic attendees from all walks of

life, including officers and officials from the District Administration of Doda. Their resounding applause and unwavering support amplified the success of the musical gala. Rashid Jahangir, Assistant Cultural Officer, JKAACL Sub Office Doda, was in charge of the programme and managed

the event. At the culmination of the program, the Deputy Commissioner delivered an impactful speech, lauding the efforts of the JK Academy of Art, Culture, and Language in preserving and promoting local culture and traditions. He emphasized the significance of continuing such captivating initiatives and affirmed the district administration's commitment to nurturing and advancing the local heritage. The event was attended by esteemed dignitaries including ADC Doda, ADDC Doda, President Municipal Council Doda, ACD Doda, ACP Doda, Deputy Director Employment, Account Officer Doda, District Information Officer Doda, Tehsildar Doda, and BDO Headquarters Doda.

Independence Day celebrations held at District Court Complex Kathua

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, AUGUST 15: As per the directions of the High Court of UT of J&K and Ladakh, the 77th Republic Day was celebrated in District Court Complex (Head-Quarter) Kathua with full zeal & enthusiasm.

The event commenced with the unfurling of the National Flag by Principal District & Sessions Judge Kathua (also Worthy Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kathua) Ashok Kumar Shavan, which was followed by reciting of the National Anthem by the gathering.

Beside this, a cultural program was organized by District Legal Services Authority Kathua in collaboration with the Department of Education, Kathua. At the end of the program, participants were felicitated by Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kathua.

This program/event was attended by Special Mobile Magistrate Kathua, Surinder

Kumar Thapa, Munsiff JMJC Kathua, Cheena Sumbria, and District Mobile Magistrate Kathua Meena Thakur, Prosecuting Officers of District Court Complex Kathua, President, Senior and Young members of the Bar Association Kathua, Staff Members of both District Court Kathua & District Legal Services Authority Kathua, Police personnel & Para Legal Volunteers of District Legal Services Authority Kathua. Beside this, a cultural program was organized by District Legal Services Authority Kathua in collaboration with the Department of Education, Kathua. At the end of the program, participants were felicitated by Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kathua. This program/event was attended by Special Mobile Magistrate Kathua, Surinder Kumar Thapa, Munsiff JMJC Kathua, Cheena Sumbria, and District Mobile Magistrate Kathua Meena Thakur, Prosecuting Officers of District Court Complex Kathua, President, Senior and Young members of the Bar Association Kathua,

Pakal Dul HEP celebrates 77th Independence Day with Enthusiasm and Unity at Arzi Site

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 16: Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project (HEP), a significant undertaking by Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (CVPL), on day before commemorated the 77th Independence Day of the Nation with patriotic fervor and enthusiasm.

The celebration took the form of a half-day sports and cultural event held at the Powder House Site Office, Arzi Village, Kishtwar.

The event began with the hoisting of the National flag by Ramesh Mukhiya, (GGM) Head of Projects (HOP) at Pakal Dul HEP Project.

The echoes of the National Anthem filled the air, marking the commencement of the celebration.

Pakal Dul Project embarked on this tradition of Independence Day celebrations at Arzi last year, and this marked the second consecutive year of festivity. The event was



carefully planned to involve not only the project's officers, staff, and workforce but also the local community. Notably, the celebration at the Powerhouse venue welcomed officers, staff, and workforce residing in the Dool/Arzi area, as well as the Project Affected Families (PAFs) from Arzi, Tanji, and nearby regions.

The heartwarming participation of PAF children, along with their parents and families, lent a special charm to the cultural and sports events.

77th Independence Day, 84 Bn CRPF honours Veer Nari & gallant CRPF personnel at Ramban

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, AUGUST 16: Commandant 84 Bn CRPF, N Ranbir Singh, during a function organized at Dett Hq Boom Ramban, felicitated Veer Nari Rubina Begum and HC/GD Pawan Kumar by presenting shawls and mementos.

On 02 Feb 2008, in the Maoist affected state of Chhattisgarh, when a column of 63 Bn CRPF personnel, while falling back, after a major operation, in the

hinterlands of Narayanpur District of Chhattisgarh, were ambushed by a strong party of armed Maoists. The CRPF party of 63 Bn retaliated effectively and tactically. In the process, an intense encounter took place. The CRPF team tactically split into two parties and attacked the Maoists' position, forcing the Maoists to flee. Few Maoists were killed and other few sustained injuries.

In the encounter, Ct/Driver Mustaq Ahmed of 63 Bn, resident of Maitra, Ramban,



J&K, fought valiantly and made supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Ct/Driver Mustaq Ahmed is survived

by his wife Smt Rubina Begum and two sons.

In another operation against the Maoists in the

highly affected District of Sukma Chhattisgarh, on 24 Jun 2006, a Special Commando Team of 119 Bn CRPF launched an Int based offensive against a team of Maoists, led by Zonal Commander Ayatu in the village Toyapara, Dornapal, Sukma. When the CRPF team cordoned the village, the Maoists attacked the CRPF party. The CRPF party launched an immediate intensive retaliatory offence. During the close combat, Ct/GD Pawan Kumar (now HC/GD) and his buddy took a well-armed

group of Maoists, head on and managed to kill 04 hard core Maoists, including the Zonal Commander. Huge cache of Arms, Amns, Explosives and incriminating items were recovered. 06 injured Maoists were also apprehended. For his exemplary act of valour, Ct/GD Pawan Kumar was awarded the Police Medal for Gallantry during 2009.

While speaking at the function, he also paid tributes to the heroes of the freedom struggle and appealed to all to live up

Public outreach camps held across Doda under Block Diwas programme

■ HT News Network

DODA, AUGUST, 16: To reach out to the people to address their grievances, District administration Doda, as part of Block diwas program, organised outreach camps at different locations. The block diwas programs were Block Headquarter Bhalla Sub District Bhadarwah, Sub Divisional Headquarter Assar, Sub Divisional Headquarter Gandoh and Sub Divisional Headquarter Thathri. The event was chaired by Tehsildar Bhalla Manjeet Singh Katal and BDO Mahesh Chandra at Bhalla, of Sub District Bhadarwah.

The government officers provided different services and listened to the grievances and demands of people. They resolved many issues on the spot pertaining to their respective departments. Large gathering of the people raised issues and grievances in front of concerned officers and officials. The line department which were present in these public outreach programs include PDD, PHE, PWD R&B, Education, Revenue etc.

EDITORIAL

Bridging the Digital Divide in Kashmir: Ensuring Equitable Internet Access for All

In an increasingly interconnected world, access to the internet has become a vital tool for education, communication, and economic opportunity. However, in the region of Kashmir, the digital divide remains a stark reality that hampers progress and equality. The issue of unequal internet access in Kashmir not only impacts personal lives but also poses significant challenges for socio-economic development.

The political and security complexities of the Kashmir region have resulted in periodic shutdowns or restrictions on internet access, affecting millions of residents. While security concerns cannot be overlooked, it is crucial to strike a balance between security measures and the fundamental right to information and communication. By shutting down the internet, governments inadvertently widen the gap between urban and rural areas, depriving residents of the benefits of the digital age.

The digital divide in Kashmir further exacerbates existing disparities. Students struggle to access online education, limiting their learning opportunities. Small businesses find it difficult to establish an online presence and tap into larger markets. The lack of access to online banking and government services leaves many marginalized communities at a disadvantage.

Efforts to bridge the digital divide must prioritize infrastructure development, policy reform, and community engagement. Investing in robust internet infrastructure in rural and remote areas will ensure that every individual, regardless of their geographic location, has the opportunity to connect with the world. Moreover, governments should work towards formulating comprehensive digital policies that take into account security concerns while safeguarding citizens' right to information.

Collaborative efforts between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private enterprises can play a pivotal role in providing digital literacy training. Empowering individuals with digital skills will not only make them active participants in the digital economy but also enable them to use online platforms for education, healthcare, and other essential services.

Bridging the digital divide in Kashmir is not just about technology; it's about enabling socio-economic progress, empowering individuals, and fostering a sense of inclusivity. By recognizing the importance of equitable internet access and working towards practical solutions, we can help Kashmir take significant strides towards a more connected and prosperous future for all of its residents.

Crystal Clear Milk: Our Collective Quest for Purity

■ [Aubaid Ahmad Akhoon](#)

"Pure milk is not just a beverage; it's a promise of nourishment and well-being for our families."

Milk, often referred to as "nature's elixir," plays a vital role in our lives by offering essential nutrients and contributing to overall well-being. Milk holds a diverse range of benefits that cater to various life stages and health needs. One of its most vital roles is in supporting infants during their early development. When a mother consumes a nutritious diet and drinks pure milk herself, the milk she produces for her child becomes full of essential nutrients that are uniquely tailored to the baby's needs. This natural breast milk is an exceptional source of vital nutrients that are essential for the baby's growth and overall health. Moreover, this milk contains antibodies that significantly bolster the infant's immune system, offering a vital shield against infections and diseases. This inherent connection between a mother's diet, her body's milk production, and the nourishment of her child emphasizes the importance of milk not just as a dietary element but as a conduit of health and wellness from one generation to the next.

Recent concerns surrounding the purity and quality of cow's milk in the Srinagar Valley have raised doubts about this invaluable natural resource. The absence of clear quality standards, testing mechanisms, and consumer awareness poses a significant challenge to ensuring the safety and wholesomeness of milk consumption.

In the picturesque landscapes of the Srinagar Valley, where lush greenery and serene beauty intertwine, a less visible but equally vital resource has been facing a shadow of doubt - cow's milk. Revered as a symbol of nourishment and health, milk serves as a cornerstone of many diets, providing a host of essential nutrients essential for growth and well-being. However,

recent worries regarding the quality and integrity of this pristine source of sustenance have ignited a unified call for action. Amidst the breathtaking vistas, there is a silent battle being waged, one that seeks to preserve the sanctity of the milk that graces the tables of countless households.

