



Dry Weather Likely To End By Jan End: MeT

Exact forecast to be known in coming days; System shows possibility of light to moderate snow from Jan 29: Director MeT



■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: Amid

the prolonged dry spell in Kash-
mir, a sigh of relief is expected
by the end of this month as there

is a forecast of moderate snow-
fall in between January

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Winter Of Despair For Kashmir's Line Producers, Artists

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: As snowfall continues to elude the picturesque valley of Kashmir, local line producers and others associated with the Indian film industry are in a state of despair as shooting requests are drying up due to a snowless winter.

The mighty mountains of Pir Panjal region, which are draped in a thick white blanket of snow during

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Tourists Head To Sinthan Top Amid Lack Of Snow In Valley

■ HT News Network

SINTHAN TOP, JAN 17: Tourists are making a beeline to Sinthan Top as the off-beat destination boasts of being the only place in Kashmir which is snow-clad these days while the rest of the valley battles with dry weather.

Sinthan top is a snow-clad mountain peak situated at 12,500 feet connecting Anantnag in south Kashmir

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BJP Only Indian Party With Proven Track Record Of Speedy Development: PM Narendra Modi

■ HT News Network

KOCHI, JAN 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the BJP was the only party in India with a



proven track record of speedy development and a clear vision for the future. The prime minister was speaking at a party

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NEWS BRIEF

IGP Kashmir visits Gurudwara Rainawari

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: On the auspicious occasion of Gurupurab, Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone V.K Birdi undertook a visit to Gurudwara Rainawari, Srinagar on Wednesday to personally inspect and review the arrangements in place for the devotees.

Accompanied by the officers, IGP Kashmir participated in the celebrations and later on interacted with the Gurudwara management, local authorities, and community leaders to ensure seamless coordination for the comfort and safety of worshippers.

As per a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Birdi appreciated the efforts of the Gurudwara committee in

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Gurupurab celebrated with religious zeal Kashmir

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: Members of Sikh community in Kashmir valley on Wednesday thronged Gurudwaras to pay obeisance on the occasion of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's 357th birth anniversary.

The largest gathering was witnessed at Gurudwara Chatti Patshahi Rainawari in Srinagar where hundreds of men, women and children visited and paid obeisance.

The occasion is also known as the Parkash Parv.

In the wake of a long dry spell, the devotees prayed for rain. Snow for

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Army recovers IED in Kupwara, says major tragedy averted

KUPWARA, JAN 17: Averting a major terror incident, Army on Wednesday said to have recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) near Chowkibal in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Army's Srinagar-based Chinara Corps as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), informed that a major terror incident was averted today by recovering an IED. "IED Recovered near Chowkibal on Srinagar - Chowkibal Highway, Chinara Warriors averted a major terror incident today by recovering & in-situ destroying an IED near Chowkibal on Srinagar - Chowkibal Highway. Indian Army stands by its

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Security Beefed Up In Jammu Ahead Of R-Day, Ram Temple Event

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, JAN 17: Security has been beefed up in Jammu ahead of Republic Day and the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Security forces and the police have been put on alert across the Jammu region, including the Indo-Pakistan border, to ensure the deployment of fool-proof security in the region.

"The security measures have been beefed up ahead of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony on January 22 and also the Republic Day celebrations. Security setup has been put on alert," a senior officer said.

The security forces have

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LG released J&K Haj Committee's Coffee Table Book "The Spiritual Journey Haj"

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha released the Coffee Table Book of Jammu Kashmir Haj Committee "The Spiritual Journey Haj" at Raj Bhawan.

The Lt Governor congratulated Jammu Kashmir Haj Committee and the editorial team on the occasion.

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Court Sends Hizbul Operative Mattu To Judicial Custody, Releases Another Accused

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, JAN 17: The Patiala House Court on Wednesday remanded Javed Ahmed Mattu to 14 days of judicial custody. Another accused, Mohd. Rafi Nazar, has been released by the court in this case. He will remain in custody in the NIA case.

As per Delhi police, Mattu is alleg-



edly involved in 11 known terror

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Dry spell: Kashmir fruit growers stare at losses due to early 'bloom'

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: Fruit growers in Kashmir stare at losses as experts predict that the prolonged dry spell may lead to early flowering, impacting the quality and quantity of the fruit.

The continuous dry spell, with no rainfall or snowfall even in January, has raised concerns among fruit growers and farmers in the valley.

Experts who spoke with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) warned



that the lack of soil moisture resulting from the prolonged dry spell could adversely affect the quality and yield of fruits, particularly apples, in the upcoming season.

Prof Khalid Mushtaq,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Ladakh's Apricot Growers Sound Alarm Over Unprecedented Dry Spell

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: The crucial part of winter is almost nearing its end and it has not snowed yet in Ladakh.

Like the rest of the farmers, the current weather pattern has doubled the worries of Sadiq Hardassi, an apricot farmer of Hardas village in Kargil district of Ladakh, who has been associated with the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

DC Srinagar Reviews Implementation Of Social Welfare Schemes

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 17: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired an Officers meeting at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, here to review the implementation of welfare measures for under privileged, vulnerable, down trodden and weaker sections of society and process of extension of benefits of various Government schemes by the Social Welfare Department.



At the outset, the DC took a comprehensive review of ben-

eficiary oriented schemes.

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Director Sericulture J&K inaugurates Resham Krishi Mela at P-4, Basic Seed Farm, Manasbal

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 17: Director Sericulture J&K, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat today inaugurated a one-day Resham Krishi Mela at P-4, Basic Seed Farm, Manasbal.

In the event more than 500 Silk-worm Rearing/youths from all districts of Kashmir participated with great enthusiasm and fervour.

On the occasion, the Director Sericulture J&K felicitated 20 progressive Silk-worm rearers and 5 Sericulture Entrepreneurs with memento, certificates, and tool kits as a token of appreciation.

The event was jointly organized by

the Sericulture Dev. Department J&K and Central Sericulture Research & Training Institute, CSB, Pampore, showcasing the achievements of the sericulture community who have relentlessly dedicated themselves for the welfare of the sericulture sector, farmers and silk-worm rearers.

The Director Sericulture J&K also released various booklets/pamphlets on the occasion exhibiting technical activities and information related to the sericulture practices as a whole.

The stalls highlighting various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), UT level schemes, and an array of silk/mulberry products were set up by the Sericulture Dev. Department



J&K, CSB, Pampore, and various Entrepreneurs of U.T of J&K.

Addressing a huge gathering of Silk-worm Rearing and Sericulture Entrepreneurs, Director Sericulture assured the full support of the Department for providing technical guidance of sericulture activities, including Silk-worm Rearing, Reeling, and Weaving.

He informed that the Department has also enhanced its Cocoon Bank Revolving Fund from Rs. 70 lakh to Rs. 3.50 Crore for local Reeling Unit holders for increasing consumption of Cocoons at local level and at the same time the department has introduced Production based Incentives to Rearing/Reeling on Cocoon and Silk production under Capex to encourage them

towards higher production/productivity. Besides the Director Sericulture informed that presently the local buyers only consume about 30% cocoons while as the buyers from other states consume 70% cocoons in the Cocoon Auction Markets organized by the Department across J&K and expressed his desire that in coming years the trend should be other way around.

