



Stokes opts out of IPL 2024
to 'manage workload and
fitness'

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Div Com inspects
developmental works of
Northernshore Road at
Habbak

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Taking Strong Note of Power Crisis LG Manoj Sinha Steps in

Reviews Power Supply Scenario in Kashmir



■ HT News Network

JAMMU, NOV 23: Lieutenant Governor

Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired a review meeting on the overall Power supply situation in the UT of Jammu Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Sh. H. Rajesh Prasad, Principal Secretary,

Power Development Department; Sh Santosh D Vaidya, Principal Secretary
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Very light rain, snow over higher reaches of J&K: MeT

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: A slight improvement in weather was observed on Thursday amid a weak Western Disturbance (WD) is likely to cause very light rain or snow over the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Thursday predicted isolated very light rain or snow over the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours. The weather mainly will remain dry over the plains of Jammu



and Kashmir during the period.

However, the MeT office said shallow to moderate fog is very likely to continue till November 28 over many places of Kashmir Division.

Currently, the weather is partly to generally cloudy at many places with the possibility of light rain or snow at isolated higher reaches of J&K, it said.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry from November 24 to 26 and turn cloudy from November 27 to 28.

There is a possibility of light rain or snow at isolated
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

J&K SSB to conduct PST, PET for Sub-Inspector post from Dec 2

JAMMU, NOV 23: The J&K Service Selection Board has scheduled conduct of Physical Standard Test (PST) and Physical Endurance Test (PET) for the post of Sub-Inspector (Home Department), tentatively from December 2, 2023 at Jammu and Srinagar centres.

According to a notice issued here today by SSB in this regard, all candidates, who have opted for Kashmir as test centre for the post of Sub Inspector, Home Department (as per the application form) and are desirous of appearing in PST and PET at Jammu centre, have been called upon to
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

2 brothers arrested in Baramulla

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: Police on Thursday arrested two brothers in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district for allegedly swindling Rs 1.50 lakhs from a man under the pretext of marrying him.

Police Post Mirgund received an application from Ghulam Mohammad Bhat a resident of Dessa Doda at present Srinagar, stating that he has been fraudulently cheated by Mohammad Qasim Bhat of Gund Ibrahim, Trikbal Pattan on the pretext of marriage.

The complaint said that he paid him about Rs 1,50,000 and when he asked for the return of the money the accused intimidated him of dire consequences.

In this regard a case under relevant sections of laws was registered in
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Marriage Scam Busted, Two Fraudsters Arrested in Pattan: Police

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: Two fraudsters were arrested in north Kashmir's Pattan area after allegedly looting a person of Rs. 1,50,000 in connection with a nuptial matter, said police on Thursday.

As per the news agency CNS, a police spokesperson said that the Police Post Mirgund received an application from a complainant Ghulam Mohammad Bhat son of Mohammad Shareef Bhat, a resident of Dessa Doda at present in Srinagar, stating therein that, he was fraudulently cheated by Mohammad Qasim Bhat son of Gh Mohammad

Div Com reviews availability of basic facilities inside fenced areas along LOC

Says border villages are first priority villages for development

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Thursday convened a meeting, here to review availability of basic amenities and services to the people living in the habitations ahead of the fenced line along the LOC in border districts of Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners of Baram-

ulla, Kupwara and Bandipora along with district officers of PMGSY, Health, Education, PDD and PHE besides officers of BEACON.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed officers to ensure that border villages are provided all the basic facilities viz. roads, electricity, mobile connectivity and internet services besides educational institutions and health centres so that these areas are not left behind on the
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Knowledge Series Film Bazaar at IFFI Goa holds focus session on J&K

■ HT News Network

GOA, NOV 23: On day three Jammu and Kashmir was the focus at the Film Bazaar



Knowledge series sessions being held at the prestigious International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

The session was presided over by
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

LeT terrorist neutralised in ongoing Rajouri gunfight

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, NOV 23: Security Forces have neutralised Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist, believed to be the mastermind of Dhangri attack, and also another militant in the ongoing gunfight in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday.

Official sources said that with the first light, Army along with police intensified the combat operation and heavily retaliated to the firing during the gunfight in Bajumal village of Kalakote.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

IGP KASHMIR CHAIRS SECURITY REVIEW MEETING IN ANANTNAG

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone V K Birdi on Thursday chaired the security review meeting in south Kashmir's Anantnag district and discussed strategies for maintaining peace and order.

IGP Birdi held a meeting with police officers of the district.

He emphasized the importance of community



engagement in preventing crime and ensuring the safety of the residents.

IGP's visit aimed to assess the security situation in the

district and to ensure that the necessary measures are in place to address any potential challenges.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Inspection, Disconnection Drives By KPDCL Intensified

Rs. 8 cr pending arrears from consumers realized in 1 day; 1082 consumers disconnected for non-payment of bills

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has further intensified its inspection drives across all district of Kashmir Division to check incidents of

hooking and power theft, which are primarily responsible for power outages and distress cuts.

As many as 566 drives were conducted across all 19 Electric Divisions and a penalty of Rs.7.84 lakh

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

More than nine lakh tourists enjoy Gondola ride at Gulmarg this year

To cross a million mark by year end; Corp. committed to enrich tourists' experiences: MD Cable Car

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: More than nine lakh tourists have enjoyed the Gondola ride at Gulmarg this year and the figure is expected to cross more than million mark by the end of this year. Tourists describe the experience as surreal and alluring.



Managed and operated by J&K Cable
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

First FDI 'Mall of Srinagar' to create jobs for 7500 persons

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: The 'Mall of Srinagar', which is the first Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Jammu and Kashmir is going to create employment opportunities for more than 7000 persons, documents reveal.

Earlier in March this year, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha laid the foundation stone for a Rs. 250-crore mega shopping mall at Srinagar's Sempora area "Mall of Srinagar".

The Mall is being constructed by Dubai-based Emaar Group, which built the world famous Burj Khalifa in the United Arab Emirates.

The foundation stone of the state-of-the-art
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Opioid use on rise in J&K, heroin mostly abused drug: Doctors

'1,68,700 drug abusers minors; 11,80,000 adults; average monthly expenditure of opioid user around Rs 90,000'

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: The prevalence of opioid use in Jammu and Kashmir is on the rise, with heroin being the most com-



monly abused drug, according to doctors. Dr Aadil, a Medical Officer at the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) in District Hospital Shopian, informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that an increasing number of patients

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Srinagar, Friday
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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Lt Governor.....

Finance Department; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor and other senior officials.

Detailed discussions took place on various aspects to meet the high electricity demand in both Kashmir and Jammu Division.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor asked the Principal Secretary, Power Development Department, H. Rajesh Prasad for strict compliance of curtailment plans, uninterrupted and quality power in 100% smart metered feeders and timely replacement of damaged transformers to avoid any inconvenience to the people. He said the team on the ground must closely monitor the situation and take proactive actions to meet the peak electricity demand.

The Lt Governor also took appraisal of the status of the installation of smart meters, manpower and power infrastructure.

Very light.....

higher Places on November 29-30 while the weather will remain generally cloudy from December 1 to 3 in J&K.

Srinagar, after experiencing consecutive coldest nights with temperature dipping to -1.8°C on Wednesday, showed a slight improvement today, recorded at -0.8°C and it was -0.9°C below normal for this period of the season, MeT office said.

Pahalgam also recorded the lowest of the season on Wednesday at -3.3°C. However, with the improvement in the weather, the temperature was recorded at -1.8°C on Thursday. It was 0.6°C above normal for the tourist hot spot in south Kashmir.

Qazigund, on Srinagar-Jammu national highway recorded a minimum of -0.4 °C against -1.0°C the previous night and it was -0.5°C below normal for the gateway to Kashmir.

Kupwara settled on 0.2°C against -1.4°C recorded on previous night and it was 0.7°C above normal for the frontier district of Kashmir, while Kokernag recorded a low of 0.7°C against the 0.3°C today. It was -0.1°C below normal for the Picnic spot of south Kashmir.

Gulmarg in north Kashmir had a low of 0.4°C Thursday against 0.6°C recorded the previous night and it was 2.5°C above normal for the famous ski resort of Kashmir, MeT office said. (UNI)

Div Com reviews.....

developmental front.

He enjoined concerned PHE officers to connect every household through JJM Schemes to provide potable water to residents of fenced areas.

Bidhuri maintained that border villages should not be treated as last habitations but these are our first priority and are considered first villages.

The Div Com impressed the officers to conduct frequent field visits to these villages to address the developmental requirements so the residents of these areas do not face hardships.

The Deputy Commissioners on the occasion informed the meeting about the number of villages of their respective districts falling in this zone and the current scenario of basic amenities available to the people there.

To execute all the developmental works ahead of the fencing line, Div Com instructed HoDs to work in close synergy with the security agencies.

Knowledge Series.....

officers from J&K DIPR and J&K Tourism Department was moderated by Sanjay Suri, actor and Film Producer, who happens to be originally from J&K himself. The panel of officers who spoke on the occasion included Amarjeet Singh, Special Secretary J&K Tourism Department; Vivek Puri, Joint Director Department of I&PR and Afaq Gadda Nodal Officer Film Policy DIPR.

During the session, the officers explained different facets of the film policy and unique features of it besides the financial and Non-Financial incentives being offered by the J&K Government. They also spoke extensively about the film tourism destinations that J&K has to offer. Few videos about 'the Film Policy' and 'Bollywood in Jammu & Kashmir' were also played, which were liked and appreciated by the audience. The session concluded with an open discussion where a lot of questions were asked by the audience.

Pertinent to mention that a team of officers from J&K including Special Secretary Tourism, Amarjeet Singh, Joint Director DIPR, Vivek Puri, Nodal Officer J&K Film Policy, Afaq Gadda, Accounts Officer I&PR, Hitesh Choudary, Tourist Officer Hyderabad, M Sajid Kirmani and Film Librarian, Abid Hussain are stationed in Goa and are meeting with National as well as International film makers for pitching the Film Policy and Film Tourism destinations, with a view to give a fillip to Filmography and Tourism in J&K.

Let terrorist.....

Notably, on Wednesday, four Army personnel, including two officers, attained martyrdom while two sustained injuries in the operation.

In exchange of fire, one hard-core terrorist of Lashkar-e-Taiba along with another militant were killed.

The LeT terrorist is believed to be the mastermind of Dhangri terrorist attack.

Sources said that the LeT terrorist killed in an ensuing gunfight is identified as Quari and is a Pakistan National.

"He has been trained in Pakistan and Afghan Front and is a highly ranked terrorist leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba," they said.

Sources added that he has been active in Rajouri-Poonch alongwith his group from past one year and is also believed to be mastermind of Dhangri and Kandi attacks in Rajouri district. "He was sent to revive terrorism in the region and was an expert in IEDs, operating and hiding from caves and a trained sniper," sources said.

Dhangri attack occurred on January 1 and 2 that resulted in six deaths and 14 others sustained injuries in separate incidents of shooting and firing. UNI

IGP Kashmir.....

Birdi also emphasized the importance of close coordination and collaboration between the various security forces to effectively combat any potential security threats. He also stressed the need for proactive measures to maintain peace and stability in the district.

IGP Kashmir also urged for prompt resolution of pending cases. Besides emphasizing Police-Public relations, he encouraged a Public-centric approach, advocating service-oriented Policing to build trust and bridge the gap between the Police and the Public.

DIG SKR Anantnag Rayees Mohammad Bhat, SSP Anantnag Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy, SP Ops Anantnag Furqan Qadir and other Officers were present in the meeting. (UNI)

Inspection.....

was imposed on those found hooking wires on bare conductor and bypassing the meters. Meanwhile, 64 Domestic Transformers (DTs) were also reported damaged on Wednesday due to overloading.

Giving details about the inspections conducted, a KPDCL spokesperson today stated that 183 drives were conducted in Circle II Srinagar, 60 in Circle I Srinagar, 123 in Circle Ganderbal, 71 in Circle Pulwama, 35 in Circle Bijbehara and 94 in Circle Sopore.

The spokesperson further stated that 1082 domestic, commercial and industrial connections were also disconnected for non-payment of energy dues for more than three months. This includes 371 domestic, 549 commercial and 157 industrial consumers.

Exhorting consumers to treat DTs as their own assets, the KPDCL spokesman said 64 DTs were reported damaged across all Electric Divisions. "While those fully damaged are being transported to Central Workshop at Pampore, the rest are being repaired at divisional-level workshops," he said, adding that KPDCL is committed to replace the damaged transformers within the stipulated timelines.

KPDCL has also urged all domestic, commercial and industrial consumers to pay their long-pending energy dues or face disconnection. "The Corporation is actively pursuing recovery of pending arrears and Rs.8.00 crore were collected on Wednesday alone from the consumers," he said, adding that KPDCL will make all out efforts to achieve the target of revenue realization fixed by the Government.

Opioid use on.....

seeking treatment are opioid users, with heroin being the most commonly abused opioid in J&K.

"Approximately 90-95 percent of patients visiting the facility for treatment are opioid users," he said, adding that heroin is the predominant opioid in use across the districts.

A psychiatrist at GMC Anantnag expressed similar concerns, saying that 90 percent of drug abusers attending the ATF facility in the district are heroin users. "About 65 percent of these heroin abusers engage in Intravenous Drug Abuse (IVDA), putting them at a higher risk of contracting HIV and hepatitis," he said.

"One notable challenge in addressing the issue is the social stigma associated with drug abuse, which prevents many individuals from seeking treatment," the psychiatrist said, adding that due to financial constraints and other societal factors, around 40 percent of drug abusers discontinue treatment after the initial visit to ATF.

Medical professionals stressed the need for increased vigilance among parents, urging them to provide comprehensive support to their children and raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

In Jammu and Kashmir, opioid preference differs from the rest of India, where alcohol is more commonly used by individuals with mental health issues, doctors said, adding that the consequences of opioid abuse include a heightened risk of overdose, which leads to severe health issues such as liver damage, sudden heart attacks, kidney damage, and mental health disorders.

Doctors reveal that heroin, a prevalent opioid, costs around Rs 5,000 per gram, and addicts spend an average of 90,000 rupees per month to sustain their opioid use. They said opioid addicts face an increased risk of sudden death, heart attacks, and other health-related complications.

Medical professionals said the possible signs of opioid use include changes in social behaviour, isolation from friends and family, altered hygiene habits, changes in eating patterns, mood swings, and financial difficulties.

They said needle sharing among heroin users has led to a substantial number of cases of severe hepatitis C, and there is also a looming risk of HIV/AIDS.

A recent report by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment highlights the gravity of the situation, stating that over 5 lakh addicts in Jammu and Kashmir use opioids, with 95,000 of them falling within the 10-17 age group. The report reveals a detailed breakdown of drug abuse statistics, encompassing various substances among different age groups.