Unseen Impurities: A Lurking Threat

Customers who rely on cow's milk for their daily sustenance might find themselves grappling with a disconcerting reality - the inability to ascertain the true quality of the milk they consume. Unlike the reputable dairies that adhere to stringent purity standards, smaller local vendors could potentially adopt shortcuts to maximize profits, casting a veil of doubt over the authenticity of their product. Boiling and storing milk, long deemed a foolproof method to ensure safety, might no longer be sufficient if the milk itself was tainted from the start. The seemingly innocent act of pouring milk into a cup could now be a game of chance.

The Missing Checkpoints Bridging the Gap

A glaring issue is the lack of reliable milk quality assessment centers throughout Srinagar and adjoining districts. A glaring chasm stands in the way of ensuring that the milk flowing through the veins of the Srinagar Valley is pure and unadulterated. The absence of visible quality assessment centers raises questions about the transparency and accountability of the milk supply chain. The silent journey of milk from udder to table becomes shrouded in uncertainty when this essential checkpoint is missing. Transparency is not just a buzzword here; it's a foundational pillar of trust that must be reinstated to uphold the integrity of the milk supply chain. This critical gap also deprives consumers of accurate information about the milk they consume daily.

The Guardians of Well-Being: Role of Consumer Affairs

In the realm of safeguarding consumer interests, the Department of Consumer Affairs holds a position of authority. Yet, its muted response to the pressing issue of milk quality raises eyebrows. The noble goal of ensuring consumers receive pure, unadulterated products stands compromised in the face of its seemingly passive involvement. For a department entrusted with the well-being of citizens, the urgency to address milk quality concerns should be as paramount as the nutrition within the milk itself.

The Call for Local Responsibility

The tapestry of milk supply is woven from various districts - Pulwama (Anand of Kashmir, Pulwama stands as the largest milk producer in the area, churning out an impressive estimated volume of 7.5 lakh litres of milk daily.), Shopain, Budgam, Ganderbal - each thread contributing to the larger fabric of sustenance. While these locales possess the natural origins of milk, questions arise about the quality of what they produce. The onus lies heavily on local milk suppliers to rise to the occasion and take up the mantle of ensuring stringent quality control. The purity of milk isn't just a byproduct; it's a collective responsibility that must be upheld.

Urgent Action: The Only Path Forward

Addressing the specter of impurity in cow's milk demands a united and comprehensive front. The tapestry must be rewoven, thread by thread, by a symphony of actors including the government, dairy producers, local vendors, and the Department of Consumer Affairs. Collaboration becomes the cornerstone for change, and the following steps lay the foundation for that transformation:

Establishing Robust Testing Centers: The landscape must be dotted with centers that act as guardians of purity, offering easily accessible milk quality testing. These centers do more than certify milk; they empower consumers with knowledge.

Stringent Regulation and Monitoring: The assurance of quality lies in stringent regulations that are upheld through regular checks. It's accountability in action, and it's a vital cog in the machinery of trust.

Raising Consumer Awareness: Knowledge is power, and informed consumers can catalyze change. Educating them about milk quality and its implications is not just a choice; it's a necessity.

Transparent Labeling: Packaged milk should bear the mark of transparency - information on source, processing, and quality testing. It's a pledge of authenticity that consumers deserve.

Bottom line: For a Healthier Future

The pursuit of purity isn't merely an aspiration; it's a necessity carved into the fabric of public health. Cow's milk isn't just a beverage; it's a promise that nourishes our families, fueling growth and vitality. A united resolve among government bodies, local producers, vendors, and consumers is the beacon that can lead us out of the murkiness that clouds milk quality. The symphony of change must crescendo, echoing the urgency for swift action. And perhaps, as we rebuild the bridges of trust in milk, we pave a path towards a future where the innocence of purity prevails over the allure of adulteration.

At the end of this article, let's give a conscious message to the milk suppliers: In the pursuit of tainted profits, those who adulterate milk should remember that ill-gotten gains can never bring peace to their hearts or a prosperous future to their children."

About the Author:
Aubaid Ahmad Akhoon is a renowned Columnist & Motivational Speaker and an Associate Editor of the Weekly Publication 'Education Quill.' He currently serves as the Senior EDP Head at DD Target PMT Kashmir, a reputable institute renowned for its coaching classes in the medical/ JEE/Foundation Classes. akhoon.aubaid@gmail.com

How does meditation help you achieve skills or confidence

■ [Vijay GarG](#)

Self-doubt is a common and normal feeling that can affect anyone, regardless of their achievements, skills, or confidence. It can make you question your abilities, decisions, and worth, and hold you back from pursuing your goals and dreams. However, self-doubt is not a permanent or fixed state of mind. You can overcome it by cultivating a more positive and realistic self-image, and one of the most effective ways to do that is through meditation.

What is meditation?

Meditation is a practice of focusing your attention on a chosen object, thought, or sensation, such as your breath, a mantra, or a sound. It can help you calm your mind, relax your body, and enhance your awareness of the present moment. Meditation can also help you develop mindfulness, which is the ability to observe your thoughts and feelings without judging or reacting to them. Mindfulness can help you recognize and challenge the negative and distorted beliefs that fuel your self-doubt.

How does meditation help you overcome self-doubt?

Meditation can help you overcome self-doubt in several ways. First, it can reduce your stress and anxiety, which are often linked to low self-esteem and insecurity. By lowering your cortisol levels and activating your parasympathetic nervous system, meditation can make you feel more calm, balanced, and resilient in the face of challenges. Second, meditation can increase your self-compassion, which is the ability to treat yourself with kindness, understanding, and forgiveness. By cultivating a more supportive and friendly attitude towards yourself, you can reduce your self-criticism and boost your self-confidence. Third, meditation can improve your cognitive and emotional skills, such as attention, memory, creativity, and empathy. By enhancing your mental and social abilities, you can perform better in various tasks and situations, and feel more competent and valued.

How to start meditating?

If you are new to meditation, it may seem intimidating or complicated, but it doesn't have to be! You can start with a simple and short practice that fits



your level and preference. To begin, find a comfortable and quiet place without any disruptions. Sit or lie down in a relaxed posture, with your spine straight and shoulders relaxed. Close your eyes or lower your gaze, and take a few deep breaths to settle your mind and body. Select a focus for your meditation like your breath, a word, a sound, or a sensation. Bring your attention to this focus and keep it there as much as possible. If your mind wanders, which is normal, simply notice it and return to the focus without judgment. You can do this for as long as you wish; start with 5-10 minutes and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable. When you are ready to end the meditation, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to notice how you feel.

How to make meditation a habit?

Consistency is a key factor for overcoming self-doubt, and meditation can be an effective tool to reap its benefits. However, establishing a regular meditation habit can be difficult if you have a busy schedule, distractions, or resistance. Here are some tips to help make meditation a habit: set a specific time and place for your practice, use a reminder or an alarm to prompt

you, start with a small goal and gradually increase it, track your progress and reward yourself for achievements, and find a support system or community to encourage you and hold you accountable. You can join a meditation class, group, or online platform, or find someone who can meditate with you.

How to deal with challenges and obstacles?

Meditation is not a quick fix for self-doubt, but a skill that demands practice, patience, and dedication. You may experience obstacles and challenges that make you feel discouraged or hopeless. If you lack time, prioritize meditation as a part of your self-care routine and find ways to fit it into your schedule. If you lack motivation, remind yourself of the reasons and benefits of your practice or use positive affirmations to boost your enthusiasm. If you don't see results, be patient with yourself and remember that meditation is a process of learning and growth. Notice the subtle changes in your mood, behavior, and attitude to measure progress instead of expecting dramatic results.

Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational Columnist Malout Punjab

India Is Closely Monitoring The Results Of Bhutan-China Border Talks

Thimphu Is Reportedly Responsive To Chinese Proposal On Demarcation

■ [Girish Linganna](#)

The key to this decades-long border strife between India and China is the strategic plateau of Doklam, located close to where the borders of the three countries—India, Bhutan and China—meet. If Beijing can seize control of the disputed Doklam plateau, it would allow China to mobilize its forces undeterred, besides providing it greater access to routes in case of an armed conflict with India. Chinese intrusion into the Indian borders in the Himalayas has resulted in rival military buildups and occasional clashes that have largely gone unnoticed in the West.

This escalating border dispute has set into motion a long-term one-upmanship that could reshape Asian geopolitics and is now knocking on the doors of India's long-time friend and ally, Bhutan. That Himalayan nation is currently holding talks with China regarding its border dispute—a dispute that can be traced back to the 19th Century. China has been stepping up pressure on Bhutan to resolve their bilateral border dispute. It has not only made greater territorial claims on Bhutan, but has also resurrected an old land-swap deal which, if actualized, will see Thimphu ceding control over more territory to reach an amicable settlement of its border dispute with China.

Border negotiations between China and Bhutan have been an undergoing process since 1984 and both countries lay claim to the Doklam region, with India backing the latter. Chinese experts say China and Bhutan were close to reaching a final agreement around 1996, but the negotiations failed as India intervened. In May 2023, the 12th Expert Group Meeting (EGM), which supervises the progress of the boundary talks, was held in Bhutan's capital, Thimphu, a short span of just four months after the 11th EGM talks were held in China's Kunming. At the conclusion of the Thimphu round of deliberations, both Bhutan and China said they had made progress towards implementing a "three-step roadmap" that would help them resolve their boundary dispute.

It emphasized the "importance of increasing the frequency of the meetings", but did not announce any breakthrough



in setting a date for the next round (the 25th round of boundary talks), which have been hanging fire since 2016, and was suspended after the India-China military standoff at Doklam. There was a long gap of two years between the 10th EGM in April 2021 and the 11th EGM in January 2023. In view of that, it seems significant that the 12th round has followed within only four months indicating a more rapid development in the talks.

The India-China border crisis was exacerbated by a standoff over the tri-junction demarcated by China-occupied Tibet's Chumbi Valley to the north, India's Sikkim state to the west and Bhutan's Haa Valley to the east. India and China have perennially struggled over the issue of where exactly the tri-junction lies.

and Bhutan had signed a special treaty in 1949 in view of Delhi's security concerns. A revised draft was signed in 2007 giving Bhutan more leeway in such areas as military purchases—and, on a wider scale, determining its own foreign policy. Hundreds of Indian soldiers have been offering combat training to Bhutanese soldiers. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) is headquartered only 20 kilometres from Doklam, in the western town of Haa, which is strategically important for India.