Speaking on the occasion Dr. N.K. Bhatia, Director Central Sericulture Research & Training Institute, CSB, Pampore also shared his valuable inputs viz-a-viz different schemes and the benefits which the people of J&K avail by associating themselves with Sericulture Dev. Department and the CSR&TI Pampore.

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra emerges as a potent force of positive change in frontier District Kupwara.

HT News Network

Kupwara, Jan 17, The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) the nationwide campaign to spread awareness about the welfare Schemes and initiatives of the Government of India, reached, Maratgam, Monbal, Nowgam A and Nowgam B Panchayats of Mawar Qalamabad block of Kupwara district, today.

The focus of the Yatra is to reach out to the people, create awareness about the welfare schemes aimed at sanitation facilities, essential financial services, access to LPG cylinders, housing for the poor, food security, proper nutrition, reliable healthcare, clean drinking water, etc.

The VBSY witnessed



overwhelming response from the people in the border district Kupwara. Today the VB Vans were received in grand welcome ceremonies organised at the venues by officers and officials from various departments.

As part of the yatra, the government departments had set up stalls to provide citizens, on the spot services, like free health check ups, issuance and updation of the Aadhaar cards, registration of beneficiaries for

various welfare schemes benefitting scores of people at these camps.

The day-long program began with participants taking the pledge to make India a developed and self-reliant nation by the year 2047.

Videos of beneficiaries of various departmental schemes under Meri Kahani Meri Zubani were also played and cultural programmes were organised.

A prominent feature of the VBSY was the deployment of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) vans, acting as mobile catalysts for change. These vans played a pivotal role in disseminating the message of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra far and wide, ensuring no corner of the District was untouched.

Police facilitates Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) meetings in Kulgam

Farooq Rather

Kulgam January 17: On the directions of SSP Kulgam Shri Sahil Saranag-IPS, police in Kulgam facilitated Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) meetings at Police Station Kulgam, PS Yaripora, PS Manzgam, PP Mirbazar and PP Frisal to strengthen Police Public relations.

The meeting at Police Station Yaripora was chaired by Addl. SP Kulgam Shri Shabir Ahmad, while as, the meetings at other police stations were chaired by respective jurisdictional officers in which respectable citizens of Town Kulgam, Sangus Kaharwat, Chawalgam, Humshalibugh, Badroo Frisal, Malpora Akhran Mirbazar and



Manzgam participated.

During these meetings, various issues of public importance including eradication of drug abuse, food adulteration, Traffic Jams were discussed. Speaking on the occasion, chairing

officers said that such meetings are conducted to solicit the suggestions and support of people for better policing. Officers also thanked the people for participating in these meetings and for providing valuable suggestions. Referring to the issues highlighted by the participants, chairing officers assured that these issues will be taken up with the concerned authorities for immediate redressal and added that police will provide its legal support as and when required for the betterment of the society.

The participants were stressed to co-operate with Police in maintaining law and order in the areas and in identifying anti-National and anti-Social elements who try to disrupt the peaceful environment.

VBSY empowers Pulwama with Transformative Development

HT News Network



PULWAMA, JANUARY 17: Embarking on a journey of progress, the ongoing Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) has etched an indelible legacy in District Pulwama, steering it towards comprehensive development. In perfect harmony with its name, the Yatra has seamlessly aligned with the vision of a Developed Nation, catalyzing transformative change across every nook and cranny of the District. Executing a meticulous strategy, the Yatra is navigating through every corner of the District, ensuring the effective implementation and saturation of Government schemes among beneficiaries. The Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) vans have been instrumental in disseminating the message and vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, fostering awareness about the Nation's Development Goals. Going beyond mere dissemination, the Yatra has actively engaged with beneficiaries, ensuring that Government scheme benefits permeate every stratum of society. This holistic approach is integral to achieving the broader goal of a developed and prosperous Nation. A notable achievement includes the registration of 13,086 individuals under the Kissan Credit Card and 2,123 under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. Further 2870 individuals have been registered under Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana during this Yatra. These numbers underscore the Yatra's commitment to its name, ensuring the widespread enrollment and fulfillment of Government schemes, thereby fostering comprehensive development within the District.

Beyond the saturation of Government schemes, various camps, including health camps and on-spot services, stand as pillars of the VBSY. These serve as essential platforms for community engagement, ensuring that the advantages of Government initiatives reach those most in need.

DC Srinagar greets people on Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti

HT News Network

RINAGAR, JANUARY 17: On the occasion of Prakash Parv being celebrated today, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has extended his warm greetings to the people. In his message, the DC greeted the Sikh Community on the 357th birth anniversary of tenth Sikh Guru, Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The DC expressed hope that Guru Gobind Singh Ji Jayanti would contribute towards strengthening brotherhood, unity, harmony and would be a harbinger of peace, progress and prosperity.

35th National Road Safety Month: MVD Anantnag, Police organise Awareness programme on Road Safety Defensive Driving Awareness Programme held at Harnag Anantnag

HT News Network

ANANTNAG, JANUARY 17: In continuation to National Road Safety month, Motor vehicle Department (MVD) Anantnag in collaboration with Traffic and District Police today organised a traffic awareness programme at Taxi Stand.

The programme witnessed a huge gathering of participation of NCC cadets of district as well as commercial drivers.

The main aim of the programme was to sensitize



the participants about importance of road safety and how to become a safer road user.

Later, over 1,500 pam-

phlets were distributed to commuters and around 500 sticker posters depicting road safety slogans were distributed among the gen-

eral public and also pasted on four-wheelers and two-wheelers.

Meanwhile, MVD Anantnag also held an awareness programme on Defensive Driving for the prospective applicants who had come for seeking Driving Licence Test at Trial Ground Harnag Anantnag.

On the occasion, as many as 120 applicants took an oath for a safe driving lifestyle on the occasion.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Anantnag, Dr Mohammad Zubair Lattoo delivered a lecture on defensive driving.

DC Baramulla visits Chattipadshai; greets Sikh community on Prakash Parv

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 17: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today paid a visit to Gurudwara Chhatti Padshahi in Baramulla and extended warm greetings to the Sikh community on the auspicious occasion of Prakash Parv marking 357th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

On the occasion, the DC took first hand appraisal of the arrangements wherein Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and conveyed their gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner in this regard.

Addressing the devotees, the DC highlighted the immense contributions of Shri Guru Gobind ji and the sacrifices of the Sikh community in defending the honour of the country. He said the tenth Guru was a great warrior, a spiritual guru and a prominent scholar who laid emphasis on social equality, universal brotherhood, altruism and social service.



While extending warm greetings on the auspicious occasion, the DC expressed hope that this event would contribute towards strengthening brotherhood, unity, harmony and would be a harbinger of peace, progress and prosperity.

He said teachings of Sikh Gurus promote social institutions such as the langar, sangat and kirtan as great levelers and unifying agencies.