As per the report, among 1,68,700 minor drug abusers; 8,000 are using cannabis, 95,000 opioids, 19,000 sedatives, 100 cocaine, 400 amphetamine stimulants, 46,000 inhalants and 200 hallucinogens.

The report reveals that 11,80,000 adults of the 18-75 age group are drug abusers and among them, 3,54,000 are using alcohol, 1,36,000 cannabis, 4,47,000 opioids, 1,51,000 sedatives, 89,000 inhalants and 1000 each of cocaine, stimulant and hallucinogens.

More than.....

Car Corporation, the Gulmarg Gondola is the flagship attraction of Kashmir tourism. It is possibly India's most popular ropeway, and at a height of 14,000 ft, it is Asia's highest operating cable car.

The Corporation, this year, improved and enhanced the service delivery by improving the ticket issuing mechanism, undertaking several safety tests and overhauled the second phase of the Gondola with latest technology.

Managing Director, J&K Cable Car Corporation, Raja Yaqoob said the Corporation is sensitized to its role as a prominent stakeholder of J&K tourism. He said the corporation is committed to improve tourist experience by giving them easy, hassle free and safe ride. He assured Tourists of even better facilities in the upcoming winter season and appealed to Tourists to book tickets through online mode only and adhere to timings mentioned in the ticket to avoid any inconvenience.

It may be mentioned here that the Gulmarg Cable Car comprises two phases; one from Gulmarg resort to Kongdori valley and the second from Kongdori to Apharwath Peak. The ropeway has in total 108 cabins and 18 towers.

The first stage transfers from the Gulmarg resort at 2,650 m (8,694 ft) to Kongdori Station in the bowl-shaped Kongdori valley. The second stage of the ropeway takes to a height of 3,980 m (13,058 ft) on Kongdori Mountain, a shoulder of nearby Afarwat Peak (4,200 m (13,780 ft)).

First FDI 'Mall.....

mall was laid almost a year after CEOs from several Gulf countries visited the Valley to explore investment opportunities.

As per the document available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), "Mall of Srinagar" will create jobs for 7500 people, thereby becoming the first single mega job creating asset of Jammu and Kashmir.

Documents said that "Mall of Srinagar", is likely to be a state-of-the-art shopping and entertainment destination, with an investment of Rs 250 Cr.

"This will contribute to the region's economic growth by creating employment opportunities of 7500 for the local population," it said.

Launched by Emaar in collaboration with Magna Waves Buildtech, the mall is set to become operational by 2026.

Officials said the "Mall of Srinagar" will become one of the prime attractions for people and tourists visiting the valley from different corners of the world.

"It will be like the Dubai mall, which is the largest mall in the world and equally famous for offering a unique experience to the visitors. The mall will be a one- stop shop for the people. It will be equipped with avenues of entertainment. It will be one of the largest malls in the region with over 500 shops," they said.

Officials said the "Mall of Srinagar", which is coming up in the outskirts of Srinagar, will get due promotion by the government throughout its promotional programmes.

"Given that the mall is being constructed on 10 lakh square feet of area, it will have a direct relevance with the tourism sector of Jammu and Kashmir. While there are many investments coming in Kashmir, this particular mall will be a mega investment," they said.

Pertinently at the time of laying of foundation stone, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Mall of Srinagar will have a transformative impact on UT and boost infrastructure, employment generation and ease of living.

J&K SSB to.....

represent before the Board through offline mode only at J&K Services Selection Board office Zam-Zam Complex, Rambagh Srinagar, within 03 days from issuance of this notice i.e. up to 25-11-2023, in the prescribed format.

The document reads that no further request in this regard shall be entertained beyond 25-11- 2023.

2 brothers.....

Police Station Pattan and investigation was taken up.

"Acting upon this, Police Party of Police Post Mirgund swung into action and after hectic efforts, accused person Mohd Qasim Bhat, alongwith his accomplice brother Nisar Ahmad Bhat have been arrested in the instant case and were shifted to Police Station Pattan where they remain in custody," a police spokesman said.

He added that further investigation is going on. (UNI)

Marriage Scam.....

Bhat, a resident of Gund Ibrahim, Trikolbal Pattan "on the pretext of marriage". The victim had paid an amount of about Rs 1,50,000 to the fraudster, who intimidated him of dire consequences when being asked by the former to pay his money back, police said.

During further investigation, police said the accused's brother Nisar Ahmad Bhat, an accomplice in the case, was also arrested. The duo was shifted to Police Station Pattan where they remain in custody, they said, adding that further investigation was taken up.

Meanwhile, an FIR was also registered against the accused fraudsters under relevant sections of law in Police Station Pattan.

USBRL rail project almost completed: CPRO Northern Railways

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: To connect Kashmir valley with the rest of the country, the much-awaited Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) project is almost completed, top railway official said on Thursday.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Northern Railway, Deepak Kumar said the work on Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) project is almost completed.

"95 to 96% of the work on the 111-km-long Katra-Banihal rail line has been completed, with only a small portion of work remaining," he said.

He said, "Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has already announced that Udhampur-Banihal track, connecting Jammu with Srinagar, will be completed by December this year, or early next year."

Meanwhile, another top official, wishing not to be named, told KNO that the work on the topographically challenging 111 km section between Katra and Banihal is ongoing.

He said once completed, the direct train service will directly run from Jammu and other parts of the country. The project will probably take a month or two, which means train service is likely to start from January or February, he said.

"The USBRL project comprises 38 tunnels covering 119 km, with T-49 being the longest at 12.75 km, making it the country's lengthiest transportation tunnel. Additionally, 927 bridges, the iconic 359-meter-high Chenab Bridge and only cable-stayed rail bridge in the country were constructed across the steep slope of Anji Khad River," he said.

Chief Area Manager, (CAM) Kashmir, Northern Railways Sakib Yousuf said they are expecting the trains to run very soon from all parts of the country towards Kashmir valley as most of the work on USBRL project almost is completed.

To facilitate the passengers from outside the state, he said, several works are being executed in Kashmir valley and some works are in pipeline.

"Budgam station is an Amit station, for passengers waiting halls and others facilities are being developed there, similarly in Anantnag station, work for goods terminal (goods shed) is currently going on," he added.



Zalwan dumping site to Wullar Lake eased; Govt approves Rs 6 Crore Project, initiates Work

BANDIPORA, NOV 23: The prolonged issue of the Zalwan dumping site, situated on the shore of Wullar Lake in North Kashmir's Bandipora district, has finally come to a resolution as the administration has initiated the land filling and protection work, providing substantial relief to residents from solid waste. Acknowledging the significant challenge of solid waste management, an official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the administration is actively addressing rural waste through initiated house collection, marking successful progress.

"In the urban waste management project, a 6 crore project has been sanctioned for the Zalwan filling site, ensuring the collection and environmentally friendly disposal of waste through a scientific process," he said.

"Simultaneously, ongoing land filling and protection work at the Nasoo existing dumping site is providing considerable relief to residents of the main town," the official added. He said that a stream near the Zalwan dumping site was directly flowing into Wullar Lake, posing a significant threat to the lake's ecosystem.

The Zalwan Dumping site had been in use since 1964, and over time, the volume of solid waste grew, adversely impacting Wullar Lake. Last year, the Supreme Court criticized the Jammu and Kashmir administration for the unscientific dumping and disposal of solid waste, emphasizing that such practices endanger people's lives.



J&K integrates all 17 functional mandis on eNAM, raises eNAM trade to over 300 cr this year

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: The Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing in collaboration with Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA), today organized an outreach programme for Warehousing Registration and integration of CA stores with eNAM portal at SKICC, Srinagar. Chairman WDRA, T.K Manoj Kumar was the chief guest on the occasion.

Kumar informed that WDRA was constituted in 2010 under the Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2007 with a mission to regulate and ensure implementation of provisions of the Act for development and regulation of warehouses, regulations of negotiability of warehouse receipts and promote orderly growth of warehousing business in the country.

He explained the advantages of registration of warehouses and emphasized that the e-NWR issued by WDRA registered warehouse shall act as a prime tool of trade and loan. He also elaborated the process of generation of e-NWR which is a potent instrument for



securing credit. He announced waiver of registration fee till 25th Oct 2025, besides emphasizing that PACS in J&K can take due benefit for registration from WDRA.

Sharing the perspective, Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing, Vikas Sharma, in his address, informed that the meet was organized with the twin objective of raising awareness on registration of warehouses under Warehousing (Development & Regulation) Act and bringing CA Stores in the fold of eNAM for giving maximum returns to the

farmers for their produce.

National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. He shared that a similar event was organized in August in Jammu.

It was informed on the occasion that J&K has now integrated all 17 functional mandis on eNAM. The Department is keen to facilitate registration of CA stores in J&K with WDRA, paving way for their integration on e-NAM Por-

tal. The Department has recently provided for declaration of CA stores as sub-yards of Mandis for carrying out e-NAM Trade to facilitate the farmers to reap maximum returns for their produce. From only 89 lakh eNAM trade till 2021-22, J&K up scaled it to 32 crore last year and during this year, it has raised manifolds to over 300 crore.

H.K. Dabas, Under Secretary, WDRA and B.P. Yadav, AD, WDRA made presentations on Warehousing Act/Rules and detailed the Registration Process, e-NWR,

scientific storage practices, assaying procedures etc. The eNAM and SFAC teams made the participants aware about the procedure for integration of warehouses and CA stores on eNAM and welcomed the initiative of the Horticulture (P&M) Department and WDRA in this regard.

The event was participated, among others by, G.R. Mir, Director Horticulture Kashmir, R.A. Wani, Special Secretary, Imam Din MD, JKHPMC, Khalid Majeed, Director I&C Kashmir, Mohammad Iqbal Choudhary, Director Agriculture Kashmir, CGM NABARD, Shahid Kamili, President, FCIK, Vicky Shah, Chairman, PHDCCI, representatives of KCCL, various stakeholders including officers of Horticulture (P&M) Department, DMI, NABARD, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, FCI, Industries and Commerce, SIDCO, SICOP, Cooperatives, SKUAST, banks. Besides, CA stores owners, owners of warehouses, farmers, and Presidents of major fruit Mandis also attended the event.

Demand in non-metered areas increases 8 times more than metered areas

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: With the government vowing to improve the electricity scenario in the valley, the authorities here have claimed that the demand in the non-metered areas of Kashmir have increased eight times more than the areas where smart meters have been introduced.

The officials while divulging the details to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that there has been an abrupt increase in the demand of electricity in wake of the early winter conditions.

“The demand at present has increased to 1900 Megawatts, but at the same time, the in-house



power generation is too low,” the officials said.

At this juncture, the public response is quite contrary as the overloading has turned out a major reason behind the unscheduled power cuts here, which is a cause of concern for one and all, the officials said, adding that the consumers who have been connected with the smart meters have been acting responsibly as the demand amidst the prevailing winter conditions has increased by just over one per cent.

The officials, however, stated that in the non-metered areas where the flat rate continues, the demand has increased 8 times more than the metered areas, which shows how the public in these areas are resorting to the excessive use of electricity, which needs to be curbed.

When asked about the accelerating night inspections, the official said that the complaints of illegal hooking in the metered areas was being received from different areas, thus the department has decided to act tough against the power theft to combat hooking.

Pertinently, Kashmir has been grappling with worst-ever power crisis while the government had claimed that the situation will be improved as a panel has already been constituted by the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta with regard to the procurement of additional electricity to meet the power demand.

For DSEK current weather is ‘pleasant to play, attend schools’

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: With the medical experts suggesting not to vent out in foggy weather, Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) on contrary says that the ‘weather is pleasant’ for attending the school.

For the past several days, Kashmir has been reeling under intense cold and foggy weather conditions and doctors have suggested taking precautions against the possible ill effects of it.

However, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), DSEK Thursday said, “The Government is aware of the matter and was sensitive of the situation too. We will make an announcement very soon.”

“However, I want to tell you that the weather is very pleasant. Look at children playing the cricket. Had there been that much of a cold, you wouldn’t have seen them playing and clapping during the match,” he said.

“As of now, I don’t think there is that much severity of cold,” the director said.

He further said that the department has to keep those rules in consideration as well that in one academic session there are 200 academic days that primary level students have to attend mandatorily and from classes 6th standard onward, students have to attend 220 academic days mandatorily. “Besides, we are supposed to fill the learning gaps of students as well. Keeping in view all those things, the government is aware of the situation and will make an announcement accordingly,” DSEK said.

Pertinently, KNO has reported that several teachers had said that besides cold weather situations, seasonal influenza have also been observed in many students.

“Unfortunately, the students have not been provided with any sort of heating arrangements. I think if such facilities were in place, there would be less chances of getting ill,” a teacher said.

Meanwhile, another teacher (Name Withheld) had said, “From the first week of November, schools in our and adjacent communities have been witnessing a very thin attendance.” Two weeks back, the teachers said that “It seems like only 50-60 percent of students are attending the classes and among those who are attending the classes, many students are not even regular.”

The teachers have also said that some of the parents of such wards had informed that their wards had a severe chest congestion.

“It is not only students who have fallen prey to seasonal influenza and cold weather atmosphere in classrooms, but many teachers have fallen ill too and they are on leave,” he said adding, “For past more than a week, there is a very thin attendance of students.”

The teacher said, “The parents prefer to keep their wards back at home to evade the cold weather conditions and avoid catching the flu.”

Rajawar Handwara, Village without drinking water from last 35 days, seek redressal

■ Dr. Ab Qayoom

HANDWARA, NOV 23: The residents of Yamlar-Bala (Rajwar) area in north Kashmir’s Kupwara district have expressed resentment against the authorities for failing to provide potable water to them, making people suffer. The residents said that few years back a water scheme under (JJM) was approved for the village but work on it has not been completed yet. A month and a half ago pipes were dumped in our village but ground situation is same like 1993. The residents said that the entire village which consists of more than 50 households get drinking water from a well located in the premises of a Jamia Masjid Shareef. Talking to HEADLINES TODAY (HT), the residents said, water supply to their village has been snapped due to some technical snag for the past two months and they are being forced to consume contaminated water from streams. They said that they have to suffer a lot in absence of potable water supply and the women folk have to travel long



distances to fetch water for drinking and other purposes. They alleged that the area is completely reeling under acute shortage of water from last 50-days while the authorities had failed to take any tangible measure despite repeated pleas. The residents said that they had taken up the issue with the concerned authorities on several occasions in the past but to no avail. They have sought immediate intervention of LG Manoj Sinha in this regard so that their grievances are addressed at the earliest. Meanwhile, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department, Handwara Division, Bilal Ahmad told HEADLINES TODAY that my team is working on it 24x7, I assured you we will restore the water supply with in few days under the same plan of JJM, and tomorrow I’m going to visit spot for further development,” he said.