The Bhutan-China border question is not delinked from the simmering decades-old India-China border tensions. The two countries share a frontier that has not been totally demarcated, and have overlapping claims to the territory. India says it is 3,488 kilometres long, while China puts it at 2,000 kilometres. The currently agreed upon border starts in the Ladakh region to India's north and runs all the way to Arunachal Pradesh state—also a bone of contention as the Chinese call it 'Southern Tibet'—in the east.

China lays claim to about 495 sq.km in north-central Bhutan and 269 sq.km in western Bhutan, according to BBC. As recently as in 2020, it also claimed another 739 sq.km of territory in the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in eastern Bhutan as a part of Mainland China territory. Three major rivers—the Bada Chu, Manas Chu and Dhansiri Chu—have their source in this region. Most of the official Chinese maps have depicted Sakteng as part of Bhutan. Even in the most ambitious—and contentious—2014 map by China, the vast territorial claims that include India's Arunachal Pradesh, Sakteng Park was shown as part of Bhutan.

The territory claimed in western Bhutan includes the Doklam Plateau, which is of strategic and military significance to India. These claims are proof that China has violated both the Sino-Bhutanese border agreements—the 1988 'Guiding Principles on the Boundary Issues' and the 1998 'Treaty to Maintain Peace and Tranquility' that promised neither party could make unilateral alterations to the status quo.

There are solid compulsions why Delhi is supporting Thimphu's stand on Doklam. The plateau is of great strategic significance to India since Chinese ascendancy in the region would give Beijing a terrain advantage over Delhi at one of India's most sensitive geographic points and could spell trouble for India at the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the 'Chicken's Neck', a 22-kilometre, narrow land bridge that connects Mainland India with its 'Seven Sisters' states in the North-East.

The 2017 China-India border faceoff, commonly known as the Doklam standoff, was a military showdown between India's armed forces and the People's Liberation Army of China. The flashpoint was a Chinese road construction in Doklam. On June 16, 2017, Chinese soldiers—armed with bulldozers, excavators, cranes, dump trucks and forklifts—began work on extending an existing road southwards in Doklam. On June 18, 2017, about 270 armed Indian troops launched 'Operation Juniper', crossing the Sikkim border into Doklam with two bulldozers to stop the Chinese troops from building the road. On August 28, both the countries announced all their troops had been withdrawn from the site in question.

However, a significant amount of data, including satellite images, points to the fact that China is engaged in building infrastructure—even small villages—inside sovereign Bhutanese territory. In an interview with Belgian daily La Libre in March 2023, Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering is reported to have said "no intrusion as reported in the media" has happened into Bhutanese territory. He hoped that Bhutan and China would be successful in demarcating some of its boundaries in a couple of meetings.

That rang alarm bells in India's security establishment that the Bhutanese leader was likely bending to China's pressure and preparing to cede territory to the Asian giant to settle the border issue, although this would weaken India's security. According to a 2012 agreement between India and China, at points along boundaries shared between China, India and a third country, the border demarcation will be drawn with the consensus of all the countries concerned. So, the border dispute can be resolved only if all the three parties—India, Bhutan and China—reach an amicable consensus. (IPA Service)

The author is a Defence, Aerospace & Political analyst.

Survey Reveals Arab Youth Seek Certainty In Religion And Tradition

Results Cast A Shadow Over Social Reform Initiatives In Arab World

■ [James M Dorsey](#)

A just-published survey suggests Arab youth are returning to traditional values. The survey contrasts starkly with another, only partially released poll, in which a growing number favour religious reform.

The conservative trend in the just released 15th Arab Youth Survey 2023 conducted by Dubai-based public relations company ASDA/ABCW reflects an earlier Arab Barometer poll. At the same time, those polled in the youth survey offered seemingly contradictory responses to questions.

If accurate, the trend casts a shadow over social reforms enacted by leaders such as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed that have enhanced women's rights and professional and leisure opportunities and created Western-style entertainment industries.

Bin Zayed has gone further than Bin Salman by reducing, if not removing, restrictions on alcohol consumption and cohabitation. The Saudi crown prince is believed to want to follow suit.

Earlier this year, the Saudi Tourism Authority surprised many by announcing that LGBTQ tourists would be welcome in the kingdom. Similarly, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, alongside Bahrain, recently released Barbie in contrast to Kuwait and Lebanon, which banned the movie because it violated religious and social norms. Two months earlier, the kingdom and the Emirates removed 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' from their release schedules for similar reasons.

It's not clear how the release of Barbie and the welcoming of LGBTQ

tourists sit with 54 per cent of those polled by ASDA/ABCW, who emphasized the importance of religion, tradition, and family in their personal and public lives.

In a similar vein, 76 percent were concerned about the loss of traditional values and culture. Sixty-five percent overall and 72 percent in the Gulf prioritised preserving religion and tradition over creating a tolerant, liberal, and globalised society.

Seventy-three percent disagreed that religious values held the Arab world back. More than sixty percent wanted their country's laws to be based on Sharia.

In line with those results, ASDA/ABCW reported that the number of youths who believed that the "Arab world needs to reform its religious institutions" was decreasing. Fifty-eight percent agreed in this year's survey compared to 79 per cent in 2019.

The ASDA/ABCW results are echoed by Arab Barometer, which regularly surveys public opinion in the Middle East like the public relations company.

Michael Robbins, director and co-principal investigator of Arab Barometer, has noted a stark increase in Arab youth wanting clerics to have greater influence on government decisions. "In 2021-2022, roughly half or more in five of ten countries surveyed agreed that religious clerics should influence decisions of government," Robbins said.

He said that "while youth ages 18-29 have led the return to religion across MENA (the Middle East and North Africa), the rise in support for religion in politics is more widespread across society. In most countries, both older and younger members of society are shifting their views in concert."

Robbins added, "Results from nationally representative public opinion



surveys...strongly suggest that political Islam is making a comeback. In most countries surveyed, young and old citizens demonstrate a clear preference for giving religion a greater role in politics. This is the first time that support for political Islam has increased meaningfully...since the Arab Uprisings of 2011."

ASDA/ABCW and Arab Barometer's results contrast starkly with a recent, partially released Washington Institute of Near East Policy survey suggesting that Saudis increasingly favour religious moderation and may be more open to religious reform.

Forty-three per cent of those surveyed by the Institute agreed that Saudis "should listen to those among us who are trying to interpret Islam in a more moderate, tolerant, and modern direction." When asked the

same question four years ago, only 20 per cent agreed.

Moreover, 65 percent surveyed by the public relations company said religion played too big a role in regional affairs. However, that figure dropped from 72 per cent last year. The survey left open what aspects of regional affairs youth meant.

Another potential contradiction was the trend towards conservatism juxtaposed with 80 per cent of those surveyed stressing the need for respect for freedoms, equality, and human rights.

The concern about traditional and religious values and the contradictions suggest complex youth attitudes towards aspects of reform.

Youth's emphasis on tradition and religion also indicates that deepening national rather than religious and

tribal identities remain a work in progress in the Arab world.

Underscoring the complexity of the identity shift, just over half of those surveyed by ASDA/ABCW attributed less significance to Arabic than their parents.

The reduced weighting of the language implied an inclination towards a more globalized society. Yet, squaring the circles is difficult, with youth saying they are less focused on globalisation.

The contradictions speak to uncertainty sparked by rapid social and economic change. Religion and tradition appear to emerge as anchors as religiosity among youth increases. (IPA Service)

By arrangement with the Arabian Post

Earlier this year, the Saudi Tourism Authority surprised many by announcing that LGBTQ tourists would be welcome in the kingdom.

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Atal Bihari Vajpayee Death Anniversary: PM Modi, HM, President Murmu Pay Tribute

■ HT News Network

New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu and other political leaders have paid their floral tribute to Bharatiya Janata Party stalwart and former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 5th death anniversary at Sadaiv Atal memorial.

PM Modi, in a tweet, stated that the country greatly benefitted from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership who played a major role in boosting the country's progress.

"I join the 140 crore people of India in paying homage to the remarkable Atal Ji on his Purnima Tithi. India benefitted greatly from his leadership. He played a pivotal role in boosting our nation's progress and in taking it to the 21st century in a wide range of sectors," PM Modi tweeted. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Praful Patel, and Apna Dal (Soneylal) leader Anupriya Patel were among



others who paid floral tribute to the former prime minister.

Home Minister Amit Shah credited Atal Bihari Vajpayee for laying the foundation of good governance in the country. Rajnath Singh shared pictures of his visit to Sadaiv Atal memorial on X, formerly known as Twitter. Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda, in a tweet, paid his tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, calling his dedication to the upliftment of the poor an inspiration. Born on December 25, 1924, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the first non-Congress Prime Minister to serve a

complete term in office. He served as the country's prime minister twice -- May 16, 1996, to June 1, 1996, and from 19 March 1998 to 22 May 2004.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary, December 25, is celebrated as Good Governance Day every year. Atal Bihari Vajpayee breathed his last on August 16, 2018, at the age of 93. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Death Anniversary: PM Modi, in a tweet, stated that the country greatly benefitted from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership who played a major role in boosting the country's progress. Paying homage to former Prime

Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his fifth death anniversary, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday called him the "Ajatshatru (one without enemies) of Indian politics", adding that he made an invaluable contribution to taking the party from zero to where it is at presently through his deft leadership and organisational skills. Amit Shah took to X, formerly Twitter, to post, "Ajatshatru of Indian politics, the most respected Atal-ji established the highest standards of politics based on ideology and principles. With his strong will to serve the nation, on one hand, he laid the foundation of good governance and on the other hand, he introduced India's potential to the whole world from Pokhran. Millions of salutes to such a great man on his death anniversary, who made an invaluable contribution in taking the party from zero to peak with his organizational skills." Earlier today President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar,

61 Dead This Week, Loss Of 10,000 Crores: Chief Minister On Himachal Rain

■ HT News Network

At least 61 people died this week so far due to landslides and flashfloods in Himachal Pradesh, home to scenic mountains and a popular tourist destination that has been battered by heavy rain since last week. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has said his state would take a year to rebuild the infrastructure damaged this monsoon and the estimated loss in the two devastating spells of heavy rain -- this week and in July -- is about 10,000 crore.