He further said that the Guru dreamt of a society outside of the prevailing rituals and ethics, based

on social equality and built on the 'recognition of light of the divine in all beings in equal measure'. He mentioned that Guru Gobind Singh Ji was an accomplished poet and a philosopher and his works possess a sublime poetic beauty, which were later, compiled into the 'Dasam Granth', he added. During the visit, DC also inspected stalls which were installed by different Banks in order to disseminate vital information about employment generation and other livelihood related schemes for the general public.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Hafsa Nazir W/o Musaib Ahmad Dar R/o 13 Seeloo Sopore Tehsil Zaingeer

District Baramulla am the original allottee/ transferee of Plot No. 609 Sector No. nil in Housing Colony, Ompora Budgam and have applied for transfer of leasehold rights to freehold rights of above said plot in my favour. Objection, if any, may be conveyed to the Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, Green Belt Park, Gandhi Nagar,

Jammu within a period of 15 days from the date of publication of this Notice. However,

no objection will be entertained after the expiry of the above said period.

Name: Hafsa Nazir
W/O Musaib Ahmad Dar
R/O 13 Seeloo Sopore Tehsil Zaingeer District Baramulla

EDITORIAL

Kashmir's Water Crisis or A Health Hazard?

As reports of a dire scarcity of drinking water flood in from various regions in Kashmir, the residents find themselves grappling with a crisis that transcends mere inconvenience. The situation has reached a point where fetching water from streams has become a daily struggle, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and immediate intervention.

The scarcity has not only disrupted daily life but has also exposed the population to potential health hazards. Shockingly, some of the streams, considered a lifeline in this arid landscape, are contaminated. The polluted water not only poses a threat to the well-being of the residents but has also become a breeding ground for waterborne diseases.

The ramifications of this water crisis extend beyond the immediate inconvenience of sourcing water. Families are compelled to navigate treacherous terrain, often covering significant distances to access water points. This daily ordeal not only consumes valuable time but also jeopardizes the safety of those, especially women and children, who embark on these journeys.

The authorities must act swiftly to address this escalating crisis. Implementation of sustainable water management practices, investment in infrastructure, and community awareness campaigns are crucial steps. Additionally, stringent measures must be taken to address the contamination of water sources, preventing the spread of diseases that further burden an already strained healthcare system.

In the face of such adversity, a unified effort is imperative. The residents, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders must collaborate to formulate and execute effective solutions. Only through prompt and collective action can we hope to alleviate the water crisis in Kashmir and safeguard the health and well-being of its residents.

Women Example of Patience

“Be patient (and you’ll reach your goal)

■ [Muneeb Shafi](#)

Pertinence is the ability to accept delay, annoyance or suffering without complaining or becoming angry. For example: People have lost patience with i.e. have become annoyed about the slow pace of reform. After three hours of waiting for the train, our patience was exhausted. She has little patience with i.e. can hardly tolerate anyone who doesn't share her views. It's enough to try i.e. test the patience of a saint! Patience is the ability to keep doing something that requires a lot of effort. For example: Learning to walk again after his accident required great patience. I haven't the patience to do embroidery. Patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious. Primary meaning of patience is good-natured tolerance of delay or incompetence. It is good nature, a cheerful and obliging disposition.

The Mother sacrifice's her life, happiness for her child. From dusk to dawn a mother sacrifices many more in her life. A women is supposed to study first, when she completes matric, then she is curtailed and kept behind the bars for the rest world. She has to struggle for her studies, when she continues studying till her jobs, then after she has to pass the biggest and the most important decision in her life. She has been said that, you have to leave the job, because women's don't work in our society, this is the mentality of 19's era. But now this has been changed, women's are the ones who challenges men's in every field of life, either it is physical or mental practice.

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physical or mental practice.

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

After the marriage the life of a women completely changes, then she has to perform the role of a wife for husband, a daughter for parent's, and a mother for her upcoming children's. She is the one who cares for you without coming to world, she cares till nine months. Have you ever thought how many problems she has to face In between this time of 9 months.

Throughout my life, I have learned patience through many people and situations. Patience is an important part of growing up and is still difficult for me. Although it is hard to be patient with others and myself, my mother, my mother's sister (Masi), and siblings instilled patience in me. Patience is difficult to uphold, but my mother never loses her patience. She is an amazing woman who grew up helping to care for family. Growing up, she taught me how to be a kind, patient, and loving person. She and I are extremely close and she encourages me to be the best person I can be. My mother is a true example of patience for me and she inspires me to be like her in any situation.

The young author namely MUNEEB SHAFI had wrote this on his own experience. You can directly contact to me on Instagram @young_author13.



Unveiling the Snapchat Epidemic: The Dark Side of Digital Connectivity

■ [Dr. Naseer Ahmad Lone](#)
■ [Dr. Vikas Bhandari](#)

A Comprehensive Examination of How Snapchat Addiction is Impacting Teens and Adult: The age of rapid technological advancement, social media platforms have become an integral part of our daily lives offering various benefits such as instant communication, sharing experiences, and staying connected with friends and family. Among the plethora of applications, Snapchat stands out as a pioneer in ephemeral messaging, allowing users to share moments that vanish within seconds. While the app has gained immense popularity for its unique features, it has also unleashed a digital epidemic that warrants our attention. Instant Gratification: The Dopamine Dilemma: Snapchat's design, with its fleeting messages and constant notifications, triggers a cycle of instant gratification. The rush of dopamine, the brain's pleasure neurotransmitter, accompanies every sent snap and received reply, fostering addictive behaviours. The pursuit of likes and validation becomes a driving force, influencing user habits.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Culture: The 24-Hour Race The Stories feature, where users share moments that vanish after 24 hours, contributes to a pervasive Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Users find themselves compelled to check the app regularly, anxious not to miss the latest updates or social events. This constant need to stay connected can lead to increased screen time and potential

negative impacts on mental health.

Social Comparison and Self-Esteem: A Downward Spiral Snapchat's focus on visual content fuels social comparison, with users evaluating their lives based on curated images and videos. For teens navigating the challenges of self-discovery, this can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and negatively impact self-esteem. Maintaining a carefully crafted online persona may lead to a distorted sense of self.

Real-Life Interaction Disruption: The Price of Digital Connectivity As Snapchat becomes a primary mode of communication, face-to-face interactions may dwindle. Users risk interrupting real-life experiences as they prioritize capturing moments for their Stories. This shift can impact the development of social skills, particularly among younger users, who may find themselves more comfortable behind a screen than in person.

Privacy Concerns: Sharing what ought not to share. Snapchat's ephemeral nature might encourage users to share more personal information, assuming it will disappear. However, the risk of screenshots and privacy breaches is ever present. Users must be cautious about the permanence of their digital footprint, preventing potential stress and anxiety related to privacy concerns.

The Mental Health Toll: Beyond the Snap The constant comparison, fear of missing out, and the pursuit of validation can take a toll on mental health. Stress, anxiety, and even depression may be the unintended consequences of the pressure to maintain a flawless online image. It is

imperative for users to be aware of these potential pitfalls and prioritize their mental well-being.