DC Srinagar chairs meeting to review Recovery of outstanding GST as Arrears of Land Revenue

State Taxes Department initiates proceedings of Recovery against wilful defaulters

SRINAGAR, NOV 23: In order to review the status regarding recovery of outstanding GST (2017) as Arrears of Land Revenue, a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad at the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex, here on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner State Taxes Recovery, Farooq Ahmad Baba, Superintendent of Police, Arif Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Yaseen Lone, Special Tehsildar Recovery Dr Irtiza, Tehsildar South, Moeen Azhar Kakroo, Tehsildar Chanpora, Saqib Saleem, Tehsildar Shalteng, Kaiser Ahmad and other concerned were present in the meeting.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar reviewed the status of each case related to recovery of outstanding GST as Arrears of Land Revenue from all concerned Tehsildars. He also discussed the further course of action to be taken against the defaulters in order to recover the outstanding GST Arrears under Land



Revenue Act.

The DC stressed upon the officers to further strengthen the recovery mechanism so that financial resources are not misutilised and are available for equitable distribution among the genuine stakeholders.

He also instructed all Tehsildars to provide details of immovable property of all defaulters so that subsequent action under the law could be ordered.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner State Taxes Recovery apprised the DC that an amount of Rs 39.45 crore is outstanding with the wilful defaulters and sought support from District Administration for its timely recovery. He also requested for initiating Legal proceedings against the defaulters for recovery of outstanding amount of Rs 39.45 crores in order to ensure equitable distribution of financial resources for development of the public at large.

Handwara police attached second property during anti-drug operation

■ Dr. Ab Qayoom

LANGATE, NOV 23: In an effort to curb the drug trade, Handwara Police continued its Seizure/Attachment Drive, securing a second property associated with notorious drug peddler Fayaz Ahmad Malla in Kralgund area of district Kupwara. A statement shared by Handwara police to social media platforms indicates that 7-Marla’s land owned by Fayaz Ahmad Malla, son of Gh Mohi-ud-Din Malla from Muqam Himwanpora Kralgund Handwara, has been attached under section 68-F of the NDPS Act 1985. As per statement, Malla is implicated in two NDPS cases, detailed as Case FIR



No.67/2020 and Case FIR No.73/2022 under sections 8/21 of the NDPS Act at PS Kralgund.

The police, during an investigation, identified the property as unlawfully

acquired, linking its origins to the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances by Malla. Currently detained under the PIT-NDPS Act, Fayaz Ahmad Malla is lodged at

Central Jail Kot Balwal Jammu. Local residents have applauded the initiative, expressing support for the attachment of properties connected to the drug peddler, signaling a collective stand against narcotics in the Handwara Police District. The ongoing efforts by law enforcement reflect a community-driven approach in addressing the grave issue of drug proliferation, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between authorities and residents to ensure a safer and drug-free environment. Earlier Handwara police have seized some property of Drug peddlers in Villgam area of Handwara and has sworn strict action against the accused persons.

DC Kupwara Reviews District Export Plan

■ HT News Network

Kupwara, Nov 23: With a vision to enhance the Export of Goods from frontier district Kupwara and make it an export hub to boost the local Economy, a meeting of Export Promotion Committee was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan, here to discuss the modalities for formulating a detailed Export Action Plan for the Kupwara district.

DC took a detailed appraisal about the measures undertaken for boosting exports of various products which are being produced or manufactured in the District.

A comprehensive discussion on the subject was held wherein various issues pertaining to the finalization

of the District Export Action Plan were discussed.

The consultants to J&K Trade Promotion Organization (Industries & Commerce), Syed Mujtaba and Asif Rashid shared a blueprint regarding the District Export Plan and it was given out that Walnut and Red Rice have been identified under ODOP (One District One Product) (a government of India initiative) in Kupwara District. Consultants said that construction of CFCs, Organic certification and laser based grading, hi-tech packing etc have been proposed in the District Export Plan.

Consultants further said that 72 farmers have been identified and are registered for organic certification.

DC asked all the concerned to undertake concerted efforts to finalize a comprehensive District Export Plan to initiate exports with adequate market linkage.



She emphasized that district has huge potential for Export business, especially in Horticulture products and there is no dearth of entrepreneurship spirit. However, the need of the hour is to take measures for providing support and hand holding. She stressed that target groups- local aggregators and progressive farmers of walnut be focused for kickstarting Export activities in the district.

The DC directed the concerned officers to identify two Resource persons from DIC and Handicrafts who can be trained to deal with all issues related to Export business and can create awareness among local entrepreneurs of the district.

DC asked JKTPO to organise a mega workshop in Kupwara in the Month of December for awareness of e-marketing platforms packaging technology and organic certification etc.

Pertinently, Kupwara district has vast potential and specialties in different export oriented products.

The frontier Kupwara district has recorded 37,010.299 metric tons of walnut production this year, making it the highest across all districts of Kashmir.

Kupwara blessed with the perfect topography for Horticulture. It has attained the title of walnut district of Jammu and Kashmir besides this traditional Kashmiri rice variety 'Zag Tumul' (red rice) is being revived and its mass production is being planned in Tangdhar and other areas of the district.

Meeting was attended by ADC Kupwara, Gh. Nabi Bhat, GM-DIC, FM DIC, Chief Agriculture Officer Kupwara, District Horticulture Officer Kupwara, LDM J&K Bank, representatives of JKTPO and other concerned officers.

ADDC Shopian inaugurates Orientation programme under Yuva Vani

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 23: To sensitize the youth about agri-business, the Department of Horticulture, Shopian today kick-started a series of 'Yuva Vani' programmes under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in three blocks of the district.

The Yuva Vani programme is specially designed for youngsters, to lure them towards the agriculture sector.

The programme was inaugurated by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone at Block Shopian with the aim to empower youth of the district about the scope of entrepreneurship in the Agriculture sector.

Speaking on the occasion, ADDC said that unemployed youth of the district Shopian should come forward



Nodal Officer HADP in the district, sensitized the participants about the 'Yuva Vani' programme and Daksh Kissan during an interaction session. He said that there are ample business opportunities available in agriculture and allied sectors for the youth.

The participants showed keen interest in opting for Agricultural entrepreneurship which has been designed exclusively for the youth within the age group of 18-35 years.

The programme was also attended by Principal Imtiyaz Memorial Govt. Degree College Shopian, Prof. Mohammad Shafiq; Chief Agriculture Officer Shopian, Farooq Ahmad Reshi; PC, KVK, Shopian, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Badri; AD Fisheries, Zahoor Ahmad Mir; AMO Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Lone and representatives of different line departments, besides a large number of youth.

and avail benefits of various schemes of agri-allied departments.

He said that the programme is committed to reaching every corner of the district starting at the block levels.

ADDC added that once the youth are informed about the schemes of the department, they would be encouraged to take part in entrepreneurship to create job opportunities.

Chief Horticulture Officer, Shopian, Mohd Ramazan War who is also

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra: District Prabhari Officer visits Pulwama, Reviews preparations of the Programme

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 23: A comprehensive review of the preparations of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) was held at the Circuit House in Pulwama by Binay Kumar Jha, Director SBM (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, GoI) and District Prabhari Officer VBSY to District Pulwama.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, ADDC Pulwama, SSP Pulwama, SSP Awantipora, ADC Awantipora, ACD, ACR, ACP and various District and Sectoral officers.



The program commenced with a warm welcome extended by Deputy Commissioner Pulwama to the District Prabhari Officer VBSY.

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama underscored the tangible progress made within the district, emphasizing the successful saturation of various schemes. He

expounded on the work accomplished and the preparations that have been carried out within the District.

He informed the chair about the establishment of social media channels, committees at block and panchayat levels, all geared towards facilitating effective communication and successful execution of

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in the District.

Further, the Deputy Commissioner assured that the objectives and the vision that the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra programme encompasses will be fulfilled in the District.

Earlier, The Assistant Commissioner Development provided a succinct overview of the meticulous preparations made by District Pulwama for the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra. He outlined a series of planned activities in Gram Panchayats, encompassing mobilization, awareness campaigns, community engagement, and cultural performances.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) Zainpora

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (for Road work/bridges/Buildings)

TWO COVER SYSTEM (above Rs. 2.50 Crores)

NIT No:- 24 /ZNP/ RnB /e-tendering/2023-24 Dated:- 22 -11-2023

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Bloc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Time & Date of Opening of tender (Technical Bid)	Class of Contractor	Position of AAA	Position of TS
1.	Upgradation of Safanagri Lamine Darbagh Wachi Road	a. Construction Cost 602.174 Lakhs + Maintenance cost : 60.217 Lakhs Total = 662.391 Lakhs	8500/-	1324800/-	18 Months	15 -12-2023 at 11:00 A.M	AAAY Class	CE/R&B/K/A/21 of 2023-24 Dated:- 27-09-2023	TS No:- CE/R&B/K/TS/06 of 2023-24 Dated:- 13-11-2023.
2	Construction/upgradation of Awncera-Kralcheck Road including Astan Mohalla, Tulwuder Road and Muder Wuder Awncera Road (Aggregate Length 4.00kms)	a. Construction Cost 562.729 Lakhs + Maintenance cost : 56.270 Lakhs Total = 618.999 Lakhs	8500/-	1238000/-	18 Months	15 -12-2023 at 11:00 A.M	AAAY Class	CE/R&B/K/A/29 of 2023-24 Dated:- 27-09-2023	CE/R&B/K/TS/09 of 2023-24 Dated:- 13-11-2023
3	Upgradation of Hermain Chakoor Road.	a. Construction Cost 331.483 Lakhs + Maintenance cost : 33.148 Lakhs Total = 364.631 Lakhs	5500/-	729300/-	18 Months	15 -12-2023 at 11:00 A.M	AAAY Class	CE/R&B/K/A/41 of 2023-24 Dated:- 27-09-2023	CE/R&B/K/TS/14 of 2023-24 Dated:- 14-11-2023

Major Head of Account = 5054 NABARD RIDF XXIX
Position of Funds = Approved.
Project Authority = PW(R&B) Department Kashmir.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	22 -11-2023
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 22-11-2023,06:00 P.M to 14-12-2023, 2:00 P.M
3.	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	24-11-2023 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Pulwama/Shopian H.Q Pulwama.
4.	Bid submission Start Date	22 -11-2023 From 6.00 P.M
5.	Bid Submission End Date	14 -12-2023 upto 2:00 P.M
6.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	15 -12-2023 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Pulwama/Shopian H.Q Pulwama

12.1 All Bidders shall upload the following information and documents along with qualifying criteria/qualification information with the bids.

a. All bidders shall upload Copies of Original Documents defining constitution /Legal status, place of registration and principal place of Business with Cell No. and Correspondence Address.

b. All Bidders shall upload Treasury Challan (Cost of tender document) and Earnest Money/Bid Security.

c. All Bidders shall upload Valid Registration with latest renewal Valid GSTIN No. & Valid PAN No.

d. All Bidders shall upload Scanned Copy of GSTIN Registration and latest clearance certificate/Acknowledge Receipt of GST Return Copy "FORM GSTR-3B" of the preceding Quarter (July-September 2023-24) preceding Month (October 2023-24).

e. All bidders shall upload Verification Certificate from concerned Chief Engineer /Superintending Engineer of Enlistment Registration Card.

13. The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR /FDR /BG in favour of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Pulwama/Shopian H.Q Pulwama (Tender Receiving Authority) within 15 days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP (05 years). The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond DLP. Bidders may contact office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Pulwama/Shopian H.Q Pulwama or concerned Executive Engineer for any guidance for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of e-tendering process.

14. Bidders should quote in percentage below/ percentage above or at par at the bottom of the BOO Percentage Template for the Work.

15. The tender receiving authority reserves the right to cancel the NIT of work without assigning any reason thereof.

16. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate/percentage inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.

17. The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work unless otherwise specified.

18. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

19. Defect Liability Period shall be 05 Years after date of completion.

20. All key construction material (i.e. cement, steel, bitumen, pipes etc) shall have to be arranged by the contractor strictly as per specifications with the approval of Engineer-in-charge.

Qualification criteria for the work and other terms and conditions are contained in the Standard Bidding Document (SBD) appended with this NIT.

DIPK-12737/23
Dated: 23-11-2023

Sd/- Executive Engineer
PWD(R&B) Division Zainpora

DC Budgam inspects upgradation & beautification projects under Beautifying Budgam Town initiative

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 23: The Deputy Commissioner (DC), Budgam, Akshay Labroo today inspected various ongoing construction and beautification projects under the Beautifying Budgam Town initiative.

The projects included upgradation of Park at Old Bus Stand, where construction of Gazebo, fountain and surface tiling works are under progress, drainage work at Old Bus Stand, construction of tile path at bridge area, upgradation of Town Hall building, retro fitting and internal fitting works.

Among other projects, the DC also inspected the selfie point at Humhama



Chowk and took on spot stock of progress of tile work, boundary wall plaster, painting and seating area renovation at Sports Stadium Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that most of the works launched by Lieutenant Governor under Phase- I of Beautification and Upgradation initiative for Town Budgam in

August- 2023 are nearing completion. He said that under the Phase- I beautification initiatives, aesthetic street lighting has been completed at the two bridges in Budgam town while 1000 more street lights have been tendered for installation across the Town Budgam. He said the projects also include upgradation of DC Complex Bud-

gam and uniform colour painting of walls in Town areas.

The DC said that the District Administration is committed to ensure speedy work completion of all projects to ensure swift infrastructure development in consonance with aesthetic and picturesque look of Budgam.

He said that other works shall be taken up for execution under Phase- II of the upgradation and beautification plan. During inspection of projects, the DC was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner Budgam, Dr Akramullah Tak, JD Planning, Executive Engineers from different Engineering Wings, DYSSO, EOMC Budgam and other concerned officers.

DC Shopian visits Keller, reviews functioning of departments

Inspects SDH Keller, takes stock of healthcare services

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 23: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Faz Lul Haseeb today visited Keller block of the district and reviewed the functioning of departments besides taking stock of healthcare services.

On the occasion, the DC chaired a review meeting with district and tehsil officers and officials of departments and reviewed the provision of services and winter preparedness besides reviewing the functioning of tehsil level offices.



The DC called upon front-line officers and officials to remain fully prepared in tackling the public welfare issues during the winter season while reviewing the provision of electricity, water, healthcare, snow clearance, etc.

He also met PRIs, con-

tractors and the public, and interacted with them on various issues and heard their issues patiently.

The DC on the occasion, asked for better cooperation from them in timely execution of developmental works being executed by the departments.

He assured them that the District Administration is always at the forefront to expedite resolution of any problem faced by them.

Later, DC also made a surprise inspection of Sub District Hospital, Keller and took stock of the functioning of the hospital, provision of healthcare facilities there besides inspecting Pharma stores.