Dozens have died in landslides in Summer Hill, Krishna Nagar and Phagli in state capital Shimla since Sunday, while another was reported this morning in Summer Hill again.

An official said 13 bodies have been recovered from the debris in Summer Hill, five from Phagli and two from Krishna Nagar. Several others are feared buried in the debris of a temple that collapsed on Monday.

A landslide washed away around eight houses in Krishna Nagar in the heart of Shimla last evening, killing two people. Several other houses were vacated.



A cloudburst incident in Solan district killed seven people on Monday.

Over 800 people have been rescued from the low-lying areas and evacuation efforts are on, said Mr Sukhu, who did an aerial survey of the rain-hit areas in Kangra district today.

He has pegged the death figure at 61 in the last three days. A meeting was convened where structural norms and drainage issues were taken up, he said. "There has been a lot of damage due to the rain. Restoration will take time, but it will be done on a war footing," he had assured.

The Chief Minister said it takes time to rebuild roads and water projects.

But the government is speeding up the process. "We have to get the infrastructure fully restored within a year. I am working with this in mind." "It's a big challenge, a mountain-like challenge. But we are not going to back away," he said.

The state government will continue with its vision to make Himachal Pradesh "self-reliant" in four years and the country's "most prosperous" state in 10 years. "But it will take a year for us to rise from this tragedy," Mr Sukhu, whose Congress government came to power, last December, said.

All schools and colleges across the state will remain

closed till August 19 in view of the extreme weather. Himachal Pradesh University too has suspended teaching activities till then.

Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force have been deployed in the state -- one each in Shimla and Kangra. Besides, the Air Force, Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police are also helping in rescue operations in Shimla.

Officials said at least 800 roads are blocked in the state due to landslides and the state has suffered losses worth thousands of crores this monsoon season.

Both Himachal Pradesh and neighbouring Uttarakhand, which too has witnessed dozens of deaths this monsoon season, are set to receive more rain, according to weather forecast.

The state Congress, which is in power in the state, has sought help from the central government and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should declare Himachal Pradesh a disaster-hit state.

UP : Three teenagers held for waving black flag on I-Day in Pilibhit district, granted bail

■ HT News Network

Pilibhit, Aug 16 (UNI) Three students of a private school were arrested by the police on Wednesday for waving black flag on the occasion of the Independence Day at Kotwali area of Pilibhit district in Uttar Pradesh, police sources said.

Police sources said that the students were later released on station bail.

The sources said that on Tuesday Sub-Inspector Vinod Kumar Rath gave a complaint that while he was on patrol duty on the occasion of the Independence Day photo of three teenagers in school uniform waving a black flag went viral on social media.

"When the police investigated the matter the identity of the three students was established," they said.

Police sources also said that a case was lodged at Kotwali police station in this regard and the students were arrested on Wednesday. "The police recovered the black flag from the possession of the students," they said. Station House Officer (SHO) Naresh Tyagi said that the case was lodged after the matter came into cognisance. He said that though the students admitted to waving black flag when quizzed, they were granted bail from the police station.

Circle Officer (City) Anju Jain said that no information about the students' connection with any organisation has come to fore.

Under New Education Policy, US Designs Specialised Courses For Indians

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: The United States, in line with India's new National Education Policy, has started an educational programme that would allow Indian Students to pursue a one-year professional master's degree with industrial specialisation in American universities. The courses are confined to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines and will begin from the fall semester of 2024. Once the courses are complete, students can stay on in the US for up to three years, as per existing and applicable visa rules, to gain work experience in industry and repay student loans.

Fitness Test For Assam Cops To Remove "Dead-wood" Gets Underway

■ HT News Network

Guwahati: Shape up or ship out. The alarm has been sounded for Assam cops. A fitness test for the 67,000-strong force, including senior officers, is underway in the state. Assam top cop Gyanendra Pratap Singh also turned up for the fitness test - body mass index (BMI): weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared. Having a higher BMI, says research, is associated with a greater risk of certain conditions, such as high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. The BMI tests are being conducted in as many as 36 locations across the state. All Indian Police Service (IPS) officers posted in the state will also be taking the test.

"I'm Senior most...": Sharad Pawar Says No Offer To Join PM's Cabinet

■ HT News Network

Mumbai: As strain builds within the Maharashtra opposition alliance over a meeting between Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar, the veteran politician has trashed claims that he has been offered a Union Minister post in exchange of deserting the INDIA bloc and tying up with the BJP. The meeting took place at a Pune businessman's residence on Saturday, over a month after Ajit Pawar and eight other NCP leaders joined the Eknath Shinde-led government backed by the BJP. Since then, both factions are in tussle to control the NCP.

The meeting sparked speculation that Ajit Pawar may be trying to convince Sharad Pawar, a key face of opposition's INDIA bloc, to shift his allegiance. Mr Pawar later said some "well-wishers" were trying to convince him to tie up with the BJP, but added that he had no such plan.

Asked about Mr Chavan's remark, Mr Pawar said today, "I have no idea what the former CM said. There was no such discussion. I am not denying that meeting happened, but as the head of the family, I speak to all family members. These are just rumors but there's no reality in any of these things



being said." "I am the senior most person in the party, who will give me an offer," the veteran asked. Earlier too, Mr Pawar had stressed that Ajit Pawar is his nephew and it is natural for them to meet.

The meeting, meanwhile, has led to unease within the alliance between the Congress, NCP and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray). Sanjay Raut, MP and aide of Uddhav Thackeray, has said Mr Pawar is the "Bhishma Pitamaha" of Maharashtra politics and he "should not do anything that creates doubt in the minds of people". The tension within the alliance is unwelcome especially in the run-up to the next meeting of INDIA bloc in Mumbai. Mr Pawar today confirmed that the meeting will take place on August 31.

"Rs 1 Lakh Loan With Maximum 5% Interest Under Vishwakarma Scheme": Centre

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: A "PM Vishwakarma" scheme for artisans and craftsmen was approved by the government today, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced it in his Independence Day speech, his last before next year's national election. The scheme will receive 13,000 crore for five years and cover 18 traditional trades to start with, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Some 30 lakh people and their families, mainly from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), are likely to benefit from the scheme, said the government.

In the scheme, artisans and craftsmen will be given recognition through the PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card. They will be provided credit support of up to 1 lakh (first tranche) and 2 lakh (second tranche), with a concessional interest rate of 5 per cent.

The beneficiaries will also be provided skill upgradation, tool kits, an incentive for digital transactions, and marketing support, an official statement said.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by PM Modi approved the "PM Vishwakarma" along with other measures. The scheme will benefit 30 lakh craftsmen and their families, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

"Under the PM Vishwakarma scheme,



artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificates, ID cards, credit support upto 1 lakh (in the first tranche) and 2 lakh (in the second tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%. The scheme will further provide skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, incentive for digital transactions, and marketing support," the Centre said in a statement.

Those in "PM Vishwakarma" include carpenters, boat makers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, goldsmiths, potters, sculptors,

cobblers, and masons, among others.

In the meeting, the CCEA also greenlit the "PM-eBus Sewa" under which 10,000 e-buses will be added to the country's fleet and operations will be supported for 10 years, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said.

"10,000 e-buses will be deployed in 169 cities and infrastructure will be upgraded in 181 cities under the Green Urban Mobility Initiatives," Mr Thakur said.

"The cabinet has approved the "PM-eBus Sewa" to augment city bus operations by 10,000 e-buses on a Private-Public Partner-



■ HT News Network

New Delhi: US Representative Congressman Rich McCormick, who is part of the American Congressional delegation visiting India, on Wednesday said that he is looking forward to his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi today. "I'm really excited about today, we're going to meet Prime Minister Modi and several other dignitaries and once again continue to advance the relationship between our two great countries", McCormick said in an exclusive interview with ANI. McCormick who represents Georgia's 6th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives also hailed the recent visit of PM Modi to America stating "there's never been a better time for developing these relationships." "I think there's never been a better time for developing these relationships. His (PM Modi) visit to America was special, it's the second time he's been over there. That's unique. The largest democracy in the world coming to visit America. And now we're here in force to have a bipartisan group of congressmen to continue to develop this relationship that I think it's going to be essential in the future", said McCormick. Speaking about the India-

US relationship and threats from China, the Congressman said that it is important to develop a strong relationship. "We continue to develop trust given the fact that we've had a long history of coordinated efforts, but this is going to be something unique as we go into this next generation of threats, especially with the proximity to China and other countries. Developing a strong relationship strategically, economically and militarily so that we can trust each other into the future", McCormick said. Hailing India's economic growth, the congressman said that it will be interesting to see India become a more powerful ally. "Last night we met with a bunch of businesses. There's a huge military industry here in India that I think is going to be partnering with this in the future."

ship model. The scheme would have an estimated cost of 57,613 crore, of which support of 20,000 crore will be provided by the central government. The scheme will support bus operations for 10 years," he added.

The scheme will generate 45,000 to 55,000 direct jobs through the deployment of around 10,000 buses in city bus operations, an official statement said.

The scheme has two segments - one to augment the city bus services and the other to develop infra under the Green Urban Mobility Initiatives which envisages green initiatives like bus priority, infrastructure, and multimodal interchange facilities among other things, the Centre said.

"Under the scheme, states/cities will be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators. The central government will support these bus operations by providing a subsidy," the statement said.

The PM-eBus Sewa will boost e-mobility, the Centre said. Vishwakarma Scheme: The scheme will receive 13,000 crore for five years and cover 18 traditional trades to start with, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. "Under the scheme, states/cities will be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators."

Another incident of Holy Quran desecration takes place in Sweden

■ HT News Network

Another incident of desecration of the Holy Quran has taken place outside the Swedish Royal Palace in the capital Stockholm amid a heavy police presence, it emerged on Wednesday.