Disrupted Sleep Patterns: The Nightly Scroll The addictive nature of Snapchat can extend into the late hours, contributing to disrupted sleep patterns. Constantly checking for updates or responding to messages can lead to sleep deprivation, impacting overall health and cognitive function.

Academic and Professional Consequences: Time Drain Excessive use of Snapchat can result in a significant drain on time, potentially affecting academic performance or professional responsibilities. The constant need for digital engagement may lead to procrastination and a lack of focus on more critical tasks.

Cyberbullying and Social Pressures: The Dark Side of Connectivity Snapchat is not immune to the prevalence of cyberbullying and social pressures. The ephemeral nature of messages may encourage users to share content they would not otherwise, contributing to an environment where harmful behaviours can thrive. In a world where digital connectivity is the norm, it is crucial to strike a balance. While Snapchat provides a platform for fun and connection, its addictive nature and associated ill effects must not be overlooked. Responsible usage, digital literacy, and open conversations about the impact of social media are essential for cultivating a healthier relationship with technology. As users, let us be mindful of the Snapchat epidemic and navigate the digital landscape with awareness and caution.

The way Forward:

Promote digital literacy and educate users, especially younger individuals, about the potential risks and consequences of their online actions.

Provide resources and information on responsible social media use, online etiquette, and the impact of digital communication on mental health.

Encourage parents and guardians to be actively involved in their children's online activities.

Promote open communication about the challenges and pressures associated with social media, and work together to establish healthy online habits.

Advocate for transparent and user-friendly platform policies that address privacy concerns and promote a safer online environment.

Encourage social media platforms to implement features that combat cyberbullying, such as reporting mechanisms and content moderation tools.

Raise awareness about the potential impact of social media on mental health.

Promote the availability of mental health resources and support services for individuals who may be struggling with the negative effects of digital connectivity.

Support ongoing research on the psychological and social implications of social media use, with a focus on specific platforms like Snapchat.

Use research findings to inform policies, guidelines, and educational initiatives aimed at mitigating the negative effects.

Foster a sense of community and positive online behaviour through cam-

paigns and initiatives that promote kindness, empathy, and understanding.

Encourage users to actively participate in creating a supportive online environment.

Advocate for responsible legislation and regulations related to online safety and privacy.

Collaborate with governmental and regulatory bodies to establish guidelines that protect users from harmful online practices.

Explore the development and implementation of technological solutions that can help identify and address issues such as cyberbullying, hate speech, and misinformation on social media platforms.

Integrate media literacy programs into educational curricula to equip individuals with the skills to critically evaluate and navigate online content.

Encourage social media platforms to take responsibility for the impact of their services on users and society.

Promote ethical practices and corporate social responsibility initiatives within the tech industry.

It's essential to approach the issue collaboratively, involving various stakeholders such as individuals, families, educators, policymakers, and technology companies. The goal is to create a balanced digital landscape that prioritizes positive online experiences and safeguards the well-being of users.

The author can be reached at naseerbita@yahoo.com Assistant professors at Chandigarh University.



Secretary Revenue chairs entrepreneurship conference, Public Darbar at Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 17: Secretary Revenue, Prasanna Ramaswamy G, today chaired an "Entrepreneurship Conference" organised by the district administration here at DC office, Kishtwar.

The conference aimed to provide a platform for dialogue and facilitating discussion with business aspirants, and stakeholders to understand challenges and opportunities in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The initiative would stimulate economic activities, create employment opportunities and contribute towards overall development of the district.

Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Devansh Yadav, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Inderjeet Singh Parihar, Joint Director Planning, Mohammad Iqbal, ACR Kishtwar, Varunjeet Singh Charak, CEO Kishtwar Development Authority, Dr. Rishi Kumar Sharma besides other district officers and representatives from the Traders Associations, Women Self-Help Group (SHG) mem-



bers, students and Business aspirants were present in the event.

The interactive session, held during the Entrepreneurship Conference, focused on identifying local issues, addressing concerns related to business development, employment and economic growth specific to the district.

Secretary Revenue, in his address, highlighted the collaborative initiatives being taken up among the Employment Department, Mission Youth and district level institutions to encourage and support new entrepreneurs.

Emphasizing the role of district administration in pushing collaboration with

various entities to facilitate financial support for the budding entrepreneurs, he asked for launching sector specific initiatives towards exploring potential areas for business growth in these areas.

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, on the occasion, provided insights into the entrepreneurial profile of the district besides highlighting interventions, including establishment of Kishtwar Haat and Mission Youth initiatives and AVSAR scheme implementation, fostering entrepreneurship for youth in the district. He also detailed tourism initiatives, emphasizing revival of tourism sectors and providing training to youths of Kishtwar in mountaineering, winter and water sports recently. He also highlighted that the ITI Kishtwar and SBI RSETI have been roped in for conducting various training programs, enhancing skills for employment. Later, Secretary Revenue also presided over a mega public darbar and listened to the issues and concerns of delegations.

Prasanna Ramaswamy took stock of public concerns, ensuring prompt redressal of revenue related demands.

BJP Only Party With Proven Track Record Of Speedy Development: PM Modi

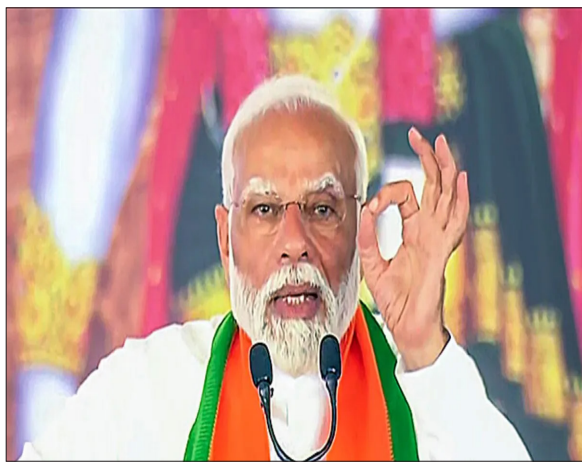
■ HT News Network

Kochi, Kerala: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said that the BJP was the only party in India with a proven track record of speedy development and a clear vision for the future.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a party meeting of around 6,000 in-charges of 'Shakti Kendras', each comprising two to three booth-level areas, at Marine Drive in Kochi.

Speaking at the event, he highlighted the diverse initiatives implemented by his government to enhance the well-being of citizens. He said according to a recent report, in the last nine years around 25 crore people have been pulled out of poverty in India.

"This indicates that the direction that we have taken for a developed nation is the correct one," the Prime Minister contended.



"The BJP is the only party in India with a proven track record of speedy development and clear vision for the future," he added. The Prime Minister also urged party workers to convey to people that the track record of the LDF and UDF in Kerala was synonymous with a history of corruption.

PM Modi also referred to the welcome he received on Tuesday on his arrival in

the state and said that he was overawed by the love and affection the people of Kerala have shown to him.