He interacted with staff and instructed healthcare functionaries to provide better healthcare facilities to the patients.

Various district and tehsil level officers and officials accompanied the DC during the visit.

Union Joint Secretary reviews preparedness for launch of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA NOVEMBER 23: Union Joint Secretary, Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), and Prabhari Officer for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) for Doda, Angshuman Dey, today visited the district and reviewed preparations for launch of 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra'.

Angshuman Dey interacted with the district officers and other stakeholders involved in the Yatra and had detailed assessment of the arrangements required for successful celebration of viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra across the district.

Union Joint Secretary visited the urban site at Town Hall Doda

and rural site for the yatra in Bulandpur Panchayat to assess the arrangements and preparedness of the stakeholders for the upcoming mega outreach programme, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra.

He was informed that two IEC Vans will arrive and display the message of Prime Minister and awareness/success story videos under various centrally sponsored welfare schemes, in Doda town, near Clock Tower and in Bhaderwah at new Bus Stand, on 24th of November 2023. He was further informed that 6 IEC Vans shall arrive in the district on 26th of November for rural areas, which shall move across the district in all 237 panchayat for awareness and saturation of all the Centrally Sponsored



Schemes.

Union Joint Secretary urged upon the stakeholders to organise camps and reach the unreached and vulnerable sections of the society. He emphasised dissemination of information through the success stories, pamphlets, small videos and IEC material regarding various government sponsored schemes. The detailed deliberation was

made on the achievements and further course of action to reach the saturation in implementation of welfare schemes in the district. The schemes which were discussed included Jal

Jeevan Mission, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, PM PRANAM Yojana, PMEGP, Ujjwala Yojana, Urea Subsidy Scheme, Atal Pension Scheme, Jan Dhan Yojana, Integrated Sheep Husbandry Scheme, Mission Poshan, PM Vishwakarma, PMVVY and others.

During the meeting, ADDC Doda Pran Singh, briefed the Visiting Officer about the road-map and plan for conduct of the Yatra. He informed that district level control room, block level nodal officers and village level committees have been established for smooth conduct of the yatra.

ADDG Doda Pran Singh also briefed the Prabhari Officer about transport and security plan.

Threadbare discussion focused on evaluating the impact of initiatives on various aspects such as infrastructure development, community engagement, and overall socio-economic upliftment across the district.

Prabhari Officer expressed confidence in positive impact of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra and reiterated the government's commitment towards holistic development of Doda.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, ADC, ADC Bhaderwah, ASP, ACD, SE Hydraulics, GMDIC, other district officers and representatives of concerned departments.

AYUSH Ramban organizes capacity building training for Paramedics, ASHAs

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, NOVEMBER 23: Department of AYUSH, today conducted capacity building training for ASHA workers and paramedical staff at AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre, Chuchatther in district Ramban.

The Department organized the training camp under capacity building national AYUSH mission, under the supervision of Medical Officer, AYUSH & District YOGA Coordinator, Dr Masood Iqbal Zargar to sensitized participants regarding C back form, Family folders and Prakrati assessment chart. The Coordinator laid stress on prevention and primitive aspects of the AYUSH System of Medicines.

The aim of the training was to impart skills to ASHA workers and Paramedical staff about involving the local population in maintaining the preventive and primitive aspects of AYUSH in their daily life.

SVEEP activities held across Ramban under SSR

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, NOVEMBER 23: District Election Department Ramban, under the aegis of District Election Officer (Deputy Commissioner), Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary today conducted a series of awareness activities under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Programme on Special Summary Revision (SSR) 2023.

The SVEEP activities under Special Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls-2023 were held at Government Degree College, Banihal, Government Higher Secondary Schools, Pogal and Sanasar to sensitize the students and for on-the-spot registration of eligible voters in the educational institutions and their Aadhar linkage. During the camps, the forms of addition were also distributed and filled-in, while forms for registration were also received from the eligible voters.

A pledge was also administered to the participants to register themselves as the voter in Electoral Rolls, besides educating them about the online portal for registration of voters' on the National Voters Service Portal (NVSP) and Mobile Voter Helpline App. The speakers threw light on different aspects of being a voter and urged the age-specific students who have attained 18 years or to attain 18 years on 01.01.2024 to enroll in the Electoral list, besides further disseminating the awareness among existing voters for modifications in the list, if any.

All the BLOs of the area also attended these camps. Special stress was laid on the inclusion of the voters in the voter list to bridge the gender gap and mapping of PwD voters.

SDRF imparts rescue training to Volunteers at Assar

■ HT News Network

DODA, NOVEMBER 23. State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), today imparted hands-on training to volunteers from Al Khair NGO in Assar. The insightful training session took place in a deep gorge near Jatthi on the banks of the Chenab River. The initiative has been directed by Deputy Commissioner, S Harvinder Singh. Under the supervision of Dy. SP Davinder Singh, Dy. Controller Civil Defence cum I/C SDRF Doda, 25 trainees from Al Khair (NGO) were instructed in the practical aspects of climbing, rappelling, and the intricate task of lifting bodies from deep gorges using the zip wire method when conventional methods fall short.

The training included comprehensive lessons on

the tactics of climbing and rappelling, with a focus on utilizing the necessary equipment for these maneuvers. Special attention was given to the zip wire method, an innovative approach to extracting casualties from challenging terrains. The session not only equipped the volunteers with essential skills but also highlighted the significance of these techniques in scenarios where traditional methods prove insufficient. In addition to the core training, emphasis was placed on accident care and road safety measures. Recognizing the critical need for preventive measures in road safety, the participants were briefed on strategies to avert accidents and mitigate their impact. The importance of prompt and effective responses to accidents, coupled

Rajouri: Tribal Students flagged off for Scientific Exposure Tour to CSIR IIIM Jammu

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 23: In a momentous event organized under the aegis of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Vikas Kundal on Thursday flagged off a group of twenty tribal students on an enlightening educational tour to CSIR IIIM Jammu.

The objective of this educational tour is to provide these tribal students with a firsthand experience of cutting-edge Research and Development activities, immersing them in the captivating world of science. The group comprises 10 students from Eklavya Model Residential School in Gurdhan Balla and Hubbi, 5 from Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostel Rajouri, and another 5 from Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostel Kalakote.

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal took the opportunity to engage with the students encouraging them to extract the maximum benefit from this unique educational experience.



During the interaction, he underscored the pivotal role education plays in shaping a brighter future and highlighted various tribal welfare initiatives that the Government has undertaken.

The event not only signifies a commitment to educational enrichment but also underscores the importance of empowering tribal communities through exposure to the advancements in the scientific realm. Such initiatives contribute to breaking

barriers and creating pathways for these students to explore and embrace opportunities beyond conventional boundaries. As these tribal students embark on this educational tour, the hope is that their horizons will broaden, fostering a passion for knowledge and instilling a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. The dedication of the administration toward tribal welfare reflects a holistic approach towards building a more equitable and progressive society.

DC Jammu asks Medicos, civil administrations to promote Jan Aushadhi Kendras

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 23: Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya today reviewed the working of Jan Aushadhi Kendras, - the outlets that provide affordable medicines to the public in different hospitals and health centers across the district.

The DC reviewed the sales performance of the operational Jan Aushadhi Kendras and discussed the factors affecting them. He exhorted the officers to make concerted efforts to boost the sales of medicines through these outlets and sought reports on the types of medicines, the number of prescriptions and other details. The DC instructed



the concerned officers to identify and eliminate the problems that deter people from buying these medicines and said that there is a need to motivate both the shopkeepers and the public to use these medicines. Sachin Kumar asked the Sub Divisional Magistrates to support the Block Medical Officers, while the latter were asked to monitor the progress of these outlets, their sales and give feed-

back to him. The BMOs were also told to ensure the availability and sufficient stock of medicines in these outlets and order more when needed. The DC also addressed some issues related to the procurement of medicines.

The meeting was attended by Chief Medical Officer Dr Harbaksh Singh, Medical Superintendents of Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar and Government Hospital Sarwal.

JU's Poonch Campus hosts 2 Day National Conference on Sericulture

■ HT News Network

POONCH, NOVEMBER 23: A Two-Day National Conference on the "Current Scenario & Future Prospects of Sericulture (CS&FPS)-2023" commenced with great enthusiasm on the Poonch Campus of University of Jammu here today. The inaugural session brought together eminent personalities, scholars, and delegates to deliberate on the future trajectory of the sericulture industry.

Additional District Development Commissioner Poonch, Sandesh Sharma was the Chief Guest.

In a moment of significance during the inaugural session of the two Day "National Conference", a Sovereign Cumulative Compendium was unveiled by distinguished guests.

Vice Chancellor University of Jammu, Prof. Umesh Rai, extended his best wishes for the success of the conference through a special message, highlighting the Jammu University's commitment towards fostering academic excellence and research initiatives.

The Chief Guest, in his address, underscored the pivotal role of sericulture in the region's economic and social development. His insights provided a local perspective, emphasizing the practical implications of sericulture on the community.

Prof. Rakesh Vaid, Director of Poonch Campus and



Convener of the conference, presented a formal welcome address, setting the tone for the conference. His words resonated with the historical and contemporary significance of sericulture, especially in the context of the Poonch region. "The conference is poised to continue over the next two days with engaging discussions, workshops, and presentations, creating a platform for collaborative learning and innovative thinking in the realm of sericulture," he added.

Director Poonch Campus extended heartfelt thanks to the Sponsor Jammu and Kashmir Bank for its crucial financial support in ensuring the success of the conference. He further said "I am delighted to share that the Cocoon Craft initiative, spearheaded by Dr Rubia Bukari I/C Department of Sericulture Poonch Campus, stands as a landmark achievement, underscoring our commitment to innovation and sustainable development. This initiative, a testament to our unwavering dedication, aims to revolutionize the sericulture industry by seamlessly integrating traditional craftsmanship with modern techniques."

In a hybrid mode, Prof. Seema Langer, Head of the Department of Zoology at the University of Jammu, addressed the gathering, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of sericulture and its connections to different scientific disciplines. Anjum Khattak, Tehsildar, and ARTO Poonch who was guest of honour, highlighted the regional significance of sericulture and its impact on the local economy.

DC Reasi reviews working of Legal Metrology & Mining Departments

■ HT News Network

REASI, NOVEMBER 23: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Vishesh Mahajan today conducted a thorough review of the working of Legal Metrology and Mining Department in two separate meetings.

Giving an overview of the LMD, Assistant Controller Pushkar Raj provided a comprehensive presentation on the department's schemes and programs for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Emphasis was placed on routine checking along the Shri Mata Vaish-



no Devi track to ensure compliance with Maximum Retail Price (MRP) regulations, particularly in shops dealing with dry fruits and Parshad.

The DDC urged the Legal Metrology Officer to take action against violations, creating a fair marketplace for pilgrims.

Concerns about the quality of

fuel at petrol pumps were addressed, with the DDC advocating for regular inspections and mandating CCTV installations for transparency. Additionally, hotel pricing within the district was scrutinized, prompting inspections and assessments to ensure fair rates for tourists.

ists.

In another meeting with the Mining Department, the DDC reviewed the formulation of the District Mining Plan. The District Mineral Officer outlined the current status of mining blocks, detailing plans for their renewal.

The DDC emphasized adherence to specified timelines for approving new mining plans and urged strict action against illegal mining activities in the district.

These initiatives aim to uphold standards, protect consumer rights, and ensure a transparent and fair business environment in the entire Reasi district.

EDITORIAL

Powering Progress:
A Glimmer of Hope in
Kashmir's Electricity Woes

As winter's icy grip tightens on Kashmir, the region grapples with perennial electricity shortages that exacerbate the challenges of the season. The struggle for a consistent power supply has been a longstanding concern, impacting daily life and hindering economic activities.

However, a recent announcement by the divisional commissioner brings a ray of optimism to the beleaguered residents.

The commissioner's assurance of improved electricity supply next week comes as a relief to a populace accustomed to navigating life in the dark during harsh winters. The scarcity of power not only disrupts domestic routines but also hampers businesses, leaving a palpable impact on the local economy.

Kashmir's winter demands a reliable and robust energy infrastructure. The upcoming improvements are crucial, promising a respite for households and businesses alike. A more stable power supply not only enhances daily life but also fosters an environment conducive to economic growth. As heaters and lights become essential commodities in the chilling winter, consistent electricity becomes a lifeline for the people.

While challenges persist, the commissioner's commitment signals a step in the right direction. The administration must ensure that this promise materializes into a sustained solution, addressing the longstanding electricity woes. As winter looms large, the power sector's responsiveness will determine not only the comfort of Kashmir's residents but also the region's overall resilience in the face of seasonal adversity.

India's Total Gdp Growth Is Not Taking
Care Of Rising Inequality Among People

Just Crossing \$4 Trillion Economy Does Not Mean Anything Concrete To The Poor

■ [K R Sudhaman](#)

India may not have crossed the US\$4 trillion economy mark as some of the Narendra Modi fans tried to propagate in the recent days in social media but certainly the total GDP is approaching that level. However some economists fear that GDP growth in the last few quarters may be overestimated. With wholesale price index being in negative territory during the last 2 or 3 quarters, growth is bound to be overestimated as WPI is used as a deflator in the calculation of growth numbers. So the GDP growth at 7.8 per cent in the first quarter this financial year 2023-24 is believed to be grossly exaggerated, so also the GDP numbers of the previous quarters. So according to one estimate the actual growth during the period under review could at best be around 6.5 per cent.

Of course \$4 trillion economy is just a number, so also projection of \$ 5 trillion in the next couple of years or for that matter \$7 trillion by 2030, unless there is visible improvement in the quality of life of vast majority of the people. Otherwise it will only promote crony capitalism, jobless growth, rural distress and pushing more people below poverty line. Growth is certainly important for poverty alleviation but the quality of growth is equally important to ensure more and more people to come out of poverty. Also skilling the youth and providing them quality and employable education to enable them stand on their own feet are equally important if India were to take advantage of the so called demographic dividend. Unfortunately that is not happening in a manner it ought to be because of wrong policies and communal politics, apart from blatant and shameless corruption widespread in the political system.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das have rightly flagged two important issues – high domestic debt and sticky inflation. These are critical macroeconomic issues and any widening of these cracks could threaten stability, which meant monetary and fiscal actions that could derail the growth momentum. Added to it, are worrying numbers on unemployment put out by CMIE lately. The unemployment has gone beyond 10 per cent again from 6-7 per cent, which is should cause concern. The latest monthly economic review of



finance ministry has flagged inflation as one of the persistent downside risks to the economy. Even though there are some positive developments in the economy, yet downside risks persisted. "Inflation is one of them that has kept the government and RBI on alert," it said.