The incident, which took place on Monday, marked the second time in a matter of weeks that Salwan Momika, 37, and Salwan Najem, 48, have desecrated the Holy Quran, Al Jazeera reported.

Momika, an Iraqi refugee based in Sweden, has been involved in multiple such incidents, the last being on July 31, when he and another man desecrated the Holy Quran outside the Swedish parliament.

The act — permitted under Sweden's freedom of speech laws — took place at Mynttorget, a central square surrounded by government buildings and the palace, Al Jazeera said.

Momika and Najem engaged in a prolonged, theatrical and now familiar desecration of the Quran while using a megaphone to goad counterprotesters, the report said.

It added that "several people in the crowd brought their own megaphones, and the two men were largely drowned out by counterprotesters".

Present among the crowd was a group wearing firefighter-themed outfits whose members chanted "extinguish the hate" while handing out plastic firefighter hats



and encouraging onlookers to speak into their megaphones, Al Jazeera stated.

Anadolu Agency reported that the perpetrators faced a reaction from a group of Swedish activists, who asked them to stop the provocative act.

It stated, "The police, protecting the attackers, arrested one of the activists, who moved to thwart the attack."

The duo also staged a similar protest outside Iraq's embassy in the Swedish capital on July 20, where they desecrated the holy book.

The incidents have drawn strong reactions across the Muslim world, with several nations, including Pakistan, condemn-

ing the acts at international forums.

Following the latest incident, former premier Shehbaz Sharif termed the act as "highly disturbing".

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), he said, "The recurring nature of such reprehensible incidents establishes that there is a vile, sinister and evil intention behind them that aims at hurting the emotions of Muslims around the world."

He added, "Equally disturbing is the lack of action on the part of [the] Swedish government to check such incidents through strict enforcement of law. Mere expression of regret and condemnation is not enough."

The former prime minister stated that

the "desecration of religious symbols, holy personages and books damages interfaith harmony that the world so desperately needs".

Calls to ban such acts

In July, the United Nations Human Rights Council approved a resolution on religious hatred, which was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The resolution called for the UN rights chief to publish a report on religious hatred and for states to review their laws and plug gaps that may "impede the prevention and prosecution of acts and advocacy of religious hatred".

The same month, the UN General Assembly adopted, by consensus, a Moroccan resolution, co-sponsored by Pakistan, calling for countering hate speech and strongly deploring attacks against places of worship, religious symbols and holy books.

The resolution, titled 'Promoting inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech', won the approval of the 193-member assembly and stated: "Strongly deploring all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their religious symbols, holy books, homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law."

US will welcome Iran's decision to slow down N-plan, says Blinken

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday he could not confirm a report that Iran slowed its pace of amassing near-weapons-grade enriched uranium but would welcome any Iranian steps to de-escalate its "growing nuclear threat."

Blinken also told reporters that Iran moving US detainees into house arrest was not related to any other aspect of US policy toward Iran, which he said reflected a strategy of deterrence, pressure and diplomacy. On Thursday, sources said Iran may free five detained US citizens as part of a deal to unfreeze \$6 billion in Iranian funds in South Korea. Iran allowed four detained US citizens to move into house arrest from prison. A fifth was already under home confinement.

The Wall Street Journal on Friday reported Iran had significantly slowed the pace at which it was accumulating near-weapons-grade enriched uranium and diluted some of its



stockpile, moves that could help ease tensions with the US and revive broader talks over Iran's nuclear programme. Secretary of State terms moving US detainees into house arrest a 'separate matter' "Of course, we would welcome any steps that Iran takes to actually deescalate the growing nuclear threat that it has posed since the United States got out of the Iran nuclear deal," Blinken told a news conference, alluding to former US President Donald Trump's 2018 abandonment of that agreement.

Under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and six major powers,

Iran had agreed to curb its nuclear programme to make it harder for it to obtain an atomic weapon — an ambition it denies — in return for relief from US, European Union and United Nations sanctions.

When asked if Iran's reported slowdown and the release of the detainees to house arrest was in any way linked, Blinken said they were different issues.

"The agreement that we're pursuing to bring home those who are wrongfully detained in Iran is an entirely separate matter that we want to bring to a successful conclusion, and that's what I'm focused on."

Russian strikes hit Ukraine areas far from front lines

■ HT News Network

LVIV: Russian air strikes hit two western regions of Ukraine bordering Nato member Poland and other areas on Tuesday, killing three people in a factory and wounding more than a dozen, Ukrainian officials said.

Local media said the attacks were the largest air assault on the Lviv region since the Russian invasion in February 2022. The fatalities were reported in the north-western region of Volyn. Officials said an industrial enterprise in the regional capital Lutsk was struck in the overnight attack. Several people were also hospitalised, Governor Yuriy Pohulyaiko said.

Swedish industrial bearings maker SKF said its factory in Lutsk was hit by a missile overnight, killing three employees. Footage released by Ukraine's state emergency service showed rescuers pulling a man from the rubble.

Fifteen people were also wounded in the Lviv region, Governor Maksym Koztytskyi said. Six missiles damaged dozens of buildings and a kindergarten playground in and around the regional capital. Koztytskyi said the youngest victim was 10 years-old.

Both Volyn and Lviv border Poland and are hundreds of miles from the front line, where Ukraine's military is fending off Russian troops in the nearly 18-month-old war. National grid operator Ukrenergo said power lines in the region were also damaged but that electricity was being restored to those affected.

Lviv city had been spared much of Rus-



sia's air attacks until July, when seven people were killed by a missile that slammed into a residential building near the historic centre.

The city has generally been seen as a safe haven from the conflict, with some government offices moving there and international NGOs using it as a base. It has also been a transit point for Ukrainian refugees en route to Poland and beyond.

"These are the parts of the country where millions of people are seeking safety and refuge after fleeing the horrors of Russia's invasion," Denise Brown, the United Nations resident coordinator in Ukraine, said in a statement condemning the attacks.

"Russia's persistent attacks hitting essential infrastructure in populated areas cause immense human suffering." At least two people were also wounded in the south-eastern city of Dnipro, where Governor Serhiy Lysak said a business enterprise and a sports complex had been hit.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said civilian infrastructure including schools and a hospital had been damaged in a total of eight regions in Tuesday's attacks.

Jamaat leader laid to rest amid violent Bangladesh protests

■ HT News Network

DHAKA: Around 50,000 people attended Tuesday's funeral for a Jamaat-i-Islami leader in Bangladesh, police said, after news of his death in prison sparked violent protests. Delwar Hossain Sayedee, 83, was sentenced to death in 2013 for his role in the rape, murder and the persecution of Hindu Bangladeshis during the country's independence war decades earlier. He was the vice president of the Jamaat.

Sayedee died on Monday after suffering a heart attack in a prison outside Dhaka, prompting protests in the capital that turned violent when police moved in to disperse them. Heavy police security guarded the funeral



al in Sayedee's hometown, in the coastal Pirojpur district, where a huge crowd gathered to watch his body be laid to rest. "Some 50,000 people joined the funeral prayer," deputy district police chief Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman said, adding that the burial took place without incident. But elsewhere in the country, one

person was killed during a confrontation between police and a group attempting to hold a memorial ceremony for Sayedee. "They gathered and wanted to hold a funeral prayer, stoking a clash between them and police," Chakaria duty police officer Md Selim Mia said. "One person has died and some more have been

injured including our policemen," he said.

News of Sayedee's death on Monday night brought thousands of Jamaat supporters to the streets chanting anti-government slogans. Police dispersed protests with rubber bullets and tear gas before dawn on Tuesday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Faruk Hossain said. The police force said it had rejected an application by Jamaat to hold a post-funeral prayer in the capital. Police dispersed protests with rubber bullets and tear gas before dawn on Tuesday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Faruk Hossain said. The police force said it had rejected an application by Jamaat to hold a post-funeral prayer in the capital.

North Korea claims 'racial discrimination' drove US soldier to defect

■ HT News Network

Travis King defected to North Korea to escape "mistreatment and racial discrimination in the US Army", state media said on Wednesday. Pyongyang's first official confirmation they were holding the American soldier.

A private second class with a chequered disciplinary record, King was due to fly back to America in July but instead slipped out of South Korea's main airport, joined a tourist trip to the DMZ and ran across the border into the North.

The United States has previously said that King crossed the border at the Joint Security Area in the Demilitarised Zone separating the North and the South "willfully and without authorisation".

Following a North Korean investigation, King "admitted that he illegally intruded", Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

"Travis King confessed that he had decided to come over to the DPRK as he harboured ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the US army," KCNA said, referring to the North by its official name.

Israeli forces kill 2 Palestinians

■ HT News Network

AQBAT CAMP: Israeli troops killed two Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, in the first deadly raid in the Jericho area for months.

There has been a surge in violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent months, marked by raids by Israeli forces as well as deadly attacks by Palestinians and Israelis. The Palestinian health ministry announced two people were shot in the chest at dawn by Israeli forces "during an attack on Jericho".

The ministry named those killed as Qusay Omar Suleiman al-Walaji, 16, and Mohammed Ribhi Njoom, 25. The Israeli military said during the raid "suspects fired toward the Israel Border Police, who responded with live fire. Hits were identified".

The army did not detail the purpose of the incursion when contacted by AFP. Nasser al-Anani, director of Jericho's public hospital, said the two killed suffered "wounds right in the heart with explosive bullets".

Two other wounded people were admitted to the hospital, he said.

It was the first deadly raid since May 1 on Jericho, an ancient city in the Jordan Valley which lies near the Dead Sea.

Iran re-arrests reporter who interviewed Mahsa Amini's father

■ HT News Network

PARIS: Iranian authorities have re-arrested a journalist who interviewed the father of the woman whose custody death sparked months of protests, just two days after her release from jail, activists said on Tuesday. Nazila Maroufian walked out of Tehran's Evin prison on Sunday, posting on social media a picture of herself without a headscarf in defiance of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

"Don't accept slavery, you deserve the best!" she wrote in her posts.