He said that people blessed him on his arrival at Kochi on Tuesday and also on the route to the Tripayar Sree Ramaswamy Temple this morning. The Prime Minister was on a two-day visit to Kerala and would return to Delhi later in the evening.

Will Do Whatever Needs To Be Done As Per Law: Arvind Kejriwal On Probe Agency Summons

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: With the ED asking him to appear for questioning on Thursday after he skipped summons thrice in the Delhi excise policy case, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said here he will do whatever needs to be done as per law.

Sources in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Delhi government, however, said on Wednesday that he is unlikely to appear before the agency as he is scheduled to leave for Goa on a three-day tour to take stock of party's preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Earlier, he was supposed to embark on a two-day tour of Goa from January 11 but had to postpone it due to preparations for the Republic Day programme in the national capital. Mr Kejriwal was issued the ED summons last week for the



fourth time and asked to appear before the agency on January 18.

At an event, where he interacted with elderly pilgrims leaving for Dwarkadheesh in Gujarat, the AAP national convener was asked about the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons asking him to appear on Thursday in connection with the Delhi excise policy linked money laundering case.

"We will do whatever needs to be done according to the law," he told reporters, in response to the query.

Earlier in the day, Delhi cabinet minister Saurabh Bharadwaj had echoed

similar views.

"He is clear that whatever he will do he will do in accordance with the law and the advice of the legal counsel," he told news agency PTL.

The 55-year-old leader had refused to depose before the ED for the third time on January 3, citing Rajya Sabha polls and Republic Day preparations.

Mr Kejriwal had also questioned the motive behind the ED's actions, citing legal "objections" to the summons and accusing the agency of assuming the role of "judge, jury and executioner".

Reacting the ED summons, Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi cabinet minister Gopal Rai had alleged that the BJP is "misusing" the ED to stop Kejriwal from campaigning for Lok Sabha polls. Mr Rai had questioned the timing of the Enforcement Directorate's summons to Kejriwal.

Gangwon 2024 set to build "a new legacy": IOC president Bach

■ HT News Network

Seoul, Jan 17 (UNI) International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach said the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Gangwon 2024 is set to build "a new legacy" for "the next generation of athletes," during a visit that he paid to check the preparation status for Games in the Athletes Village in Gangneung, South Korea, on Wednesday. Bach praised the facilities of the Village: "I'm really very, very impressed by the quality of the accommodation and what I am hearing from the athletes, they are all very happy." With two days to go before the Opening Ceremony, The IOC chief added that all is set for a "successful Games." "For the athletes, I think it's a wonderful experience to



compete in the venues their idols have been competing in just six years ago and whom they are following. These young athletes are carrying this legacy on toward the next generation of athletes. So it's a true success story," he concluded. Accompanied by the Chair of the Coordination Commission and 2014 Olympic speed skating champion, Zhang Hong, Bach met the first group of young athletes in the gym of the Village Sport Com-

plex, part of the Gangneung Wonju National University. Bach then continued his tour inside the Village, where he stopped to take pictures with mascot Moongcho and the volunteers, before visiting the Main Resident Centre and the Dining Hall. "What for athletes is the most important is good sleep and good food and they all confirmed that the rooms are excellent, that the beds are excellent and that they're enjoying the food very much so that there is enough variety," Bach said. Gangwon 2024 is the fourth edition of the Winter Youth Olympic Games, an event that - according to Bach - has represented in the past "a great stepping stone to success in the Olympic Games" and serves as evidence of "the ever-growing popularity of winter sports in Asia."

Seat-Sharing Talks On with Samajwadi Party, Says Congress

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: The Congress and the Samajwadi Party have started discussions on seat sharing, senior party leader Salman Khurshid said today, dispelling speculation that such an event may not happen in Uttar Pradesh, which sends 80 members to the Lok Sabha. The parties will stay in touch and should be able to decide on the major seats very soon, he told NDTV.

Asked about the outcome of the discussion, Mr Khurshid said they looked into "all possibilities, probabilities, and winnabilities". Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal will be included in the alliance since it is already an ally of the Samajwadi Party, he said.

"We have shared details of each seat with each other... I hope that the alliance happens before the (Bharat Jodo Nyay) Yatra reaches Uttar Pradesh," he told reporters. Senior Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav confirmed that the parties have made progress after the meeting with the National Alliance Committee in Delhi.

"We have covered halfway distance and the remaining half will be covered soon," he told reporters.

Delhi Police initiates training prog for cops to adapt new criminal laws

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, Jan 17 (UNI) Delhi Police Academy on Wednesday commenced a comprehensive training program for its officers to adapt the new criminal laws- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023 passed by the Parliament.

The Academy, in collaboration with the National Law University, Dwarka, has meticulously designed its training modules to cover officers of all ranks, from Special Commissioner of Police to the Constables of Delhi Police in a phased manner, police said in a statement.

Experts from the National Law University are conducting the sessions, ensuring that officers at all levels are proficient in the application of the new laws, it added.

The four-day training module, inaugurated today by Delhi Commissioner of Police Sanjay Arora, will continue until January 20 for all officers up to SHO level.

Addressing the inaugural event, Sanjay Arora, underscored the significance of the training and urged the participants, including higher rank officers to embrace the forthcoming changes as both a challenge and an opportunity.

The change in laws is a paradigm shift from the Bhartiya "Dand" Sanhita to the Bhartiya "Nayay" Sanhita, he highlighted.

S.K Gautam IPS, Spl. CP/HRD, Ms Chhaya Sharma IPS, Spl. CP Training, Sh. Vijay Singh IPS, Director, DPA, and Dr. Neeraj Tiwari, Faculty of National Law University were also present during the event.

NCC cadets are role models of youth: Defence Secy

■ HT News Network

New Delhi Jan 17 (UNI) Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane hailed the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets and stated that for the country's youth, the cadets are the role models who inspire them to excel in their respective field and contribute to nation building.

While addressing the cadets at the NCC Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantt here on Wednesday, Aramane emphasised that the NCC, with its philosophy and vision, energises the youths and train them into better citizens, an official statement said.

The objective to expand the NCC is to motivate more and more youth across the country to join the largest uniformed youth organisation and explore its benefits, he added.

The Defence Secretary urged the youth to shed mediocrity and aim high to achieve their goals, which in turn help the country to reach greater heights.

"The youth with lots of energy, when not properly directed, will end up doing anti-social activities. The youth has to be properly educated and should be given a task which is constructive and contributes to the nation's economy & prosperity. NCC cadets can be their inspiration to achieve this objective," Aramane said.

He also witnessed a cultural programme, and also visited the 'Flag Area', prepared by 17 NCC Directorates showcasing various social awareness schemes depicted through sand models.

Jal Kalash Yatra taken out in Ayodhya ahead of consecration

■ HT News Network

Ayodhya (UP), Jan 17 (UNI) A Jal Kalash Yatra was taken by over 500 women on the second day of the rituals on Wednesday which started ahead of the consecration ceremony of Lord Ram in the grand temple on January 22.