Strangely this observation has come at a time when retail inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) dropped to 4.9 per cent in October from 5 per cent in September, mainly because of cheaper non-food and non-fuel products. However food inflation remained at the same level in October. The central bank has cautioned that food prices may push inflation. The continued Russia-Ukraine war coupled with Israel-Hamas stand-off do not augur well for the global economy. These uncertainties have already started pushing global crude oil prices besides impacting global trade. Apart from increased global commodity prices, India's merchandise exports growth are slowing down. The FDI flow into India, too has been impacted, though not at a worrying level.

The government may claim India has become 5th largest economy from 10th position during Modi era. It had overtaken Britain to become fifth largest economy and it will overtake Germany and Japan in a couple of years to become third largest economy. India's growth certainly improve in coming

years. But common man is not amused with these figures as a large number of wage earners have lost their jobs. The doubling of allocation to MNREGA programmes from the budgeted level so far this year itself is a clear indication that jobs are not available to them. This also amounted to fudging of figures as proposing lower allocation for MNREGA programmes while presenting the budget in February this year, the finance minister has shown a lower fiscal deficit than the actual number.

Princeton economist Ashoka Mody has claimed that the country's Gross Domestic Product during April-June quarter of 2023-24, would come to 4.5 per cent instead of 7.8 per cent as National Statistical Office takes into account only estimates of domestic income and not expenditure to calculate growth figures. Chief economic advisor, V Anantha Nageswaran rejected this claim saying that the government has been consistent in its method for calculating the growth numbers.

But there is some merit in former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian in saying growth is overestimated because of using WPI as deflator. Former chief statistician Pronab Sen agrees with the view point and expected the real growth to be around 6.5 per cent instead of 7.8 per cent as official figures indicate in the first quarter of this financial year. He however points out it's a double edged

weapon. When WPI is in negative territory, certainly there could be over-estimation of growth, but when WPI is high and in double-digits, there is underestimation of growth numbers. This problem arises when WPI is used as deflator.

What one needs to worry now is how to create more jobs. At least 11 million jobs have to be created every year to absorb people getting into the job market. That apart, the job market has to absorb many who have been pushed into self-employment to keep themselves afloat, especially after closure of large number MSME units during Covid. There was also migrant labour issue due to lockdown. There is one positive sign lately that MSME is slowly reviving in the last one or two quarters if one goes by improved lending to the sector.

In sum, there are several pressing issues to be addressed in the economy. Just being carried away by growth numbers will serve no purpose. In fact the 6-7 per cent growth that Indian economy has been striving at is not enough to provide the jobs that is required to absorb the people getting into the job market. According to former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan, India need to get back to 8-9 per cent growth to take advantage of the demographic dividend.

(IPA Service)

Waking up early offers several benefits for students

■ [Vijay GarG](#)

Waking up early in the morning is a practice that has been celebrated throughout history for its various benefits, particularly for students. The early morning hours offer a unique and tranquil environment that fosters a sense of calm and focus. As the world gradually comes to life, students can capitalise on this peaceful time to engage in activities that set a positive tone for the day ahead. Whether it's dedicating time to study, engaging in reflective practices like meditation or exercise, or simply enjoying a nutritious breakfast, waking up early provides students with an opportunity to establish a routine that can enhance their overall well-being and productivity.

Moreover, the early morning hours provide a precious commodity that is often scarce in today's fast-paced world – time. By waking up early, students can carve out additional moments in their day to prioritise tasks, set goals, and plan effectively. This proactive approach allows for a more deliberate use of time, enabling students to manage their responsibilities with greater efficiency. Waking up early can be a challenge, especially for teenagers, but there are many benefits to starting your day off early. Here are the top 10 benefits why students should wake up early in the morning:

Improved Academic Performance

Early risers often find that they are more alert and focused in the morning, which can positively impact academic performance. This increased alertness can lead to better concentration during classes and while studying.

Establishing a Routine

Waking up early helps in establishing a



consistent daily routine. A structured routine can contribute to better time management, helping students balance their academic and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Increased Productivity

Mornings are often quieter and less

distracted, providing an ideal environment for focused work. This can lead to increased productivity as students can tackle important tasks without the interruptions they might face later in the day.

Better Mental Health

Establishing a morning routine that

includes activities such as exercise or mindfulness can positively impact mental health. Regular exercise in the morning, for example, has been linked to reduced stress and improved mood.

Enhanced Time Management

Waking up early provides students with

extra time in the morning to plan their day, organise their tasks, and set priorities. This proactive approach to time management can lead to a more successful and less stressful academic experience.

Optimal Brain Function

Research suggests that the brain tends to function at its best during the early hours of the day. By waking up early, students may be able to harness this period of optimal brain function for tasks that require critical thinking and problem-solving.

Improved Physical Health

Early risers are more likely to engage in regular exercise, which contributes to overall physical health. Morning exercise has been associated with better fitness levels, weight management, and a reduced risk of various health issues.

Increased Exposure to Natural Light

Exposure to natural light in the morning can regulate the body's internal clock, known as the circadian rhythm. This helps in maintaining a healthy sleep-wake cycle, potentially improving the quality of sleep and overall well-being.

Better Sleep Quality

Waking up early is often linked to going to bed earlier, which can contribute to better sleep quality. A consistent sleep schedule is crucial for maintaining good physical and mental health.

Opportunity for Personal Development

Early mornings provide a quiet and undisturbed time for personal development activities such as reading, reflection, or pursuing hobbies. This dedicated time can contribute to personal growth and self-improvement.

Vijay GarG Retired Principal
Educational columnist Malout

Canada and the West will have to retreat

Based on India's insistence, Canada withdrew 41 of its diplomats. Melanie Joly, the Canadian foreign minister stated, "Revoking the diplomatic immunity of 41 diplomats is not only unprecedented, but also contrary to international law."

■ Harsha Kakkar

Based on India's insistence, Canada withdrew 41 of its diplomats. Melanie Joly, the Canadian foreign minister stated, "Revoking the diplomatic immunity of 41 diplomats is not only unprecedented, but also contrary to international law. Canada will continue to defend international law, which applies to all nations and will continue to engage with India."

Canada also announced suspending its visa and consular services at its consulates, hoping to put pressure on New Delhi. This is the period when students are issued visas for Canadian universities. Justin Trudeau, the Canadian PM, whose accusation of India being involved in the killing of terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, started the downside, mentioned, "It's something that has me very concerned for the well-being and happiness of millions of Canadians who trace their origins to the Indian subcontinent."

India refused to back down. The Indian foreign ministry statement read, "Our actions in implementing this parity are fully consistent with Article 11.1 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations." Hitting back, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated, "ensuring safety and security of diplomats is the most fundamental aspect of the Vienna Convention. And right now, that is what has in many ways been challenged in Canada: that our people are not safe, our diplomats are not safe."

India, which had stopped issuance of visas from its high commission and consulates in Canada, has recommenced them, signalling a drawdown. All members of the Five Eyes Intelligence network objected to the Indian actions. The US state department spokesperson, Matthew Miller, mentioned in a press interaction, "We have urged the Indian government not to insist upon a reduction in Canada's diplomatic presence and to cooperate in the ongoing Canadian investigation."

The British foreign office stated, "We do not agree with the decisions taken by the Indian government that have resulted in a number of Canadian diplomats departing India." India challenged the Canadian accusations, though Ottawa is supported by its allies.



India insists that Canada has not shared any inputs, while Canada's allies mention that intelligence exists.

In all likelihood the inputs available with Ottawa are based on illegal monitoring of Indian communications which can never be placed in public domain as it could impact credibility of the 'five eyes' group of nations. India simultaneously accused Canada of interference in its domestic affairs. Jaishankar stated on a public platform, "we had concerns about continuous interference in our affairs by Canadian personnel. We haven't made much public. Over a period of time inputs will flow and people will understand why we had the kind of discomfort with many of them which we did."

Such accusations on public platforms have global ramifications. The threat of releasing details of gross interference in

the public domain is a warning to all Canadian allies that India will hit back in case it is pushed, even dragging them in. Subsequently it has been leaked that Canadian diplomats were granting visas to known Khalistan supporters including those with criminal antecedents.

A government source said, "Canadian diplomats have done this deliberately and the idea was very clear — to give visas to take certain individuals out of India." More would follow. Jaishankar had stated, "India has problems with certain segments of Canadian politics." This implies that as long as Trudeau is in power and depends on the support of Jagmeet Singh's NDF, Indo-Canada relations will not be normal. These comments will support the Canadian opposition, especially as Indian-Canadians form a sizeable vote bank. India is also

contemplating taking Canada to the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) for its inaction against terror financing on its soil. India possesses inputs which it has already shared with Ottawa.

This would be the first time a Western nation would be accused of permitting the raising of funds for terrorist activities on its soil. While its allies may protect Canada in the FATF, the Indian action could harm its global image. Trudeau's disastrous visit to India in 2018 should have been taken as a hint of deteriorating ties. The firmest message was the G20 summit, where frostiness in relations was evident.

It was to avoid criticism of his failed visit that Trudeau prematurely accused India. Till date no evidence has been provided nor released in public domain on Indian involvement in the killing of Nijjar. Melanie Joly when asked on

whether Canada has provided evidence to India, fumbled for words. Neither the US nor UK have mentioned availability of evidence. All they state is India must cooperate in the investigation. To sidestep its lack of credible evidence, Ottawa changed its strategy. It has begun harping on India not adhering to the Vienna convention. With an experienced diplomat as India's foreign minister, Delhi will ensure that it can never be caught on the wrong foot.

To counter Ottawa's statement that it has stopped visa services at its consulates, Jaishankar stated that reduction of staff should have been done in Delhi, not consulates. Western nations have always assumed that they dictate rules and others would blindly follow. This is based on their history of colonialism and economic might. The Indian economy and global standing are far higher than those of most Western nations, including Canada and the UK. India therefore decided to challenge them to share evidence openly. Nothing was forthcoming.

India's public threat to further expose Ottawa's ill-intent pushed them onto the defensive. The assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist in Istanbul in October 2018, by a hit squad, especially dispatched from Riyadh, was proved as Turkey possessed irrefutable evidence. On the other hand, proof of Indian involvement is either non-existent or based on illegal intelligence gathering, which cannot be made public. Jamal was an established critic of the Saudi regime and had settled in the US, while Nijjar was a terrorist whom Ottawa refused to extradite.

The Biden administration threatened action against Saudi Arabia for ordering the assassination. In response to US threats, Saudi reduced engagement with the US and refused to consider its requests. With passage of time all has been forgotten. It is Washington which is currently wooing Riyadh. In Nijjar's case, India is challenging the West. It has enough evidence and inputs on Canadian interference, while they lack them on Indian involvement. Ultimately the West and Canada will be compelled to back down.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army

Dr. Google and the search for certainty

How to escape the spiral of health anxiety by embracing vulnerability

■ Sandra Parker

During the Covid pandemic, many of us became more mindful of health risks than we were previously. But then we adapted and now are going on with our lives pretty much as before. But, for some people, a pre-existing inclination to ruminate about health concerns has intensified, feeding into crippling obsessions over the medical meaning of body sensations and time-consuming attempts to get certainty.

We have all probably had the experience at least once in our lives where we experienced some sensation, perhaps shortness of breath or a racing heart, and found ourselves running scary mental movies about serious illness. Most of us shake those thoughts off as the sensations wane, or after checking in with friends or seeking medical advice.

Cyberchondria: Hours Online on the Worry Path

But for people who suffer from health anxiety, the focus on "what if" becomes a compulsion to worriedly track the suspicious sensations in an effort to predict and understand what is going on. Those what-if movies are often amplified by Dr. Google, where even the most benign sensations can be linked to dire illness. This online health fear cycle has been coined cyberchondria. Hours are spent online pursuing unlikely but devastating possibilities that lure people further down the worry path.

Unfortunately, this rumination jacks up the sympathetic nervous system and produces a whole host of sensations that can validate the original catastrophic

hypothesis. It also fuels the fantasy that there is and should be a conclusive answer to why they feel what they feel.

Fixed But Not Feeling

People with health anxiety appear to be very tuned in to their bodies. They can tell you exactly when the tingling gets worse and how the tinnitus shifts in tone and how the lump in the throat makes them feel unable to swallow. They are often very knowledgeable, able to tell you the life cycle of a tick that may possibly have bitten them and that now is certain to cause Lyme disease.

This fixation on illness and sensations makes health worriers appear to be very aware of the body but, in reality, they are quite detached from their lived experience. They are avoiding the felt sense inside the body, as the sensations shift and ebb and flow. The story about what is going on dominates their thoughts. They touch down into the body for a second to track a sensation and then jump quickly into their heads with a fearful prediction about what that sensation might mean.

From "What If" to "What Is"

The work of resolving health anxiety is the same as the work of addressing all forms of anxiety: We must face vulnerability. We need to release the fixation on "what if?" and turn ourselves toward the painful truth of "what is."

Vulnerability is a fact, constant and inevitable, like a background hum of life: We have limits to control things. Whether it's landing that job, having a good night's sleep, or not catching Covid, the outcome is not entirely up to us. That creates a feeling in our bodies: unrest.

Wired through the same nervous



system circuitry as fear, unrest is a growth promoting signal – a physical spike alerting us to the optimal moment to tune inward. If we tune in and soothe the body when unrest stirs, we access adaptive emotions that help us come to terms with the fact that we cannot make the world be as we wish.

Embracing Unrest: Our Path Home

Unrest is our path home, but since it comes through the same pathway as fear, we unconsciously misinterpret unrest as danger. We unwittingly escape the discomfort meant to help us grow by creating suffering as we escape via all sorts of activity and stories. For the health anxious person, frightening narratives about illness are aimed at eliminating the uncertainty that feels

intolerable.

But instead of leaving the body we must come home and pay slow, close attention with warm interest and non-judgment until the body recognizes there is no danger. We need to enter into the sensations we have been obsessing about and allow ourselves to simply feel them without a story.

We need to be with the uncomfortable sensations as they are. As we slow down we begin to feel them fluctuate – and we realize there is more going on inside than we had really felt before. We come to see that, although what we feel may be uncomfortable, it is not dangerous.

Accepting Our Human Limits

As we stay present with the discomfort of unrest the body is assured and settles.

We realize that, although we long for certainty and control, we live in a world that has neither. As we bear the discomfort of unrest we see that, much as we wish we had certainty and control, we can accept our human limits and be open to our fullest lives.

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- Sandra Parker, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and the author of **Embracing Unrest: Harness Vulnerability to Tame Anxiety and Spark Growth.**

"Congress Lying, Not Answering My Questions On Rajesh Pilot": PM Modi

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: A day after accusing the Congress of victimising Sachin Pilot because of the revolt by his father, Rajesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday doubled down on the claim and alleged that the party was avoiding answering the questions that were posed by him. He also said that the Congress had removed Rajesh Pilot "like a fly in milk" and was doing the same to his son.