But she has now been detained again and moved outside of Tehran to Qarchak women's prison, whose conditions are repeatedly criticised by rights groups, the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said. The group, which collates information from activists, said it had confirmed her re-arrest with a source close to the family.

Maroufian, whose age is given by Persian media outside Iran as 23, in October published an interview on the Mostaghel Online news site with Amjad Amini. He is the father of Mahsa Amini, 22. Her death in custody last September 16 after she allegedly violated the dress rules sparked months of protests.

In the interview, Amjad Amini accused authorities of lying about the circumstances of his daughter's death. Iranian authorities have indicated she died because of a health problem, but the family and activists have said she suffered a blow to the head while in custody.

Maroufian, a Tehran-based journalist from Amini's hometown of Sazej in Kurdistan province, was first arrested in November.

Poland displays military might in big parade

■ HT News Network

WARSAW: Poland's biggest military parade since the Cold War took place in Warsaw on Tuesday, as the Nato-member country flexed its military muscle in what the government hoped would be both a message to Moscow and to voters ahead of elections in October.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has made boosting the armed forces a priority for Poland's ruling nationalists Law and Justice (PiS), and with the election campaign in full swing the immense display of military hardware provided a chance to burnish their security credentials.

The Armed Forces Day parade, taking place on the 103rd anniversary of Poland's victory over the Soviet Union in the Battle of Warsaw, saw 2,000 soldiers from Poland and other Nato countries march through the capital accompanied by 200 items of military equipment and 92 aircraft.

"August 15 is not only an opportunity to pay homage to the heroes of the victorious Battle of Warsaw and to thank contemporary soldiers for defending our homeland," Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak told troops and onlookers who had gathered near the Vistula river.

"It is also a perfect day to show our strength, to show that we have built powerful armed forces that will effectively defend our borders without hesitation."

PiS, in power since 2015, has vowed to double the size of the army and spend around 4pc of gross domestic product (GDP) on defence this year.

German FM axes trip after plane breaks down

■ HT News Network

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was forced on Tuesday to scrap her trip to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji after her plane suffered recurring technical problems, the latest in a series of incidents to hit the German fleet. "We tried everything but unfortunately it's logistically not possible to carry out my Indo-Pacific travel (plans) without the defective plane," the minister wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "That is more than annoying," she added.

Baerbock had left on Sunday for the week-long trip but her plane had suffered an outage after refuelling in Abu Dhabi. The minister was stranded for hours while the technical crew battled to fix a problem with the wing flaps.

"Saath Nibhaana Saathiya" Star Sonam Lamba to Lead in Vijayendra Kumeria-Produced Series "Jahaan Chaand Rehta Hai"

■ Syed Tajamul

Mumbai: Popular actress Sonam Lamba, recognized for her roles in notable shows including "Sasural Simar Ka 2," "Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya," "Balika Vadhu," and "Diya Aur Baati Hum," is set to take on the lead role in the upcoming show "Jahaan Chaand Rehta Hai," produced by actor Vijayendra Kumeria.

Sonam, enthusiastic about her new venture, shared her thoughts on her character, Kiran. In a candid conversation, she revealed, "Kiran's tale revolves around a small village in Punjab, where she faces the challenges of belonging to a traditional family that restricts educational opportunities for girls."

Sonam elaborated on Kiran's determination and intelligence, stating, "Kiran defies societal norms and secretly educates herself, surpassing even her teachers and the school principal. Her aspirations extend to mastering the English language and harboring dreams of traveling to the moon."

Expressing her desire to create a positive impact on society, Sonam explained, "Through this role, I aim to shed light on the struggles faced by women like Kiran and their resolute spirit to achieve their dreams. This series chronicles her journey, her triumph over obstacles, and her path to becoming an astronaut. Unlike my previous roles as the obedient daughter or daughter-in-law, I am thrilled to portray the character of an ambitious young



woman. I have always yearned to be part of a project that carries a significant social message. Our aim is to challenge the prevailing perceptions in regions where opportunities for girls are limited. I am hopeful that our show can spark change."

"Jahaan Chaand Rehta Hai" is scheduled to premiere on August 15, showcasing Kiran's inspiring journey. Sonam, reflecting on the project, shared, "We wrapped up the shooting of this finite series in Punjab around March. Looking ahead, I am excited about exploring new and exhilarating opportunities. I am drawn to roles that test my abilities and offer unique challenges." The show will also feature Vibhuti Thakur, Shresth Kumar, and Rajiv Kumar in pivotal roles, with Raghav Dhir

taking on the role of the male lead opposite Sonam.

Sonam Lamba's versatility and dedication to her craft have established her as a prominent figure in the television industry. As she embarks on this empowering journey with "Jahaan Chaand Rehta Hai," viewers can anticipate witnessing her exceptional portrayal of Kiran's inspirational voyage. Sonam Lamba's versatility and dedication to her craft have established her as a prominent figure in the television industry. As she embarks on this empowering journey with "Jahaan Chaand Rehta Hai," viewers can anticipate witnessing her exceptional portrayal of Kiran's inspirational voyage.

JKAACL organises Multilingual Mushaira to celebrate Independence Day

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 16: J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, in collaboration with Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts, Jammu, organised a Multilingual Mushaira here in K. L. Saigal Hall. The programme was organized to celebrate Independence Day by recalling the war heroes and paying a poetic tribute to them.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar was the Chief Guest on the Occasion. He was accompanied

on presidium by renowned writers S. Pritpal Singh, Prof Lalit Mangotra, Bharat Singh, Secretary JKAACL and Shruti Awasthi, regional Director, IGNCA.

The Div Com, in his address, hailed JKAACL and IGNCA Jammu for organizing the literary program to recall the sacrifices of freedom fighters and know how the People can protect the honour, pride and prestige of the Country. "We Indians have to be united as India is a Country of diversity with different religions, casts, languages and Cul-



ture," he added. He further added that the administration will earnestly collaborate with JKAACL and IGNCA in organizing such functions on a bigger platform to provide young and budding writers and poets a chance to share their liter-

ary works with renowned writers. "This will help in developing writing skills in the young generation who had lost this skill of writing in this electronic age" he added. Earlier, Secretary JKAACL, Bharat Singh welcomed the Guests by pre-

sending a flower bouquet. He also presented a shawl and bouquet to the Chief Guest. In his welcome address, the Secretary JKAACL said that the main thought behind organizing this program was to highlight the importance of this Day in our lives. In ancient days our Country was known as the Golden Sparrow and what happened to this country, the people here had to suffer cruelty or unjust acts of exploitation, oppression, and wrongdoing of slavery. And after a lot of struggle, our

country got Independence on 15th August, 1947, he added. Shruti Awasthi, Director, IGNCA, Jammu thanked the Chief Guest for encouraging Culture oriented activities. She said that IGNCA has just started its activities in Jammu and it will not restrict to organizing the cultural programmes but also contribute in the field of research and development of art and culture of J&K. Later, the Multilingual Mushaira began in which renowned writers/ poets along with young writers presented.

Illegally mined minerals seized in Doda District

■ HT News Network



DODA, AUGUST 16: To curb illegal mining activities, a strategic operation was carried out under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Doda, Vishesh Mahajan.

District Mineral Officer Doda, Sunil Kumar Manhas spearheaded the operation, to clamp down on the unlawful practices. Collaborating seamlessly with the revenue department, local police and the Geology & Mining department, the operation yielded substantial results as a JCB & a DUMPER were seized in the Bhalla area of District Doda on August 14.

In another operation, the Mining Department with cooperation of the Police Department seized two trolleys involved in illegal mining in Gandoh Sub-Division of district on August 15. The operation against illegal Mining in the Gandoh area was conducted in collaboration with a team of the Police Department led by ASI Abdul Shakoor, I/C Police Post Changa. In another operation, the Mining Department with cooperation of the Police Department seized two trolleys involved in illegal mining in Gandoh Sub-Division of district on August 15. The operation against illegal Mining in the Gandoh area was conducted.

Amrit concert held in Poonch on 77th Independence Day

■ HT News Network

POONCH, AUGUST 16: In a first, a musical concert under the tagline "Amrit Concert" was organised by District Administration Poonch, in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), here in the Sports Stadium.

The Concert was open for all and attracted huge gathering of Youngsters and Musicophiles. The event started with the performance of local Artists followed by mesmerizing folk songs presentations by famous singers like Aijaz Bhut, Chaman Lehri and thrilling folk Dances by the Jackson Group.

The event showcased a vibrant array of artistic performances and drew praise from attendees. The festival boasted an impressive line-up of attractions, including enthralling performances



of Pahari and Gojri Songs, Qawalis, Dogri Songs and dance.

The Artists and Singers showcased their own exceptional talents, leaving the audience in awe. Their performances were met with enthusiastic appreciation, underscoring the

impact of such cultural festivals on nurturing young artists.

The festival was a part of Independence Day celebration aimed to remember the martyrdom of Brave Soldiers for the motherland.

The event saw the

presence of dignitaries, including DDC Chairperson Poonch, Deputy Commissioner Poonch, SSP Poonch, DDC/BDC members and others.

Jammu and Kashmir, in the northernmost part of India, holds a diverse cultural fabric. Its art, seen in Pashmina shawls and music and dance traditions, such as Sufi music and Rouff dance, embody the region's vibrant heritage. The breathtaking landscape has spurred creativity, while festivals like Baisakhi and Navroz highlight its unity in diversity. Jammu and Kashmir, in the northernmost part of India, holds a diverse cultural fabric. Its art, seen in Pashmina shawls and music and dance traditions, such as Sufi music and Rouff dance, embody the region's vibrant heritage. The breathtaking landscape has spurred creativity, while festivals like Baisakhi and Navroz highlight its unity in diversity.

Piping Ceremony held at DPO Budgam

■ HT News Network

August 16: In an impressive ceremonial function held at District Police Office Budgam, a piping ceremony of recently promoted DySP Shri Aijaz Ahmad Malik was held.