The yatra started from the banks of the Saryu River in the morning. Carrying urns filled with sacred water from River Saryu, the women joyfully danced to the melodious songs of Lord Ram, expressing their deep devotion to him.

Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi coordinated the yatra which was led by his wife Ramalakshmi Tripathi. Over 500 women, including Namrata Pathak, the wife of Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak and district Panchayat President Roli Singh, actively participated in this spiritually significant journey.

Stalin writes to EAM for release of TN fishermen arrested by Lankan Navy

Chennai, Jan 17 (UNI) Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin urged External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to secure the immediate release of all the apprehended fishermen and their fishing boats by the Sri Lankan Navy. He said in two back-to-back incidents 28 fishermen from Tamil Nadu were arrested on January 15 and 16 during fishing in high seas on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). In a Demi-Official letter to Dr Jaishankar on Wednesday evening, Mr Stalin with a sense of deep anguish, drew his attention to the repeated apprehensions of fishermen and their fishing boats by the Sri Lankan Navy.

He said 10 fishermen who ventured into the sea on January 13 from the Nagapattinam Fishing Harbour were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on January 15 along with their mechanized fishing boat.

In yet another incident, 18 fishermen from Pamban, Ramanathapuram along with their two mechanized fishing boats were apprehended by the Lankan Navy on Tuesday.

Mahant Rohit Shastri calls on Rana

Learning Sanskrit will enable youngsters to access repository of knowledge: Rana

■ HT News Network

JAMMU JANUARY 17- Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said that promotion of Sanskrit language will enable the younger generation to access the vast repository of knowledge and wisdom. "Preserving and promotion of Sanskrit is not only to sustain the language deeply rooted to Indian ethos but to safeguard the cultural legacy", Mr Rana said while interacting with a delegation of Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sanathan Trust, Raipur Banatalab Jammu led by its President Mahant Rohit Shastri here this afternoon. Lauding the tireless efforts of the Trust for promoting the ancient language, Mr Rana emphasized the societal role in making use of Sanskrit that will empower the people to know their past, rich heritage and glorious ethos. He also advocated for making



it mandatory for students to learn Sanskrit so that they

remain rooted to their heritage. Learning Sanskrit language will hugely help in sharpening the mind and gaining knowledge about the ancient texts and scriptures which are mainly written in this language, he added. Mahant Rohit Shastri presented the Annual trust Patrika "Kartavya Marg" and discussed various issues pertaining to heritage and culture and reiterated that the issue with regard to teaching of Sanskrit language from the sixth grade in schools across Jammu and Kashmir to keep children acquainted with the ancient scriptures—treasure trove of wisdom and knowledge. He hoped that this issue will be taken up with all the concerned, especially Lieutenant Governor Mr Manoj Sinha for implementation in the larger good of the coming generations. Mahant Rohit Shastri said the Trust is committed to preserve and promote Sanskrit, a language deeply rooted in ancient Indian knowledge and literary tradition.

VBSY: IEC Van Traverses through panchayats of block Rajouri & Sunderbani in Rajouri District

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, JANUARY 17: The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) has become a driving force behind the implementation of various government schemes and ushering in comprehensive development throughout Rajouri district. The ambitious initiative is strategically crafted to transform Rajouri by extending its reach to underserved areas and ensuring the effective execution of government programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

Today, the VBSY IEC vans traversed through the panchayats of Kangri Lower, Kangri Upper, Kangri Middle, Lower Bhajwal-B, Palam, Charran, Bathuni and Muradpur-A of block Rajouri as well as Sunderbani. This strategic journey highlights the Yatra's commitment to reaching every corner of the district and ensuring that the benefits of government initiatives are felt at the grassroots level. Central to this endeavor is an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) van, a dynamic mobile platform designed to effectively communicate and create awareness about



the diverse initiatives undertaken as part of the Yatra. The van plays a pivotal role in engaging with local

communities, imparting crucial knowledge, and empowering residents to avail themselves of the ben-

efits offered by government schemes. The VBSY has recorded notable success in the implementation of various government schemes in Rajouri District. These schemes, crafted to elevate living standards and provide essential services, have been executed with exceptional efficiency on the ground. Consequently, the community has experienced tangible improvements and witnessed positive changes in their daily lives. The impact of the Yatra is evident in enhanced access to healthcare, education, and basic amenities, contributing to the overall progress of Rajouri District. Meticulously planned and

executed, this initiative aligns with the core objective of holistic development, leaving a lasting and positive impact on the community. The VBSY symbolizes progress and collaboration, embodying the spirit of Viksit Bharat Sankalp. By bringing government schemes to the grassroots level and ensuring comprehensive coverage, it has created a platform for empowerment and upliftment. This transformative journey in Rajouri District stands as an exemplary model of effective governance, community engagement, and collective determination to build a better and prosperous India.

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Panchayat Suryachak

Rohit Kansal visits Suryachak panchayat; describes public participation as essential in nation building

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: Central Prabhari Officer and Union Additional Secretary, Ministry for Textiles, Rohit Kansal, today visited Panchayat Suryachak in Mandal block, under the ambitious public outreach programme "Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra". Secretary Planning Aijaz Asad, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, ADDC, Sher Singh, ACD Preeti Sharma and other senior officers, eminent citizens and public representatives were present on the occasion. While highlighting the significance of the yatra, Rohit Kansal said that the ambitious initiative aims to create awareness among citizens about various welfare schemes and seek their participation in the spirit of "Jan Bhagidari" to ensure 100 per cent saturation of government schemes. It is the largest-ever outreach initiative of Government of India which will ensure required services are accessible to all targeted and eligible beneficiaries facilitating the last mile delivery. He highlighted the significant impact of government schemes on lives of common masses over



the past decade, citing the success of Ayushman Bharat, PM Kisan, PMAY, Ujjwala, Ujala, Laadli Beti and other such schemes. He proudly shared that Jammu and Kashmir has excelled in achieving universal health coverage under Ayushman Bharat scheme, a unique accomplishment in comparison to rest of the nation. Rohit Kansal also shed light on transformative outcome of various historic schemes on lives of people while making a mention of

direct transfer of financial assistance to bank accounts of farmers. He articulated that the primary objective of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is to create awareness in every corner of the nation and ensure that all eligible beneficiaries avail benefit government schemes. He mentioned about recent reports indicating that 24.8 crore people have risen above the poverty line, largely attributed to initiatives like free ration and pension schemes. Referring to 'Amrit Kaal', the period until the centenary of India's Independence in 2047, Rohit Kansal maintained that all efforts are underway to transform the country into a developed nation while emphasising the indispensable role of public participation in this regard. Rohit Kansal encouraged every individual to contribute towards nation development by diligently performing their duties, protecting public amenities and adopting sustainable practices like water and energy conservation. Later, he inspected the departmental stalls aimed at raising awareness about various government schemes where the public had the opportunity to engage with representatives from different departments, gaining valuable knowledge.

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture through HADP: Awareness camps organised in Palmar, Dachan Organic Clusters

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 17: In a significant stride towards promoting sustainable agricultural practices, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare organized awareness camps at three organic clusters here to promote "Alternate Agriculture System for Sustainability," a project initiated under the Horticulture and Agriculture Development Project (HADP).