In a post on X, the BJP, quoting the Prime Minister, said that the Congress had issued several statements on the issue and even addressed press conferences, but had not answered the question raised by him.

"Since yesterday, the royal family of Congress has been after me... Congress is lying with full force that the royal family of Congress never insulted Rajesh Pilot, but it is not answering the question I am raising," the post quoted the PM as saying. The royal family refer-



ence is being seen as a dig at the Gandhis. Later, addressing a rally in Rajsa-mand, PM Modi said, "A Gurjar son struggles to make his space in politics, gives his life to the party and after coming to power, the royal family removes him like a fly in milk".

"They did the same with late Rajesh Pilot and are doing the same with his son," he said, adding the Congress has been "insulting" Gurjars in the past and is continuing to do so now, according to a report by news agency PTI. The Pilots are from the Gurjar community, which plays a key

role in the state's elections and is said to influence the outcome in 30-35 of the state's 200 Assembly seats.

Allegation, Reaction
Addressing a public rally in Rajasthan's Bhilwara on Wednesday, PM Modi had said the Congress was upset with Rajesh Pilot and that same resentment was expressed against Sachin Pilot, whose intra-party feud with Ashok Gehlot over the state's top job is well known. "You know the history of the Congress. Whoever tries to raise his voice against wrongdoings in the party will lose political space because of the

high command sitting in Delhi," PM Modi had said.

"Rajesh Pilot only once raised his voice against Congress and that too for the betterment of the Congress, but the party is punishing Sachin Pilot till date. Rajesh Pilot is no more, but Congress is with a feeling of rancour for his son Sachin Pilot," PM Modi said.

Reacting to the PM's statements, the Congress accused PM Modi of "unleashing another pack of lies". Senior party leader Pawan Khara said the late Rajesh Pilot was inspired by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi and had left the Indian Air Force to enter politics. Sachin Pilot had also hit out at the PM on Wednesday and said there was no need for anyone other than his party and the people to worry about him. According to a PTI report, he said his father has been a dedicated Congressman throughout his life and the PM's statements were far from fact and aimed at diverting people's attention.

Rahul Gandhi Gets Poll Body Notice For 'Panauti' Comments On PM Modi

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: Congress's Rahul Gandhi has come under the lens of the Election Commission over his "Panauti" comment on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The commission sent him a notice today, asking him to provide an explanation to the allegations made in a complaint filed by the BJP. He has to file his response by Saturday evening.

The BJP complaint also alleged that Mr Gandhi had used other derogatory terms and made unverified allegations during his campaign in Rajasthan, where assembly elections are due on Saturday. The use of such language is "unbecoming" of a senior leader, the complaint read.

In its notice, the Election Commission pointed out that the Model Code of Conduct prohibits leaders from making unverified allegations against political rivals. On Tuesday, speaking at a rally in Rajasthan, Rahul Gandhi had accused PM Modi of attempting to divert attention from key issues at the heart of the election. "He comes on TV



and says 'Hindu-Muslim' and sometimes goes to a cricket match," he said. "Our boys would have won the World Cup but the panauti (bad omen) lost us the match," he then said, referring to India's defeat to Australia at the World Cup finals on Sunday. "PM means Panauti Modi," he had added.

PM Modi had attended the match, played at a stadium in Ahmedabad named after him.

While the comment, complete with memes, went viral on social media, the furious BJP demanded an apology. Senior BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad

said the comment was "shameful, condemnable and disgraceful".

Union Minister Rajeev Chandrashekar said they indicated "desperation and mental instability".

"A 55yr old who has never worked a day in his life, whose family has exploited country like Parasites for decades with their corruption and whose govt destroyed country economically in the #LostDecade, wud refer like this to our PM is sign of desperation and mental instability," read his post on X, formerly Twitter.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan accused Mr Gan-

dhi of being "anti-national". The senior Congress leader's jab at PM Modi had led to his temporary suspension from parliament earlier this year following a defamation case. He was reinstated after four months when the Supreme Court put a freeze on his conviction. In its notice, the Election Commission pointed out that the Model Code of Conduct prohibits leaders from making unverified allegations against political rivals. PM Modi had attended the match, played at a stadium in Ahmedabad named after him. While the comment, complete with memes, went viral on social media, the furious BJP demanded an apology. Senior BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the comment was "shameful, condemnable and disgraceful". Union Minister Rajeev Chandrashekar said they indicated "desperation and mental instability". "A 55yr old who has never worked a day in his life, whose family has exploited country like Parasites for decades with their corruption and whose govt destroyed country economically.

PM to celebrate Navy Day at Sindhudurg Fort on Dec 4

■ HT News Network

Sindhudurg (Maharashtra), Nov 23 (UNI) Indian Navy Day is all set to be celebrated in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Sindhudurg fort in Maharashtra on December 4. Navy Day will be celebrated in a grand and divine manner at the historic fort in Sindhudurg district, with PM Modi taking part in the programme as the chief guest. Sindhudurg fort was built by Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji in the second half of the 17th century. On this occasion, a grand statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji erected at Malvan-Rajkot will be unveiled by Prime Minister Modi. Modi has directed that the day be celebrated at Sindhudurg fort keeping in mind the contribution of Chhatrapati Shivaji in building the Indian Navy. A 43 feet statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji has been erected at Malvan-Rajkot sea shore of Sindhudurg. Also an art gallery depicting Shivaji's life and achievements has been created.

Various warships of the Navy will participate in the programme. Events celebrating the day will also be organised at Tarkarli and Makvan Beach. Senior officers of foreign navies and dignitaries from abroad will be present as special guests

Yogi pays tribute to martyr Capt Shubham Gupta

■ HT News Network

Lucknow, Nov 23 (UNI) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday paid tribute to Army Captain Shubham Gupta, a resident of Agra district, who was martyred during an encounter with terrorists in Rajouri, Jammu and Kashmir. Expressing his condolences to the bereaved family through his official X handle, CM Yogi wrote, "Uttar Pradesh government is with the bereaved family members of the martyred captain at this hour of grief." It may be noted that four army personnel, including Captain Shubham Gupta who joined the Indian Army in the year 2015 and was commissioned in the year 2018, were martyred in an encounter between the security forces and terrorists that took place at Rajouri in Jammu on Wednesday. Shubham's first posting was in Udhampur.

Belgian Ambassador meets Yogi, discuss partnership

■ HT News Network

Lucknow, Nov 23 (UNI) Belgian Ambassador to India Didier Vanderhasselt met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence on Thursday.

During the meeting, the four-member team accompanying the Belgian ambassador expressed the desire for partnership with UP in various sectors, including defence and space. The Belgian team also evinced keen interest in partnership with UP in the areas of waste management, solar projects and semiconductor manufacturing. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Didier Vanderhasselt praised the unprecedented development work done in UP under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Ibrahim Hafeezur Rehman, Lead, South Asia and India Operations of Vito Arabia.

Piyush Goyal confident of BJP victory in Telangana, predicts defeat for BRS

■ HT News Network

Hyderabad, Nov 23 (UNI) Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal expressed confidence that the BJP will come to power in Telangana, foreseeing the defeat of Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS).

"BRS came to power in Telangana with a promise of Neellu, Nidhulu, Niyamakalu but failed to implement them. Huge corruption has taken place in Telangana projects. The future of Telangana is at risk. People were cheated and they are going to answer them with a vote. We have unveiled what we can do in the manifesto. People will vote for us and we will make BC CM in the state. Youth will stand with the party," said Piyush Goyal while speaking to reporters here on Thursday.

Highlighting national achievements, Goyal stated, "We have become the fifth-largest economy with improvements in finance and infrastructure. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we aim to be at the top of the world in the next 15 years. In Telangana, we have doubled the national highway, increased the railway budget 16 times, proposed economic and industrial corridors, and initiated



ated the development of cargo terminals. Mega textile parks, a super thermal power project, and the Hasan to Charalalappally LPG pipeline are underway. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is expected to reach record levels. We are building an 'Aspirational India new India,' and everyone is included in that vision." Goyal also predicted victory for the BJP in elections in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh.

Addressing the current Chief Minister, K Chandrasekhar Rao, Goyal remarked, "Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has confined himself to working from home, and the people have decided to keep him at home. The Vande Bharat trains, completely made in India, are a source of pride for the nation."

"Central Agencies Targeting Opposition Will": Mamata Banerjee Warns BJP

■ HT News Network

Kolkata: The central agencies that are at present targeting opposition leaders will be after the BJP following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee claimed on Thursday, asserting that the government at the Centre will last for three more months.

Addressing TMC workers at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here, she said that after the arrest of her party's leaders in different cases, the expulsion of MP Mahua Moitra was being planned but it would eventually help her before the elections.

"Central agencies targeting opposition leaders at present will go after the BJP following the 2024 elections," she told party workers.

"This government at the Centre is there for three more months," she said.

Ms Banerjee also claimed that the BJP-led government wants to do away with reservations and maintained that she will oppose it.

"BJP is also against the reservation for minorities, but we will bring them under the system through OBC quota," she added.

Ms Banerjee also alleged that attempts of "saffronising" the country were underway in full swing -- from



metro railway stations to the cricket team.

"Saffron is the colour of 'tyagis', but you are 'bhogis'," she said, targeting the BJP, claiming that players resisted, as a result, the Indian cricket team did not have to wear the saffron practice jersey during matches.

The TMC chief also claimed that India would have won if the World Cup final happened in Kolkata or Mumbai, instead of Ahmedabad.

"They won all the matches in the World Cup except the one attended by the sinners," she said.

Ms Banerjee also attacked the Centre over the state of the country's economy.

"The banking sector is in the doldrums and PSUs are being sold," she said, noting that the unemployment rate was also very high.

She took on the BJP over the allegations of cow smuggling to Bangladesh through West Bengal.

"Cows for smuggling to Bangladesh are brought from different states, including UP. Who takes the cut there," she asked.

The chief minister said that West Bengal was fast evolving as a destination for investment.

"All big IT companies are investing in Kolkata's 'Silicon Valley' project," she said.

Supreme Court Gives Defaulting States Last Chance To Pay Arrears To Lower Court Judges

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: The Supreme Court granted a last opportunity to the defaulting states and Union territories on Thursday to clear the salary arrears and other dues of lower court judges in accordance with the recommendations of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission (SNJPC). The SNJPC recommendations cover the pay structure, pension and family pension and allowances, besides dealing with the issue of establishing a permanent mechanism to determine the subjects of the service conditions of the district judiciary. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud noted that despite its directions dated May 19, some states have not complied either fully or in part with those. "We are, prima facie, of the view that the chief secretaries of all defaulting states and Union territories are in contempt. In order to grant one last opportunity of compliance, we direct that the directions shall be effected on or before December 8, 2023, failing which the chief secretaries of all defaulting states and Union territories shall personally remain present before this court," the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said. The court also



clarified that compliance shall mean actual crediting of the amount payable to each judicial officer and in the case of family pension, the surviving spouses. In another direction, the bench also allowed the High Court of Telangana to increase the superannuation age of judicial officers from 60 to 61 years, in line with that of the state government officials. Describing the district judiciary as the backbone of the judicial system, the top court had, on May 19, directed all the states to clear the salary arrears and other dues of lower court judges in accordance with the SNJPC's recommendations. The court, which had accepted the recommendations made in 2020 by the SNJPC headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice PV Reddi, had directed the states to ensure that the dues under several heads are positively credited into the accounts of the judicial officers.

Punjab policeman killed, three injured in clashes with Nihang Sikhs

■ HT News Network

Kapurthala, Nov 23 (UNI) A Punjab Police home guard was killed and three others were injured during a clash between Nihang Sikhs and the cops on Thursday morning at Gurdwara Akal Bunga in Kapurthala district, an official said.

There was an exchange of fire between the police and some Nihang Sikhs, when the lawkeepers reached the spot to stop a violent clash between two groups of the religious order over the control of the Gurdwara.

The police had to retaliate after a group of Nihang Sikhs, owing allegiance to Baba Man Singh, opened fire at them.

Police said for many years, the Gurdwara was under the control of Budha Dal Sant Baba Balbir Singh. However, on November 21 another group of Nihang Sikhs loyal to Baba Man Singh captured the Gurdwara.

The Nihang Sikh group loyal to Baba Man Singh locked themselves up in the Gurdwara after the exchange of fire with the police and refused to leave the premises. However, after two hours of talks, the police persuaded them to come out.

A police officer said Baba Man Singh and his followers will leave the Akal Bunga Gurdwara, while the other group has also agreed not to enter its premises.

The police have arrested ten people following the clashes.

State Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced a Rs 1 crore financial assistance to the family of the deceased home guard. His family will get a further Rs 1 crore through insurance.

Nihangs are a militant and armed Sikh order, who have played pivotal role in the Sikh military history. They are known for their distinctive blue attire and blue turbans.

Israel, Hamas 4-day truce and hostage release delayed by at least a day

■ HT News Network

Israel said a four-day truce with Hamas and hostage release will not start until at least Friday, delaying a breakthrough deal to stop the incessant bombardment of Gaza. Israel and Hamas agreed early on Wednesday to a truce in Gaza for at least four days, to let in humanitarian aid and free at least 50 hostages held by Hamas in the enclave in exchange for at least 150 Palestinians jailed in Israel.

Hamas political bureau member Mousa Abu Marzouq had said the truce was expected to start at 10am (08:00 GMT) today while mediator Qatar had expected the commencement of the "humanitarian pause" to be announced within 24 hours.

Today, Israeli National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi indicated the release of at least 50 Israeli and foreign hostages is still on track, but would not happen as expected. "The negotiations on the release of our hostages are advancing and continuing constantly," he said in a statement released by the prime minister's office.

"The start of the release will take place according to the original agreement between the sides, and not before Friday," it said.

White House spokesperson Adrienne Watson said final logistical details for the release were being worked out. "That is on track and we are hopeful that implementation will begin on Friday morning," she added. A Palestinian official told AFP that



a delay was due to "last minute" details over which hostages would be released and how. He said the truce had been put back as "the names of the Israeli hostages and the modalities of their release," said the official, who has knowledge of the negotiation process but asked to remain anonymous. Lists of those to be freed had been exchanged by both sides, he added.

Meanwhile, Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said that implementation of the accord "continues and is going positively". He said the truce agreement that was reached will be concluded in the coming hours. The delay is a

hammer blow to families desperate to see their loved ones return home and to two million-plus Gazans praying for an end to 47 days of intense bombardment and deprivation. More than 14,000 Gazans have been killed, around 40 per cent of them children, according to medical officials. There was no let-up in the fighting early on Thursday, reports said. Palestinian media said Israeli aircraft and artillery struck Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis in at least two waves and 15 people were killed. Attacks were also reported in several other parts of Gaza, including the Jabalia and Nuseirat camps. The Israeli military said its forces carried

out aerial strikes on over 300 Hamas targets over the past day.