Senior Superintendent of Police Budgam Shri Al-Tahir Gilani-JKPS adorned DySP Shri Aijaz Ahmad Malik-JKPS with the new rank of Superintendent of Police. The event was also attended by Addl. SP Budgam Gowhar Ahmad Khan-JKPS and other officers.

The event celebrated the recent promotion of DySP Shri Aijaz Ahmad Malik (JKPS) who was elevated to the rank of SP by Home Department J&K. Speaking on the occasion, SSP Budgam extended heartfelt congratulations to the newly promoted officer. He lauded the achievements of promoted officer and emphasized the importance of maintaining the same level of enthusiasm and dedication in his future endeavours.

Police organises plantation drives under "Meri Maati Mera Desh" campaign

■ HT News Network

August 16: The campaign "Meri Maati Mera Desh-Mitti Ko Naman Veroon Ka Vandan" continues under which Jammu & Kashmir Police organized plantation drives in Shopian and Sopore.

In Shopian, on the directions of SSP Shopian MS Tanushree-IPS held a plantation drive across all the police establishments in the district with an aim to promote awareness, importance and community engagement in understanding environmental ethics and role of Police & Public in upliftment of the nation. This initiative has garnered significant enthusiasm and participation from all sections of society, highlighting the collective dedication towards a stronger and environmentally conscious community. All SDPOs of the district participated in the said drive and planted ornamental and other local variants of trees in and around office campus & at other places.

In Sopore, SSP Sopore Shri Shabir Nawab-JKPS accompanied by SDPO Sopore Dr. Raies Ahmad-JKPS and DySP DAR Sopore Dr. Hilal Ahmad Hilal-JKPS held a plantation drive at District Police Lines Sopore. Moreover, the drive was also launched in all Police establishments of Police district Sopore.

Independence Day Celebrations At Higher Secondary School Bhalra, Bhandarwah

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

Bhadarwah, Aug 16: Like the whole nation and Union Territory of J&K, Govt. Higher Secondary School Bhalra, Bhandarwah celebrated 77th Independence Day in the School premises with great fervor, gaiety and enthusiasm on Tuesday.

Principal of the Institution Pardeep Kumar Billa-waria unfurled the national flag and took salute at the impressive march past along with Col. Parveen Kumar Commanding Officer CBS Bhalra and Dr. Sanjeev Kumar (Associate NCC Officer).

The NCC Cadets (Junior Division of 2 J&K (I) Coy NCC Bhandarwah) along with students of HSS Bhalra and adjoining schools of Cluster namely Vasuki Vidya Mandir, G.P.S. Bhalra and Modern Public School took part in the March Past.

Thereafter, students of different schools of Cluster Bhalra including HSS Bhalra presented colorful cultural programs depicting patriotism besides local Bhandarwah cultural folk lore.

The special attraction of the program remained the historically significant Dhaku dance that enthralled the audiences when students and staff members presented the item with traditional attire and pulsating beats. Earlier, Chief guest in his address whole heartedly thanked CBS Bhalra for providing logistic support to the programme. He also appreciated the efforts of the students and staff members of the participating schools to make it a successful event. Furthermore, he expressed his gratitude to all the staff members who contributed for making the program a big success.

On this occasion, NCC Cadets (2 J&K (I) Coy NCC Bhandarwah) of the institution also launched HAR GHAR TIRANGA campaign in and around Bhalra area under the guidance of Dr Sanjeev Kumar Koul (Associate NCC Officer) and supervision of Principal of the Institution.

Dr Koul said that the campaign aims to encourage people to post the Tiranga on their houses and hoist it to mark the 77th year of Indian independence.

DC Kishtwar reviews HADP Implementation in Fishery Sector

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 16: District Development Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav today chaired a meeting of District Level Committee (DLC) to review the implementation of the Holistic Agricultural Development Programme (HADP) in the Fisheries Sector. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Assistant Commissioner Development Kishtwar, General Manager DICKishtwar, Assistant Director Fisheries Kishtwar, Lal Hussain, Chief Agricultural Officer, Chief Horticultural Officer, Lead Bank Manager, Pro-



gressive Fish Farmers of the district besides other members of the committee. The main agenda of the meeting was approval of beneficiaries for beneficiary oriented individual/group activities of the Holistic Agricultural Development Programme pertaining to the Fisheries sector. Assistant Director Fisheries explained in detail

different Centrally Sponsored Schemes/State Sector Schemes being implemented in the District like Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY), Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) etc. The meeting approved 9 cases for establishment of Trout Raceway Units in the private sector and 01.

DC Kathua presides over public outreach programme at Keerian

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, AUGUST 16: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rakesh Minhas today presided over a public outreach programme here at Keerian organised as part of weekly Block Diwas program.

DDC Councillor Keerian Gandyal, Dr. Shweta; CPO Uttam Singh; ACD Kishore Singh Katoch; Chief Agriculture Officer, CEO, CMO, XEN. PWD, XEN PDD, XEN Jal Shakti, BDO and other officers and officials of line departments were also present.

On the occasion, PRIs and local populace projected the issues of public importance and sought immediate redress of the



same. The major issue highlighted by the deputations including PRI representatives was of employment of local youth in the construction work of Express highway that is passing through their block.

People from both Keerian and Gandyal panchayats also highlighted their problems and demands seeking renova-

tion of Keerian Gandyal canal, check on unscheduled power cuts during night hours, Payment of pending liability under MGNREGA, early disbursement of compensation for acquired land of locals, meeting shortage of lecturers in GHSS Keediyar, construction of new park and Community Hall etc.

DDC Councillor, Dr. Shweta also highlighted various issues of public importance and asked for timely resolution by the concerned authority.

Responding to the demands, the DC said the issues highlighted by PRIs and others will be looked into and every effort shall be made to get tangible results before the next

Is fasting really the quickest way to lose weight?

A very common belief when it comes to weight loss is that fasting is the quickest and easiest way to drop the pounds. Haven't we all skipped a few meals in the hope of losing a few inches just before a family event to fit into our favourite clothes? To some extent, it has proved to be true. We do see some immediate results due to the temporary calorie deficit. The basic science of weight loss is based on the difference between calories consumed and the calories expended. Thus, during fasting, when the consumption reduces, the weight too tends to reduce.

However, we have also come across a lot of cases where people end up gaining all the weight or even more than the usual weight once, they stop fasting as their appetite goes back to where it was originally. Denial for a period of time means they tend to overeat. This is because they fail to maintain the calorie deficit with balanced and portion-controlled eating along with enough energy expenditure through exercise. What many ignore is that fasting may give you the first push but then a weight loss plan has to be sustainable. Which means you have to exercise, plan your meals and sleep adequately. It is a normal human tendency to function well in strictly imposed restriction, but that goes away with a little relaxation due to lack of will power and proper knowledge.

Another mistake people make during sudden bouts of fasting is that such erratic and extreme habits slow down body metabolism, or the pace at which the energy expenditure happens. It



When trying to lose weight, one must consider an approach which is more sustainable and can be adopted as a lifestyle modification rather than doing things which are extremely radical and that do more harm than good to the body in the long run, says Bhakti Samant, Chief Dietician, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai

may go down by as much as 20 per cent. Your body then optimises its functioning and prioritises only basic functions such as blood pumping and breathing. Because these activities are necessary for survival, your body simply becomes more efficient and burns fewer calories to perform them than it would when adequately fed. You would feel more tired than healthy.

Also, people do not choose the correct foods during fasting. Just because one ends up skipping a meal or two does not mean one can afford to eat high calorie foods during the rest of the time as it again disturbs the overall calorie deficit.

One fasting practice — provided it is followed for a long term — that can actually work for people want-

ing to lose weight and maintain it would be following the "early time restricted feeding." This discipline involves consuming a majority of the calories during the first six to ten hours a day, which in turn leads to stable blood sugar levels and an improvement in metabolism. And although there are many studies done on intermittent fasting, most have followed subjects for a few months. None have followed subjects who have done this more than a year to establish long-term benefits. When trying to lose weight, one must consider an approach which is more sustainable and can be adopted as a lifestyle modification rather than doing things which are extremely radical and that do more harm than good to the body in the long run.

NEWS

A Fish Diet May Help Reduce Risk of Multiple Sclerosis



A preliminary study published this week concluded that eating fish and consuming over-the-counter fish oil supplements is associated with a 45 percent reduced risk of developing multiple sclerosis (MS).

Fish consumption also showed success against clinically isolated syndrome (CIS), in which a person will have one MS-type attack but no further disease development.

The full study will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 70th annual meeting in Los Angeles in late April.

Fish provide a much-needed polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) known as omega-3, which have been shown to be neuroprotective in nature. They've also shown ability to suppress MS-related inflammation in nonhuman research.

In the latest study, a group of experts in Southern California wanted to see if a simple lifestyle modification such as eating fish could reduce the risk of MS.

"We are increasingly recognizing that MS is not only a chronic inflammatory disease of the central nervous system but also often leads to diffuse neuro-degeneration," said Dr. Annette Langer-Gould, who is associated with Kaiser Permanente Southern California in Pasadena, a member of the American Academy of Neurology, and a study author.

"While the cause is not known, the rising prevalence of MS has led to increased interest in identifying modifiable risk factors including diet."

Modifiable risk factors (MRFs) are choices people with MS can make that may offer benefit or detriment to their illness.

Smoking tobacco and consuming alcohol are two MRFs to be avoided for those with MS.

Taking vitamin D and vitamin B-12 have been proven beneficial for people with MS and are considered MRFs worth adopting.

What the study revealed

The new research analyzed the diets of 1,153 people in the MS Sunshine Study out of Kaiser Permanente Southern California.

Fish consumption was categorized.

Participants were divided into two groups.

Those considered to have a high fish intake either ate fish once a week or took a fish oil supplement along with eating fish one to three times per month. Any over-the-counter fish oil supplements were considered OK.

Low fish intake was defined as less than one serving of fish per month and no fish oil supplements.

"Most fish consumed in California is salmon or [Pacific] tuna, which are not as high in mercury as swordfish and mackerel, also known for their high omega-3 content," explained Langer-Gould.

Some tuna does have higher mercury content.