The first camp took place at Fatna Palmar, focusing on detailed training on organic farming methods for cultivating crops and vegetables. Participants were educated on the use of organic inputs, preparation of Jeevamrut/Panchgavya liquid manure, composting, and other sustainable practices.

The event witnessed the presence of DDC Palmar, Tahir Masood, Chief Agriculture Officer Kishtwar, Amjad Hussain Malik, District Agriculture Officer Kishtwar, Sanjay Kumar Sharma, Manzoor Ahmed Zargar (SDAO Marwah) and field staff dedicated to the organic cluster in Khattan Fatna Palmar.

The session concluded with the distribution of organic components/inputs. Another two awareness camps were conducted in the organic clusters of Loharna and Lopara at Sounder Dachhan. Similar training on organic cultivation techniques, use of organic inputs, and the preparation of Jeevamrut/Panchgavya liquid manure and composting was provided.

Bhupinder Kumar inspects progress on Jammu-Akhnoor four laning Project

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 17: Secretary Public Works Department (R&B), Bhupinder Kumar, today assessed status of ongoing construction works on Jammu-Akhnoor road widening during his extensive inspection of the vital four laning project.

Secretary was accompanied by General Manager NHIDCL, Director Finance PWD, Director Planning PWD, Site Engineer NHIDCL, concerned Tehsildars and site Engineers of NHIDCL.

The inspection specifically focused on Package I and III of the 30 Km 4-lane road widening project, which will ease travel to Akhnoor, Rajouri and Poonch districts.

Secretary visited and inspected the work sites at Bhagwati Nagar, Muthi, Domana, Kangrail, Akhnoor and other key locations on the road.

While inspecting Bhagwati Nagar flyover, Secretary directed the NHIDCL authorities to further expedite work on 1.35 Km flyover and complete the project within stipulated timeline of January 2025. This flyover will decongest traffic in the city besides addressing traffic congestion in canal area.



On Muthi-Akhnoor section, Secretary asked the NHIDCL engineers to pace up the work and complete remaining stretches and incomplete bridges so that commuters can have safe and comfortable travel on the road.

He also inspected the site of 450 meter bridge under construction at Akhnoor over Chenab river and was briefed about the project details. He was apprised that 7.42 Km Akhnoor bypass including bridge over Chenab is expected to be completed by March 2025.

Bhupinder Kumar also directed NHIDCL authorities to maintain an effective liaison and regular com-

munication with district administration for timely redressal of issues concerning the execution of ambitious road widening project. The inspection specifically focused on Package I and III of the 30 Km 4-lane road widening project, which will ease travel to Akhnoor, Rajouri and Poonch districts.

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DC tours Arnas area, inspects ongoing developmental works

■ HT News Network

REASI, JANUARY 17: Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Vishesh Paul Mahajan today undertook a comprehensive day-long tour of Arnas to assess the progress of various ongoing developmental works and mega projects in the area. During the tour, the DC inspected the pace of works undertaken by Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), works being executed by R&B and the mining leases.

The DC assessed the progress of work on the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) in Arnas, coming up at an estimated cost of Rs 744.33 lakh. He conducted detailed examination of the pipe network, civil works, Dugwell



and allied works costing Rs 130 lakh, and 392 Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs). The DC also inspected the WSS works at Kanthan Dharmatha, projected at Rs 947.46 lakh, emphasizing the importance of timely completion.

The DC also Inspected Mining block and directed

the DMO and Tehsildars to demarcate and ensure to put in place systems to curb any attempt of illegal mining.

He inspected the under-construction Degree college building at Dharmari and Narloo Bridge, issuing directives to executing agencies to ensure the completion of the works by or before February 28, 2024.

JJM: DDC Chairperson Ramban inaugurates construction of GSR Projects in Block Sangaldan

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, JANUARY 17: Chairperson, District Development Council, Ramban, Dr Shamshad Shan, today launched the work of two Ground Service Reservoirs (GSR) being executed by the Jal Shakti department in Block Sangaldan.

The Chairperson initiated the construction of a 5000-gallon GSR in Kachar Mohalla Panchayat Famrote, Block Sangaldan, as part of the Jal Jeevan Mission schemes. This retrofitting project, being executed by the Jal Shakti Department with an estimated cost of Rs. 5 Lakh, would benefit 326 households.

In addition, Dr Shamshad Shan inaugurated the



construction of a 10000-gallon GSR at Dar Mohalla Movalkote under the District Plan, with an estimated cost of Rs. 12.34 lakh. Commending the local residents for their unwavering support, the Chairperson underscored the pivotal role of these projects in elevating the overall quality of life of the entire community. She reiterated the government's resolve to provide clean and

safe drinking water to all residents, aligning with the objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

The event witnessed the presence of PRIs members, J.E Jal Shakti Department Rakesh Kumar, along with field staff and local residents, symbolizing a collaborative effort towards achieving the shared goal of enhanced water infrastructure in the region.

HDFC Bank Parivartan Announces StartUp Grants for 30 Incubators

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Jan 17, KNT: HDFC Bank today announced that it will be funding 30 incubators and accelerators under the Parivartan StartUp Grants this year. The funded startups, in turn, will finance and provide mentorship to over 100 social impact startups.

The incubators and accelerators will further mentor startups that will aim to solve sectoral challenges of national importance and thus contribute towards achieving United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In its seventh edition this year, the Parivartan StartUp Grants is being run this year in partnership with the Atal Innovation Mission, the Government of India's flagship initiative under NITI Aayog, to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

Ms. Smita Bhagat, Group Head – Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank said, "HDFC Bank aims to bridge the gap between startup founders and incubators by acting as a funding facilitator for government-approved startups. These grants have been running under our CSR brand Parivartan, since the last seven years, to give flight to the dreams of aspiring entrepreneurs in remote areas of the country. This year, we are delighted to partner with Atal Innovation Mission to support technology-based startups aligned with SDGs, contributing to a sustainable and inclusive future for India."

Dr Chintan Vaishnav, Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog said, "The collaboration between Atal Innovation Mission and HDFC Bank plays a crucial role in advancing the innovation ecosystem through CSR. These grants are essential for incubators, enabling them to cultivate transformative ideas that can effectively address issues of national importance. The Parivartan StartUp Grants will empower startups to implement solutions aimed at achieving SDG targets. I am confident that this partnership will lead the charge in propelling the global innovation ecosystem forward, fostering positive change on a national scale." (KNT)

35th National Road Safety Month: ARTO Baramulla organizes Road Safety Awareness Program

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 17: In line with the ongoing 35th National Road Safety Month, the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Baramulla today organized a Road Safety Awareness Program at Bus Stand Sopore.

The event aimed to sensitize the general public and drivers about the importance of safe driving and adherence to traffic rules.

During the program, more than one hundred drivers were educated about various road safety norms. The Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Muazzam Ali, emphasized the significance of different traffic rules and urged all stakeholders in society to acknowledge their responsibilities towards better traffic management and road safety.