In Israel, sirens warning of incoming rocket fire from Gaza blared in communities near the border with the enclave, the military said. There were no reports of damage or injuries.

Israel also appeared to be pushing on with its offensive in northern Gaza, with witnesses reporting strikes on Kamal Adwan hospital and nearby homes.

Medical workers treated bloodied, dust-covered survivors as other residents fled through debris-strewn streets to safety.

At Gaza's biggest hospital, the Al-Shifa, Israeli soldiers escorted journalists to a tunnel shaft they alleged was part of a vast underground network Hamas uses for military purposes — a claim Hamas denies. "We are not ending the war. We will continue until we are victorious," the chief of the Israeli general staff, Lieutenant-General Herzi Halevi, told commanders in a video released by the military on Thursday. "Need to know if they are alive"

Netanyahu made no mention of a potential delay in implementation of the agreement during a press conference late on Wednesday. Hanegbi's statement was released about an hour after the press conference. "We need to know they are alive, if they're okay. It's the minimum," said Gilad Korngold, who said he drew just a measure of comfort from the deal between Israel and Hamas and was among those who were still awaiting word of relatives. Seven of his family members.

North Korea To Toughen Border Security After Spy Satellite Launch Success

■ HT News Network

Seoul, South Korea: North Korea said Thursday it would deploy new weapons and stronger armed forces to the border with the South, as Seoul's spy agency said Pyongyang had received Russian help to successfully put a military spy satellite into orbit.

Tuesday's launch of the "Malligyong-1" was Pyongyang's third attempt at securing a military eye in the sky after two failures in May and August.

North Korean state media claimed within hours of the launch that leader Kim Jong Un was already reviewing images of US military bases in Guam. Seoul's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers the launch had been a success but cautioned it was too early to say if the satellite was working as Pyongyang claimed, adding the North had been given "feedback" by Russia after Kim met Russian President Vladimir Putin in September.

"After the summit with Putin, the North provided Moscow with the blueprint and data relevant to the first and second satellite launches. Russia in turn analysed those data and provided the North with feedback," the agency told lawmakers, according to a briefing by MP Yoo Sang-bum.

While the North claims the satellite is already functioning, the NIS -- which col-



lected and analysed debris from one of Pyongyang's failed launches, finding it had no military utility -- said it was unlikely.

"Given it usually takes three years for satellite development, the current claims do not guarantee the North's satellite capability -- unless Pyongyang actually makes public those Guam base photos it mentioned," Yoo said.

After the launch, Seoul partially suspended a five-year-old military accord and deployed "surveillance and reconnaissance assets" to the border, in what defence chief Shin Won-sik said Thursday was an "essential measure" to defend against the nuclear-armed North's growing threats.

North Korea's defence ministry on Thursday called Seoul's moves "reckless" and said it would also suspend -- in full -- the deal, saying Pyongyang "will never be bound" by the agreement again and would immediately beef up its own border security.

"Extraordinarily Gratified": Biden Hails Hostage Deal Between Israel-Hamas

■ HT News Network

Washington: US President Joe Biden said Tuesday he was deeply relieved that some hostages taken when Hamas operatives entered Israel on October 7 will soon go free under a deal brokered with help from across the Middle East.

"I am extraordinarily gratified that some of these brave souls... will be reunited with their families once this deal is fully implemented," Biden said in a statement released by the White House.

Biden thanked the leaders of Qatar and Egypt for their "critical leadership" in reaching the deal and also



hailed Israel for agreeing to an extended pause in fighting in Gaza to allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. He noted that two American hostages were freed in late October as part of intense diplomacy.

"Today's deal should bring home additional American hostages, and I will not stop until they are

all released," Biden said.

The four-day truce announced Tuesday after weeks of all-out war marked the first major diplomatic breakthrough since fighting began more than six weeks ago.

Under the Qatar-brokered deal, Palestinian operatives will release 50 women and children kidnapped during their October 7 raids, in which Israel says 1,200 people were killed, most of them civilians. A senior US official said three Americans, including three-year-old Abigail Mor Idan, were among the 50 earmarked for staggered release from Thursday.

Israel Says It Hit 300 Hamas Targets Including Tunnels, Storage Facilities

Tel Aviv: Israeli military forces continued striking Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip on Thursday morning ahead of an imminent ceasefire. Although Israel agreed to a temporary ceasefire and partial prisoner exchange on Wednesday morning, details are still being finalized.

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majid bin Mohammed Al Ansari, said that an announcement of the temporary ceasefire could come within hours.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces said ground forces struck terror targets in Jabaliya. Aerial drones directed by ground forces struck an armed terror squad approaching the soldiers. A drone strike also destroyed a Hamas observation post which posed a threat to the soldiers. In another area of northern Gaza, several Hamas terror cells were eliminated by fire from tanks and aerial drones. Soldiers also located a tunnel shafts inside a mosque.

Biden spoke with Milei on continuing bilateral ties

■ HT News Network

Washington, Nov 23 (UNI) US President Joe Biden spoke by telephone with Argentine President-elect Javier Milei and discussed the importance of continuing to build a strong bilateral relations between the United States and Argentina, the White House said on Wednesday.

"The two leaders discussed the importance of continuing to build on the strong relationship between the United States and Argentina on economic issues, on regional and multilateral cooperation, and on shared priorities, including advocating for the protection of human rights, addressing food insecurity and investing in clean energy," the statement said.

Biden congratulated Milei on his election and applauded the electoral process as a testament to the strength of Argentina's democratic institutions, it added.

On Sunday, far-right libertarian Milei won the runoff presidential election in Argentina. He is scheduled to officially take office on December 10. Milei advocates ditching the national currency for the US dollar and a foreign policy oriented towards Israel and the United States. He is also against joining BRICS

Brazil to spur bioeconomy, tackle hunger, inequality: president

■ HT News Network

Rio De Janeiro, Nov 23 (UNI) Brazil will promote an initiative to spur bioeconomy and set up working groups to tackle hunger, inequality and climate change when it takes the Group of 20 (G20) presidency on Dec. 1, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Wednesday.

"We will seek concrete results that generate benefits for the poorest and most vulnerable across the planet. The G20 will help boost ongoing multilateral initiatives," Lula said during the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit.

It is necessary to "recover the three dimensions of sustainable development and accelerate the pace of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda" for Sustainable Development spearheaded by the United Nations, he said.

The motto of Brazil's G20 presidency will be "building a just world and a sustainable planet," the president said.

Brazil will host the 30th UN Conference of Parties on Climate Change in 2025, to which it intends to bring "an ambitious climate agenda that guarantees the sustainability of the planet and people's dignity," said Lula.

However, that will only be possible by seriously addressing indebtedness, access to finance and progressive taxation mechanisms on international agendas, he said.

Palestinian death toll from Gaza war tops 14,500

■ HT News Network

Tunis, Nov 23 (UNI) The number of Palestinians killed in the war in the Gaza Strip since October 7 has topped 14,500, the enclave's administration said on Wednesday.

"The death toll has reached 14,532, this includes 6,000 children," Gaza's information center said in a statement.

The number of those wounded in more than seven weeks of hostilities has exceeded 35,000.

Israel and Hamas agreed a four-day humanitarian pause in fighting on Wednesday. It is expected to take effect on Thursday morning. As part of the temporary truce, Israel will release 150 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for 50 hostages taken by the Palestinian group.

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel. On October 27, Israel launched a large-scale ground incursion inside the Gaza Strip with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages

Australia to expand subsidies for renewable energy projects

■ HT News Network

Canberra, Nov 23 (UNI) The Australian government has announced an expansion of subsidies for clean energy projects to help achieve its 2030 renewables target. Chris Bowen, minister for climate change and energy, on Thursday announced that the existing taxpayer-funded Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS) will be expanded to underwrite new renewable energy projects. Under the expansion, the CIS will underwrite private companies to build 32 gigawatts (GW) of new electricity projects, consisting of 9GW of storage projects and 23GW of renewable generation projects. If electricity prices are too low for the companies to generate a profit for the companies, the CIS will pay the difference, but if a company's earnings exceed a set ceiling, the government will share in its profits. The governing Labor Party has set a goal of 82 percent of Australia's electricity coming from renewable sources by 2030.

Gaza World's "Most Dangerous Place" For Children, Says UNICEF

■ HT News Network

United Nations, United States: The head of the United Nations children's agency on Wednesday called the besieged Gaza Strip "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child," and said that the hard-won truce deal between Israel and Hamas was not enough to save their lives.

UNICEF's executive director Catherine Russell told the UN Security Council that over 5,300 children have reportedly been killed in Gaza since Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, accounting for 40 percent of the deaths. "This is unprecedented," said Russell, who had just returned from a trip to southern Gaza. "I am haunted by what I saw and heard."

Russell welcomed a deal reached Wednesday by Israel and Hamas to free hostages and pause ferocious fighting and bombardment in Gaza.

Some 240 people -- ranging from infants to the elderly -- were taken



captive during the October 7 attack by Hamas militants that killed about 1,200 in Israel, mostly civilians, according to Israeli authorities.

But Russell said that a pause is not enough and called for "an urgent humanitarian ceasefire to immediately put a stop to this carnage."

"For children to survive... for humanitarian workers to stay and effectively deliver... humanitarian pauses are simply not enough," she said. Russell said that an additional 1,200 children are believed to remain under the rubble of bombed-out build-

ings or are otherwise unaccounted for.

"In addition to bombs, rockets, and gunfire, Gaza's children are at extreme risk from catastrophic living conditions," Russell added.

"One million children -- or all children inside the territory -- are now food insecure, facing what could soon become a catastrophic nutrition crisis," UNICEF estimates that acute malnutrition in children could increase by nearly 30 per cent in Gaza over the next months.

Also addressing the Security Council, the head of the United Nations Population Fund, Natalia Kanem, drew attention to the plight of Gaza's pregnant women, with some 5,500 expected to deliver babies under appalling conditions in the coming month.

"At a moment when new life is beginning, what should be a moment of joy is overshadowed by death and destruction, horror and fear," said Kanem. omptment of China-Argentina relations.

Winter Preparedness Meeting: DC Baramulla calls for Operational & Accessible of all Essential Services

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, NOVEMBER 23: Directing all departments to gear up for winter preparedness and ensure uninterrupted essentials during the winter season, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr. Syed Sehrish Asgar today exhorted upon the functionaries of all concerned departments to adopt a coordinated approach while tackling any undesirable situations. These directions were

passed by the DC during a meeting held at DC Office Complex regarding review of arrangements for winter preparedness. Discussing preparedness measures threadbare, Dr Sehrish assigned every department a responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of the residents in the district during the winter season. Dr Sehrish reviewed availability of snow clearance machines, stock position of essentials, action plans prepared by the concerned departments framed



to prevent interruption to services during this winter season. Asking Mechanical & Engineering Department (M&ED) to prepare a comprehensive and meticulous snow clearance and winter plan, the DC instructed the concerned functionaries to avoid any inconvenience to people by extending a prompt response besides ensuring snow clearance on highways and other major and inner link roads. She also asked R&B Department to properly handle the parking issues in the promi-

nent and tourist destinations including Gulmarg by creating additional parking sites and using the existing parking places judiciously. Similarly, officers of PDD, Jal Shakti, and FCS&CA were directed to make sure the smooth supply of water, power, ration and other essential supplies during the winter season. Power Development Department was particularly directed to notify schedule of curtailment in Power supply in the district and avoid unscheduled power cuts.

Rajawar Handwara, Village without drinking water from last 35 days, seek redressal.

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, Nov, 23: The residents of Yamlar-Bala (Rajwar) area in north Kashmir's Kupwara district have expressed resentment against the authorities for failing to provide potable water to them, making people suffer. The residents said that few years back a water scheme under (JJM) was approved for the village but work on it has not been completed yet. A month and a half ago pipes were dumped in our village but ground situation is same like 1993. The residents said that the entire village which consists of more than 50 households get drinking water from a well located in the premises of a Jamia Masjid Shareef. Talking to HEADLINES TODAY (HT), the residents



said, water supply to their village has been snapped due to some technical snag for the past two months and they are being forced

to consume contaminated water from streams. They said that they have to suffer a lot in absence of potable water supply and the

women folk have to travel long distances to fetch water for drinking and other purposes. They alleged that the area is completely reeling under acute shortage of water from last 50-days while the authorities had failed to take any tangible measure despite repeated pleas. The residents said that they had taken up the issue with the concerned authorities on several occasions in the past but to no avail. They have sought immediate intervention of LG Manoj Sinha in this regard so that their grievances are addressed at the earliest. Meanwhile, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department, Handwara Division, Bilal Ahmad told HEADLINES TODAY that my team is working on it 24x7, I assured you we will restore the water supply within a few days under the same plan of JJM, and tomorrow I'm going to visit spot for further development," he said.

OSC Ganderbal organizes awareness camp at Anganwadi centres

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, NOVEMBER 23: On the directions of District Development Commissioner Ganderbal, One Stop Centre (OSC) Ganderbal, implemented by the She Hope Society for Women Entrepreneurs (SHSFE), Ganderbal today organized an awareness camp at several Anganwadi centres in Halqa Theru of the district.

The event garnered significant participation and enthusiasm from Anganwadi workers, helpers, and beneficiaries towards the initiatives of the Sakhi club.

District Programme Officer, G R Wani played a key role in the awareness program, enlightening the participants about the pivotal role and responsibilities of the Sakhi club.

Approximately 60 individuals actively engaged in the camp, demonstrating a keen interest in the cause.

Advocate Malik Shugufta, the Centre Administrator of OSC Ganderbal took the opportunity to inform the participants about the various services offered at the OSC for distressed women.

She also highlighted the essential roles and responsibilities of Sakhi club members, emphasizing the crucial support they provide to women in need.

Overall, the event proved to be an informative and engaging platform, promoting awareness about the OSC's services and the vital role played by the Sakhi club in the community.

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri chairs

District Tuberculosis Forum Meeting to Bolster NTEP

HT News Network

RAJOURI NOVEMBER 23: To discuss an Action Plan to foster National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP) in the district, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of District Tuberculosis Forum here today.

The NTEP, a pivotal component of the National Health Mission, spearheads India's efforts against Tuberculosis. The meeting shed light on the composition, objectives, and functioning of the TB Forum. The session delved into the achievements of the program within the district, spotlighting a range of services offered by the government under the NTEP.