How a Novel Vaccine for the Epstein-Barr Virus Could Reduce the Risk of MS, Cancer

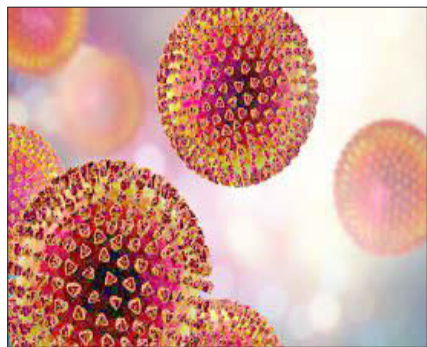
Researchers announced a new study looking at a potential vaccine for the Epstein-Barr virus.

The virus is one of the most common viruses around the world and is linked to certain cancers and an increased risk of multiple sclerosis.

The latest study looked at how a potential vaccine worked to boost the immune system of mice.

We are one step closer to having a vaccine against the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) Trusted Source, one of the most common human viruses that causes mononucleosis and long-term complications, including some cancers and multiple sclerosis (MS).

Approximately 95% of the world population has contracted EBV, and while most people are asymptomatic or recover without any issues, the infection is thought to



be a major risk factor for the development of MS, lymphoma, and nasopharyngeal cancer.

What is the Epstein-Barr virus and why is it linked to MS and cancer?

Nearly 200,000 new EBV-associated cancers are diagnosed around the world

every year.

Because EBV may be disabling for millions of people, scientists have been eager to develop a vaccine that could provide protection against infection and prevent the virus from damaging the body.

In a report published August 8, 2023, in Nature Communications Trusted Source, researchers from QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia demonstrated that they designed a vaccine that successfully targets multiple arms of the immune system in mice to block EBV activity and prevent EBV-associated diseases.

The shot, which will need to be tested in human clinical trials, would be the first EBV vaccine licensed for human use.

"The value of a vaccine against Epstein-Barr virus would be primarily against the

serious complications that can occur such as lymphoproliferative disease or possibly multiple sclerosis," Dr. Amesh Adalja, FIDSA, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security and an infectious disease expert, told Healthline.

Epstein-Barr vaccine could be a game changer

A 2022 study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health looked at 801 military personnel who developed MS. They found a higher rate of EBV infection in people with MS compared to the control group who did not develop MS.

Those researchers suspect that the virus could lead to issues like MS and cancer by triggering an autoimmune response in the body or triggering immune dysregulation following an acute infection.

Study Finds 80% of Infants With RSV Didn't Have Underlying Conditions

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) usually results in mild symptoms for most people.

But infants are at higher risk for complications due in part to their smaller airways.

A new study finds that most infants with the virus treated in the ICU didn't have underlying conditions.

As summer winds down in the U.S., cold and flu season is just around the corner.

That means cases of RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is likely to increase in the coming months.

Now new research Trusted Source finds that most infants who were admitted last season to an intensive care unit for RSV were healthy before their infection, suggesting that preventative measures should be ramped up as we head into the next virus season.

RSV is a common lower respiratory virus that usually causes cold-like symptoms in healthy adults but is more likely to have serious symptoms in infants and older adults.

"RSV is a seasonal virus that is the leading cause of hospitalizations of infants in the U.S. That is a very powerful statement," said Dr. William Schaffner, Professor, Preventative Medicine, Health Policy, Division of Infectious Diseases, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. "It accounts for somewhere between



50,000 and 80,000 hospitalizations in children younger than five in the U.S. each year. About 20% of those require admission to the ICU."

New study finds RSV can take a toll on healthy children

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, RSV is a lower respiratory virus Trusted Source that causes cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in one to two weeks, but in some cases, RSV can be serious, particularly in infants and older adults.

In a new study published August 15 in JAMA Network Open, researchers looked at 600 infants who were hospitalized in the intensive care unit for RSV. They found over 80% of these

children did not have any underlying health conditions before their illness.

Infants under 3 months of age, those born prematurely, and those who were publicly insured were at higher likelihood of needing to be intubated.

"RSV is a scary illness," said Dr. Rebecca Fisk, a pediatrician at Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital. "RSV has a lot of morbidity in children under six months and particularly in children under three months because we know that even healthy children have very small airways. Smaller child, smaller airways. If you have even a little bit of inflammation from the virus or the mucus production in reaction to the virus, you're narrowing the diameter of those airways significantly. It's like taking a straw and making it a coffee stirrer."

How is RSV transmitted?

According to the CDC, RSV can spread when Trusted Source:

An infected person coughs or sneezes

You get virus droplets from a cough or sneeze in your eyes, nose, or mouth

You have direct contact with the virus, like kissing the face of a child with RSV

You touch a surface that has the virus on it, like a doorknob, and then touch your face before washing your hands

Being Heart Healthy Can Decrease Risk Of These Cancers

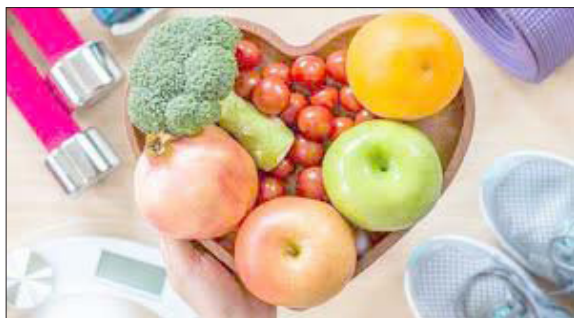
A new study finds that cardiorespiratory (heart and lung) fitness decreased risk for 9 different kinds of cancer.

Some cancer risk was reduced by up to 40% compared to low fitness levels.

Surprisingly, two forms of cancer (skin and prostate) were found to have a slightly increased risk in more fit individuals.

Physical fitness, specifically of the cardiorespiratory system, may decrease the risk of nine different forms of cancer by up to 40%. The affected cancers include: head and neck, stomach, pancreas, liver, colon, rectum, esophagus, kidney, and lung.

Exercise and physical activity are known to help lower overall cancer risk. Trusted Source, however less is known about cardiorespiratory fitness and its relationship to individualized or "site specific" forms of cancer. A new research study, published today in the British Journal of Sports Medicine is now shedding more light on how having



a healthy heart and lungs can protect against specific forms of cancer.

The study unambiguously concludes that higher levels of cardiovascular fitness are protective against nine different forms of cancer: "We found that higher cardiorespiratory fitness at age 18 was associated with a lower risk of being diagnosed with nine out of the 18 site-specific cancers we included in our study. The associations between fitness and cancer seemed to be most apparent in gastrointestinal cancers," Dr. Aron Onerup, MD, PhD, Department of Pediatrics, Institute of Clinical Sciences, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, and lead

author of the study, told Healthline. Trusted Source Trusted Source Trusted Source Erika Rees-Punia, Trusted Source Phd, Senior Principal Scientist, Population Science Department at the American Cancer Society, speaking on behalf of the ACS, told Healthline, "This is a large study that provides more evidence for a link between cardiorespiratory fitness and cancer risk."

"The results of this study aligned with what we know about physical activity, cardiorespiratory fitness, genetics, and cancer," she said. Dr. Rees-Punia was not involved in the study.

Researchers analyzed data from over 1 million men. Dr. Onerup and his

team undertook a massive observational study, using a Swedish databank to comb through health and fitness data for more than one million male military conscripts. They then tracked cancer outcomes over the next three decades, with an average observation period of 33 years.

This study included men who underwent military conscription from 1968 to 2005. Only men with severe chronic conditions, functional disabilities, and imprisoned individuals were barred from conscription, limiting the cohort to healthy young men.

Conscripts underwent standard physical assessments, including blood pressure, BMI, height and weight, and physical strength. The importance of aerobic fitness

The conscription process also included a "maximal aerobic workload" test, essentially a form of VO2 max test that uses a bicycle to determine cardiorespiratory fitness. A VO2 max test measures how much oxygen.

"Mohammed Faizan (Steyn)" The Latest in The Fast Lane of Affarwat-XI

BARAMULLA: The 19-Year old Pacer got his call for Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla Side for the North Kashmir Premiere League (NKPL) at Jehlum Stadium Baramulla.

Mohammed Faizan (Steyn) Can trouble batters with his rapid pace. He is the latest addition to Affarwat-XI's set of quicks who can hit speeds north of 135- 140 kph. Mohammed Faizan (Steyn) is only 3-T20's old for Affarwat-XI Sports Club but he shown enough promise to lead the pace battery of Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla.

In the very Second match of NKPL at Jehlum Stadium Baramulla, against Strong Sultan Warrior's taking 17- runs off his first over but he struck and scares the dangerous hitter of the ball Munir Bhat by his rapid pace and was dropped on the very third ball. The match was abandoned as the heavy showers didn't allow to continue the game. The next Scheduled date for the same match has issued by the Baramulla Cricket Forum on 24th August 2023 at 9:30 am on the same venue.



Gill advances in ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings



DUBAI: India batter Shubman Gill has reached a career best 25th position in the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings following a half-century in the fourth match of the series against the West Indies in Lauderhill last week.

Gill has moved up 43 places after scores of 77 and nine in the last two T20Is of the five-match series that the West Indies won 3-2. Gill's previous best in the format was 30th position, attained in February, after he registered India's highest score in T20Is, an unbeaten

126 against New Zealand in Ahmedabad. Gill's opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal, with whom he added 165 runs in the fourth match, has also made rapid progress in the latest weekly update, rocketing over a thousand places to reach 88th position for his player of the match' effort of 84 not out off 51 deliveries, an ICC media release said.

West Indies opener Bandon King's 85 not out off 55 balls has lifted him five places to a career-best 13th position while Kyle Mayers (up two places to 45th) and Shimron

Hetmyer (up 16 places to 85th) have also moved up.

In the rankings for bowlers, West Indies' left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein is up three places to 11th and Jason Holder is up two places to 25th after they bagged two wickets each in the final match while Romario Shepherd's match-winning four-wicket haul has lifted him 20 slots to 63rd position.

India's left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav has progressed 23 places to 28th position after grabbing two wickets in the fourth match.



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