Ali highlighted that while changing driving behavior may take time, education remains the key to achieving this transformation. The event at Bus Stand Sopore was part of a broader initiative to promote responsible driving practices and reduce road accidents.

Meanwhile, the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) officials in Baramulla also undertook a significant initiative to bolster road safety by distributing road safety stickers to motorists at various taxi stands.

Officials actively engaged with the community at Sumo Stand Baramulla. The campaign extended to affixing stickers on two-wheelers, maxi cabs, and other vehicles, aiming to promote safe driving practices among commuters. Emphasizing the importance of adherence to road safety norms, the campaign targeted discouraging mobile phone usage while driving, along with addressing the risks associated with drinking and driving, overloading and over speeding. The ARTO Office Baramulla continues to play an active role in fostering a safer road environment, and such awareness programs contribute significantly to creating a culture of responsible driving within the community. Emphasizing the importance of adherence to road safety norms, the campaign targeted discouraging mobile phone usage while driving, along with addressing the risks associated with drinking and driving, overloading and over speeding. The ARTO Office Baramulla continues to play an active role in fostering a safer road environment, and such awareness programs contribute significantly to creating a culture of responsible driving within the community.



Rassie van der Dussen hopes to put in 'strong performances' at SA20 for T20 World Cup spot

Rassie van der Dussen and Ryan Rickelton are both hopeful the SA20 will serve as a launch pad to national selection after being overlooked for key series in the recent past.

The pair have been first off the blocks at the SA20, with Rickelton leading the run charts with scores of 87 and 98 from the first two games and van der Dussen smashing a 50-ball 104 at the weekend. It was van der Dussen's fourth T20 century but first in ten years and serves as a reminder of what he can do in this format, especially as an opener.

"There's a T20 World Cup later this year and I want to be in a position to hopefully put in strong performances for that," van der Dussen, who has only played two T20Is since August 2022, said after his hundred in Johannesburg. "The last few series, I haven't been playing and there've been some guys who have played really well. The last time I played was against Australia where I got one or two starts but I did not really convert. I am realistic in the sense that maybe my international T20 numbers in the last year or two, albeit not being bad, haven't shot the lights out."

In his last seven T20Is, van der Dussen scored

a total of 63 runs and has only gone past 20 once. Before that, he scored 1008 runs in 32 T20I innings at an average of 42.00 and a strike-rate of 132.80 and it's those kinds of numbers he believes could force him into the national side. "I know what I can do. I know what kind of T20 player I can be and hopefully today is the start of that," he said.

With no T20Is before South Africa name their squad to go to West Indies (where they will play three matches before the World Cup starts), white-ball coach Rob Walter indicated he will use the SA20 and other leagues to select his final XV and van der Dussen has lined

I think he's been hard done by to not be involved in any of the squads against India. He's had a really good two to three years in all formats and he was in the mix earlier in the year and got left out.

up the tournaments he will use as auditions as best he could. "I have this SA20, then I am going to PSL and then we have domestic CSA T20, so it's going to be three to four months of T20 cricket and I can really focus on that," he said. "As a player all you can really do is put on the performances and put the numbers on the

board. I am not special, I am not above anyone else. If it's going to be a shoot out but if they are going to select performances, then your name needs to be up there."

One of his direct competitors is his MI Cape Town team-mate, Rickelton, who was overlooked for all South Africa's squads against India this summer, despite being considered across formats last season. There hasn't been an official reason given for Rickelton's omission, particularly in Tests where red-ball coach Shukri Conrad identified him as a batter he could build a side around, and van der Dussen's assessment was that Rickelton has been unlucky.

Edward Moore added to South Africa Test squad for New Zealand tour

Opening batter Edward Moore has been added to South Africa's Test squad for their two-Test series against New Zealand next month. Moore is the eighth



uncapped player named in the traveling group, and takes the total squad size to 15. Moore's call-up comes after Tony de Zorzi became unavailable when he landed an SA20 deal with Durban's Super

Giants. De Zorzi had been identified as an opener for the New Zealand series, and played in that role in the A team matches against West Indies, but, in line with CSA's directive that players are obliged to fulfil SA20 duties ahead of international cricket, he cannot play in the series.

With 117 first-class caps and an average of over 40 in red-ball cricket, Moore is vastly experienced, albeit only at domestic level. This season, he has scored 414 runs at an average of 51.57 in the first-class competition, and is currently the seventh-highest run-scorer. He is likely to open the batting with uncapped captain Neil Brand.

South Africa will depart for New Zealand on Friday, more than two weeks before the first Test, to give themselves time to familiarise with conditions ahead of the series. The two Tests are part of the 2023-2025 WTC cycle, where South Africa lie third after one series. They drew 1-1 with India over the festive period with a full-strength squad. Given the clash with the SA20, South Africa have opted to send a makeshift Test side to New Zealand after attempts to have the series moved were unsuccessful.



Cummins reassures Bancroft and Harris over Test futures

Australia captain Pat Cummins has been in contact with Cameron Bancroft and Marcus Harris to reassure them that they remain firmly in Test consideration despite being overlooked following David Warner's retirement.

With Steven Smith promoted to open, Cameron Green returning at No. 4 against West Indies in Adelaide, and Matt Renshaw selected as the reserve batter, the other two specialist openers remain on the outer.

Bancroft was the leading Sheffield Shield run-scorer last season and is in the same spot midway through the latest campaign, while Harris holds a central contract and was the reserve batter on the Ashes tour last year.

"Obviously private phone calls, but no real surprises," Cummins said in Adelaide. "We love what they both are doing in first-class cricket. We love what they bring to any side they're playing in.

They're doing all the right things. Unfortunately, they both just missed out on this one. So [the] message was 'don't change'.

"In international cricket, there's always injuries or these guys [the incumbents] aren't going to be around forever. Marcus and Cam are still relatively young, as is Renner. So once that opening comes up at some point, any one of them we're confident can jump straight in and do a really good job."

When Cummins was asked after the Sydney Test about replacing Warner, he appeared lukewarm to the idea of a batting-order reshuffle but has now said that once the option of Smith had been seriously considered, it made a lot of sense by allowing Green back at a more natural position for him.

Smith has spoken of not enjoying the wait to bat from No. 4 and while he hasn't specifically addressed whether the move will lengthen his Test career, he has committed to the shift not being a short-term solution. At training, Cummins has

already noticed a difference.

"Seeing someone who's basically achieved everything in the game get really excited for a new challenge, you've got to entertain that," he said. "You can already see his mind whirring about how he's maybe going to go about it a bit differently."

"I've never seen him as happy and as energetic as I've seen him around the nets the last couple of days. He can't wait to get out there. Also think the new ball, maybe [there will be] a few more scoring options. It's something that excites him. So that makes sense and getting Greeny a spot where we think he is set up to succeed."

The retirement of Warner and Green's return will also see a reshuffle in the cordon with Usman Khawaja taking up first slip, followed by Smith and Mitchell Marsh, with Green in the gully where he has already made a considerable impression with a string of spectacular catches.