The meeting was apprised that 15596 microscopy and 4379 molecular tests were done in the second quarter and 679 cases were notified till date. It was further informed that ninety percent achievement has been recorded under the



Nikshay Poshan yojna scheme.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the urgency of eradicating Tuberculosis as it being a leading infectious disease leaves a very adverse impact on the people's lives, the economy and the future of the Nation. He called for making concerted efforts towards effective and successful implementation of the

NTEP in the district.

A crucial highlight of the discussion was the emphasis on registering all TB patients under the Nikshay Mitras scheme. This initiative aims to provide comprehensive support to TB patients, encompassing nutritional aid, additional diagnostic assistance, and vocational support.

As the district intensifies its commitment to the NTEP, Deputy Commis-

sioner Vikas Kundal urged all stakeholders to collaborate seamlessly, recognizing that a collective approach is paramount in the fight against Tuberculosis.

Among the others, the Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Khurshid; District Tuberculosis Officer, Dr Khalid Mansoor and other officers and officials attended the meeting.

DC Kupwara reviews CAPEX Budget, BADP

HT News Network

KUPWARA, Nov 23 : In order to review the progress of the Capex Budget 2023-24 and BADP a meeting of Officers and engineers was convened on Thursday at Meeting Hall of DC Office here, which was chaired by the District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan.

DC reviewed tendering, execution and completion of projects under District Capex, UT Capex, NABARD and BADP. DC took the strong note of gap in authorisation of projects and their allotments despite lapse of ample time of working season and directed concerned engineers to submit the list of works authorised but not tendered out yet. DC emphasized upon Officers and engineers to expedite the pace of projects as short working season is left.

DC directed upon the engineers to ensure that lapse of funds is avoided in the district. She directed SE, PWD to monitor the progress of tendering, execution and completion of projects, closely and ensure that all projects are completed within stipulated time frame. Meeting was attended by, SE, PWD Er. Ram Lal, JD Planning Kupwara, Abdul Majeed, Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers and other concerned officers.

ADC Gbl emphasizes Quality Resolution of Public Grievances

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, NOVEMBER 23: With a strong emphasis on ensuring the quality resolution of public grievances, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad today chaired a meeting at Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Complex here to evaluate the redressal of public grievances.

During the session, a comprehensive discussion took place department-wise, focusing on the status of grievances registered on JK-IGRAMS.

At the outset, the chair was informed that 4553 grievances have been received on IGRAMS out of which 4488 have been disposed-off and remaining are under process.

The ADC instructed all departments to treat public grievances with utmost seriousness, emphasizing the need for the highest level of accountability and transparency in dealing with public issues. He directed officers to promptly address all public grievances within the stipulated time frame while ensuring quality disposal.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I informed to general public that my Daughters Date of birth (DOB) is 13/06/2011. Now I am applying for his date of birth Certificate (DOB) if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file His /her objection in the (BDO) office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....ABDUL RASHEED CHOPAN
F/O.....QURAT RASHEED
R/O.....DARWAFRASTWARI
Block..... WAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public through this notice that Muhammad Maqbool Bhat S/O Abdul Ahad Bhat R/O Kreeri District Baramulla passed away on 18th November 2023 at 7:00 am in the morning at his residence kreeri. Now we want to apply for his death certificate. If anybody has any kind objection in this regard, he/she may contact the concerned authority within the stipulated time. After which no objection shall be entertained.

Name.....ABDUL RASHEED CHOPAN
F/O.....ZEENAT RASHEED
R/O.....DARWAFRASTWARI
Block..... WAGOORA

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Name: JANA BEGUM
W/O Late MUHAMMAD MAQBOOL BHAT
R/O Kreeri District Baramulla

DLSA Gbl organises Awareness programme on Constitutional Values & Fundamentals of Indian Constitution

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, NOVEMBER 23: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal today conducted the second awareness programme on constitutional values and fundamentals of the Indian Constitution and Reading of Preamble, in honor of Constitution Day at Government Middle School Mammer, Hariganwan.

It is worth mentioning here that the Constitution Day is celebrated nationwide on November 26, 2023.

The programme was held under the guidance of Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Amit Gupta and under the chairmanship of the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Ganderbal, Ritesh Kumar Dubey and under the guidance of the Civil Judge (Sr. Division) /Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal, Nusrat Ali Hakak. The programme witnessed the presence of Adv. Sajad Ahmad Khan, teachers, students of Government Middle School Mammer, Hariganwan, and para-legal volunteers of DLSA Ganderbal. During the programme, Advocate



Sajad Ahmad Khan and students of Government Middle School read the preamble. Understanding of the preamble leads to a better understanding of the constitutional framework and empowers individuals to act as responsible citizens of the nation.

The awareness programme proved to be a valuable opportunity for the students to gain knowledge and a deeper appreciation for the constitutional values that shape the fabric of our society.

DLSA Ganderbal, remains committed to organizing such initiatives that promote legal literacy and empower individuals with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities.

DDC Reasi reviews performance of I&C, POSHAN Departments

HT News Network

REASI, NOVEMBER 23: District Development Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan today conducted a thorough review of the POSHAN Department's performance here in the DC office Complex. The meeting focused on the implementation of different components of Poshan Abhiyan, aiming at comprehensive nourishment of children, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls. The Project Officer provided a detailed overview of ongoing initiatives, achievements, and future plans within the district. The DDC instructed officials to ensure saturation under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY) by cross-checking health department data on pregnant and lactating mothers. This step is essential to guarantee that all eligible women benefit from the scheme. Furthermore, officers were directed to collaborate with the health department in identifying unvaccinated children. In a strategic move,



the DDC issued directives for the relocation of Anganwadi Centers to non-functional government buildings, maximizing existing infrastructure for efficient Anganwari service delivery. CDPOs were tasked to conduct comprehensive visits to every Anganwadi Center by December 20, strengthening monitoring and evaluation processes.

Encouraging collective responsibility, DDC Mahajan urged district officers to adopt one Anganwadi Center each, emphasizing the shared goal of enhancing child nutrition. Later, a meeting to review the working of Industrial and Allied Sectors in the district was also chaired by the DDC.

Following an Ayurvedic diet that includes warm, easily digestible foods and incorporating spices like cumin, coriander, and fenugreek can boost digestion and overall health. A healthy digestion system is essential for eliminating toxins and preventing nasal congestion.

Stokes opts out of IPL 2024 to 'manage workload and fitness'

LONDON, NOV 23: Ben Stokes, Chennai Super Kings' England all-rounder, has made himself unavailable for IPL 2024 to manage his workload and fitness. The franchise, in a statement on their website, said they were "supportive of Ben in his decision".

Super Kings, though, have not said if they will release Stokes.

The IPL has set Sunday, November 26, as the deadline for franchises to announce their retentions and releases for the 2024 season. In case they do not release Stokes, Super Kings will have the option of retaining him ahead of the mega auction for IPL 2025. And if they release him by Sunday, Super Kings can utilise the INR 16.25 they had bought him for, in the auction next month.

At the end of the World Cup, Stokes had revealed that he would be undergoing knee surgery, a step he had been delaying for a while. Depending on his rehab, Stokes and the ECB will determine the timeline of his return.

Stokes, who was Super Kings' most expensive buy ever in the auction ahead of the 2023 IPL season for INR 16.25 crore (US\$ 1.98 million approx. at the time), played just two games through the season, scoring 15 runs and bowling just the one over. This was partly because of the left-knee injury, which had forced him to start the season as a specialist batter. The injury to the knee is a long-standing one, but had flared up during England's tour of New Zealand in



February this year. Stephen Fleming, the Super Kings coach, had said at the time that the team would wait for Stokes to be "100% ready" before asking him to bowl.

More recently, after coming out of ODI retirement to play the World Cup in India, Stokes was one of England's better batters on show even as the team had a horror run in the tournament. Stokes played six of England's nine games after missing the first three with a hip

niggle, but ended as their second-highest run-scorer behind Dawid Malan. Stokes, who didn't bowl at all at the World Cup, scored 304 runs in his six innings including two half-centuries and a century, ending with a scoring sequence of 64 (vs Australia), 108 (vs Netherlands) and 84 (vs Pakistan). He scored at an average of 50.66 and a strike rate of 89.14.

As things stand, Stokes, the England Test captain, is hopeful of

touring India for the five-Test series, to run from January 25 to March 11.

"I've put a lot of hard work in away from cricket to give myself the best chance of a quicker recovery and, with Christmas and everything coming up, the main thing for me is getting this knee right and being ready and raring to go for that Test series in India," Stokes had said after England's last game at the World Cup.

Ashwin admits India were undone by 'tactical brilliance and execution' from Cummins

NEW DELHI, NOV 23: R Ashwin was almost certain that India would win the World Cup on November 19. But the "tactical brilliance and tactical execution" of Australia captain Pat Cummins meant India finished as runners-up, as Australia won their sixth World Cup. This was Ashwin's review of the final, which he spoke about vividly on his YouTube channel this week.

"Pat Cummins was struggling as an ODI bowler heading into the World Cup. But in the last four or five games leading into the final, nearly 50% of the balls he bowled were cutters," Ashwin said.

"In the final - I don't know how many people explained it on TV - Cummins bowled to a four-five leg-side field like an offspinner, bowling the stump line. But he bowled only three balls in the six-meter mark or further up on the pitch in his entire ten-over spell. [He] knocked off crucial wickets in the final. The five fielders on the on side were square leg, midwicket, mid-on, deep square leg and long leg, and he bowled his ten overs without a mid-off."

Despite having a predominantly leg-side field without a mid-off in place, Cummins did not concede a single boundary and finished with figures of 2 for 34. The two wickets were those of Shreyas Iyer and Virat Kohli; Iyer was done in by the low bounce on a length ball while Kohli played one on while trying to steer a back-of-a-length ball to deep third. Those strikes went a long way in restricting India to 240 in Ahmedabad.

"Cummins' execution should be applauded," Ashwin said. "It is easy to plan to bowl to a leg-side field. It is



easier to bowl that way in a Test match because the umpires will not call a wide even if you bowl a couple of balls down leg.

"But to not bowl a wide down leg in an ODI, execute the plans with that field and not allow batters to drive the ball is brilliant. In my experience, I have seen bowlers go for at least one or two fours with such a field.

"It was the first time I saw a fast bowler bowl to an offspinner's field without a mid-off in a one-day game. Tactical brilliance, tactical execution. They had us there."

Josh Tongue ruled out of England's white-ball tour of Caribbean

ANTIGUA, NOV 23: Josh Tongue has been ruled out of England's white-ball tour of the Caribbean next month after sustaining an injury during the ongoing England Lions training camp in the United Arab Emirates.

Matthew Potts will replace him for the three-match ODI series, beginning in Antigua on December 3, but no replacement has yet been named for the five T20s which follow from December 12-21.

The injury is a blow for Tongue, 26, who impressed during his two Test appearances at Lord's in the 2023



home summer, and had been anticipating a white-ball debut across formats as England seek to rebuild their fortunes after their disappointing World Cup campaign in India.

With his ability to generate awkward bounce at speeds in the region of 90mph, Tongue's value to the England set-up was confirmed last month when he was handed a lucrative two-year ECB central contract.

Speaking to ESPNcricinfo last week, Tongue had stressed his desire to hone his white-ball skills on this Caribbean tour, having so far played just 15 List A and T20 domestic fixtures, as opposed to a total of 50 first-class appearances, 47 of which have come for his former county, Worcestershire.

Injury permitting, Tongue's next opportunity for England honours could come on the five-Test tour of India, which gets underway in January. "I think my pace will help in subcontinental conditions and I can get the ball to reverse as well and my bouncer tactic, which [Ben] Stokes obviously likes, will benefit the team," he said prior to the Lions trip.

For Potts, the late call-up is a chance to build on his brief taste of England white-ball action, having been selected for a one-off ODI debut against South Africa in 2022, and two further appearances against Ireland just prior to the World Cup, one of which was washed out. Like Tongue, Potts was also the recipient of a two-year ECB contract for 2023-24, having impressed with his work ethic during his debut Test summer in 2022. He claimed 20 wickets at 28.00 in five appearances that year, before a further one-off appearance against Ireland at Lord's this June.

Graeme Swann moulds young England spinners dreaming of another series win in India

NEW DELHI, NOV 23: It is coming up to ten years since Graeme Swann called time on a distinguished England career. Yet even with a CV that boasts three Ashes victories, including in Australia in 2010-11 (a success which led to England's No. 1 Test ranking), a Test victory in India in 2012 and a T20 World Cup, there is one great regret.

"I wish I got a hundred, that's something that really annoys me," he reveals. The highest score of "only" 85 against South Africa in December 2009 grates the offspinner who did manage four first-class centuries.

"I look back now and think, 'Why didn't you just have that extra five minutes here and there in the nets?' Why not listen to the little devil on your left shoulder rather than the one on your right that said, 'Just bat through until tea' rather than 'Imagine hitting this bowler for six right now'? I always listened to that idiot.

"I still dream about cricket. I take slip catches in my sleep. I'm always fielding or batting in my dreams - never bowling. Which probably tells me something - that I was a very frustrated batsman."

At this point, I offer a different perspective. Perhaps Swann does not think about bowling because, well, what more was there to achieve? In the land of the living, 255 Test dismissals put him seventh on England's all-time list, second behind Derek Underwood's 297 as the country's most productive spinner, at an average of 29.96. Impressive numbers through performances that elevated him as one of the best fingerspinners of his era.

"Yes, maybe," replies Swann. "I get your point, 100%. You know, I've never really delved into the dream world. But now I do, and you're absolutely right."

It was on the eve of the Ashes Boxing Day Test in 2013 that Swann called it quits after 60 Tests. A nerve issue in his right elbow, which had been under the knife earlier that year, meant he had lost the feeling in his fingers. With the urn gone after the three matches, he decided that was that.

England eventually succumbed to a 5-0 whitewash, amplifying the sentiment Swann had deserted his teammates. It was the only time he felt mischaracterised by the media. "But there's no point holding grudges," he says, phlegmatically, before joking: "And the one guy I've got a grudge against, one day I'll push him in the sea."

That the third Test in Perth was his last game of cricket underlines the terminal nature of the injury. Nevertheless, stepping away altogether was tough. "You keep thinking - could I have waited? Could I have seen if my elbow got better? And then I'd see England playing again and get massive pangs of jealousy.

"I'll be honest, I still get it now. I think it'll help when Jimmy Anderson breaks a hip or something by the time he goes. But seeing your mate still doing it and being on the outside, it is hard. It's not enjoyable. I'd love to be a grey-haired, wily old spinner playing for England like him. I don't think I could have kept my fitness up, to be fair. "That's life. I was dealt an amazing hand for five years, if I bemoan the end of it, it'll take away from how amazing those five years were." England still have not got over Swann. Beyond the wickets was a level of control, particularly in the first half of matches, which allowed Andy Flower's chart-topping team to operate with him as one of a four-man attack alongside three quicks.

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